



THE WORKING HANDBOOK

A Professional's Manual for Intervention with Sexually Abused Boys

THOMAS H. ROANE

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CHILD by Thomas H. Roane, M.A. ADVOCACY

PUBLICATIONS

"It always grieves me to contemplate the initiation of children into the ways of life when they are scarcely more than infants. It checks their confidence and simplicity, two of the best qualities that heaven gives them, and demands that they share our sorrows before they are capable of entering into our enjoyments."

- Charles Dickens

CHILD ADVOCACY PUBLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Only a generation ago, sexually victimized children remained silent, powerless because adults were deaf to what they did not want to hear. At the start of this decade, adults working with children took advantage of societal changes to construct a climate of acceptance that allowed the first public acknowledgments of the sexual victimization of children. Once children were given permission to reveal these secrets we became witness to an almost unbearable volume of testimony. These revelations demanded action.

Teachers, law enforcement officers, protective service investigators, physicians and nurses, psychologists, judges, lawyers and counselors all worked to become knowledgeable about the sexual abuse of children. Learning from each other, professionals in communities across the country organized into task forces and multi-disciplinary teams to begin to assess the dizzying number of cases coming to light. Our fund of knowledge about the sexual abuse of children began to expand because of the rich, national exchange of information and ideas among these child advocates.

Our willingness to believe information from the first girls who reported their abuse allowed more testimony to come forth. Evaluation of reports from those courageous children helped us establish a course of action to aid other girls and their families.

We are still learning how to listen to what sexually abused children have to tell us about their lives. And now we are beginning to hear from boys who have been sexually abused. We are listening, recording, analyzing and sharing the data about this "new" victimization. The more we can listen and understand, the more able we will be to offer appropriate response and care.

The Working Handbook is offered by Child Care Publications as another link in the chain of knowledge and enablement that connects children to their advocates.

Elizabeth D. Drake
Anne E. Gilroy
Child Care Publications, Inc.

PREFACE

Most of what we know about the sexual abuse of children comes from efforts to examine the nature and dynamics of the abuse of female children victimized by men. While the commonalities of male and female victims are great, the special circumstance of the sexually abused boy has received a relatively minor amount of attention in the professional literature.

It is the purpose of this book to provide practical suggestions and guides to the initial assessment of sexual abuse with an effort to incorporate what is known, and to some extent what is speculated, about male victims. Chapters 1, 3, 7, and 8 discuss and review literature relevant to male victimization in the areas of reporting, interviewing, therapy, and validation. Chapter 2 relies upon the work of Suzanne Sgroi as a framework to examine the case histories of boy victims. Chapters 4 and 5, along with other discussions, rely upon the author's experience with the assessment and case management of over 200 young, male victims referred to a multi-disciplinary child protection team. An opportunity to provide group therapy to offenders and mothers of victims through a Parents United Chapter also extended this writer's understanding of abuse.

The knowledge base of the social sciences often moves in a cycle from conceptual to empirical and back to a more refined conceptual basis. It is hoped that THE WORKING HANDBOOK will facilitate this process to join the focus of the different perspectives of psychology, social work, medicine and law enforcement in the healing process.

*Tom Roane
Gainesville, FL*

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Boys as
victims of
sexual assault

Allen is nine years old. He has an older brother who has recently revealed a history of his own extensive sexual abuse by their father. Allen has been asked once and has denied that he has been abused.

Asked again regarding the possibility, Allen is reluctant and sullen, but finally talks about the many abuses which he endured and then asks of his father, "Why did he have me born if he was going to do that to me?"

The young male victim of sexual abuse moves in a world of fear, anger, denial, and self-doubt that we are just beginning to comprehend. In the past, the numbers of male victims that were reported were small. Such is not the case now. Children's protective service agencies and law enforcement personnel are increasingly asked to investigate cases of boys who have been sexually assaulted. Treatment programs that provide services to victims of abuse have also seen dramatic increases in the rate at which male victims are referred for treatment.

INCIDENCE RATES

Gaining a consistent picture of the prevalence of sexual abuse of boys has been difficult. Although there have been only limited numbers of studies that pertain to boys, the survey work of David Finkelhor is widely noted:

8.7% of male children experienced sexual contact while under age 13 with a partner at least 5 years older or had had an experience between ages 13 and 18.

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