**Module L – Situational and Organizational Factors Affecting Sexual Abuse, Types of Offenders, Grooming Techniques, and Prevention of Abuse**

**(Primarily for Parishes)**

**Outline, Goals and Comments, Discussion Questions, References, and Sources**

**Outline**

1. Title Slides and Sources of Data (L-1 to K-3)
2. Situational Factors: Settings and Circumstances of Sexual Abuse (L-4 to L-17)
3. Settings Where Victims First Met Priests Who Abused Them (L-5 to L-9)
4. Physical Locations of Abuse (L-10 to L-13)
5. Circumstances and Timing of Abuse (L-14 to L-17)
6. Organizational Factors Relating to Abuse (L-18 to L-23)
7. Priests’ Primary Duty or Role at Time of Abuse (L-19 to L-23)
8. Categories of Offenders: Fixated/Regressed Typologies (L-24 to L-26 )
9. FBI Typologies: Situational and Preferential Offenders (L-27 to L-28)
10. Personality Characteristics of Clergy Offenders (L-29 to L-31)
11. Grooming Behavior (L-32 to L-40)
12. Five Ways to Prevent Abuse by Implementing Situational Crime Prevention Models (L-41 to L-45)
13. Summary of Situational and Organizational Factors, Types of Offenders, Grooming, and Prevention Related to Sexual Abuse of Minors L-46:
14. Discussion Questions, 1 (L-47)
15. Discussion Questions, 2 (L-48)

**Goals and Comments**

The goals of Module L are multifaceted. The first is to gain an understanding of situational and organizational factors related to abuse. It is striking that nearly two-thirds of sexual abuse of minors took place in a church-related setting. The physical location of most abuse was on church property or in residences. The timing was usually during or after church services and parish events or at recreational and social events. Note that most of the abuse occurred in ordinary situations where priests find themselves every day as they go about their ministry. Organizational factors are similar in terms of focus, that is, over 40 percent of abuse was perpetrated by associate pastors and 25 percent by pastors in parish situations. Lower percentages were represented by priests in residence in a parish, in diocesan offices, schools, and chaplaincies. The fact of greatest importance here is that most sexual abuse of minors by clergy takes place in relationship with and in proximity to parish ministry.

The second goal of Module L is to identify and understand the major categories of sexual abusers and personality characteristics of clergy offenders. The first two types, fixated offenders and regressed offenders, are differentiated by the degree to which deviant sexual behavior is entrenched and the basis of the psychological condition that led to abuse. **Fixated offenders** are characterized by compulsive attraction to children and often have not attained any degree of psychosexual maturity. Their actions are premeditated and do not stem from stressors. They typically recruit vulnerable children. Fixated offenders are most dangerous, of highest risk to the community, and have the highest rate of recidivism. **Regressed offenders** usually begin offending as adults and their offenses are triggered by stressors in the environment, including disordered childhood relationships. Stressors can be situational and are often related to loneliness, isolation, or anxiety. They prefer that their victims cooperate, but should they resist, regressed offenders do not usually follow through with sexually abusive behavior

FBI typologies categorize offenders as **situational** or **preferential**. Offenders of the first type have poor coping skills and target victims who are accessible, either children or adults. They are often insecure misfits with low self-esteem. Preferential offenders court children and give them much attention and many enticements. Because of poor psychological development they are compulsively attracted to children and are aggressive and extremely dangerous.

The third goal of Module L relates to the phenomenon of grooming, which is pre-meditated behavior intended to manipulate a potential victim into complying with sexual abuse. Tactics may include seduction and testing of a child, emotional manipulation and verbal coercion. It may also involve catching the victim by surprise, using physical force, disguising sexual advances, and using alcohol and drugs. Building relationships to gain trust often precedes abuse and may take years to develop. Abuse persists as offenders employ a variety of justifications and excuses, as well as deviance disavowal. Excuses include denial of responsibility and blaming the victim. Characteristics of accused priests are identified; justification for their actions, such as denying the wrongfulness and harmfulness of the behavior, and downplaying what actually occurred, are noted.

Finally, the fourth goal is to understand ways to prevent abuse. Situational Crime Prevention Models describe five strategies: increase the effort it takes to commit acts of abuse, increase the risk of being identified and punished, reduce the rewards by providing alternate outlets for close bonds with others, reduce provocations such as stress and isolation, and remove excuses for inappropriate behavior.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Taking into account the circumstances and timing that were most common when abuse was perpetrated, what instructions should be given to parishioners, especially parents, and to children about sexual abuse? What safeguards should be implemented?
2. Considering the settings and locations where abuse took place, what precautions should priests and other church leaders take relative to where they meet young people?
3. What are the major differences between types of sexual offenders?
4. How can those responsible for the care of children and young people be made more aware of the characteristics of grooming behavior and how to respond when it occurs?
5. What risk factors particular to clergy might be observed in potential clergy sex offenders?
6. What are the essential ingredients of educational programs that can help prevent sexual abuse?
7. To what extent are recommendations on education of young people, parishioners, and church leaders being implemented?
8. What components of the prevention models are most useful in your parish?
9. How can oversight be enhanced to prevent further sexual abuse?

**Titles of Slides and References**

L-1: Module L

L-2: Title slide

L-3: Main Sources of Data

L-4:I. Situational Factors: Settings and Circumstances of Sexual Abuse

L-5: Settings Where Victims First Met Priests Who Abused Them

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 108

L-6: A. Church/Parish Related

L-7:B. Teacher/School Related

L-8: C. Home of Victim or Relative of Victim

L-9: D. Other Institutions

L-10: Physical Locations of Abuse

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 109

L-11: A. Church/Parish Related

L-12: B. Residences

L-13: C. Other Locations

L-14: Circumstances/Timing of Abuse

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 110

L-15: A. Church/Parish Related

L-16: B. Social Event/Other Recreation

L-17: C. Other

L-18: II. Organizational Factors Relating to Abuse

L-19: Priest’s Primary Duty or Role at Time of Abuse

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 111

L-20: A. Pastoral/Parish Role

L-21: B. Other Clerical Role

L-22: C. School/Teaching Role

L-23: D. Other

L-24: A. The Fixated/Regressed Typology

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 154, 174, 196

Figure 1

National Child Sexual Abuse Rate, 1992-2001



Sexual Abuse Rate per 100,000 Child Population

Groth, A.N., Hobson, W.F. and Gary, T.S. (1982). The child molester: Clinical observations. In J. Conte and D.A. Shore (Eds.). Social Work and Child Sexual Abuse. New York; Haworth.

L-25: Fixated Offenders, 1: Definition

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 191

American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSMIV-TR. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

L-26: Regressed Offenders, 1: Definition

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 174, 176

L-27: B. FBI Typologies: Situational Offenders, 1

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 177, 197

Holmes, R.M. and Holmes, S.T. (1996). Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications.

L-28: FBI Typologies: Preferential Offenders, 2

Notes: Nature and Scope, pp. 177, 197

Holmes, R.M. and Holmes, S.T. (1996). Profiling Violent Crimes: An Investigative Tool. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications.

L-29: C. Personality Characteristics of Clergy Offenders, 1

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 180-181, 202

Plante, T.G., Manuel, G., & Bryant, C. (1996). Personality and cognitive functioning among hospitalized sexual offending Roman Catholic priests. Pastoral Psychology, 45, 129-139.

L-30: Personality Characteristics of Clergy Offenders, 2

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p, 181

Irons, R. & Laaser, M. (1994). The abduction of fidelity: Sexual exploitation by clergy-Experience with inpatient assessment. Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 1, 119-129.

Most of the individuals in the sample met the diagnosis for personality disorders with features of antisocial/psychopathic traits or paranoid, sadistic, or schizoid features. The results also illustrate that narcissistic and dependent traits clustered and modeled together in an exploitive manner.

For results of other studies, see Nature and Scope, pp. 180-181.

L-31: Onset of Abuse, 3: Overcoming External Factors that May Prevent Abuse from Occurring

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 99 and endnotes 437 and 438

Grooming is a premeditated behavior intended to manipulate the potential victim into complying with the sexual abuse.437 Pryor describes several methods by which child sexual abusers approach and engage their victims in sexual behavior, including verbal and/or physical coercion, seduction, games, and enticements.438 He explains how they are able to manipulate their victims into sexual compliance and how offenders either continue the manipulation or adjust it in order to continue with the abuse.

L-32: C. Grooming Behavior

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, pp. 102, 202

The tactics used by offenders depend somewhat on the potential victim’s response to the tactic. If an offender encounters little to no resistance from the potential victim, he will continue to use the same tactic repeatedly. If, however, some resistance is encountered, the offender may either change the tactic and/or become more forceful in his endeavor.

Pryor, D.W. (1996). Unspeakable Acts: Why Men Sexually Abuse Children. New York: New York University Press.

L-33: Grooming 2, Seduction and Testing of a Child

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 172

L-34: Grooming 3, Emotional Manipulation and Verbal Coercion

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 172

L-35: Grooming 4, Catching the Victim by Surprise

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 172; *Causes and Context*, p. 103

L-36: Grooming 5, Using Verbal or Physical Force

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 172

L-37: Grooming 6, Disguising Sexual Advances

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 172

The most methodical and deliberate tactic of engaging a victim in sex involves a process of initially introducing the victim to the idea of sex and then gradually engaging them in sexual activity. Pryor describes this tactic as turning the victim out. For example, the offender will begin by displaying himself in the nude or introducing the victim to pornography. Then there is a period of rationalizing that sex is okay. This may be followed by fondling the victim or having the victim fondle him, all the while rationalizing that sex is okay and possibly verbally praising the victim for his/her efforts. This exchange slowly builds up to more serious sexual acts and possibly to the point where the victim is being rewarded with gifts for his/her participation.

L-38: Grooming 7, Using Alcohol and Drugs

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 103

L-39: Grooming 8, Building Relationships with the Families of the Victims

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 103

L-40: Grooming 9, Effects of Grooming over Time

Notes: *Nature and Scope*, p. 173

When offenders set out to groom a victim, they will usually use tactics that have previously proved successful in gaining their victim’s compliance. However, given that offenders attend to their victim’s response, they are open to changing their tactics if an approach proves unsuccessful.

L-41: Five Ways to Prevent Abuse by Implementing Situational Crime Prevention Models

Notes: *Causes and Context*, pp. 101, 120-121

Crime-prevention techniques, as depicted in Table 5.1, range from “hard” to “soft” approaches. Hard strategies (such as blockading the cockpit on airplanes that make the pilots inaccessible to potential terrorists) incapacitate targets and make it impossible for the crime to be committed. In other words, the suspect desires to commit the crime, but the implemented SCP strategies prevent him or her from accomplishing the illegal act. Soft techniques (such humanizing potential victims) reduce situational prompts/cues that increase a person’s motivation to commit a crime during a specific event. These techniques, in turn, prevent a crime from occurring at a particular time.

1. Target harden

* Steering column locks and immobilizers
* Anti-robbery screens
* Tamper-proof packaging

1. Control access to facilities

* Entry phones
* Electronic card access
* Baggage screening

1. Screen exits

* Ticket needed for exit
* Export documents
* Electronic merchandise tags

1. Deflect offenders

* Street closures
* Separate bathrooms for women
* Disperse pubs/bars

1. Control tools/weapons

* “Smart” guns
* disabling stolen cell phones
* Restrict spray paint sales to juveniles

L-42: Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 2

Notes: *Causes and Context*, pp. 101, 120-121

By regularly surveying priests, administrative staff, and parishioners about their responses to, and satisfaction with, the priests with whom they have contact, dioceses are more likely to be alerted to questionable behavior that might have been undetected in the past. By sending a clear signal to all members of a parish community that their responses to individual priests are valuable, diocesan leaders open avenues of communication and gain early notice of problems.

1. Extend guardianship

* Take routine precautions: go out in group at night, leave signs of occupancy, carry phone
* “Cocoon” neighborhood watch

1. Assist natural surveillance

* Improved street lighting
* Defensible space design
* Support whistleblowers

1. Reduce anonymity

* Taxi driver IDs
* “How’s my driving?” decals
* School uniforms

1. Utilize place managers

* CCTV for double-deck buses
* Two clerks for convenience stores
* Reward vigilance

1. Strengthen formal surveillance

* Red light cameras
* Burglar alarms
* Security guards

L-43: Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 3

Notes: *Causes and Context*, pp. 101, 121

1. Conceal targets

* Off-street parking
* Gender-neutral phone directories
* Unmarked bullion trucks

1. Remove targets

* Removable car radio
* Women’s refuges
* Pre-paid cards for pay phones

1. Identify property

* Property marking
* Vehicle licensing and parts marking
* Cattle branding

1. Disrupt markets

* Monitor pawn shops
* Controls on classified ads
* License street vendors

1. Deny benefits

* Ink merchandise tags
* Graffiti cleaning
* Speed bumps

L-44: Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 4

Notes: *Causes and Context*, pp. 101, 121

1. Reduce frustrations and stress

* Efficient queues and polite service
* Expanded seating
* Soothing music/muted lights

1. Avoid disputes

* Separate enclosures for rival soccer fans
* Reduce crowding in pubs
* Fixed cab fares

1. Reduce emotional arousal

* Controls on violent pornography
* enforce good behavior on soccer field
* Prohibit racial slurs

1. Neutralize peer pressure

* “Idiots drink and drive”
* “It’s OK to say No”
* Disperse troublemakers at school

1. Discourage imitation

* Rapid repair of vandalism
* V-chips in TVs
* Censor details of modus operandi

L-45: Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 5

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 101 and endnotes

It is critical not only to educate priests about the harm of abuse to victims but also to continue to do so once they have been ordained.

Continued discourse about appropriate forms of closeness to others is critical throughout the life of the priest.

The church has taken many of the steps necessary to reduce opportunities for abuse, which should be maintained and continually evaluated for efficacy. Many individuals who enter the priesthood will have vulnerabilities that, if not addressed, may lead to a higher risk of abuse. It is important not only to address some of these vulnerabilities in seminary but also to offer post-ordination education, training, and evaluation. Knowing that most potential abusers will not be identified before the abuse occurs, and knowing that many priests have vulnerabilities that may lead to the commission of deviant behavior, it is important to reduce the opportunities for abuse to occur. The church has taken an important step in risk reduction through the safe environment education programs; post ordination education and evaluation can also play a role in further reducing the possibility of abuse.

Individuals primarily neutralize feelings of wrongdoing through excuses and justifications for their behavior.434 Sykes and Matza described these rationalizations as “vocabularies of motive,” 435 which not only allow the individual to commit the act of abuse, but also allow the behaviors to persist.436

1. Set rules

* Rental agreements
* Harassment codes
* Hotel registration

1. Post instructions

* “No Parking”
* “Private Property”
* “Extinguish camp fires”

1. Alert conscience

* Roadside speed display boards
* Signatures for customs declarations
* “Shoplifting is stealing” signs

1. Assist compliance

* Easy library checkout
* Public lavatories
* Litter bins

1. Control drugs and alcohol

* Breathalyzers in pubs
* Server intervention
* Alcohol-free events

L-46: Summary of Situational and Organizational Factors, Types of Offenders, Grooming, and Prevention Related to Sexual Abuse of Minors

L-47: Discussion Questions, 1

L-48: Discussion Questions, 2

**Sources**

This module and others prepared for use in parishes and dioceses are based primarily on the two reports presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team, The City University of New York: *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States*, 1950-2010, March, 2011 and *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002*, February 2004.

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