



Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

LARRY NASSAR: EXPLOITING PRIVILEGE & TRUST

Prevention starts with understanding

CREDIT: Rhonda Freeman, Ph.D

The Michigan State University physician Larry Nassar has been sentenced to 175 years (maximum) in prison. There are no psychological assessments available to the public of the former USA Gymnastics doctor. However, the numerous sexual assaults committed by Dr. Nassar presents us with an opportunity to discuss sexual predators and the impact of their behavior on victims.

Betrayal, violation of trust, and remembrance of the inappropriate acts can leave abuse survivors with trauma-related symptoms. Conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, complex PTSD, eating disorders, substance abuse, alcohol dependence, or a disordered personality (i.e., borderline personality) are not uncommon after abuse. Understanding the psychological and neurobiological impact of trauma on survivors

can help the abused and those who love them pursue treatment and support.

Heinous acts that violate our trust and body often disrupt neurochemistry and lead to dysregulation of the emotional system within our brain. These neurobiological changes can leave a survivor in a state of suffering, pain, and anger long after the abuse.

The Innocent Targets.

Most children or teenagers who are sexually assaulted will know their abuser. Stranger molestation or rape represents approximately ten percent of reported cases. Unfortunately, some victims who come forward to expose sexual abusers are doubted, minimized, or blamed before their words are taken as truth. One of several variables contributing to ignoring of the victim's complaints is the carefully orchestrated mask of the predator.

The Child Sexual Predator. Violating, manipulative,

and deceitful; they engage in behavior that is nearly unimaginable. Sexual predators and pedophiles are the true wolf in sheep's clothing. This group preys upon the most innocent and vulnerable in society.

Although their behavior is predatory, their 'mask of normalcy' will hide their true nature, making red flags difficult to detect. They can present as a powerful leader, successful business person, gentle professional, helpful neighbor, or awkward co-worker. However, only their victims will know the magnitude of their darkness.

The Psychopathic Child

Predator. There is a subset of sexual predators that also meet criteria for psychopathy. Psychopathy falls under the Cluster B Personality Disorders within antisocial personality disorder. Research suggests that child molesters have one or more personality disorders.

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If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☉ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana:
800.CHILDREN/
800.422.4453
www.pcakyo.org
www.pcaain.org
- ☉ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
800.4.A.CHILD
800.422.4453
www.childhelp.org

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.

KOSAIR (CONT...)

Psychopaths do not and cannot feel badly for any harmful acts committed. Sexual predators with psychopathy understand right from wrong. Their sickness lies in their lack of morality, poor emotion processing, inability to care that they are dangerous, and absence of inhibitory con-

trol over deviant desires. These individuals hurt others to satisfy a need they feel is their right to indulge. Given lack of empathy, shame, or guilt within this population, they work diligently to hide their unacceptable behaviors and manipulate anyone who may be on to them.

COMMON PATTERNS FOUND AMONG ABUSERS

Grooming is a manipulation tactic used by most predators to gain the trust of their victims and their caretakers. Within grooming the predator may provide gifts, attention, time, mentoring, special privileges, alcohol, drugs, or companionship. If the abuser is successful, the grooming process will connect positive experiences to the perpetrator within the victim's mind.

Naturally, the person targeted will begin to feel this person is their friend or that the abuser has sincerity and integrity. It is normal to feel warm emotions toward someone who behaves with kindness. This is how relationships are built. However, in reality, the predator has no interest in a genuine relationship, but rather future sexual contact.

Manipulation. Grooming is one of several forms of manipulation engaged in by sexual predators. Not only do they have to control the beliefs of their victim, but they also have to conceal their deviant behaviors from their family, employer, authorities, neighbors, and parents of their victims.

The Mask | Public Persona. Most abusers of this type have a persona they portray to the public. Unfortunately, in our society when someone is in a position of power or prestige (e.g., politician, actor, physician, or clergy) the reputation and respect associated with those roles can become aligned with that individual. When their friends, colleagues, or public are informed of their behavior, many will respond with, 'I do not believe that!' Victims of the powerful, influential, or respected are often blamed, called liars, greedy, or trouble-makers seeking to harm the career of their abuser. This problematic response leads to further psychological harm.

The predator's occupation or gentle, helpful public persona can be given more weight than the words of the person who was victimized. Awareness and acceptance that predatory behavior is not negated by intelligence, popularity, socioeconomic status, power, or occupation are where we all should move toward in our society. Many predators are aware of the assumption of innocence their positions provide and use that privilege to discredit their victims.

Society and Awareness of Sexual Abuse Predators that sexually violate children and teenagers get the opportunity to re-violate when we do not act immediately to bar them from their targets.

It is natural to let down your guard when a person is kind, encouraging, generous, and helpful to our children (e.g., the mask of many sexual offenders). It can be difficult to detect the warning signs of sexual predators and pedophiles that are among us. Many spend their lives perfecting their mask and counting on our bias to respect their occupations, intelligence, or position of power.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

4.9.18

Incarnation

4.19.18

St. James (Elizabethtown)

5.23.18

Assumption High School

8.23.18

St. James (Elizabethtown)

More trainings are in the process of being scheduled and will be posted as soon as confirmed.

Keep checking

www.archlou.org/safe for updates as

A CLOSER LOOK AT GROOMING

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age.

Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse. The signs of grooming aren't always obvious and groomers will often go to great lengths not to be identified.

If a child is being groomed they may:

- be very secretive, including about what they are doing online
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- go to unusual places to meet friends
- have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain

• have access to drugs and alcohol. In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behavior, but you may notice unexplained changes in behavior or personality, or inappropriate sexual behavior for their age.

Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining a child's trust. Groomers may try to gain the trust of a whole family to allow them to be left alone with a child and if they work with children they may use similar tactics with their colleagues.

Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating the child from friends or family and making the child feel dependent on them. They will use any means of power or control to make a child believe they have no choice but

to do what they want.

Groomers may introduce 'secrets' as a way to control or frighten the child.

Some Behaviors of Suspected Abuse

withdrawn
anxious
clingy
depressed
aggressive
problems sleeping
eating disorders
wets the bed
soils clothes
takes risks
misses school
changes in eating habits
obsessive behavior
nightmares
drugs
alcohol
self-harm
thoughts about suicide

Sometimes they will blackmail the child, or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse.

Groomers can use social media sites, instant messaging apps including teen dating apps, or online gaming platforms to connect with a young person or child.

They can spend time learning about a young person's interests from their online profiles and then use this knowledge to help them build up a relationship.

It's easy for groomers to hide their identity online - they may pretend to be a child and then chat and become 'friends' with children they are targeting.

Groomers may look for usernames or comments that are flirtatious or have a sexual meaning or public comments

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

By now the spring sports season has taken hold and your coaches, field trip, retreat leaders, chaperones, and others should be identified and Safe Environment certified. If you're not absolutely sure, now is the time to reach out to athletic directors and field trip/retreat leaders and ensure those responsible for the care of youth are certified to do so.

Now is also the time to starting looking ahead to the fall (late July and August). Do you have a plan in place for getting your coaches and/or new school/church personnel (*both employees and volunteers*) Safe Environment certified?

Should you have any questions or need assistance with Safe Environment please contact

Scott Fitzgerald
Coordinator of Safe Environment Services

fitzgerald@archlou.org
or 502.471.2132

that suggest a child has low self-esteem or is vulnerable. Groomers don't always target a particular child. Sometimes they will send messages to hundreds of young people and wait to see who responds. Groomers no longer need to meet children in real life to abuse them. Increasingly, groomers are sexually exploiting their victims by persuading them to take part in online sexual activity.

**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

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Phone: 502.636.1044
Fax: 502.634.3381
E-mail: msiegel@archlou.org

No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

ALWAYS BE ALERT

Don't think you can make a difference, sometimes its when you least expect it.

An accused child molester has been arrested because of an alert lunchroom monitor at Mt. Tabor Elementary School in Floyd County, Indiana. Amy Finn has heard endless stories from the kids she watches in the lunchroom each day, but this one told by a six year old could have been the most important.

"It started with a few girls at her lunch table calling me over, saying she was talking about nasty stuff" Finn told WDRB.

Finn pulled her aside and after the girl mentioned the suspect touched her in her "private area" she notified authorities. After some questioning

by the authorities an arrest was made.

Finn went on to say "She's just an all-around happy girl, you'd never suspect she was going through such horrible stuff".

This isn't the first time something has happened involving the little girl. WDRB reports court records say it happened more than once saying the child mentioned an incident before Halloween, when she was not in school and it was warm outside.

Floyd County Prosecutor Keith Henderson weighed in saying "This was the ultimate mistrust in that the child was taken advantage of. Predators have a method of operation, and that is getting the confidence or a young child, and at that age, children

in many cases don't have the discretion to know what's proper and what's improper.

Court records say the suspect admitted to sexually abusing the six year old. If convicted he faces more than 15 years in prison.

"I don't feel like a hero," Finn said. "I feel like I was just doing my job protecting children"

REMEMBER!

BOTH Kentucky AND Indiana are MANDATORY reporting states.

If you suspect ANY abuse you must report it!