

Relationships after Sexual Abuse

Stopping the Cycle of Sexual Abuse

There are 4 reasons that can help explain why the cycle of sexual abuse generally follows the victim, and not necessarily the perpetrator. These reasons tend to work with one another:

1. A father or father figure is often the perpetrator in child sexual abuse, and the role modeling of the father is a foundation for choosing future romantic partners, especially by women.
2. Female victims who were sexually abused during childhood are more likely to experience sexual dysfunction later in life. Sexual abuse can be relived during adult sexual experiences, making it extremely difficult to experience emotional intimacy.
3. Sexually abused women may not be protected by their mothers, which destroys the potential for appropriate mothering where the mother would/should protect her daughter from sexual abuse.
4. Sexually abused individuals often portray what Hindman calls an abusable attitude or acceptability that is quite attractive to people with abusive qualities.

Women who were sexually abused as children by male role models are more likely to choose a partner with abusive characteristics, to experience poor sexual adjustment, and to allow or perhaps even expect the abuse to continue with an attitude of acceptance. Individual cases and circumstances may vary, which may affect the rate of recovery for survivors.

Traditional Components of Recovery

1. Age
2. Penetration
3. Violence
4. Frequency

Understanding these four areas helps determine how traumatic the abuse was, and makes a difference in the difficulty of the recovery process.

The New Perspectives of Recovery

1. The Relational Perspective
2. The Developmental Perspective
3. The Situational Perspective

This model of recovery emphasizes the relationships between the victim, the offender, and significant others and how those relationships are handled.

Resource:

Hindman, J. (1999). *Just before dawn*. Dexter, MI: AlexAndria Associates.