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Assessment of the Child victim: Using evidence-based sex offender knowledge.

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A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

“Better at gathering, than making sense?”

- Good competencies at gathering information about the story of the child.
- Challenging to analyse and present complex information in order determine risk, protection issues.
- Consistent with recent research highlighting the poor accuracy of decision-making in the child protection field.



Assessment & Analysis

- Poor accuracy of decision making is often based on assessments being slightly better than guessing (ie child protection field).
- Assessment & Analysis - key to any system to safeguard protection/welfare of children.
- Analysis is at the heart of assessment.
- As is using a systemic lens to make sense and to analyse the story the child is telling.



Using a 'bottoms-up approach'

- Dynamics of sexual victimization and sex offending are multifaceted.
- Unique risks / traits posed by sex offender dynamics – that impact on assessment of the child victim.
- “one size fits all” approaches are neither appropriate nor effective.



A Comprehensive approach to assessment

- 'fragmented and inconsistent know how' – offender grooming strategies.
- 'shared goal of ensuring victim and community safety.'
- 'victim-centeredness -



What do we need to know about the sex offender?

- Grooming patterns – threats, coercion, image consultancy, making the child complicit; strategies to remove the credibility of the child.
- Modus Operandi – ‘hiding in the open’ aspects



Sex Offender Impact on the child victim (in the system)

- Victim impact – ‘seduction of innocence’
- Divide and rule – the family dynamic
- Over compensation – ‘I’ll pay for everything to minimize the child’s trauma’



In conclusion

- The relationship – implications for assessment outcomes
- Family dynamics
- “Best interest of all principle”
- Offender knowledge, dynamics and grooming, mo – important issues for outcomes.

