

RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION PROCESS FOR THE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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Abstract - This study attempts to examine complications related recovery and reintegration process of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. In order to do so, three main goals were set. First, to understand the situation of the sexually abuse children and how they were treated by the society; second, to know the laws guiding the provision of services for the victim/survivor of abuse third, to evaluate the difference between what the law says and what happened in reality and fourth, to know the programs and services provided by different agencies for the child sexual abuse.

The exploration of the ways those with experience of abuse are being given intervention is important to understand the perceptions, behaviors, and communications with the child sexual abuse. Recovery and Reintegration process will carefully analyze and evaluate which includes the experiences of the children living in the shelter and their way of recovery.

Key Words:

Child

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites.

Child Sexual Abuse

"Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to: — the

inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; — the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; — the exploitative use of children in pornographic performance and materials".

Recovery

- The act or process of becoming healthy after an illness or injury: the act or process of recovering
- The act or process of recovering
- The act or process of returning to a normal state after a period of difficulty
- The return of something that has been lost, stolen, etc.

Other literature states that recovery is a rescue, removal or escape from sexual exploitation. It can also defined as emotional recovery through psychosocial programs and measures including some resilience work to mobilize and support the child's innate healing or coping strengths.

Reintegration

The term "reintegration" was also used in a number of different ways in the literature. According to Oxford Dictionary, it is the action or process of integrating someone back into society. For the survivor/victims of abuse "it is a way of returning home to their families /relatives in the community.

Reunification

'Reunification' refers to the process whereby a child separated from his or her family due to exploitation is *physically* reunited with them. Not all children affected by CSE will be living separately from their families and not all of those separated will be reunified. Some children may be placed with other family members or in alternative care for a period of time or, if they are older, they may be supported through semi-independent living arrangements.

DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development)- the governing body of the Philippine government responsible in the welfare and needs of the marginalized group of people.

CCA (Child Caring Agency)- licensed and accredited agency by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) which provide temporary shelter, rehabilitation and proper case management to the victim/survivor of different abuse.

Victim/Survivor- children who are abused sexually and was rescued out of the harmful activities done to them. They are removed from detrimental environment and place in an institution providing total healing and recovery.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to focus on the recovery and reintegration process of Child Sexual Abuse while staying at the child caring agency. Over the years, there are a lot of frameworks for actions by the different International community pertaining to the reintegration of the abuse children. For example, in the anti-trafficking field, the three R's approach emphasize on prevention, protection and prosecution. In later years, additional "P's" were added to highlight importance of punishment of abusers and the campaign of International cooperation.

The "protection" element relates to the care and support of children as having experienced child sexual exploitation. States have a duty to provide care and support to the abused children. There are a number of specific International provisions in place to assist the children in their recovery and reintegration.

Based on Article 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it states that: "State parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture to any form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of children".

In the Philippines, it draws attention on the reports of an increase in very young children being forced into sex acts for live internet streaming which increasingly takes place in private residences and internet cafe. They earn a big amount of money which helps them to uplift their living conditions. This type of work is considered as one of the main source of income in different city and municipality.

According to the study by the Center for Women Resources (CWR), one child or woman is raped every 62 minutes. Let that sink in for a moment. The group also found out that 70 percent of the victims are children, with women from the lowest economic group more prone to

violence, including rape. Some of the children are being abused by the members of their own families.

Another study by UNICEF claims that one out of five Filipino children suffer from sexual violence at home, in school or in the community. With this the government makes some solutions to help the victims with different programs and services under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Despite the state being primary duty carriers when it comes in promoting recovery and reintegration of the abuse children, in reality, the Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) provides the majority of specialized care and support for those victims of abuse. The services provided by the NGO's for its clientele is more comprehensive than the services provided by the government.

2. RESULTS

Based on the initial literature review, there are two main approaches in providing care. One is trauma informed approaches and two is right based approaches. These two approaches are complimentary and priorities of many the same principles. Based on the literature review and seeing these approaches there are nine elements or principles of professional practice that have been identified as particularly relevant when supporting children in their recovery and reintegration.

These principles are:

- Building trust
- Committing in terms of confidentiality and privacy.
- Emphasizing safety
- Implementing non-judgmental approach
- Encouraging acceptance and belonging,
- Encouraging hope
- Having commitment with the child by building solid relationship
- Giving access to information
- Supporting agency

These nine elements are not distinct areas and in many ways are interrelated. For example, building trust may result in having a good working relationship with a caring adult to nurture and develop. Maintaining the practice of confidentiality may help children to trust the person feeling that they can keep them safe. Having commitment with the child by building solid relationship is important protective factor to help them keep safe.

The elements of care listed above do not cost much in financial terms. People working children do not require years of training to master it. They are instead, things that all Child caring agency, in any given context should be made aware of and supported to prioritize, nurture and

develop in their everyday interactions with children who were abused.

As mandated by the law, states have a duty to provide care and support to the children who is abuse. There are a number of specific International provisions in place to assist children in their recovery and reintegration. Article 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child states that:

‘States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.’

In addition to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the rights of children to recovery and reintegration are preserved in a number of instruments including:

- The optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000),
- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), and the
- ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999).

Regional instruments also highlight the duty of states to assist ‘victims’. Such instruments include:

- The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention: 2007),
- The EU directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims (2011),
- The EU directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (2011),
- The Southeast Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002). There is therefore, a surfeit of legal tools in place that clearly lay out the duty of states to support children affected by abuse. That said, it has been argued that the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms mean that implementation and action do not necessarily follow.

In the Philippines, there are several local laws governing the protection of the child who were abuse. Department of Social Welfare and Development as lead in social protection is mandated to set standards, register, license, accredit and provide consultative services to organizations engaged in social welfare and development activities. It enables to develop and maintain the standards of a high performing, proactive and supportive partners in the delivery of social welfare and development programs and services for the best interest of the child.

R. A. 5416 of 1968 otherwise known as Providing for Comprehensive Social Service for Individuals and Groups in Need of Assistance Creating the Department of Social Welfare, Section 3, The Department shall A. set standards and policies to ensure effective implementation of public and private social welfare programs. B. Accredit institutions and organizations, public and private, engaged in social welfare activity including the licensing of child caring and child placement institutions and provide consultative services thereto.

Executive Order No. 292 otherwise known as Administrative Code of 1987, Title XVI, Chapter 1, Section 3, Functions of the Department- to accomplish its mandates and objectives, the Department shall:

- a) Accredit institutions and organizations engaged in social welfare activities and provide consultative and information services to them
- b) To set standards, accredit and monitor performance of all social welfare activities both in public and private sectors

Executive Order No. 221 Series of 2003 otherwise known as Amending E. O. No. 15 S. Of 1998 entitled Redirecting the Functions and Operations of the DSWD, Section 3 Powers and Functions of DSWD- Set standards, accredit and provide consultative services to institutions, organizations and persons engaged in social welfare activities and monitor performance of institutions, organizations and persons engaged in social welfare activities, both public and private

Administrative order No. 16 Series of 2012, Revised A. O. 17 Series Of 2008 (rules and Regulations on the Registration and Licensing of Social Welfare and Development Agencies and Accreditation of Social Welfare and Development Programs and Services)- DSWD is mandated to set standards, register, license, accredit and provide consultative services to organizations engaged in social welfare and development activities.

Administrative Order no.15 provides ladderized standards on the operation of a 24 hour residential care services for abandoned, abused, neglected or voluntarily

committed children, youth, women, persons with disabilities and older persons among others.

Memorandum Circular No. 1 and 6 Series of 2012 otherwise known as Re-clustering of Offices, Bureaus, Services and Units at the DSWD-CO (as amended by MC 6, Standards Bureau Functions-Develop national standards on registration, licensing and accreditation of SWDAs and service providers.

Given how essential the response from family and community is when it comes to reintegration, there is a clear need to comprehend the context in which the child has come from and an appreciation of where they will end up. An appropriate approach to child protection recognizes that children's experience of harm occurs in, and is alleviated by a series of interconnected settings: the home, peer groups, educational settings and community spaces. When viewing child protection through this lens, the role of individuals, institutions and structures in each of these contexts in preventing, identifying and intervening in abuse and discrimination becomes vital. Such an approach also recognizes that the policies and organizations' that shape and govern these spaces affect the ability to keep children safe and, can in turn, contribute to their successful reintegration.

Different child caring agencies practice case management to better serve its clientele and to make sure that the best interest of the child is in place. A series of learning about the role of professional social workers and other care providers emerged from this review.

- Case management- (assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and termination) are key functions in determining what areas of support a child sexual abuse may require through a thorough assessment of the social worker.
- Resident therapist/psychologist helps the child to process their feelings and emotions through different interventions.
- Houseparent or caregivers play a vital role when it comes in the recovery and reintegration of the child sexual abuse through their day to day interactions.
- The child's victim/survivor relationship with the caregiver(s)/houseparent(s) will have a great impact on their willingness to open their feelings and emotions. When the relationship is strong and supportive, this can positively influence a child's safety, sense of self-worth, acceptance and agency.
- Children want to be able to 'look up' to their caregiver(s)/houseparent(s), and in some cases

may feel more comfortable being supported as they are the one who are with the children every day. Most importantly though, they want someone who they trust, respects them, is kind, and genuinely cares about their wellbeing.

- Working with the sexually abuse children can be challenging. Feelings of distress, frustration, and in some cases failure, can take a toll on caregivers'/houseparents' emotional and physical health.
- Given this, and recognizing the crucial role that caregivers play, it is mandatory that they are able to access supervision, support and training to ensure they are well equipped to carry out this complex role through the help of the professionals (social workers, therapist, and psychologist). Without this type of support, not only are there risks in terms of the quality of care that children receive, but organizations also risk losing staff.
- As consistency and continuity are important in working with this group of children, supporting and retaining good staff should be a priority for service providers.

Through reviewing findings from the field research, and through exploring the literature, a number of key areas of support, have been identified. In addition to the fundamental need for care of every child – as important in assisting them in their recovery and reintegration. These include:

- **Basic needs and shelter-** Children have a right to an adequate standard of living, particularly in regards to food, clothing and housing. Through the findings of the field research conducted by ECPAT, it was evident that these standards were not being met by all those services supporting children as some survivor respondents explained that they had to share soap, toothbrushes, bedding and beds.

Survivor respondents talked about wanting to have their basic needs met. This meant having access to fresh, familiar food and clean water, having appropriate clothing, having their own, and enough, hygiene products and having their own bedding and sleeping space. Through listening to children and providing them with these basic items, this can signal to children that their views matter and that they are respected and cared for. Through involving children in decision-making about their basic needs, for example when it comes to meal planning and preparation, this can also promote agency and a sense of control for children.

Through involving children in decision-making about their basic needs, for example when it comes to meal planning and preparation, this can also promote agency and a sense of control for children. The fact that shelter facilities often appeared to be the only option, and that children were spending long periods of time in facilities that were designed for short term stays, is concerning. Survivor respondents shared that they needed clear information about care placements and needed to know if, why and where they may be moved to next.

Survivor respondents expressed how small things made them feel welcomed and cared for when arriving at a new care setting; i.e., staff members talking to them, being asked if they were ok, and being offered food. Giving teddy bear as agency's welcome gift to the child is one of the way to feel that they are welcome in the shelter. Survivor respondents talked about the difficulties they sometimes faced in shelter homes due to teasing, bullying and the everyday stresses of living with other children.

Although some survivor respondents felt that physical security measures, such as having security guards at shelter homes, helped them feel safe, others did not understand why they were living in locked and guarded facilities. Survivor respondents shared that they had, or in some cases, were planning on running away from shelter facilities. For a number, this appeared to be due to the restrictions which meant they were unable to spend time, communicate with family or friends or 'have fun' outside the shelter. There is a need to recognize the value of building other dimensions of safety, alongside physical safety, such as relational safety, through establishing solid relationships between children and their caregivers.

In understanding the importance of acceptance and belonging for children, organizations' should prevent isolation and promote opportunities for children to build positive connections with family, friends and the community. Evidence suggests that such relationships will help build resiliency and enable smoother transitions.

- **Health-** All children have a right to access the highest attainable standard of health. Children affected by the abuse are likely to suffer from a collection of physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health problems as a result of their experiences. Children affected by abused report a range of 'stressors' that exist prior to, during and following experiences of the said exploitation. It is important to be aware of the multiple forms of trauma that children may have experienced and may continue to experience due to the on-going stress and uncertainty that survivors of Child sexual abuse are likely to be living with.

Children affected by the abused want confidential services and they want to talk to non-judgmental professionals (like social workers, therapist, and psychologist) who will listen and have the skills and training to help them deal with their problems. Service providers have a role to play in helping children access other services and accompanying them to appointments like for their psychological sessions outside. Service providers must also advocate for confidential, consistent, child-friendly and sensitive health service provision for the children they are supporting.

- **Education, vocational training and Income generating projects-** Children have a right to education and vocational training. There is evidence that engaging in education or training can help children establish a sense of 'normality', help place children on an equal footing with other children and lead to respect and acceptance in their wider communities. There is a variety of forms of education, training and income-generation activities, and it is important that children are both informed about their options and supported to make decisions about what is the best fit for them. Abused children wanted something that they can spend their time with. Like teaching them how to knit, sew and other livelihood activities where they can gain income that they can use once they reintegrate with their families.
- **Life skills and peer support-** The development of life skills are important for all children, including those affected by Child sexual abused. Through the development of life skills children may build up a number of protective factors which can aid in recovery and reintegration and help keep children safe. Children who develop skills and undergo training may be interested in using these skills to help other children and young people affected by the abused. Some survivor respondents shared that they learnt about services from their peers, felt comfortable talking to their friends, and therefore felt that peer-to-peer communication could be a useful way to provide education and support. It is also important to have peer specialist meeting every week to check their concerns, needs and to voice out their idea of what services are they needs to help them recover.
- **Access to cultural, religious and recreational activities-** For some children spiritual and religious coping strategies may help them make sense of their experiences and provide them with hope for the future. Children have a right to participate in cultural and religious activities. Through such activities, they may also develop a sense of belonging and connectedness that can be so important for children. Children have a right to play and access recreational

activities that are age appropriate. Survivor respondents illustrated that children want 'normality'. In other words, they want to be like other children of their own age who are not affected by the abused. Therefore having opportunities to play, 'hang out' with friends and take part in other activities will be an important part of the overall recovery and reintegration process. Some of the abuse children wanted to devote their time to play and keep themselves busy. Some activities they want to do are playing soccer, basketball, volleyball, football, and other outdoor and indoor games.

- **Legal support-** As child victims, children affected by abused have a number of rights and interests that must be protected during the criminal justice process. It is clear from the field research and review of the literature that survivors find the legal process particularly challenging. Specific aspects identified as particularly difficult include having to make tough decisions, having to retell their stories in front of their perpetrators or people inside the court, the drawn out nature of the legal process, the fear of revenge, the discrimination they face, and the sense of a lack of justice. Survivors highlight that they often feel a lack of power and control during the legal process and that they need better communication and information from professionals during this period. Given the lengthy nature of legal cases, children should be provided with on-going information and ideally maintain a consistent relationship with a support worker (social worker, therapist, psychologist and caregivers) throughout. Practicing them before court hearings is one of the best ways to prepare the child to face her perpetrators. It also helps the child to feel comfortable and secure while they are inside the court.
- **Family and community strengthening-** Children have a right to family life and, where safe to do so, should be supported during reunification with family members. There are differing views over when children, if they are able, should return home and it is unclear how decisions are made on the ground, including who is involved in the decisions regarding reunification. Assessments are essential in establishing the readiness of the child, family and community for reunification and all relevant parties should be involved in this process. Service providers must ensure that they are aware of legal frameworks and implement existing guidelines and procedures while making decisions regarding reunification. Service providers should prioritize working with and strengthening the family as this is important to successful reintegration. Psycho education sessions and training can be conducted to the families to

strengthen their awareness and to give additional information on what the child has been through at this stage of time and to learn how to deal with them properly.

Children value and recognize the importance of being 'accepted' by their family and community and yet they may experience disgrace and discrimination if they return home. There is a general need to work with communities on challenging perception against children affected by the abused. Monitoring children once they return home can be resource thorough and must be done with sensitivity so as not to further defame children. Children should have access to long-term support accessible from their home communities. As specialist service providers may be unable to provide this support due to geographical barriers and resource constraints, it is important to explore the potential of working with local community organizations' or local government units and structures to provide on-going support.

It is clear that discrimination is a key obstacle to all children accessing support and services. The fears that children face, and the lack of sensitive, child-friendly, confidential, consistent support, greatly influences a child's willingness to engage with services. States have duty to provide care and support to children affected by abused and it is clear from this report that states are falling short. Although there is a need for more resources, what is striking from the messages from survivors is the seemingly small things that can also make a difference. Through their interactions with service providers and the wider community, children can feel cared for and respected.

Implementing the nine key principles for practice may go some way in improving children's experience of support during their recovery and reintegration. Traditionally the focus of recovery and reintegration work has been on supporting the child and in some cases the child's family until they are both stable to continue their lives. Programs and services needs to consider the wider situations children dwell and how those within these shared spaces can be trained and supported to contribute to a positive environment for promoting successful recovery and reintegration.

In designing and implementing programs, having an understanding of the context and resources available is critical. There is therefore, a need for more research, particularly with children and their families, to understand fully the contexts where recovery and reintegration takes place.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Children have right to a family life where they can feel the love, care and affection of their family members. Children should be supported in their efforts in terms of reunification with their respective family especially if the member is the one who abused the child. When it comes to assessing whether family reintegration is appropriate, responsible persons should have critical thinking before making decisions. It should be based on the existing legal frameworks and implementing guidelines and procedures.

While preparing the family and its member, it is vital to consider having different kinds of psycho education, trainings and seminars that will keep them aware about the situation of a child sexual abuse and how they can understand children having this kind of experience. Children on the other hand needs to be involved in this decision making process about their reintegration. Children will easily developed trust to an adult person if they feel that they are being love, care and support them to have good working relationships.

It is difficult to trust a person outside their circle of family and friends, but once they feel that they are important to that person, children would start to open their feelings and emotions. Building trust to have a second family while staying at the shelter is a difficult task to accomplish but it will help keep children safe in the future.

There are some families, who have widespread resources to enable them to understand, accept and protect their child but others need support on this. Service providers may not always be able to give this support but where possible should prioritize working with and strengthening the family because the literature indicates that this is fundamental to successful reintegration. Continue partnership with different government agencies to access their resources in helping these families will be a great help to sustain the capacity building prior to the reintegration.

For children who have been abuse, it is important to them the acceptance of their community. Therefore, it is important to consider the role of the community in terms of caring, protecting and supporting children who are affected by the abused. States have an obligation to have a campaign in terms of awareness about the detrimental effects of becoming child sexual abuse on children and there is a clear need to also work with the community to challenged discrimination and stigma. This is particularly important when it comes to professionals in the community who are likely to play a significant role in children's recovery and reintegration such as teachers, health workers, barangay officials, local officials, police officers, lawyers, judge and others involved in child protection.

There are great potential in working more closely with communities to support the recovery and reintegration of children, as with all area of support, it is imperative that any plans or activities are fully considered, discussed with the child and family and ensure that they are appropriate, protect the child's right and practice confidentiality and do no harm. All information should be known and be available to the child to have a good and harmonious working relationship. The best interest and welfare of the child is the utmost priority in every decision that needs to be done.

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BIOGRAPHIES



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