Preventing Sexual Violence Where It Most Often Occurs: An Investigation of the Situational and Structural Components of Child Sexual Abuse in Residential Settings

Nicole Colombino

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PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE WHERE IT MOST OFTEN OCCURS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SITUATIONAL AND STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

by

NICOLE COLOMBINO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Preventing Sexual Violence Where it Most Often Occurs: An Investigation of the Situational and Structural Components of Child Sexual Abuse in Residential Settings

by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Preventing Sexual Violence Where it Most Often Occurs: An Investigation of the Situational and Structural Components of Child Sexual Abuse in Residential Settings

by

Nicole Colombino

Advisor: Cynthia Calkins, Ph.D.

Given that sex offenders tend to perpetrate crimes against people they know (e.g., Greenfield, 1997) and first encounter victims in residential locations (Colombino, Mercado, Levenson, & Jeglic, 2011), it is important that research examine the circumstances of sexual offenses within residential settings. Although previous research has examined the perpetration patterns of sexual offenses against children, especially related to grooming tactics (e.g., Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989) and situational factors (e.g., Wortley & Smallbone, 2006), there are few studies that specifically examine the correlates of child sexual abuse within residential settings. This type of data would allow for the development of empirically supported strategies that work to prevent sex crimes against children where they most often occur. Further, there is little to no research that has examined the role and activities of the child’s legal guardian within the context of child sexual abuse. Because children are not in the best position to prevent perpetration (Kaufman, Mosher, Carter, & Estes, 2006), it is important to understand how the child’s guardian may help inform prevention strategies. Using interview data obtained from both an offender and victim sample, the current study examined situational and structural components of the offense location, as well as factors related to the legal guardian, to provide a comprehensive examination of child sexual abuse in residential locations. Descriptive analyses revealed that sex offenses most often occurred in the offender’s bedroom (20.9%). Although, at least one other
person tended to be in the home during the offense (64.6%), the legal guardian was present in only 29% of cases. Despite others’ presence in the home, there were specific barriers that prevented someone from witnessing the offense. Suggestions for child sexual abuse prevention are discussed.
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Preventing sexual violence where it most often occurs: An investigation of the situational and structural components of child sexual abuse in residential settings

Sexual violence is a serious problem that affects the lives of children and adults around the world. In the United States, 1 in 5 women (18.3%) and 1 in 71 men (1.4%) report having experienced rape in their lifetime (Black, Basile, Breiding, Smither, Walters, Merrick et al., 2011). Additionally, 44.6% of women and 22.2% of men report having experienced some other form of sexual violence in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). Given the prevalence of sexual violence, as well as the public’s heightened concern about sex crimes against children, there is strong support for federal, state, and local governments to develop policies to protect communities from sexual perpetration (DeGue, Holt, Massetti, Matjasko, Tharp, & Valle, 2012). Sexual violence prevention efforts have been largely tertiary in nature, in the form of sex crime legislation aimed at preventing known sex offenders from re-offending. Although well intended, sex offender laws tend to lack empirical support as effective methods for preventing sexual violence (Levenson & D’Amora, 2007). For example, the majority of all sex crimes are committed by unknown sex offenders, or those not on a sex offender registry (Sandler, Freeman, & Socio, 2008). Further, sex offender laws tend to be predicated on the stranger danger myth, despite the plethora of research that has demonstrated that sex offenders perpetrate crimes against victims they know (e.g., Colombino, Mercado, Levenson, & Jeglic, 2011; Greenfield, 1997; Snyder, 2000). Similarly, sexual recidivism rates tend to be fairly low (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2004). Therefore, tertiary legislation aimed at preventing or reducing recidivism of convicted sex offenders targets only a minority of all sex crimes. Consequently, there is a growing initiative to focus sexual violence prevention efforts on secondary strategies.
that provide immediate intervention to minimize the consequences of sexual violence, and primary strategies, which help curb sexual violence before it occurs.

Research has shown that sex offenders tend to perpetrate crimes against people they know (e.g., Greenfield, 1997; Snyder, 2000) and first encounter victims in private residential locations (e.g., offender’s home, victim’s home; Colombino et al., 2011), debunking the “stranger danger” myth of sexual offending. In order to devise empirically supported prevention strategies, it is essential that research examine the situational aspects of sexual offenses within private or residential settings. Indeed, situational crime prevention (SCP) aims to use empirical knowledge of the situation to alter physical environments to decrease opportunities for crime (Leclerc, Chiu, & Cale, 2014). This type of data can help in the formation of more effective and empirically based prevention strategies that deter sex crimes in the places where they are most likely to occur (i.e., in the home). The current paper will review current sex crime prevention strategies, as well as the role situational crime prevention has played in the prevention of child sexual abuse. The paper will also discuss how sexual offenses are perpetrated against children, especially as it relates to grooming tactics (e.g., Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989) and situational factors (e.g., Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). The purpose of the current study is to further this knowledge by examining situational factors associated with sex offenses against children to provide suggestions for prevention strategies in private residential settings.

**Sex Crime Prevention**

Sexual violence is a major public health concern (DeGue et al., 2012; DeGue, Simon, Basile, Yee, Lang, & Spivak, 2012). Women who experience sexual violence are at increased risk for a number of mental health problems (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety), as well as medical health issues (e.g., sexually transmitted infections, genital injury,
gastrointestinal problems; Martin, Macy, & Young, 2011). Sexual violence can also indirectly affect the public through the substantial economic cost associated with preventing and treating sexual violence (Martin et al., 2011). Further, the public demands that their communities be protected from sexual offenders. Given the public health risk, economic cost of sexual violence prevention and treatment, and the public’s heightened concern about sex crimes against children, there is pressing need for federal, state, and local governments to develop effective -- not simply “feel good” -- policies, to protect communities from sexual perpetration.

The majority of sexual violence prevention efforts have been directed towards tertiary prevention, through a criminal justice approach, focused on strategies that aim to prevent repeat sex crimes. Tertiary strategies aim to provide a long-term response to manage the lasting effects of sexual violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004), such as mandates and laws aimed at controlling known sex offenders from re-offending. Although well intended, sex offender laws tend to lack empirical support as effective methods for preventing sexual violence (e.g., Levenson & D’Amora, 2007). As mentioned, the majority of all sex crimes are committed by unknown sex offenders, or those not on a sex offender registry (Sandler, Freeman, & Socio, 2008), suggesting that tertiary legislation, aimed at preventing or reducing recidivism of convicted sex offenders, may not target the majority of all sex crimes. Further, tertiary prevention only attempts to curb future crimes, after sexual violence has already occurred.

The medical community’s prevention methods (i.e., public health approach) are based on the principle that a disease is best combated by stopping the disease before it occurs. For example, to prevent death and illness caused by smoking, medical communities promote community-wide efforts that aim to prevent youth from starting to smoke (e.g., campaigns aimed at teenagers). If individuals never smoke, they will prevent, or at least minimize, the occurrence
of smoking-related diseases. Drawing on a similar model, sexual abuse prevention experts have called for legislation to be directed towards primary prevention, with the aim of curbing the problem before it occurs, as well as secondary prevention efforts that provide immediate response after sexual violence happens to manage short-term consequences (CDC, 2004). Through primary and secondary prevention methods, the incidence of sexual violence can be lessened while the consequences of sexual violence can be minimized.

Secondary prevention strategies focus on short-term consequences and provide an immediate response to reduce the impact of sexual violence shortly after victimization has occurred (CDC, 2004). For example, programs provide services to minimize the psychological and medical consequences of victimization. Sexual violence prevention, at the secondary level, aims to avert future victimization, as well as to prevent victims from developing sexually inappropriate behaviors. Toll-free hotlines provide services to victims, perpetrators, and family members of the abused or abusers. These hotlines encourage sexual abuse reporting and provide referrals for intervention and treatment services (Beier, Ahlers, Goecker, Neutze, Mundt, Hupp, et al., 2009; Chasen-Taber & Tabachnick, 1999; Renk, Liljequist, Steinberg, Bosco, & Phares, 2002). Some hotlines target victims (e.g., RAINN) or perpetrators (e.g., Project Dunkelfeld), whereas other hotlines are open to victims, perpetrators, and concerned community members (e.g., STOP IT NOW!). This method of outreach is largely dependent on media campaigns that raise awareness of their existence (Beier et al., 2009; Chasen-Taber & Tabachnick, 1999). Media campaigns can also contribute to reporting rates, through increased public awareness of child sexual abuse, as well as communicate with adults who are in a better position to report abuse (Renk et al., 2002). Community-level education efforts can also help create a society that is supportive of victim disclosure. One of the main concerns victims express when deciding
whether to disclose abuse is concern over whether they will be believed (Fontes & Plummer, 2010; McElvaney, Greene, & Hogan, 2014; Schaeffer, Leventhal, & Asnes, 2011). Creating community environments that are supportive of disclosure can lead to an increased number of sexual abuse reports. Therefore, secondary prevention strategies can be most effective when implemented through a multi-level approach (e.g., individual and community levels).

While tertiary and secondary prevention methods provide intervention after sexual violence has occurred, primary prevention aims to prevent abuse before it happens (CDC, 2004). For example, one primary prevention strategy focuses on helping victims protect themselves through school-based sexual educational programs. These programs teach children to identify sexual abuse and instill self-protection skills (DeGue et al., 2012; Finkelhor, 2009; Walsh, Zwi, Woolfenden, & Shlonsky, 2015). The primary goals of these programs include helping children identify potentially dangerous situations in which sexual abuse may occur and provide strategies to avoid abuse (Finkelhor, 2009). Although these programs do appear to influence discussion about threatening situations, these initiatives have not yet been found to directly decrease the likelihood of victimization (Finkelhor, Asdigian, & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995). Further, education-based school programs have been criticized for putting responsibility on the victim (Wurtele, 2009). As stated by Kaufman et al. (2006), “children are not in the optimal position” to prevent perpetration (p. 104). This illustrates the importance of adults who can be better equipped to prevent child sexual abuse.

Other primary prevention efforts have focused on perpetration prevention, which identify individuals who may be at risk for perpetration and provide intervention (DeGue et al., 2012; Renk et al., 2002). Media campaigns, for example, have been successful at reaching potential perpetrators in the community, providing a hotline to anonymously call to receive information
regarding treatment and evaluation before acting on sexually deviant desires (Beier et al., 2009). Most programs focused on perpetration prevention are conducted at the individual level, focusing on identifying individual level characteristics that may pose risk for perpetration (e.g., alcohol and drug use, antisocial behavior), though risk factors at the relationship, community, and societal level are gaining increased attention. For example, The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (n.d.), through the support of the Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC’s) Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program, has instituted a statewide primary prevention initiative that, using a multi-layered public health model approach to understanding sexual violence, aims to change the climate that allows sexual crimes to occur in the first place. DeGue et al. (2012) note that approaches that attempt to modify the characteristics of settings (e.g., schools or workplaces) appear promising. College campuses, for example, often implement sexual violence prevention programs that address rape myths and encourage bystanders to intervene before a sexual assault occurs (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004), whereas other programs may seek to improve school climates or modify community policies (The White House, 2014). Maintaining individual level change, without community and society level change can be difficult (Quadara & Wall, 2012). Therefore, like secondary prevention, primary prevention strategies are most effective when implemented through a multi-level approach (e.g., individual and community levels).

Notably, some prevention strategies overlap and are applicable in more than one level of prevention. For example, toll-free hotlines provide services before a crime is perpetrated (i.e., primary prevention), as well as provide services to victims and abusers (i.e., secondary or tertiary prevention). Similarly, school-based education programs aim to educate children on self-protection strategies to avoid perpetration (i.e., primary prevention), but also have shown to
increase the likelihood for disclosure (i.e., secondary prevention; Finkelhor, 2009). Therefore, some of these strategies can be understood as methods for prevention at more than one level.

What no research has done to date, however, is examine how primary prevention strategies might be implemented in the home. Research that identifies perpetration patterns in home settings could be used to tailor educational efforts and modify settings so as to avert child sexual abuse within the home. While victims can be educated on how to respond in a sexual abuse scenario, the responsibility of sexual violence needs to be on perpetrators and adults who are in better positions than children to avert victimization. Using empirical knowledge on how guardians can create safer environments for their children can be an important contribution to primary prevention efforts.

**Situational Crime Prevention (SCP)**

Situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies have been used in controlling various types of crime, but only a few studies have examined the role SCP could have in preventing sexual offending (Terry & Ackerman, 2008; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). SCP is based on the criminological notion that offenders’ behaviors are a direct result of environmental influences; therefore, rather than concentrating on the individual, SCP strategies focus on creating safe environments (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). Premised on the idea that offenders will select victims that are easy targets, one SCP strategy to prevent sexual offending, urges people to increase efforts to make offending difficult (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). For example, from a primary prevention perspective, teaching defensive strategies to potential victims (i.e. women and children), such as educating children and women on who a likely offender is and how to defend themselves, as well as maximizing protection within families (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006), are methods for increasing efforts. Increasing risk (i.e. the more risk there is that the
offender will be detected, the less likely the offender will perpetrate an offense) is another situational crime prevention strategy that could be implemented (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). Legislation aimed at monitoring known sex offenders in the community is an example of *increasing risk* at the tertiary prevention level, as these laws are premised on the notion that supervision will create difficulties in a known offender going undetected. Since most sex crimes occur within private locations by someone known to the victim (Calkins et al., 2015; Colombino et al., 2011; Greenfield, 1997; Snyder, 2000), the discussion of “stranger danger” needs to be expanded to include neighbors, friends, and family (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). Similarly, although SCP strategies have been implemented in a variety of settings, there is no research to date that has expanded this framework to home settings, likely because there is little known about the structural components of the offense location within home environments. Once the situational and structural components within home settings have been identified, empirically derived situational crime prevention strategies, at a primary prevention level, can be used in an effort to curb child sexual abuse where it most often occurs (i.e., in the home).

**Sex Offender Perpetration Patterns**

Research has shown that sex offenders tend to perpetrate crimes against people they know (Colombino, Mercado, Jeglic, & Levenson, 2011; Duwe, Donnay, & Tewksbury, 2008; Greenfield, 1997; Smallbone & Wortley, 2000; Snyder, 2000). In a sample of 224 recidivistic child victim offenders, Duwe et al. (2008) found, that only 35% of the offenders had developed a “direct-contact relationship” with their victims (e.g., met their victim on the street or in a place where no parent was present), while 51% were “collateral-contact” offenders (e.g., formed relationship with the parent of the child victim) and 14% had a biological relationship with their victim. Further, Greenfield (1997) reported that over 73% of offenders knew their victims prior
to the offense, and the Minnesota Department of Corrections (2007) found, in their sample, that the majority (79%) of sex offenders had offended against someone they knew. These findings suggest that sex offenders tend to form a relationship with their victims, often through collateral contact (e.g., parent of the victim), rather than perpetrate an offense against a child unknown to them.

Because sex offenders tend to know their victims, it is not surprising that sex offenders most often encounter victims in residential settings (Colombino, Mercado, & Jeglic, 2009; Colombino et al., 2011) and also perpetrate offenses within residential locations (Colombino et al., 2009; Colombino et al., 2011; Duwe et al., 2008; Smallbone & Wortley, 2000). Colombino et al.’s (2011) examination of sex offenses in New Jersey showed that approximately 75% of child sex offenders ($n = 1,202$) first encountered victims within the home (e.g., victim’s home, offender’s home, relative’s home). Similarly, it has been found that the majority of offenders perpetrated offenses in private residential locations (82%; Colombino et al., 2009). In Smallbone and Wortley’s (2000) sample of extra-familial child molesters, 40% of the offenders met their victims in a friend’s home, while relatively few offenders met their victims in public places, such as a park (10.5%) or playground (5.3%). Further, Calkins, Colombino, Matsuura, and Jeglic (2015) found that less than 0.5% (7/1456) of offenses, in their sample, were perpetrated by a stranger within a public, child-dense location (e.g., school, park). This finding further demonstrates that the stranger danger scenario is rare. Although, thus far, most legislative efforts have focused on preventing strangers from perpetrating sex crimes in public places, it seems that prevention efforts could be better served through prevention strategies aimed at averting sex crimes where they are most likely to occur (i.e., residential settings). Given these findings, it
seems necessary to examine the characteristics of sex offenses perpetrated within private or residential settings in order to provide empirically informed prevention policies.

There tends to be a public misconception that sex offenders reoffend at high rates, and that all sex offenders perpetrate crimes in the same way (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007). However, recidivism studies tend to show that sexual re-offense rates are fairly low. For example, through a meta-analytic examination of 95 recidivism studies based on re-arrests, re-convictions, and self-reports, Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2004) found an average sexual recidivism rate of 13.7%. Notably, sex offenders are heterogeneous in their offending and recidivistic patterns. For example, child victim offenders who perpetrate crimes against extra-familial victims tend to sexually recidivate at higher rates compared to incest offenders. Further, offenders with male child victims also have increased sexual recidivism rates compared to offenders who have female child victims (Harris, Knight, Smallbone, & Dennison, 2010; Parton & Day, 2002). Therefore, although sexual recidivism overall is quite low, there are sub-types of offenders that may pose greater risk for sexual recidivism. Therefore, examining sub-types of offenders, rather than sex offenders as a homogenous group, may be most effective when forming empirically supported prevention efforts.

**Perpetration Patterns of Child Sex Offenders**

Previous research has examined the modus operandi of sexual offenses against children, especially as it relates to grooming tactics and gaining access to children (Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989; Elliot, Browne, & Kilcoyne, 1995; Leclerc, Proulx, & Beauregard, 2009; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). This body of research seeks to understand how sex offenders select and gain access to their victims. These strategies are observable behaviors, which have been identified as ways that offenders lure the victim, gain the trust of the victim and the victim’s guardian, initiate
sexual contact, and maintain the silence of the victim (Conte et al., 1989; Kaufman, Mosher, Carter, & Estes, 2006; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). For example, a common strategy used to gain victim trust is to give gifts or affection to the child (Kaufman et al., 1998). Other common strategies include developing relationships with the child and the child’s family, as well as desensitizing the child to touch by using non-sexual touching games (e.g., tickling; Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006). Common methods used to prevent disclosure include isolating the victim from their family (Craven et al., 2006) or using threats or bribes (Berliner & Conte, 1990; Kaufman et al., 1998). If the child feels isolated from their family or caretaker, the child may think that no one will believe their disclosure. Notably, it has been found that intra-familial offenders are more likely to give gifts to gain victim trust, whereas extra-familial offenders are more likely to provide alcohol and drugs (Kaufman et al., 1998); therefore, the type of strategy used is most likely to depend on a variety of factors including aspects of the offender, victim, victim’s caretaker, and the environment.

Kaufman et al. (2006) state that modus operandi strategies can be used not only on the child, but on the child’s guardian as well. Establishing trust with the parent or guardian seems to be one tactic in gaining and maintaining access to a child victim. For instance, Smallbone and Wortley (2000) found that in 46% of cases, the offender spent time with the child while the child’s caretaker was present. Similarly, Underwood, Patch, Cappelletty, and Wolfe (1999) found that almost a quarter (23.9%) of their sample of adult male sex offenders had abused a child while another adult was present. More recently, Leclerc, Smallbone, and Wortley (2013) found that in approximately 61% of cases, sexual abuse occurred when a potential guardian was present (Leclerc et al., 2013). Although it is reported that severity of abuse decreased in the presence of a guardian (Leclerc et al., 2013), these findings suggest that sexual abuse still occurs
Despite guardian presence. It should be considered, however, that “guardian” was loosely defined as an adult that was present (e.g., relative, acquaintance), which was not necessarily the parent or legal guardian of the child victim. Therefore, there appears to still be limited to no research that has examined the child’s legal guardian within the context of child sexual abuse. It is imperative to further examine the role that children’s guardians play in sex crimes against children.

Craven and colleagues (2006) argue that the offender not only grooms the child and the guardian, but also grooms or manipulates the environment. Once a victim has been identified, Craven and colleagues argue that the offender will then begin to manipulate the environment in such a way that will allow the offender to gain access to the child, with less risk of being caught. Gaining the trust of the child’s family and caretaker is one of the first steps of grooming the environment. For instance, offenders might seek out single parent households, not only because the child might have less protection, but also because this might allow for the offender to fill an emotional or psychological void that the child or caretaker may have (Craven et al., 2006). It has long been found that sex offenders tend to choose victims that appear vulnerable (Conte et al., 1989); however, it may be that it’s not the child that is vulnerable (e.g., low self-esteem), but more importantly, aspects of the environment in which the child has now become vulnerable (e.g., absent or impaired guardian). Rather than manipulating or changing an environment through the grooming process, it seems also likely that an offender chooses an environment because it appears to be a suitable offense location.

**Situational Factors in Child Sexual Abuse**

Situational and geographical aspects of sex crimes perpetrated against adults have been widely researched, especially in cases where the victim is unknown to the offender. The
literature has largely focused on “hunting patterns,” which include a systematic investigation of geographical aspects of the offense, such as the offender’s choice for hunting field (i.e., type of area offender searched for victim) and methods used to attack the victim (Beauregard, Rossmo, & Proulx, 2007; Rebocho & Goncalves, 2012). Although there have been recent attempts to extend this research to offenders who perpetrate crimes against children (Leclerc et al., 2009; Leclerc, Smallbone, & Wortley, 2011; Rebocho & Goncalves, 2012), this area of research is still in its infancy. Further, the findings tend to resemble the modus operandi literature previously discussed (e.g., location of offense, strategies for obtaining access to the victim). Although there appears to be sufficient empirical knowledge surrounding strategies employed by offenders to gain and maintain access to children (e.g., grooming patterns), there has yet to be a detailed analysis and understanding of physical, structural components of the home environment that may foster the ability for the offender to use such strategies. For example, it is unknown whether physical barriers (e.g., closed doors) increase risk for sexual abuse. Similarly, there is limited knowledge regarding temporal factors related to child sexual abuse in the home, such as time of day or time of year. Although Leclerc et al. (2013) found that approximately 28% of offenses within the home occurred between 6pm and 9pm, no other time information was provided. Similarly, Chaffin, Levenson, Letourneau, and Stern (2009), who examined 67,045 extra-familial sex crimes against children aged 12 or younger that occurred toward the end of October, reported that, “Halloween appears to be just another autumn day where rates of sex crimes against children are concerned,” and suggested vigilance should perhaps be directed to summer months where sex crime rates appeared higher (Chaffin et al., 2009, p. 372). However, there is still much to learn in regards to temporal factors (e.g., time of day, seasonality) before temporal implications for prevention can be derived. Further, most studies sample offenders only, and
examine just the offenders’ methods or role played during the abuse (Rebocho & Goncalves, 2012). To have a comprehensive understanding of how the situation interacts with the individuals involved, it is important to empirically evaluate not just the offender, but the role others (i.e., victim, guardian) have in the environment, as well.

Although studies have largely found that sex offenses most often occur within residential settings (Colombino et al., 2011; Leclerc, Wortley, & Smallbone, 2011; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006), little is known about the specifics of the home environments in which these sex crimes occur. Despite the lack of empirical knowledge, there have been attempts to outline prevention methods within residential locations based on situational crime prevention theory (Leclerc, Chiu, & Cale, 2014). For example, one suggestion put forth is to control access to unsupervised places within the home or put locks on bedroom and bathroom doors to ensure privacy (Leclerc et al., 2014). These suggestions are based on theory alone, as there has yet to be a systematic investigation into how sex crimes are perpetrated within the home. It is empirically unknown, for example, whether or not most sex crimes occur in the bedroom or bathroom. Indeed, the authors caution that empirical knowledge of situational characteristics of sex crimes is limited to date (Leclerc et al., 2014). To develop empirically informed prevention suggestions, physical environments need to be examined (Leclerc et al., 2009). Understanding the situational and structural components of sexual abuse that happen in the home can help inform and develop prevention strategies aimed at creating safer environments.

Current Study

Given the prevalence of sexual violence, effective prevention policies are warranted. Situational factors in child sexual abuse have implications for prevention efforts (Hebenton, 2011; Kaufman et al., 2006; Leclerc et al., 2009; Leclerc, Proulx, & McKibben, 2005; Leclerc et
al., 2011; Rebocho & Goncalves, 2012; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). It has been found that approaches that attempt to modify the characteristics of settings (e.g., schools, workplaces) appear promising (DeGue et al., 2012). Stranger danger is rare, as most offenders develop relationships with their victims and encounter victims in private residential locations (Calkins et al., 2015; Colombino et al., 2011; Greenfield, 1997; Snyder, 2000). Therefore, in order to develop empirically informed suggestions for preventing sex crimes against children, where they most often occur, it is necessary to understand the context of child sexual abuse perpetrated within residential settings. Although important, there are still relatively few studies that have comprehensively examined situational factors and even fewer that have examined the role of the legal guardian. The purpose of the current study is provide a comprehensive examination of child sexual abuse within residential locations, by exploring situational and structural components of the offense location, as well as factors related to the legal guardian, to provide empirically-supported primary prevention suggestions for averting child sexual abuse within residential settings. Toward this aim, a semi-structured interview was developed to assess situational and structural components of the offense location, as well as aspects of the legal guardian (i.e., parent or non-parent legal guardian), in both an offender and victim sample. An offender and victim sample was utilized to gather information from two different data sources for more complete and accurate portrayal of the child sexual abuse situation. Participants were also asked to provide suggestions for preventing child sexual abuse.

Therefore, the current study aimed to:

1. Provide a highly contextualized understanding of child sexual abuse within residential settings, as understood by a comprehensive examination of situational aspects of sexual
abuse and factors related to the legal guardian, through quantitative and qualitative methods,

2. Compare victim and offender interview responses to assess for variations and similarities, and

3. Provide specific, empirically driven strategies for preventing child sexual abuse.

The following table represents the factors represented in the study (see Table 1).

Table 1.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Items</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SITUATIONAL ASPECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Structural Aspects of the Home</strong></td>
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<td>Location offense occurred within the home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aspects that made it a suitable location *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the victim have own bed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the victim have own bedroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family members that lived in the home</td>
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<td><strong>Observation by Others</strong></td>
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<td>Other people home during offense</td>
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<td><strong>GUARDIAN FACTORS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>PREVENTION SUGGESTIONS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Prevention of Offense</strong></td>
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<td>What were some warning signs to prevent abuse? *</td>
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<td>How could someone have prevented abuse? *</td>
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<td><strong>General Prevention</strong></td>
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</table>
What would you tell a child to prevent abuse? *
What advice would you give to a parent to prevent abuse? *
What do you think the community can do to prevent abuse? *

* Indicates open-ended interview item.

Offender perpetration patterns will also be examined as an ancillary research aim. Therefore, Table 2 represents perpetration pattern interview items (see Table 2).

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Interview Items</th>
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<td><strong>OFFENDER PERPETRATION PATTERNS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Victim Characteristics and Selection</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Offender Strategies</strong></td>
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</table>

* Indicates open-ended interview item.

Although this is an exploratory study, the following were expected:

1. It was expected that participants would identify a number of situational factors that made the offense location appear like a suitable setting. For example, structural factors that might be reported may include physical barriers that prevented others from seeing the offense (e.g., closed door), certain house rules and household organization (e.g., shared bedrooms), the amount of people present or able to witness sexual abuse, and temporal factors (e.g., abuse occurred during summer months, abuse occurred overnight).
2. It was expected that offenders and victims would report that the guardian was absent or impaired to some degree. Absent or impaired might include situations where the guardian had financial problems, mental health concerns, or some other issue that interfered with the guardian being present.

3. It was expected that offenders and victims would report that the victim was targeted because the victim was perceived as vulnerable. Participants were asked to explain what made the victim appear vulnerable, and it was expected that offenders would report on situational factors (e.g., lack of supervision), whereas victims would report internal-based responses (e.g., “I was quiet,” low self-esteem). Further, it was expected that offenders would also identify opportunity as a reason for choosing their victim (e.g., the victim was there).

**Experimental Methods and Design**

**Sample**

There were two samples for the current study: 1) Participants who identified as victims of child sexual abuse, and 2) Incarcerated sex offenders. Most studies that examine factors related to child sexual abuse utilize *either* a victim sample *or* an offender sample, but there has yet to be a study of this kind that has both victims and offenders as participants. Having both victims and offenders as participants, within one study, presents an advantage, as it allows for triangulation. The goal of triangulation is to provide an examination from different data points to obtain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied (Sands & Roer-Strier, 2006). Offenders and victims each have their own perceptions of what they recall from the child sexual abuse situation. Using both perceptions for data collection allowed for a more complete understanding of the circumstances surrounding child sexual abuse.
**Offender Sample.** The first sample consisted of adult male sex offenders, who were convicted of a contact sexual offense against a minor (i.e., victim was under 17 years old at the time of the offense), and who were incarcerated at the Graterford State Correctional Institution (heretofore “Graterford”) in Pennsylvania. The sex offense must have occurred within a residential setting for the offender to be eligible for the current study. Graterford houses over 4,000 inmates and is the largest maximum-security prison in Pennsylvania. Further, Graterford houses the majority of all sex offenders in Pennsylvania and the facility has the largest sex offender treatment facility in the state. Inmates housed at Graterford are racially diverse and come from rural, urban, and suburban locations. There are approximately 700 inmates at Graterford who have an index sexual offense. The PI’s primary and secondary advisors have an on-going relationship with the research staff at Graterford prison and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Participants were recruited as part of a larger study on desistance from crime among sex offenders. Recruitment took place in the prison where the participants were incarcerated, and was conducted by graduate level research assistants with help from the Clinical Research Director in the psychology department of the prison. Participation was voluntary and participants were not compensated for their participation. In total, 61 sex offenders participated in the semi-structured interview, and 47 met selection criteria of having committed a sex crime against a child within a residential setting. Participants averaged 42.8 years at the time of participation ($SD = 9.67$) and their average age at the time of their offense was 28.4 ($SD = 8.38$). Offender participants were African American (51.1%; $n = 24$) and White (48.9%; $n = 23$).

**Victim Sample.** The second sample consisted of undergraduate students at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. To recruit participants for the current study, an online survey --
titled “Preventing Sexual Violence” -- was developed. The survey’s main objective was to recruit participants for the follow-up interview, which was assessed through a questionnaire that asked participants to report whether or not they experienced an unwanted sexual experience prior to age 18 and situational questions related to their unwanted sexual experience (e.g., location of the offense). Participants were also asked to report on their relationships with their parents and methods for coping with stress. During the informed consent phase, participants were asked whether they would like to participate in a follow-up study. If the participants agreed, they were asked to provide contact information for follow-up. Participants were awarded one course credit for completion of the online survey. In total, 2,000 students participated in the online survey.

Participants who indicated that they experienced child sexual abuse (i.e., victim of sexual abuse before 18 years old) and also indicated that they would like to participate in a future study \( (n = 162) \) were contacted to participate in the current study. Of those contacted, 79 students consented to participate in the semi-structured interview. Of those 79 students who agreed to participate, 61 met selection criteria (i.e., was a victim of sexual abuse that occurred within a residential setting) and completed an interview as part of this study. Participants were awarded two course credits for their participation in the follow-up interview. Participants averaged 21.0 years at the time of participation \( (SD = 4.46) \) and the average age at the time of victimization ranged from 4 to 17 \( (M = 10.5, SD = 4.2) \). Victim participants were Latino \( (63.3\%; n = 50) \), White \( (19.0\%; n = 15) \), African American \( (15.2\%; n = 12) \), or Pacific Islander \( (2.5\%; n = 2) \). The majority of victim participants were female \( (91.4\%, n = 117) \), while only 8.6% \( (n = 11) \) were male.

**Measures**

Two semi-structured interview tools were developed by the principal investigator to measure the context of child sexual abuse in the home: an offender interview tool and a victim
interview tool. Items were developed after considering research that has focused on “hunting patterns” of stranger adult rape offenders (Beauregard et al., 2007; Rebocho & Gobcalves, 2012), modus operandi literature that has examined offenders who perpetrate crimes against children (Kaufman et al., 1998; Leclerc et al., 2005; 2009; 2013), and research that has focused on situational aspects of child sexual abuse (Smallbone & Wortley, 2000). Interview questions were reviewed by sexual violence prevention experts to determine and establish validity.

**Offender interview tool.** A semi-structured interview tool was developed to measure the context of child sexual abuse within the home. The interview protocol took approximately half an hour to complete. Offenders that had multiple victims were asked to complete the interview protocol for each victim. Theory-driven items were developed to measure the situational characteristics of offenses that occur in residential locations. The interview asked specific questions about the situational aspects of sexual abuse, guardian factors, prevention suggestions, and offender perpetration patterns. Items that assessed situational aspects of sexual abuse focused on structural aspects of the home (e.g., aspects that created a suitable offense location), the ability for others to witness sexual abuse (e.g., barriers to others seeing abuse), and temporal factors (i.e., time of day, time of year). Items that measured the victim’s legal guardian asked the offender to report the guardian’s awareness and presence (e.g., guardian presence during the offense, guardian mental health), as well as whether or not the guardian confronted the offender about spending too much time with the victim or, if made aware of abuse, had disclosed the abuse to authorities. Items that assessed suggestions for prevention asked the offender to report how their own sex crime could have been prevented (e.g., warning signs), as well as advice they would provide to a child, parent, and the community (see Table 1). The structured interview also contained items that assessed offender perpetration patterns, including items on victim
characteristics (e.g., victim gender, victim age, relationship to the victim), method for victim selection (e.g., why the offender chose the victim), and method used to carry out the offense (e.g., method used to get victim alone for sexual contact; see Table 2). Interview items contained close-ended (dichotomous “yes” / “no” and multiple answer) and open-ended questions. See Appendix A for the offender interview tool.

**Victim interview tool.** Similarly, a semi-structured interview tool was developed to measure the victim’s perception of the context of the sexual abuse they experienced as a child. The interview protocol took approximately a half hour to complete. Victims that had multiple offenders were asked to complete the interview protocol for each offender. Theory-driven items were developed to measure situational characteristics. Interview items asked specific questions about the situational aspects of sexual abuse, guardian factors, prevention suggestions, and offender perpetration patterns. The victim interview tool was developed to mirror the offender interview tool. Interview items contained close-ended (dichotomous “yes” / “no” and multiple answer) and open-ended questions. See Appendix B for the victim interview tool.

**Data Collection Procedure**

**Offender data collection.** Masters’ and doctoral level students were recruited to participate as research assistants for the current project. Research assistants were thoroughly trained in interviewing techniques, safety protocols, and prison procedures and policies, which involved ongoing training and clinical supervision. A team of four to five clinical research assistants traveled to the Graterford prison for four business days to conduct interviews with the incarcerated offender sample, over seven total trips.

The current study, though conceptually distinct, relied on data collection procedures that were already in place as part of a larger longitudinal study that examined desistance from crime
among sex offenders. Research assistants asked the potential participant if they would like to participate in the study. After they agreed to participate, research assistants began the informed consent process. Research assistants addressed any questions or concerns the participant had, and the participant was informed that they could withdraw from participation at any time. After documented informed consent was obtained, research assistants then began the semi-structured interview. The current study’s interview tool was included in the comprehensive interview packet developed for the desistance study. Each semi-structured interview took approximately 75-120 minutes to complete, which included all items from the current study’s interview tool.

**Victim data collection.** Masters’ and doctoral level students with trauma-related clinical experience were recruited to participate as research assistants for the current project. Research assistants were thoroughly trained in interviewing techniques, as well as risk and safety protocols, and received ongoing training and clinical supervision. Participants were recruited from the online survey, “Preventing Sexual Violence,” which sampled John Jay College of Criminal Justice’s undergraduate students from psychology classes that participated in the research experience program (REP) at John Jay College. In the online survey, all students, 18 years or older, were eligible to participate. The students self-reported on their own child sexual abuse history (i.e., “Have you experienced an unwanted sexual experience before age 18?”). Participants were also asked whether they would agree to be contacted for a future study. Students who agreed to be contacted in the future were asked to provide contact information in the form of up to two email addresses, up to two phone numbers, and the contact information for an individual who would always know how to get in contact with them. Those who indicated that they had experienced child sexual abuse, and agreed to be contacted for a future study, qualified to participate in the semi-structured interview. Research assistants contacted eligible
participants, following an email or telephone script, to recruit participants for the follow-up interview. Participants who agreed to the follow-up interview were scheduled with a trained clinical research assistant. The interview was conducted one-on-one. The research assistant explained the purpose of the study and began the informed consent process, which included consent to audio record interviews. After documented informed consent was obtained, the semi-structured interview began, which was expected to take approximately one hour to complete. Research assistants addressed any questions or concerns the participant had, and the participant was informed that they could drop out of the study or refuse to answer a question at any time. Participants who signed the informed consent were remunerated with two research credits regardless of completion of the study. The interviews were audio recorded, so as to maintain clinical rapport with the participants during discussion of sensitive information and ensure the accuracy of data obtained. The audio recordings were transcribed and the original recordings were destroyed. The participant was allowed to refuse audio recording and at any time could ask that the recording be erased. The audio recording identified the victim through a number only, and no identifying information was audio-recorded. Notably, no participants refused audio recording.

Results

Analysis Plan

A mixed methods approach was employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative analyses. There were offenders and victims that reported more than one child sexual abuse offense (i.e., different victims or perpetrators). Ten victim participants reported two offenses and five victim participants reported three offenses, resulting in a total number of 81 victim reported abuse incidents. Four offender participants reported two offenses and one offender participant
reported three offenses, resulting in a total of 53 offender reported abuse incidents. In total, victim and offender participants reported 134 incidents of child sexual abuse that occurred in a residential location. The data was aggregated to achieve an overall understanding of the child sexual abuse situation. Then, when appropriate, offender and victim responses were compared, using chi-square analyses, to determine whether differences were found. Open-ended questions were analyzed for themes and, when applicable, frequencies were reported.

**Offender Perpetration Patterns**

**Victim characteristics and selection.** Participants were asked to report how long the offender knew the victim prior to the offense. Of the 128 cases for which data was available, most participants (42.2%, $n = 54$) reported that the offender knew the victim for one year or less. Specifically, offenders knew victims for 2 weeks to 1 month (10.9%, $n = 14$), 1 – 6 months (10.2%, $n = 13$), 6 months – 1 year (9.4%, $n = 12$), less than 24 hours (8.6%, $n = 11$), or 1 day to 7 days (3.1%, $n = 4$). Other offenders knew their victims for more than one year (29.7%, $n = 38$). Specifically, participants reported offenders knew their victims since birth (10.2%, $n = 13$), 1-3 years (7.9%, $n = 10$), 4-7 years (7.0%, $n = 8$), or 10-13 years (5.4%, $n = 5$). Over one-quarter (28.1%, $n = 36$) of participants reported that they did not know how long the offender knew the victim prior to the offense.

The offender most often was an extended family member (26.1%, $n = 35$), acquaintance (17.9%, $n = 24$), friend (15.7%, $n = 21$), friend of the family (11.9%, $n = 16$), step-parent (10.4%, $n = 14$), parent (6.0%, $n = 8$), stranger (5.2%, $n = 7$), biological sibling (3.0%, $n = 4$), step-sibling (3.0%, $n = 4$), or grandparent (0.7%, $n = 1$). The victim’s age at the time of victimization ranged from 4 to 17 ($M = 10.87$, $SD = 4.03$).
Most participants reported that the offender most often met the victim in a private location (i.e., a residence; 48.9%, \( n = 65 \)) and less met the victim in a public location (24.0%, \( n = 32 \)). Just over a quarter (27.1%, \( n = 36 \)) of participants reported that the offender knew the victim since birth. A chi-square analysis revealed there was no statistically significant difference between victim and offender responses regarding the location where the offender met the victim, \( \chi^2(3, N = 133) = 5.660, p = .129 \).

The majority of victim participants were female (91.4%, \( n = 117 \)), while only 8.6% (\( n = 11 \)) were male. Although most offenders were male (95.5%, \( n = 127 \)), some offenders were female (4.5%, \( n = 6 \)).

**Offender strategies.** Offenders were asked to report on the reason they chose the victim and victims were asked to report on their opinion as to why the offender had chosen them as their victim. Participants most often reported “opportunity” as a reason for victim selection (76.7%, \( n = 102 \)). Other reasons included that the victim appeared vulnerable (66.2%, \( n = 88 \)), that the victim lacked supervision (56.4%, \( n = 75 \)), the victim’s age (55.6%, \( n = 74 \)), that the victim’s guardian trusted the offender (54.1%, \( n = 72 \)), and that the offender was sexually attracted to the victim (50.4%, \( n = 67 \)).

A chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between offender and victim responses in regards to whether victim vulnerability was a reason the offender chose the victim, \( \chi^2(3, N = 133) = 31.244, p < .001 \). Victims were more likely to report that they had appeared vulnerable (77.3%, \( n = 68 \)) compared to offenders (22.7%, \( n = 20 \)). Offenders were more likely to indicate that vulnerability was not a reason for victim selection (67.5%, \( n = 27 \)) compared to victims (32.5%, \( n = 13 \)). Victims and offenders were asked to specify what made the victim appear vulnerable. Most offenders (70.9%, \( n = 39 \)) reported that they “did not know”
what made the victim appear vulnerable. Other offenders identified factors such as the victim’s age (9.1%, n = 5), lack of supervision (9.1%, n = 5), that the victim trusted the offender (5.5%, n = 3), that the offender had easy access to the victim (1.8%, n = 1), that the offender believed the victim would not tell their parent (1.8%, n = 1), and that the victim appeared mature for her age (1.8%, n = 1). Most victims (45%, n = 36) also reported that they did not know what made them appear vulnerable to their perpetrator. Other victims identified factors including their young age (21.3%, n = 17), that the victim was “quiet” (11.3%, n = 9), that the victim trusted the offender (6.3%, n = 5), that the victim was intoxicated (6.3%, n = 5), that the victim lacked supervision or was regularly left alone with the offender (5.0%, n = 4), that the victim was threatened by the offender (2.5%, n = 2), that the victim was “too friendly” (1.2%, n = 1), and that the victim had a disability (1.2%, n = 1).

Participants were asked to report the method the offender used to get the victim alone for sexual contact. The most common method used was for the offender to gain the trust of the victim (i.e., “victim trusted the offender;” 57.1%, n = 76), followed by the offender’s use of a bribe or enticement (26.3%, n = 35). Other methods included the offender’s use of force (24.1%, n = 32), the offender threatened the victim (15.8%, n = 21), the offender provided alcohol or drugs to the victim (6.8%, n = 9), and the offender threatened the victim’s family (5.3%, n = 7). Further, only 20.5% of participants indicated that the offender made the victim seem like a “bad child” to others. For example, one victim reported that her offender isolated her from her family and other children her age. Another victim indicated that her offender told her family that she was acting too mature for her age and that she wanted to do “nasty things.” Similarly, when one victim would avoid her offender’s abuse attempts, her offender would tell her mother about disapproving things the victim had done.
Of the 109 cases for which data was available, most participants reported that the abuse occurred one time (36.7%, \(n = 40\)) or 2-3 times (24.8%, \(n = 27\)). Others reported that the abuse occurred 4-5 times (13.8%, \(n = 15\)), 6-20 times (11.0%, \(n = 12\)), 21-50 times (7.3%, \(n = 8\)), or over 50 times (6.4%, \(n = 7\)).

**Situational Aspects of Sexual Abuse**

**Structural aspects of the home.** Participants reported that the offense most often occurred in the offender’s home (35.1%, \(n = 47\)), followed by the victim’s home (22.4%, \(n = 30\)), a home shared by the offender and victim (i.e., offender and victim lived together; 19.4%, \(n = 26\)), or someone else’s home (e.g., relative or neighbor’s home; 18.7%, \(n = 25\)). A lesser percentage (3.0%, \(n = 4\)) did not report the offense location, and only 1.5% (\(n = 2\)) of offenses occurred at both the offender and victim’s home (i.e., multiple incidents that occurred at least once in the offender’s home and once in the victim’s home; see Table 3). A chi-square analysis revealed there was a statistically significant difference between victim and offender responses on offense location, \(\chi^2(5, N = 134) = 17.895, p = .003\). Victims were more likely to report that the offense occurred within someone else’s home (e.g., relative’s home; 24.7%, \(n = 20\)) and in the offender’s home (39.5%, \(n = 32\)), whereas offenders were more likely to report that the offense occurred within the victim’s home (34.0%, \(n = 18\)) or a home that they shared with the victim (28.3%, \(n = 15\)).

Participants were asked to report a more detailed account as to where within the home the offense occurred. Overall, 20.9% (\(n = 28\)) of offenses occurred within the offender’s bedroom, 16.4% (\(n = 22\)) occurred in the victim’s bedroom, 12.7% (\(n = 17\)) occurred in someone else’s bedroom, 12.7% (\(n = 17\)) occurred in the living room, 10.4% (\(n = 14\)) occurred in an unspecified area or multiple locations within the offender’s home, 6.0% (\(n = 8\)) occurred in multiple
locations within a shared home, 6.0% (n = 8) occurred in a basement, 4.5% (n = 6) occurred in a
bathroom, 2.2% (n = 3) occurred within a kitchen, and 1.5% (n = 2) occurred within an
unspecified area or multiple locations within the victim’s home (see Table 3). There were nine
(6.7%) offenses where the offender or victim did not specify in the home where the offense
occurred.

A chi-square analysis revealed there was a statistically significant difference between
victim and offender responses regarding the specific offense location, ($\chi^2 (10, N = 134) = 27.641,$
$p = .002$). Victims were most likely to report that offenses occurred in the offender’s bedroom
(24.7%, $n = 20$), whereas offenders were most likely to report that offenses occurred in multiple
locations within a home that they shared with the victim (13.2%, $n = 7$) or in a living room
(22.6%, $n = 12$).

Participants were asked to report why they believed the offense location may have been
perceived as a suitable location for the offense to occur. Of the 76 cases for which data was
available, participants reported that the offender most often took the victim to a secluded area of
the home (e.g., basement, the other end of the home away from other people that were home;
32.9%, $n = 25$) or committed the offense in a locked room (26.3%, $n = 20$). Others reported that
the offender felt comfortable in the home (14.5%, $n = 11$), no one else was home (7.9%, $n = 6$),
the offense occurred overnight when others were sleeping (6.6%, $n = 5$), the guardian was
incapacitated (i.e., overweight with limited mobility, intoxicated; 5.3%, $n = 4$), or the offender
darkened the room (i.e., curtains shut, lights off; 3.9%, $n = 3$). One participant (1.3%) reported
that the offense occurred in the offender’s bedroom with the door closed. This participant stated
that the offender’s grandmother would knock or “announce herself” prior to entering the
bedroom. Another participant (1.3%) reported that the offender told her that the walls were
soundproof, so if she yelled, no one would hear her. The victim was unsure whether or not it was true, but the threat was enough to not call out.

Participants were asked to report the victim’s sleeping arrangements in the victim’s home. Of the 108 cases for which data was available, the majority of participants reported that the victim had their own bedroom (55.6%, \(n = 60\)), while 44.4% (\(n = 48\)) of victims shared a bedroom with another person. Further, the majority of victims had their own bed (79.4%, \(n = 85\)), while only 20.6% (\(n = 22\)) of victims shared a bed with another person (see Table 3). Chi-square analyses revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the locations where the offense occurred and whether the victim had their own bedroom, (\(\chi^2(20, N = 112) = 28.344, p = .102\)) or bed, (\(\chi^2(20, N = 111) = 26.908, p = .138\)).

Participants were asked to report on family members or others that lived in the victim’s home during the time of the sexual offense. Of the 108 cases for which data was available, participants reported that only 30.6% (\(n = 33\)) of victims resided with both their biological mother and father. Some participants reported that the victim resided with their biological mother and a step-parent (15.7%, \(n = 17\)) and a lesser percentage (2.8%, \(n = 3\)) reported that the victim resided with their biological father and a step-parent. Just over half of cases (50.9%, \(n = 55\)) involved a victim who resided in a single-parent household. Other participants reported that a grandparent (19.4%, \(n = 21\)), an uncle (7.4%, \(n = 8\)), an aunt (6.5%, \(n = 7\)), or a cousin (5.6%, \(n = 6\)) resided in the victim’s home. Further, participants reported that minor siblings ages 0-12 (34.3%, \(n = 37\)), minor siblings ages 13-17 (27.8%, \(n = 30\)), and adult siblings (19.4%, \(n = 21\)) resided in the home. Finally, participants reported that some other child (8.3%, \(n = 9\)) or adult (4.6%, \(n = 5\)) lived in the home.
**Observation by others.** Most participants indicated that other people tended to be home when the offense occurred (64.7%, n = 86). Specifically, nearly half of the sample (45.1%, n = 60), reported that other people were “Always” home during the offense while others reported that others were “Sometimes” home (11.3%, n = 15), “Usually” home (7.5%, n = 10), or “Infrequently” home (0.8%, n = 1). In 35.3% of cases (n = 47), no other person was at home when the offense occurred. Although most (90%, n = 81) of those who reported that others were at home during the time of the offense reported that the other person was in another room, 10% (n = 9) reported that another person was in the same room when the offense occurred. Eight of these nine offenses occurred overnight when the other person in the room was asleep; however, one of these offenses occurred in the basement behind a couch (others were sitting on the couch).

Of the 111 cases for which data was available, 50.5% (n = 56) of participants reported that it was possible for someone to see the offense, whereas 49.5% (n = 55) of participants reported that there was a barrier that prevented someone else from witnessing the offense. The most common reported barrier was that no one else was at home when the offense occurred (55.4%, n = 36). Participants reported that when other people were at home during the offense, a likely barrier was that the door was closed (33.8%, n = 22). A lesser number (10.8%, n = 7) reported that other people were home, the door was open, but the offender was alone in the room with the victim. For example, one victim reported that the offense occurred in her room with the door open, overnight, when others were sleeping. One offender reported that he had isolated the victim in her bedroom, with the lights off, but the door was open (see Table 3).

**Temporal factors.** Offenders and victims were asked to report the time of day that the offense most often occurred. Most offenses occurred during late afternoon (3-6pm; 25.9%, n = 27), followed by overnight (12am – 6am; 24.0%, n = 25), evening (6-9pm; 18.3%, n = 19), and
early afternoon (3-6pm; 15.4%, n = 16). Fewer participants reported that the offense occurred during the morning (9am – 12p; 8.7%, n = 9), late evening (9pm-12am; 5.8%, n = 6), or early morning (6am – 9am; 1.9%, n = 2). Participants indicated that when the offense occurred overnight, others at home tended to be asleep (88%, n = 22), whereas a smaller percentage (12%, n = 3) indicated that others at home, overnight, were awake. Chi-square analyses revealed that there were no significant differences between the location where the offense occurred and the time of day when the offense occurred, ($\chi^2 (70, N = 109) = 69.142, p = .507$). Although significance was not found, most likely due to the small sample size, it appeared that when the offense occurred overnight, it was likely to occur in the victim’s bedroom (47.6%, n = 10).

Participants were also asked to report the time of year that the offense occurred. Of the 89 cases for which data was available, participants reported that the offense most often occurred during Summer (37.1%, n = 33), followed by Winter (25.8%, n = 23), Fall (21.3%, n = 19), and Spring (15.7%, n = 14; see Table 3).

**Guardian Factors**

Only a minority of offenses were committed by the victim’s legal guardian (23.1%, n = 24). Of the 23 offenses for which data was available, 52.2% (n = 12) of offenders were the victim’s *sole* guardian and 47.8% (n = 11) were the victim’s *partial* guardian. Participants were not asked the guardian interview questions for cases that involved an offending *sole* guardian.

Participants were asked to report on the legal guardian’s relationship to the victim. Most victims and offenders reported that the victim’s legal guardian was indeed a biological mother and/or biological father (83.7%, n = 87); however, a smaller percentage (16.3%, n = 17) reported that some other individual was the victim’s legal guardian, which included a grandparent (n = 9),
a step-father \((n = 6)\), an aunt \((n = 4)\), a step-mother \((n = 1)\), an adopted parent \((n = 1)\), and a family friend \((n = 1)\).

**Guardian awareness and presence.** Participants reported that a legal guardian was at home during the time of the offense in nearly one-third \((29\%, n = 27)\) of cases (see Table 4).

Participants were asked to report whether or not they believed the legal guardian had any significant concerns (e.g., mental health, medical, financial) at the time of the offense. Of the 90 cases for which data was available, participants reported that some legal guardians \((42.2\%, n = 38)\) had a mental health, financial, or medical concern, whereas the majority \((57.8\%, n = 52)\) reported that the legal guardian did not have a mental health, financial, or medical concern. Specifically, participants reported that legal guardians had experienced substance abuse \((n = 13)\), financial concerns \((n = 13)\), mental health concerns (i.e., depression, anxiety, schizoaffective disorder; \(n = 8)\), and medical concerns \((n = 5)\).

The majority \((56.3\%, n = 63)\) of participants reported that the victim’s legal guardian knew the offender had spent time alone with the victim, whereas fewer \((43.8\%, n = 49)\) did not know the offender spent time alone with the victim. Similarly, most participants \((46.8\%, n = 59)\) reported that the legal guardian “liked” the offender, while less \((19.8\%, n = 25)\) reported that the legal guardian disliked the offender prior to the offense. Some participants \((24.6\%, n = 31)\) reported that they did not know if their legal guardian liked the offender, and others \((8.7\%, n = 11)\) reported that their legal guardian never knew the offender. A chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between victim and offender responses in regards to whether or not the victim’s legal guardian liked the offender prior to the offense, \(\chi^2 (4, N = 126) = 10.933, p = .03\). Offenders were more likely to report that the legal guardian liked them prior to the
offense (80.0%, \( n = 28 \)), whereas victims were more likely to report that their legal guardian did not know the offender (18.3%, \( n = 11 \)) prior to the offense.

**Guardian confrontation and disclosure.** Of the 81 cases for which data was available, the victim disclosed the abuse to someone in 54.3% (\( n = 44 \)) of cases, compared to 45.7% (\( n = 37 \)) of victims that did not disclose the abuse. Victims reported that they disclosed abuse to a friend (\( n = 24 \)), parent (\( n = 15 \)), sibling (\( n = 9 \)), grandparent (\( n = 7 \)), therapist (\( n = 6 \)), extended family member (e.g., aunt; \( n = 5 \)), family friend (\( n = 2 \)), step-parent (\( n = 1 \)), and/or acquaintance (\( n = 1 \)).

Participants were also asked to report whether the victim’s legal guardian had ever confronted the offender for spending too much time with the victim. Of the 114 cases for which data was available, 6.1% (\( n = 7 \)) of cases involved a legal guardian who had confronted the offender about the amount of time spent with the victim, whereas most legal guardians (93.9%, \( n = 107 \)) did not confront the offender (see Table 4).

Participants were asked to report on whether the victim’s legal guardian had filed a report with authorities. Of the 108 cases for which data was available, the majority (66.7%, \( n = 72 \)) of participants (offenders and victims) indicated that the victim’s legal guardian did not file a report with authorities, whereas less (33.3%, \( n = 36 \)) indicated that the legal guardian did file a report with authorities (see Table 4).

Victims were asked whether or not anyone filed a report with authorities. Of the 76 cases for which data was available, most (90.8%, \( n = 69 \)) reported that no one filed a report with authorities either because the victim did not disclose abuse or because those who had knowledge of abuse chose not to report abuse. Victims indicated that only 9.2% (\( n = 7 \)) of cases involved someone who filed a report to authorities by the victim or someone else. Although victims
indicated that knowledge of the abuse usually resulted in a report to authorities (61.5%, \(n = 48\)),
there were still 38.5% \((n = 30)\) of cases where someone knew of the abuse but did not file a
report.

**Prevention Suggestions**

**Prevention of offense.** Although most participants (53.7%, \(n = 72\)) had a suggestion for
how their offense could have been prevented, there were many (46.3%, \(n = 62\)) who reported that
they “did not know” how their offense could have been prevented. The majority (33.3%, \(n = 24\))
of those that reported a prevention suggestion recommended adult supervision, treatment for
offender’s substance use (12.5%, \(n = 9\)), for the guardian and victim to be less trusting (12.5%, \(n = 9\)), and that the victim should have a safe adult to talk to about warning signs (11.1%, \(n = 8\)).
Others (8.3%, \(n = 6\)) reported that another child had disclosed abuse by the offender and no
action had been taken or adults knew of offenders’ prior sexual deviance. Some participants
(5.6%, \(n = 4\)) suggested sexual abuse education in homes and schools and that children should
not be left with unknown adults (5.6%, \(n = 4\)). Others (5.6%, \(n = 4\)) believed that adults should
have noticed warning signs or should have asked questions about the offender’s behaviors.
Some participants (4.2%, \(n = 3\)) indicated that the offender could have been provided mental
health treatment and one participant (1.4%) suggested that locks should *not* be kept on doors
inside the home.

Participants were also asked whether there were warning signs that someone could have
noticed. Of the 132 cases for which data was available, most participants (61.4%, \(n = 81\))
reported that there were no warning signs prior to the abuse and 6.8% \((n = 9)\) reported that they
“did not know” what warning signs might have been present. Some (8.3%, \(n = 11\)) participants
reported that adults/guardians could have noticed that the victim did not want to be alone with
the perpetrator or that the victim became depressed (8.3%, n = 11). Others (6.8%, n = 9) reported that adults/guardians could have noticed that the perpetrator took a special interest in the victim. For example, one participant reported that a family member stated, “I’ve never seen a 15-year-old so interested in kids,” regarding the victim’s 15-year old uncle who sexually abused her. Another participant reported that her aunt “found him (the offender) kissing me” prior to her identified unwanted sexual experience. One participant stated that she “tried to tell my mom at night (about the abuse), but she thought I was having a bad dream.” Some participants reported that others could have noticed that the victim began to display anger (5.3%, n = 7) or sexualized behaviors (2.3%, n = 3) as a result of the abuse.

**General prevention.** Participants were asked what advice they would offer to a child to avoid sexual abuse. The most common themes that emerged included that children should be provided with sexual abuse knowledge (e.g., good touch, bad touch) including that a child should say “no” and that saying “no” does not make the child a “bad person.” Another theme included that children should be taught to trust their instincts – if they feel uncomfortable to leave the situation and tell a trusted adult. Another similar theme was that children should be taught to be wary of who they trust and that children should employ a “buddy system” so that they are not left alone. Notably, participants reported that children are not responsible for preventing sexual abuse and that all children should be taught that they should disclosure abuse if it occurs. One participant reported that doors should always be kept open in the home.

Participants were asked what advice they would offer a parent to avoid child sexual abuse. The most common themes that emerged included that parents should have continuous, open, and supportive communication, and if a disclosure occurs, that the parent believe their child and get the victim psychological treatment. Another theme presented was that parents
should be attentive to their child, both in their supervision (i.e., careful who they trust with their child, keep away from strangers) and in their observations of their child’s behaviors (e.g., mood changes). Participants reported that parents should provide sexual abuse education (e.g., good touch, bad touch). Finally, one participant reported that a parent should “get help immediately” if he or she experiences sexual arousal by a child.

Participants were asked what advice they would offer the community to prevent child sexual abuse. A common theme that emerged was that communities should provide a supportive environment for children to talk openly and feel safe to make a disclosure. If a disclosure occurs, the community should be supportive of the child and help facilitate the report. Participants reported that adults in the community could ask children if they have experienced abuse and if so, a report should be made. Another theme that emerged was that the community should have supervision responsibility, in that community members can notice and respond to behavioral or emotional changes in children, perform background checks prior to hiring adults who will interact with children, and report anything or anyone that appears suspicious in the neighborhood. Finally, participants reported that sexual education programs should be implemented in schools to teach about sexual abuse (e.g., good touch, bad touch), encourage self-esteem and self-worth, and combat gender role expectations.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to provide a comprehensive examination of child sexual abuse within residential locations by exploring situational and structural components of the offense location. Descriptive analyses revealed that sex offenses most often occurred in the in the offender’s bedroom (20.9%). One of the most important findings – from a prevention perspective – is that nearly two-thirds of our participants (64.6%) reported that at least one other
person was home during the offense. That said, offenders limited the opportunity for these bystanders to witness the offense, through strategies such as darkening of the room (e.g., shutting curtains or turning lights off), closing or locking doors, or taking the victim to a secluded part of the home (e.g., basement). These findings are consistent with research that has demonstrated that offenders seek out isolated areas to perpetrate offenses (Beauregard, Rossmo, & Proulx, 2007). Participants also reported that offenders perceived the offense location as suitable because the offender felt comfortable in the home since the victim and the victim’s guardian trusted the offender. Craven et al. (2006) argues that once a victim has been identified, the offender will begin to manipulate the environment in such a way that will allow the offender to gain access to the child, with less risk of being caught. Given the findings, it appears that the offender created physical barriers to avoid others from witnessing the offense and also created psychological barriers by gaining the trust of the victim and the victim’s guardian, which also allowed the offender to feel comfortable in the home.

Another key finding from this study is that most offenses occurred during the summer months, which is consistent with previous research (Chaffin et al., 2009). Further, most offenses occurred in the late afternoon (3pm-6pm) or during night hours when others were asleep (12am – 6am). Inspection of those offenses that took place overnight showed that they tended to occur in the victim’s bedroom (47.6%), though this finding did not reach significance. Most victims had their own bedroom and bed; therefore, when the offense occurred overnight, it is suggested that the offender most likely entered into the victim’s bedroom to commit the offense (i.e., did not sleep in the same room as the victim). Although some offenders may manipulate an environment to create a suitable location to perpetrate an offense (Craven et al., 2006), it also seems likely that an offender may choose an environment that already appears suitable. In this case, summer
months, as well as after school (3-6pm) and overnight hours (12am-6am), may foster a suitable environment to perpetrate an offense (e.g., children unsupervised). These findings suggest that vigilance should be increased during summer months and certain times of day, such as after school and overnight, that may present greater opportunity for offenders. Further, preventative measures should be taken to increase protection in certain areas of the home (i.e., victim’s bedroom) during certain times of the day (i.e., overnight). To decrease perpetration that occurs overnight, house rules that promote healthy boundaries can be implemented, such as not entering into someone’s room when they are sleeping. Further, in the same way that closed circuit television (CCTV) has been used as a method for crime prevention in parking garages by increasing detection risk (Welsh & Farrington, 2004), such supervision and security methods can be employed within the home. For example, parents can increase perceived visibility overnight in their child’s room by using a baby monitor. To balance privacy needs with prevention efforts in older children, dummy cameras can be mounted, as the perception of being caught is still present.

Toward the aim of obtaining a comprehensive examination of the child sexual abuse situation in the home, the study also examined factors related to the victim’s legal guardian (i.e., parent and non-parent legal guardian). Research has demonstrated that one common method for an offender to obtain access to children is to gain the trust of the victim and the victim’s guardian (Conte et al., 1989; Kaufman et al., 2006; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). Indeed, participants reported that, in 54.1% of cases, the offender selected the victim because the victim’s guardian trusted the offender. Therefore, it is not surprising that guardians often knew their child spent time alone with the offender (56.3%) and liked the offender (46.8%). These findings further
demonstrate stranger danger is rare (Colombino et al., 2011; Greenfield, 1997; Snyder, 2000), since offenders are more likely to be known to the victim and the victim’s guardian.

Participants reported “opportunity” to be the number one reason for victim selection (76.7%). As mentioned, most offenses occurred within the hours of 3pm-6pm and over the summer months. Presumably, there tends to be less supervision during these times periods. Guardians may be at work and children are likely to have more time left unsupervised. Leclerc et al. (2013) found that another adult was present in the home in 61% of sexual abuse cases; however, the adult was not necessarily the legal guardian. The current study similarly found that other people also tended to be at home when the offense occurred (64.6%); however, the legal guardian was only present in 29% of cases. It appears, therefore, that other adults may be at home when an offense occurs, but it is not necessarily the legal guardian. As mentioned, the guardian often felt comfortable for the child to be with the offender outside of the guardian’s supervision. Taken together, these findings suggest that sexual abuse may be more likely to occur when the child is not in the direct care of the legal guardian, such as when the child is alone with the offender or when the victim is supervised by another adult. Realistically, parents or legal guardians cannot always be present to supervise their children and, therefore, parents or legal guardians rely on other adults to watch their children in their absence. Although these adults are often trusted family members, friends, or hired professionals who have undergone a background check, children may still be at risk since offenders generally are trusted individuals. Drawing on the use of CCTV’s as a method for crime prevention in parking garages (Welsh & Farrington, 2004), guardians can install a “nanny cam” that could monitor activities in the home when the guardian is not present. This type of supervision would increase risk for the offender to be caught, which would consequently, decrease offender opportunity in the home. Another
alternative to leaving children unsupervised or in the care of another adult during the hours of 3-6pm or summer months is afterschool and summer programming. Indeed, afterschool programming has been found to have a number of benefits, including decreased rates in youth obesity, juvenile crime perpetration, teen pregnancy, and juvenile drug experimentation (Afterschool Alliance, 2007). Similarly, providing a safe and pro-social environment through afterschool and summer programming for children could also serve as a method to prevent child sexual abuse during times when opportunity for child sexual abuse perpetration is most present.

Participants also reported on guardian characteristics that may facilitate offender opportunity. For example, guardians had financial difficulties in 14.4% of cases, which could lead to increased work hours and decreased supervision. Alternatively, financial difficulties may foster offender opportunity, as the offender may use money and financial security as a method to groom the guardian and victim. Other factors may also impede guardian supervision, such as psychological and medical concerns. Indeed, on a national level, 18.1% of Americans are diagnosed with a mental illness (NAMI, 2014), and 7.1% of adults (ages 26 or older) are diagnosed with a substance use disorder every year (SAMSHA, 2015). In the current study, participants reported that the guardian dealt with substance abuse (14.4%), mental health concerns (8.9%; e.g., depression), or significant medical conditions (5.6%) a portion of the time. The findings align with the study’s expectation that the guardian is not always available (i.e., physically, psychologically, or medically) to be a sufficient gatekeeper.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2009) single parent homes comprise one-quarter (25%) of households across the nation. However, the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4; Sedlak, Mettenburg, Basena, Petta, McPherson, Greene, & Li, 2010)
reported that single parent families are most at risk for child sexual abuse. Further, children who reside with two married biological parents are sexually abused at significantly lower rates than children living in other guardian conditions (Sedlak et al., 2010). It is not surprising, therefore, that only 30.6% of child sexual abuse victims in the current sample resided with both their biological mother and father, whereas just over half (50.9%) of the victims resided in single parent homes. Offenders might seek out single parent households, not only because the child might have less protection, but also because this might allow for the offender to fill an emotional or psychological void that the child or caretaker may have (Craven et al., 2006). Indeed, 3.7% of children across the United States live in non-parent households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Notably, in the current study, the victim had a non-parent guardian (e.g., grandparent, aunt) over four times (16.3%) the national average. This may suggest that children who reside in non-parent households could be at greater risk for child sexual abuse. Consequently, sexual violence prevention efforts, which aim to avert offender opportunity, should not only be directed towards mothers and fathers, but extended family members and community members who may also have a pivotal role in the child’s supervision.

Overall, supervision appears to be a significant factor in child sexual abuse prevention. Most offenders took measure to decrease the ability for anyone to witness the offense. Parents and extended family members who also regularly supervise children can be provided with information on how to create safer home environments. For example, house rules that promote clear visibility of children, such as open doors and lights on, should be enforced. As a theoretical prevention suggestion, Leclerc et al. (2014) proposed that bedrooms and bathrooms should have locks to ensure privacy; however, the empirical evidence from the current study, showed that a locked door acted as a barrier for anyone to witness the offense. One participant specifically
suggested that doors not have locks, as this was a method used by her offender to commit the offense. With older children and teenagers, it may be challenging to balance privacy with supervision. For example, one participant reported that the offense had occurred in the offender’s bedroom, with the unlocked door closed. She reported that the offender’s grandmother always knocked on the door before entering, so she believed the offender felt comfortable that he would not be caught. According to our findings, one method for creating a safer home environment is to remove locks from interior home doors (e.g., bedroom). To offer privacy, individuals can knock before entering a door; however, doors should only be shut when the person is alone in the room. Further, it is necessary to control access to unsupervised places within the home (e.g., offenses often took place in a secluded area of the home). Part of house rules and organization may require children to be with others in visible areas of the home, and only be in unsupervised areas, when alone or when more than one person is present in the same room (e.g., play with others in common areas, not a bedroom). Offenders likely choose an environment because it appears to be a suitable offense location; however, increased visibility and supervision of children in the home will decrease barriers and offender opportunity leading to safer home environments.

The victim’s legal guardian was the offender in 23.1% (n = 24) of cases, in which half of those cases (n = 12), the offender was the victim’s sole guardian. Notably, victims are less likely to disclose abuse when they have a close relationship with the abuser (Lyon & Ahern, 2010), and this may be especially true if the offender is the child’s sole guardian. Sexual violence prevention programs provide parents and children with information on sexual abuse psychoeducation and the disclosure process; however, within the same programs, it may also be effective to target unknown child sex abusers. For example, both STOP IT NOW! and Project Dunkelfeld have
had success at reaching potential perpetrators and child sex abusers in the community, providing a hotline to anonymously call to receive information regarding treatment and evaluation (Beier et al., 2009; Chasan-Taber & Tabachnick, 1999). Sexual violence prevention programs that also target an offending legal guardian, or a potential offending legal guardian, can help to avert sexual abuse before it occurs, or at least, stop victimization and provide needed treatment services.

In regards to what characteristics made the victim appear vulnerable to the offender, it was hypothesized that offenders would report on situational factors (e.g., lack of supervision), and victims would report internal-based responses (e.g., “I was quiet,” low self-esteem). It has long been found that sex offenders tend to choose victims that appear vulnerable (Conte et al., 1989), and it appears, that there are some differences as to how offenders and victims perceive vulnerability. Overall, victims were more likely than offenders to report victim vulnerability as a reason for victim selection. When asked to identify characteristics that made the victim appear vulnerable, offenders and victims both reported the victim’s young age, that the victim trusted the offender, that the victim lacked supervision, and that the offender had access to the victim (e.g., was regularly left alone with the victim). Consistent with the literature that demonstrates that some victims blame themselves for the abuse (Coffey, Leitenberg, Henning, Turner, & Bennett, 1996), victims also reported internal-based characteristics, such that the victim was “quiet” or “too friendly.” Notably, offenders did not report on victim characteristics, outside of the victim’s young age. Instead, offenders identified factors in the environment that made the child appear vulnerable (e.g., lack of supervision, access to child). This suggests that aspects of the victim’s environment may play a greater role than individual victim characteristics in determining victim vulnerability. Beyond prevention, this finding could also be used in
psychological treatment of child sexual abuse victims to combat the common cognitive distortions (e.g., victim blames self) many victims experience by providing evidence that it is not something the victim did as to why the offender chose the victim but environmental conditions that created a suitable offense scenario.

There are many challenges children face when deciding whether or not to disclose sexual abuse. In the current study, most victim participants never filed a report with authorities (90.8%), which is similar to other studies that have reported that less than 10% of child sexual abuse cases are reported to police (Lyon & Ahern, 2010). Notably, 38.5% of victim participants reported that someone knew of the abuse but did not file a report. Victims have spoken at length about the challenge disclosure presents (Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008). Children tend to take longer to disclose when they take responsibility for the abuse, feel embarrassment or shame, or when a family member is the perpetrator (Goodman-Brown, Edelstein, Goodman, Jones, & Gordon, 2003). Overall, children worry about the negative consequences disclosure might have on themselves, as well as the consequences that might come to others (Fontes & Plummer, 2010; McElvaney et al., 2014; Schaeffer et al., 2011). For example, disclosure can cause problems for the family, such as financial hardship and social isolation (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). As such, children need to know that they will be believed if they make a disclosure (McElvaney et al., 2014). Public awareness and education campaigns can be implemented to disseminate this message to adults. Having open discussions about sexual abuse disclosure can aid in this process. Further, adults that ask children about their general well-being can foster a supportive atmosphere to disclose abuse. Adults also can be educated on how to be supportive once a child discloses sexual abuse. Chasan-Taber and Tabachnick (1999) found that although 70.2% of individuals stated they would report child sexual abuse to authorities if they
were certain abuse were occurring, only 27% stated they would report suspected abuse to authorities. Individuals also stated that they did not know where to refer an adult (40.5%) for treatment or evaluation if they knew an adult who might be abusing a child (Chasan-Taber & Tabachnick, 1999). Therefore, educating the public on child sexual abuse reporting procedures could facilitate the process when an adult becomes aware that a child has experienced sexual abuse. Not only do parents or guardians need to be educated and aware about the importance of supporting sexual abuse disclosures, but other adults who have regular access to children, such as teachers, coaches, and doctors, should be educated as well (McElvaney et al., 2014). At a community level, education should be provided that children have very little to gain by making a false allegation of sexual abuse. Often times, there are direct negative consequences to the child or the child’s family, and not always the sense of safety that one might think a child has when disclosing abuse. Therefore, a child’s disclosure should always be taken seriously, to create the best possible outcome for the sexual abuse situation.

Overall, participants were unsure of how their crime could have been prevented and most reported that there were no warning signs. Many participants who identified warning signs reported on events that occurred after the abuse began (e.g., victim attempted to avoid the offender). Although there are a variety of reasons as to why it would be difficult for offenders and victims to recall warning signs (e.g., lack of insight, hindsight bias), this finding illustrates that prevention efforts that target potential perpetrators may assist in averting sex crimes before they occur, since responsibility is ultimately on the perpetrator. Participants reported that, in some cases, adults ignored a warning sign, whether it was that an offender took a special interest in the victim (i.e., spending more time with the child victim than peers), or in situations where the abuse had already begun, the victim’s disclosure was dismissed in some way. Other
participants reported that their offense could have been prevented if the offender’s substance use or mental health concern had been addressed. Given these findings, it appears essential that communities and families be educated on sexual abuse and the disclosure process so an adult knows how to adequately respond to a disclosure or identify warning signs from a victim, offender, or potential offender. Similarly, community members should be knowledgeable on how to access evaluation and treatment services. Media campaigns have been one successful method in disseminating sexual abuse knowledge to communities. For example, prior to the implementation of STOP IT NOW!, almost half of the surveyed citizens were unable to identify one warning sign in an adult or child’s behavior that could suggest they were at risk for perpetrating sexual violence (Blanchard & Tabachnick, 2002; Chasen-Taber & Tabachnick, 1999). STOP IT NOW! provided information on healthy sexual development for children, sexual abuse warning signs, and information regarding evaluation and treatment. Notably, following the two-year evaluation period, respondents showed an increased awareness in sexual abuse knowledge (Becker & Reilly, 1999). Providing psychoeducation to communities and families on prevention methods, treatment services, and the disclosure process can help increase sexual abuse knowledge, which may enable individuals to recognize early warning signs of potential perpetration or abuse that has occurred, and provide community members with the tools to adequately respond. This information can be disseminated at parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings or mandatory school events for parents and caretakers, as well as town hall meetings for community members.

Limitations

The first limitation was sample size. Although the current study was comprised of a relatively large sample size in comparison to other similarly designed studies utilizing interview
data, due to the inclusion criteria (i.e., victim was 17 or younger, offense occurred within a home), there was still only 61 victims and 47 offenders interviewed, which yielded 134 cases. Further, the interview tool was modified to include more interview items (e.g., time of day, time of year) after the start of data collection, which caused some interview items to have less available information. Due to the smaller sample size, there are limits to which suggestions for prevention can be generalized. Further, it is possible that some comparative analyses were not able to achieve significance levels given low cell counts. Second, selection bias is present, as participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, and were selected based on certain inclusion criteria. Third, although the victim participant sample was ethnically diverse, the offender participant sample was comprised only of individuals who identified as White or African American. Fourth, participants were asked to self-report information, which may be cause for bias. One particular area this may have been present was in the interview item that required the offender and victim to report on whether or not the guardian “liked” the offender. Offenders were more likely to report that they were liked by the guardian compared to victims who reported the offender was not liked by the guardian. Although this could be accurate, it is also possible that offenders had a distorted perception of how they were viewed by others, including the victim’s guardian. Fifth, it is possible that offenders’ and victims’ memories could be impaired or distorted. At the time of participation, offenders were on average 43 years old and victims were on average 21 years old. Victims reported on offenses that were, on average, 10 years prior to the date of participation, whereas offenders reported on offenses that were, on average, 15 years prior to the date of participation. Given the time gap, it is possible that recollection can be impaired or distorted. Finally, the victim and offender data was aggregated to portray an overall examination of how offenses were perpetrated in the home; however, a
more detailed analysis could be conducted if the samples were examined separately as two data samples.

**Future Directions**

This is one of the first attempts to examine the specifics of home environments in which child sexual abuse occur. Although one may assume how sex crimes are perpetrated within the home, this is the first systematic investigation. Empirical knowledge on the situational and structural components of sexual abuse that happen in the home can help inform and develop prevention strategies aimed at creating safer environments. Given this topic of research is in its infancy, future studies should continue to investigate the physical environments in which child sexual abuse occurs in the home. This study may serve as a foundation for other studies to continue in this systematic investigation, with the aim to further prevention knowledge.

Most studies sample offenders only and examine just the offenders’ methods or role played during the abuse (Rebocho & Goncalves, 2012). To have a comprehensive understanding of how the situation interacts with the individuals involved, it is important to empirically evaluate not just the offender, but the role others (i.e., victim, guardian) have in the environment, as well. Therefore, future studies should continue to sample various individuals involved in the home environment. A direction for future study could include a sampling of legal guardians, considering the pivotal role guardians have in child sexual abuse prevention.

Further, in the current study, offenders represented known or apprehended offenders, whereas victim cases largely represented unknown offenders or those who were not reported to police. This presented a unique advantage to examine crimes of known and unknown sex offenders. Notably, offenders (known offenders) were more likely to report that offenses occurred in a home shared with the victim, whereas offenses reported by victims (mostly
unreported crimes) tended to occur in the offender’s home. One might suggest that it is possible that an adult or guardian is more likely to become aware of child sexual abuse when it occurs in the victim’s home or a home shared by the victim and the offender, compared to when the offense occurs in someone else’s home. However, future empirical knowledge is needed before prevention suggestions in this area could be derived.

**Conclusion**

In order to prevent child sexual abuse where it most often occurs, it is necessary to understand the situational characteristics of home environments. Understanding the physical and structural components of the home can help inform and develop prevention strategies aimed at creating safer environments. Approaches that attempt to modify the characteristics of settings (e.g., schools) appear promising (DeGue et al., 2012), yet there are few studies that have empirically evaluated the situational factors in child sexual abuse that occur in residential settings. Although this study has set a foundation for examining the physical environments and the individuals involved (e.g., victim, offender, legal guardian), future research should continue in this effort to identify specific aspects of the environment that may foster sexual abuse, to develop empirically informed prevention strategies.

Although, thus far, most legislative efforts have focused on preventing strangers from perpetrating sex crimes in public places, it seems that prevention efforts could be better served through strategies aimed at averting sex crimes where they are most likely to occur (i.e., residential settings). What no research has done to date, however, is examine how prevention strategies might be implemented in the home. Research that identifies perpetration patterns in home settings could be used to tailor educational efforts and modify settings so as to avert child sexual abuse within the home. While victims can be educated on to how to respond in a sexual
abuse scenario or how to create safer environments (e.g., remove physical barriers), the responsibility of sexual violence needs to be on perpetrators and adults who are in better positions than children to avert victimization. Using empirical knowledge on how guardians can create safer environments can be an important contribution to primary prevention efforts. Because prevention efforts are most effective through a multi-level approach, community and societal level change are essential in sexual violence prevention, as it will be difficult to effectively modify individual and relationship level change without the support of the community and society (Quadara & Wall, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary that knowledge on how to create safer home environments be disseminated to communities. At a community level, supportive environments should be fostered so that victims feel supported to disclose child sexual abuse. Notably, nearly 40% of victim participants reported that someone knew of the abuse but did not file a report. A disclosure should always be taken seriously and communities should be educated on how to best respond to disclosure. Further, communities can provide sexual abuse education, such as healthy sexual development, how to identify sexual abuse warning signs, and how to create safer home environments. Specifically community members can be educated on the importance of increasing visibility and removing physical barriers in the home (e.g., remove locks from doors), as well as the importance of supervision. Victims, abusers, and families should be aware of community intervention and treatment services available to help manage the consequences of victimization and perpetration. Because a guardian is not always available to be an adequate gatekeeper, it is necessary for the community (e.g., school, church, neighborhood) to play an integral role in an effort to keep children safe.

The current study has acted as a foundation for which empirical knowledge of child sexual abuse can be used to develop prevention strategies in the home. Continuing to identify
factors within residential settings that foster a suitable offense location has great potential for prevention initiatives. For example, most offenses occurred in the summer months, as well as after school (3-6pm) and overnight (12am-6am), which suggest these times may foster a suitable environment to perpetrate an offense (e.g., children unsupervised). Guardians can use such information to modify their home setting to help create a safer home environment. Although others tended to be at home when the offense occurred, the legal guardian was only present in 29% of cases. This illustrates the importance for sexual violence prevention efforts to not only target mothers and fathers, but also extended family and other community members who may also supervise children. Situational crime prevention is possible (Hebenton, 2011; Leclerc et al., 2009, Wortley & Smallbone, 2006) and educating guardians, families, and communities on how to create safe environments can help decrease access to victimization.
NSI

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE FOR SEX OFFENDERS WITH CHILD VICTIM(S) ONLY (i.e., sex offender with a child victim < 17)

INTERVIEWERS: For the following set of questions, please provide an answer for each victim (regardless whether offense resulted in a conviction). In recording responses, use abbreviations to identify victims. For example, if the offender has 3 victims, record response for each identified victim (e.g., V1: step-parent, V2: cousin, V3: friend of V3’s mother). Keep victim identifiers consistent throughout this section (i.e., V1 is the same victim for each question).

234. REL_VIC Please indicate relationship to the victim(s) below. Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Identifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>☐1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-parent</td>
<td>☐2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sibling</td>
<td>☐3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-Sibling</td>
<td>☐4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Family Member (indicate specific relationship below)</td>
<td>☐5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend of Family</td>
<td>☐6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance (knew family and child but not close friend; e.g., neighbor)</td>
<td>☐8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger (knew victim less than 24 hours)</td>
<td>☐10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to answer</td>
<td>☐7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know.</td>
<td>☐9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If extended family member, please specify specific relationship below, using victim identifier (e.g., V1 – uncle).

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

235. VIC_AGE Please indicate age(s) of your victim(s) at time the offense began

________________________________________________________________________

236. VIC_GENDER Please indicate gender of your victim(s). Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Identifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>☐0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female ☐ 1 ______
Refused to answer ☐ 7 ______
Don’t know. ☐ 9 ______

237. **DURATION** About how many times, on average, did you have sexual contact with each of the victims you sexually abused? *Please write victim identifier in corresponding box (e.g., V1).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 time</th>
<th>2-3 times</th>
<th>4-5 times</th>
<th>6-10 times</th>
<th>11-20 times</th>
<th>21-50 times</th>
<th>Over 50 Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

238. **LOC_MET** In what location did you first meet your victim(s)? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1) and identify specific locations in space provided below (e.g., V1 – Private, victim’s home).*

- Knew the victim since victim’s birth ☐ 1 ______
- Private (i.e., residential) ☐ 2 ______
- Public (i.e., any non-residential location) ☐ 3 ______
- Refused to answer ☐ 7 ______
- Don’t know. ☐ 9 ______

Please identify specific location below (include victim identifier):

________________________________________________________________________

239. **LOC_OFF** In what location did you tend to have sexual contact with your victim(s)? *If offense occurred within a home, please ask offender to specify where in the home offense occurred and whether there was opportunity for someone to see offense occurring. Please obtain detailed information (e.g., in bedroom with door closed).*

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

240. **BARRIERS** Was it often possible for someone to see the sexual contact occurring? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- No ☐ 0 ______
- Yes ☐ 1 ______
- Refused to answer ☐ 7 ______
IF NO

**BAR_TYPE** What barriers typically prevented other people in the home from seeing sexual contact? [check all that apply] *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

No one else was in the home during sexual contact

Door was closed

Door was open, but offender was alone with victim in the room (e.g., other people were home at the time of sexual contact, but were in a different room)

Other (specify below)

Refused to answer

Don’t know.

If other, please specify offender answer:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

241. **TIME_DAY** What time of day did the offense most often occur? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

12am – 6am (overnight) ☐ 1 _____

9 – 12am (late evening) ☐ 2 _____

6 – 9pm (evening) ☐ 3 _____

3 – 6pm (late afternoon) ☐ 4 _____

12pm – 3pm (early afternoon) ☐ 5 _____

9am – 12pm (morning) ☐ 6 _____

6am – 9am (early morning) ☐ 8 _____

Refused to answer ☐ 7 _____

Don’t know. ☐ 9 _____

**IF OFFENSE MOST OFTEN OCCURRED 12AM-6AM (OVERNIGHT)**

**TIME_ASLP** Were other people in the home often asleep during the sexual contact?

No ☐ 0 _____

Yes ☐ 1 _____

Refused to answer 7 _____

Don’t know. 9 _____

242. **TIME_YR** What time of year did the offense first occur? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

Fall 1 _____
Winter: 2
Spring: 3
Summer: 4
Refused to answer: 7
Don’t know: 9

243. **VIC_KNOW** How long did you know the victim(s) before sexual contact began?
   
   For all other response types please indicate time below (minutes, hours, days, months, years). Please indicate victim identifier next to response (e.g., V1)

   Knew victim since victim’s birth: 1
   Refused to answer: 7
   Don’t know: 9

   Specify Time Here: ______________________________________________________

244. **ASP_CHI** What aspects of the victim(s) made you select him or her? Please use victim identifiers (e.g., V1).

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

246. **VIC_CHOICE** Why did you choose the victim(s) you chose? [check all that apply]
   
   Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

   Opportunity: 1
   Sexual attraction: 2
   Victim was vulnerable: 3 (specify how)
   Victim age: 4
   Victim lacked supervision: 6
   Guardian of victim trusted me: 8
   Refused to answer: 7
   Don’t know: 9

245. **VIC_METHOD** What method did you use to get victim to go with you to a place for sexual contact? [check all that apply] Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

   Offered Alcohol/Drugs: 1
   Threatened victim: 2
   Threatened victim’s family: 3
   Used force (violence): 4
   Victim trusted me: 5
   Bribes or enticement: 6
   Refused to answer: 7
   Don’t know: 9
If other, please specify offender answer:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

247. **OTH_PRES** Were there typically any other people present in the home when the sexual contact occurred? Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to answer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF YES**

**PRES_REL** Please specify relationship to victim (e.g., V1 – mother, sister, aunt)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**IF YES**

**PRES_LOC** Please specify where in the home the person was located (e.g., V1 – mother, aunt, sister in the kitchen)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

248. **ASP_LOC** What physical aspects of the offense location (e.g., child’s home, motel, your home, other) made it seem like a safe place to commit the crime? Please use victim identifiers.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

249. **SLEEP_ROOM** Did the victim have his or her own bedroom? Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to answer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

250. **SLEEP_BED** Did the victim have his or her own bed? Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
252. **VIC_FAM** Who did the victim(s) live with at the time the sex offense occurred? *Please indicate number of people in the appropriate box (e.g., Adult, Minor) next to the corresponding relationship, specifying victim identifier (e.g., Biological mother – V1-1, Biological Father- V1-1, Step-parent – V1-0…)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Adult # (&gt;17)</th>
<th>Minor # (ages 13-17)</th>
<th>Minor # (ages 0-12)</th>
<th>Legal Guardian (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTERVIEWERS:** The following questions involve the victim’s guardian. Guardian is defined as the victim’s legal guardian(s). For example, a step-parent without legal custody, would not be considered a legal guardian.

253. **VIC_PAR** Were you the victim’s legal guardian? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- No: 0
- Yes: 1
- Refused to answer: 7
- Don’t know: 9

**IF YES**

**GUAR_TYPE** Please specify type of guardianship and describe in detail below: *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- Sole guardian: 1
- Partial guardian: 2
Describe guardianship in detail below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

IF YES Skip to question 262 PREVENT for that victim. For example, if offender answered “yes” for V1 but “no” for V2, then ask the following questions for V2, but skip to PREVENT for V1.

254. **VIC_GUARD** Who was/were the victim(s)’ legal guardian at the time of the sex offense? [check all that apply] Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

- Biological mother __1____
- Biological father __2____
- Other (please specify below) __3____
- Refused to answer __7____
- Don’t know. __9____

If other, please specify who victim(s)’ legal guardian was, including victim identifier:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

255. **PAR_HOM** Was the victim’s legal guardian present during the time of the offense (within the same home)? Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

- No __0____
- Yes __1____
- Refused to answer __7____
- Don’t know. __9____

256. **PAR_CHAR** Did the victim’s legal guardian have any mental health problems (e.g., substance use, psychiatric diagnoses) Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)

- No __0____
- Yes __1____
- Refused to answer __7____
- Don’t know __9____

IF YES

**PAR_MH** Please specify type of mental health problem:
257. **PAR_ALONE** Did the victim’s legal guardian know you were spending time alone with the victim? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- No 0
- Yes 1
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

258. **PAR_CON** Did the victim’s legal guardian ever confront you about spending too much time with the victim? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- No 0
- Yes 1
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

259. **PAR_REP** Did the victim’s legal guardian ever file a report? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- No 0
- Yes 1
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

**IF YES,**

**PAR_TIME** how long did it take for legal guardian to report abuse?

________________________________________________________________________

260. **PAR_LIKE** Prior to sexual contact with the victim, did the legal guardian(s) of your victim(s) like you? *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*

- No 0
- Yes 1
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

**IF YES**

**PAR_YLIKE** Please explain:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

261. **VIC_BAD** Did you ever make the victim seem like a bad child to others (e.g., did you socially isolate the victim?) *Please indicate victim identifier next to checked box (e.g., V1)*
IF YES
PAR_BAD Please explain:

262. **PREVENT** How could someone have prevented the sexual offense from occurring?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

263. **WARNING** What are some warning signs someone could have picked up on to prevent sexual offense from occurring?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

264. **PREV_CHILD** What advice would you give a child to prevent sexual abuse?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

265. **PREV_PAR** What advice would you give a parent to prevent child sexual abuse?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

266. **PREV_COM** What do you think the community (e.g., schools) can do to prevent child sexual abuse?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

NSI-V

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE FOR VICTIMS WHO EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE AS A CHILD (<17)

**Interviewer:** Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. If at any time during the interview you feel uncomfortable or don’t want to answer a question, please let the interviewer know.

**NUM_OFF_V** In the previous study, you said that you have experienced sexual abuse. How many different people have sexually abused you before you were 17 years old? [please circle]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 person</th>
<th>2 people</th>
<th>3 people</th>
<th>4 or more people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If the victim has been sexually abused by four or more individuals:

You stated that 4 or more individuals have sexually abused you before you were 17 years old. I am going to ask you to think of the three of those individuals to talk about during today’s interview.

**INTERVIEWERS:** Administer separate NSI-V interview tools for each offender (e.g., 2 perpetrators, administer the NSI-V 2 times, one for each perpetrator). If four or more perpetrators have been identified, administer three interview tools.

When asking the interview questions, refer to the offender in the same way the victim refers to the offender. For example, the victim calls the offender “my uncle Jay.” For the remainder of the interview when inquiring about this offender, say “your uncle Jay” for each indicated area labeled [person].
**REL_OFF_V** Please indicate your relationship with [person] who you had the unwanted sexual experience with:

- Parent ☐
- Step-parent ☐
- Grandparent ☐
- Biological Sibling ☐
- Step-Sibling ☐
- Extended Family Member (indicate specific relationship below) ☐
- Friend ☐
- Friend of Family (not your direct friend) ☐
- Acquaintance (knew family and child but not close friend; e.g., neighbor) ☐
- Stranger (knew victim less than 24 hours) ☐
- Refused to answer ☐
- Don’t know. ☐

If extended family member, please specify specific relationship below:
________________________________________________________________________

**VIC_AGE_V** How old were you when the sexual abuse first started?
________________________________________________________________________

**OFF_GENDER_V** Was the [person] male or female?

- Male ☐
- Female ☐
- Refused to answer ☐
- Don’t know. ☐

**DURATION_V** About how many times, on average, did [person] have sexual contact with you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 time</th>
<th>2-3 times</th>
<th>4-5 times</th>
<th>6-10 times</th>
<th>11-20 times</th>
<th>21-50 times</th>
<th>Over 50 Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**LOC_MET_V** In what location did you first meet [person]?
Knew the victim since victim’s birth ☐1
Private (i.e., residential) ☐2
Public (i.e., any non-residential location) ☐3
Refused to answer ☐7
Don’t know. ☐9

Please identify specific location below:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

LOC_OFF_V  In what location did [person] have or tend to have sexual contact with you?
If offense occurred within a home, please ask victim to specify where in the home offense occurred and whether there was opportunity for someone to see offense occurring. Please obtain detailed information (e.g., in bedroom with door closed).
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

BARRIERS_V  Was it ever possible for someone to see the sexual contact occurring?
No ☐0
Yes ☐1
Refused to answer ☐7
Don’t know. ☐9

IF NO  BAR_TYPE_V  What barriers typically prevented other people in the home from seeing sexual contact? [check all that apply]
No one else was in the home during sexual contact ☐1
Door was closed ☐2
Door was open, but offender was alone with victim in the room (e.g., other people were home at the time of sexual contact, but were in a different room) ☐3
Other (specify below) ☐4
Refused to answer ☐7
Don’t know. ☐9

If other, please specify offender answer:
### TIME_DAY_V
What time of day did the sexual contact most often occur?
- 12am – 6am (overnight) □ 1
- 9 – 12am (late evening) □ 2
- 6 – 9pm (evening) □ 3
- 3 – 6pm (late afternoon) □ 4
- 12pm – 3pm (early afternoon) □ 5
- 9am – 12pm (morning) □ 6
- 6am – 9am (early morning) □ 6
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

### IF OFFENSE MOST OFTEN OCCURRED 12AM-6AM (OVERNIGHT)
**TIME_ASLP_V** Were other people in the home and usually asleep during the sexual contact?
- No 0
- Yes 1
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. □ 9

### TIME_YR_V
What time of year did the sexual contact first occur?
- Fall 1
- Winter 2
- Spring 3
- Summer 4
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

### VIC_KNOW_V
How long did you know the [person] before sexual contact began?
*If the victim knew the offender since birth, please check the first box. For all other response types please indicate time below (minutes, hours, days, months, years).*
- Knew victim since victim’s birth 1
- Refused to answer 7
- Don’t know. 9

Specify Time Here: ________________________________________________

### VIC_CHOICE_V
Why do you think [person] chose you?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

65
VIC_REASON_V  Do you think any of the following could have been reasons why the [person] chose you? [check all that apply]
Opportunity  1
Sexual attraction  2
I was vulnerable  3  __________ (specify how)
My age  4
I lacked supervision  6
My guardian trusted [person]  8
Refused to answer  7
Don’t know.  9

VIC_METHOD_V  How did [person] get you alone for sexual contact? [check all that apply]
Offered Alcohol/Drugs  1
Threatened me  2
Threatened my family  3
Used force (violence)  4
I trusted [person]  5
Bribes or enticement  6
Refused to answer  7
Don’t know.  9

If other, please specify victim answer:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

OTH_PRES_V  Were there other people in the home when the sexual contact occurred?
Always (or Yes, if occurred only 1 time)  1
Usually  2
Sometimes  3
Infrequently  4
Never (or No, if occurred only 1 time)  0
Refused to answer  7
Don’t know.  9

IF OTHER PEOPLE WERE PRESENT
What was your relationship to the other people who were present in the home during sexual contact (e.g., victim’s mother)?

________________________________________________________________________

IF OTHER PEOPLE WERE PRESENT
What part of the home were they in (e.g., victim’s mother in the kitchen)?
ASP_LOC_V  Do you think there were any physical aspects of [place where sexual contact typically occurred] that made it seem like a safe place for [person] not to get caught?

SLEEP_ROOM_V  In your family home, did you have your own bedroom?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

SLEEP_BED_V  In your family home, did you have your own bed?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

VIC_FAM_V  Who did you live with at the time the sexual abuse first occurred? Please indicate number of people in the appropriate box(e.g., Adult, Minor) next to the corresponding relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Adult # (&gt;17)</th>
<th>Minor # (ages 13-17)</th>
<th>Minor # (ages 0-12)</th>
<th>Legal Guardian (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-parent</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DISCLOS_V** Did you tell anyone that you were being sexually abused?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

**IF YES,**

**DIS_WHO_V** Who did you tell? [check all that apply]
Parent 1
Step-parent 2
Grandparent 3
Sibling 4
Extended family 5
(indicate specific relationship below)
Friend 6
Friend of Family (not your direct friend) 8
Acquaintance 10
(explain relationship below)
Teacher 11
Stranger (knew < 24 hours) 12
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

If other, please specify:
________________________________________________________________________

**IF YES,**

**DIS_WHY_V** What prompted you to tell someone?
________________________________________________________________________

**IF NO,**

**DIS_YNO_V** Why didn’t you tell anyone?
________________________________________________________________________

**PAR_REP_V** Did anyone file a report with authorities?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

**IF YES,**
**REP_FILE_V** who filed the report?

- Parent
- Step-parent
- Grandparent
- Sibling
- Extended family
- (indicate specific relationship below)
- Friend
- Friend of Family (not your direct friend)
- Acquaintance
- (explain relationship below)
- Teacher
- Stranger (knew < 24 hours)
- Refused to answer
- Don’t know.

If other, please specify:

_______________________________________________________________________

**IF YES**

**REP_TIME_V** From the time of your disclosure, how long did it take for this person to report abuse to authorities? [check only one box per offender]

- Reported abuse same day
- 1- 3 days
- 3 days - one week
- one week - two weeks
- two weeks - one month
- one month - six months
- six months - one year
- More than one year
- Refused to answer
- Don’t know.

**NO_REP_V** Did anyone know you were being sexually abused but did not file a report with authorities?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer
- Don’t know.

**IF YES**

**NO_REP_REL_V** What was your relationship to this person?

- Parent
- Step-parent
Grandparent 3
Sibling 4
Extended family 5
(indicate specific relationship below)
Friend 6
Friend of Family (not your direct friend) 8
Acquaintance 10
(explain relationship below)
Teacher 11
Stranger (knew < 24 hours) 12
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

If other, please specify:

________________________________________________________________________

IF YES
REP_HOW_V How did they know you were being sexually abused?

________________________________________________________________________

IF YES
REP_WHY_V Why do you think they did not file a report?

________________________________________________________________________

INTERVIEWERS: The following questions involve the victim’s guardian. Guardian is defined as the victim’s legal guardian(s). For example, a step-parent without legal custody, would not be considered a legal guardian.

VIC_GUAR_V Who was/were your legal guardian(s) at the time of initial sexual contact?
[check all that apply]
Biological mother 1
Biological father 2
Other (please specify below) 3
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

If other, please specify who your legal guardian was:
**VIC_PAR_V** Was [person] your legal guardian (or one of your legal guardians) at the time of sexual contact?

- **No** 0
- **Yes** 1
- **Refused to answer** 7
- **Don’t know.** 9

**IF YES**

**GUAR_TYPE_V** Please specify type of guardianship and describe in detail below:

- **Sole guardian** 1
- **Partial guardian** 2
- **Refused to answer** 7
- **Don’t know.** 9

Describe guardianship in detail below:

---

**IF YES, SKIP TO QUESTION ## PREVENT_V.**

**PAR_HOM_V** Was your legal guardian typically present during sexual contact (within the same home)?

- **No** 0
- **Yes** 1
- **Refused to answer** 7
- **Don’t know.** 9

**PAR_CHAR_V** Did your legal guardian have any problems (e.g., mental health problems, substance use, psychiatric diagnoses, financial problems) during the time of your sexual abuse?

- **No** 0
- **Yes** 1
- **Refused to answer** 7
- **Don’t know.** 9

**IF YES**

**PAR_MH_V** Please specify type of problem:

---

**PAR_ALONE_V** Did your legal guardian know you were spending time alone with
[person]?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

**PAR_CON_V** Did your legal guardian ever express concern about you spending too much time with [person]?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

**PAR_REP_V** You previously answered a question as to who filed a report with authorities. Did your legal guardian ever file a report with authorities?
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

*IF YES,*

**PAR_TIME_V** How long did it take for legal guardian to report abuse?

---

**PAR_LIKE_V** Prior to having knowledge of the sexual abuse, did the legal guardian(s) like or have a good relationship with [person]?
No 0
Yes 1
Legal guardian never knew of abuse 2
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

*IF YES*

**PAR_YLIKE_V** Please explain:

---

**VIC_BAD_V** Did [person] ever make you seem like a bad child to others (e.g., did he attempt to socially isolate or make you seem like you couldn’t be trusted?)
No 0
Yes 1
Refused to answer 7
Don’t know. 9

*IF YES*

**PAR_BAD_V** Please explain:
PREVENT_V  How could someone have prevented your sexual abuse?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

WARNING_V  What are some warning signs someone could have picked up on to prevent your sexual abuse?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

PREV_CHILD_V  What advice would you give a child to prevent sexual abuse?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

PREV_PAR_V  What advice would you give a parent to prevent child sexual abuse?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

PREV_COM_V  What do you think the community (e.g., schools) can do to prevent child sexual abuse?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
Table 3
Situational Aspects of Sexual Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situational Aspects of the Home</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location offense occurred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender’s home</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim’s home</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared home</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else’s home</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both offender and victim’s home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific location offense occurred in the home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender’s bedroom</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim’s bedroom</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else’s bedroom</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living room</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender’s home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unspecified or multiple locations)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(multiple locations)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim’s home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unspecified or multiple locations)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim had a shared bedroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim had a shared bed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation by Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people at home during the offense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrier that obstructed view of offense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one else home</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door closed</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door open, but alone in room</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (cont.)  
Situational Aspects of Sexual Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporal Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of day the offense occurred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late afternoon (3pm-6pm)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight (12am-6am)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening (6pm-9pm)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early afternoon (3-6pm)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning (9am-12pm)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late evening (9pm-12am)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early morning (6am-9am)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If overnight, were others asleep?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of year the offense occurred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4  
Guardian Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guardian Awareness and Presence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the guardian home during the offense?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the guardian have any significant concerns?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the guardian know the victim spent time alone with offender?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the guardian “like” the offender?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant did not know</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian did not know the offender</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guardian Confrontation and Disclosure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the guardian confront the offender about spending too much time with the victim?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the guardian file a report?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


