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PARENTAL ABILITIES TO RECOGNIZE PREDATORY CSA STRATEGIES

Groomed: Examining Parental Abilities to Recognize Predatory Strategies of Child Sexual Abusers

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Abstract

Sexual grooming is a manipulative process that is common in cases of child sexual abuse (CSA). Identifying sexual grooming behaviors holds potential to help reduce occurrences of CSA and increase disclosure rates. Yet, the few studies examining abilities to detect these behaviors have indicated that recognizing sexual grooming is difficult to do. Given gaps in the current grooming recognition literature, and the influential role parents play in sexual child abuse prevention this study reexamined adult's abilities to recognize sexual grooming behaviors with a special focus on the impact of parental status. Differences in abilities to recognize grooming behaviors associated with specific stages of the process as identified in the Sexual Grooming Model (Winters et al., 2020) were also examined. The data resulting from a survey of 865 participants (420 parents and 445 nonparents) indicated that parents were better able to recognize behaviors associated with the Post-Abuse Maintenance stage of the Sexual Grooming Model, compared to nonparents. Surprisingly, parents performed less well than nonparents when associating behaviors related to the Trust Development stage of the grooming process with CSA. In examining the parent group alone, parents were found to be better able to recognize grooming behaviors related to the Desensitization to Touch stage or when all stages of the grooming process were presented together. Despite these statistically significant differences, both groups displayed low levels of associations between grooming behaviors and CSA on average. Ultimately, the findings of this study indicate a need for increased education for both parents and nonparents about the grooming process and its relation to preventing CSA.

Keywords: child sexual abuse, parents, sexual grooming

Introduction

An estimated one in four girls and one in thirteen boys experience sexual abuse during their childhood (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). This traumatic experience can have severe psychological implications for the victim, including increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicidality, and sexual revictimization (Lahav et al., 2020). Chronic abuse perpetrated by a family member or acquaintance can further increase the severity of these consequences (Molnar et al., 2001). Resultingly, CSA comes with a heavy financial toll. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) reported that the lifetime economic burden of CSA in 2015 was estimated to be 9.3 billion dollars in the United States.

Several factors make the precise prevalence of CSA difficult to determine. For instance, while estimates consistently show that girls are more likely to experience CSA compared to boys, exact findings of gender prevalence vary (Bolen, 1999; Briere, 2003; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005; Finkelhor, 1994; van Dam, 2001; World Health Organization, 2020). The tendency for boys to disclose abuse less often than girls may contribute to an inaccurate understanding of gender-based prevalence (Briere, 2003; Finkelhor et al., 2011; Lev-Wiesel & First, 2018; McAlinden, 2006). The rates of CSA are also likely to be underestimated as victim disclosure rates in general are consistently low and, unsurprisingly, offenders are unlikely to report their own crimes (van Dam, 2001). Children of varying age groups have been found to be victims of sexual abuse (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005) however, those between the ages of 7 and 13 years old are most vulnerable to be selected as victims (Finkelhor, 1994). Overall, victims have been found to have a mean age of 11.3 years old, with males facing greater risk when they are young while females face increased risk in adolescence (Hassan et al., 2015).

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Given the severity of the problem of CSA, a focus on prevention is paramount. One possible avenue toward prevention is identification of potential abuse before it occurs. Previously, it was estimated that 45% of CSA cases involve sexual grooming (Canter et al., 1998). However, more recent studies report as many as 99.1% adults CSA survivors indicating experiencing at least one sexual grooming behavior occurring during the process of their abuse (Winters & Jeglic, In Press). While definitions of sexual grooming have varied (i.e., Conte, 1984; Craven, 2006, Groth, 1979), Winters and colleagues (2021) 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)

Expanding the public understanding of sexual grooming could contribute to both prevention and investigative efforts. Further, McAlinden (2012) found that acts of community and familial grooming can influence adults to be less likely to believe reports from children. So, better understanding of these processes, behaviors, and tactics could allow allegations of abuse to be more readily believed (Canter et al., 1998).

Based on a review of the sexual grooming literature including sources describing in-person grooming behaviors enacted by offenders, in 2017, Winters and Jeglic proposed the Sexual Grooming Model (SGM). Winters and colleagues (2020) then conducted a content validation of the SGM, finding support for the five stages of the grooming process including:

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victim selection, gaining access to and isolation of the child, trust development, desensitization to sexual content and physical touch, and post-abuse maintenance behaviors. Importantly, over two thirds CSA survivors by female perpetrators report experiencing at least one behavior from each of these stages of the SGM (Winters et al., In Submission). A sample of undergraduate students with histories of CSA reported experiencing grooming behaviors at each stage of the SGM (Winters & Jeglic, In Press). However prevalent these behaviors may be in the context of grooming, it is important to acknowledge that these behaviors are not intrinsically indicative of abuse.

The first stage, *Victim Selection*, consists of risk items related to characteristics of both the child and their family. Vulnerable children from families who with difficult relationships and non-nuclear structures are more at risk for being selected for CSA (Assink et al., 2019). Research has identified that certain characteristics of the child, such as being trusting, having low self-esteem (Elliot et al., 1995), or lacking of friends (Craven, 2006), may also contribute to higher likelihood of being selected as a victim. Approximately 91% of participants in Winters and Jeglic's (In Press) study reported experiencing at least one behavior from this stage.

The next stage, *Gaining Access and Isolation*, describes how an offender engages in behaviors to gain access to a child and isolate them from their peers or protective adults. This process can include manipulating the family or community by placing themselves in positions where they are likely to be trusted (Craven, 2006). For example, they may seek out work in either paid or volunteer positions in organizations that serve children. Thus, they are more able to access a child without drawing suspicion. In Winters and Jeglic's (In Press) study, this stage produced the smallest proportion of participants who reported experienced at least one behavior (64.9%), compared to other stages of the SGM.

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The *Trust Development* stage consists of behaviors through which the offender develops trust with child in order to increase cooperation and decrease likelihood of disclosure (Craven, 2006). Trust development behaviors may involve making the child feel special by providing rewards or displaying favoritism, while some offenders may even offer drugs or alcohol (Bennet & O'Donohue, 2014). During this stage, offenders may also further groom the family to gain their trust (Elliot et al., 1995). Undergraduates with histories of CSA were found to be most likely to endorse having experienced at least one behavior from this stage (93.9%) compared to the other stages of the SGM (Winters & Jeglic, In Press).

During the *Desensitization to Sexual Content and Physical Touch* stage, perpetrators may engage in behaviors more closely related to actual sexual behaviors in order to desensitize the child to physical and sexual content before the abuse begins. For example, the literature indicates that in these situations, sexual content can be normalized by inappropriate language, telling dirty jokes, or showing the child pornography (McAlinden, 2006). Nonsexual physical touch can also gradually increase during this stage through activities such as wrestling, tickling, or hugging (Craven, 2006; McAlinden, 2006). Ninety three percent of participants in Winters and Jeglic's (In Press) study reported experiencing at least one behavior from this stage.

After sexual abuse has occurred, offenders may engage in behaviors aimed at maintaining the child's compliance and preventing disclosure. This stage is referred to as *Post-Abuse Maintenance*. Research has indicated that offenders may engage in behaviors intended to persuade the child to keep secrets, such as threatening, bribing, or warning the child that disclosure could be harmful to themselves or to their family (Craven, 2006). Approximately 83% of the undergraduate participants in Winters and Jeglic's (In Press) study reported experiencing at least one behavior associated with this stage.

Parental Roles in Grooming Prevention

As parents are generally the gatekeepers to their children, they are possibly the most important group to target when developing and implementing effective CSA prevention efforts. Parenting methods and the cultivation of the parent-child relationship are highly influential factors in the development of a child's personality, confidence level, as well as emotional and behavioral patterns (Mendelson, 2015). These are characteristics that child sex offenders assess when selecting victims (Winters et al., 2020). In some cases, parents may be able to use parenting methods to influence these characteristics in their child, therefore reducing the child's risk of being targeted. Further, parent-focused interventions have been found to be effective for CSA prevention (Mendelson, 2015). Most importantly for research related to identifying grooming behaviors, their role as guardians give parents primary authority in making decisions about who is allowed access to their child.

Historically, prevention strategies have placed the burden of protection on the children themselves (McAlinden, 2012; van Dam, 2001). However, recently expectations have shifted toward encouraging adults to take primary responsibility as protectors (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018). These cultural shifts have inspired research related to how parents can best protect their children from sexual abuse.

Research indicates that while parents do demonstrate good knowledge regarding CSA and its risk factors, many parents continue to base their prevention efforts on assumptions that strangers are more likely to perpetrate offenses (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Walsh, 2012). This has been demonstrated across multiple studies, confirming that parents emphasize stranger danger narratives in their prevention efforts (Chen, 2007; Collins, 1996; Deblinger, 2010; Rudolph et al., 2018; Wurtele et al., 1992). Several studies examining parental roles in

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CSA prevention have found that use of specific parenting styles (Collins, 1996; Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018) and discussion-based techniques are prevention strategies most often reported by parents (Babatsikos & Miles, 2015; Collins, 1996; Ige, 2011; Walsh, 2012; Xie, 2016).

Further, one study found that a vast majority (94.1%) of convicted child molesters were not on the sex offender registry at the time of their offense (Sandler et. al., 2008). Thus, prevention efforts that rely on the registry are less protective than those focusing on identifying sexual abusers who have not yet been recognized by the criminal justice system. Because sexual grooming is highly prevalent in CSA cases, applying abilities to identify these behaviors holds promise as an effective prevention strategy. However, the extent to which adults are able to do this is currently understudied.

With the benefit of hindsight, individuals are better able to identify grooming behaviors related to physical touch and isolation of the child, compared to other grooming-related behaviors (Winters & Jeglic, 2016). While some research has hypothesized that recognizing signs of CSA and grooming is difficult to accomplish prospectively (Craven, 2006; McElvaney, 2020), the limited research that has empirically tested this hypothesis has shown varied findings. Research using undergraduate student samples has found that individuals are unable to identify behaviors belonging to any stage of the SGM (Winters & Jeglic, 2017). However, because Winters and Jeglic's study did not examine the parental status of its participants, the findings are less relevant for real-world situations where recognition may be useful. In another study examining adult awareness of grooming behaviors, Rudolph and Zimmer-Gembeck (2018) found that parents in particular do possess sufficient understanding of the family traits that put a child at risk to be selected as a victim.

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Several factors could explain why recognizing the grooming process is so difficult. First, even if parents are aware of what sexual grooming looks like, those who have long accepted the presence of an offender in their child's life may face cognitive dissonance if they do begin to notice concerning interactions between their child and the offender. In turn, this may reduce their ability to detect inappropriate adult behaviors (Craven, 2006). Secondly, many of the behaviors associated with sexual grooming are also characteristic of normative adult-child interactions when abusive intent is absent. Some behaviors associated with grooming, such as physical touch, can be positive components to healthy adult-child relationships. Further, even more inappropriate behaviors, such as telling dirty jokes, are not always indicative of future sexual abuse. While increased understandings of these behaviors as being associated with sexual grooming could benefit preventative efforts, protective adults should also be aware of the potential for false positives. Behaviors associated with grooming should therefore be treated as red flags for adults in protective roles, rather than absolute predictors of sexual abuse.

Current Study

Currently, no study has empirically examined parental abilities to recognize the behaviors identified by Winters and colleagues (2020) as being related to sexual grooming. Previous studies (Winters & Jeglic, 2016, 2017) have relied on undergraduate student samples, thereby limiting the applicability of their findings. The current study had several aims. First, it aimed to address the limitations of previous research by using a sample that incorporates both parents and nonparents to assess abilities to recognize grooming behaviors while replicating methodological features used by Winters & Jeglic (2017). Here, we hoped to better understand the differences in ease of recognition of the overall grooming process as well as the respective stages of the SGM (Winters et al., 2020). This study also aimed to understand the degree to which perceived

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abilities to recognize sexual reflected actual performance. First, parents and nonparents were compared to assess recognition abilities. Then, the abilities of participants within the parent-only sample were individually examined. In doing so, we aimed to build on the previous literature in hopes of clarifying the goals for effective CSA prevention. Parents are more prone to seek out information related to child rearing. Therefore, they may be more likely to engage with CSA prevention literature, becoming more familiar with the concept of sexual grooming. Because of these tendencies, we hypothesized that parents would be better able to recognize grooming behaviors as compared to non-parents. Further, findings from previous research (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Winters & Jeglic, 2016) informed our hypothesis that participants would be better able to identify grooming behaviors that involve touch and isolation as well as characteristics associated with victim selection.

Methods

Participants

An a priori power analysis was conducted (effect size $f = .15$, Power = .80, $\alpha = 0.5$, groups = 14) to determine that a total sample size of 812 participants would provide adequate power for the intended analyses. After excluding participants who either did not pass the human verification ($n = 7$) and attentional checks ($n = 318$) or did not provide likelihood ratings relevant to the purpose of the study (i.e., “John is a child molester” and “John will sexually abuse Robbie”) ($n = 51$), the sample consisted of 865 total participants – 420 parents and 445 non-parents. Participants were recruited online via Amazon Mechanical Turk, an online crowdsourcing platform, to participate in a study entitled “Effect of Parental Status on Perception” in exchange for one dollar (1 USD).

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Participants ranged in age from 18 – 65 years old, with the modal age falling between 30 - 41 years old. The sample consisted of 418 male participants (48.3%), 398 female participants (46.0%), 5 gender neutral/nonconforming participants (0.6%), and 44 participants who did not report their gender identity (5.1%). The sample included 45 Hispanic/Latinx participants (5.2%), 110 African American/Black participants (12.7%), 63 Asian participants (7.3%), 19 Native American/Alaskan Native participants (2.2%), 575 White participants (66.5%), 15 participants who identified as “Other” (1.7%), and 38 participants (4.4%) who did not provide their race/ethnicity. Table 1 specifies the demographic characteristics of the parent and nonparent groups, as well as information exclusively related to parents.

Materials

Sexual Grooming Vignettes

Participants from both the parent and nonparent group were randomly assigned to read to one of seven vignettes using a random number generator. In each vignette a situation is depicted involving an adult character, John, a coach for a local youth boys’ baseball team and a child character, one of the team’s players, Robbie. These vignettes are based on those used by Winters and Jeglic (2016; 2017) and have been updated to include behaviors identified with the five stages of the SGM (Winters et al., 2020). These materials have been reviewed for accuracy by experts in the field of sex offender research.

Aside from the elements that remain constant between the conditions, such as names and professions, the vignettes differ in their content to reflect the following conditions. First, the “All Grooming Stages” condition combines various behaviors associated with the sexual grooming of children (Winters et al., 2020). A second condition, “Nongrooming”, does not include these associated behaviors. The additional five conditions, “Victim Selection”, “Gaining Access and

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Isolation”, “Trust Development”, “Desensitizing to touch”, and “Post-Abuse Maintenance”, all include behaviors that are associated with respective stages of the SGM (Winters et al., 2020).

Likelihood ratings

After reading the vignette, participants were asked to “Estimate the likelihood that the following statements are true about John” (0 = definitely not true, 100 = definitely true). The statement of intended study, “John is a child molester,” was placed alongside “filler” statements (e.g., John is an alcoholic, John is a father, John is a domestic abuser). Next, participants were asked "Estimate the likelihood of the following scenarios happening in the future" (0 = definitely will not occur, 100 = definitely will occur). The statement of intended study, "John will sexually abuse Robbie," was given alongside "filler" statements (e.g., John will win the lottery, John will get divorced, John will lead his baseball team to a winning season).

Parental Confidence and CSA Knowledge Questions

Participants were asked to rate their perceived level of confidence in their abilities to recognize grooming behaviors (0 = not confident at all, 10 = extremely confident). Participants were also asked to estimate the percentage of CSA cases in which grooming occurs (0% of cases to 100% of cases).

Demographic Questions

All participants were asked to answer demographic questions to assess gender, age, race/ethnicity, education level, and annual income. Parent participants were asked additional questions in order to assess the age(s) of their children, the quantity of children and parental makeup of their household. Lastly, all participants were asked about their direct or indirect experiences with CSA.

Procedure

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Participants were recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk based on their parental status and proceeded to an online survey website where they were given a consent form explaining certain aspects of the purpose of the study, the required task, and the eligibility requirements. The role of grooming in this research was not initially disclosed in order to avoid influencing participant responses. After screening for eligibility and verifying that they were human and not Bots, participants were asked to read the randomly assigned vignette and answer the likelihood questions. Afterward, correctly answering an attention check question related to the vignette material was required for further participation. Next, participants answered the demographic, and parental confidence and knowledge questions. They then received a debrief informing them fully on the study's purpose and providing resources for further education about sexual violence prevention. Upon completion of the survey, participants received compensation of one dollar (1USD) in exchange for their participation. In order to reduce repeat participation, submissions were limited to once per worker ID and IP address.

Results

The means and standard deviations for the seven conditions (i.e., Nongrooming, Victim Selection, Gaining Trust/Isolation, Desensitizing to Touch, Post-Abuse Maintenance, and All Grooming) and the two outcome variables (i.e., likelihood rating that John is a molester, likelihood rating that John will abuse Robbie) are presented in Table 3.

In examining the data, a Shapiro-Wilk test of normality indicated that the data for the dependent variables were not normally distributed. Table 2 provides information related to significance levels and relevant statistics. When data violates the assumption of normality, it is considered appropriate for the researcher to either delete outlying cases, transform data, or use non-parametric tests (Nimon, 2012). The resulting approach to the data analysis was two-fold:

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consisting of the use of parametric tests on transformed data and non-parametric tests on the original data.

Parental Status and Recognition Abilities

In order to examine the relationship between parental status and recognition abilities, the data was transformed using square root transformations (Parents and Nonparents for Molester/Abuse: *Victim Selection, Gaining Access/Isolation, Trust Development*; Nonparents for Molester/Abuse: *Post-Abuse Maintenance*; Parents and Nonparents for Molester: *Nongrooming*; Parents for Abuse) and logarithmic transformations (Nonparents for Abuse: *Nongrooming*) to correct violations of normality in order to use a parametric test for analysis.

The transformed data was analyzed using a series of Analysis of Variance tests (ANOVAs) in order to determine if there were differences among the parent and nonparent groups in abilities to recognize grooming behaviors overall as well as at the different stages of the SGM (Winters & Jeglic, 2017). The ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant interaction between the effects of parental status and assignment to the Post-Abuse Maintenance condition on the ability to identify whether John is a child molester, $F(1,210) = 40.337, p < .001$, as well as on the ability to identify whether John will abuse Robbie, $F(1,210) = 27.926, p < .001$. In both of these cases, the parent group produced higher mean likelihood ratings. There was also a statistically significant interaction between the effects of parental status and assignment to the Trust Development condition on the ability to identify whether John will sexually abuse Robbie, $F(1,229) = 7.352, p = .007$. In this case, the parent group produced lower mean likelihood ratings related whether John will sexually abuse Robbie. For this condition, results were not statistically significant for the additional outcome variable

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(“John is a child molester”). Table 3 displays a summary of the interaction effects found for all of the conditions.

In order to assess the relationship between participants’ confidence and their displayed ability to recognize grooming behaviors, data from both parents and nonparents assigned to the All-Grooming condition was tested to see for violations of linearity. Upon finding that the data associated with the responses to the question “How confident do you feel in your ability to recognize grooming behaviors?” was nonlinear and moderately, negatively skewed, the data was transformed using a Square Root Transformation. This transformation enabled preliminary analysis to show the relationship to be monotonic, as assessed by visual inspection of a scatterplot. A Spearman’s rank-order correlation was then run to assess the relationship between participants’ confidence and their displayed ability to recognize grooming behaviors. There was no statistically significant correlation between confidence in recognition abilities and displayed recognition abilities for the Molester variable, $r_s(98) = -.151, p = .135$. There was also no statistically significant correlation between confidence in recognition abilities and displayed recognition abilities for the Abuse variable, $r_s(98) = -.183, p = .068$.

Parental Recognition Abilities

A series of nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted on the original, untransformed data of the parent group only to examine differences in parental recognition abilities according to assignment to particular conditions. The results of these tests are summarized in Table 4. In comparing the mean scores of parents assigned to the control condition (i.e., “Nongrooming”), the Kruskal-Wallis H tests indicated statistically significant differences for two conditions.

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First, the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between parental likelihood ratings indicating that “John is a child molester” in those assigned to the Desensitizing to Touch condition compared to the Nongrooming condition, $\chi^2(1) = 9.897, p = 0.002$. The Kruskal-Wallis H test similarly showed that there was a statistically significant difference between parental likelihood rating that “John will sexually abuse Robbie” in those assigned to the Desensitizing to Touch condition compared to the Nongrooming condition, $\chi^2(1) = 9.355, p = 0.002$.

Next, The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between parental likelihood ratings that “John is a child molester” in those assigned to the All Grooming condition compared to the Nongrooming condition, $\chi^2(1) = 9.442, p = 0.002$. The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between parental likelihood ratings that “John will sexually abuse Robbie” in those assigned to the All Grooming condition compared to the Nongrooming condition, $\chi^2(1) = 9.034, p = 0.003$.

Discussion

Sexual grooming is used in many cases of CSA to allow the perpetrator to engage in the abuse while avoiding detection. Therefore, adult abilities to recognize grooming before sexual abuse occurs could assist in preventative efforts. However, we know little about adult abilities to recognize the behaviors associated with sexual grooming. As such, this study is the first to empirically examine parental grooming recognition abilities. Overall, parents were no better than adults who were not parents at detecting sexual grooming. While parents displayed slight superiority in associating post-abuse maintenance behaviors with CSA, this group also performed less well in identifying behaviors related to trust development within the sexual

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grooming process. When solely examining parents, we found that overall, they displayed statistically significant abilities to detect grooming behaviors, specifically when the vignettes involved more obvious behaviors such as those involved with desensitization to physical and sexual touch.

Contrary to our expectations, parents were no better than non-parents at detecting sexual grooming, and both groups tended not to relate the behaviors depicted in the vignettes with sexual abuse and molestation. Regardless of parental status, participants rated individuals and situations as being relatively unlikely to involve CSA even when behaviors associated with sexual grooming were present. These findings align with previous assertions that sexual grooming is difficult to recognize prospectively (Craven, 2006; McElvaney, 2020) as well as research findings empirically indicating that sexual grooming is difficult for unsuspecting adults to recognize (Winters & Jeglic, 2017). However, the current study builds on these previous findings, which relied on a sample of undergraduate students, by expanding the generalizability to parents, a population more likely to take on the responsibility of protecting children.

Compared to nonparents, parents were slightly more likely to relate behaviors within the Post-Abuse Maintenance stage of the SGM with CSA. This could suggest that parents are more likely than nonparents to associate CSA with the behaviors that occur after abuse (e.g., encouraging secrets, telling the child that they are loved and giving the child special gifts). However, because the likelihood ratings were low, it cannot be assumed that parents can regularly recognize post-abuse maintenance behaviors as indicative of grooming children for sexual abuse.

Surprisingly, nonparents were more likely to associate behaviors from the Trust Development stage of the SGM with CSA, compared to parents. Again, the average likelihood

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rating was on the lower end of the rating scale, indicating that neither group was highly likely to perceive the depicted behaviors as sexual grooming tactics. However, nonparents were more likely than parents to associate behaviors related to trust development, such as providing the child with special attention and/or gifts with the action of sexual abuse. While previous research has not explicitly examined parental abilities, Winters and Jeglic's (2017) study suggested that no stage of the SGM is more easily identified by adults in general. While parents did not display superior recognition skills compared to the nonparent group within the current study, they did provide higher mean likelihood ratings (Molester: $M = 20.137$; Abuse: $M = 18.063$) than the undergraduate students in the Trust Development condition of Winters and Jeglic's previous study (2017) (Molester: $M = 13.839$; Abuse: $M = 14.86$). This difference in recognition abilities challenges previous study findings by suggesting that while parental status may slightly impact abilities to detect grooming behaviors associated with the Trust Development stage, some stages may be more easily associated with the grooming process. These differences could be due to the expanded generalizability of the findings of the current study as a result of a larger sample compared to previous studies (Winters & Jeglic, 2016; Winters & Jeglic, 2017) examining grooming recognition abilities.

When looking at the parent group alone, the findings suggest that parents were more likely to associate behaviors with sexual grooming when these behaviors were either grouped together as a whole (as seen in the "All Grooming" condition), or when behaviors were specifically related to the Desensitizing to Touch stage of the SGM. Importantly, these findings were consistent across both dependent variables (i.e., Abuse and Molester).

The findings suggests that parents may not be well equipped to recognize grooming behaviors, as parent participants in all of the conditions displayed mean ratings of less than fifty

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out of one hundred for the likelihood statements that indicated the presence of CSA within the vignettes. However, parents are more likely to report higher likelihood ratings when the behaviors from the five stages of the model are grouped together. The current study confirms what previous studies have found (Winters et al., 2016; Winters & Jeglic 2017) and proposed (Craven, 2006; McElvaney, 2020) and applied these findings directly to parent populations; recognizing behaviors with grooming children for sexual abuse is a difficult task, especially when considering that on their own, many of these behaviors are not invariably inappropriate. Therefore, it has been proposed that in attempting to identify real-life occurrences of sexual grooming, protective adults should be cautious of the frequency, clustered nature, and severity of grooming behaviors in order to differentiate harmful, predatory acts from normative adult-child interactions (Jeglic & Calkins, 2018). With this in mind, the finding that parents display greater abilities to recognize grooming behaviors when grouped together suggests practical applicability of these skills to real-world situations.

As hypothesized, the findings suggest that within the parent group, participants were more likely to associate behaviors related to touch with sexually abusing a child and labeling an individual as a child molester, compared to the control condition (“Nongrooming”). Likelihood ratings were not high and therefore do not indicate that participants had strong associations between the behaviors within the Desensitization to Touch stage and CSA. However, the findings do suggest that parents are slightly more likely to associate grooming behaviors with CSA when these behaviors are related to physically touching or exposing to the child to inappropriate content (e.g., through “locker room talk”, dirty jokes, or accounts of personal sexual experiences). These findings contrast with Winter and Jeglic’s (2017) study that indicated that no stage of the SGM is more easily associated with the grooming process. The current study

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replicated several aspects of Winters and Jeglic's (2017) study, including the use of likelihood ratings and vignettes. However, differences in findings may be due to updates made to the vignettes since, intended to reflect a more comprehensive and developed understanding of the grooming process, based on the SGM. Interestingly, Winters and Jeglic's (2016) study found that participants were able to retrospectively identify grooming behaviors when they were related to physical touch, suggesting that adults may be more likely to associate behaviors related to touch and sexual desensitization with CSA.

Importantly, the current study found that for both parents and nonparents, feelings of confidence in their abilities to identify grooming behaviors were unrelated to their associations of these behaviors with sexual grooming within this study. These findings suggest that adults could be generally unaware of their grooming recognition deficits. It is therefore imperative that educational efforts seek to inform adults on how to recognize sexual grooming and abuse, despite individual perceptions about capabilities.

Limitations

The current study is not without limitations. First, vignettes were used to present scenarios depicting grooming behaviors and participants were asked to answer likelihood statements based on what they read. The act of reading about a scenario rather than observing it in real life within one's community could have an impact on recognition abilities. As with many experimental designs, the external validity of these findings are compromised by the laboratory setting, limiting the extent to which the understanding of the findings can be applied to real-world settings.

The online setting through which the current study was conducted also poses some limitations to the generalization and validity of the findings. Due to the nature of the anonymous

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and self-report measure, verification of parental status, demographic information, and the quality of participation was limited. The researchers took several precautions to reduce the likelihood of encountering these issues. In order to decrease repeated participation, settings were applied to the survey and crowdsourcing platforms to limit participation to once per computer IP address as well as worker ID number. On the crowdsourcing platform, the opportunity to participate was limited to workers who had already received high approval ratings and completed a large number of previous tasks. Finally, details about the eligibility criteria and related screening questions were provided three separate times in order to encourage adherence to the study's requirements.

While the current study's large sample size implies a greater generalizability than previous studies examining grooming recognition abilities (Winters. & Jeglic, 2016; 2017), the demographics are still not adequately representative of the overall population in the United States. The sample was recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk, a platform known to consist of individuals more likely to be unemployed, white, affluent, and educated, but less likely to be religious (Goodman et al., 2013). Therefore, some care should be taken when generalizing these findings.

Finally, in addressing questions related to grooming recognition abilities, it is of the utmost importance to consider how the nature of grooming behaviors limit potential associations with the process of sexual abuse. Many behaviors associated with sexual grooming are not only part of normal adult-child interactions, but serve as positive contributions to child development when enacted without abusive intent. It could be problematic for a protective adult to incautiously interpret innocent adult-child interactions as sexual grooming. Unfortunately, one can only identify abuse with absolute certainty once it has already occurred. Therefore, while potentially inappropriate behaviors should not be ignored, efforts in improving adult grooming

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recognition abilities should emphasize that many of these behaviors can not only be unassociated with sexual abuse, but also be part of healthy community interaction.

Implications

The literature related to grooming recognition abilities is still in its early stages. Therefore, the current study is considered a preliminary exploration in understanding parental abilities to recognize grooming behaviors. The study's findings suggest that parents are generally unaware of the behaviors that are indicative of sexual grooming. We speculate that this lower range in abilities has likely resulted from a dearth in available educational resources related to sexual grooming or minimal emphasis on these topics within these resources. A recent cultural shift has gravitated toward expectations for adults to take primary responsibility in protecting children from sexual abuse (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018). Yet, the long history of placing the burden on the child by emphasizing preventative efforts that ask children to protect themselves may still pervade. A minimal emphasis on adult responsibility could provide an explanation as to why adult recognition abilities are currently lacking.

To increase these recognition abilities, the researchers call for integrating the information on the sexual grooming process into sexual violence prevention materials and programs. Specifically, educational efforts should seek to encourage adults to be observant of frequent and severe clusters of the behaviors associated with the SGM in order to prevent the occurrence of CSA, increase acceptance of allegations, therefore encouraging future disclosures.

The psychological manipulation a child endures during the grooming process can impact their long-term mental health (Wolf & Pruitt, 2019). While it is beneficial that parents display some ability to recognize behaviors associated with the Desensitization to Touch stage, these behaviors are likely to immediately precede the sexual abuse (Winters et al., 2020). Even if

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parents are able to recognize grooming at this stage and prevent direct sexual abuse, the child may already have grooming experiences that result in trauma-related symptoms. These efforts should introduce adults to the various stages of the SGM, rather than emphasizing certain aspects (i.e., desensitization to touch and sexual content, post-abuse maintenance behaviors). Adults can then begin to associate all of the categories of behaviors with the grooming process – especially the early stages in an effort to minimize resulting trauma and prevent abuse. Educational interventions to address these needs should not only be implemented, but also tested for effectiveness at identifying real-world instances of sexual grooming. Importantly, educational efforts should be careful not to encourage overconfidence in recognition abilities. As discussed previously, many behaviors associated with sexual grooming can also be characteristic of nonabusive adult-child interactions. Protective adults should be made aware of the possibility of false positives in their interpretations of observed behaviors.

Future Directions

The current researchers suggest several directions for further examination. First, individuals who are not parents but may be frequently involved with children due to employment, familial relationships, or community culture, were likely included as nonparent participants in this study. Like parents, those who have consistent contact with children could also play important roles in protecting children from sexual abuse. Therefore, their current understandings of the sexual grooming process as well as their abilities to recognize related behaviors should be assessed.

Second, because the measures used in this study are not infallibly consistent with real-life occurrences of CSA and sexual grooming, alternative measures of recognition abilities should be used in future research and the findings should be compared. Future research should also

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consider the impact of a real-life relationship with a child (i.e., one's own child versus a fictional child character presented in a vignette) or with the perpetrator may result in differences in abilities to detect inappropriate relationships or behaviors. Finally, further additions to the literature should take into account variables that might impact recognition abilities, such as personal experience with CSA, the age and number of children in a family, and other demographic variables.

Conclusion

The current study indicated slight differences related to parental status and associations of CSA with specific stages of the SGM. Ultimately, this study's identification of low levels of associations between grooming behaviors and CSA among parents and nonparents alike indicates a need for expanded and targeted community education in sexual violence prevention. While the current study does not attempt to explain why these deficits exist, it is apparent that individuals, regardless of parental status, do not readily relate grooming behaviors with the process of sexual abuse. The researchers of this study propose that educational efforts inform both parents and nonparents on the ways they can prevent predatory sexual behavior towards children by identifying the sexual grooming process.

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Appendix A

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Parental Status	Parent n (%)	Nonparent n (%)	Total n (%)
Total	420 (48.6%)	445 (51.4%)	865 (100%)
Gender			
Male	204 (48.6%)	214 (48.1%)	418 (48.3%)
Female	194 (46.2%)	204 (45.8%)	398 (46.0%)
Gender Neutral/Nonconforming	1 (0.2%)	4 (0.9%)	5 (0.6%)
Did not respond	21 (5.0%)	23 (5.2%)	44 (5.1%)
Education Level			
High School	14 (3.3%)	29 (6.5%)	43 (5.0%)
Some College	55 (13.1%)	73 (16.4%)	128 (14.8%)
Bachelor's degree	223 (53.1%)	214 (48.1%)	437 (50.5%)
Graduate degree	105 (25.0%)	104 (23.4%)	209 (24.2%)
Vocational Training	2 (0.5%)	4 (0.9%)	6 (0.7%)
Other	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	3 (0.3%)
Did not respond	20 (4.8%)	19 (4.3%)	39 (4.5%)
Race/Ethnicity			
Hispanic/Latinx	23 (5.5%)	22 (4.9%)	45 (5.2%)
Caucasian	272 (64.8%)	303 (68.1%)	575 (66.5%)
African American	58 (13.8%)	52 (11.7%)	110 (12.7%)
Asian	33 (7.9%)	30 (6.7%)	63 (7.3%)
Native American	10 (2.4%)	9 (2.0%)	19 (2.2%)
Other	7 (1.7%)	8 (1.8%)	15 (1.7%)
Did not respond	17 (4.0%)	21 (4.7%)	38 (4.4%)
Age*			
18-29 years old	59 (14.0%)	123 (27.6%)	182 (21.0%)
30-41 years old	197 (46.9%)	181 (40.7%)	378 (43.7%)

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42-53 years old	115 (27.4%)	83 (18.7%)	198 (22.9%)
54-65 years old	30 (7.1%)	40 (9.0%)	70 (8.1%)
Did not respond	19 (4.5%)	18 (4.0%)	37 (4.3%)
Annual Income*			
Less than \$20,000	11 (2.6%)	50 (11.2%)	61 (7.1%)
\$20,000-\$40,000	75 (17.9%)	89 (20.0%)	164 (19.0%)
\$40,001-\$60,000	86 (20.5%)	108 (24.3%)	194 (22.4%)
\$60,001-\$80,000	101 (24.0%)	78 (17.5%)	179 (20.7%)
\$80,001-\$100,000	63 (15.0%)	54 (12.1%)	117 (13.5%)
Over \$100,000	62 (14.8%)	47 (10.6%)	109 (12.6%)
Did not respond	22 (5.2%)	19 (4.3%)	41 (4.7%)
Parental Makeup of Household			
Single mother	41 (9.8%)		
Single father	23 (5.5%)		
One mother and one father	325 (77.4%)		
Two fathers	8 (1.9%)		
Two mothers	3 (0.7%)		
Did not respond	20 (4.8%)		
Number of Children			
1	199 (47.4%)		
2	155 (36.9%)		
3	33 (7.9%)		
4 or more	13 (3.1%)		
Did not respond	20 (4.8%)		
Age of Child/Children			
0-3 years old	57 (13.6%)		
4-7 years old	127 (30.2%)		
8-11 years old	99 (23.6%)		
12 years or older	118 (28.1%)		
Did not respond	19 (4.5%)		

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Table 2: Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality on Dependent Variables

	W
	Molester / Abuse
Victim Selection*	.716 / .711
Gaining Access/Isolation*	.770 / .725
Trust Development*	.790 / .748
Desensitizing to Touch*	.888 / .887
Post-Abuse Maintenance*	.795 / .796
All Grooming*	.901 / .894
Nongrooming*	.703 / .629

*Denotes statistical significance at p<.001.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for Likelihood Ratings

Condition	n		Molester M (SD)		Abuse M (SD)	
	Parent	Nonparent	Parent	Nonparent	Parent	Nonparent
Nongrooming	61	65	20.164 (30.072)	17.431 (26.387)	18.083 (28.467)	11.078 (21.311)
Victim Selection	53	65	18.698 (26.863)	18.677 (27.796)	19.660 (28.134)	18.203 (28.117)
Gaining Access/Isolation	61	74	20.672 (26.756)	18.730 (25.029)	20.033 (27.406)	15.236 (22.759)
Trust Development	73	70	20.137 (25.821)	18.414 (22.914)	18.083 (24.887)	18.956 (24.907)
Desensitizing to Touch	58	62	39.845 (34.149)	46.623 (37.263)	36.368 (33.230)	40.355 (35.400)
Post-Abuse Maintenance	63	60	32.000 (34.493)	21.000 (27.739)	30.508 (31.549)	19.600 (27.772)
All Grooming	51	49	43.412 (36.536)	46.167 (33.009)	39.941 (36.375)	48.857 (33.027)

Table 3: ANOVA Summary of Interaction Effects

Condition * Parental Status	df	MS	Molester / Abuse		
			F	p	η ²
Victim selection	1	.690 / 33.220	.068 / 3.859	.795 / 0.51	.000 / .019
Gaining Access/Isolation	1	.014 / 26.057	.001 / 3.175	.970 / .076	.000 / .014
Trust Development	1	.614 / 60.118	.063 / 7.352	.801 / .007**	.000 / .031
Desensitizing to Touch	1	755.730 / 428.108	1.206 / .641	.273 / .424	.005 / .003
Post-Abuse Maintenance	1	12505.665 / 8096.782	40.337 / 27.926	<.001** / <.001**	.142 / .117
All Grooming	1	125.265 / 1342.211	.232 / 2.130	.630 / .146	.001 / .011

** Denotes statistical significance at p<.05 level.

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MS= Mean Square

Table 4: Comparison of Stages of SGM (Parent Sample Only)

	Mean Rank Score		χ^2
	Grooming Stage	Nongrooming	
	Molester/Abuse	Molester/Abuse	
Victim Selection	57.61 / 55.99	57.40 / 55.09	.001 / .022
Gaining Access	62.72 / 60.60	60.28 / 60.40	.153 / .001
Trust Development	68.77 / 66.17	65.98 / 66.90	.180 / .013
Desensitizing to Touch **	70.06 / 68.74	50.43 / 49.75	9.897** / 9.355**
Post-Abuse Maintenance	68.41 / 67.02	56.39 / 54.88	3.595 / 3.735
All-Grooming **	66.65 / 65.84	48.02 / 47.63	9.442** / 9.034**

**Denotes statistical significance at p<.01 level

Sexual Grooming Vignettes

ALL NON-GROOMING

Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and only works the lunch shift so she can be home for the family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a proud member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is faster and stronger than the other boys so he gets a lot of playing time. Robbie is very confident and has high self-esteem. He has a lot of friends and is always included in activities with his peers. After school he does his homework with his mom and loves to practice Tee-ball with his father. He feels wanted and loved by the people in his life and he tends to be very assertive and cooperative with others. The peers and adults in his life pay attention to him, and he has never gotten into trouble at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local college. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he was offered a teaching job and he told the principal he enjoys teaching. John also volunteers at an elderly home and organizes games for the old folks to play. John loves going out to dinner with his wife and playing golf where he often meets up with old friends. John always wants to make sure that his players get home safely after practice. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will ask another player's parent take Robbie home and stay with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach who knows a lot about the game. In his short time in Amity, he has really enjoyed becoming a member of the community. Before practices, John has the team do warm ups while he talks to the parents. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages all the kids, telling them that are putting in great effort and he avoids playing favorites. John even organized a corporate sponsorship to purchase the whole team new equipment. He often calls the player's parents during the week to if he has any concerns about the child's behavior during practice; he makes sure to tell the parents the positive things the boy accomplished as well.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice demonstrating the skill and then having the kids imitate him. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other, John reminds them that this is unsportsmanlike behavior and the kids stop. The players love jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor; John discourages these conversations. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and they leave for the locker room while John cleans up the field. The players often facilitate "locker room talk" where the boys talk about whether they have crushes. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, they return to the field. John tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about the game of baseball. When it is time for pickup, John tells his players they did a great job and he waves goodbye to all of the kids.

John likes to have team cheers as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "hustle, hit, and never quit" and then the players cheer. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he has fit in well. He often tells his wife he loves her and that she is special; he gives her a necklace to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication his job and the community. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

VICTIM SELECTION

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Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, divorced mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and often takes on extra shifts to earn money to support her family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is slower and smaller than the other boys so he does not get a lot of playing time. Robbie is not very confident and has low self-esteem. He has few friends and is rarely included in activities with his peers. Robbie doesn't know his father and rarely gets to see his mom because she is always at work, he is often left alone at home after school because his mom can't afford a sitter. He generally feels unwanted and unloved by the people in his life and he tends to be very compliant and trusting of others. Robbie seeks the attention of peers and adults in his life, which has resulted in him getting into trouble occasionally at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local college. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he was offered a teaching job and he told the principal he enjoys teaching. John also volunteers at an elderly home and organizes games for the old folks to play. John loves going out to dinner with his wife and playing golf where he often meets up with old friends. John always wants to make sure that his players get home safely after practice. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will ask another player's parent take Robbie home and stay with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach who knows a lot about the game. In his short time in Amity, he has really enjoyed becoming a member of the community. Before practices, John has the team do warm ups while he talks to the parents. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages all the kids, telling them that are putting in great effort and he avoids playing favorites. John even organized a corporate sponsorship to purchase the whole team new equipment. He often calls the player's parents during the week to if he has any concerns about the child's behavior during practice; he makes sure to tell the parents the positive things the boy accomplished as well.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice demonstrating the skill and then having the kids imitate him. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other, John reminds them that this is unsportsmanlike behavior and the kids stop. The players love jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor; John discourages these conversations. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and they leave for the locker room while John cleans up the field. The players often facilitate "locker room talk" where the boys talk about whether they have crushes. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, they return to the field. John tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about the game of baseball. When it is time for pickup, John tells his players they did a great job and he waves goodbye to all of the kids.

John likes to have team cheers as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "hustle, hit, and never quit" and then the players cheer. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he has fit in well. He often tells his wife he loves her and that she is special; he gives her a necklace to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication his job and the community. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

GAINING ACCESS AND ISOLATION

Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and only works the lunch shift so she can be home for the

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family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a proud member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is faster and stronger than the other boys so he gets a lot of playing time. Robbie is very confident and has high self-esteem. He has a lot of friends and is always included in activities with his peers. After school he does his homework with his mom and loves to practice Tee-ball with his father. He feels wanted and loved by the people in his life and he tends to be very assertive and cooperative with others. The peers and adults in his life pay attention to him, and he has never gotten into trouble at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local school. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he heard about a teaching job and told the principal that he loves to work with kids. John also volunteers on the weekends at Boys and Girls club where he organizes and chaperones outings and camping trips for the kids. John enjoys spending time at the local arcade where he often meets up with kids from the team. John sees that Mary is struggling so he offers to help her out. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will drive Robbie home and stays with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach who knows a lot about the game. In his short time in Amity, he has really enjoyed becoming a member of the community. Before practices, John has the team do warm ups while he talks to the parents. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages all the kids, telling them that are putting in great effort and he avoids playing favorites. John even organized a corporate sponsorship to purchase the whole team new equipment. He often calls the player's parents during the week to if he has any concerns about the child's behavior during practice; he makes sure to tell the parents the positive things the boy accomplished as well.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice demonstrating the skill and then having the kids imitate him. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other, John reminds them that this is unsportsmanlike behavior and the kids stop. The players love jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor; John discourages these conversations. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and they leave for the locker room while John cleans up the field. The players often facilitate "locker room talk" where the boys talk about whether they have crushes. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, they return to the field. John tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about the game of baseball. When it is time for pickup, John tells his players they did a great job and he waves goodbye to all of the kids.

John likes to have team cheers as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "hustle, hit, and never quit" and then the players cheer. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he has fit in well. He often tells his wife he loves her and that she is special; he gives her a necklace to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication his job and the community. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

TRUST DEVELOPMENT

Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and only works the lunch shift so she can be home for the family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a proud member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is faster and stronger than the other boys so he gets a lot of playing time.

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Robbie is very confident and has high self-esteem. He has a lot of friends and is always included in activities with his peers. After school he does his homework with his mom and loves to practice Tee-ball with his father. He feels wanted and loved by the people in his life and he tends to be very assertive and cooperative with others. The peers and adults in his life pay attention to him, and he has never gotten into trouble at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local college. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he was offered a teaching job and he told the principal he enjoys teaching. John also volunteers at an elderly home and organizes games for the old folks to play. John loves going out to dinner with his wife and playing golf where he often meets up with old friends. John always wants to make sure that his players get home safely after practice. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will ask another player's parent take Robbie home and stay with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach and overall nice guy who really shows that he cares about the children. In his short time in Amity, he has really become a respected member of the community. Before practices, John talks to Robbie and a few other kids about video games and comics, while the stars of the team warm-up. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages most of the kids, especially Robbie, and tells him that he is really special and that he cares about him. John even buys candy or other small gifts with his own money for Robbie and some of his other favorite players if he feels like they could use a treat. He will often call Robbie during the week to check in on him and talk about their shared interests; he makes sure to compliment Robbie on the accomplishment he has made in baseball and his schoolwork.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice demonstrating the skill and then having the kids imitate him. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other, John reminds them that this is unsportsmanlike behavior and the kids stop. The players love jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor; John discourages these conversations. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and they leave for the locker room while John cleans up the field. The players often facilitate "locker room talk" where the boys talk about whether they have crushes. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, they return to the field. John tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about the game of baseball. When it is time for pickup, John tells his players they did a great job and he waves goodbye to all of the kids.

John likes to have team cheers as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "hustle, hit, and never quit" and then the players cheer. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he has fit in well. He often tells his wife he loves her and that she is special; he gives her a necklace to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication his job and the community. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

DESENSITIZING TO TOUCH

Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and only works the lunch shift so she can be home for the family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a proud member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is faster and stronger than the other boys so he gets a lot of playing time. Robbie is very confident and has high self-esteem. He has a lot of friends and is always included

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in activities with his peers. After school he does his homework with his mom and loves to practice Tee-ball with his father. He feels wanted and loved by the people in his life and he tends to be very assertive and cooperative with others. The peers and adults in his life pay attention to him, and he has never gotten into trouble at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local college. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he was offered a teaching job and he told the principal he enjoys teaching. John also volunteers at an elderly home and organizes games for the old folks to play. John loves going out to dinner with his wife and playing golf where he often meets up with old friends. John always wants to make sure that his players get home safely after practice. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will ask another player's parent take Robbie home and stay with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach who knows a lot about the game. In his short time in Amity, he has really enjoyed becoming a member of the community. Before practices, John has the team do warm ups while he talks to the parents. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages all the kids, telling them that are putting in great effort and he avoids playing favorites. John even organized a corporate sponsorship to purchase the whole team new equipment. He often calls the player's parents during the week to if he has any concerns about the child's behavior during practice; he makes sure to tell the parents the positive things the boy accomplished as well.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice by getting in behind them and helping them hold and swing the bat properly. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other during practice, John smiles and joins in. He loves to tell the kids jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor. John likes to end each practice on a fun note, so he is always the tagger as they play a game of freeze tag. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and supervises them in the locker room as they change out of their uniforms. He often facilitates "locker room talk" where he asks the boys about whether they have crushes and shares with them his sexual experiences with his own girlfriends in the past. He tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about healthy sex education in a more informal setting compared to the classroom. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, John typically undresses, brushes past the group, and showers himself. When it is time for pickup, he gives Robbie and a few other players a warm hug goodbye.

John likes to have team cheers as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "hustle, hit, and never quit" and then the players cheer. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he has fit in well. He often tells his wife he loves her and that she is special; he gives her a necklace to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication his job and the community. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

Post-Abuse Maintenance Behaviors

Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, happily married mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and only works the lunch shift so she can be home for the family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a proud member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is faster and stronger than the other boys so he gets a lot of playing time. Robbie is very confident and has high self-esteem. He has a lot of friends and is always included

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in activities with his peers. After school he does his homework with his mom and loves to practice Tee-ball with his father. He feels wanted and loved by the people in his life and he tends to be very assertive and cooperative with others. The peers and adults in his life pay attention to him, and he has never gotten into trouble at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local college. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he was offered a teaching job and he told the principal he enjoys teaching. John also volunteers at an elderly home and organizes games for the old folks to play. John loves going out to dinner with his wife and playing golf where he often meets up with old friends. John always wants to make sure that his players get home safely after practice. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will ask another player's parent take Robbie home and stay with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach who knows a lot about the game. In his short time in Amity, he has really enjoyed becoming a member of the community. Before practices, John has the team do warm ups while he talks to the parents. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages all the kids, telling them that are putting in great effort and he avoids playing favorites. John even organized a corporate sponsorship to purchase the whole team new equipment. He often calls the player's parents during the week to if he has any concerns about the child's behavior during practice; he makes sure to tell the parents the positive things the boy accomplished as well.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice demonstrating the skill and then having the kids imitate him. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other, John reminds them that this is unsportsmanlike behavior and the kids stop. The players love jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor; John discourages these conversations. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and they leave for the locker room while John cleans up the field. The players often facilitate "locker room talk" where the boys talk about whether they have crushes. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, they return to the field. John tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about the game of baseball. When it is time for pickup, John tells his players they did a great job and he waves goodbye to all of the kids.

John likes to have team cheers as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "hustle, hit, and never quit" and then the players cheer. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he has fit in well. He often tells his wife he loves her and that she is special; he gives her a necklace to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication his job and the community. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

John likes to have team secrets as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "what happens on the playing field stays on the playing field" and then laughs at his own joke. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he really cares about the kids. He often tells Robbie and some of the other kids that he loves them and that they are special; he gives each boy a baseball playing card to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication to the children and their education. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

ALL GROOMING

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Mary Smith is a 35-year-old, divorced mother living in Amity, Massachusetts. She is a server at a local restaurant, and often takes on extra shifts to earn money to support her family. Mary has an 8-year-old son named Robbie, who is a member of the Sharks Tee-Ball team. Robbie is slower and smaller than the other boys so he does not get a lot of playing time. Robbie is not very confident and has low self-esteem. He has few friends and is rarely included in activities with his peers. Robbie doesn't know his father and rarely gets to see his mom because she is always at work, he is often left alone at home after school because his mom can't afford a sitter. He generally feels unwanted and unloved by the people in his life and he tends to be very compliant and trusting of others. Robbie seeks the attention of peers and adults in his life, which has resulted in him getting into trouble occasionally at home and school.

The Sharks' coach, John, is an English teacher at a local school. John and his wife moved to the community three years ago when he heard about a teaching job and told the principal that he loves to work with kids. John also volunteers on the weekends at Boys and Girls club where he organizes and chaperones outings and camping trips for the kids. John enjoys spending time at the local arcade where he often meets up with kids from the team. John sees that Mary is struggling so he offers to help her out. If Mary can't pick up Robbie from practice, John will drive Robbie home and stays with him until Mary gets home.

Parents consider John to be a great baseball coach and overall nice guy who really shows that he cares about the children. In his short time in Amity, he has really become a respected member of the community. Before practices, John talks to Robbie and a few other kids about video games and comics, while the stars of the team warm-up. As practice begins, it is clear the kids are all eager to play and really enjoy the game. John encourages most of the kids, especially Robbie, and tells him that he is really special and that he cares about him. John even buys candy or other small gifts with his own money for Robbie and some of his other favorite players if he feels like they could use a treat. He will often call Robbie during the week to check in on him and talk about their shared interests; he makes sure to compliment Robbie on the accomplishment he has made in baseball and his schoolwork.

John makes sure the team gets better at passing the baseball and swinging the bat with each practice by getting in behind them and helping them hold and swing the bat properly. During practices, if the kids start horsing around and throwing grass or dirt at each other during practice, John smiles and joins in. He loves to tell the kids jokes, and the kids particularly like the ones that include bathroom-related humor. John likes to end each practice on a fun note, so he is always the tagger as they play a game of freeze tag. Afterwards, John tells his players they did a great job and supervises them in the locker room as they change out of their uniforms. He often facilitates "locker room talk" where he asks the boys about whether they have crushes and shares with them his sexual experiences with his own girlfriends in the past. He tells the boys that as a coach and mentor, he hopes he can help teach them about healthy sex education in a more informal setting compared to the classroom. After the boys finish up in the shower and are changing back into clothes, John typically undresses, brushes past the group, and showers himself. When it is time for pickup, he gives Robbie and a few other players a warm hug goodbye.

John likes to have team secrets as he says it builds trust. He tells the kids "what happens on the playing field stays on the playing field" and then laughs at his own joke. The town of Amity is happy to have John as a member of the community as he really cares about the kids. He often tells Robbie and some of the other kids that he loves them and that they are special; he gives each boy a baseball playing card to symbolize their bond. He says that he hopes nothing

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breaks them apart. The school and the Tee Ball committee value his dedication to the children and their education. Everyone looks forward to seeing what John will contribute to the community in the future.

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