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They Should Know Better:

Recognizing Sexual Grooming and Culpability Placement in Adolescents versus Children

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in

Forensic Psychology

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They Should Know Better:
Recognizing Sexual Grooming and Culpability Placement in Adolescents versus Children

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This thesis has been presented to and accepted by the office of Graduate Studies, John Jay
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Abstract

Sexual grooming is a process used by individuals in order to facilitate sexual abuse with a minor while simultaneously avoiding detection. As many sexual grooming behaviors are used before the perpetration of abuse, the identification of grooming behaviors is integral to child sexual abuse prevention. To date, few studies have researched the identification of sexual grooming behaviors utilized by child molesters and even fewer have examined the identification of those same behaviors utilized on adolescents. This study examined whether the age of the victim (child versus adolescent) affected how well someone can identify sexual grooming behaviors. Five hundred and forty-eight participants were randomly assigned to read one of four vignettes representing the four testing conditions (i.e., Grooming: Adolescent, Grooming: Child, Non-grooming: Adolescent, and Non-grooming: Child) and asked to rate the likelihood the person in the story is a child molester and the likelihood the person in the story will sexually abuse another character. This study found no significant difference in likelihood ratings that the person was a child molester between the adolescent and child conditions; but a significant difference was observed in likelihood ratings that the person was going to sexually abuse another character between the adolescent and child conditions. Findings indicated that the age of the victim does have some effect on how sexual grooming behaviors are perceived by the general public, in that the older the victim, the higher the likelihood ratings that they will be sexually abused. These findings will be discussed as they pertain to identification and prevention of child sexual abuse.

Keywords

sexual grooming; grooming behaviors; adolescent sexual grooming; child sexual abuse; child molester; teen sexual abuse

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Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2021), one in four girls and one in 13 boys experience child sexual abuse (CSA) at some point in childhood. The CDC further defines CSA as “involvement of a child (person less than 18 years old) in sexual activity that violates the laws or social taboos of society that he/she: (1) does not fully comprehend, (2) does not consent to or is unable to give informed consent to, or (3) is not developmentally prepared for and cannot give consent to. Studies have found that children are most vulnerable to CSA between the ages of seven and 13. In addition, almost 28% of adolescents ages 14 to 17 have been sexually abused during their lifespan (Finkelhor et al., 2015).

Grooming is a known precursor to CSA. Leberg (1997) proposed three types of grooming: (1) physically grooming the victim, (2) psychologically grooming the victim and family, and (3) grooming the social environment and community. It is estimated that about half of all cases of CSA involve an element of sexual grooming (Winters et al., 2020). CSA can occur at any age, up to 17 years old. Even with one in four adolescents experiencing CSA, most research on sexual grooming is limited to pre-pubescent children (Bennett & O’Donohue, 2020; Berson, 2003; Craven et al. 2006; Gillespie, 2002; Winters & Jeglic, 2016; 2017). The present literature that examines the sexual grooming of adolescents are focused on online grooming (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2018) and thus little is known about in-person sexual grooming as it pertains to adolescents.

Sexual Grooming

Winters et al. (2020) recently proposed an operational definition of sexual grooming that encompasses both children and adolescents. They defined sexual grooming as:

The deceptive process used by sexual abusers to facilitate sexual contact with a minor while simultaneously avoiding detection. Prior to the commission of the sexual abuse, the would-be sexual abuser may select a victim, gain access to and isolate the minor, develop trust with the minor and often their guardians, community, and minor serving institutions, and desensitize the minor to sexual content and physical contact. Post-abuse, the offender may use maintenance strategies on the victim to facilitate future sexual abuse and/or to prevent disclosure (p. 7)

However, until recently, the construct of sexual grooming has been used as a noun, verb, and an adjective (Burgess & Hartman, 2017) and there has not been a consistent definition of sexual grooming in the literature. Previously, the majority of definitions of sexual grooming have used the word “child” when referring to the victim, rendering it unclear whether adolescents could also experience sexual grooming. For example, one of the most cited definitions of sexual grooming proposed by Craven et al. (2006) defined sexual grooming as:

A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child, gaining the child’s compliance and maintaining the child’s secrecy to avoid disclosure. This process serves to strengthen the offender’s abusive pattern, as it may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions (p. 297)

Similarly, definitions across sexual grooming literature include preparing a child for abuse (Brackenridge, 2001; Craven et al., 2006; Gallagher, 1999; Winters & Jeglic, 2016;2017), trust development between the adult and the child (Berson, 2003; Craven et al., 2006; Gillespie, 2002; Salter, 1995), and maintenance that prevents the child from disclosing the abuse (Berson, 2003; Craven et al., 2006; Gallagher, 1999; Gillespie, 2002; Winters & Jeglic, 2016). More

recently Winters and colleagues (2020) developed the Sexual Grooming Model (SGM): A five stage model comprised of observable and measurable behaviors most commonly employed by child molesters including the aforementioned behaviors utilized in the sexual grooming literature definitions. The SGM has offered a more comprehensive view of what sexual grooming looks like and the process that takes place immediately before half of all CSA occurrences. During the first stage, the groomer identifies a vulnerable child (Brackenridge, 2001; van Dam, 2001). Some things they look for are attractiveness, innocence, trustfulness, and a lack of confidence (Elliott et al, 1995). The second stage the groomer seeks to separate the victim emotionally and physically from their parents and/or guardians (Winters & Jeglic, 2016). The third stage involves giving the child an abundance of attention, affection, recognition, and emotional support in order to gain their trust (Lanning, 2010). The fourth stage involves desensitizing a child to touch. This includes things like tickling, hugging, showering/bathing together, and play fighting (Howitt, 1995; Wyre, 1987). The fifth and final stage is maintenance. During this stage, the abuse has already happened. The abuser then continues the abuse avoiding detection through threatening, shaming, and/or guiltting the child (van Dam, 2001).

Adolescent Sexual Abuse and Sexual Grooming

According to the Department of Justice, victims ages 12-17 account for 15% of sexual assaults that take place annually in the United States. While there has been much research on sexual grooming, few researchers have taken adolescent sexual grooming into consideration. With technology being more easily accessible to adolescents today, most research involving adolescents and sexual grooming have shifted their focus from in-person sexual grooming to online sexual grooming. Online sexual grooming is the process in which an adult uses communication technologies to access and maintain a sexual interaction with a minor virtually,

physically, and/or both (Craven et al., 2006; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2016; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2018; Kloess et al., 2014; Smith, Thompson, and Davidson, 2014). Online sexual grooming is quite different from in-person sexual grooming. While there are similarities between in-person and online sexual grooming, there are key differences such as the way the perpetrator selects the victim. Perpetrators sit in chat rooms, observing the behaviors of the group and picking their victim. Typically, victim selection in online sexual grooming is based on accessibility, opportunity, and perceived vulnerability after engaging in private conversations to assess the previous factors listed (Winters et al., 2017). Once initial contact is made, trust is built, and sexual “feelers” are sent to assess how far the adolescent will let them go before the first meetup is requested.

With adolescents, perpetrators have easier access to their victims due to less supervision by parents as well as the utilization of additional tactics such as lowering their inhibitions by providing the adolescent with alcohol or other drugs (Winters et al., 2017). The end goal of all perpetrators when utilizing their online grooming strategies is to make contact with the minor in person and employ further in person sexual grooming tactics in order to ensure the sexual abuse occurs. Consequently, it is important to better understand the in-person sexual grooming strategies and tactics used by perpetrators and how they may lead to sexual abuse.

Identifying Sexual Grooming

To date, there have only been three empirical studies to see if and how well individuals identify grooming behaviors. Two studies, Bennett and O’Donohue (2020) and Winters and Jeglic (2017) are consistent with proposals stating sexual grooming behaviors are difficult to identify (Canter et al., 1998; Craven et al., 2006; Lanning, 2010). Part of the difficulty in identifying grooming is the fact that many behaviors used by perpetrators appear quite similar to

behaviors seen in normal adult–child relationships (Bennett & O’Donohue, 2014). In the Bennett and O’Donohue (2020) study, they examined whether individuals could be trained to better identify sexual grooming behaviors. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: (1) “experimental,” which trained participants to focus on behaviors and their context, (2) “treatment as usual” (TAU), which trained participants based on how they would learn about sexual grooming via the internet, and (3) “control,” which involved no training on sexual grooming. The results of this study found that even after training individuals on sexual grooming behaviors, they were still getting it wrong one-third of the time.

Similarly, the Winters and Jeglic (2017) study examined whether sexual grooming behaviors were recognizable and if so, which behaviors were most easily recognizable. Participants in this study were randomly assigned to one of six conditions. Each condition represented a stage from the SGM. The results of this study were consistent with that of the Bennett and O’Donohue (2020) in suggesting that sexual grooming behaviors are not easily recognizable and individuals are unable to identify potentially predatory behaviors.

In the Winters and Jeglic (2016) study, the researchers examined the hindsight bias in sexual grooming detection as well as if the relationship of the child molester to the victim is a factor in recognition of sexual grooming behaviors. The results of this study contradict the former two studies mentioned, finding that individuals were indeed able to recognize grooming behaviors. However, the ratings given by participants remained in the lower half of the scale (less than 50%), leaning towards “definitely not true” when asked about the character in the vignette being a child molester and/or sexually abusing the child in the vignette. Their findings suggested that although there was a significant difference in ratings given by participants between the control and experimental groups, participants were still unsure of the behaviors

presented as being something to worry about. It is important to note that in the Winters and Jeglic (2016;2017) studies the victims were prepubescent children. Further, while the Bennet and O'Donohue 2020 study depicted some adolescent sexual grooming scenarios, they were not analyzed separately from the child scenarios.

Victim Blaming in Child Sexual Abuse

Research has shown that factors such as age, sex, and relationship to the offender affect credibility and blame attribution in cases of CSA (Davies & Rogers, 2009; Esnard & Dumas, 2013; Rogers et al., 2007; Rubin & Thelen, 1996). In a study conducted by Rogers et al. (2007), researchers examined the victim's age, attractiveness, and abuse history as perception factors in CSA. The results of this study found that the victim's attractiveness and abuse history had no bearing on where individuals placed blame or culpability, but the victim's age did. The researchers found that between the two age groups (ten years old and 15 years old), the ten-year-old was found less culpable and had less blame placed on them than the 15-year-old did. The study suggested that due to the ten-year-old not having any prior sexual experiences, they were more believable than the 15-year-old who may have had prior sexual experiences and therefore knew the full extent of what was happening to them. Additionally, in a study conducted by Esnard and Dumas (2013), they examined the perceptions of male victim blaming in CSA. The researchers presented participants with a fictitious story of a child being sexually abused, manipulating the victim's age (seven years old or 12 years old), the victim's gender, and the perpetrator's gender. The results of their study found that male victims were attributed more blame than female victims in both the seven and 12 age conditions contradicting that of the Rogers et al. (2007) study that found the older the victim, the more blame that was placed on them.

The Current Study

Prior research in the field of sexual grooming and child sexual abuse have found that individuals are not good at recognizing sexual grooming behaviors, but there is a lack of research on how the age of the victim can affect recognition of sexual grooming behaviors. The purpose of this study was to compare sexual grooming recognition and accountability placement between scenarios involving adolescents versus children. Given that the majority of research on sexual grooming has focused primarily on children, we examined whether there are differences between the recognition of grooming behaviors in scenarios where the victim is an adolescent as opposed to a child. We also examined whether participants assigned more accountability to the victim in sexual grooming cases when the victim is an adolescent as opposed to a child. Based upon previous research it was hypothesized that: (1) participants in the child condition would have higher likelihood ratings than participants in the adolescent condition; (2) participants in the Non-grooming conditions would have lower identification scores than those in the Grooming conditions; (3) while participants would overall not hold the victims responsible for the abuse, more accountability would be placed on the victim in the adolescent condition than the child condition.

Materials and Methods

Participants

There were 548 participants in the study (319 males, 202 females, 2 gender neutral/non-conforming, 25 skipped) following the removal of those who failed the qualification and manipulation check (i.e., those who were not between the ages of 18 and 65, did not speak, write, and read English, as well as those who answered a basic question about the vignette incorrectly) $n = 184$. All participants were over the age of 18 and were recruited from Amazon Mechanical

Turk, an online crowd sourcing marketplace. Participants received 1USD for their participation in this study. On average, participants were between 25 and 34 years old and the majority were White (n=331, 63.05%) followed by Asian (n=117, 22.29%), Black (n=38, 7.24%), Latinx (n=28, 5.33%), Another race (n=8, 1.52%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (n=3, .57%). Further characteristics of the sample are described in Table 1.

Demographic Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to collect basic demographic information, which included age, gender identity, and racial/ethnicity identification. In addition, participants were also asked if they have ever been a victim of CSA or know someone who has been a victim of CSA. This questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

Sexual Grooming Vignettes

Using a random number generator, each participant was randomly assigned to one of four conditions where they read one of four, two-page, double spaced vignettes. These vignettes were adapted from the vignettes used in the Winters and Jeglic (2016; 2017) studies. All of the vignettes described a dance teacher named Robert who taught ballet to a young girl named Julie. The vignettes described sexual grooming behaviors commonly used by child molesters according to the extensive literature written on the sexual grooming process (Craven et al., 2006; Elliott et al., 1995; Lanning, 2010; van Dam, 2001). Additional behaviors were added to the vignettes reflecting the 42 behaviors that were identified as representative of sexual grooming by 18 experts in the field (Winters et al., 2020).

The four vignette conditions were as follows: (1) Grooming: Adolescent; (2) Grooming: Child; (3) Non-grooming: Adolescent; (4) Non-grooming: Child. In the Grooming: Adolescent and Grooming: Child vignettes, Robert utilized numerous tactics from all five stages of the SGM

(i.e., selecting a vulnerable victim, gaining access, trust development, and desensitizing to touch). Examples of sexual grooming behaviors used in the vignettes included: Julie lacks confidence and lives with her divorced mother (i.e., victim selection), Robert volunteers at Boys and Girls Clubs (i.e., gaining access), Robert buys gifts for Julie (i.e., trust development), and Robert fix Julie's posture by pushing her chest up and out (i.e., desensitization to touch).

The non-grooming conditions mirrored the grooming conditions with all of the sexual grooming behaviors removed. Examples of the non-grooming behaviors used in the vignettes included: Julie is confident and her parents are happily married, Robert volunteers at various retirement facilities, and Robert asks the other students to show Julie the proper posture.

Additionally, participants were asked to read a follow up, three sentence long vignette stating Robert was convicted of child molestation and the events included in Julie's testimony. These vignettes are included in Appendix B.

Likelihood Scale

After reading the vignette, participants were asked to "Estimate the likelihood that the following statements are true about Robert" (0 = definitely not true, 100 = definitely true), this section of the survey included ten "filler" items adapted from the Winters and Jeglic (2016) study (e.g., Robert is wealthy, Robert is depressed, Robert is a father). The statement of interest was "Robert is a child molester." Next, participants were also asked, "Estimate the likelihood of the following scenarios happening in the future" (0 = definitely not true, 100 = definitely true). This section of the survey, like the first, included an additional ten "filler" items (e.g., Robert will get divorced, Robert will stop teaching ballet, Robert will become an alcoholic). The statement of interest in this section was, "Robert will sexually abuse Julie." These two dependent variables

will be referred to as “Child Molester” and “Sexually Abuse.” All questions are included in Appendix C.

Accountability Questions

A set of five statements presented to all four conditions after reading the follow-up vignette to assess where the participants placed accountability. These statements were adapted from the behaviors identified in the sexual grooming vignettes. Participants were presented with five “or” statements and asked with which statement they most agreed with (e.g., Julie shouldn’t have accepted Robert’s gifts OR Robert shouldn’t have given Julie gifts). These questions are included in Appendix D.

Procedure

Participants were informed that they were going to take part in a research study regarding their perceptions of individuals based on a short vignette. The study was only available online via a survey. The participants first read the informed consent and if they agreed to participate, they were instructed to indicate consent by clicking “next.” Participants were then randomly assigned to one of four vignettes. They were instructed to read carefully and take as much time as they needed. After participants read the vignette, they were asked to rate the likelihood of 22 statements. Next, participants were presented with the follow up vignette and asked an additional five accountability questions. Finally, participants were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire and read the debriefing form which provided information to mental health services if needed. The survey took approximately seven minutes to complete and participants were given 1USD for their time.

Results

The data were not normally distributed and violated the assumption of normality. Consequently, like Winters and Jeglic (2017), this study used the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H test to analyze the data. A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted for each dependent variable (i.e., Child Molester; Sexually Abuse) in order to determine if there were differences between the four groups (i.e., Grooming: Adolescent, Grooming: Child, Non-grooming: Adolescent, Non-grooming: Child). The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in Child Molester ratings between the Grooming and Non-grooming conditions, $\chi^2(1, N = 548) = 16.200, p < .001$, with a mean rank Child Molester rating of 301.39 for Grooming and 247.61 for Non-grooming. The Kruskal-Wallis H test conducted for the Adolescent and Child conditions for Child Molester ratings showed that there were no statically significant differences between the two, $\chi^2(1, N = 548) = 3.214, p < .073$. The third Kruskal-Wallis H test conducted showed that there was a statistically significant difference in Sexually Abuse ratings between the Grooming and Non-grooming conditions, $\chi^2(1, N=548) = 16.496, p < .001$, with a mean rank Sexually Abuse rating of 301.62 for Grooming and 247.38 for Non-grooming. Similarly, the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in Sexually Abuse ratings between the Adolescent and Child conditions, $\chi^2(1, N = 548) = 8.505, p < .004$, with a mean rank Sexually Abuse rating of 293.84 for Adolescent and 254.88 for Child.

In addition, a Chi-Square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between Age and Accountability Placement, $\chi^2(1, N = 524) = .022, p < .883$, therefore no further tests were conducted. Overall, in both the adolescent and child conditions, participants placed about 33.3% of the blame on the victim and 66.6% of the blame on the perpetrator. See Table 4 for detailed responses to each accountability statement.

Discussion

This study is the first to examine whether there are differences in the recognition of sexual grooming behaviors when the victim is a child versus an adolescent. Overall, our findings suggest that the age of the victim has no effect on recognition of a child molester and their sexual grooming behaviors, but had a significant effect on recognition of possible sexual abuse occurring in the future. Our findings further suggest that age does not impact the placement of accountability in cases of CSA, meaning that older victims are not viewed as more culpable in their abuse than younger victims by the general public.

As hypothesized, we found that there was a significant difference in child molester and sexually abuse ratings between the Grooming and Non-grooming conditions. However, much like the Winters and Jeglic (2016, 2017) studies, the ratings were not overwhelmingly high, suggesting that sexual grooming behaviors continue to be difficult to recognize despite recent media attention in cases like Jeffery Epstein, R.Kelly, Woody Allen, and Keith Raniere. As the literature has suggested, sexual grooming behaviors are likely to be difficult to identify due to their seemingly normal and innocent appearance to those who would never suspect such predatory behavior from the perpetrator (Canter et al. 1998; Craven et al. 2006; Lanning 2010; Winters & Jeglic 2016; Winters & Jeglic 2017).

Contrary to our hypothesis, the study found no significant differences in Child Molester ratings when the victim was portrayed as a child compared to when the victim was portrayed as an adolescent. However, it is important to note that there was a difference in Sexually Abuse ratings between the two age conditions, with participants giving higher likelihood ratings in the adolescent condition. The findings between the two dependent variables suggests that the participants believed Robert, to some extent, could be a child molester and the adolescent was more at risk for being sexually abused by Robert than the child was in the vignettes.

The results from this study contrast those of Winters and Jeglic (2017) who found that there were no significant differences in likelihood ratings for Child Molester or Sexually Abuse for those in the Non-grooming condition compared to that of the All Grooming condition. These differences can likely be attributed to the absence of certain sexual grooming behaviors that were included in the present study as well as the Winters and Jeglic (2016) study such as the perpetrator offering the victim a ride home.

It was also hypothesized that while participants would overall not hold the victims responsible for the abuse, more accountability would be placed on the victim in the adolescent condition than the child condition. The results of the study suggested that age does not impact where individuals place accountability (i.e., the victim versus the perpetrator) in instances of sexual grooming. Our findings further show that whether the victim is six years old or sixteen years old, individuals believe the victim played a role in their abuse and according to the accountability statements, “should’ve done this or shouldn’t have done that” (e.g., Julie shouldn’t have accepted a ride home from Robert, Julie should’ve quit ballet). These findings contradict other studies such as (Davies & Rogers, 2009; Rogers et al., 2007), who both found that adolescents had more blame placed on them than children. One possible explanation could be that the previous studies conducted on victim blaming in CSA are now almost 15 years old. Since the previous research has been conducted, movements such as “#metoo,” have shifted the general public’s view of sexual abuse in that victims are no longer being looked at as responsible for what happened to them. Because of this, there has been more recognition of the negative impact victim blaming has on the victim as well as the court system.

Overall the findings of this study showed that participants were able to recognize sexual grooming behaviors with higher likelihood ratings in the Grooming condition compared to the

Non-grooming condition. However, the means were in the lower half of the scale (less than 50%) suggesting that participants were not entirely sure if Robert was a child molester nor were they entirely sure that Robert was going to sexually abuse Julie. These means were consistent with the those found in the Winters and Jeglic (2016) study.

Limitations

The present study had several limitations. First, this study focused on the teacher-student relationship between a male adult and female child/adolescent. It is suggested that further research look into different types of adult-child relationships between different combinations of sexes. There is a strong possibility that sexual grooming behaviors can look different across these relationships and sex combinations to lay people (e.g., male pastor and male student, female babysitter and male child, etc.). Due to the study being conducted online via a survey, an additional limitation includes individuals not feeling encouraged to provide honest and accurate answers. Further, this study is the third to use the sexual grooming vignette outline that has yet to be validated due to a lack of a comprehensive definition of sexual grooming and the exact behaviors involved in the construct. Additionally, this research did not examine if demographic variables have an impact on how well someone can recognize sexually grooming behaviors and the literature would benefit from subsequent research examining for a possible third demographic variable. Lastly, a limitation in this study as well as the sexual grooming literature is that many sexual grooming behaviors are ordinary prosocial behavior not always followed by sexual abuse. It is difficult to identify sexual grooming behaviors as there is no data showing a baseline for how often these same behaviors occur to minors who have not been sexually abused. Although research has found that sexual grooming behaviors increase in frequency and in clusters, without a baseline, there is no clear way to decipher the “good behavior” from the “bad

behavior.” Thus posing an issue with keeping adults engaged in children’s lives by helping members of their community while simultaneously protecting children.

Implications

Although further research is needed to examine adolescent sexual grooming and the identification of the sexual grooming behaviors that take place, this research is a stepping stone in discovering how adolescent sexual grooming and ultimately CSA is viewed by the general public. More research is needed to determine if adolescent sexual grooming is easier or more difficult to identify than child sexual grooming. Having this information could help with detection and prevention of CSA. The results of this study imply that adolescent sexual grooming is no more and no less recognizable than child sexual grooming and individuals have difficulty with identifying potentially dangerous behaviors no matter the age of the victim. The low ratings found in this study could possibly be attributed to a lack of knowledge of sexual grooming and the SGM. It would be beneficial to the general public to have the SGM taught to those who have children or work in child related fields such as a teacher, pediatrician, daycare center worker, etc. It is also suggested that a replication of the Bennett and O’Donahue (2020) study utilizing the recently proposed SGM as a learning tool in order to determine if this model better helps the general public with their identification of sexual grooming behaviors. Additionally, adolescents can experience sexual grooming both on and offline. There is a need for more research focused on adolescents to discover if the sexual grooming tactics utilized by sexual abusers differ from what is utilized with children so that it can be detected sooner and adolescents can be taught what to look out for when speaking with people they know as well as strangers. Lastly, further education is needed to help people understand the manipulation behind

sexual grooming and that the victim does not play any role in the events that take place thereafter.

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Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

		n	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	319	60.76%
	Female	202	38.48%
	Gender Neutral	2	0.38%
	Prefer not to answer	2	0.38%
	Total n	525	
Age Range	18-24	23	4.37%
	25-34	229	43.54%
	35-44	161	30.61%
	45-54	66	12.55%
	55-65	47	8.94%
	Total n	526	

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for condition by the child molester and sexually abuse variables.

Condition	Total N	Child Molester M(SD)	Sexually Abuse M(SD)
Grooming: Adolescent	146	32(30)	32(32)
Grooming: Child	128	28(32)	25(31)
Non-grooming: Adolescent	130	21(29)	21(28)
Non-grooming: Child	144	20(29)	18(28)

Note. The table shows the mean likelihood ratings (1-100) and standard deviations for the two dependent variables “Robert is a child molester” and “Robert will sexually abuse Julie.”

Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis H test by grouping variables of grooming and age.

	Child Molester		Sexually Abuse	
	Grooming	Age	Grooming	Age
Kruskal-Wallis H	16.200	3.214	16.496	8.505
df	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig	.001	.073	.001	.004

Note. The table shows the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test between the grooming and non-grooming groups and the adolescent and child groups for the two dependent variables “Robert is a child molester” and “Robert will sexually abuse Julie.”

Table 4. Frequency by age by accountability question.

	Adolescent				Child			
	Robert		Julie		Robert		Julie	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Ride	160	60.4%	105	39.6%	153	58.89%	106	41.11%
Secret	177	66.32%	90	33.68%	164	63.17%	95	36.83%
Touching	205	76.76%	62	23.24%	200	77.63%	57	22.37%
Quitting	204	76.36%	63	23.64%	196	75.4%	63	24.6%
Gifts	162	60.95%	104	39.05%	160	61.5%	99	38.5%

Appendix A: Demographic Scale

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Gender Neutral/Non-Conforming
 - d. I prefer not to answer

2. What is your age?
 - a. 18 – 29 years' old
 - b. 30 – 41 years' old
 - c. 42 – 53 years' old
 - d. 54 – 65 years' old

3. What is your race/ethnicity?
 - a. White
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. Asian
 - d. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - f. Two or More Races
 - g. Other

4. What is the highest degree or level of education that you have completed?
 - a. Some High School
 - b. High School Diploma
 - c. Some College

- d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. GED or Vocational Training
 - g. Other
5. Which of the following best describes your annual household income?
- a. Less than \$20,000
 - b. \$20,000 — \$40,000
 - c. \$40,001 — \$60,000
 - d. \$60,001 — \$80,000
 - e. \$80,001 — \$100,000
 - f. Over \$100,000
6. Have you ever been a victim of child sexual abuse?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I prefer not to answer
7. Do you know someone who has been a victim of child sexual abuse?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I prefer not to answer

Appendix B: Vignettes

Grooming: Adolescent

Lisa Sharp is a 40-year-old, divorced mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a waitress at a local diner, and often takes on extra shifts to earn money to support her family. Lisa has a 16-year-old daughter named Julie, who has recently joined a dance studio to learn ballet. Julie is not very confident and has low self-esteem, and is rarely included in activities with her peers.

The ballet teacher, Robert, owns the studio Julie goes to. Robert and his wife moved to the community three years ago when the ballet studio was put up for sale. Since then, he has become a respected member of the community. Robert volunteers at Boys and Girls clubs and organizes games and dance recitals for the teens. He has created community functions to raise money for underprivileged teenagers in the community. Robert enjoys spending time at the local mall and going out to ice cream with his students. Robert is always willing to help the parents of the students at his studio. If Lisa is held late at work, Robert will take Julie home and stay with her until Lisa gets home.

Parents consider Robert to be a great ballet teacher who really cares about the teens. Before rehearsals, Robert chats with the teens about music and pop culture. As practice begins, it is clear the teens are all eager to dance and learn new ballet techniques. Robert encourages the teens, telling them they are special and he really cares about them. Robert even buys the teens ribbons for their shoes and other small gifts with his own money.

Julie is nervous about the upcoming ballet recital and knows she needs more practice but cannot afford any extra lessons. Robert hears of Julie's home situation and offers to give her discounted private lessons to help prepare her. Robert tells Julie that she must keep the lessons a

secret from everyone else so the parents of his other students don't get upset about the discount.

Julie's biggest problem as a ballerina is her posture. During their private lessons, Robert helps fix her posture by pushing her chest up and out so she stands tall and proud. After several hands on lessons with Robert, he is so impressed by her improvement that he gifts her brand new ballet shoes. Julie is thrilled and Robert opens his arms for a long embrace.

The ballet recital goes off without a hitch and all of Robert's students are excited for their next show. Impressed with the production, more parents sign up their teens for classes at Robert's ballet studio.

The town of Amity is happy to have Robert as a member of the community. His dedication to the teens of the town is valued immensely. Everyone looks forward to seeing what Robert will contribute to the community in the future.

Grooming: Child

Lisa Sharp is a 40-year-old, divorced mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a waitress at a local diner, and often takes on extra shifts to earn money to support her family. Lisa has a 6-year-old daughter named Julie, who has recently joined a dance studio to learn ballet. Julie is not very confident and has low self-esteem, and is rarely included in activities with her peers.

The ballet teacher, Robert, owns the studio Julie goes to. Robert and his wife moved to the community three years ago when the ballet studio was put up for sale. Since then, he has become a respected member of the community. Robert volunteers at Boys and Girls clubs and organizes games and dance recitals for the children. He has created community functions to raise money for underprivileged children in the community. Robert enjoys spending time at the local

mall and going out to ice cream with his students. Robert is always willing to help the parents of the students at his studio. If Lisa is held late at work, Robert will take Julie home and stay with her until Lisa gets home.

Parents consider Robert to be a great ballet teacher who really cares about the children. Before rehearsals, Robert chats with the children about music and pop culture. As practice begins, it is clear the children are all eager to dance and learn new ballet techniques. Robert encourages the children, telling them they are special and he really cares about them. Robert even buys the children ribbons for their shoes and other small gifts with his own money.

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The ballet recital goes off without a hitch and all of Robert's students are excited for their next show. Impressed with the production, more parents sign up their children for classes at Robert's ballet studio.

The town of Amity is happy to have Robert as a member of the community. His dedication to the teens of the town is valued immensely. Everyone looks forward to seeing what Robert will contribute to the community in the future.

Non-grooming: Adolescent

Lisa Sharp is a 40-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a manager at a local restaurant, and often takes on extra shifts to earn money to support her family. Lisa has a 16-year-old daughter named Julie, who has recently joined a dance studio to learn ballet. Although a beginner, Julie is one of the best ballerinas in her class and often gets to dance lead. Julie is very confident and has high self-esteem, and is always included in activities with her peers.

The ballet teacher, Robert, owns the studio Julie goes to. Robert and his wife moved to the community three years ago when the ballet studio was put up for sale. Since then, he has become a respected member of the community. Robert volunteers at various retirement facilities and loves to organize games like bingo for them to play. He has also created community functions to raise money for the homeless in the community. Robert enjoys spending time at the local park and going out to dinner with his wife. Robert is always willing to help the parents of the students at his studio. If Lisa is held late at work, Robert will ask other parents to take Julie home and drop her off at the neighbors until Lisa gets home.

Parents consider Robert to be a great ballet teacher who really cares about the teens. Before rehearsals, Robert makes up new routines while the teens chat about music and pop culture. As practice begins, it is clear the teens are all eager to dance and learn new ballet techniques. Robert encourages the teens, telling them when they nail a routine or put in a lot of effort. Robert even buys the teens ribbons for their shoes with his own money.

Julie is nervous about the upcoming ballet recital and knows she needs more practice so she signs up for extra classes. Robert hears of Julie's sign up, and tells her she must get her parents' permission first for extra group lessons.

Julie's biggest problem as a ballerina is her posture. During the group lessons, Robert asks one of the other ballerinas to show her the proper form so she stands tall and proud. After several extra group lessons with Robert, he is so impressed by the group's improvement he gifts everyone new scrunchies for their hair. Julie is thrilled and Robert gives her a high five.

The ballet recital goes off without a hitch and all of Robert's students are excited for their next show. Impressed with the production, more parents sign up their teens for classes at Robert's ballet studio.

The town of Amity is happy to have Robert as a member of the community. His dedication to the teens of the town is valued immensely. Everyone looks forward to seeing what Robert will contribute to the community in the future.

Non-grooming: Child

Lisa Sharp is a 40-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a manager at a local restaurant, and often takes on extra shifts to earn money to support her family. Lisa has a 6-year-old daughter named Julie, who has recently joined a dance studio to learn ballet. Although a beginner, Julie is one of the best ballerinas in her class and often gets to dance lead. Julie is very confident and has high self-esteem, and is always included in activities with her peers.

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The ballet recital goes off without a hitch and all of Robert's students are excited for their next show. Impressed with the production, more parents sign up their children for classes at Robert's ballet studio.

The town of Amity is happy to have Robert as a member of the community. His dedication to the children of the town is valued immensely. Everyone looks forward to seeing what Robert will contribute to the community in the future.

Follow-up Vignette

Two weeks after Julie's ballet recital, Robert was convicted on 14 counts of child molestation. Amongst his accusers were students who attended his ballet classes, including Julie. In Julie's testimony, she spoke about how Robert would drive her home, buy her gifts, how Robert would touch her chest often to fix her posture, and about how Robert asked her to keep secrets between just the two of them.

Appendix C: Recognition Questions

1. Estimate the likelihood that the following statements are true about Robert: 0-100% (0= definitely not true, 100- definitely true)

1. Robert is wealthy
2. Robert is a domestic abuser
3. Robert is embezzling money
4. Robert is also an English teacher
5. Robert is depressed
6. Robert is a child molester
7. Robert is a father
8. Robert is an alcoholic
9. Robert is obsessive compulsive
10. Robert is a wine enthusiast
11. Robert is an upstanding member of the community

2. Estimate the likelihood of the following scenarios happening in the future: 0-100% (0= definitely will not occur, 100- definitely will occur)

1. Robert will become depressed
2. Robert will get divorced
3. Robert will have children with his wife
4. Robert will stop teaching ballet
5. Robert will abuse his wife
6. Robert will sexually abuse Julie

7. Robert Will embezzle money
8. Robert will receive a "volunteer of the year" award
9. Robert will become an alcoholic
10. Robert will have an award-winning ballet studio
11. Robert will win the lottery Robert will start a nonprofit organization

Appendix D: Accountability Questions

Please select the statement you most agree with:

Julie shouldn't have accepted a ride home from Robert.

OR Robert shouldn't have offered to give Julie a ride home.

Julie shouldn't have kept Robert's secret.

OR Robert shouldn't have asked her to keep secrets.

Robert shouldn't have touched Julie

OR Julie should have stopped Robert from touching her.

Robert should've quit teaching.

OR Julie should've quit ballet.

Julie shouldn't have accepted gifts from Robert.

OR Robert shouldn't have offered Julie gifts.