What do US Adults Think about Child Sexual Abuse: Measures of Knowledge and Attitudes Among Six States

June 29, 2010
Agenda

• Introduction to Stop It Now!
• Survey methodology and data
• Interpretation
• Implications for Action
Today’s Participants

- Parents
- Child Welfare
- Child Advocacy Center
- Rape Crisis/Sexual Assault Recovery
- Domestic Violence
- Crime Victim Assistance
- People personally impacted by child sexual abuse
- Child Abuse Prevention
- Therapists
- Criminal Justice
- Medical staff
- Faith Communities
- Youth services
- Public Health
- Researchers

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Collaboration

Can you name others?

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Now! Approach

- Public Health/Root causes
- Adults protecting children-focus adult and community responsibility
- Inclusive/Accountability and Understanding
- Hope
- Research-based
- Avoid use of labels if possible

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Research Based Programming--Methods

- Focus groups & individual interviews
- Public opinion surveys (Vermont, Philadelphia, Minnesota, Georgia, UK & Ireland, Wisconsin)
- Process & training evaluation
- Research (Risk Factor project)
Community-based Program Model

• Sponsoring organization
• Steering committee of local stakeholders
• Social marketing campaign
• Training and community education
• Research and Evaluation
• Public Policy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Prevention</th>
<th>Sample Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Helpline, Website, Brochures</td>
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<td>Promoting Community Education</td>
<td>Social Marketing, Community presentations and Public Dialogues, op-eds and media interviews,</td>
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<td>Educating Providers</td>
<td>Training child protection workers, school counselor, teachers, child care providers, substance abuse counselors etc.</td>
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<td>Fostering Coalitions and Networks</td>
<td>Local steering committee, Participation in local, state and national coalitions</td>
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<td>Changing Organizational Practices</td>
<td>Training of trainers for child care licensors and other agencies</td>
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<td>Influencing Policies and Legislation</td>
<td>State and national advocacy</td>
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Ecological Model
Why Survey?

- Understanding your audiences
- Program planning
- Evaluation measure
Survey Data
Your questions…

- Who was surveyed?
- What states were included?
- What kind of survey?
- What was the time frame?
- Are the results statistically valid?
Survey Caveats

• Time between surveys
• Demographic differences between sample sites.
• Surveys by telephone
Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse Survivorship

- Total: 23%
- Men: 14%
- Women: 29%

(Sample Size: 3,336)
Webcast Poll #1

What % of US adults surveyed believe that children are sexually abused most often by someone known to the child?

- 15%
- 35%
- 65%
- 85%
- 95%
## Webcast Participant Poll #1 Results

**Question:** What % of US adults surveyed believe that children are sexually abused most often by someone known to the child?

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<th>% of WEBCAST Participants</th>
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Webcast Participant Poll #1 Results

What % of US adults surveyed believe that children are sexually abused most often by someone known to the child?

Actual Survey Results: 95% of adults surveyed believed this
Knowledge of Who Sexually Abuses Children

- Someone they know: 95% (Sample Size: 3,303)
- Offenders live in community: 72% (Sample Size: 4,434)
- Other children: 64% (Sample Size: 5,241)

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Hypothetical Situation of Possible Child Sexual Abuse

- Would do nothing: 1%
- Don’t know what they would do: 7%
- Would take action: 91%

(Sample Size: 2301)
Webcast Poll #2

What % of US adults surveyed said they knew of another adult who was probably sexually abusing a child in the past year?

- 8%
- 18%
- 29%
- 54%
What % of US adults surveyed said they knew of another adult who was probably sexually abusing a child in the past year?

- Think 8% of adults knew: 6%
- Think 18% of adults knew: 22%
- Think 29% of adults knew: 29%
- Think 43% of adults knew: 43%
- Think 54% of adults knew: 0%
What % of US adults surveyed said they knew of another adult who was probably sexually abusing a child in the past year?

Actual Survey Results: 8%
Actual Situations

- Did not know of a situation: 92%
- Knew of an actual abuse situation: 8%

- Did something: 22%
- Did nothing: 72%
- Didn’t know what to do: 6%

(Sample Size: 3421)
Data from registrants survey

What did you do when you recognized concerning behaviors?

- Report 55%
- Talk with parents, child, ally 21%
- Confront person with concerning behaviors 14%
- Refer to therapy 5%
- Keep child away from person 3%
- Nothing 3%

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Adult Awareness and Concern About Child Sexual Abuse

- Familiar with child sexual abuse term (Sample Size: 3401) - 99%
- Heard about CSA from media in last year (Sample Size: 3000) - 86%
- Talked to someone about CSA (Sample Size: 891) - 48%
- Considers CSA a major problem (Sample Size: 899) - 44%
Webcast Poll #3

What % of US adults agreed that: “treatment programs can help abusers stop their sexual abuse of children”?

- 12%
- 46%
- 69%
- 76%
What % of US adults surveyed agree that treatment programs can help abusers stop their sexual abuse of children?

- Think 12% of adults agree (49%)
- Think 46% of adults agree (32%)
- Think 69% of adults agree (12%)
- Think 79% of adults agree (6%)

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What % of US adults surveyed agree that treatment programs can help abusers stop their sexual abuse of children?

Think 12% of adults agree
Think 46% of adults agree
Think 69% of adults agree
Think 79% of adults agree

Actual Survey Results: 79% of adults surveyed agreed

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Views on Treatment for Child Sexual Offending

- Abusers can stop sexually abusing children if they want to: 28% (Sample Size: 1367)
- Abusers can stop sexually abusing children if they get appropriate treatment: 50% (Sample Size: 398)
- Some abusers would like to get help to stop: 68% (Sample Size: 1303)
- Treatment can help abusers stop sexually abusing children: 69% (Sample Size: 3938)
- Child sexual abusers should get treatment in prison: 96% (Sample Size: 4435)
Views on Sex Offender Management

- **Residency restrictions:** 72% of Philadelphia respondents support residency restrictions.
- **Sex offender registry use:** 36% of Georgia respondents report having used the sex offender registry.
- **Perceived effectiveness of sex offender registry:** Most Georgia respondents (68%) feel that sex offender registration policy is at least somewhat effective in preventing child sexual abuse.
Interpretation of Findings
Key Interpretations

1. Prevalence rates consistent with other research.
2. Majority are aware, knowledgeable & concerned about the issue.
3. Higher percentage of adults who have experienced childhood sexual abuse are aware & knowledgeable.
5. Majority support sex offender policies like residency restrictions and sex offender registry.
6. Majority support treatment for those who have offended.
• Media and public discourse don’t represent privately held views.
• “Stranger danger” myth may not be a major barrier to awareness & action
• Are our prevention efforts well-focused?
• More support for sex offender treatment & innovative policy than assumed?
Areas for Further Research

- Demographic differences
- Language & meaning
- Media framing & policy rhetoric influence on opinions
- Existing policies & systems linked to CSA
- Barriers & opportunities for action
Implications for Action
Implications for action

• Help adults overcome barriers to taking action
• Go beyond the myths—Focus on daily preventive behaviors
• Prevention programs supported on par with sex offender interdiction and management activities
• Treatment for all involved
• Build the case for investing in prevention
• More research

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Copies of this report

• Pdf available soon online and printed version in store
• Recording of today’s webcast on our site
• You can link to the report on www.StopItNow.org
• Briefing Sheet
Thank you

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