**Module E – Typologies of Child Sexual Abusers in General**

**and Clergy Sexual Abusers in Particular**

**Outline, Goals and Comments, Discussion Questions, References, and Sources**

**Outline**

1. The Fixated/Regressed Typology (E-4 to E-13)
2. Fixated Offenders (E-5 to E-9)
3. Regressed Offenders (E-10 to E-13)
4. FBI Typologies of Preferential and Situational Offenders (E-14 to E-15)
5. Personality Characteristics of Clergy Offenders (E-16 to E-17)
6. Summary of Typologies of Child Sexual Abusers (E-18)
7. Discussion Questions (E-19)

**Goals and Comments**

The goal of Module E is to identify major categories of sexual abusers. The first two types, fixated offenders and regressed offenders, are differentiated by the degree to which deviant sexual behavior is entrenched and the basis of the psychological condition that led to abuse. **Fixated offenders** are characterized by compulsive attraction to children and often have not attained any degree of psychosexual maturity. Their actions are premeditated and do not stem from stressors. They typically recruit vulnerable children. Fixated offenders are most dangerous, of highest risk to the community, and have the highest rate of recidivism. **Regressed offenders** usually begin offending as adults and their offenses are triggered by stressors in the environment, including disordered childhood relationships. Stressors can be situational and are often related to loneliness, isolation, or anxiety. They prefer that their victims cooperate, but should they resist, regressed offenders do not usually follow through with sexually abusive behavior. In sex-forced offenses – the rarest type – they use intimidation or physical aggression and so may be drawn to victims who can be easily overpowered.

FBI typologies categorize offenders as **situational** or **preferential**. Offenders of the first type have poor coping skills and target victims who are accessible, either children or adults. They are often insecure misfits with low self-esteem. Preferential offenders court children and give them much attention and many enticements. Because of poor psychological development they are compulsively attracted to children and are aggressive and extremely dangerous.

Personality characteristics of clergy offenders are unique in some ways when compared with the general population. They tend to display shyness, loneliness, and passivity. They exhibit over-controlled hostility and show less affect than normal. One clergy abuse study found that they had little insight into their behavior and they failed to appreciate how it affected their ministry. In part the problem stemmed from virtually no training or education on sexual abuse, addictive disease, or healthy professional boundaries.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What are the major differences between fixated and regressed sexual offenders?
2. What differentiates situational from preferential offenders?
3. How do clergy sex offenders differ from the general population of sex offenders?
4. What risk factors particular to clergy might be observed in potential clergy sex offenders?
5. What are the essential ingredients of educational programs that can help prevent sexual abuse?

**Titles of Slides and References**

E-1: Module E

E-2: Title Slide

E-3: Main Sources of Data

E-4: A. The Fixated/Regressed Typology

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 154, 174, 196

Figure 1

National Child Sexual Abuse Rate, 1992-2001



Sexual Abuse Rate per 100,000 Child Population

Groth, A.N., Hobson, W.F. and Gary, T.S. (1982). The child molester: Clinical observations. In J. Conte and D.A. Shore (Eds.). Social Work and Child Sexual Abuse. New York; Haworth.

E-5: Fixated Offenders, 1: Definition

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 191

American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSMIV-TR. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

E-6: Fixated Offenders, 2: Characteristics

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 197

Holmes, S.T. & Holmes, R.M. (2002). Sex Crimes: Pattern and Behavior. California: Sage Publications, Inc.

E-7: Fixated Offenders, 3: Behaviors

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 176, 191, 200

Abel, G.G., & Rouleau, J.L. (1995). Sexual abuses. Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 18, 139-153.

Marshall, W.L., & Barbaree, H.E. (1990). Outcome of comprehensive cognitive-behavioral treatment programs. In W.L. Marshall (Eds.). Handbook of Sexual Assault: Issues, Theories, and Treatment of the Offender (pp. 363-385). New York: Plenum Press.

E-8: Fixated Offenders, 4: Primary Victim Preference

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 176

E-9: Fixated Offenders, 5: Dangers

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 191, 195

Abel, G.G., Lawry, S.S., Karlstrom, E., Osborn, C.A., & Gillespie, C.F. (1994). Screening tests for pedophilia. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 21, 115-131.

Abel, G.G., & Rouleau, J.L. (1990). The nature and extent of sexual assault. In W.L. Marshall, & D.R. Laws (Eds.). Handbook of Sexual Assault: Issues, Theories, and Treatment Of The Offender (pp. 9-21). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Elliott, M., Browne, K., & Kilcoyne, J. (1995). Child sexual abuse prevention: What offenders tell us. Child Abuse & Neglect, 19, 579-594.

E-10: Regressed Offenders, 1: Definition

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 176

E-11: Regressed Offenders, 2: Stressors

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 175, 204

Schwartz, B.K. (1995). Characteristics and Typologies of Sex Offenders. In B. Schwartz (Ed.). The Sex Offender: Corrections, Treatment and Legal Practice (Vol. 2-3). New Jersey: Civic Research Institute, Inc.

E-12: Regressed Offenders, 3: Behaviors

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 175

E-13: Regressed Offenders, 4: Behaviors (cont.)

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 175

E-14: B. FBI Typologies of Situational Offenders

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 177, 197

Holmes, R.M. and Holmes, S.T. (1996). Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications.

E-15: FBI Typologies of Preferential Offenders (cont.)

Notes: Nature and Scope, pp. 177, 197

Holmes, R.M. and Holmes, S.T. (1996). Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications.

E-16: C. Personality Characteristics of Clergy Offenders, 1

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 180-181, 202

Plante, T.G., Manuel, G., & Bryant, C. (1996). Personality and cognitive functioning among hospitalized sexual offending Roman Catholic priests. Pastoral Psychology, 45, 129-139.

E-17: Personality Characteristics of Clergy Offenders, 2

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p, 181

Irons, R. & Laaser, M. (1994). The abduction of fidelity: Sexual exploitation by clergy-Experience with inpatient assessment. Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 1, 119-129.

Most of the individuals in the sample met the diagnosis for personality disorders with features of antisocial/psychopathic traits or paranoid, sadistic, or schizoid features. The results also illustrate that narcissistic and dependent traits clustered and modeled together in an exploitive manner.

For results of other studies, see Nature and Scope, pp. 180-181.

E-18: Summary of Typologies of Child Sexual Abusers

E-19: Discussion Questions

**Sources**

This module and others prepared for use in seminaries and schools of theology are based primarily on the two reports presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team, The City University of New York: *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States*, 1950-2010, March, 2011 and *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002*, February 2004.

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