

Care and Treatment of child-victims of **child-pornographic exploitation in Germany**



Deutsche Sektion e.V.

3 steps taken

- Step 1: nationwide mailing: 555 x 1 page questionnaires in order to gain an overview
- Step 2: in depth questionnaire – was requested by 84 professionals from 39 institutions. Return rate 39% (32 professionals)
- Step 3: interviews – 28 professionals from 13 institution participated at 1 to 2 hour interviews

Being confronted with **child-pornographic exploitation (CPE):** (06/2000 – 06/2005)

- 84,8% reported „no“ or „rare“ confrontation with CPE,
- 14,6% reported „some“ or much („often“)
confrontation with CPE

within their work.

Counseling of CPE victims (06/2000 – 06/2005)

From 2000 until 2005 a total of **245** child and adolescent victims of CPE were being treated: **197 girls and 48 boys**

- **Most girls** (68) were aged 11 – 14, followed by the age of 6 – 10 (48 girls).
- **Most boys** (21) were aged 11 – 14, followed by the age 6 – 10 (16 boys).

Suspicion of cases of CPE and their distribution via internet (06/2000 – 06/2005)

- 42% suspected CPE in **218 cases**
suspicion of CPE for boys was 3times as high as
for girls
- 58% had no such suspicion
- 74% knew of no cases where CPE images had
been distributed via internet

What makes it difficult for victims to disclose CPE?

- “guilt”
- “fear of the threats of the abuser”
- assumption that maybe suggestions the victim might have made during counselling/therapy were not interpreted rightly by the professional.

Types of CPE images

- sexual acts between child/adolescent and adults
- touching of genitals
- vaginal abuse
- oral abuse
- posing for nude pictures and
- photographing/filming genitals.

Distribution via internet

- 50% of the professionals did not know if CPE images of girls had been publicized via internet. Regarding boys the insecurity was even greater.
- 15 girls and 5 boys knew that “their” images had been publicized via internet. 6 girls and 5 boys had even seen ‘their’ pictures in the internet.
- Professionals suspected distribution of CPE images via internet for 24 girls and 16 boys.
- On the other hand 11 girls and 13 boys expressed such a suspicion themselves.

Perpetrators

A total of **118 perpetrators** was reported.

Concerning 58% of these abusers (68) more information was given:

- 90% were male between ages 22 to 40
- 61 male and 7 female perpetrators were of German nationality.
- Most of them were the “father” or a “father figure” or had a close relationship to the family as a family friend.

Strategies used by perpetrators

- “showing ‘emotional affection’, preference over others”
- "pretending wrong sexual behaviour to be normal."
- “presents, money”
- “threats” were used to abuse children for CPE
- “modern slavery, trafficking” played no vital role.

This seems to allow for the assumption that CPE takes place within close surroundings of the victims.

Treatment offered to victims

- therapy
- counselling
- preparation and accompaniment to trial
- pedagogic work.

Striking was the fact that diagnostic assessment was not of uttermost importance!

What enables victims to disclose CPE?

- if professionals let them know that **THEY** know about CPE
- a trusting relationship and patience

Disclosure was being accompanied by feelings of shame, hate, disgust/loathing for both girls and boys.

Girls would also show fear and denial.

Boys would show guilt and speechlessness.

What is special about treating victims of CPE?

- Cases of CPE are cognitively as well as emotionally more challenging for the counselor/therapist,
- whereas for the victims the issues regarding the abuse rather than the filming or picture taking are of more relevance.

Confrontation

- Confronting victims of abuse with the possibility of abusive images was usually avoided by professionals.

They believed such a confrontation could retraumatize the child and it would contradict the position of letting the victim set the pace as to what to disclose at which point in time.

- Some specialized counselling centers believed that their specialization considering sexual abuse would be enough to encourage disclosure – also disclosure of CPE.

Permanence of abusive images on www

- The fact of “permanence” on the internet lead to feelings of discomposure and powerlessness for counsellors/therapists. They assumed that victims would be just as challenged by it as soon as they would cognitively grasp the implication of permanence within the world wide web.
- In order to cope with “permanence” some professionals would use trauma-therapeutic measures. Others believed coping as in healing not to be possible considering permanence.

CPE as a crime within close familial and social surroundings

- All reported cases of CPE had been taken place as part of sexually abusing a child within close familial or social surroundings.
- Structures of organized crime (mafia) or internationally operating rings were rarely ever mentioned. It seems that victims of such organized crime hardly ever find any help within the German counseling/therapy services.

Cell phones

- Sexualized assaults which are being photographed or filmed by peers using cell phones mean that victims are almost immediately being exposed as such within their close surroundings such as school or peer group.
- Quite often that leads to a gauntlet for the victim which enforces their feelings of shame and guilt. So far counselling centers have not developed coping and/or prevention strategies for this issue.

Networking / Cooperation:

- Most cooperation took place between counsellors/therapists and youth welfare services, attorneys and police.

This cooperation was rated mostly as satisfying.

- Least satisfying was the cooperation with judges, experts on credibility of victims and district attorneys.

Overall cooperation was seen as being very dependent on a functioning personal level of all concerned.

Demand #1: specialized training for professionals

- Information about magnitude, form and number of reports concerning CPE,
- information concerning diagnosis, symptoms of victims as well as how to help those victims,
- information on how to confront a client with the possibility of CPE within counseling/treatment,
- information as to how the fact that images were being taken affects the victims,
- information about the perpetrators/abusers.

Demand #2: Continuous and broad networking

- Networking within the psychosocial treatment and care structures as well as
- other close areas like police, justice and medical care,
- as well as regional, national and international networks
are necessary!

Demand #3: Prevention

- Create a prevention tool with children and adolescents
- Install popups which will give links to help lines or online counseling
- Education about emotional as well as social consequences concerning peer violence via internet and cell phones by external experts
- Expanding online counseling

Prevention model scheme

SMART-USER

- Goal is to work WITH adolescents regarding clever strategies when using „New Technologies“
- At the same time use these tools to be creative – producing songs, videos, picture books, etc.
- Cooperation with Motorola & German HipHop band

SMART-USER

- 62 youths (age 11 to 15) from different educational backgrounds – including deaf adolescents
- Workshops and weekends
- Talk about their strategies, good and bad experiences, pornsites, etc.

SMART-USER

- Homepage to be filled with content by adolescents – www.smart-user.eu
- Create tools to distribute amongst schools, youth clubs, etc.
- Maybe also create a truly international site – find similar projects in other countries ...
- You are all welcome to join this great experiment 😊! It's fun 😊 😊 😊



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