

**Is it really
that bad?**

**An anthology of online
sexual abuse of
children and young people** 🧑



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Save the Children Denmark



Helene Almind Jansen holds a Master's Degree in Psychology and has a specialist licence in psychotherapy for children and young people. She has extensive experience with examining and treating children, young people and adults who have been the victims of sexual offences. Her research includes grooming and the online abuse of children, children's experiences as witnesses in court trials and the effects of group therapy. Since 2014, she has carried out clinical work in the fields of general sexology, transsexuality and sexual crime.



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IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?

An anthology of online sexual abuse of children and young people

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© Helene Jansen, 2015, article on treatment following online sexual abuse
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Save the Children provides relief aid and prevents disasters. We combat violence, abuse and bullying. We secure schooling, build communities and enhance children's resilience. We work politically for positive change for vulnerable children, and we promote debate on children's living conditions.

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CONTENTS

Contents 5

Prologue 9

Reading guide 13

The internet opens doors for offenders 15

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

Technological development has created new opportunities for communication – alas, also for adults with a sexual interest in children, who are able to contact minors on numerous online platforms and to exchange experiences as well as pictures and videos with other adults. This article provides a brief retrospective on the history of internet communications and their impact on sexual abuse. Moreover, it reviews a number of historical cases that have had a particular impact on legislation and practices in Denmark in this field.

Growing up with sex and porn 25

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

With the advent of the internet, sex and pornography is never more than a click away. And even though pornography and dating sites target adults, children are also peeking. This article looks at some of the platforms offering sex and describes how they affect children and youth.

Grooming – a strategic process 33

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

The perpetration of sexual abuse is often preceded by a prolonged process whereby the offender manipulates a child or young person to cross their own boundaries. This article examines the various phases through which the offender typically takes the child in order to commit sexual abuse, whether online or offline.

More than just an image 47*By Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark*

The supply and demand of photos and videos aimed at satisfying adults' sexual fantasies about children are growing rapidly. The content depicted varies from children posing on their own to gross sexual abuse. This article explains the categories that we use – in Save the Children, the police and the criminal justice system in Denmark – to assess the various kinds of photos and videos.

Treatment of online sexual abuse 59*By Helene Almind Jansen, psychologist*

When a child's use of the internet goes awry and ends up in sexual abuse, it is important that they receive the right treatment. This article examines some of the challenges faced in the wake of online sexual abuse, highlighting some psychological therapy cases and perspectives.

How the police work 77*By Henrik Gundorff, the National Police Cyber Crime Centre (NC3) and Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark*

The police launch a major investigation when they receive a report of abuse images. The images are categorised and the perpetrators, the people who downloaded the material, and the children subject to the abuse depicted are identified. The internet being global, this endeavour often involves police in several countries. This article describes the police work and tools used when dealing with child sexual abuse images. The article also touches on police efforts to combat other online crimes that violate the rights of children and young people.

Save the Children Denmark's work to combat online sexual abuse 89*By Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children, Denmark*

Save the Children is involved in a number of activities that help protect children against violence and sexual abuse. This article

describes this work, which includes the operation of a Danish hotline to which citizens can report online images of the sexual abuse of children as well as information aimed at politicians, children, parents and professionals.

Digital child sex tourism 97

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children, Denmark

Adults who are interested in sex with children from Third World countries can now save the price of travel and, from the comfort of their own homes, order the live streaming of the sexual abuse of children as scripted by themselves. This article describes this phenomenon, how it came about, and how it is addressed by current legislation.

Widening the perspective – various ethical and other dilemmas 103

By Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark

This concluding article sets out to take a broader view of the subjects addressed in the individual articles. It places these subjects in a broader perspective and calls for increased efforts in various fields aimed at making the world a better and safer place for children.

PROLOGUE

'So nothing really happened. It was on the net and we never met, you know, face to face'.

Boy, 14 years

'She needed a friend and she genuinely enjoyed the attention I gave her'.

Adult, 37 years

'It began with a chat on the game site. I thought it was a girl my own age. We shared some pictures. Suddenly I had shared several of them – nude photos. And the girl turned out to be a man, much older than me. I couldn't get away from it. He threatened he would share the pictures on the web'.

Girl, 12 years

'Is it really that bad? After all, no physical abuse has taken place'.

Adult working with treatment of victims

Thinking *'it can't be that bad'* might be a natural reaction when you hear about online sexual abuse. However, even though an encounter might take place only online, it is still a case of actual abuse, and such sexual offenses are often preceded by a protracted process of manipulation known as *'grooming'*. So, yes, it is bad. It is a serious matter, and it traumatises the children and young people who are subject to

online sexual abuse. The entirely unexpected and deeply hurtful breach of trust experienced in the wake of grooming scars the soul. Moreover, the fact that images published on the web can never be entirely deleted adds a new dimension to the understanding of the term 'long-term consequences of early childhood sexual abuse'. Victims often struggle with intense feelings of guilt and shame; for many, anxiety and low self-esteem become part of everyday life.

It can be difficult to come to terms with the fact that sexual abuse takes place and that digital developments are providing new opportunities for adults with a sexual interest in children. But we must. Just as we must break the taboo again and again and talk about the reality – not only the reality that plays out in the physical encounter but also the reality that exists online and which is the subject of this anthology. Otherwise, we cannot deal with it.

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S DUTY

In 2001, Save the Children Denmark set up a hotline for reporting online images of child sexual abuse together with a website, sikkerchat.dk (which translates to 'safe chat dot Denmark'). In combination with our international cooperation, both areas of operations give us special insights into online sexual abuse targeted at children.

In 2006, we published a book in Danish entitled 'Fra kigger til krænker' (*From peeper to offender*) about online sexual abuse. It compiles professional knowledge about images of abuse, about consequences for victims, about offenders and the grooming processes, and about the general effort to combat 'child pornography', as it was then called.

In the years since then, we have published thematic booklets about interventions against sexual abuse and abuse images circulated worldwide as well as a report highlighting the problem of posed photographs in the grey area between legal and illegal. We have contributed to various specialist publications and written opinion pieces about grey area

images and how we view sexual offenders. We have delivered countless talks on theme days and conferences, and we have commented on the subject in the press. This activity reflects the importance of maintaining the focus on this issue and our unique and specialised knowledge in this field, which we feel obliged to share with practitioners and society at large. As a child rights organisation, we also have a duty to champion the children's cause and to secure the protection that they need and to which they have a right.

CHILDREN AS VICTIMS OF ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE – A PROJECT

In 2014, Save the Children Denmark began taking steps to further systematise its communication of this expertise to practitioners.

We chose to complement our own professional knowledge with that of a specialist from NC3, the National Police Cyber Crime Centre, and a psychologist with a career dedicated to treating children and young people who have fallen victim to online sexual abuse. A grant from the Council of the Danish Victims Fund enabled us, during the winter and spring of 2014–15, to offer instruction to specialists in the five government-run child protection centres (*børnehuse*) and three centres for sexual abuse victims. We also participated in a one-day conference for social workers in Region Zealand and held two open conferences on the subject. Altogether, we directly reached more than 300 practitioners from across Denmark from all relevant occupations and workplaces, including social workers, psychologists, police officers, criminal detectives, crime prevention staff, teachers, nurses, paediatricians, forensic doctors, lawyers and specialist consultants from schools, hospitals, child protection centres, professional associations and treatment services.

Based on presentations and talks from these theme days and conferences, we prepared this collection of professional articles, including a closing chapter that widens the perspec-

tive. We believe that the better practitioners become at tuning into the worlds of children, talking to them about their stories, the easier it becomes for the children to recount their experiences. In this manner, online abuse is ideally prevented from ever occurring. And if sexual abuse does take place, the children will receive quicker and better help when more people know what to do and how.

We would like to call on practitioners as well as decision-makers to engage in the necessary endeavour that requires us to work across professions, sectors and national borders.

This anthology has great value, but is provided free of charge. The Danish edition of the book was financed by the Council of the Danish Victims Fund. The English translation and publication has been financed by the European Union's Connecting Europe Facility.

*Gitte Jakobsen, Head of Project and Senior Advisor, and
Kuno Sørensen, Psychologist*

Save the Children, Denmark

This anthology is available at redbarnet.dk/report – Resources

READING GUIDE

This anthology is about the **online** sexual abuse of **children and young people**.

- We have chosen to write the articles in non-technical prose. There are no references to specialist books or articles, neither our own nor those of others. Instead, we have decided to set up a subpage at redbarnet.dk/report, where individual articles from the anthology and supplementary articles will be made available.
- Some articles contain a case description. All such cases are constructed examples for use in the articles. In other words, the cases and individuals presented are based on reality but not 'real', as such.
- **The articles use the term 'online'**. Today, information is largely transmitted digitally. Thus, saying that sexual abuse is online means it involves the use of online media, primarily computers, smartphones and tablets, but also other online toys with a chat function, such as gaming consoles.
- The articles generally use the term **children**, although sometimes the words **youth or young people** are preferred if they make more sense in the context concerned, particularly regarding young people's sexual curiosity and identity formation. In principle, we define 'children' as all minors aged 0–18 years. Accordingly, 'children' might well refer to teenagers or young people.
- Both men and women sexually abuse children. Thus, when the articles say 'offender' or use the pronoun 'he' about such a person, this may refer to either a man or a woman. Nevertheless, we know that the vast majority of sex offenders are men. We also know that the vast majority of victims are girls. Even so, both girls and boys are victims of sexual abuse. Once again, it is up to the reader to apply a broader understanding of who the victims mentioned might be.

- In general, both in the case of minors subjected to online grooming and to (online) sexual abuse and in the case of adults who commit such abuse, all age groups, social strata and nationalities are represented. This is yet another premise and elaboration that readers must factor in on their own, as it would be too extensive to cover all of the conceivable scenarios in the presentations in each article.
- The complexity involved is vast. This applies both to the scholarly articles and to the subjects being addressed. Vast complexity is indeed characteristic of human life. It is plainly impossible to cover all ground and include all nuances in every scenario without writing an entire library of books.

Here, however, readers should never cease to remind themselves of the complexity aspect in the following context: children's post-abuse reactions and trauma are different. A child subject to a single incidence of one type of sexual abuse can be just as traumatised as another who is victim of repeated incidences of various types of sexual abuse over a short or prolonged period. One key parameter in the subjective experience springs from the severity of the breach of trust. Another concerns the development stage in the child's life in which the sexual abuse takes place. If the abuse spans multiple development stages during the child's upbringing and identity formation, the risk of deeper traumatising increases accordingly. However, it also matters whether the child has developed sound and solid fundamental trust during their early development as well as the closeness and strength of their trust to the adult committing the abuse; the greater and more intrusive the breach of trust, the higher the risk of deep traumatising.

Guilt and shame are major issues for sexual abuse victims. Some are crippled for life, while others find ways of 'learning to live with it'. Some repress the memories of what happened, while others talk openly about them. Many books have been written on the ability of children to cope with sexual abuse. While this is not the issue of this book, the theme is implicit whenever we write about children and young people who have survived sexual abuse and exploitation.

THE INTERNET OPENS DOORS FOR OFFENDERS

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

Technological developments have created new opportunities for communication – alas, also for adults with a sexual interest in children, who are able to contact minors via numerous online platforms as well as exchanging pictures and videos with other adults. This article provides a brief retrospective of the history of internet communications and their impact on sexual offending. It also reviews a number of historical cases that have had a particular impact on legislation and practices in this field.

Adults exploiting children sexually is nothing new – it has been going on for millennia. This anthology will focus on sexual offences against children in which digital technology plays a significant role. Our communication options have been revolutionised over the last 20 years. Sadly for children, sex offenders have been quick to discover the opportunities provided in two particular areas: as a platform to get in contact with children in order to exploit them sexually and as a channel for sharing pictures and videos of child sexual abuse.

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL LIFE

The greatest breakthrough in communication technology came with digitalisation. As a result, the World Wide Web provided entirely new and unheard-of opportunities for communicating across borders by the mid-1990s. It suddenly became possible to be directly in touch with one another through so-called instant messaging chat programmes, which differ from email by making conversations instantaneous when both parties are online. ICQ (pronounced I Seek You) was the first free chat programme. Launched in November 1996, it managed to sign up more than 100 million users worldwide. Chat programmes display who among one's contacts are online and interested in chatting. Over time, these programmes have added further features to enable voice calls, thus replacing traditional phone lines, as well as video calls by means of a webcam or a camera phone. The most commonly used programmes today are Skype, WhatsApp, Messenger and FaceTime. Much of this activity takes place in chat forums on social media and game sites, as well as through image sharing, for example on Instagram and Periscope.

ARTO

Only the domain owner was originally able to edit website content; however, technological development soon enabled

others to edit, communicate and socialise through a website. One company that was quick to capitalise on this was Denmark-based Arto, which had a great impact in the early 00s on the online social lives of Danish children. Arto was one of the first so-called social networking sites; that is, a website-based community in which users fill out their own profile page. It became a huge success among users, at one stage reaching half a million profiles, primarily set up by children and young people aged 10 and above. Arto was dubbed 'Denmark's biggest playground'. However, while providing platforms for new friendships and the exchange of healthy interests, Arto and the other new social communities sadly also experienced an increase in conflicts, threats, bullying and sexual contact between adults and children, as the people behind the website community failed to invest sufficiently in pedagogical and ethical guidelines as well as in moderators capable of monitoring and providing assistance.

THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Online services targeting children were complemented by websites for playing role games within various digital universes: The user sets up an avatar and can then become, for example, a guest at Habbo Hotel, a celebrity on Movie Star Planet or a warrior in the World of Warcraft. Over time, it became apparent that these websites also attracted adult visitors looking for sexual contact with children.

In response, various initiatives were taken to make the online communities safer and less frightening for children and youth. Companies in this line of business tried to establish a 'safe chat' label scheme, requiring service providers to meet certain standards in exchange for being allowed to advertise with the safe chat label. For instance, they had to provide logs of user dialogues together with monitoring and assistance from moderators. Contributing to this scheme, Save the Children Denmark held special courses for moderators, focusing on online grooming, conflict management and bullying. Regret-

tably, service providers generally failed to back the chat label scheme, which ended after a few years.

To combat the presence of adult offenders in the children's universes, attempts have also been made to make user identities transparent, e.g. by using Danish personal ID numbers (CPR), while another experiment equipped users with a centrally issued proof of identity as a 'Certified Kid'. Ultimately, however, none of these schemes have carried the day.

FACEBOOK

Facebook came to life in 2004, initially a network for American universities and high schools. In the course of 2005 and 2006, Facebook expanded to more countries, in September 2006 becoming an open forum for anyone at least 13 years of age with a valid email address. By 2012, Facebook was available in 70 countries, and by the end of 2014 it had about 3.4 million Danish users (out of a total population of 5.6 million). The spread of Facebook, the new social networking site for kids and grownups alike, caused Arto to lose ground over the following years, reducing its role among Danish children and ultimately closing in 2016. In its place, a host of other, particularly foreign-owned, social networking sites have sprung up. Trends and popularity among children and young people are no longer determined nationally, increasingly driven instead by major international companies.

WHEN ARE YOU OLD ENOUGH?

The age limit at Facebook is 13 years, whereas at Arto it was 10 years. Facebook's age limit, which is also found among other US-based service providers, such as Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram, stems from US legislation, which holds that children must be 13 before they can relate independently to advertising and marketing. However, several surveys of the media habits of minors, such as EU Kids Online, have found that Facebook has many users aged 10–12, even if this is against the company's rules. It is also

common to see newborns with their own Facebook profiles, set up in their name by their parents, but with a fictitious age.

ONLINE 24/7

With Apple's launch of the iPhone in 2007 and Google's launch of the Android operating system for smartphones in 2008, it became possible to go online using a mobile phone. In this manner, an array of digital options that used to be tied to computers was expanded to the pocket-sized smartphone. In 2010, the iPad hit the market, and other forms of tablets followed soon after, alongside the development of ever-smaller laptop computers. Consequently, most people are now online practically 24/7.

Children and young people are now growing up with modern information and communication technology. Since it is an integral part of their everyday and social lives, they see the existence of the internet and its opportunities as a matter of course. They may have a hard time grasping that the internet has not always been around. For example, when parents explain to their 8-year-old daughter that, when they were children, there were no personal computers, iPads or smartphones, the daughter might typically react by asking: 'Then how did you get on the internet?'

NEW CONTACT OPPORTUNITIES – ALSO FOR OFFENDERS

While these new channels of communication have changed how we forge social contacts, the beneficial technological progress can – sadly – also be used to perpetrate criminal acts. In 2001, Save the Children began to focus more systematically on the online sexual abuse of children by setting up our hotline for people to report images of sexual abuse. We also set up an information campaign together with the Danish Crime Prevention Council. This was motivated by more and more cases involving children who had chatted with someone who subsequently exploited them sexually. The cooperation led to

Save the Children and the Crime Prevention Council opening the website Sikkerchat.dk (safe chat dot Denmark) in 2001. The website has since become a key channel of information for children, young people, parents and practitioners about the social challenges faced by children navigating the online world.

The cases of children who were sexually abused online also posed new professional challenges for social workers, psychologists, police, teachers and other educators. They began to focus on the processes taking place prior to the physical meeting, thus developing the concept of 'online grooming'. Grooming is described in more detail in the article 'Grooming – a strategic process' included in this anthology.

SERIOUS DANISH GROOMING CASES

Despite information campaigns to promote safe conduct online, the press regularly tells stories about children who have been manipulated and threatened to gratify an adult offender sexually. Looking back over the past 10 years, four cases stand out. Each in its own way has helped us to understand the subject and to uncover the opportunities provided by the new media for offenders.

In 2006, a criminal investigation revealed that 25 boys had been lured, manipulated and threatened to follow a 28-year-old man's instructions, which, in the most severe cases, led the boys to masturbate in front of a webcam. The case is noteworthy, firstly because the contact was created through the online game *World of Warcraft*, which had not been commonly perceived as a place for offenders to contact and get to know children, and secondly because all of the victims were boys. The vast majority of online games, including *World of Warcraft*, enable gamers to chat with one another.

In 2007, a family father confessed to 24 different relationships in which he had manipulated and threatened girls aged 12–15 years to undress in front of a webcam and asked them to perform various kinds of masturbation. He passed himself off as a model and offered the girls modelling work. He was

convicted of a total of 30 relationships. In another five cases, the girls refused to witness, as they preferred to put the experience behind them. The investigation showed that, over a 3-year period, he had been in contact with at least 200 girls. He did not sexually abuse all of them, but the case demonstrates how an online offender can reach a high number of children even while ‘working from home’.

In 2008, the Danish tabloid newspaper *Ekstra Bladet* put the spotlight on digital child offenders. Journalists had set up a fictive profile of a girl on Arto, which led to offers from several men who wanted to meet with her and engage in a sexual relationship. The newspaper carried out and documented meetings with four men, subsequently handing the evidence over to the police. Among the four were a police employee and a member of the Royal Danish Navy. Unfortunately, not all of the cases led to convictions, but one was found guilty of attempted sexual offence against a minor. This verdict sets a precedent, because he was sentenced even though the person with whom he had communicated was a journalist masquerading as 14-year-old BabyMay.

In 2013, a 21-year-old man was convicted of having sexually exploited 86 girls aged 10–18 years. He had made contact with the girls on the internet. What is remarkable about this case is that, only two years earlier, he had been similarly found guilty of sexually abusing 23 girls, whom he had also met online. Despite serving his sentence, having his computer confiscated and attending a course of sex offender treatment, he continued his illegal sexual activities.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCHANGING IMAGES OF ABUSE

The development of the internet has made it easy to exchange images and find others who share special interests. Already in the 1990s, adults with a sexual interest in children found ways to contact like-minded people online.

In 1995 and the year after, some individuals, the internet industry and authorities raised the alarm about the internet being used to exchange images of child sexual abuse. In the

course of 1996, hotlines were set up in several European countries. Acting together, these hotlines applied for financial support from the EU, and, in 1999, they founded the umbrella organisation INHOPE. At that time, INHOPE stood for Internet Hotline Providers in Europe. It has since evolved into a worldwide network of roughly 50 hotlines in as many countries, including Save the Children Denmark. A more detailed description of this cooperation is provided in the article on Save the Children Denmark's work.

In 1998, a man from the Copenhagen area was exposed as the administrator of 'The Lolita Club', a so-called child porn ring with 54 members in 19 countries. In the man's home, the police found some 20,000 images involving the sexual abuse of children as well as a video documenting how he had sexually abused one of his own three children, a 7-year-old daughter. In Denmark, Save the Children has focused since 1997 on the problem of sexual abuse images on the internet, including the handing of anonymous reports from citizens to the National Cyber Crime Centre, NC3. In 2000, Save the Children Denmark joined INHOPE and received financial support from both the Ministry of Social Affairs and the EU's Safer Internet Programme. This made it possible to set up the Danish hotline, where Danes can report websites that they believe contain child sexual abuse images by filling in a special form at redbarnet.dk/report.

As early as 2001, the hotline cooperation led to the unravelling of a Danish crime ring responsible for the sexual exploitation of children in which the internet played an important role, known as the Hamlet case. Both the Swedish and Danish hotlines received reports about material showing the gross sexual abuse of a girl. The adult perpetrator was wearing a t-shirt with the logo of a Danish company, which enabled the Danish police to identify and arrest the man already the next day. He had been sexually abusing his own step-daughter and had sent pictures and videos of this repeated abuse to others in his network. Police forces in ten countries were involved in the case, which led to 16 persons being convicted and more than 45 children being identified as victims.

DEVELOPMENT OF DANISH ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The Danish Penal Code has been updated several times, as it previously did not take account of the opportunities for crime provided by the internet. Until 1994, the private possession of child pornographic material was not a punishable offence in Denmark. The justification was that adults with sexual fantasies about children could satisfy themselves with the images, which would in theory then reduce the number of physical assaults. Starting in 1994, possession of such imagery was punishable with a fine. Subsequently, this has been increased to also being punishable by a prison term of up to one year.

But does visiting a website and looking at an image amount to possession? For many years, it first became illegal when website images were actively stored. This meant that, in 2008, a preschool teacher could still watch child pornography on the preschool's computer without violating the Penal Code. In 2009, this was changed to make it punishable merely to seek out the illegal material. More information about the Danish Penal Code can be found in the articles 'More than just an image' and 'How the police work'.

In countries such as England, Norway and Sweden, a special grooming article has been added to the Penal Code to enable the prosecution of adults who systematically set out to lure and manipulate children into sexual abuse. The Danish Penal Code also outlaws grooming to the extent that the court views this as an attempt to commit sexual abuse, although a clear definition of how to interpret the law in these cases is found wanting.

Over the years, the police have regularly been able to seize computers containing photos and video sequences of the sexual abuse of children. Most of those convicted of the possession and distribution of such illegal material are men, and in Denmark, there has yet to be a woman convicted of this crime. The male convicts represent a broad cross-section of the population. In recent years, they have ranged in age from 25 to 71 years and included judges, teachers, priests, police officers, scout leaders and managers. Accordingly, there is no reason to believe that adults

with a sexual interest in children are confined to particular parts of society. We must accept the possibility that they can also be found among those we know and deal with in our daily lives.

GROWING UP WITH SEX AND PORN

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

With the advent of the internet, sex and pornography are never more than a click or two away. And even though pornography and dating sites target adults, children are also peeking. This article examines some of the platforms offering sex and describes how they affect children and youth.

An issue that pops up frequently in the public debate is the general ‘pornification’ of the public space, as reflected in language, advertising, pop-up ads, music videos and so forth. The internet offers free access to all kinds of pornography. Children and young people growing up today cannot avoid being affected by this general trend.

NET DATING – CHILDREN IN AN ADULT UNIVERSE

Forming ideas about falling in love with someone is a natural part of puberty. Many young teenagers turn to the internet to get an idea of what romance is about, which is partly why children and young people often visit dating sites, even though they are intended for adults.

Previously, the personal ads in newspapers and various telephone services provided platforms for those who were looking to meet new people. Net dating and social media have since completely displaced the slow-motion personals in newspapers – whether to bring people together to share hobbies, organise political interests, socialise or pursue romantic interests. A search for dating sites in Denmark alone returns a long list of results such as [dating.dk](#), [netdating.dk](#), [soulmate.dk](#) and [hotflirt.dk](#). Other sites are more thematic, for example [farmerdating.dk](#), [boyfriend.dk](#) [cougarcentral.dk](#) and [handicapdating.dk](#) (the latter for persons with disabilities), not to mention the numerous international dating sites.

Some dating sites focus more directly on the sexual dimension. Among the more controversial are [auktionsdate.dk](#) and [sugardaters.dk](#), which have been widely accused of operating in a grey area between casual sex and prostitution. At [auktionsdate.dk](#), women can put themselves up for ‘naughty auctions’. Men can then bid what they believe such a naughty date is worth, the auction going to the highest bidder.

[Sugardaters.dk](#) describes itself as a serious dating site targeting those who seek a mutually beneficial relationship between two types of persons: a ‘sugar daddy/mama’ and a ‘sugar babe’ (male or female). The relationship between a

sugar daddy and a sugar babe often consists of caricatured, old-fashioned gender roles: The man pampers, maintains and sweetens the life of his woman, who can then concentrate on being feminine and indulging her sugar daddy. Our impression is that some of the sexual offenders who seek out young girls are inspired by the sugar daddy concept.

So-called 'adult websites' like voksenbasen.dk offer opportunities to set up a massage or escort ad on the site and reach up to 3,000 daily users. Another website, camsclub.dk, offers members free access to pornographic webcam-shows. Webcam sex can be viewed live 24/7 in addition to an array of scheduled shows. Visitors meet both amateur models and famous porn stars who strip and play in front of their webcams. Like auktionsdate.dk and sugardaters.dk, these websites turn sexuality into a commodity for trade or exchange, possibly contributing to altering the perceptions of normality among some young people, thereby rendering it easier for an offender to persuade them to perform sexual activities that are fundamentally carried out on the offender's terms.

Some websites where young people set up profiles may also play up the sexual aspect. One such site is speak.dk, which has been around for many years. The site opens with questions such as 'who of the three pictured above would you most want to have sex with?' and 'how about a one-night stand with the one pictured above you?' The site thus clearly signals that sexuality is foremost on the minds of the users, and profile names such as fuckyou, fuckyoubitch, petersexsexsex and mebadboy are commonplace.

PORNOGRAPHY – AVAILABLE FOR ALL

The internet opens access to all kinds of pornography for everyone. A Google search for the word 'porn' takes 0.22 seconds to produce 204,000,000 results. Curious people of all ages are able to gain insights into the realm of pornography. Particularly for children who have yet to reach the general curiosity typical of puberty, merely visiting a hardcore pornographic website can

be a traumatic experience, since the unadorned exhibition of body parts in often violent-looking tableaux seems scary and incomprehensible. Teenagers can also be overwhelmed and frightened by what unfolds in the pornographic universe. Watching pornography can twist expectations regarding love, the body and sex. Many young people also come to view their own genital organs as substandard, as they measure them against the ideals upheld by the porn industry. Likewise, the pornographic ideals of smooth-shaven genitals and the focus on anal sex have rubbed off on what people, young people in particular, believe to be common practice beyond the world of pornography.

The icons and ideals of pornography sneak into the entertainment industry, whether it be music videos, television series or reality programmes, such as *Paradise Hotel*. Sexual and pornographic expressions also slip into the language, becoming ordinary concepts. Since some young people know these expressions and assume these attitudes, they give the impression of having much greater knowledge of and experience with sex than previous generations, even if this is not actually the case. Some sex offenders use this as justification, believing it cannot be wrong to engage in sexual contact with minors, given that they are familiar with pornography and therefore must be fascinated by sex.

The ready access to pornography also poses the risk that particularly children and young people who already have problems with feelings and intimacy may adopt the stereotypical versions of sex presented in pornography, such as submission, compulsion and dominance. There have been examples of young men who, after being convicted of raping a woman their own age, defended their acts by saying that the woman 'acted in a porn-like manner'; they were under the impression that her resistance was a normal part of sexual roleplay.

SEXTING – A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

It is entirely normal and to be expected that pubescent individuals are preoccupied with their bodies and sexuality as

part of their identity formation, self-presentation and projection of themselves towards others. The advent of social media and camera-equipped mobile phones has indeed made it much easier for young people to achieve such projection of their body and sexuality.

The English language has created its own word for online communication with a sexual content: sexting. Initially, the concept referred to text messages, in particular by SMS, since the term is a contraction of ‘texting’ (using a mobile phone to write text messages) and sex. Over time, however, the expression has come to cover any messaging with sexual content, including pictures or videos.

The race for recognition, attention and ‘likes’ drives some young people to take ‘selfies’ in which they pose in an erotic or sexual manner in various stages of undress. Some young people also send erotic or pornographic images of themselves to their boyfriend or girlfriend as part of their intimate relationship, and there have been cases of girls exchanging nude photos of themselves in order to cement a close friendship.

The problem with sharing intimate images is that the sender loses control over them the moment they have been sent. Others may copy or share them with new and sometimes derisive comments. The close friendship or romantic relationship might come to an end, and the jilted party may choose to spread the supposedly confidential, intimate images to the world.

SEXTORTION – WHEN IMAGES ARE USED TO EXTORT

A survey conducted by the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation in the UK) found that over 80% of private photos and videos with sexual content that young people have shared with others are subsequently copied or stolen and distributed on social media and on other webpages. In some cases (described in the article ‘Grooming – a strategic process’), such images can also be used for so-called ‘sextortion’, where victims are typically threatened and pressured into paying money or providing

sexual services to save themselves from having images further distributed.

This also relates to the phenomenon of ‘revenge porn’, whereby ex-boyfriends deliberately share private sexual images to exact revenge for being dumped. Some websites allow users to expose their former partners to public humiliation with photos and comments. There have been numerous cases in Denmark in recent years. One of them concerned a young woman, Emma Holten, who fell victim to this exact treatment by her former boyfriend. In 2014, she opted to reclaim control over her body by publishing her own nude photos of herself – photos *she* had chosen to share.

The sharing of intimate photos of children and young people without their consent can be experienced as an act of abuse. Victims see their bodies exposed as sexual objects in a manner that is beyond their control. One renowned Danish example is ‘the Viborg Folder’, named after the small Danish city that was home to most of the victims. It is uncertain who was originally behind the folder and how it was compiled, but the media first mentioned its existence in 2011. It is a digital folder consisting of intimate photos of girls as young as 13 from the local area. Many of the girls are easily recognisable and names have been attached to most of the photos. The folder has been distributed on USB memory sticks for DKK 50 (€6.70) and has been shared online. The online folder has repeatedly been removed, only to reappear again. The first folder that came to the attention of the police contained between 800 and 900 image files. The Viborg Folder is merely a single example of how private and intimate photos are being harvested from social media and then included in collections or distributed in contexts that are degrading and abusive.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat enables users to share photos and videos with one’s so-called ‘followers’. Many users prefer Snapchat for sending sexual or intimate material, as it is supposed to be automat-

ically deleted after a few seconds. In 2014, however, some people managed to hack into the Snapchat servers, gaining access to 200,000 images that supposedly no longer existed. The hackers announced that the images would be published on various websites, and many Snapchat users were caught in uncertainty as to whether searching for stolen images of themselves (and others) was legal or not.

To sum up: it is extremely easy to lose control over images online. There is a risk of ending up feeling exposed and humiliated and it is important to think carefully before sharing private, intimate images.

NEED FOR SEX EDUCATION

Children and young people are bombarded with eroticism, sexuality and even pornography in the media. Accordingly, it is hardly surprising that it affects them. For prepubescent children, intentional or inadvertent glimpses into the world of pornography can be frightening and, in the worst cases, be seared into the mind as traumatic experiences requiring professional assistance (as detailed in the article on treatment). Pubescent children risk assimilating the stereotypes of the porn and entertainment industry, believing that they must live up to these ideals in their own sex lives. This makes it even more important for all children to receive high-quality sex education that helps them understand sexuality and pornography in a broader context. It is essential that children learn to understand and enforce their own boundaries and that they become able to reflect on whether and possibly how they want to come across as sexual objects; for instance in relation to how they dress and express themselves online.

GROOMING – A STRATEGIC PROCESS

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

The perpetration of sexual abuse is often preceded by a (lengthy) process whereby the offender manipulates a child or young person to overstep their own boundaries. This article examines the various phases through which the offender typically takes the child in order to commit sexual abuse, either online or offline.

While it might seem incomprehensible why a bright, well-adjusted teenager meets with a man 20 years older for the purpose of having sex, this disbelief is usually because we only see the end result and not the lengthy, step-by-step process that led to the meeting. The sexual abuse of children where contact has been established online, say, in a chat forum, often causes astonishment, as the child would appear to have cooperated. Accordingly, the understanding of abuse was greatly improved when practitioners and researchers started working more closely with the processes taking place between offender and victim that enabled the abuse. In English and various other languages, the term coined for this process is 'grooming'. Grooming processes are also common in the case of sexual abuse that is not online, but this article concentrates on describing grooming processes taking place online.

FROM PLAYGROUND TO CHAT FORUM

The sexual abuse of children is nothing new, but offenders now have more places and opportunities to make contact with children. With the onward march of IT, internet and social media, all of us, including children, spend increasing amounts of time online. Accordingly, the traditional archetype of a paedophile or child sex offender in a playground, waving a lollypop as bait, has come to realise that he is much better able to contact children via the online universe in which they spend so much time.

For the vast majority of children, wearing a mobile phone has become an obligatory part of their dress code and a natural 'extension' of their person, already from about 8–10 years of age. Accordingly, they can always be contacted and reply through SMS, email, Snapchat, Facebook or one of the numerous apps enabling both playing and chatting with others.

For older children, their online presence is an important part of their identity formation. On the net, they show who they are. They use the net to announce what they think and believe, to make appointments and plan activities together.

Barring children access to social media is the equivalent of sending them to their room a generation ago. It prevents them from participating in the social life that is constantly unfolding both online and offline within their group of classmates and with friends from after-school activities.

WHICH CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE?

It is natural to ask who is most vulnerable to grooming. Experience shows that any child can fall victim to a sex offender acting online, and there are numerous examples of well-balanced, robust children being fooled and manipulated by the offender to go far beyond their boundaries. Nevertheless, we observe that children with low self-esteem and poor social relations are more vulnerable to various grooming techniques. The offender's offers of attention, praise and appreciation make a particularly deep impression on children who do not feel understood, tolerated and included in their day-to-day community of peers. When it comes to age and gender, young teenage girls appear to be particularly vulnerable to online offenders. This relates to the fact that most sex offenders are heterosexual men. Interviews with sex offenders reveal that they often have an acute sense of which children are most susceptible to their offers of adult attention.

WHO ARE THE ADULT OFFENDERS?

Adults looking for children online take different approaches. Some get straight to the point without trying to conceal their intentions, firing indiscriminately in all directions to see if they hit someone who might be tempted. For example, they may announce in a forum: 'Any girls here ready to give a blowjob for DKK 500 (67 Euro)?' This will usually provoke a range of reactions, such as 'you sick paedo pig, go away!' However, sometimes there will be a neglected and/or ill-treated child who says 'yes' to get attention. Or who needs the money.

‘That money would come in handy at the party on Friday. And it’s just a blowjob, so what’s the big deal?’

Other adults adopt a more strategic and devious approach. This is precisely the type of child sex offender who offends by using the grooming technique described in this article. They will often write sweet, caring messages to create contact with the child, such as; ‘I’m so happy we can chat again’.

Adults seeking children online can be somewhat crudely categorised into three different groups, according to their motivation: friendship-seekers, masturbators and physical offenders. Each category is described in detail below.

1. Friendship-seekers

Friendship-seekers are typically adults who feel inadequate when socialising with other adults. They may be lonely and feel that they communicate better and feel more comfortable with children. This is why they prefer to build and maintain friendships with that age group. It might also be due to their limited intellectual capacities. There is not necessarily anything wrong with their seeking contact with children; it only becomes a problem when the adult’s motivation for seeking such friendship also comes with a sexual interest. However, it can be exceedingly hard to figure out whether the adult’s interest in friendship with children is acceptable or has sexual undertones.

2. Masturbators

Masturbators are a category of offenders seeking friendship in order to achieve online experiences of a sexual nature, albeit without ever intending to arrange any physical sexual encounter. So-called ‘cybersex’ may consist of exchanging written messages with a child or young person about sexual fantasies and desires. The communication about sexual acts can go a step further when, for example, adults send nude pictures of themselves in which they are masturbating and encourage the child to take similar pictures. Some persuade the child to turn on their webcam and exchange photos or videos.

3. Physical offenders

The third category of offenders frequently behaves similarly to friendship-seekers and masturbators, but their ultimate goal is to meet physically with the child or youth to perpetrate sexual abuse.

GROOMING DEFINED

The word grooming means ‘giving a tidy appearance to oneself or others’, and ‘preparing someone for a particular activity’. It has therefore become a general term for the process in which the (somewhat) older and more experienced offender uses manipulation, lies, flattery and praise, and also implants a sense of responsibility and guilt into his victim in order to bring the victim to participate (seemingly voluntarily) in sexual activities aimed at gratifying the offender.

More systematic analyses of cases of online sexual abuse of children indicate that many of them run through more or less the same phases, although the order may vary slightly from one case to another, e.g. As regards the point at which the sexual issue is introduced. Likewise, some phases may overlap or feature more prominently than others.

Grooming typically starts with an introductory or **contact-initiating phase**, where the offender selects potential victims. They then try to **build a friendship** or relationship with the victim. The offender engages in various **risk assessments** regarding the victim’s social network and the risk of their intentions being exposed.

If the offender sees a chance to abuse their selected victim sexually, they will usually proceed to strengthen the friendship in order to make the victim feel chosen – to feel as though they are **their true love**. This is typically (although sometimes also at an earlier stage) where the offender introduces the **sexual issue**. When the time comes where the offender feels confident of being powerful and in control of the relationship, the **sexual offence** is committed either online or physically. Finally, both in connection with the sexual abuse

and subsequently, the offender will ensure that the victim does not report what has happened and **keep it a secret**.

These phases will be elaborated below, highlighting examples. No two cases are ever the same. Offenders are sometimes very seductive and manipulating, as it is hard for them to push the child's boundaries and get them to do what the offender wants. At other times, the offender's plans are made easier by the child's budding sexuality, curiosity and willingness to explore their own boundaries. Accordingly, the examination of phases accounts for the huge variations characterising grooming processes.

1. MAKING CONTACT

As already mentioned, any child can fall victim to a sex offender, although we also see that some groups of children are at greater risk than others. Offenders often lie about their age, sex, occupation, income level, housing situation and other things. They typically want to create an adult profile that captures the child's interest and curiosity. The offender might also stress certain competencies that make them interesting, such as having gained high status in an online game and therefore being able to help and share tips with less experienced players. Offenders present themselves in this manner both to appear more attractive as a friend and to wear down the child's scepticism or critical sense.

Other offenders falsely assume a child identity. 'My name is Laura, I'm 14 and I love horse riding'. This *modus operandi* works as long as they communicate online. If they are to meet face-to-face later on, however, the offender with the false identity has the problem that his credibility can suffer badly when he has to reveal he is not a young girl but in reality an older man.

There have also been examples of the offender posing as a young woman, for example working for a modelling agency and scouting modelling talent. Most male offenders present themselves as a man, albeit often somewhat younger than they really are; most teenagers have fewer qualms about

building a relationship with an 18-year-old than a 35-year-old. Conversely, some offenders choose to play up their true age in their approach to the victim.

While the sex offender is establishing contact with the victim online, the child is typically at home in their own room. This location often gives the child a false sense of being safe and protected. Many children take comfort from the illusion that people communicating with them online are unable to touch them and therefore cannot harm them. If something dangerous comes up, they reason, they can always turn off the computer. To get the child to slowly and gradually overstep their own boundaries, the offender can manipulate this false sense of safety with ease.

2. BUILDING FRIENDSHIP

Once offenders have established contact with their potential victim, they typically try to uncover the unique problems, wishes and dreams that preoccupy the child or young person in their sights. All children and young people have unfulfilled dreams or wishes that they would like to share with others and get help to achieve. This is where the offender is often very skilful at enquiring into what motivates the child in order to maintain and expand contact with the stranger. In many cases, we learn that the child was vulnerable to the offender's approach because they were in a critical situation or had recently experienced something distressing (e.g., being bullied or let down by a friend), making it comforting to find a neutral person to talk to. Having found one or two issues to communicate about, the offender takes care to convey personal and emotional interest and attention; for example, by asking empathic questions, showing care and expressing appreciation.

In online grooming cases, this phase of building and establishing friendship can develop in the course of a single conversation if the child or young person is determined to seek a new friendship or explore sexual subjects. However, the relationship often forms over several days, weeks or months. Some offenders display great patience and perseverance towards

victims who remain more ambivalent towards the offender's attempts at making contact.

3. ASSESSING RISKS

Sex offenders are aware that they are engaged in an offending and illegal undertaking. In the course of the grooming process, we therefore see the offender taking action to reduce the risk of being exposed. Most contacts are made in forums with open profiles, where others are able to follow the correspondence. Once the initial contact has been made, however, the offender usually suggests moving communication to a medium that allows for chatting or talking without others being able to follow what is said. This may involve various forms of private chat, such as Skype, WhatsApp, Messenger or FaceTime, SMS or email.

We also see examples of the offender enquiring about the child's parents or guardians. The offender might ask who helps the child if there is a technical problem with the computer or from where the child is communicating (are they home alone, together with friends, sitting in their own room?). This is about getting an impression of the child's social relations to others and also of the parent or the caretakers' interest in the child's online navigation.

The offender typically also tests the child's ability to keep a secret, as it can be risky if the child talks too much about what they are doing together.

4. YOU'RE THE ONE AND ONLY

Once the offender believes there is a good chance of getting the child to participate in their sexual plans, the next phase is strengthening their relationship so that the child feels even more committed.

The offender has thus far expressed interest and paid attention to the child and their special interests, dreams or frustrations. Now the relationship intensifies. The offender stresses how they belong together and how important it is for them to be able to trust one another. The child is encouraged

to confide in the adult, and the offender often emphasises their view that the other adults in the child's life fail to understand the child's special abilities, personality and/or vulnerable situation, depending on what matters most to the child, typically through messages such as: "Sweetheart, you know you can tell me everything. I know how the grownups around you don't understand you and how their reactions are so totally wrong!" The offender repeatedly confirms how much the child means to him and how he is looking forward to their next chat together.

In the course of this phase, the offender also tests the durability and strength of the relationship by asking the child to do something in return; it need not be of a sexual nature, but can be agreements about when to chat together or questions of a more private nature, which might push the child's boundaries. If the child is hesitant or dismissive of the offender's wishes, the offender will react emotionally with disappointment: 'I'm spending so much time helping and supporting you, and when I ask you to do this one little thing, your answer is no! You disappoint me! I thought we had a friendship, but maybe that doesn't mean that much to you, right? Sweetheart?' This enables the offender to gauge how robust their relationship is and the extent to which it is possible to push the child's personal boundaries. Particularly for vulnerable children who lack contact with adults, the threat of endangering the friendship may bring them to push their own limits to oblige the adult and maintain their relationship.

5. INTRODUCING AND TESTING THE SEXUAL ISSUE

Sexual issues are introduced relatively early in some grooming cases because the child or young person might be curious. In other cases, the offender introduces sexual issues after having established a friendship and trusting relationship strong enough to contain issues that seemingly overstep the child's limits. Sexual issues can be introduced by enquiring about experiences regarding a boy-/girlfriend or sexual contact. Alternatively, they might ask about how their physical development. 'Do you

use a bra? Do you have pubic hair? Do you sometimes wake up with an erection?' The offender offers their knowledge and experience. Should there be subsequent legal proceedings, they will then often attempt to explain that the child needed to obtain such knowledge from an experienced person, which is why the conversations revolved around sexual subjects.

The offender might also choose to send nude pictures of himself or other children in sexual situations in order to test how the child or young person reacts. Images of children in sexual situations (also known as child pornography) are accompanied by comments such as: 'Look, it's completely normal for children to do that kind of stuff! Wouldn't you like to try, sweetheart? I can help you and I promise to be nice. Only if you feel like it!'

6. ARRANGING THE ONLINE ABUSE

Once strong trust is established and sexual issues have been introduced (earlier in the process in some cases than others), the offender might suggest talking together via webcams in order to find out what their potential victim looks like. Sometimes it also starts out with the child being asked to send supplementary photos of him- or herself, possibly because the ones on the child's profile are of insufficient quality. The offender might make comments like: 'You've got to have some better pics, right, honey? Some that show how amazing you really look!' The child is gradually persuaded to pose in various positions, the offender rewarding with appreciation and praise. He might even succeed in convincing the child to perform gradually more erotic or sexual posing, wearing less and less clothing.

At this stage, the offender might opt to expose himself naked, either by sending nude pictures or posing naked in front of the webcam.

Another common ploy is to masquerade as a model scout, the offender rationalising the gradual undressing as the young person potentially gaining access to modelling jobs where underwear or bikinis are to be worn.

Once the offender has succeeded in getting their potential victim to reveal him- or herself in photos or on a webcam and the child indicates that they do not want to go further, the offender typically adopts a new attitude. From being sweet, kind and appreciative, he now begins to make more direct demands, backing them up with threats if these demands are not met. 'No, you've got to undress completely, so I can see your body! If you don't, I'll post the other pictures of you on Facebook and your friends can see how cheap you are!'

The child is now caught in the offender's trap, having been deceived or pushed into overstepping their own limits. Children involved in such cases often explain that they had gone further than they wanted but that they did so for the offender's sake – because he praised them and said such nice things. Teenage victims sometimes explain that they were curious to try webcam/cyber sex but then suddenly lost control. The children report that the supposed safety of sitting at home in their own bedroom has not protected them. At this point in the grooming process, the victim is left with a choice between obeying the offender and hoping he does not go that far or running the risk of the images being posted on social media, where friends and family can see how naïvely and foolishly they have behaved.

7. ARRANGING A PHYSICAL MEETING

For some offenders, the ultimate goal is to meet the child 'in real life' and perform sexual acts. Particularly in cases involving younger children, sexuality may not have been introduced as an issue, and the child might believe the meeting to be regarding the shared interest about which they have been writing (e.g., World of Warcraft, FIFA World, horse riding). Only after the face-to-face encounter does the offender begin demanding the child's participation in something sexual.

In other cases, the child or young person is unwilling to meet in real life. The offender then expresses understanding and patience while at the same time exerting insistent pres-

sure to stress the importance of meeting; the child's rejection is met with disappointment and complaints.

In many cases, however, the physical meeting is based on the trust and friendship that have been established. For the young victim, this is not an encounter with a stranger but indeed with a friend or confidant in whom they feel great trust. In many cases, the young person indicates that they have fallen in love with or have positive expectations of having their sexual debut with an experienced grownup. There are also examples of the young person believing it to be about mutual love, where they are going to get married as soon as they are old enough.

Finally, there are also cases in which the offender threatens to go public with materials such as photos or webcam recordings of the child in a form of extortion aimed at forcing a physical meeting.

8. KEEPING THE SECRET

Throughout the grooming process – but especially after having introduced sexual issues – the offender points out that he and the child share something unique that others will not be able to understand or accept. This requires that the child does not talk to others about their special connection. Once the process has gotten so far that the child has been subject to sexual abuse, the offender will again remind the child not to reveal what has happened. Many offenders go to great lengths to place responsibility, guilt and shame on the child. They might tell the child things like: 'You did it willingly – you could've just chosen not to. Actually, this came about because you suggested it! And you liked it'. The offender will often also claim that the child has done something illegal and will be punished if it comes to light that the child sent nude pictures. The offender might frequently repeat the threat to make such pictures public if the child does not keep their secret. For the child, the experience of being sexually abused is associated with such shame and guilt that they – regardless of the offender's admonitions – does not feel like recounting their experiences to others.

THE OFFENDER'S ATTRACTIVE OFFER

To understand why some children go so far in a friendship resulting from a grooming process, it is important to remember to consider the positive experiences that the offender offers the child:

The offender often gives the child **attention, praise and appreciation** – things that they should be getting from the people closest to them. However, particularly in the case of vulnerable children grappling with inferiority complexes, low self-esteem and insecurity, it can be very hard to refuse someone who is offering what they have been missing.

The offender might also cast himself in the role of a **kind adult friend**, who understands and supports the child when they are teased, struggling to make friends or quarrelling with their parents. Once again, we see that vulnerable children without healthy, trusting relationships with adults in their daily lives are particularly likely to go to great lengths to avoid losing their new adult friend.

The offender might also represent **experience and maturity**, which the child looks up to and wants to share in. This can be about the numerous issues and dilemmas that become pressing in adolescence, such as sexuality, boy-/girl-friends, masturbation, alcohol, smoking or other matters of importance to a young person's identity and self-perception.

Some offenders lure their victims with different kinds of **gifts**. We have seen examples of offenders who have given children a new smartphone and calling cards in order to facilitate contact without their parents knowing what is going on. Some children have been paid to carry out sexual acts in front of a webcam. Offers of modelling jobs can also bring financial rewards while appealing to the child's dream of becoming famous.

The victims have no advanced understanding of how mental manipulation (the grooming process) works through online media and gradually pushes their boundaries. When it goes awry, they feel that they have been naïve; they feel so ashamed and humiliated that the vast majority choose not to

involve others in their fiasco, trying to forget it instead. At the core of the grooming process is the experience of a breach of trust.

This makes it important always to listen to the nuances in the child's story about the contact with the sex offender as opposed to merely focusing on the time when the sexual offence took place. As elaborated upon in the article about treatment, the examination and understanding of all of the steps in the grooming process are important in the child's processing of what they have experienced.

MORE THAN JUST AN IMAGE

By Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark

There is rapid growth in both the supply and demand of pictures and videos aimed at satisfying adults' sexual fantasies about children. The contents depicted vary from children posing on their own to gross sexual abuse. This article explains the image categories that we – in Save the Children, the police and the criminal justice system in Denmark – use to assess such materials.

The world is full of images. The internet is inundated with them. Images depicting good experiences and beautiful memories.

People should not be restricted from sharing fond recollections and pictures of their good times together. That would be tantamount to attacking our freedom of expression. Nevertheless, there are some photos and videos that ought not to exist, because they show the sexual abuse of children that should never have happened. The demand for this type of material is high, and the internet is widely used to distribute it. This largely takes place on the open, known internet, but to an even greater extent on the so-called 'deep web', which consists of webpages that cannot be indexed by search engines. The deep web includes the dark web: those parts of the deep web where access is controlled, mainly by means of passwords. In these hidden and sometimes murky regions of the internet, tracking down a user's identity poses a much greater challenge. The deep web makes up as much as 80% of the total internet. The dark web accounts for a small part of the deep web.

We cannot criminalise all of the kinds of images adults use to stimulate their sexual fantasies about children. Some images are computer-generated and do not depict 'real' children, but they are still illegal if they are too lifelike. Others are simply normal photographs that are not actually illegal but nevertheless sexually arousing for some adults. Some such normal pictures are presented in a highly sexualised context or are otherwise used for purposes that were definitely not intended when the photo was taken or shared with others. Images portraying the sexual abuse of children must be stopped in the same manner as the actual assaults must be stopped.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY – A MISLEADING TERM

Images of sexual abuse are often referred to as 'child pornography'. In Denmark and around the world, practitioners, police and other specialists actively seek to limit the use of

this term, as it is misleading. Linguistically, ‘child porn’ possibly gives the impression of being something for children, like ‘childcare’ or ‘child support’. Moreover, the word ‘pornography’ indicates an act involving one or more voluntary participants. This is not so in the sexual abuse of children. Children cannot consent to abuse. Children are victims of abuse.

Save the Children Denmark, usually prefers to refer to ‘images of the sexual abuse of children’, because such phrasing describes the phenomenon more precisely. Other internationally used terms are ‘child sexual abuse material’ (CSAM) and ‘child sexual abuse images’.

MORE THAN JUST AN IMAGE

To assist in assessing images and determining whether they should be deemed illegal, the police and practitioners in the field use various scales or categorisations. The section below presents the categories applied in the Danish justice system together with a more detailed scale covering all types of images, which is the one we use in the Save the Children Denmark hotline against child sexual abuse images.

ILLEGAL IMAGES – THREE CATEGORIES

The Danish criminal justice system operates with three categories:

Category 1:

The child is alone in the image without engaging in sexual activity with others, but there is focus on the genitals and/or there is masturbation or other touching of a sexual nature.

Category 2:

Two participants (minor with minor or adult with minor) are engaged in intercourse or other direct sexual activity, or a child appears alone while sticking fingers or objects into the genital openings.

Category 3:

Depiction of gross sexual activities with children, representing rape, coercion or threats, or children engaged in sex with animals. This category is also applied to all sexual abuse involving children under three years of age.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S AGE

To be able to evaluate whether an image is illegal and to which category it belongs, the child's age must be determined. The three categories above define 'children' as anyone below 18 years of age. In practice, however, it can be hard to tell from an image whether a young person is more or less than 18. One tool of age estimation is the Tanner Scale, which is based on the physical development of sex characteristics of the child or young person. This includes the development of a girl's breasts, a boy's penis, pubic hair and other easily observable physical features that change with age. It can be difficult, if not impossible, to determine if a child in a photo is four or five years, but as long as the child is clearly under 18 years and the picture is categorised as being illegal, there is no doubt that it must be dealt with as such. The challenge is greater when having to estimate whether a young person in an image is 16, 17 or 18 years old. Only the birth certificate can give a definite answer, and in cases where the police fail to identify the young person photographed, the image may consequently pass as legal, since the young person is estimated to be over 18 years even if they are actually only 16 or 17.

IMAGES ON A SCALE FROM 1–10

There are countless images on the internet, legal and illegal alike, as well as those in the grey area. The three-way categorisation used in the Danish criminal justice system is applicable to how the police handles illegal imagery. The Save the Children Denmark hotline against child sexual abuse images focuses on illegal material. However, we also pay attention to

images in the grey area and other types of material, still legal in Denmark yet of a kind that we find as violating children's rights. This includes some material shared on social media. We register images by type for use in knowledge, advocacy and elsewhere. This is why we operate with a more detailed categorisation, the COPINE scale,¹ to assess the nature of images. This scale was developed in the 1990s by two British psychologists, Max Taylor and Ethel Quayle, who reviewed considerable quantities of images found on the internet and in newsgroups, categorising them by type.

The COPINE Scale (see detailed descriptions and examples of the levels on the next page).

Categorisation of sexual content in images of children

Level	Denomination	Description of imagery
1	Normal	Normal pictures in which children play in neutral surroundings, or non-erotic and non-sexualised pictures showing children in underwear, swimsuits or the like, either from advertising or family photography.
2	Nudism – art	Pictures of nude or partially nude children in normal nudist contexts and from legal sources. Artistically justified images of children.
3	Voyeuristic	Pictures of children photographed covertly at playgrounds and other surroundings for children. Such pictures might possibly include visible underwear or various degrees of nudity.
4	Posing	Posed photos of children, whether fully clothed, partially clothed or nude.

1) COPINE stands for 'Combating Paedophile Information Networks in Europe', a project in which the University of Cork, in cooperation with the Paedophile Unit of the London Metropolitan Police, developed a scale for categorising images for use both in research and in the English criminal justice system. The scale from 1–10 was developed against the background of images collected from the internet and newsgroups. Today, the English criminal justice system uses a simpler three-way categorisation.

5	Erotic posing	Posed pictures of fully or partially clothed or nude children in erotically suggestive, sexualised or sexually suggestive poses.
6	Explicit erotic posing	Pictures emphasising genital areas, where the child is either nude, fully or partially clothed.
7	Explicit sexual activity	Pictures that depict touching, mutual and self-masturbation, oral sex and intercourse conducted by a child, though not involving any adults
8	Assault	Pictures of children subject to sexual assault, showing touching of the body with the hands and with adult involvement.
9	Gross assault	Pictures of gross sexual assault, showing sexual activities of intercourse, masturbation, oral sex and with adult involvement.
10	Sadistic/bestiality	a) Sexualised pictures showing a child being tied, beaten, whipped or otherwise being subject to actions that inflict pain on the child. b) Pictures where an animal is involved in some form of sexual activity with a child.

COPINE LEVELS – EXPLANATIONS AND EXAMPLES

LEGAL IMAGES

Level 1: Completely normal pictures of the kind we are used to seeing in private photo albums. Pictures featuring happy children and adults in all kinds of day-to-day situations, such as children playing in neutral surroundings, non-erotic and non-sexualised images of children in underwear, swimsuits and the like.

Level 2: Images of nude or partially nude children in normal nudist contexts and from legal sources. Photo series from a nudist organisation's summer camp or other activities in which the children's nudity is motivated by nudism. Originally, Level 2 pictures have not been produced to stimulate sexual fantasies, although the photographer's motives cannot always be ascertained. At any rate, adults with a sexual interest in children can use the images for purposes of sexual gratification.

Level 3: These can be photos taken surreptitiously at a playground, wading pool, beach or other places where children are found. The photographer has often taken such photos with a telephoto lens or otherwise at considerable distance to avoid drawing attention. As almost everyone now has a mobile phone and many have tablets with cameras, such photos can also be taken at very close range, since it does not necessarily raise suspicion when people sit around handling their smartphones in any environment. This type of material is problematic, because it is produced without the knowledge of the children, their parents or teachers. It is offensive that the photos are used to stimulate the sexual fantasies of adults.

Levels 4 and 5: These are pictures of children who have been made to pose or model totally or partially clothed or nude. The children may have been instructed to strike an erotic pose in order to stimulate adult sexual fantasies. Other pictures may have been taken and shared by children themselves – possibly playing photo models and experimenting with their looks and charisma, or a teenager who has taken nude pictures of him- or herself and shared them with a boy-/girlfriend or a close platonic friend, expecting that they would remain confidential. The images have then, either instantly or later on, somehow been posted on the web and used for purposes other than those intended by the child or youth. In cases where an adult has instructed the child, the adult's intentions may have been clear to himself, but not to the child, who possibly thought they were just playing. Assessing such an image involves a difficult balancing act to determine whether it depicts coercion or voluntary posing, and whether the child or young person knows that the photo is to be shared on the web. While not actually illegal, the photos are used in an offensive manner or context.

Images at *Level 4* also include some types of clothing ads. While the strictly formal aim might be merely to present particular children's clothing, underwear or swimsuits, the images have been imbued with a slight touch of erotic posing, at least in the eyes of some adults.

IMAGES IN THE GREY AREA

Level 5 images lie in a grey area. Some of them are close to being illegal and perceived as highly offensive by most people who look at them and by the children themselves. Such pictures include children with adult make-up, instructed in erotic posing and feather boas, or dressed up in lace or leather underwear, high boots and holding a whip. The images are not illegal *per se* but sometimes appear in an adult-centred pornographic setting, thus being judged illegal due to the context, or they are accompanied by erotic texts or clear references to, for instance, sex for money. If these images were shown on their own in Denmark, they would be considered legal; in such a sexualised context, however, they are deemed illegal.

In between Levels 5 and 6, we find the ever-increasing self-exposure wherein particularly boys and young men masturbate in front of a webcam. Most of these videos have roughly the same setup and chain of events, and there are suspicions that the boys receive requests and instructions about what to do and how to share these video sequences. If the young person in the video is under 18 years of age and the video is distributed and downloaded with the aim of sexually gratifying adults, such material is illegal. If the young person has shared the video with a group in a closed forum or believes that to be the case, it is not necessarily illegal. Furthermore, it can be difficult to assess precisely if the persons featured are older or younger than age 18.

ILLEGAL IMAGES

Levels 6–10 encompass images that are deemed illegal in Denmark pertaining to the aforementioned categories 1–3 used in the Danish criminal justice system. These images clearly focus on and around the genitals and/or depict sexual activity (e.g., masturbation, oral sex, intercourse) involving one or more children.

In the case of Level 6, for the image to be deemed illegal, the camera perspective (i.e. the focus of the image) must clearly be on genitals. If the child is shown in underwear, for instance, the limit for what is considered ‘clothed’ is exceeded if they are only wearing a G string or thong underwear, as

this is tantamount to showing (parts of) the child's genitals.

Levels 6–7 encompass images in which the child or children appear alone (i.e., no adults in sight). These are images in which children engage in sexual activity alone or with each other and to a degree that exceeds what can be seen as children's normal examination of themselves and one another.

At Levels 6 and 7, there is no doubt left that the images show sexual abuse or sexual contact and activity beyond what can be expected within the boundaries of children's normal development in general.

Levels 8–9 cover images of adults sexually abusing children. These can be anything from touching to masturbation, oral sex and intercourse, where the adult sexually abuses the child or the child is forced to stimulate and satisfy the adult sexually.

Level 10 refers to the most shocking images. Here, the child is a victim of sexual sadism. The child may be tied up or subject to physical violence while being sexually abused. This category also includes images in which the child is coerced to have sexual contact with animals.

A common trend for all images at levels 6–10 is a growing number depicting ever-younger children, both boys and girls, showing ever-grosser sexual abuse. We even see images in which infants are subject to gross sexual abuse as well as images in which women sexually abuse children.

IMAGES IN THE GREY AREA

Every month, Save the Children Denmark receives around 300 reports of online pictures and videos with suspicions of the sexual abuse of children. About one in ten reports concern images in the grey area; that is, which are not illegal under Danish law. These images do not depict the outright sexual abuse of children but exhibit children in a manner or context that violates their dignity. In 2013–14, we conducted a survey of more than 15,000 such images, which resulted in a March 2014 publication entitled 'Images in the grey area'. It highlights the problem of an

industry dedicated to deliberately exhibiting children as sexual objects in order to satisfy adult sexual fantasies. As described above under Level 5, this kind of images is almost illegal. Save the Children works to have images in the grey area included in criminal law and categorised as illegal. We recognise the difficulty of assessing exactly when an image is intentionally aimed at gratifying adults sexually. We also acknowledge that banning such material will increase the workload of police and courts as more images are subject to criminal investigation. However, we maintain the right of children not to be violated by being exhibited as sexual objects as being paramount.

WHY CATEGORISE THE IMAGES?

It is an ongoing discussion whether it is possible and reasonable to relativise sexual abuse by ranking it in order of grossness. One sexual abuse is one too many. Accordingly, seen from a child's perspective it makes little sense to divide images into different categories. The child has been the victim of one or more sexual assaults and must live with the consequences for the rest of his or her life. No amount of financial compensation or prison sentence to the offender(s) can change that. Even so, in objective terms and as regards the administration of justice, assessing pictures for the grossness of sexual abuse involved makes sense, just as we also determine sentences for different degrees of assault depending on the extent and severity of each punishable act.

THE ABUSE NEVER STOPS

Children who are victims of sexual abuse are scarred for life. They have to live with the aftereffects, the long-term consequences. On top of that is the fact that the abuse never stops: Every single time an adult clicks on the picture and derives sexual gratification from it, the offence against the child repeats itself once more. The chance of ever being able to leave such sexual abuse behind is thwarted by the awareness that the pictures and/or videos are still out there somewhere. The risk of being recognised or

suddenly seeing oneself in the such images is stressful. This is described in further detail in the following article about treatment of children who have been victims of online sexual abuse.

This is yet another reason why it is so essential both to prevent sexual abuse from occurring and to combat the production and distribution of pictures and videos depicting abuse.

TREATMENT OF ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE

By Helene Almind Jansen, psychologist and specialist in psychotherapy with children and young people

When good-natured online playfulness goes bad and ends in sexual abuse, it is important that the child receive the right treatment. This article examines some of the challenges faced in the wake of online grooming and sexual abuse, highlighting some cases of psychological therapy and perspectives.

There is little specialist literature offering advice on the approach to treatment of online sexual abuse. The question is: Do the symptoms and reactions to such abuse differ from other types of sexual exploitation and abuse and does this give rise to special treatment strategies? The answer is both yes and no. Online sexual abuse does differ from other types of sexual exploitation in several respects and attention must be paid to different concerns in psychological treatment. Moreover, there is variation in the cases of online sexual abuse, such as whether or not the offender and child have met in real life. Nevertheless, it is a misunderstanding to assume that online sexual abuse devoid of any physical contact has less impact and is less harmful to the child than direct, physical sexual abuse. Indeed, the symptoms can be identical, although they can also assume different forms and vary from one child to another.

Based on the long-term consequences (i.e., the aftereffects) from a wide variety of online sexual abuse, this article discusses the consequent treatment options and challenges for the following types of victims:

- Children subject to online grooming who are lured and manipulated into sexual contact online leading to offline physical sexual abuse.
- Children who appear in images distributed on the internet, either because they have chosen to share nude photos on the net that are later passed on without their consent or because they have been lured into sharing the images.
- A special category are children who are subject to sexual abuse filmed and distributed for sale, and who can be said to suffer double damage. They are victims of physical sexual abuse on top of which they must live with the dread that photos and/or videos of this abuse are spread around the world in an uncontrollable, never-ending flow. While the physical abuse may have ended, the virtual abuse continues.
- Children who are exposed to pornographic material early in their upbringing, thus affecting their general well-being

and development. This refers particularly to prepubescent children.

SECRETS, SHAME AND SELF-REPROACH

Children who have been groomed online and have been victims of physical abuse tend to keep such sexual encounters a secret. The same applies to children who have sent pictures of themselves to strangers or to someone they believed to be a friend.

Accordingly, such children rarely reveal the crimes themselves. Instead, the abuse frequently comes to light during police investigations or because parents discover something. Some children confide in friends who then ‘break the secret’ and tell an adult. In cases where the child has fallen victim to violent physical abuse, it is more likely that they will break down and report the event, as it is difficult to keep such a traumatising experience secret. As in the case of other sexual abuse, choosing not to disclose the meeting with a stranger on the net is typically motivated by emotions such as guilt, shame and self-reproach together with fear of how their parents and friends – as well as the offender – will react.

Children who have been interacting with someone online for a prolonged period often have numerous opportunities to object and cut off contact but fail to do so. This may strengthen feelings of guilt and self-reproach.

Somewhat older children and young people who have been engaged in exploring the sexual realm and experimenting with their own sexuality in an online encounter are often embarrassed and ashamed. If such self-exploration results in a sexual encounter, the shame can give rise to such strong inner conflicts that they might find it hard to ask for help on their own. At the same time, the child may be in doubt about what they have actually experienced.

FALLING IN LOVE OR BEING ABUSED?

An act of abuse is often perceived as something taking place against the victim's will. If someone regrets sexual intercourse, is it then abuse or merely a bad sexual experience? Online interactions can be riddled with confusion over the emotions involved, including love, fascination and curiosity. Is it possible to talk about what happened as abuse after meeting somebody who provided attention, understanding and a feeling of being important and valuable? During childhood, children learn that keeping their word is important. 'In for a penny, in for a pound', as the saying goes. If a child has playfully agreed to something sexual, backtracking becomes dishonourable. Such children might therefore consider themselves to be complicit in the sexual abuse. The personal boundaries are essentially wider in the online world than offline. For a minor, having a face-to-face conversation about sexual fantasies with a 40-year-old is very unusual. Yet the age difference tends to fade away when it takes place on the internet.

The child might have perceived the physical encounter following online contact as a sexual debut, whereas those around them, including their parents, the social authorities and the police, see it as a sexual offence against the child. It becomes difficult to navigate professionally when the law and the child's experience point in opposite directions. It may be hard to insist that a teenager talk to a psychologist if they do not want to. From an adult perspective, it might be obvious that the child was manipulated by the offender. This can give rise to the adults intensely and impatiently wanting the child to learn to behave in a more desirable, less risky manner. However, the young person may not appreciate being described as someone who has been sexually abused or as a victim of sexual abuse. Moreover, the shock of seeing how their surroundings react may be the first issue requiring treatment. This dilemma is illustrated in the case below, a constructed example based on multiple real-life cases.

A CASE

14-year-old Frederick arrives at the Centre for Victims of Sexual Assault at Rigshospitalet, a large Danish hospital, together with his father. He reluctantly crosses the doorstep. As he puts it, he has 'not been abused'. What happened to him was not experienced as abuse, but rather as a 'sexual experiment'. He struggles to understand the reactions of those around him. The police have interrogated him, he has talked to a social worker from social services, and his parents are anguished and want him to talk to a psychologist. They think there must be something wrong with him.

On the internet, Frederick met a 40-year-old man who was friendly and obliging. The man enquired about his well-being at a time when he was worried about his mother being seriously ill. She had been on sick leave from work for a long time and was being examined at various hospitals. The doctors were struggling to diagnose her properly. Frederick confided in the man, who was attentive and understanding of his worries, and was there for him when he needed a friend. They had long been in touch when the man asked if he had ever tried sex and if he thought he was into boys or girls. Frederick had long suspected that he might be homosexual but remained unsure. He had yet to fall in love for the first time and felt attracted to both boys and girls. He met the man one evening behind a railway station, where they mutually stimulated one another sexually by hand and orally. When it was over, the man gave him DKK 500. Frederick later felt euphoric about the easy money and sent Facebook messages about it to a few trusted friends. A parent of one of the friends read the message and reported it to Frederick's parents. He initially denied it ever happening, claiming it was just a joke, but his parents found the DKK 500 in his wallet. Suddenly, everything picked up speed. The police interrogated him about the man's identity, and a social worker suggested a psychologist for Frederick. The social worker expressed concern. Frederick failed to understand why those around him were so worried. His only regret was having written about it on Facebook.

When children have not revealed the sexual abuse themselves or do not see the sexual encounter as abusive, there is often a lack of motivation and/or desire to undergo treatment. This sets online sexual offences apart from other types of sexual abuse in which victims often are more disposed to undergo treatment.

An often-repeated truism is that children cannot be pushed to see a psychologist, and especially not teenagers. In a way, this is correct. Strong motivation to talk to a professional therapist certainly boosts the alliance and the chances of success. However, giving in to the child's initial resistance also entails a risk of failing to provide the necessary assistance. Frederick needed help in how to explore his own sexuality in a less risky manner. For the purposes of treatment, it may be appropriate to insist on contact with a professional. Moreover, the way forward may come through re-establishing trust between the child and parents.

TRUST BETWEEN THE CHILD AND THE PARENTS

Parents often react with shock, anger and despair upon discovering that their child has been a victim of online sexual abuse, regardless of whether it involves physical abuse or the child has chatted and exchanged pictures. In many cases, the anger can be targeted at the child, particularly when they have kept the relationship secret for a long time and they have violated family rules and agreements. The child and parents can become separated when online abuse comes between them. This makes finding common ground vital.

Children who have engaged in self-promotion and experimented with their own sexuality online may grapple with strong feelings of guilt and intense self-doubt. In particular, the shame of the parents having found out can be so strong that the child may hold back from recounting even deeply serious and disturbing incidents experienced via the internet. This can also keep them from talking to others about it.

First and foremost on the child's mind is often to re-establish the broken relationship of trust with their parents, proving

that the parents can once again trust them both online and offline. Accordingly, the first part of the therapy should not necessarily be concerned with treating the sexual abuse itself; and certainly not if the child did not perceive the sexual contact as abusive. Instead, the focus should be on re-establishing the child–parent relationship. The introductory conversations therefore often resemble mediation and conflict management, which, if carried out successfully, can boost the child’s motivation to receive assistance and continue to talk with a professional therapist.

In cases where the child does not perceive the experience as abuse, it can be difficult to persuade them that they need help. The therapeutic needs of children and parents tend to differ drastically, and it is not always optimal to address these needs at the same place. Parents may need to tackle their anger and despair without having the child present. It is crucial that parents are helped to understand the manipulative and sophisticated techniques applied in the course of the grooming process.

This knowledge often increases their understanding and reduces their anger, thus facilitating reconciliation between child and parents and redirecting the anger where it belongs: at the offender.

The child–parent relationship must be restored before the child can turn to look inwards and reflect on what happened and how they ended up in the given situation. In other words, calm and a safe haven are required for the child to be able to relate to and concentrate on what they have experienced.

THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE OFFENDER

Unlike other types of sexual exploitation, in most online sexual abuse, the child–offender relationship usually ends after being exposed. Children who are sexually abused by someone closely related to them, whether within or outside the family, do not necessarily end their relationship with the perpetrator after the abuse has been exposed; a father continues to be a

father, even if he has sexually abused his son or daughter. Their contact may be interrupted or be subject to special conditions for a while, but the relationship persists.

When online sexual abuse of a child is revealed, the victim often becomes confused about the offender's identity. Suddenly the police may provide information of which the child had no idea, for example that the offender was not a single 20-year-old male, as he said, but rather 36 years old, married and with two children. Realising that one has been deceived and manipulated can be disheartening and sorrowful, which might also result from having lost someone believed to be a friend, and this emotion can be followed by anger over having been tricked and fooled.

Having shared their innermost thoughts with someone who turned out to be a lie might create insecurity and make the child question their own judgment. Trust in their surroundings has been betrayed, and doubt over their ability to assess risk may hurt the child's self-confidence and self-esteem. This happens both to children who have met their offender offline and to those who did not meet their offender face-to-face, having sent digital images of themselves.

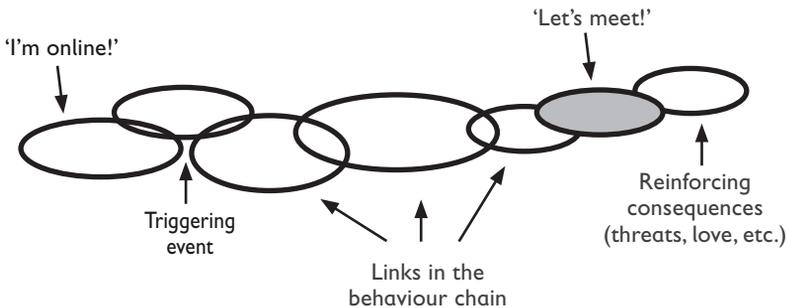
Sometimes the child will maintain a positive image of the offender, especially when close friendship or feelings of love have been involved. This may startle and bewilder the adults around the child, such as social workers, police investigators and parents, who clearly recognise anger, see through the offender's sly manipulations, and recognise the damage he has caused to the child. Verbalising to the child what a terrible person the offender is can make it even harder for the child to understand how they ended up in the sexual situation without realising that the adult was grooming and luring them into it. Refusal to let go of a favourable view of the offender can stem from something other than that which went on between the offender and the child that was positive. Anger towards the offender also tends to remain absent as long as the child reproaches him- or herself for what has happened.

In the case of children who do not perceive themselves as

victims, it is important not to push them into acknowledging the abuse, since this can inflict secondary traumatisation. Some children need to cling on longer to their 'great love fantasy'. Here, it is important to be gentle and allow the child to move in and out of the denial of having been abused. In other words, it is necessary to give the child room for this process and to follow them in it. One of the methods to assist the child in this part of the treatment effort is to consider the grooming process.

EXAMINING THE GROOMING PROCESS

Children can benefit from a step-by-step understanding of the grooming process, which fosters an understanding of what happened and what made it possible. It also helps prevent a recurrence, because the child becomes familiar with the techniques the offender uses to become intimate with them.



In their initial work with the grooming process, the child and therapist carry out a kind of chain analysis. The point is to identify the occurrence in the surroundings or the emotion that triggered the behaviour chain. To some it is the experience of loneliness, a conflict with friends or parents. To others it is budding sexual desire and curiosity or a question in the chat that catches their interest. While it can be hard to pinpoint the exact triggering factor(s), this is important to

give the child an understanding of what drew them into the grooming process.

By analysing all of the steps in the contact with the offender, the child becomes aware of how they have been manipulated or deceived. Important hidden information can often be dug up and enhance the child's understanding, retrospectively making sense and enabling insights. The key is for the therapist to focus on the basic elements and avoid accelerating the process or skipping links in the chain that may prove significant and meaningful. What matters is to stay focused on the process together with the child long enough to reach an understanding of where it took a wrong turn.

It is a balancing act to land in a manner that overcomes the child's self-reproach and puts the learning aspect centre stage without placing the responsibility with the child. Understanding what grooming is and what being manipulated does to a person helps make sense of the chaos that the child often feels.

THE CHILD'S SEXUALITY AND FEELINGS OF PLEASURE

Therapy also focuses on the child's own sexuality. The shame of having played with their own sexuality can be devastating, whether or not it has resulted in a physical encounter or sharing of images. Pubescent children who have started exploring their own sexuality and are then interrupted in this by an adult with adult intentions frequently become confused and insecure about their feelings. They need to figure out what is right and wrong in what they have been through and to be able to put it into words. For some children, the meeting on the internet and subsequent physical sexual abuse are associated with their first feelings of sexual pleasure, which can then also produce an overwhelming sense of shame.

Few psychologists are trained in talking about sexuality, and it is easy to overlook in treatment. It can be discomfoting for the child and psychologist alike. A young person's budding sexuality can be awkward to share with an adult stranger,

even a psychologist. It takes tact and delicacy to introduce the subject without again violating the child's personal boundaries. Nevertheless, the vast majority find it a relief to talk to an adult who can normalise and systematise the knowledge and experience that the child has picked up both on the internet and during the sexual abuse. Pubescent children without any previous sexual experience often wrestle with questions about what is normal, partly because they have been influenced by access to pornography on the internet.

Some children have been groomed and at the same time have felt as though they were in love with the adult. If they then also met physically with the offender, they often realise that the intention of the meeting was for the offender to achieve pleasure and gratification as opposed to their own gratification. In particular, they need to sift through their feelings surrounding the abuse. It can be sorrowful realising that it was not mutual love, but rather sexual abuse and exploitation. Some also find it liberating to find out that something different is to be expected from other sexual relationships and that sex can be pleasurable when it is not abusive. This creates hope. Conversations about sexuality with children in puberty are necessary so that the child's sexual development is not unnecessarily damaged and so that, when entering into future sexual relationships, they can distinguish between abuse and good sexual experiences; between sexual desire and the absence of it.

MEETING OTHERS

As with other types of sexual exploitation, online abuse is taboo-ridden and rarely something talked about with others. A particular characteristic of online sexual abuse is the inner emotion of self-reproach or feeling stupid for having brought the situation upon oneself. This applies both to the victims who have met with their offenders and to those who have sent photographs of themselves. Meeting other children who have been in similar situations can make a great differ-

ence for the child and facilitate the healing process. The therapeutic situation between psychologist and child is characterised by the fact that only the psychologist listens and validates the child's process. Sharing one's experiences with another person who has been through something similar and learning how this person has found a way back on the right track in life and is doing well gives basis for hope and strength.

However, it is necessary to consider carefully the ethics of involving children who have completed their treatment or are well on their way to doing so. Psychologists must consider how long after completed treatment it is reasonable to ask for such assistance from a child. They must also consider whether an invitation places the child in a dilemma if they do not really feel like it but find it hard to refuse a person who used to be helpful. The child may feel obliged to turn up. In our experience in Denmark, however, all of the children who have taken part in such conversations with other children of their own age have wanted to return for further sharing. The meetings have been inspired by the concept of outsider-witness practice in narrative therapy (Michael White 1948–2008). All such children receive an invitation by letter.

AN EXAMPLE

Dear Frederikke

I hope you and your family are doing well, and that you're still enjoying swimming, school and your good friends. Do you still love to draw manga?

I'm writing to you because I am currently talking to a girl who was sexually abused by someone she met on the internet. My conversations with this girl made me think about you, since much of what she is grappling with in many ways reminds me of what I remember from our talks. She feels that she is the only one in the

world who would think about meeting someone from the net. She finds it hard to forgive herself for going off to meet someone she did not know. She does not like 'the internet girl' (that's what she calls the girl who went off to meet the stranger) and what she did. She feels it is her own fault and that she could have just said 'no'. She is sad that she has made her mum and dad unhappy.

This made me think about some of our conversations and the drawings you made of 'smart Frederikke', who hit the younger and not-so-smart Frederikke in the head with a club and blamed her for everything that happened – do you remember? And how you were also struggling with feelings of guilt. It's sort of the same with this girl. She also hits herself in the head and doesn't like 'the internet girl'.

The last time we met for our follow-up conversation, I noticed you said you had put the guilt behind you, that it no longer had a grip on you, that you had accepted what happened and were no longer blaming yourself for it. And that you had put the guilt into a football and given it a huge kick to the other side of Planet Earth, and that you would never have gone if you had known what was going to happen.

I'm writing you to ask if you might like to come for a conversation with the girl and me. The idea is not to tell us what happened to you. The way I imagine the conversation, you will first listen to the conversation between the girl and me, and afterwards tell us what caught your attention the most. Whether what the girl and I talked about is something you know about yourself and whether it has made a difference to you to listen to our conversation.

The girl would like to ask: Have you learned to live with what happened or do you shut it out?

There might not be any simple answer to this question – it might not be answerable at all. What matters most to her is to meet someone who has managed to get through that with which she is still struggling.

Before answering, you're welcome to call or stop by my office and hear some more. Perhaps you also have some good ideas.

I haven't told the girl about you or your experience – I just said that I will ask someone I used to talk to. It's absolutely fine for you to say 'no'. I understand if you don't have the time or don't feel comfortable doing it, and I won't hold it against you in any way.

Kind regards,

Many of the children invited indicate that they are glad to receive a letter that validates parts of what they toiled with during their therapy and to be asked an inviting question by another child. This often also helps facilitate a process in which the child once again connects with what happened, but from a new perspective in their life. Reflections on what took place will vary at different stages of one's life. A question may add new perspectives to one's own narrative and contribute something novel, which also helps the invited child to grow. In this manner, it becomes a two-way process.

IMAGES OF CHILDREN

Victimised children are not always aware of the existence of images on the internet showing them being sexually abused. The images may have been recorded while they were asleep or, in the worst cases, while they were drugged, hence not knowing that pictures were taken or possibly even that they have been sexually abused.

In other cases the children know that (nude) pictures of them exist, but not that they have been shared (e.g., on adult pornographic sites) or distributed as child pornographic material.

Regardless of the channels used to make the images available online, it has consequences when the child learns about them, as in connection with a police investigation in which the images have been found on a computer. On other occasions, children are subject to extortion by the person possessing the

images. They may be pressured into sending more, possibly more intimate pictures. Such intimidation can be massive and possibly include threats to pass on the images to the child's contacts on social media. Such pressure can be extremely stressful to the child.

Children who have suffered physical sexual abuse usually find that the abuse stops once the crime is exposed, whereas those whose images circulate on the net find that the abuse continues if the images remain online. Upon understanding that the images will never disappear, they often react with symptoms of depression, feeling hopelessness and sorrow over having ended up in that situation. Some children have traumatic responses, as seen with other types of abuse, such as nightmares, flashbacks and difficulties sleeping.

For some children, the worrying becomes evident only when they remember an image that they do not want to exist anymore. This can be a picture that they have sent to someone else or a profile picture that they have regretted. Children can consume so much energy thinking about this that it takes a toll on their ability to concentrate. They can grow so fixated on this in their mind that it becomes hard for them to find escape. Their thoughts evolve into self-criticism and further self-reproach, possibly followed by hopelessness, depression, anxiety and stress.

Living with the apprehension and fear that their image may be distributed, copied or end up in the wrong hands is extremely burdening and affects the child's well-being noticeably. Some children find that anxiety dominates their everyday life, worrying constantly about friends and family hearing about or seeing the pictures, or even being recognised on the net or in public. This fear is often accompanied by extreme shame and self-loathing regarding the child's own body and how it is portrayed in an individual picture. In terms of health, this everyday anxiety is stressful and somewhat comparable to the symptoms observed in children who live with the offender and suffer sexual abuse continually. The body is on constant alert, triggering increased stress hormones, which in

turn increase the risk of disease. The sense of losing control can be deeply distressing and degrading.

Many children require assistance to avoid being burdened with excessive thoughts. It is often difficult to push such thoughts aside, and they can become overwhelming, further worsening the anxiety and stress symptoms. It may help the child to offer them tangible techniques to help them gain control over invasive thoughts.

It can be difficult to reassure the child and dispel their fear and anxiety. Accordingly, one of the priorities in therapy is to learn to live with the fact that the picture(s) will never disappear, with the sorrow and anger over having ended up in the situation, and with the loss of control over the image(s). Some children find that their attitudes to their own bodies are affected, even if the sexual abuse occurred online and not physically. Becoming conscious of an image of their body being capable of arousing and stimulating sexual fantasies in others can fill some children with self-loathing. As with other types of sexual abuse, self-harming behaviour may be one of the long-term consequences that also must be addressed in therapy.

TREATMENT OF FLASHBACKS

Seven-year-old Magnus breaks down crying at school. On the blackboard in the classroom, an erect penis keeps appearing. He knows it isn't real, but it feels like it. It also pops up in the pages of the book he is trying to read. This image has pursued him for weeks now, ever since an older boy from grade 9 got him to type 'xxx' in the browser of his new iPad in the schoolyard. After the summer break, all of the schoolchildren in the municipality had received an iPad with free wi-fi as a new learning tool at school. At xxx, Magnus saw an Asian woman with a bare torso and breasts. Then the video cut to a shot of the same woman with an erect penis, with which she penetrated a man. Magnus was shocked and does not know what to do with what he has seen. He does not tell anyone and tries to forget it. Now he is haunted by flashbacks, and his heart is galloping wildly.

Children exposed to situations or images online that they are not developmentally ready to handle might be plagued by visual flashbacks, where glimpses of the trauma are re-experienced. For some children, such flashbacks seem so real that they may actually be in doubt as to whether the trauma is actually reoccurring.

To Magnus, the shock was double. Firstly, he had seen something he did not know existed: a woman with a penis, a transgender person. Secondly, he learned that the anus can be penetrated. These were two items of information that he was not developmentally ready to handle at all.

We do not know with certainty how being exposed to hardcore pornographic imagery at an early age affects children's sexual development. Some researchers are convinced that it harms children. They point out that some children and teenagers feel over-eroticised and that the child's inner homeostatic balance is disrupted. Recent research indicates that the new generations that are growing up with internet access and are exposed to erotic materials at an early developmental stage are more likely to suffer sexual dysfunction as adults. In Denmark, research has focused on whether the age of sexual debut has changed over time – which it has not. The sexual activities practised among young people have not been investigated, however, nor is it known with certainty how young people are affected by being exposed to pornographic material. What we do know for sure is that images that children have no words or concepts to explain or understand have a massive impact on them, and they subsequently need help to process the impressions.

In psychological therapy with children, it is essential early in the process to find out whether the child suffers from flashbacks. Very few children feel like talking about what has happened if they are disturbed and overwhelmed by flashbacks; they fear that such flashbacks will become too invasive. At the same time, the example of Magnus shows how it does not necessarily take an offender committing sexual abuse for children to go through a sexually traumatising experience on the internet that may call for therapy.

Magnus received help to control his flashbacks. He received an imaginary remote control, which he used to 'change the channel' whenever he was tormented by flashbacks. He changed the channel to good experiences, visualising a holiday trip with his family. It gave him inner comfort to be able to regain control in this manner over what used to upset his mental balance. And his flashbacks eventually dissipated.

HOW THE POLICE WORK

*By Henrik Gundorff, the National Police Cyber Crime Centre (NC3),
and Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark*

The police begin a major investigation when receiving a report about images of abuse. Such an investigation sets out to categorise the pictures and not least to identify those behind the camera, those who downloaded the material, and the children subject to the depicted abuse. The internet being global, this endeavour often involves police in multiple countries. This article describes the tools available to the police and their work against images of the sexual abuse of children. The article also touches on police efforts to combat other online crimes that violate the rights of children and young people.

The internet is global and cannot be contained within any one country's borders or legal structures. This provides infinite opportunities and challenges. The internet that most of us know and use makes up perhaps 20% of the total internet. This is the open web, which is easily accessible through browsers, such as Chrome, Firefox and Explorer. However, the rest of the internet, about 80%, contains the so-called deep web (invisible to search engines), which includes the dark web (where access is controlled). These hidden and sometimes murky regions of the internet host vast quantities of entirely legal data, such as research data, medical records and other privacy-sensitive data, government-protected data, and other data that is not intended to be publicly accessible. However, the deep web, and not least the dark web, also contain incredible quantities of deeply concerning and genuinely illegal materials, including photographs and videos chronicling the sexual abuse of children.

THE INTERNET IS GLOBAL

The fact that the internet is global and that the amount of information is unimaginably vast requires police authorities to cooperate across national borders and across continents when investigating cases about illegal content.

A website, an image-sharing forum, a peer-to-peer network or a chat room can be removed one day in one country, only to reopen the very next day from another geographical location. Users will not know the slightest difference. But the authorities will. In principle, illegal content must be investigated in the country where it is stored; that is, the country where the server hosting the material is placed. The persons searching for and downloading illegal content must be investigated in the country where they are located when committing the crime and in their home country. Accordingly, such cases require the involvement of police forces in a host of countries. In Europe, this cooperation revolves largely around the European Cybercrime Centre, EC3, under Europol. On a worldwide

scale, it takes place through Interpol. Locally, however (e.g., in a Danish police district), the local police are responsible for investigating specific cases. In the case of illegal activity taking place on the internet, the National Police Cyber Crime Centre (NC3) is involved.

THE DANISH PENAL CODE

The sexual abuse of children is punishable and covered by Chapter 24 on Sexual Offences. The same chapter covers online sexual abuse of children, including images of child sexual abuse, also known as child pornography. Only the four articles specifically referring to online sexual abuse are presented here:

Section 226.

Any person, who records obscene photographs, films or similar of a person under the age of 18 years with the intention to sell or otherwise disseminate the material, shall be liable to a fine or imprisonment for any term not exceeding six years.

Section 227.

Subsection 1. Any person who aids or abets in the participation of a person under the age of 18 years in a performance that involves obscene behaviour is liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding six years.

Subsection 2. Any person who acts as a spectator of a performance as mentioned in subsection 1 with the participation of a person under the age of 18 years is liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding 2 years.

Section 232.

Any person who by obscene behaviour commits indecent exposure shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two years, or, if the behaviour has been directed at a child under the age of 15 years, to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding four years.

Section 235.

Subsection 1. Any person who disseminates obscene photographs or films, other obscene visual reproductions or similar of persons under the age of 18 years, shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two years or, in particularly aggravating circumstances, to imprisonment for any term not exceeding six years. Considered as particularly aggravating circumstances are instances where the life of the child depicted has been endangered, where gross violence has been used, where serious harm has been caused to the child, or where dissemination of a systematic or organised nature has taken place.

Subsection 2. Any person who possesses or for a payment becomes acquainted with obscene photographs or films, other obscene visual reproductions or similar of persons under the age of 18 years, shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding one year.

Subsection 3. The provision in subsection 2 does not cover possession of photographs, films or similar of a person who has reached the age of 15 years, if the person concerned has consented to the possession.

WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU ARE

For those participating in illegal activity online, anonymity is obviously important. Several browsers enable the opening of an ‘incognito window’, and some people set up false profiles in social networking sites and forums where they wish to assume a different identity. Others are highly particular with their privacy settings. Nevertheless, truth be told, no anonymity is ever totally impregnable. Even the supposedly super-anonymous Tor browser has now been hacked, so nobody can be completely certain about maintaining their anonymity. For many people, this is irrelevant. They are not doing anything illegal and they accept that we live in times when everyone is under surveillance with or without their consent. To others, however, it is a calculated risk. They know that their criminal acts risk being

exposed, that they live in constant danger of being found out. They know that, in the worst case, they can be convicted and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. This is why some of them become specialists in concealing themselves. They have the latest technical equipment and are on the cutting edge of methods for hiding their identities and keep them secret. However, they should not rest assured.

All computers used to log on to the internet have an IP address, a kind of digital GPS. The IP address renders it possible to track the computer's location, not merely the country or town, but all the way down to the physical address. We know this from stories in the media telling about how an email was sent from this exact computer at this precise internet café. Such stories are sometimes accompanied by pictures taken by a surveillance camera showing who was sitting at the computer at the exact time when the email was sent. Such persons might believe themselves to be anonymous, but the reality is that they are not. There are no perfect hiding places on the net, but unfortunately many of those committing crimes online manage to remain one or two steps ahead of the police.

ILLEGAL IMAGES ONLINE

There are mindboggling quantities of images on the net, and we know that a disturbingly large number of them depict the sexual abuse of children. We also know that new images and videos are uploaded every day and, hence, that sexual assaults are constantly being committed. Even though the police, interest groups, international networks such as INHOPE.org, the telecom industry, and major internet providers around the world work to limit access to illegal material, the fact of the matter is that child sexual abuse images remain in demand.

This places us in a dilemma. Because even as the authorities remove abuse images from the net, the demand obviously persists. When the old pictures are no longer there, the people who make money from them will see to it that new ones are

produced. And to that end, new sexual assaults must be committed. We cannot know if there would be fewer pictures taken and fewer assaults perpetrated, if we never removed or limited access to illegal images. Nevertheless, it raises the dilemma as to whether we ought to let the old images be or it is better to get rid of as many as possible, thereby letting the criminals know that we are snapping at their heels. We choose the last option.

HASH VALUES AND PHOTO-DNA

All images that come into the hands of the police, either nationally or internationally, are registered in databases. Each unique image is assigned its own so-called hash value (# value), which is a code of letters and numbers. A hash value is like a fingerprint. It means that whenever a computer or some other electronic equipment is brought in for examination, the hash values of all of the files in the computer are calculated, which promptly reveals if it contains known illegal material (images or other files). Material that remains unknown is then stored and categorised in the police database.

The use of hash values makes it easier and quicker to determine whether there are any illegal images and, hence, basis to continue investigating the case at hand. Another great advantage is that the staff have no need to view or revisit illegal images that are already known and have a hash value; the use of hash values saves time and saves staff from the mental stress of being exposed to such images.

In the Danish police database at NC3, so many new images were registered over a 6-month period that the total-ity of data collected in the period took up more than one tera-byte, equivalent to more than 1,500 CDs full of images.

In addition to the hash values, the police also use a technology called PhotoDNA, which basically enables comparisons between photos that are identical to the eye, thus determining if they are in fact the same image with slight modifications or possibly photographs from the same series. PhotoDNA is

based on a value calculated after the image has been changed into black-and-white, which makes it possible to assess if two images are the same despite changes in, say, a few pixels or hues.

PhotoDNA was originally developed by Microsoft and used for image recognition by the company's own search engines. Facebook, Twitter and Gmail are now also using the technology in their efforts to remove abuse images from their servers. PhotoDNA is primarily used in the fight against child sexual abuse images. This is because hash values and PhotoDNA make it easy to filter illegal images in the search results shown, just as they enable the identification and removal of known illegal images – knowing that they will reappear whenever they are uploaded again.

LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

A new police investigation in Denmark may start with a local report. It may also be triggered by an ongoing NC3 investigation. Yet another reason for opening a local case in Denmark is a wider international investigation. Examples of the latter include Operations Hamlet (2001), Avalanche (2002), Viking (2009) and Icarus (2011). And more recent Operations Kvaser (2015), Daylight (2016), Moonlight (2016) and Bifrost (2016).

CASE

Someone sits at his computer in a room inside a home in a mid-sized Danish town. The computer is used to search for and download illegal images of the sexual abuse of children. One day, the computer is used by someone else, who discovers connections to illegal sites on the net and sees some illegal images on the computer hard-drive. This person reports it to the local police, and an investigation is launched. The computer is seized. It is submitted for examination at NC3. The person caught in the illegal act is possibly

remanded in custody, and the local police remain responsible for carrying out the investigation. Indeed, NC3's check confirms that the computer contains illegal images. The images are matched up to material previously stored in the database. If the images are already known to the police and have already been assigned a hash value, it helps speed up the decision as to whether the case merits further investigation. Hitherto unknown images are assessed in accordance with current legislation and are registered in the database. At the same time, the hash values are shared with Europol's EC3 and with Interpol.

The investigation reveals that several persons in Denmark have shared the same illegal images. They have also shared images with persons in other European countries. Some of the websites from which the illegal material has been downloaded are hosted on servers in other countries within Europe and abroad. The first person exposed in the case is still under local police investigation. However, the case has now expanded to assume a wider international scope. The internet is global; the cooperation is international, while the actual police work involved in investigating and arresting individuals takes place locally.

VICTIM IDENTIFICATION

Another focus in the work with child sexual abuse images is to identify and find the victims depicted. An image might include a newspaper or periodical with a date indicating that the sexual abuse took place within the past month, giving rise to concerns that the abuse might be ongoing. Is it possible to tell from the contents and information gleaned from the images where they were recorded? Does the background contain any text or item suggesting that the images were recorded in Denmark or in another specific country?

Apart from helping us to catch those who perpetrate the assaults and distribute recordings of them, the images may also serve to identify and locate the children depicted, thus stopping the abuse and providing them with help.

NC3, SAVE THE CHILDREN AND THE TELECOM INDUSTRY

Save the Children in Denmark and in other countries runs civil hotlines to fight images of sexual abuse on the internet. Accordingly, Save the Children receives and handles reports from citizens who suspect that they have found illegal content online. The work being carried out by Save the Children Denmark is described elsewhere in this anthology. It involves close cooperation with NC3 and the telecom industry to remove or limit access to illegal images. In Denmark, sites containing child sexual abuse imagery are blocked. The site-blocking scheme was set up in 2005. It specifically ensures that non-Danish websites containing illegal images are blocked so that they cannot be accessed using normal browsers on the open internet. Not all internet providers have joined this scheme. However, when a computer goes online through a provider taking part in the site-blocking scheme, the pages of blocked websites will not be displayed. Instead, a page headlined 'STOP' appears, notifying the user that the site contains illegal material and has therefore been blocked. The page provides information about the helpline provided by the Sexological Clinic in Copenhagen, 'Break the Circle', and targets adults with a sexual interest in children who want to seek help.

An additional advantage of the site-blocking scheme is to spare non-offending people from being exposed to illegal images that they have no intention of seeing.

The websites covered by the site-blocking scheme are only blocked in Denmark, and only occurs when they are visited using a browser through a Danish internet provider signed up to the scheme.

STOP

Rigspolitiets Nationale Cyber Crime Center (NC3) har underrettet "TDC" om, at den internet-side, som din browser har forsøgt at få kontakt med, kan indeholde billedmateriale, der vil kunne anses som seksuel udnyttelse af børn (i daglig tale børnepornografi).

Efter opfordring fra Rigspolitiets Nationale Cyber Crime Center har "TDC" derfor valgt at blokere adgangen til internet-siden. Hvis du har indvendinger imod, at internet-siden er blokeret, kan du kontakte "TDC".

Den danske blokeringsordning over for billeder og film af seksuelle overgreb mod børn er en del af et europæisk politisamarbejde til bekæmpelse af kommerciel og seksuelt udnyttelse af børn.

Efter **straffelovens § 235** er det strafbart at udbrede, besidde eller mod vederlag eller gennem internettet at gøre sig bekendt med børnepornografisk materiale. Strafferammen er i visse tilfælde 6 år.

Oplysninger om strafbare forhold på internettet kan i øvrigt videregives på politiets hjemmeside på www.politi.dk.

Ønsker du hjælp og rådgivning i forhold til seksuelle tanker om børn kan du læse mere på <http://www.brydcirklen.dk>.



NC3
POLITI



Text in english:

The National Cyber Crime Center of the Danish National Police, who assist in investigations into crime on the internet, has informed "TDC", that the internet page which your browser has tried to get in contact with may contain material which could be regarded as child pornography.

On recommendation of The National Cyber Crime Center of the Danish National Police "TDC" has blocked the access to the internet page. If you have any objections against the internet page being blocked, please contact "TDC".

The Danish Anti-distribution Filter covering pictures and movies showing sexual abuse of children is part of a european police co-operation for the prevention of commercial and sexual exploitation of children.

According to Section 235 of the Danish Criminal Code it is a criminal offence to disseminate, possess or for a payment or through the internet to become acquainted with child pornography. The maximum penalty can in certain cases be imprisonment for up to 6 years.

Information on criminal conduct on the internet may be passed on to the danish police on www.politi.dk.

Are you in need of help or guidance in relation to child pornography, please contact <http://www.brydcirklen.dk>.

CHILD PROSTITUTION ONLINE

Another field that has expanded noticeably in recent years following the worldwide proliferation of the internet is the trade in sexual services via webcam.

We have long been aware of sex tourism, including adults who travel abroad to look for and purchase sex with children. This commerce still exists. The internet even offers travel guides, detailing where and how adults can find the 'merchandise' in which they are interested and at what price.

In today's world with wide access to the internet, these adults are now able to save the cost of travel. Through chat forums and webcams, they are now able to order sexual services, paying for live recordings of other adults committing

sexual assaults on children, or of children sexually abusing other children. In principle, such cases are investigated as described above; local police investigate both those selling and buying webcam sex. However, international cooperation is crucial for success in stopping the organised criminals behind it and saving the children. This subject is dealt with in further detail in the separate article on digital child sex tourism.

SEXTING, HATE CRIMES, NUDE PICTURES ON THE WEB AND OTHER ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE

A growing share of human communication takes place via social media on computers, smartphones and tablets. Conflicts escalate and text messages change their nature, becoming ever coarser. Threats of, say, sharing nude pictures with friends and contacts unless a person delivers more nude pictures or sexual services, hateful messages, gross bullying, self-produced photos and videos in which, for example, young boys pose and masturbate in front of a webcam, are distributed in growing quantities on social media and gay websites.

Such materials are illegal according to current Danish law. In principle, reports to local police or to NC3 are investigated in the same manner as described above in the case of illegal images. The police at the local and national levels cooperate closely, and the need for cross-border cooperation is also obvious in such cases.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Most of us buy goods, flights and music online, typing in our credit card data on websites. There used to be a time when child sexual abuse content could also be purchased online using common credit cards. Organised criminals still make a fortune from distributing images, but today it is very rare for such transactions to take place using commonly known credit cards, as the risk of getting caught is too high.

Relevant actors from the police, private sector and NGOs cooperate to combat commercial sexual exploitation and

abuse of children on the internet. In Europe, this is formalised in **EFC – European Financial Coalition against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Online**. Mastercard, VISA and PayPal, joining forces with Google and Microsoft, are some of the companies taking part in this cooperation in Europe. Internationally, other credit card firms and banks also contribute. In practical terms, this makes it possible to follow the flow of money from payer to recipient (or vice-versa) whenever trade in illegal images is discovered. Consequently, the persons behind these crimes and their customers must find other channels to exchange money for services. Much of this activity occurs on the dark web.

SAVE THE CHILDREN DENMARK'S WORK TO COMBAT ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE

By Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark

Save the Children is involved in a number of activities helping to protect children against violence and sexual abuse. This article describes this work, including the operation of a Danish hotline whereby people can report online images of the sexual abuse of children, as well as information targeted at politicians, children, parents and professionals.

As early as 2001, Save the Children Denmark set up its website-based hotline, where citizens can report images of the sexual abuse of children on the internet. Since its establishment, we have received over 80,000 reports from people who believe they have come across illegal images depicting children in sexual situations, also known as child pornography.

This work has been made possible over the years thanks to financial support to Save the Children Denmark from the Ministry of Social Affairs in Denmark and the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme and Connecting Europe Facility.

WHY SAVE THE CHILDREN?

People often ask why Save the Children (and not the police) is running a hotline handling reports of illegal material. Indeed, the efforts against online images of child sexual abuse are primarily the responsibility of the police. For the same reason, the Save the Children hotline cooperates closely with the Danish National Police Cyber Crime Centre, NC3, which is in charge of the investigation of these cases, just as we cooperate with local Danish police districts and with Europol and Interpol.

However, there are good reasons for the existence of civil hotlines:

Firstly, as a civil hotline, we are part of an international network with similar civil hotlines around the world. This enables a quick response, since messages are delivered straightaway from one hotline in one country to the hotline in the country where the content is located – and then onwards to the police in the hosting country. The INHOPE network enables quicker action and contact with national and local police forces across borders than what is possible through the formal channels of police cooperation. Consequently, websites can be promptly closed down and illegal content removed, sometimes within a few hours or days. Moreover, the international network in INHOPE provides access to knowledge

and to influencing decision-makers locally, nationally and internationally by means of advocacy. Such activity cannot be as readily undertaken by a public entity like the police. At the same time, the professional knowledge thus gained can be used in our information work targeted at children, young people, parents and practitioners in Denmark.

Secondly, we know that some people make a deliberate choice to report to Save the Children rather than to the police, because it allows them to remain anonymous and, hence, to avoid the risk of their reports exposing their wilful criminal acts either in this or in some other field. They may also be persons who simply do not wish their identity to be associated with the illegal content in any way, even if they did not set out to search for it. Or they may be persons who search for and have perhaps become addicted to the adult-centred pornographic sites but do not want this to be known by anybody else.

WE HAVE PERMISSION

The Save the Children Denmark hotline has very clear guidelines for the work handling these reports, including technical and safety-related norms as well as requirements for education and staff supervision. The Danish Director of Public Prosecutions has provided us with a written guaranty assuring that our staff will not be prosecuted for accessing illegal content as long as we follow strict guidelines.

Very few Save the Children employees have been assigned to this work, and they alone have access to the database of reports and to the material that has been reported. These few staff members have permission to access webpages with illegal material in connection with the work concerned, but only from a computer that has been dedicated to this purpose and is subject to extraordinary safety precautions.

A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

Handling the reports of illegal images is a special assignment. Looking at pictures and watching videos of child sexual abuse makes a fierce impression on people. Therefore, the hotline staff also hold other job functions at Save the Children Denmark and, if possible, each only process reports one week out of every three weeks. This job has clear guidelines regarding where and when it is to take place, mandatory supervision both individually and as a team, and free access to supervision. These guidelines are in force for the Save the Children Denmark hotline. They follow INHOPE policy and apply to all of the civil hotlines in this international network.

CHILDREN ARE SAVED AND CRIMINALS ARE CAUGHT

The internet has no borders, and the reports that we receive mainly concern websites hosted on servers outside Denmark. While it does not occur very often, illegal content is sometimes found on Danish websites hosted by Danish servers.

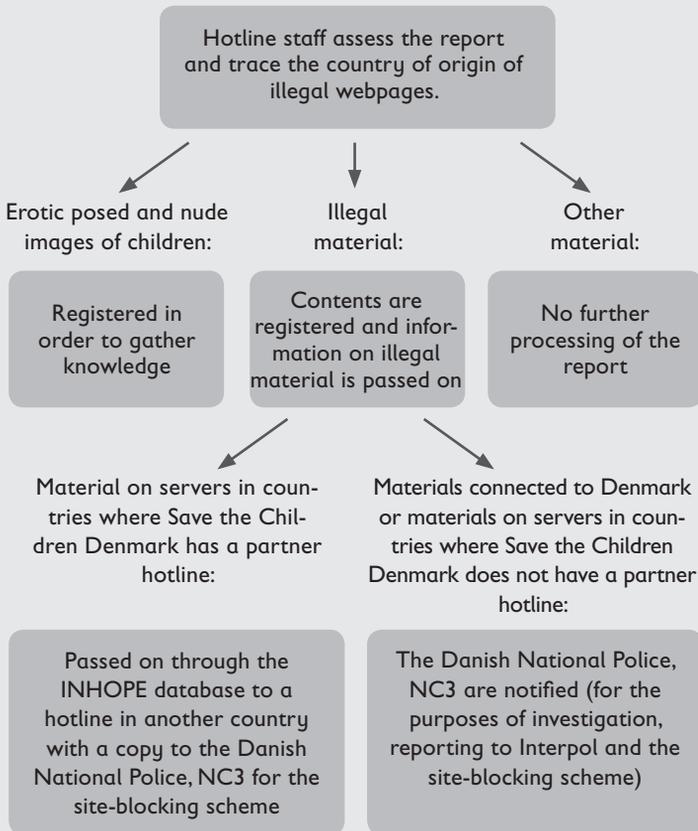
We cannot say how many Danish children appear in the pictures. We can tell if the children look typically European or, say, Asian, but not whether they are German, English or Danish. We do not know how many Danish adult men and women search for, download or distribute images of the sexual abuse of children. Nor can we determine with certainty when a report we receive passed on from the Save the Children hotline to NC3 and to the INHOPE network actually leads to children being saved and criminals being caught. The reporting of illegal images that we pass on is a piece in a vast international puzzle, which leads every day to cases being investigated, children being saved, and criminals getting caught around the world. We participate in international networking and contribute to the flow of information from the hotline to the Interpol and Europol databases feeding into their investigatory work. Keeping this wider international perspective in mind is important for us in order for our work to make sense.

Processing of reports to Save the Children Denmark

Reports are submitted to the database via the online form at redbarnet.dk/report. The informer receives a reply on the webpage confirming reception.

STOP

BØRNEPORNOGRAFI NU



The illustration overleaf shows the steps in the procedure for handling a report of potentially illegal content.

The Save the Children Denmark hotline publishes an annual report in Danish for those who want to read more about this work to combat the sexual abuse of children and to promote the safe use of social media. The annual reports in Danish are available on our website: www.redbarnet.dk/report.

THE SITE-BLOCKING SCHEME

In 2005, Save the Children Denmark, working together with NC3 and major internet providers, set up a site-blocking scheme, meaning that websites with illegal material hosted on servers in countries outside Denmark are blocked; instead, a STOP page appears.

When users have attempted to open a blocked web address, they receive a message that the page has been blocked because it has been judged that it may “contain imagery that could be considered sexual exploitation of children”. Users are also informed about the site-blocking scheme, the cooperation between police, the internet provider and Save the Children, as well as the provisions of the Danish Penal Code on this matter.

The STOP page also provides information about the option to obtain help and counselling regarding sexual thoughts about children, referring to ‘Bryd Cirklen’ (Break the Cycle) at www.brydcirklen.dk. Apart from sending a signal to users deliberately searching for illegal material, it also protects citizens from being inadvertently exposed to images depicting the sexual abuse of children.

WEBSITE ABOUT SAFE CHAT

An important part of Save the Children’s efforts to promote internet safety is played out through the sikkerchat.dk website (safe chat dot Denmark). This website is a joint undertaking

between Save the Children Denmark and the Danish Crime Prevention Council, the original version dating back to 2001. The site consists of four main areas and targets schoolchildren in grades 4–6 and 7–9 in the Danish school system (i.e., roughly 10–16 years old), professionals and parents. The purpose of the site is to help children and young people to navigate the internet safely on computers, smartphones and tablets. It provides good advice to prevent bullying, threats and sexual online experiences that violate personal boundaries. Furthermore, the site presents a series of short videos in which children and young people recount their own online experiences. The site also contains the latest material, for instance for practitioners, about dialogue with vulnerable minors about their internet lives as well as materials for children and young people about the consequences of sharing compromising pictures on the internet.

DELETE-IT HELPLINE

Research from 2015 showed that 20% of Danish high school students have shared nude or sexually explicit images online.

This was the starting point of the Safechat.dk helpline, called Delete-It. The helpline supports children and young people who have been exposed online without their consent and helps them to delete offensive content when possible.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

As mentioned above, Save the Children Denmark is involved in national and international networks focusing on online safety and the online sexual abuse of children and young people.

INHOPE.ORG

INHOPE.org, the International Association of Internet Hotlines, is a worldwide network comprising about 50 civil hotlines in just as many different countries, with over 170

employees annually handling more than a million reports of potentially illegal material on the net. In Europe, 97% of illegal material was subsequently reported to the police within 24 hours. Of the illegal material, 93% was removed from the internet within a week. On average, it takes about three days before illegal material is deleted, and in some cases just a few hours. INHOPE receives financial support from the European Commission and a growing number of Industry Partners. INHOPE is also served by an Advisory Board with participants from relevant stakeholders, such as Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Twitter, Trend Micro, Europol and Interpol.

NATIONAL NETWORKS AND COOPERATION FORUMS

Save the Children Denmark, the Media Council for Children and Young People, and the Centre for Digital Youth Care combine to make up the Danish Safer Internet Centre. The centre is supported by the EU's Connecting Europe Facility and is responsible for organising the Danish version of the Safer Internet Day, held every year in February. In 2017, the day was celebrated worldwide in more than 100 countries with the slogan 'Be the change: Unite for a better internet'. Read more about this at saferinternetday.org.

DIGITAL CHILD SEX TOURISM

By Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark

Adults who are interested in sex with children from Third World countries can now save the price of travel and, from the comfort of their own homes, order the live streaming of sexual assaults on children as scripted by themselves. This article describes this phenomenon, how it came about, and how it is addressed in current legislation.

In 2011, the Public Prosecutor of the Philippines filed criminal charges against two Swedish and three Philippine citizens. They were accused of having procured, in return for payment, the ability of adults to watch and direct the course of events of a live transmission of Philippine children engaging in sexual activity. The phenomenon was dubbed ‘webcam child sex tourism’ and is sometimes referred to as ‘digital child sex tourism’ or the ‘live streaming of the sexual abuse of children’.

For years, it has been possible to buy webcam sex in which *adults* perform live shows on the net. In countries like the Philippines, this type of prostitution is a major industry. The customer is in contact with the prostitute over the internet and might decide or dictate which sexual acts are to be carried out. Sadly, it is no longer ‘newsworthy’ that adults with sexual interest in children can now sit at home in front of their computer and order the live streaming of the sexual abuse of children. They can even script and direct their own sex show. One child or two children? A girl or a boy? A child with an adult?

The online abuse only adds to the problem of children being sold into prostitution. This has been going on for years, and the customers include Western tourists who travel to various Asian and Central American destinations, among other places, where access to children for such purposes is cheaper and easier. Child sex tourism travel guides can even be found on various internet forums for adults with a sexual interest in children.

THE SWEETIE CASE

After the case in 2011, the Dutch chapter of the children’s rights organisation Terre des Hommes decided to study the issue first-hand. With help from animators, they created a fictitious 10-year-old virtual Filipina girl. They called her ‘Sweetie’ and set up her online profile in various social media and forums.

As soon as Sweetie showed her virtual face in various freely available chat programmes and forums, she was con-

tacted by numerous adult men asking if she wanted to take part in online sex. Over the two months that Sweetie was active on the net, Terre des Hommes identified over 1000 men who contacted children online with a view to exploiting them sexually.

A second edition of Sweetie has been announced for 2017: Computer-generated profiles of young girls making themselves available online. Computer robots to engage 24/7 in chats with potential offenders and collect data to be reported to national police in the relevant countries for investigation.

POVERTY AND CHILD LABOUR

This market is primarily defined by Westerners. Money is often scarce in developing countries, which is why almost any request for services via webcam will be met, including the grossest and most perverted wishes. The proliferation of the internet and mobile telephones in developing countries makes it possible to satisfy the growing demand.

Poverty is the main driver behind the online exploitation of these children. In addition, the Terre des Hommes research shows that victims of digital child sex tourism have usually also been physically exploited for traditional child prostitution or other dangerous child labour. These victims often hail from rural districts, where their parents have borrowed at sky-high interest rates to finance the purchase of webcam-equipped portable computers, so that their children can be sold for sex tourism, often at a very young age. The parents may be under the misconception that their children's sexual acts in front of a webcam will not be as harmful to them as physical sexual contact with a stranger. In some cases, children work on their own from internet cafés and are sometimes part of more organised forms of digital child sex tourism, where pimps train the children, teach them various sex tricks and force them to perform in front of the camera in prison-like, walled-off rooms. In many places, the local police receive payments to turn a blind eye.

CASES IN DENMARK

Nine cases of people caught by the Terre des Hommes sting operation were traced to Denmark, the first sentence being passed down in April 2015. A 62-year-old man was convicted of attempting to make minors take part in an obscene performance-for-payment scheme. He was also found guilty of attempting to commit indecent exposure directed at one or several minors and for possessing 375 images of an obscene nature depicting children under age 18.

The previous month, March 2015, Danish police carried out a coordinated operation to arrest ten persons in six different police districts. The National Police Cyber Crime Centre, NC3, had received information from a foreign police authority about a number of persons in Denmark suspected of having ordered and paid for the live streaming of child sexual abuse in the Philippines. Such cases come to light because investigators are able to follow the money flow. If the live-streamed performance has not been recorded, it can be a challenge to obtain evidence that the commercial service involved a child, since the same supplier might also offer webcam sex with exclusively adult participants.

In February 2017, a retired Danish man, 70 years old, was caught by Danish police and charged with the live-streaming of child sexual abuse in the Philippines. When the police searched his house, he admitted to the offence and willingly gave up his profile name and passwords, allowing the police access to a large number of chat logs proving how he had ordered the sexual abuse of small children.

This case is in the courts at the time of writing, expected to be completed in June 2017.

COVERED BY THE PENAL CODE

Save the Children Denmark has taken part in previous information campaigns against traditional child sex tourism. These have hammered home two key messages: that sexual abuse harms children and that the Danish Penal Code also covers

sexual offences against children committed abroad. The same applies when sexual abuse takes place digitally, as seen in these cases of live streaming. The various police operations show that international law enforcement cooperation is also effective in this field. People cannot sit at home and think they are safe hiding behind the screen: They risk being held accountable for perpetrating sexual offences.

WIDENING THE PERSPECTIVE – VARIOUS ETHICAL AND OTHER DILEMMAS

By Gitte Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark

We live in a digital age, and both children and adults switch effortlessly between their online and offline presence or identities. We communicate across national borders and continents, moving smoothly around the world without having to travel. While many good things follow from this enhanced mobility offline and online, it also raises major challenges and causes serious problems that can have grave repercussions for massive numbers of children.

This concluding article takes a broader view of the subjects addressed in this book. It provides food for thought and calls for stronger efforts in various fields in order to make the world a better, safer place for children.

DIFFERENT ERA – SAME REALITY

Journalists and professionals often ask us whether there are more instances of sexual abuse today than previously – or whether we are just hearing more about it. We have much more documentation today than 20 years ago. Even today, however, when nearly everything is registered and accounted for, we do not truly know how many children and young people are subject to sexual abuse, nor do we know how often information technology is a factor. We hear from offenders and victims alike that it has become easier to cross one's own and other people's personal boundaries when communicating online. It is concerning that an increasing number of people are searching for images of abuse or seeking out children in order to commit sexual offences. However, we still know too little and far too many children and young people never find the courage or the place to be able to talk about such abuse. Some children and young people are not even aware that such abuse has been photographed or filmed. But we do know that the images exist. We also know that distribution via the internet means that each image can be easily shared a vast number of times. And on top of that, we know that children and young people are subject to sexual abuse on an unbelievable scale. We see ever-younger children and ever-grosser sexual assaults in the images.

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES – FOREVER AFTER

As described in this anthology, the internet is full of images that offend children, either because they depict outright sexual abuse, because they have been shared with someone not intended by the children in question, or because they have been used in an inappropriate context. Such images potentially scar the victims for life. The long-term consequences, traditionally referring to long-term bodily harm and psychological trauma – take on a whole new meaning regarding sexual abuse images that have been shared online. In the past, sexual abuse stopped when the offender no longer had physical access to the child, either because the child moved or was moved away, because the offender was exposed, convicted and imprisoned, or because the offender died. In contrast, once sexual abuse images are distributed on the internet, the abuse never ends.

This is because images uploaded to the internet can never be completely eliminated. Accordingly, every time the image is seen, every time an adult uses it to satisfy their sexual fantasy, the child is once again violated. This awareness occupies the minds of many victims far into adulthood. In the coming years, centres for sexual abuse victims will meet an increasing number of adults who have grown up with the internet and who seek help to process the long-term consequences of grooming and online sexual abuse.

CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS

The work carried out by Save the Children is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which establishes that children have the right to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution, participation in pornography and other illegal sexual activity. They also have the right to privacy and safety.¹

¹ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by General Assembly resolution on 20 November 1989, Article 34 and others.

Our job is to save, protect and empower children. One way of doing this is by running our hotline against online child abuse images. Other ways include championing the cause of children and training practitioners in the field. We also do so by lobbying decision-makers and informing the public about the special challenges posed by the proliferation of the internet and the consequent additional risk of distribution of images of child sexual abuse.

GUARDIANS OF BOUNDARIES

We are not the guardians of morality. However, we would like to guard the boundaries of privacy and protect children against adults exploiting children. Our focus is on protecting children. This is why we take the liberty to spell out our viewpoints and break taboos whenever this is needed.

It remains a taboo for most people that women also commit sexual offences against children. For many people, it also remains a taboo that boys are subject to sexual abuse. However, both of these phenomena exist. And we have to talk about it in order to deal with it. Otherwise, we can neither prevent new abuse from happening nor help those who have already suffered from it.

Our hotline work uncovers images that we must not and will not show; images that document scenes that very few want to think about, let alone talk about, but which are happening nonetheless.

The physical sexual abuse stops at some stage. The breach of trust leaves deep wounds and scars. The relationship might be re-established to some extent. But the images still exist. The abuse continues. The awareness of this follows the child into adulthood and throughout the rest of their life. This is inevitable, yes, but not acceptable. This is why we must keep working to have these images removed from the internet. The criminals must know that we are on the lookout for them and that they risk being exposed and punished for their acts.

Children and adults suffering long-term consequences should have access to professional help, both when the abuse is revealed and when the trauma is repeatedly relived and disturbs their life.

GROOMING SHOULD BE RECOGNISED BOTH IN TREATMENT AND IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

A report about the sexual abuse of a child in Denmark will lead to the involvement of the government-run child protection centres (Danish: *børnehuse*). Save the Children Denmark has offered our specialist knowledge of online sexual abuse to their staff and partners.

Our visits to the child protection centres have provided indication of an ongoing need for training in this specific field. The staff must understand the grooming processes preceding sexual abuse, online as well as offline, and they need more knowledge about the long-term consequences that victims suffer due to the continued distribution of the images of the abuse they underwent.

We also know that many practitioners are unsure of how to ask children questions when it comes to the topic of sexual abuse.

In this regard, a simple rule applies. Asking is not going to kill anyone, but some children and young people suffer miserably because no one ever asked. Questions must be asked in connection with the investigation, but they must also form part of the therapeutic work with the children.

The municipal authorities in Denmark currently decide whether children require psychological treatment and therapy in the aftermath of sexual abuse, and the service must be found outside the domain of child protection centres. Consequently, the children must relate to yet another (or several other) professional(s). They need to tell their story once again and to establish yet another relationship of trust before they can talk about the offenses that they have experienced. This is an additional and unnecessary burden to place on a child; it can even be re-traumatising.

From the child's perspective, it seems right to give the child protection centres the opportunity to offer the children the required psychological or therapeutic treatment. And it seems correct to make the treatment available both to children whose abuse images are being spread on the internet, as well as to children who need help to understand and process the grooming, the distressing breach of trust and the manipulation through which they have suffered.

GROOMING – PROHIBITED FOR CHILDREN

Grooming has been thoroughly described in this anthology. It is a lengthy process in which an adult befriends a child, makes the child dependent on him (or her), and makes the child feel guilty if they refuse to 'play ball' on the adult's terms or they seek to withdraw from the relationship. This is all aimed at preparing the ground for the adult to be able to sexually abuse the child, either online or offline. These children experience this as a distressing breach of trust. It is a manipulation that the individual child has no chance of seeing through nor understanding until it is too late. If such adults started out by declaring their intentions, more children would undoubtedly reject them. However, not all adults admit to being adults. Some pretend to be of a similar age. Others declare their real age, but conceal their intentions. The child believes that they have simply met a new friend online. And friends basically want what is good for you, right?

Sometimes we wish that grooming always and in any form would be illegal. It is clearly illegal for adults to groom children for the purposes of committing sexual abuse or otherwise violating a child's life and integrity. But substantial evidence is required that this was the adult's clear intention – to actually set out and meet with the child and commit a crime. In the Danish criminal justice system, there have been convictions in cases where chat logs were used to document that the adult clearly intended a physical meeting to result in sex with a minor. These guilty verdicts were not solely based on grooming, however, as they were also based on the explicit, planned sexual abuse.

The article on the psychological treatment of children who have been victims of online sexual abuse makes it abundantly clear that this abuse has profound consequences for the children involved. Before it is even possible to begin to process the sexual abuse, it is often necessary to begin working through the grooming experience, helping the child to realise what actually took place up to the breach of trust and to understand that it is not the child's own fault.

However, it is not just in the treatment of victims of online sexual abuse that grooming ought to attract more attention. The Danish Penal Code has yet to specify the concept of grooming, although in some sections it mentions when an adult makes use of 'superiority based on age and experience' to commit sexual offences against children as an aggravating circumstance. Adhering to the Danish Penal Code, the grounds for punishing an adult who has groomed a child all the way to sexual abuse must be pieced together from a variety of sections

THE IMAGES EXIST – EVEN AFTER BEING DELETED

The police operate locally, nationally and internationally to catch the criminals. They work to save children from sexual abuse. They collect knowledge and information. They assess images and calculate hash values. They register PhotoDNA, sharing it across countries and continents. Working together with Microsoft, Google, Twitter, Facebook and many other major and minor stakeholders in the market, as well as the telecom industry and a vast array of interest organisations, they seek to remove illegal images from the internet. On some days it seems like a Sisyphean task – the more we do, the more there remains to be done.

We must undoubtedly continue what we are doing. The images must be exposed and removed from the internet. However, we also recognise that there is a constant dilemma. Regardless of how many images are removed from the net and regardless of how well the access to (new) mate-

rial is restricted, the demand for pictures and videos will remain. Adults with sexual fantasies about children are still out there. They search for, buy, download and carry on distributing images of the abuse, either because it gives them sexual gratification or because they have cynically figured out that they can make money from it.

NOT ALL OFFENDERS ARE PAEDOPHILES

Not all adults who commit child sexual abuse are paedophiles. Not all paedophiles commit child sexual abuse. Paedophilia is a clinical diagnosis used to refer to adults with a persistent and explicit sexual preference for prepubescent children. Adults with a sexual preference for pubescent children are called hebephiles. To qualify for these diagnoses, the sexual attraction to prepubescent and pubescent children should be stronger than to adults.

However, there are also adults otherwise engaging in sexual relations with other adults who might be attracted to children, younger children, older children and teenagers, and who sexually abuse minors from all of these age groups, just as such sexual abuse can also be committed by adults who would not engage in sexual relations with other adults. Sexual abuse is perpetrated by men and women alike. And it targets boys as well as girls. We know this, because we hear the stories and see the images.

One common denominator of adults who abuse children sexually is that they are often lumped together as paedophiles in colloquial speech, even though it does not hold true for all of them in a clinical sense. There are also true paedophiles who live with their deviant sexual inclinations without ever perpetrating an offence.

BREAK THE CYCLE – BRYD CIRKLEN

In order to prevent sexual abuse we must also target our efforts at the adults committing it. We must ensure that such

adults get appropriate offers of help and treatment to stop them from offending again. In the Danish context, such a nationwide service is available at the Sexological Clinic. Save the Children cooperates with the Sexological Clinic on 'Break the Cycle', a campaign targeting adults with sexual fantasies about children, drawing their attention to the chances of receiving help before they commit crimes.

HELP FOR CHILDREN – BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

There is also a continued need for help for children with sexual behaviour problems. JanusCentret is a clinic in Copenhagen with activities including the psychological examination and treatment of children who exhibit worrying sexual behaviour. Together with equivalent projects in other parts of Denmark, it is now possible to offer the examination and treatment of children nationwide. This is sorely needed. Some of these children have themselves been victims of sexual abuse and are now becoming the victimizers. Some have witnessed violence or sexual abuse and react by displaying disturbing sexual behaviour. Once again, the internet plays a role, since access to stereotypical adult pornography and images of child sexual abuse can be a contributing factor as we try to understand why some children violate the sexual boundaries of others. Regardless of the underlying causes, it is essential to help these children as early as possible. Therefore, the children and the adults surrounding them must know that help is available. Is there a need for a children's version of Break the Cycle? Perhaps. Children are not paedophiles, but some children violate other children sexually and need help: the earlier, the better.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION – AT A PRICE

With ever more advanced drawing and graphics software available to a growing number of people, it has become relatively simple to tamper so much with a photograph that it no longer resembles the original recording of reality, turning it into a manipulated artistic reproduction. This can render it

difficult to determine whether the child in an image is actually a real child.

Images of child sexual abuse are clearly illegal. But there are other pictures we would like the Penal Code to cover as well, namely images in the grey area as described in our report 'Images in the Grey area, 2011'.

Other images are not and probably never will be illegal in Denmark, even if what they depict seems offensive to many of us. Artistic reproductions, drawings, computer-generated images of rape and other types of child sexual abuse are only illegal when they are so lifelike that they can be mistaken for reality. Texts that describe shocking fantasies about rape and bestial sexual assaults on children in explicit detail are not illegal, since they do not refer to or show 'real' children. Furthermore, we have freedom of expression, and who is going to appoint himself the judge of people's fantasies and artistic expressions?

THE ART OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

Quite possibly, any depiction of the gross sexual abuse of children does not deserve to be called art. Yet sometimes it is the art of the impossible to walk a tightrope between an objective assessment and a subjective emotion of disgust provoked by such pictures and writings. The subjective experience of feeling offended by watching and reading such 'artistic expressions' is not, and probably cannot ever be, covered by the Penal Code. If it were, so many other horror-inducing expressions in the world would have also been banned. We cherish our freedom of expression. Nevertheless, in some respects this freedom comes at a price.

Computer-generated images of children sometimes look like real children but rarely enough to make them illegal. If such visual representations of abuse, rape and extreme physical assaults were to be outlawed, would that violate freedom of expression? To some people, the answer is yes. Would a ban truly serve to protect children? Perhaps. However, how much would it cost in

police resources? How much would it distract them from their effort to find real children and stop sexual assaults on them? Once again, we face an insurmountable dilemma.

YOUNGER CHILDREN AND GROSSER ABUSE

In the work of handling reports of images of child sexual abuse on the net, we see an increasing number of pictures of very young children.

It is hard to fathom why some adults abuse children sexually. Looking at such photos and watching such videos is a deeply shocking experience. Such repulsive scenes remain seared into one's mind. A small child being forced to satisfy adults' sexual desires. Toddlers and infants subject to rape. Children who ought to feel safe in the care of adults, but who are manipulated and trained to fulfil adult perversions. Children who are stupefied and then raped.

We cannot statistically document any contemporary trend towards the children becoming younger and the abuse becoming grosser. Perhaps this is how it has always been. Perhaps it is a consequence of pictures and videos being distributed more widely today, enabling more producers of such materials to see what others have done, contributing to copycatting and one-upmanship that exacerbates the problem.

YES, IT *IS* BAD

Regardless of whether or not there is more sexual abuse today than previously, whether or not the children are younger and the sexual abuse is grosser, it is a fact that every time a child falls victim to sexual abuse, it is one time too many. Every time a child sexual abuse image is uploaded, distributed, downloaded and used to gratify adults sexually, it is once too many. And yes, it is bad. Sexual abuse leaves deep psychological scars; and the images existing online add another dimension and a whole new meaning to the understanding of 'long-term consequences'.

This is why we at Save the Children Denmark have chosen to invest time and resources in sharing our knowledge with practitioners throughout Denmark and, with this translation into English, around the world. We hope and wish that professionals and decision-makers will read it and understand that it is necessary to dedicate more attention and effort to combating online child sexual abuse.

IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?

An anthology of online sexual abuse of children and young people

'So nothing happened for real. It was on the internet and we never got to meet, you know, face to face.'

Boy, 14 years

'Is it really that bad? After all, no physical abuse has taken place.'

Adult working with treatment of victims

Sex offenders know that social media offer new opportunities for contacting children and forming friendships with them. They have also realised how simple it is to take pictures and make videos of sexual abuse and share them with other people with the same sexual interests.

Digital information technology and social media add new aspects to our understanding of how sexual abuse takes place and how it affects victims. It is necessary for all practitioners working with children and young people to have knowledge of this field. All types of sexual abuse are shameful and taboo-ridden. Consequently, children and young people who feel unhappy need to be asked directly how negative online encounters have affected them. However, the dialogue with them must proceed with an understanding of how demeaning, intimidating and traumatic such experiences can be, including when living through them on the internet.

Save the Children Denmark has compiled this anthology with the latest knowledge in a field that is in constant flux and full of professional challenges.



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