

Intrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse

RUTH O'LEARY

What do we already know?

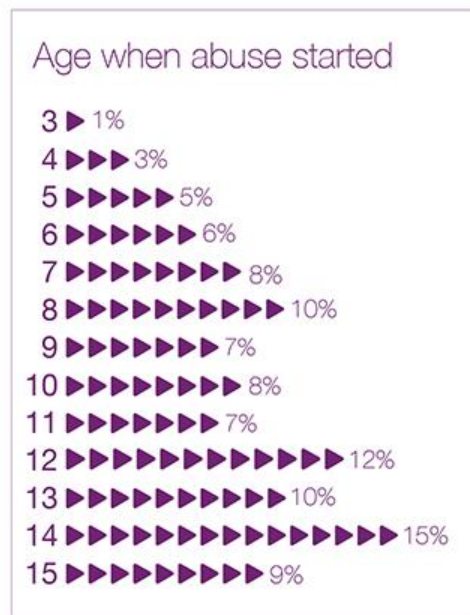
Intra-familial child sexual abuse refers to child sexual abuse (CSA) that occurs within a family environment. Perpetrators may or may not be related to the child. The key consideration is whether the abuser feels like family from the child's point of view.

Around two-thirds of all CSA reported to the police is perpetrated by a family member or someone close to the child.

There is no single agreed definition of intra-familial CSA. However, it is generally recognised that, in addition to abuse by a relative (such as a parent, sibling or uncle), it may include abuse by someone close to the child in other ways (such as a step-parent, a close family friend or a babysitter).

A snapshot of child sexual abuse

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse



Disabled adults are **2x** as likely as non-disabled adults to say they had been abused in their childhood

1 in 4 of those who had lived in a care home reported experiences of child sexual abuse - almost **4x as many** as those living with family / carers

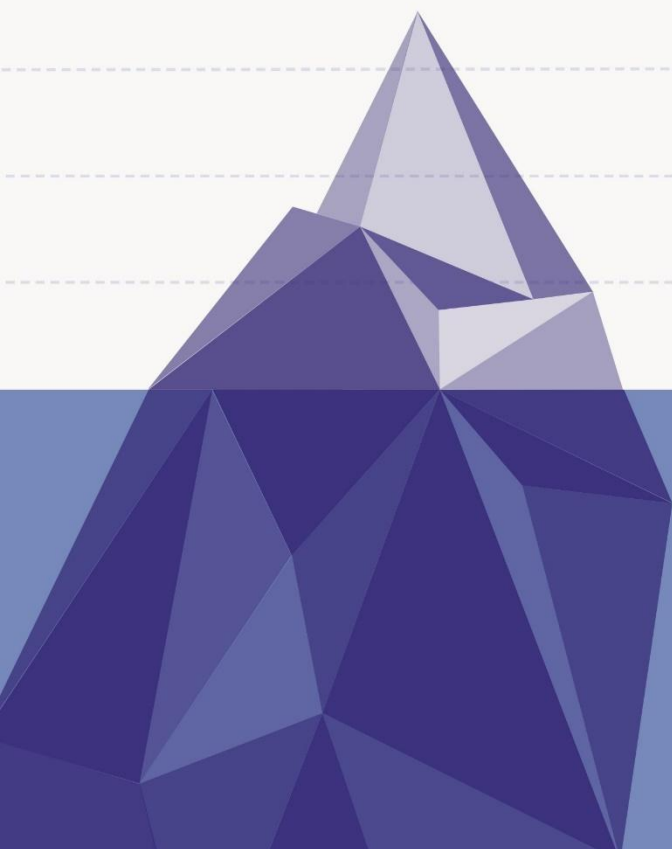
92% of child sexual abuse **images** depicted **girls** only in 2019

92% of **perpetrators** of child sexual abuse are **male**

References: Department for Education: Characteristics of children in need: 2019 to 2020. Home Office Police Recorded Crime and Outcomes, year ending March 2020, updated 28 October 2020. Calculated using single-year prevalence estimates by age group (Radford et al, 2011, Childhood abuse and neglect in the UK today) and the Office for National Statistics 2019 population estimates. To read the full report - The scale and nature of child sexual abuse: Review of evidence 2021 - visit www.csacentre.org.uk

Far more children are sexually abused than services identify

Child sexual abuse in 2022/23: Trends in official data
csacentre.org.uk



2,300 children on a child protection plan due to child sexual abuse (England)

9,500 children seen by sexual assault referral centres (England and Wales)

49,000 children assessed at risk of sexual abuse* (England)

105,000 child sexual abuse offences recorded by the police (England and Wales)

500,000

children are estimated to be sexually abused every year**

Sources: Home Office, Police recorded crime and outcomes, 2022/23; Department for Education, Characteristics of Children in Need, 2022/23. *Includes assessments recording concerns of child sexual abuse and exploitation. **Estimate calculated using single-year prevalence estimated by age group (Radford et al. 2011, Childhood abuse and neglect in the UK today) and the Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates, 2022. Please note: numbers rounded to the nearest hundred/ thousand.

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The impact of intra-familial CSA

Abuse by a family member may be particularly traumatic because it involves high levels of betrayal, stigma and secrecy.

CSA in the family is linked to a range of negative outcomes over the whole of the life course, including poorer physical and mental health, lower income, relationship difficulties and further violence and abuse.

Scott, S. (2018). Key Messages from Research on Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse. Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre), London

Signs to consider-professional curiosity.

- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- School difficulties
- Behavioral changes
- Sexualized behavior
- Sleep problems, nightmares
- Somatic symptoms (abdominal pain, headaches)
- Bedwetting/soiling
- Genital symptoms or STIs
- Anxiety, depression, PTSD symptoms
- Contraception/pregnancy

Role of non-abusing parent/carer

Non-abusing caregivers may be supportive, disbelieving, fearful, or dependent on the alleged perpetrator.

Children may retract disclosures because of family pressure.

Disclosure can create significant family disruption.

Support to non-abusing parent carer will support family moving forwards safe space to talk-offload-check in.

Engagement with child/family member

Open questions and discussions

Reference to signs

What is already known about the child/family context.

Continued open door for conversation/discussion

Safeguarding and contact with other services.

Thank you



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