

Childhood Sexual Abuse: Are there Consequences in Adulthood?

Does being sexually abused in childhood lead to drug use or criminal behavior in adulthood?

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Background/Literature Review:

According to research by the CDC, approximately 1 in 6 boys, and 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18.

Research shows that as many as two-thirds of all people in treatment for drug abuse report that they were physically, sexually, or emotionally abused during childhood. – Neil Swan

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:

- 6 out of 10 abusers know the victim but are not family (e.g. family friend, neighbor, etc.)
- 3 out of 10 abusers are family members (e.g. parent, cousin, etc.)
- 1 out of 10 abusers are strangers

Why does this happen?

Rational Choice Theory, (Clarke and Cornish), describes how a person will look at a situation, weigh the pros versus the cons, and knowing the outcome can result in negative action, will proceed with the action.

The Self-Medication Hypothesis (Radut n.d.) suggests that a person who is addicted to drugs is using such drugs to relieve symptoms of an underlying disorder or condition.



Conclusion:

This research study will look at participants in the hopes of helping future generations of sexually abused victims whose childhood innocence was stolen from them, and by trying to lead these victims away from a future that includes incarceration.

By figuring out other, healthier ways for these child victims of sexual abuse to cope with their victimization, this study may help create a reduction in future sexual abuse.

This study can help fields such as law enforcement, social services, and even educators identify victims of sexual abuse and steer them in the right direction, away from crime, possibly recidivism, if the victim would attempt to bury their victimization with drugs or criminal acts..

Victims may be able to restore their faith in society, as well as brighten their future, by changing their course of action, and being able to move on past their abusive history.

References:

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Methods/Research Design:

The group of participants, roughly 200 individuals, that will be the focus of this study are:

Approximately 100 inmates incarcerated for sex crimes (e.g. rape, sexual assault, etc.)

Approximately 100 inmates incarcerated for narcotics charges (e.g. selling, using, possession, etc.)

Since this group of participants is a protected class of individuals, precautions to protect them from potential harm will be made for this study. These include:

Assigning participants codes to keep their information confidential

Using a spreadsheet to confidentially track the information of the participants and their assigned codes in the study.

This spreadsheet will be pass code protected, and I alone will know the pass code to access this file.

The codes assigned will include a letter and number given to each participant

- Inmates incarcerated for sex crimes, will receive a code beginning with S followed by a number between 1 and the total number of participants who fall under the category of inmates incarcerated for sex crimes (e.g. S34, or S12, etc.)
- Inmates incarcerated for narcotics, or drugs, will receive a code beginning with D followed by a number between 1 and the total number of participants who fall under the category of inmates incarcerated for drugs (e.g. D82, or D67, etc.)

Questions that will be asked:

What are you incarcerated for?

Were you sexually abused in childhood?

If yes, was the perpetrator a single person?

If yes, how often were you sexually abused?

If yes, did you decide to become involved with drugs?

If yes, did you decide to become involved with criminal behavior?

If no, did you decide to turn to drugs?

If no, did you decide to turn to criminal behavior?

What actions assisted in leading to your criminal behavior, or interaction with drugs? (Circle all that apply)

Family life? Environment? Peer pressure? Any other factors that may have assisted in such decisions?

Please help me understand why you committed the crimes that you are incarcerated for:

If you are incarcerated for sex crimes:

- Did you commit the sex crime because you wanted to feel power over another individual?
- If you were sexually abused, did you want to make someone else feel the pain that you went through? Did you want to make someone else feel like a victim so you do not feel victimized or violated anymore?
- If you were not sexually abused, what did you hope to accomplish by committing such an act on another person?
- Does Rational Choice Theory play a part in committing such criminal behavior?

If you are incarcerated for drugs:

- Did you get involved with drugs because such behaviors (i.e. interactions with drugs) were considered normal in your environment?
- If you were sexually abused as a child, did the interaction with drugs help you "numb the pain of victimization?"
- Does the Self-Medication Hypothesis play a part in your interaction with drugs?

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