Exploring the Narratives of Children & Young People displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The HSB Team:
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Aims of the Session

- Dominant Narratives of HSB
- The Dangers of a Single Story
- Narrative Psychology & HSB
- Exploring Practitioners Views & Experiences
- What is the HSB Project?
- What can you expect?
- How you can get in touch
A Narrative is:

“a story or report of connected events, real or imaginary presented in written or spoken work…a method of articulating life experiences in a meaningful way”

The stories we tell, the labels we assign hold powerful sway over our memories, behaviours & identities
The Narratives around Harmful Sexual Behaviour
A rapist aged FOUR is among almost 800 children investigated for sex crimes

Shock official figures obtained by the Sunday Mirror show nearly 800 under nines have carried out sex crimes on other children since 2009

Nicola Fifield
Group Exercise

Turn to the person next to you:

1. What thoughts and feelings come to mind after reading the news headlines?
2. How would you feel working with a child displaying harmful sexual behaviour now?
The Social Construction of a “Child Sex Offender” (Gavin, 2005)

- Predominantly Male
- Older
- Innately Evil
- Low Socio-economic status
- Uncontrollable or untreatable
- Female victim
The impact of Narratives on Children

- Our understanding of the other is primarily gained from stories and narratives (Kerby, 1991)
- Narratives, language and labels have the power to construct life trajectories (Foucault, 1967)
- Children displaying HSB confront negative social perceptions on a daily basis
- The privileging of a single identity – the sexualised child
- How does a child escape/change/alter the “risky” label?
- How do “high risk youth” negotiate ideas around normative childhood & adolescence (Ungar, 2001)
- Self or other definition – Troubled, troublesome or troubling children?
Practitioners views & experiences

- Universal vs. Specialist
- Overlooking victimhood
- Confidence
- Anxiety
- Risk & Fear

Practitioners
The Norfolk Harmful Sexual Behaviour Team
The Norfolk Picture

- 50% of all sexual offences against children and young people are committed by other children and young people (Norfolk Constabulary, 2017)
- Norfolk Serious Case Reviews – Victim or perpetrator?
- Increase in residential placement for CYP displaying HSB (DfE, 2015)
- Drug Gangs & County Lines
- Intra-familial HSB
- Online Perpetration
- Peer on Peer exploitation
- NSCB Child Sexual Abuse is a priority
- Early Adopter of the NSPCC HSB Framework & Audit
Who are we?

- Health and YOT Partnership & Cross Boundary Working
- Specialist Team: Clinical Psychologist & HSB Specialists
- Transforming the way we work with children & young people displaying HSB
- Raising Awareness & the developing workforce
- Support & specialist advice for the Team around the CYPF through Case Consultations
- Developing the role of HSB Community Consultants
- Offering specialist assessment & interventions
Our vision for Norfolk

“To have a skilled and confident workforce that is able to identify, assess and intervene across the continuum of Harmful Sexual Behaviours”
Normal
- Developmentally expected
- Socially acceptable
- Consensual, mutual, reciprocal
- Shared decision making

Inappropriate
- Single instances of inappropriate behaviour
- Socially acceptable within peer group
- Context may be inappropriate
- Generally consensual or reciprocal

Problematic
- Problematic or concerning behaviours
- Developmentally unusual or socially unexpected
- Consent unclear
- Lacking reciprocity or equal power
- May include compulsivity

Abusive
- Victimising intent/outcome
- Misuse of power
- Coercion/force to ensure victim compliance
- Intrusive
- Lacking informed consent or not able to be freely given
- May include expressive violence

Violent
- Physically violent sexual abuse
- Highly Intrusive
- Instrumental violence which is physiologically sexually arousing for the perpetrator
- Sadism

(Hackett, 2010)
Who do we work with?

- Children and young people under the age of 18 living in Norfolk & Waveney
- Worries and concerns around harmful sexual behaviour, including inappropriate or problematic sexual behaviour
- Where there has been NFA from the police
- Request for HSB Case Consultations can come from any professional working with CYP
- Enabling professionals to assess, understand and offer interventions for HSB to manage levels of concern and risk
- Specialist intervention for most complex cases
The HSB Training Triangle

- Universal HSB awareness raising
  Defining HSB and begin to understand levels of concern
- Assessing and addressing HSB in primary and secondary prevention
- Bespoke training for primary and secondary prevention - Specific to settings client group
- Tailored packages
- AIM ERASOR J-SOAP
- Communities of Practice, and Community Consultants
- Residential units, Health, Education, Children’s Services, Fostering
- Professionals working directly with CYP for a period of time
- All professionals working with children and young people for any period/setting
- Brook Traffic Lights
- CEOP, NSPCC, Lucy Faithful
- Specialist training
Emerging Feedback from Practitioners

“This was the first HSB consultation I have been provided for a case I had assessed. It was therefore useful for my own development to spend time with (HSB Team Member) to help not only understand the case we were planning for, but also the interventions available for future cases I may have” (Assessment Team Social Worker)

“It is good to be able to think about these cases in a cross-agency way and think about how we can all work together to form teams around these children and address their multiple needs” (CAMHS Worker)

“I found the continuum really helpful – clear working definition and model that would be useful to share with colleagues at school. Training has increased my understanding and will help in my role as D.S.L”
Emerging Feedback from children, young people & their parents/carers

“I haven't felt safe enough to talk about my sexual thoughts before, but here...I have”

“I felt understood and not judged”

‘I felt like nobody would be able to talk to me about my sexual thoughts before these sessions’

‘I spent hours looking for support for my son and was so relieved to finally find people who could help us...it’s not something that’s easy to talk to anyone else about’
Group Exercise

In Groups discuss:

1. Now that we’ve explored the narratives around HSB what are your hopes from the HSB Team in your professional role?
Thank you
Any Questions, Comments or Reflections?

Contact the HSB Team:
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