

The Manipulation (Grooming) of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

A Bibliography



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Scope

This bibliography covers literature relevant to how perpetrators manipulate and groom their victims of sexual abuse. Both *contact* and *cyber* grooming are covered. This bibliography is not comprehensive. Scholarly articles, reports, book chapters, and books are included. Links to open source publications are included.

Organization

This bibliography is organized into two sections. Section one (page 3) covers issues of contact grooming in date descending order from 1990-2019. Section two (page 20) covers issues of cyber or Internet grooming arranged in date descending order from 2002-2020.

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The Manipulation (Grooming) of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

A Bibliography

McElvaney, R. (2019). Grooming: A Case Study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 28*(5), 608-627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1554612>

In recent years, legislation recognizing the grooming of a child for the purposes of sexual abuse as a criminal offense has been introduced. However, there is a limited evidence base on the mechanisms involved in grooming behavior, particularly from the perspective of those who have experienced grooming. This article, drawing on an in-depth case study of a 52-year-old man, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, explores the experience of grooming from childhood into adulthood. Four key themes were identified: abuser as benefactor, a substitute parent, abuser as mind controller, and facilitating system. The findings suggest that two key relationship dynamics are helpful in understanding the process of grooming; the traumatic bond established between the abuser and the abused and relationships within the child's wider system that facilitated the child's silence. These dynamics illustrate how the sexual abuse experience is normalized, and how the occurrence of abuse and maintenance of the secret is facilitated by those in the victim's wider ecological system over a number of decades. A better understanding of the process of grooming can enhance professionals' responses to those who have experienced grooming, in particular helping to alleviate self-blame associated with experiences of sexual abuse and non-disclosure.

Raine, S., & Kent, S. A. (2019). The grooming of children for sexual abuse in religious settings: Unique characteristics and select case studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 48*, 180-189. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2019.08.017>

This article examines the sexual grooming of children and their caregivers in a wide variety of religious settings. We argue that unique aspects of religion facilitate institutional and interpersonal grooming in ways that often differ from forms of manipulation in secular settings. Drawing from Christianity (Catholicism, Protestantism, and Seventh-day Adventism) and various sects (the Children of God, the Branch Davidians, the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints, a Hindu ashram, and the Devadasis), we show how some religious institutions and leadership figures in them can slowly cultivate children and their caregivers into harmful and illegal sexual activity. A number of uniquely religious characteristics facilitate this cultivation, which includes: theodicies of

legitimation; power, patriarchy, obedience, protection, and reverence towards authority figures; victims' fears about spiritual punishments; and scriptural uses to justify adult-child sex.

Wolf, M. R., & Pruitt, D. K. (2019). Grooming hurts too: The effects of types of perpetrator grooming on trauma symptoms in adult survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 28*(3), 345-359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2019.1579292>

There are a multitude of behaviors that child sexual abusers use to 'groom' children into becoming vulnerable to abuse. In this study of 277 adult survivors of child sexual abuse, participants advised the many ways they were groomed into being abused by up to three perpetrators. The effects of three categories of grooming (Verbal Coercion, Grooming that used Drugs/Alcohol, and Threatening/Violent Grooming) were examined for their effects on trauma symptom severity. Using Linear Regressions, each grooming category had a significant predictive effect on trauma symptom severity. Multiple Linear Regressions revealed that for most trauma symptoms, Threatening/Violent Grooming was a significant predictor of trauma symptom severity, even when other more well-known variables were controlled for (including age at onset of abuse, relationship to perpetrator, and severity of abuse), with a notable exception of verbal coercion as a significant predictor of sexual problems in adulthood (i.e. not satisfied, low drive, overactivity, confusion, bad thoughts or feelings).

Commentary

Berliner, L. (2018). The concept of grooming and how it can help victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*(1), 24-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517742057>

Burgess, A. W., & Hartman, C. R. (2018). On the origin of grooming. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*(1), 17-23.

The concept of grooming has long been identified with language in child sexual abuse. This article reviews a brief history of child sexual abuse with regard to efforts to identify and classify abuser and victim behavior. We examine the evolution of terms used to label different behaviors particularly those used to obtain initial control over the child victim including grooming.

Dietz, P. (2018). Grooming and seduction. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 28-36.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517742060>

Ken Lanning's recollections of the origins of the use of the term "grooming" to refer to techniques used by acquaintances to gain sexual access to and control over children is an important contribution to the history of the significant recognition that many cases of child sexual abuse occur at the hands of offenders who are acquaintances of the child and who do not need to use force, threats, or violence to gain the compliance of their victims. That this recognition was slow in coming is obvious in retrospect, as is true of any social problem that remains hidden for centuries only to burst into public consciousness over the course of a few years. In this article, I report the results of searches using Google Scholar to look at the introduction of this use of the term "grooming" to the peer-reviewed literature in 1984 and its increasing use through 2016. Since 2008, the usage has been adopted in hundreds of articles in the professional literature each year, suggesting that this usage of the term "grooming" will remain common in the decades ahead. I also examine the history of the term "seduction" in the context of child sexual abuse, particularly two archaic uses of the term: as a euphemism for any sexual or sexually stimulating encounter between child and adult and in the context of suggestions that it was the child who seduced the adult. To avoid resurrecting any confusion over these issues, it would be a mistake to abandon "grooming" in favor of "seduction." I conclude that the best strategy may be that adopted by Lanning of using the terms grooming and seduction in tandem, explaining the parallels between the seduction of one adult by another and the grooming or seduction of a child by an adult.

Lanning, K. (2018). The evolution of grooming: Concept and term. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 5-16.

This discussion is not intended to be a detailed analysis of the complexities and dynamics of *grooming*. Instead, it will focus on the evolution of the concept and the term. More than an historical narrative, however, this evolution provides valuable insight into recognizing the diverse nature of contact sex offenses against children and important differences among types of cases. In this victimization context, the term *grooming* generally refers to specific nonviolent techniques used by some child molesters to gain access to and control of their child victims. The techniques a child molester employs are most influenced by the relationship between the offender and the victim. Although acquaintance child molesters are sometimes violent, to avoid discovery, they

tend to control their victims primarily through this *seduction* or *grooming* process. I believe the term was first used by a group of law enforcement investigators beginning in the late 1970s to describe aspects of a seduction pattern of offender behavior that was poorly understood by most professionals. The term *grooming* then evolved, as language does, and spread into more common usage by law enforcement, other professionals, and then by the media and laypersons. The term *grooming* has pretty much supplanted *seduction* as the term of choice for this behavior pattern. Hopefully, understanding the evolution of the concept of grooming, the diversity of cases, the need for precise and consistent definitions, and the use of nonviolent grooming techniques to access and control victims will help interveners to better respond to and evaluate cases.

Plummer, M. (2018). Lived experiences of grooming among Australian male survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 37-63.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517732539>

Because child sexual abuse (CSA) is a pervasive social issue affecting up to one in five girls, and one in 10 boys, there have been significant developments in legal responses to the problem of CSA. One such response is to acknowledge the significance of grooming behaviors in the commission of child sex offenses by criminalizing behaviors that are engaged in with the intention of facilitating the sexual abuse of a child. However, grooming behaviors remain underresearched, and current knowledge is based largely upon the perspectives of offenders, with few studies analyzing how grooming is experienced by victims. The purpose of this article is to address key gaps in the grooming literature by analyzing the lived experiences of grooming from the perspectives of 11 adult male CSA survivors. Qualitative analysis revealed novel insights into the characteristics, stages, and impact of grooming for male survivors. The implications of the findings suggest that New South Wales's (NSW) grooming legislation could better reflect the types of grooming behaviors engaged in by child sex offenders. Tentative evidence for enduring impacts of grooming also indicates the need for further qualitative research into men's experiences of sexual grooming during childhood with larger and more representative samples.

Elliott, I. A. (2017). A self-regulation model of sexual grooming. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 18(1), 83-97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838015591573>

A preparatory process is widely accepted to be a common feature in the perpetration of sexual offenses. Numerous commentators, however, have documented the difficulties in defining and

understanding this process, given its transient nature and its specificity to this one form of criminal behavior. This theoretical review aims to provide a universal model of a grooming process for the achievement of illicit or illegal goals in which achievement requires the compliance or submission of another individual— one that can be applied both to the sexual offending process and beyond. First, an evaluation of three process models of grooming is conducted. Second, using a process of theory knitting, an integrated universal model of illicit grooming is developed. This model unites salient elements of the previous models while seeking to address their limitations. It is founded in control theory and self-regulation approaches to behavior, assumes a goal-directed protagonist, and comprises two distinct phases, namely, (1) a potentiality phase of rapport-building, incentivization, disinhibition, and security-management and (2) a disclosure phase in which goal-relevant information is introduced in a systematic and controlled manner in order to desensitize the target. Finally, the theoretical quality of the model is appraised, and its clinical implications are discussed.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2017). [Stages of sexual grooming: Recognizing potentially predatory behaviors of child molesters](https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1197656). *Deviant Behavior*, 38(6), 724-733.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1197656>

It has been proposed that sexual grooming behaviors of child molesters are not easily identified prior to the abuse. The present study investigated whether participants could recognize grooming behaviors, and if so, identify which stages of the process were most easily identified. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of six vignettes describing the stages of the grooming process. Results revealed no differences in likelihood ratings that the person in the vignette was a child molester and would commit sexual abuse between any of the conditions, suggesting that people may be unable to identify potentially predatory behaviors of child molesters prospectively

Julich, S. J., & Oak, E. B. (2016). [Does grooming facilitate the development of Stockholm syndrome?: The social work practice implications](#). *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 28(3), 47-56.

This article focuses on the problem of risk instrumentalism in social work and the way it can erode the relationship-based nature of practice and with it, the kinds of critical reflexivity required for remedial interventions to keep children safe. By exploring the relationship between the process of grooming and the condition known as Stockholm syndrome, the article seeks to address this

problem by offering some concepts to inform a critical understanding of the case dynamics in the sexual abuse of children which can explain the reluctance of victim-survivors to disclose. Beginning with an overview of the development of actuarial risk assessment (ARA) tools the article examines the grooming process in child sexual abuse contexts raising the question: "Is grooming a facilitator of Stockholm syndrome?" and seeks to answer it by examining the precursors and psychological responses that constitute both grooming and Stockholm syndrome. The article identifies the underlying concepts that enable an understanding of the dynamics of child sexual abuse, but also identifies the propensity of practitioners to be exposed to some of the features of Stockholm syndrome.

Katz, C., & Barnett, Z. (2016). Children's narratives of alleged child sexual abuse offender behaviors and the manipulation process. *Psychology of violence, 6*(2), 223-232.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039023>

An investigation of child sexual abuse (CSA) offenders' behaviors and manipulation tactics has the potential to increase the existing knowledge in this area to modify prevention and intervention programs for children, families, communities, and societies. The exploration of this matter is highly challenging given the nature of child abuse, in which both offenders and children typically remain silent following reluctance. Most of the literature regarding this issue has predominately been generated from the offenders' narratives, perspectives, and reports. The current study seeks to shed light on CSA while focusing on the children's narratives, experiences, and perceptions with respect to the offenders' behaviors and manipulation tactics. Mixed method analyses were conducted to enhance understanding with respect to these tactics, as well as to describe their frequencies and relations to both children and abuse characteristics.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2016). I knew it all along: The sexual grooming behaviors of child molesters and the hindsight bias. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 25*(1), 20-36.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2015.1108945>

Recent high profile cases of child sexual abuse have increased interest in the grooming behaviors of child molesters and why these offenders are not identified sooner. This study examined one possible explanation—the hindsight bias. Five hundred and twenty-six undergraduates were randomly assigned to read one of six vignettes and asked to rate the likelihood the person in the story is a child molester. Results supported the presence of the hindsight bias, with participants

who were given outcome information overestimating the likelihood they would have predicted that the person was a child molester. Also, participants were able to recognize sexual grooming behaviors when the potential child molester was a relative and nonrelative. Findings indicated that sexual grooming behaviors may be more easily identified than previously proposed, but individuals greatly overestimate the likelihood they would have predicted a person was a child molester once they are given outcome information.

Knoll, J. (2010). Teacher sexual misconduct: Grooming patterns and female offenders. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19(4), 371-386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2010.495047>

Educator sexual misconduct has received increasing attention over the past decade. The attention has exposed a number of concerning issues, including a lack of formal research in the area and difficulties in recognizing and prosecuting cases. Public responses to high profile cases of sexual misconduct involving female teachers suggest that gender-biased views on sex offenders remain prominent in society. This article will review the literature on female teacher sexual misconduct in addition to what is known about grooming patterns and warning signs. Finally, current dilemmas in resolving cases of educator sexual misconduct will be discussed, and basic prevention strategies will be recommended.

Campbell, A. M. (2009). False faces and broken lives: An exploratory study of the interaction behaviors used by male sex offenders in relating to victims. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 28(4), 428-440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X09341948>

This study examines the use of self-presentation strategies and manipulation by male sex offenders in grooming a victim for a sexual relationship. The study finds that male sex offenders use multiple categories of self-presentation strategies in their interactions with victims with the supplication strategy being present in a majority of reports of such interactions. Furthermore, the research reveals that the male sex offender uses manipulation to isolate and groom the victim for a sexual relationship in conjunction with coercive tactics to ensure the victim does not reveal the true nature of their relationship to other people. Findings are discussed in the context of luring communication theory and applications of the findings.

Patterson, M. A., & Austin, D. F. (2008). [Stop the grooming: How can you help protect children from sexual misconduct by school employees?](#) *American School Board Journal*, December, 18-20.

In most sexual misconduct cases, a form of “grooming” takes place. Preventing it can be very difficult, in part because sexual grooming can be quite subtle and similar to innocent behavior. In fact, many experts are not willing to label conduct as “sexual grooming” until intent has been established by actual molestation. However, the best way for school districts to prevent the grooming is by stopping inappropriate boundary invasions

Terry, K. J. (2008). Stained glass: The nature and scope of child sexual abuse in the Catholic church. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35(5), 549-569.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854808314339>

This article presents the results of the Nature and Scope of Child Sexual Abuse by Catholic Priests from 1950 to 2002. Ninety-seven percent of dioceses (representing 99% of diocesan priests) and 64% of religious communities (representing 83% of religious priests) responded to the request for data. Findings showed that 4,392 priests (4%) had allegations of abuse, 10,667 victims made allegations, and the Church paid (at the time surveys were completed) \$572.5 million for legal and treatment fees and as compensation to the victims (more than \$1.3 billion to date). The study also provided information on the circumstances of the abuse (e.g., types of sexual acts, location, duration), the offenders (e.g., year of ordination, age, ministry duties, other behavioral problems), the victims (e.g., age and gender, family situation), and the dioceses (e.g., differences in abuse rates by region and population size). Importance of these results for policy and practice is discussed.

Craven, S., Brown, S., & Gilchrist, E. (2007). Current responses to sexual grooming: Implications for prevention. *The Howard Journal*, 46(1), 60-71.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2311.2007.00454.x>

This article aims to outline current responses to sexual grooming; specific attention will be given to new legislation introduced in England and Wales under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Following an outline of this new legislation, consideration will be given to its effectiveness, including practical difficulties that are likely to restrict its scope. Issues to be discussed include: poor definition and understanding of sexual grooming, scope of legislation in relation to non-Internet grooming, difficulties in identifying sexual grooming, and a failure of the new legislation

to be truly preventative. The article concludes by supporting Richard Laws's suggestion that the most effective prevention of child sexual abuse would result from adopting a public health approach.

Olson, L. N., Daggs, J. L., Ellevold, B. L., & Rogers, T. K. (2007). Entrapping the innocent: Toward a theory of child sexual predators' luring communication. *Communication Theory, 17*(3), 231-251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00294.x>

This paper examines an unexplored form of communication deviance—the communicative process of entrapment used by child sexual predators to lure their victims into an ongoing sexual relationship. Specifically, using grounded theory methodology to analyze extant literature, a theory of luring communication (LCT) is proposed. The LCT begins by discussing how certain perpetrators gain access to particular types of children. Once in contact with a child, the perpetrator sets in motion the cycle of entrapment, which allows him to communicatively groom and entrap the child into accepting sexual advances. The theory then explores how certain communication responses by the perpetrator and the victim characterize the sustenance or disruption of an ongoing sexually abusive relationship. The essay ends with a series of propositional statements and suggestions for empirically testing and extending the theory.

Craven, S., Brown, S., & Gilchrist, E. (2006). Sexual grooming of children: Review of literature and theoretical considerations. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 12*(3), 287-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600601069414>

The current review aims to outline the existing understanding of sexual grooming. Issues of poor definition, the adoption of the term “grooming” and the prevalence of sexual grooming will be discussed. Consideration will be given to how prominent theories of child sexual abuse often neglect sexual grooming. This will be followed by a detailed account of the existing knowledge within the literature. Three types of sexual grooming were thus identified: self-grooming, grooming the environment and significant others and grooming the child. Based on these findings, a new definition of sexual grooming is suggested. Furthermore, the findings correspond well with current models of the sexual offence process. A more comprehensive understanding of sexual grooming is required to facilitate a preventative approach to child protection.

McAlinden, A.-M. (2006). 'Setting 'em up': Personal, familial and institutional grooming in the sexual abuse of children. *Social and Legal Studies*, 15(3), 339-362.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663906066613>

The term 'grooming' has been used to describe the offender's actions during the preparatory stage of sexual abuse. This article will argue that current discourses on grooming have created ambiguities and misunderstandings about child sexual abuse. In particular, the popular focus on 'stranger danger' belies the fact that the majority of children are abused by someone well known to them, where grooming can also occur. Current discourses also neglect other important facets of the sex offending pattern. They fail to consider that offenders may groom not only the child but also their family and even the local community who may act as the gatekeepers of access. They also ignore what can be termed 'institutional grooming' – that sex offenders may groom criminal justice and other institutions into believing that they present no risk to children. A key variable in the grooming process is the creation and subsequent abuse of trust. Given that the criminal law may be somewhat limited in its response to this type of behaviour, ultimately concerted efforts must be made to foster social and organizational awareness of such processes in order to reduce the offender's opportunity for abuse.

Gillespie, A. (2004). 'Grooming': Definitions and the law. *New Law Journal*, 154, 586-587.

Amid confusion over what grooming entails and whether this is a specifically online offence, clarification of the new British legislation is provided.

Ost, S. (2004). Getting to grips with sexual grooming? The new offence under the sexual offences Act 2003. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 26(2), 147-159.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/014180304200023088>

In recent years, there has been increased societal concern regarding the dangers posed to children by sexual abuse and other related acts. For the main part, this article examines the new offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming under Section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. I will address the question of whether the introduction of this offence is likely to meet the Government's aim of providing greater protection for children against behaviour associated with sexual abuse. In particular, I will consider how difficult it will be to prove the existence of a harmful ulterior intent in order to make out the offence and why the Government has opted to

create this specific offence rather than utilise the existing law of criminal attempt. I will argue that the new offence is a step in the right direction and that the current protection offered to children will be significantly extended by its introduction.

Sanderson, C. (2004). The Grooming of Children. In *The seduction of children: Empowering parents and teachers to protect children from sexual abuse* (pp. 165-190). London: Jessica Kinsley Publishers.

Sullivan, J., & Beech, A. (2004). A comparative study of demographic data relating to intra- and extra-familial child sexual abusers and professional perpetrators. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 10(1), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600410001667788>

Forty-one professional perpetrators, who sexually abused the children with whom they worked, were questioned about the nature of their offending. Some of their demographic information was compared with a sample of non-work-based child abusers to identify any significant differences between the two groups. It was found that the professional perpetrators were more likely to be sexually interested in same-sex children. Of the study group, 92.5% said that they were aware of their sexual arousal to children by 21 years old and a further 67.5% said that they had already committed a contact sexual offence against a child by age 21. Perhaps the most interesting findings related to the stated motivation of the professional perpetrators in obtaining their employment working with children. Fifteen per cent said that they chose their profession exclusively to provide them with access to children to abuse. A further 41.5% said that, while abusing children was not their primary motivation for working with children, it formed part of their motivation. The study also provided some insight into the grooming and manipulation techniques used by professional perpetrators: 77.5% said that they arranged to meet children outside work for the purpose of facilitating the sexual abuse of that child.

Lawson, L. (2003). Isolation, gratification, justification: Offenders' explanations of child molesting. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 24(6-7), 695-705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840305328>

Child sexual abusers' descriptions of their thoughts, behaviors, and relationships were identified by reviewing qualitative research studies published between 1982 and 2001. Offenders used cognitive distortions to meet personal needs, protect themselves from aversive self-awareness, and overcome internal inhibitions against engaging children in sexual activity. Offenders carefully

groomed their victims by systematically separating them from their families and peers and socializing them into sexual relationships. Specific cognitive and behavioral processes were used to translate sexual arousal into offending behavior. Offenders justified the abuse by making excuses and redefining their actions as love and mutuality. Throughout the process, offenders exploited the power imbalance inherent in all adult-child relationships. The participants in these studies provided a unique perspective on child sexual abuse that can be used to help victims cope, guide treatment development and evaluation, and suggest new questions for future research.\

American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (2002). Special Issue: The Compliant Child Victim. *APSAC Advisor*, 14(2), 1-20.

This series of commentaries is intended to stimulate thinking and discussion about sexual abuse cases that involve what we are calling compliant victims.

Paine, M. L., & Hansen, D. J. (2002). [Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(01)00091-5). *Clinical Psychology Review*, 22(2), 271-295.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358\(01\)00091-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(01)00091-5)

Self-disclosure by victims of child sexual abuse (CSA) is critical to initiate legal and therapeutic intervention. Unfortunately, research indicates that lengthy delays in disclosure and even nondisclosure are common. A comprehensive review of the clinical and research literature on CSA and an overview of related bodies of literature was conducted. Areas addressed include the context of sexual abuse as it relates to disclosure, the context and elements of children's disclosures, motivational factors inhibiting disclosure, and models of the disclosure process. Ancillary and analogue research on secrecy and disclosure are also reviewed. Implications for future research and practice are discussed. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

van Dam, C. (2001). [Identifying Child Molesters: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse by Recognizing the Patterns of the Offenders](#). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press/The Haworth Press, Inc.

Ward, T., & Hudson, S. M. (2000). Sexual offenders' implicit planning: A conceptual model. *Sexual Abuse: Journal of Research and Treatment*, 12(3), 189-202.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009534109157>

In recent years empirical research, clinical observation, and theoretical models about sexual offending have emphasized the importance of problem solving and decision making throughout different phases in the offense chain. This work suggests that sometimes offense planning is explicit, systematic, and analytical, while at other times it appears to be implicit and intuitive. The latter style of decision making has been called seemingly unimportant decisions. We attempt to provide an explanation of offenders' implicit decision making and suggest two social cognitive mechanisms capable of generating these types of decisions. We believe that implicit decision making in offenders has the appearance of automaticity, that is, decision making that is implicit, fast, relatively autonomous, frequently associated with a lack of control, effortless, and occurring without conscious awareness. Drawing from diverse theoretical sources, we hypothesize that these types of decisions are generated by underlying automatic goal dependent action plans. More specifically, we suggest that there are at least two types of automatic goal dependent plans evident in offenders' decision making: offense scripts and mental simulations. We draw implications for generating future hypotheses and provide suggestions for future research.

Canter, D., Hughes, D., & Kirby, S. (1998). Paedophilia: Pathology, criminality, or both? The development of a multivariate model of offence behavior in child sexual abuse. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 9(3), 532-555.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585189808405372>

Investigated variations in crime scene behavior among child sex offenders. Hypotheses concerning behavioral consistencies were drawn from the literature on child sexual abuse wherein 3 conceptually distinct behavioral themes are identified. These themes are characterized by aggressive (violence, force, threats), intimate (promise of gifts, reassurance, affection), or criminal-opportunist (stranger victim, outdoors, child alone) modes of offender-victim interaction. Crime scene data from 97 recorded child sex offenses that occurred between 1987 and 1989 in England were analyzed. Victims were 5-12 yrs old (67% were female), and the male offenders were 10-61 yrs old at the time of the offense. The results provide empirical support for all 3 themes, suggesting a multivariate model of offense behavior in child sexual abuse. These

findings are seen to effectively demonstrate that pedophilia can exist as both a pathology and a form of criminality. (PsycINFO Database Record © 2012 APA, all rights reserved)

Brackenridge, C., & Kirby, S. (1997). [Playing safe: Assessing the risk of sexual abuse to elite child athletes](https://doi.org/10.1177/101269097032004005). *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 19 p.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/101269097032004005>

Young athletes frequently suffer from being seen as athletes first and children second. This has consequences for their legal, civil and human rights as children (Kelly et al., 1995) and for the way in which sport organisations choose to intervene on their behalf to protect them from physical, psychological and sexual abuses (Brackenridge, 1994). Sport careers peak at different ages depending on the sport: in some, children as young as 12 or 13 may reach the highest levels of competitive performance; in others, full maturity as an athlete may come late into adulthood or even middle age. Recognition of this variation has given rise to the concept of ‘sport age’ (Kirby, 1986) referring to sport specific athlete development. This concept is of significance in helping to identify the developmental process in terms of athletic, rather than chronological, maturity. The risk of sexual abuse in sport, formerly ignored or denied, has now been documented in a number of studies, using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Kirby & Greaves, 1996; Brackenridge, 1997; Volkwein, 1996). Drawing on data from these studies and from the previous work on sport age and athletic maturation, this paper proposes a possible means of identifying and assessing relative risk of sexual abuse to elite young athletes in selected sports. The concept of a ‘stage of imminent achievement’ (SIA) is proposed as the period of peak vulnerability of young athletes to sexual abuse.

Itzin, C. (1997). Pornography and the organization of intrafamilial and extrafamilial child sexual abuse: Developing a conceptual model. *Child Abuse Review*, 6(2), 94-106.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-0852\(199705\)6:2<94::AID-CAR310>3.0.CO;2-I](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0852(199705)6:2<94::AID-CAR310>3.0.CO;2-I)

This paper uses a case study (the experience of having been sexually abused as a child) and a review of the relevant literature as the basis for developing a conceptual model of the relationship between intrafamilial and extrafamilial child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation, and the role of adult and child pornography in it. The paper illustrates some of the characteristics and effects of pornography and child sexual abuse including: gender; intra- and intergenerational patterns of victimization; coercion and compliance; the sexualization of the child; pornography

and prostitution; and the function of incest as a form of pimping for the perpetrator and as grooming for extrafamilial abuse. It also illustrates the way in which pornography is a part of all forms of intrafamilial and extrafamilial abuse and is itself a form of organized abuse. © 1997 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Jenkins, S. (1997). Sexual abuse-A process, not an event: A view from practice. *Psychiatry, Psychology & Law*, 4(1), 65-71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719709524897>

The perception of sexual abuse as an event or a series of events is reinforced through traditional strategies for investigation, the current legal system and single agency responses. If, however, we are to understand the dynamics of sexual abuse, offenders and victims, we need to explore and understand the nature of sexual assault as a process. This process of abuse often starts long before the actual 'hands-on' assault and may continue long after the 'hands-on' assault is over. Recognising all the elements of the process (offender strategies developed in order to perpetrate the assaults and survivor strategies adopted to survive the assaults) is central to our understanding of the dynamics of sexual assaults and, therefore, central to informing our approach to working with the perpetrators of abuse and with those who have been on the receiving end of such behaviour.

Kaufman, K. L., Hilliker, D. R., & Daleiden, E. L. (1996). Subgroup differences in the modus operandi of adolescent sexual offenders. *Child Maltreatment*, 1(1), 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559596001001003>

The current investigation examined the predictability of adolescent sexual offenders' modus operandi based upon differences in victim, perpetrator, and offense characteristics. Questionnaires regarding modus operandi and history of victimization were completed by 179 male adolescent sexual offenders. Subgroups of perpetrators were delineated based upon their history of sexual abuse, as well as the gender, age, and relatedness of offenders' child victims. Results indicated that a history of sexual abuse was related to the selection of male victims and younger victims. Furthermore, subgroups of offenders differed significantly in the strategies they employed to build victims' trust, gain compliance with illicit sexual activity, and maintain victims' silence following the onset of sexual abuse. Implications are discussed for child sexual abuse theory and prevention, as well as for victim and offender treatment.

Elliott, M., Browne, K., & Kilkoynne, J. (1995). Child sexual abuse prevention: What offenders tell us. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*(5), 579-594.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(95\)00017-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(95)00017-3)

Ninety-one child sex offenders were interviewed about the methods they used to target children, the age range of their victims, how they selected children and maintained them as victims, and what suggestions they had for preventing child sexual abuse. Offenders were selected from treatment programs, probation, special hospitals, and prisons. They were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Results indicate that offenders gained access to children through caretaking, such as babysitting; targeted children by using bribes, gifts and games; used force, anger, threats, and bribes to ensure their continuing compliance; and systematically desensitized children through touch, talk about sex, and persuasion. Nearly half the offenders had no bad feelings about sexually abusing children. The implications for prevention programs are discussed.

Brackenridge, C. (1994). Fair play of fair game? Child sexual abuse in sport organizations. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 29*(3), 287-298.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/101269029402900304>

Feminist perspectives in sport research have helped to problematise gender relations in sport and to highlight dominating behaviours such as sexual harassment. It is argued that the independent status of many voluntary sport organisations helps to protect coaches from the scrutiny of certain state regulations and, consequently, offers easy targets for individuals with sexual motives. The paper sets the problem of child sexual abuse in sport within this broad context of organisational accountability and raises issues for both research and professional practice.

Singer, M. I., Hussey, D., & Strom, K. (1992). Grooming the victim: Analysis of a perpetrator's seduction letter. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 16*(6), 877-886.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(92\)90089-A](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(92)90089-A)

The authors review the current literature on the sexual victimization of adolescent males with attention given to victim characteristics and victim selection factors and strategies. Following this review, a letter written by a middle-aged man to entice a teenage boy into sexual activity is presented and analyzed. The strategy used by the letter-writer is to refute the usual reservations a teenage boy might have about engaging in sexual activity with a man. The approach used in the letter and the ensuing analysis are generalizable to teenage boys experiencing similar encounters

and highlight the sophisticated seduction and grooming strategies used to sexually victimize adolescent males.

Berliner, L., & Conte, J. R. (1990). The process of victimization: The victims' perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 14*(1), 29-40. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(90\)90078-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(90)90078-8)

Twenty-three child victims (aged 10–18 years) of childhood sexual abuse were interviewed about the victimization process, the person who abused them, and how abuse might have been prevented. Specific questions obtained information about the quality of the relationship between victim and offender, the offender's pre-abuse behavior, the explanation for the behavior given by the offender, and the child's understanding of the behavior. Results suggest that the victimization process involves three overlapping processes: sexualization of the relationship, justification of the sexual contact, and maintenance of the child's cooperation.

Christiansen, J. R., & Blake, R. H. (1990). The grooming process in father-daughter incest. In A. L. Horton, B. L. Johnson, L. M. Roundy, & D. Williams (Eds.), *The Incest Perpetrator: A Family Member No One Wants to Treat* (pp. 88-98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Most acts of incest perpetrated by fathers involve coercion without physical force drawing on the research of de Young (evolved incest and courting behavior), Russell (persuasion), Herman (courting behavior), and others, a series of studies was begun in 1986 by a research team consisting of both faculty and graduate students . . . that illuminated the psycho-social process involved in father-daughter incest / we call this form of socialization, the "grooming process" these studies support the view that perpetrators use trust, favoritism, alienation, secrecy, boundary violations, and evaluation in "grooming" their daughters to participate in sexual activities (PsycINFO Database Record © 2012 APA, all rights reserved)

Online or Cybergrooming

Lorenzo-Dus, N., Kinzel, A., & Di Cristofaro, M. (2020). [The communicative modus operandi of online child sexual groomers: Recurring patterns in their language use](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.09.010). *Journal of Pragmatics*, 155, 15-27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.09.010>

Online child sexual groomers manipulate their targets into partaking in sexual activity online and, in some cases, offline. To do so they use language (and other semiotic means, such as images) strategically. This study uses a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies methodology to identify recurring patterns in online groomers' language use, mapping them to the specific grooming goal that their use in context fulfils. The analysis of the groomers' language (c. 3.3 million words) within 622 conversations from the Perverted Justice website newly identifies 70 such recurring linguistic patterns (three-word collocations), as well as their relative strength of association to one or more grooming goals. The results can be used to inform computational models for detecting online child sexual grooming language. They can also support the development of training resources that raise awareness of typical language structures that characterise online sexual groomers' communicative modus operandi.

Schoeps, K., Hernández, M. P., Garaigordobil, M., & Montoya-Castilla, I. (2020). [Risk factors for being a victim of online grooming in adolescents](https://doi:10.7334/psicothema2019.179). *Psicothema*, 32(1), 15-23. <https://doi:10.7334/psicothema2019.179>

The risk of child grooming has spread exponentially with the massive access of adolescents to social networks and the internet. The aim of the study was to examine the personal factors (body self-esteem and disinhibition) and erotic-sexual factors (sexual initiation strategies and erotic-pornographic sexting) that predict grooming. The sample was comprised of 1,200 adolescents aged between 12 and 16 years ($M = 14.54$, $SD = 1.17$; 50.83% girls). A cross-sectional design with self-report data was used and structural equation modeling (SEM) with mediation analysis was performed. The results indicated two paths explaining child grooming: 1) physical attractiveness and disinhibition are indirectly associated with grooming through erotic sexting and direct sexual initiation strategies; both of which partially mediate this relationship; 2) disinhibited behavior has an indirect impact on grooming; pornographic sexting and coercive strategies acting as mediators. The semi-partial mediation model explains 54% of the variance of grooming. These findings

highlight the urgent need to implement prevention programs considering these attitudes and behaviors that function as precursors of victimization and the risk of falling into pedophile networks.

Arthur, R., & Down, L. (2019). Preventing the criminalisation of children who have been victims of group-based sexual exploitation involving grooming tactics—Understanding child sexual exploitation as enslavement. *The Journal of Criminal Law*, 83(5), 370-380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022018319879013>

The United Kingdom has been beset by a series of moral panics concerning grooming gangs sexually exploiting young girls. These moral panics derive from a number of well-publicised cases, the most infamous of which took place in Rochdale, Greater Manchester. Further grooming rings have been exposed in Rotherham, Oxfordshire, Oldham, Derby, Huddersfield and Newcastle. Grooming children has been criminalised by section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. These offences apply to online and offline communication, including social media. Adult groomers face up to two years in prison and being automatically placed on the sex offenders register. These laws are intended to protect children from abuse and exploitation. However, child victims who have been abused by gangs and coerced into offending may still be liable for prosecution for any offending they have engaged in. These offences will also be recorded on their criminal records. Fear of being prosecuted may stop victims coming forward and prevent survivors from moving on with their lives. This article will examine how the law can be reformulated to ensure protection of children from sexual exploitation and also ensuring children are not charged for committing crimes whilst being groomed or coerced. The article will consider whether the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and in particular the statutory defence available under section 45 of the 2015 Act, potentially offer a means of protecting victims of grooming without the risk of criminalisation.

Jonsson, L. S., Fredlund, C., Priebe, G., Wadsby, M., & Svedin, C. G. (2019). [Online sexual abuse of adolescents by a perpetrator met online: A cross-sectional study](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-019-0292-1). *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 13(1), 32. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-019-0292-1>

The current study aimed at exploring adolescents' experiences of online sexual contacts leading to online sexual abuse by a perpetrator whom the victim had first met online. Associations with socio demographic background, experience of abuse, relation to parents, health and risk behaviors were

studied. The participants were a representative national sample of 5175 students in the third year of the Swedish high school Swedish (M age = 17.97). Analyses included bivariate statistics and stepwise multiple logistic regression models. In total 330 (5.8%) adolescents had gotten to know someone during the preceding 12 months for the purpose of engaging in some kind of sexual activity online. Thirty-two (9.7%) of those, the index group, had felt that they had been persuaded, pressed or coerced on at least one occasion. Sexual interaction under pressure was seen as constituting sexual abuse. These adolescent victims of online sexual abuse, the index group, did not differ with respect to socio-demographic background from the adolescents without this experience, the reference group. The index group had significantly more prior experiences of different kind of abuse, indicating that they belong to a polyvictimized group. More frequent risk behavior, poorer psychological health, poorer relationships with parents and lower self-esteem also characterized the index group. Online sexual abuse, without experiences of offline abuse, was associated with a poorer psychological health, at least at the same level as offline sexual abuse only. The study made clear the importance of viewing online sexual abuse as a serious form of sexual abuse. Professionals meeting these children need to focus not only on their psychological health such as symptoms of trauma and depression but also need to screen them for online behavior, online abuse and other forms of previous abuse.

Kloess, J. A., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E., & Beech, A. R. (2019). Offense processes of online sexual grooming and abuse of children via internet communication platforms. *Sexual Abuse*, 31(1), 73-96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063217720927>

The aim of the present study was to provide an inclusive and realistic account of the offense processes of naturally occurring, sexually exploitative interactions between offenders and victims that took place via Internet communication platforms, and develop an offense process diagram of online sexual grooming and abuse. Five case series, comprising 29 transcripts of 22 interactions, were analyzed using the qualitative approach of thematic analysis. Police reports were reviewed for descriptive and case-specific information. The five offenders were men aged between 27 and 52 years ($M = 33.6$, $SD = 5.6$), and the number of children they communicated with ranged from one to 12 ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 4.5$). Victims were aged between 11 and 15 ($M = 13.0$, $SD = 1.2$), and were both female ($n = 17$) and male ($n = 6$). Findings revealed that offenders employed either an indirect or a direct approach to conversations with victims and initiating contact with them. The approach offenders employed was also reflected in the types of strategies they used. Only two

offenders were found to engage in aspects of sexual grooming as part of an indirect approach; the majority of the interactions by the other three offenders, that lacked features of sexual grooming altogether, were found to be of a direct approach. These findings are discussed in relation to current issues surrounding terminology and definition of sexual grooming, as well as theoretical and practical implications, concluding with suggestions for future research.

Kloess, J. A., Larkin, M., Beech, A. R., & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E. (2019). Case studies of men's perceptions of their online sexual interactions with young people: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Sexual Abuse, 31*(8), 867-885.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063218769031>

The aim of the present study was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of men who were convicted of committing a sexual offense that included online sexual grooming. It explores their experiences of illegal interactions with young people via Internet communication platforms, which progressed to physical meetings. Semistructured interviews were conducted with two men and analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), providing in-depth accounts of their personal experiences. These are presented in a case study format. Three dominant themes emerged from the analysis: (a) fulfilling an unmet need, (b) spiraling cycle of use, and (c) confrontation with reality. Narrative tones employed by the two men were “being trapped in a lie,” analogous to a problem narrative through which their Internet use was presented as a poor and/or failed coping strategy to deal with life stress. Through a process of habituation, their Internet use spiraled out of control. A progression was described in terms of time spent on the computer, frequency and intensity of online interactions, and the impact this had on the men's personal lives, highlighting the “compulsive” nature of such interactions for them. A consideration of individual and situational vulnerability factors provides new insight into the progression of online sexual behavior and contributes to our understanding thereof.

Lorenzo-Dus, N., & Kinzel, A. (2019). 'So is your mom as cute as you?': Examining patterns of language use in online sexual grooming of children. *Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies, 2*, 15-39. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18573/jcads.31>

Linguistic research into online grooming is scarce despite both the communicative essence of this form of online child sexual abuse and a substantial body of literature into it across other Social Sciences. Most of this literature has examined small data sets via qualitative methods, primarily

Thematic Analysis. This study evaluates the contribution that a Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) approach can make to this body of literature, with a focus on online groomers' language. The corpus, extracted from the Perverted Justice Foundation archive, consists of c. 3.3 million words produced by >600 convicted child sexual offenders interacting online with adult decoys whom they believed to be children. Lexical dispersion (DPNorm), collocation and concordance analyses were conducted. The corpus was also run through the software LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count), which is the only other software-assisted methodology that has been adopted to examine Perverted Justice data. Our analysis shows that LIWC may not be the most efficient software to analyse online groomers' language due to a lack of general language comparison scores, the non-transparency of some of its analytic variables and a focus on de-contextualised words. Comparatively, CADS methods can shed light upon online groomers' strategic use of language. They can also reveal the complex and nuanced ways in which discourse features such as sexual explicitness/implicitness and interpersonal (in)directness operate alongside these strategies.

McMahon, M., & Kirley, E. A. (Fall, 2019). [When cute becomes criminal: Emoji, Threats, and online grooming.](#) *Minnesota Journal of Law, Science and Technology*. 38 p.

Emoji are widely used and are frequently perceived as cute or benign adjuncts to online communications. Employed to humanise truncated digital messages by conveying humour, emotion and sociability, emoji perform a far more sinister role when used to convey threats or to sexually exploit minors. These activities exploit the emotive function of emoji and/or their role in facilitating trust, albeit for a criminal purpose. This paper explores the role of emoji in both threats and online grooming. Through a review of a sampling of criminal cases from diverse jurisdictions, we examine relevant prosecutions and find that emoji are being increasingly recognized as a facilitator or adjunct to criminal threats and unlawful sexual solicitation made on online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or through private messaging. The review also examines the multiple and diverse ways in which evidence of emoji has been admitted in criminal trials, raising contentious (but hitherto largely unrecognised) issues in relation to the application of the best evidence rule. While noting the distinctive opportunities, challenges and problems posed in relation to how to interpret and best represent these stylised visual representations in criminal proceedings, the article concludes that despite these various difficulties, imposing criminal liability

for threats or solicitation conveyed by emoji is a necessary evolution of the criminal law, demonstrating its adaptation to the digital age.

Quayle, E., & Koukopoulos, N. (2019). Deterrence of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 13(3), 345-362.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pay028>

‘Cyberspace’ has added a dimension to the ecology of the child and should be a starting point for practitioners (including police) to think about digital media in the context of child sexual abuse. While there is no evidence to suggest that online abuse and exploitation is a more serious offence than crimes occurring offline, the behaviours enabled by social media may present a significant risk factor for some children. This article gives a brief overview of the phenomena and prevalence of online child sexual abuse and exploitation and the role that the Internet may play. This is considered in relation to deterrence, prevention and management of these crimes, and further develops a public health approach to online child abuse and exploitation. Finally, the article critically considers emerging evidence to support this interaction between the individual and the online environment.

Ramiro, L. S., Martinez, A. B., Tan, J. R., Mariano, K., Miranda, G. M., & Bautista, G. (2019). Online child sexual exploitation and abuse: A community diagnosis using the social norms theory. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104080>

This study focused on the drivers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) among Filipino children and youth, with emphasis on community norms. An ethnographic qualitative study was conducted in two communities in MetroManila that are considered “hotspots” for child sexual abuse. One hundred and forty-four (144) males and females from various age groups served as key informants. Political officials, Internet shop managers, professionals and police officers were also interviewed. Non-participant observations and mapping were used to provide context regarding OCSEA in the communities. The results revealed that OCSEA was committed online by heterosexual and same sex attracted men in their 40s–50s. The usual victims were girls aged 13–17 years, although boys were also noted. The victims came from poor families and were out-of-school. The various forms of online activities leading to OCSEA included sexual chatting, showing of child sex photos and live videos as well as sextortion. The online transactions were usually initiated by the peer group and some enablers. In general, online sexual activities were perceived

as “normal” among young people, although regarded as “disgusting”. Online sex activities had become a source of “easy money” for the child and family. They were perceived as not harmful because of anonymity and the absence of any actual physical contact. People in the community tolerate these online practices and do not report the incidence to authorities. The effects on children and youth were predominantly social and psychological, albeit perceived as economically beneficial. Some preventive and mitigating actions were recommended to curb the incidence of OCSEA in the communities.

De Santisteban, P., Del Hoyo, J., Alcázar-Córcoles, M. Á., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2018). Progression, maintenance, and feedback of online child sexual grooming: A qualitative analysis of online predators. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 80, 203-215.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.03.026>

The limited literature on online child grooming has focused mainly on studying the characteristics of perpetrators and victims that facilitate the sexual abuse of minors. Little attention has been given to the perceptions of the perpetrators about the abuse process and the strategies used to sustain it over time. In the present study, after identifying a sample of 12 men convicted of online grooming, we used qualitative grounded theory through in-depth interviews and comparisons with the proven facts of their convictions. The results show how aggressors actively study the structural environment, the needs and vulnerabilities of the minors). In this way, the aggressors adapt by using most effective strategies of persuasion at all times, so that the child feels like an active part of the plot. This allows the aggressors to have sexual interactions with minors either online or offline and in a sporadic or sustained manner. This process is maintained with some distorted perceptions about minors and the abuse process, which seem to feed back to the beginning of the cycle with other potential victims. The interaction between the persuasive processes and the distorted perceptions of the aggressor leads to a potential work focus for treatment as well as detection and prevention. Trying to visualize the complexity of the phenomenon could also help researchers to understand processes from this approach that may be applied with other types of vulnerable populations.

Gámez-Guadix, M., Almendros, C., Calvete, E., & De Santisteban, P. (2018). Persuasion strategies and sexual solicitations and interactions in online sexual grooming of adolescents: Modeling direct and indirect pathways. *Journal of Adolescence*, *63*, 11-18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.12.002>

Online sexual grooming and exploitation of adolescents is receiving increasing social attention. Drawing on a social influence framework, the aim of this study was to test a model of the direct and mediated relationships between an adult's use of persuasion strategies and online sexual grooming of early adolescents. The initial sample of the study consisted of 2731 early Spanish adolescents between 12 and 15 years old (50.6% female). Of these, 196 adolescents (7.17% of the total; 53% girls) were involved in online grooming (mean age = 14.93, *SD* = 0.90). Persuasion strategies by the adult through internet increased the probability of using deceit, bribery, and the minor's nonsexual involvement. In addition, deceit and bribery were associated with higher rates of sexual solicitation, which in turn increased abusive sexual interactions. Understanding strategies used by adults to groom minors contributes to the prevention of and intervention in this crucial societal problem.

Hanson, E. (2017). The impact of online sexual abuse on children and young people. In J. Brown (Ed). *Online Risk to Children: Impact, Protection and Prevention*, (pp.97-122). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Smallbone, S., & Wortley, R. (2017). Preventing child sexual abuse online. In J. Brown (Ed). *Online Risk to Children: Impact, Protection and Prevention*, (pp.143-162). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Winters, G. M., Kaylor, L. E., & Jeglic, E. L. (2017). Sexual offenders contacting children online: An examination of transcripts of sexual grooming. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, *23*(1), 62-76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2016.1271146>

The present study investigated transcripts of adults sexually grooming decoy victims on the Internet. One hundred transcripts were coded for offender characteristics, victim characteristics, and dynamics of the conversation. The results revealed that all of the offenders were male, most of whom believed they were communicating with an adolescent female. The sexual intentions of the offenders were made clear, with the majority introducing sexual content early on into the conversation. The length of the contact ranged from one day to nearly one year, suggesting that the duration of the online grooming process may vary significantly. The majority of offenders also

communicated with the decoy victim over the telephone and attempted to arrange an in-person meeting, many within short periods of time. Implications for prevention and future research are discussed.

van Gijn-Grosvenor, E. L., & Lamb, M. E. (2016). Behavioural differences between online sexual groomers approaching boys and girls. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 25*(5), 577-596. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2016.1189473>

This study focused on the behavior of convicted offenders who had approached profiles of boys and girls online for offline sexual encounters. A detailed coding scheme was designed to code and analyze offenders' grooming behaviors in transcripts of conversational interactions between convicted offenders and 52 volunteer workers purporting to be girls and 49 volunteer workers who masqueraded as boys. Behavioral differences and commonalities associated with the gender of the groomed child decoys were examined. Results showed that offenders approaching boys were significantly older and pretended to be younger than offenders approaching girls. When compared to offenders grooming boy decoys, offenders grooming girl decoys typically built more rapport, were less sexually explicit, and approached sexual topics carefully and indirectly. Offenders also used more strategies to conceal contact with girls than with boys.

Black, P. J., Wollis, M., Woodworth, M., & Hancock, J. T. (2015). A linguistic analysis of grooming strategies of online child sex offenders: Implications for our understanding of predatory sexual behavior in an increasingly computer-mediated world. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 44*, 140-149. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.12.004>

There is a large body of evidence to suggest that child sex offenders engage in grooming to facilitate victimization. It has been speculated that this step-by-step grooming process is also used by offenders who access their underage victims online; however, little research has been done to examine whether there are unique aspects of computer-mediated communication that impact the traditional face-to-face grooming process. This study considered the similarities and differences in the grooming process in online environments by analyzing the language used by online offenders when communicating with their victims. The transcripts of 44 convicted online offenders were analyzed to assess a proposed theory of the online grooming process (O'Connell, 2003). Using a stage-based approach, computerized text analysis examined the types of language used in each stage of the offender-victim interaction. The transcripts also were content analyzed to

examine the frequency of specific techniques known to be employed by both face-to-face and online offenders, such as flattery. Results reveal that while some evidence of the strategies used by offenders throughout the grooming process are present in online environments, the order and timing of these stages appear to be different. The types (and potential underlying pattern) of strategies used in online grooming support the development of a revised model for grooming in online environments. © 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved

Quayle, E., Allegro, S., Hutton, L., Sheath, M., & Lööf, L. (2014). Rapid skill acquisition and online sexual grooming of children. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 39, 368-375.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.07.005>

The limited research on online sexual grooming has largely focused on the stages of grooming, typologies of offenders, or comparisons with people who download abusive sexual images of children. Little attention has been paid to Internet affordances and the role these might play in the offending behavior, the development of expertise and the avoidance of detection. This exploratory, qualitative grounded theory study involved interviews with 14 men convicted of online grooming. The analysis indicated that the Internet was used to create a private space within which to engage in purposive, sexual behavior with young people. This engagement was for all an aid to fantasy, and for some was a precursor to an offline sexual assault. The opportunities afforded by Internet platforms not only allowed access to young people but facilitated the rapid acquisition of expertise.

Whittle, H. C., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E., & Beech, A. R. (2014). “Under his spell”: Victims’ perspectives of being groomed online. *Social Sciences*, 3(3), 404-426.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci3030404>

The aim of this paper is to highlight key themes within the process of online grooming from the victim’s perspective. Eight adolescents who experienced online grooming were interviewed and data were analysed using Thematic Analysis. It was found that participants, who had been both sexually abused online and/or offline, were subjected to a range of grooming experiences. Consistent grooming themes within this sample included: manipulation; deception; regular/intense contact; secrecy; sexualisation; kindness and flattery; erratic temperament and nastiness; and simultaneous grooming of those close to the victim. These themes are similar to those identified by the literature surrounding grooming offline. Analysis demonstrated that once a participant was ‘enmeshed’ in the relationship with the offender, they were more likely to endure negative feelings

associated with the grooming, than if the victim was not ‘enmeshed’. This paper supports the notion that grooming is a varied and non-linear process. Recommendations are made for practitioners, parents and carers, as well as suggestions for primary preventative education.

Whittle, H., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Beech, A., & Collings, G. (2013). A review of online grooming: Characteristics and concerns. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18*(1), 62-70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2012.09.003>

The process of online grooming facilitates child abuse and is a threat to young people across the world. This literature review explores the research surrounding how young people are targeted by offenders on the internet. Definitions, prevalence, and characteristics of online grooming are addressed in addition to consideration of child sexual abuse theories and internet behaviors. There are a variety of techniques used by internet groomers to manipulate young people (e.g., flattery, bribes, and threats) and different ways that young people engage in risk taking behavior on the internet (e.g., communicating with strangers online and sharing personal information). While models and typologies can aid professionals in understanding the crime, it is important to acknowledge that internet offenders, victims, and the dynamics between the two are often unique and varied. This is fundamental to the development of effective preventative education for online grooming and abuse. The review concludes that research concerning the online grooming of young people is limited, and calls for further study in this field. © 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Whittle, H., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Beech, A., & Collings, G. (2013). A review of young people's vulnerabilities to online grooming. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18*(1), 135-146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2012.11.008>

This review explores risk factors that may make a young person vulnerable to being groomed online. Even though research in this area is extremely limited, adolescents appear to be the age group most vulnerable to online grooming. Other vulnerabilities appear to be consistent with those associated with offline sexual abuse. The review suggests that behaviors specific to online grooming include: engaging in risk taking behavior online, high levels of internet access, and lack of parental involvement in the young person's internet use. Vulnerabilities to carry out these types of behavior and be more exposed to the risk of online grooming, are set within the context of the Ecological Model of child protection, consisting of: individual, family, community, and cultural risk factors. Patterns of vulnerability regarding living environment, ethnicity, socioeconomic

status, and personality are tentative, but are often interconnected. The more risk taking behaviors the young person carries out, plus greater levels of vulnerability factors, the less resilient they are likely to be towards protecting themselves against online grooming. A protective factor appears to be parental involvement in their child's use of the internet. Therefore, this, in combination with internet safety education at school, is encouraged. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Williams, R., Elliott, I. A., & Beech, A. R. (2013). Identifying sexual grooming themes used by Internet sex offenders. *Deviant Behavior*, 34(2), 135-152.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2012.707550>

In the context of the sexual abuse of children, “grooming” is a process by which an individual prepares the child and their environment for abuse to take place, including gaining access to the child, creating compliance and trust, and ensuring secrecy to avoid disclosure (Craven et al. 2007). Grooming can be difficult to identify and define, especially Internet sexual grooming, as it incorporates a variety of behaviors and processes and can differ greatly in duration. This study looks to establish possible strategies that Internet sex offenders use within the grooming process, within the initial hour of contact with a child on-line. Eight transcripts were qualitatively analyzed using thematic analysis. The transcripts that were analyzed featured a “decoy” adult posing as a child, and an adult male who was later convicted following those discussions. Three main themes were identified in the transcripts: Rapport-building, Sexual Content, and Assessment. Implications for practice are discussed in the article.

Gallagher, B., Christmann, K., Fraser, C., & Hodgson, B. (2012). International and Internet child sexual abuse and exploitation- Issues emerging from research. *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 15(4), 353-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2012.707550>

This article examines knowledge concerning cases of child sexual abuse involving an international element or use of the internet – risks to children that have received widespread official attention only in the last few years. In particular, it draws upon the authors’ ongoing research, other (completed) research and the wider literature to establish what is known about these cases in terms of their extent and nature, and their implications for policy and practice.

Wachs, S., Wolf, K. D., & Pan, C. (2012). [Cybergrooming: Risk factors, coping strategies and associations with cyberbullying](#). *Psicothema*, 24(4), 628-633.

The use of information and communication technologies has become ubiquitous among adolescents. New forms of cyber aggression have emerged, cybergrooming is one of them. However, little is known about the nature and extent of cybergrooming. The purpose of this study was to investigate risk factors of being cybergroomed, to identify various coping strategies and to explore the associations between being cyberbullied and cybergroomed. The sample consisted of 518 students in 6th to 10th grades. The computer assisted personal interview method (CAPI method) was implemented. The «Mobbing Questionnaire for Students» by Jäger et al. (2007) was further developed for this study and served as the research instrument. While being a girl, being cyberbullied and willingness to meet strangers could be identified as risk factors; no significant age differences were found. Furthermore, three types of coping strategies – aggressive, cognitive-technical and helpless – with varied impacts were identified. The findings not only shed light on understanding cybergrooming, but also suggest worth noting associations between various forms of cyber aggression

Davidson, J., & Gottschalk, P. (2011). Characteristics of the Internet for criminal child sexual abuse by online groomers. *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society*, 24(1), 23-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2011.544188>

This paper presents a number of characteristics of the Internet that makes it attractive to online groomers. Relevant Internet characteristics include disconnected personal communication, mediating technology, universality, network externalities, distribution channel, time moderator, low-cost standard, electronic double, electronic double manipulation, information asymmetry, infinite virtual capacity, independence in time and space, cyberspace, and dynamic social network. Potential sex offenders join virtual communities, where they meet other persons who have the same interest. A virtual community provides an online meeting place where people with similar interests can communicate and find useful information. Communication between members may be via email, bulletin boards, online chat, web-based conferencing or other computer-based media.

Elliott, I. A., & Ashfield, S. (2011). The use of online technology in the modus operandi of female sex offenders. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 17*(1), 92-104.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2010.537379>

In this review we examine the methods by which female sexual offenders may use communications technologies such as the internet in their offending behaviours. We outline the context of sexual abuse of children both by female perpetrators and by those using the internet. The topic is examined based on three criminogenic areas highlighted by Lambert and O'Halloran: (1) interpersonal/socialization deficits; (2) deviant sexual arousal; and (3) cognitive distortions and recognition barriers. We include elements drawn from anonymized clinical cases of female-perpetrated sexual abuse of children involving online technology. We present the argument that the characteristics of this population are likely to suggest that clinicians assessing cases of this nature may find it more useful to refer to the literature on female sexual offenders rather than that of male internet offenders.

Jewkes, Y. (2010). Much ado about nothing? Representations and realities of online soliciting of children. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 16*(1), 5-18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600903389452>

This paper is concerned with where the public's ideas come from about online risks to children and young people. Combining perspectives from criminology, sociology and media studies, it will be argued that as a culture we are confused about childhood and hold on to highly ambiguous ideas about children and sexuality. Further, despite the media's inclination to present adult attraction to children as a uniquely "modern" phenomenon, conflicting notions of childhood have always underpinned social and legal norms and were particularly salient in Victorian society. More recently, at precisely the same time as individuals have retreated from public spheres to the "security" of domestic and privatized spaces, we have seen the emergence of one of the most feared phenomena of the age: the online sexual abuse of children.

Choo, K. R. (2009). Responding to online child sexual grooming: An industry perspective. *Trends & Issues in Criminal Justice, 379*, 1-6.

Findings suggest the need for non-legislative measures to improve Internet safety for children concerning online child grooming, a premeditated behavior intended to secure the trust and cooperation of children prior to engaging in sexual conduct. In particular, initiatives by those that

operate social-networking sites and the financial services industry will favorably reduce such contact. Several social networking sites have been proactive in working with law enforcement agencies to protect children against online sexual offenders. Because child-abuse materials often involve payment, an effective strategy is to monitor online payments made to those who provide illegal content for a fee. Online reporting and monitoring systems are also important tools, often including a simple method to report abuse to authorities. Finally, the development of sophisticated computer forensic software that can be used for child-exploitation investigations is increasingly important. Adult awareness and child education are critical preventive measures; educational outreach programs can provide proactive prevention and reporting. This multi-dimensional non-legislative approach should focus on effective coordination and collaboration among the public and private sectors.

Davies, M., Rogers, P., & Hood, P. A. (2009). Perceptions of child sexual abuse in a hypothetical cybersexploitation case: The importance of perpetrator honesty, outcome type, and respondent gender. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 18*(4), 422-441.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10538710903051104>

This study investigated perceptions of child sexual abuse in a hypothetical cybersexploitation case. Men were predicted to be more negative toward the victim than were women. Victims were predicted to be more negatively judged when they consented to sex than when they did not and when they were lied to than when they were not. Two hundred and seventy-six respondents read a sexual abuse depiction in which the perpetrator's disclosure about his age (being honest from the outset, lying, or refusing to disclose when questioned) and the final outcome of the meeting (consensual versus nonconsensual sexual intercourse) were varied between subjects. Respondents then completed a 17-item attribution scale. ANOVAs revealed broad support for the predictions. Results have implications for education about cybercrime.

Beech, A. R., Elliott, I. A., Birgden, A., & Findlater, D. (2008). The Internet and child sexual offending: A criminological review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 13*(3), 216-228.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2008.03.007>

This paper outlines the current literature on what is known about the processes by which individuals utilize the Internet for child sexual abuse. First, three ways in which the Internet is utilized are outlined: (1) by dissemination of sexually abusive images of children for personal and/or commercial reasons; (2) by communication with other individuals with a sexual interest in

children: and (3) by maintaining and developing online pedophilic networks. Second, content and availability of abusive images are described, and the difficulties faced by criminal justice agencies in both the definition of abusive images and their prohibition is discussed. Third, the potential for offenders to ‘cross-over’ from online offenses to contact sexual victimization of children is examined and placed within a context of various Internet offender typologies that have been developed. Finally, implications of this body of research for law and public policy are considered.

Kierkegaard, S., (2008). Cybering, online grooming and ageplay. *Computer Law & Security*, 24(1), 41-55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2007.11.004>

Recent advances in computer technology have been aiding sexual predators, stalkers, child pornographers, child traffickers, and others with the intent of exploiting children. Internet bulletin boards, chat rooms, private websites, and peer-to-peer networks are being used daily by paedophiles to meet unsuspecting children. Compounding the problem is the lack of direct governance by an international body, which will curb the illegal content and activity. Most countries already have laws protecting children, but what is needed is a concerted law enforcement and international legislation to combat child sex abuse. With the enactment of the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, this may soon become a reality in Europe. This current article will discuss some of the recent legal developments concerning online child protection, including the new Convention.

Shannon, D. (2008). Online sexual grooming in Sweden-online and offline sex offences against children as described in Swedish police data. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(2), 160-180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14043850802450120>

The expansion in Internet use since the mid-1990s has created a completely new and largely unmonitored forum for contacts between adults and children. The anonymity provided by Internet communications has been viewed as creating favourable conditions for adults wishing to develop manipulative relationships with children, and there has been a growing concern about the way the Internet may be used by adults intent on sexually exploiting and abusing young people. Much of the focus of this concern has been directed at adults using the Internet to create opportunities for the commission of offline sex offences. Based on police data from Sweden, this article describes the range of Internet related sexual offences against children currently being brought to the

attention of the Swedish justice system. It focuses not only on the range of strategies employed by adults to persuade children to meet them offline for the purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse but also on the different types of online sexual offences that children in Sweden are currently being subjected to.

Dombrowski, S. C., Gisclare, K. L., & Durst, T. (2007). Safeguarding young people from cyber pornography and cyber sexual predation: A major dilemma of the Internet. *Child Abuse Review*, 16(3), 153-170. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.939>

Over the past 20 years, the internet has provided an expedient mode of communication and access to a wealth of information. The internet is a valuable tool; however, it can also be detrimental to the wellbeing of children due to numerous online hazards. There is the potential for children to be abused via cyberspace through online sexual solicitation and access to pornography. Indeed, the internet is replete with inappropriate material, including pornography, chatrooms with adult themes and access to instant messaging wherein others could misrepresent themselves. Because children are actively utilizing the internet where unknown others can have access to them or where they can be exposed to inappropriate sexual materials, they require safeguarding and education in safe internet use. The purpose of this article is to provide a discussion of how to safeguard children from and educate them about online sexual solicitation and pornography. We contend that society needs an overall conceptual shift in its attitude towards young people's internet use. Copyright © 2007 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Jayawardena, K. P., & Broadhurst, R. (2007). [Online Child Sex Solicitation: Exploring the feasibility of a research 'sting'](http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2137390). *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 1(2), 228-248. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2137390>

A small scale test of the integrity of Internet Web 2.0 social network sites was undertaken over several weeks in 2007. The fictional identities of four female underage children were posted on three network sites and later introduced to relay chat forums in order to explore the impact of apparent vulnerability on potential selection of Internet victims. Only one of the three social network sites in the study recognised that the postings violated child protection policies and subsequently closed down the underage postings. Two basic identities were created: one that engendered a needy and vulnerable characterisation of a child while the other identity was created

to represent a happy and attached child character. The number of contacts and suspicious contacts were monitored to test assumptions about child ‘vulnerability’ and risks of unwanted sexual solicitations. The characters created also included either an avatar and/or contact details. These variants of the experiment showed that the inclusion of an image or access details increased the likelihood of contacts, including suspicious contact regardless of ‘vulnerability’. This small experiment noted that although vulnerable children with additional cues maybe at more risk all children who posted details about themselves on social network sites faced the risk of contact by predators. The need for further research and better means of regulating such sites was suggested.

Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2005). [The Internet and family and acquaintance sexual abuse](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559504271917). *Child Maltreatment*, 10(1), 49-60.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559504271917>

This article explores the dynamics of cases involving family and acquaintance sexual offenders who used the Internet to commit sex crimes against minors. Although the stereotype of Internet crimes involves unknown adults meeting juvenile victims online, Internet use can also play a role in sexual crimes against minors by family members and acquaintances. Data were collected from a national sample of law enforcement agencies about arrests for Internet-related sex crimes against minors. Family and acquaintance offenders were nearly as numerous as offenders who used the Internet to meet victims online. They used the Internet in various ways to further their crimes including as a tool to seduce or groom, store or disseminate sexual images of victims, arrange meetings and communicate, reward victims, or advertise or sell victims. Prevention messages and investigation approaches should be revised to incorporate awareness of such cases and their dynamics.

Gillespie, A. A. (2004). Tackling grooming. *The Police Journal*, 77(3), 239-255.
<https://doi.org/10.1350/pojo.77.3.239.54092>

In recent years there has been increasing concern over the use of the internet and other communication technologies to groom children for abuse. The government responded to this pressure by creating an advisory group, The Home Secretary’s Internet Task Force on Child Protection, which proposed new legislation, eventually enacted as s. 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This article explores why this provision was created and considers how it can be used to safeguard children.

Berson, I. R. (2003). Grooming cybervictims: The psychosocial effects of online exploitation for youth. *Journal of School Violence*, 2(1), 5-18. https://doi.org/10.1300/J202v02n01_02

Presents an overview of the benefits and risks of Web-based interactions for youth. Discusses, as an illustrative example, the psychosocial effects of online "grooming" practices that are designed to lure and exploit children by enticing them, typically in a nonsexual way, toward a sexual encounter. Suggests constructive solutions and a plan for action to foster protective and productive learning.

O'Connell, R. (2003). [A typology of cybersexexploitation and online grooming practices.](#) Cyberspace Research Unit, University of Central Lancashire. 22p.

Gillespie, A. (2002). Child protection on the internet challenges for criminal law. *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 14(4), 411-425.

This article looks at the issue of protecting children on the internet. It focuses on some of the problems for the law in combating potentially abusive contact on the internet, the response of the Government in framing new laws to combat these problems and the response of the police informing tactics to tackle the area.