

SEEING BEYOND THE PICTURE

Child Sexual Abuse Images Fact Sheet for Victim/Family Advocates

Scope of the Problem:

The number of child sexual abuse images is increasing at a historic rate, while the average age of the victim depicted is decreasing. (Reid, 2017).

Terms such as *child pornography*, *child porn*, and *kiddie porn* are an inaccurate minimization of the abuse that has occurred (Reid, 2017).

Child sexual abuse images may include images of sexting, sextortion, sexual tourism, youth-produced images, and other technology facilitated child exploitation.

78% of victims are under 12 years old, 63% are under 8 years old, and 80% are girls (NCVC, 2014).

Most offenders arrested had images that showed penetrative child sexual abuse and more than 20% possessed images depicting violence, such as bondage, aggressive rape, or torture (NCVC, 2014).

Most images produced by perpetrators who are known and have intimate access to victims are family or household members, acquaintances such as neighbors, family, friends, or babysitters.

Over 25 million images and video files are viewed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children annually (Reid, 2017).

Myths about child sexual abuse images:

- It's victimless.
- It's like other child sexual abuse.
- It's not as harmful.
- It's a choice.

Things to Remember When Serving Victims and Families

The role of the victim/family advocate in a Children's Advocacy Center is to advocate for the victim, partner with the multidisciplinary team, and serve as a resource for victims and their non-offending caregivers. This advocacy will reduce trauma to the victim and provide critical support to the caregiver.

For the victim, the sexual abuse is not perceived as in the past but rather it goes on and on and does not end.

Victims have feelings of powerlessness and helplessness because there is an inability to gain control over child sexual abuse images that have been distributed.

A child's response when having experienced childhood trauma, largely depends on the response of the primary caregiver. The security of the attachment bond with the caregiver mitigates against additional and ongoing trauma. When the child has a consistent and predictable caregiver, the child can learn to regulate and modify their internal states and develop a sense of interpersonal security (NCVC, 2014).

The Children's Advocacy Center model brings together agency professionals involved in a case of child abuse and encourages the professionals to work together and keep the victim and the families at the center of the response.

The victim/family advocate must help the members of the multidisciplinary team to understand the need to treat the victim and family with sensitivity.

Victims of child pornography crimes have rights under state and federal law.



Baltimore Child Abuse Center