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1. Introduction

Many sociologists view the family as a basis to every society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children. It is very common for people to share the idea that the family provides shelter for its members. Here the relationship is based on trust, affection and love. However, these assumptions are proved as untrue, when violence and abuse are found within the family system, especially when the perpetrators are the parents themselves.

1.1. The situation in the Maltese Islands.

In order to struggle with these problems, the Cabinet of Ministers work for the improvement of Social Welfare Sector as well as community development. The rights of children have been the major trust to the development of the agency APPOGG in Malta, which was established in 1993. The Child Protection Services within APPOGG was the first service focusing on the protection of children. As from 1999, particularly 2000, various changes and developments were undertaken to provide coherent and integrated services within the domain of Children Services. As part of the services within Child Protection Services one finds the Supportline 179, which is a national helpline, since 1996, which has

been a listening ear to children who call in case of abuse, 24 hours a day. Since 1993 Child Protection Services experienced an increase in referrals. The following tables of statistics were provided by Mr. Gordon Sammut B.Psy (Hons) the research executive of the Domestic Violence Unit of APPOGG. The tables show the case turnovers, the type of abuse, the age categories, the gender and the home locality for the abused children for the years 1993 to 2004.

Table 1- Case Turnovers

	Case Turnover
1993	12
1994	65
1995	291
1996	570
1997	782
1998	880
1999	879
2000	993
2001	982
2002	1386
2003	1734
2004	1462

Table 2- Type of Abuse Crosstabulation

	Year of Opening												Total
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	
Abandonment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
At Risk	3	9	37	66	27	34	22	0	25	76	89	24	466
Bullying	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	0	0	2	0	2
Combination	6	13	42	60	59	62	107	0	89	207	290	130	1209
Emotional	0	3	14	8	21	13	15	144	10	44	59	22	235
Neglect	1	6	51	78	81	35	66	26	38	87	135	50	709
Physical	0	8	51	83	88	96	97	98	46	121	131	80	899
Prenatal	0	0	1	3	0	3	2	1	0	0	2	0	12
Sexual	5	9	32	41	48	64	46	59	20	66	96	47	533
Unidentified	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	6	3	25	20	8	68
Total	15	48	228	340	326	308	357	469	231	626	827	361	4136

Table 3- Age Categories Crosstabulation

	Year of Opening												Total
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	
0 to 5	0	0	1	3	3	4	18	54	47	106	163	92	491
6 to 10	3	4	32	51	59	81	94	117	62	205	255	111	1074
11 to 15	7	17	60	113	108	92	111	131	51	160	254	104	1208
16 to 20	3	12	71	89	93	89	95	131	49	118	106	34	890
21+	1	10	53	73	49	35	31	11	1	1	1	0	266
N/A	1	5	11	11	14	7	8	25	21	36	48	20	207
Total	15	48	228	340	326	308	357	469	231	626	827	361	4136

Table 4- Gender Crosstabulation

	Year of opening												Total
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	
Females	8	28	122	163	160	152	198	251	133	310	381	185	2091
Males	7	19	95	163	156	142	153	207	80	278	371	154	1825
Unknown	0	1	11	14	10	14	6	11	18	38	75	22	220
Total	15	48	228	340	326	308	357	469	231	626	827	361	4136

Table 5- Home Locality Crosstabulation

	Year of Opening												Total
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	
Gozo and Comino	0	0	0	3	8	10	7	17	7	21	15	5	93
Northern District	3	5	27	30	30	37	45	77	28	102	120	44	548
Northern Harbour District	6	9	76	114	97	98	127	125	88	174	247	100	1261
South Eastern District	0	6	22	44	38	20	40	45	34	90	99	53	491
Southern Harbour District	6	18	80	103	111	113	103	155	52	168	220	109	1238
United kingdom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unidentified	0	1	8	17	13	2	5	15	4	13	35	26	139
Western District	0	9	15	29	29	28	29	35	18	58	91	24	365
Total	15	48	228	340	326	308	357	469	231	626	827	361	4136

The aim of this research is to get the perception of professionals towards Child Sexual Abuse and Parental Gender. The perception of professionals within this

field of research is believed to provide an insight in the topic being researched. In addition by meeting professionals dealing with child sexual abuse, an understanding of the dominant belief of professionals in Maltese society towards child sexual abuse is provided, while tackling the question of whether fathers are more likely than mothers to turn to child sexual abuse in child rearing. The perception of professionals using snowball sampling will be analysed through the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

After introducing the subject, the second chapter provides an overview of the existing literature and theoretical positions. Chapter three describes the methods and methodology used to compile the study. Chapter four presents the findings and analysis of the interviews conducted with fifteen professionals who deal with cases of child sexual abuse and finally, the last chapter presents the conclusion of the dissertation followed by various recommendations of implementation and social policy.

2. An overview of Child Abuse

Some children will have fewer scars than others, just as some soldiers return from war unscathed or with fewer wounds. Very few however will be unchanged by the experience.

(Justice and Justice 1979, Cited in Bagley and King 1990:114)

Child abuse is a very complex issue and a vast amount of literature covers the different facets of this phenomenon. The National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect; an agency of the Federal Government established in 1974, expanded the definition of abuse to include non-physical acts as well. The agency's definition of abuse is;

The physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of child under the age of eighteen by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby.(Public Law, cited in Gelles.R.J.and C.P.Cornell,1985)

Gelles.R .J. and C.P. Cornell (1985), considered two categories of the general definition of violence, 'normal violence' and 'abusive violence'.

- *Normal violence* is the commonplace slaps, pushes, shoves, and spankings that frequently are considered as normal or acceptable part of raising children. These are the acts many people object to calling "violent". This is especially true for spanking.

"I spank her once a week-when she deserves it-usually when she is eating. I believe that a child should eat so much and that is it" (Gelles.R.J.1974)

- *Abusive violence* is more dangerous acts of violence which have the high potential for injuring the person being hit. Included in this definition are punches, kicks, bites, choking, beatings, shootings, stabbings, or attempted shootings and stabbings.

2.1 Different Types of Child Abuse

Abuse can be categorized into four types; neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

i. Neglect

Child neglect can be defined as a type of maltreatment that refers to the failure to provide needed age-appropriate care, such as food, clothing, education, supervision, medical care and other basic necessities needed for development of physical, intellectual and emotional capacities. Unlike physical and sexual abuse, neglect is usually typified by an ongoing pattern of inadequate care and is readily observed by individuals in close contact with the child; such persons include nurses, teachers and neighbors. Neglect can kill, and this is not only in cases of deliberate starvation. In cases of neglected children sometimes the cause is ignorance, the inability to care properly, apathy or a hopelessness about being able to care, or it can be a willful indifference as to whether the children receives any care or not. (www.preventchildabuse.com) Neglect can also be detected from

the state of the home in which one lives. This includes; dirty and smelly clothes and surroundings, broken furniture and damaged doors among other things. (Gilmour. A, 1988)

She would never notice the stain because she never changed the beds. The smell of dirt and urine permeated us as well as our surroundings, travelling us to school the next day in our clothes and hair and on our skin. (Lewis Kevin, 2003:13)

ii. Emotional abuse

This is probably the least understood of all child abuse, yet it is the most common, and can be the cruelest and most destructive of all types of abuse, because emotional abuse attacks the child's psyche and self-concept, the victim comes to see oneself as unworthy of love and affection. Children who are constantly shamed, humiliated, terrorized or rejected suffer at least as much, if not more, than if they had been physically assaulted. Emotional Abuse includes rejecting and ignoring a child, terrorizing and isolating the child from activities with his or her peers and locking a child in ones own room and corrupting the child by permitting him or her to use drugs and alcohol or watch pornographic material.

ii. Physical Abuse

This type of abuse is the most visible form of abuse and may be defined as any act which results in non-accidental trauma or physical injury. Inflicted physical

injury most often represents unreasonable, severe punishment. This usually happens when a frustrated or angry parent strikes, shakes or throws a child. Physical abuse injuries result from punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or otherwise harming a child (www.preventchildabuse.com).

iv. **Sexual Abuse**

It is very difficult for most people to talk about sexual abuse and even more difficult for society as a whole to acknowledge that the sexual abuse of children of all ages, including infants, happen everyday around the world. Sexual abuse has only received persistent research attention since the late 1970's (given the nature of the act, it is extremely difficult to study.)

Doyle, C. (1994) argued that child sexual abuse could be defined as an activity relating to sex organs, engaged in for sexual gratification which takes advantage of, violates or deceives children and young people. Abuse can be divided in extrafamilial and intrafamilial abuse. The former is used to denote abuse perpetrated by persons outside the family system while the latter is a name for someone who commits child sexual abuse within the family system; father, mother, step-father, uncle, aunt can all be potential perpetrators. Intrafamilial abuse is another name for incest.

Despite the long history, child abuse as an area of scientific and sociological inquiry is relatively new. All adults have the physical strength to abuse children as well as the emotional power to confuse their children. Although parents are usually thought of as loving and caring individuals one can not help asking;

what makes parents abuse their children? This dissertation aims at considering the above question and other issues, in relation to the various literature available regarding child sexual abuse.

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives

2.2.1. Feminists Perspective

An answer to the above question comes from the sociological theory of abuse. Susan Brownmiller (1976) argues that rape and sexual abuse of women and children is a product of society in which males dominate both politically and economically. Our society denies women and children power and make them inferior partners in decision making. In her work *Against our will* (1975) the author argues that incest in fact should be called “father rape” (cited in Cicchetti and Carlson, 1990).

“I believe rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear”

(Brownmiller 1975:14:15, cited in Howitt 1995:146) .Feminists see abuse as intimately connected with normal relations between men, women and children within society. They argue that mothers are often blamed for what is happening

to their children. This approach is wrong because it makes the mother responsible for everything that happens to her children. In this way, the mother is made to carry part of the blame for the abuse (Cicchetti and Carlson, 1990)

La Fontaine, J. (1990) held that in addition to their maternal role, women are expected to protect their children, but in the role of a wife they are expected to show loyalty to their husband. Their two roles, as wives and mothers, may relate them to both abuser and victim; the disclosure that her child has been sexually abused by her husband poses a severe role conflict.

Finkelhor, D. (1986) reported that children who live in families where the fathers believe that children should be obedient and women need to be subservient to men have a greater chance of being abused. Moreover, if the child lives without her mother, it increases her chances for sexual abuse threefold.

Generally boys and men learn to experience their sexuality as an overwhelming and uncontrollable force; they learn to focus their sexual feelings on submissive objects, and they learn the assertion of their sexual desires, the expectation of having them serviced.

(MacLead and Saraga, 1988:41, cited in Howitt, 1995:147)

The Feminist Analysis encompasses all existing theories and examines them in a context of gender relations. (Herman.J, 1981b, cited in Bagley and King, 1990:152)

According to feminist theories, children are objects of choice because of the value that a patriarchal society puts on the male being the dominant, powerful, and controlling member in initiating sexual relationships (Hite.S, 1981; Rush.F, 1980;Russell.D.E.H, 1986, cited in Whetsell Mitchell Juliann, 1995:48). Finkelhor.D and S.Araji argued that males connect with “partners who are younger, smaller and weaker than themselves”. One can say that children fulfill all of the above criteria. In other words feminists tend to see patriarchy and male socialization as not only the prime cause of child sexual abuse, but also as the cause of the oppression of women in general. This idea is further clarified by Rush.F (1980) and S.Brownmiller (1975) who argued that incest has its roots and continues to exist because society is patriarchal. Women and children in this type of society are the property of men. So males expect their wishes including sexual desires to be met by women and children. Hence men use force when their desires are let down. In addition Rush gave the example of the way females are depicted in the media and said that all of this makes the female child to be socialized in an inferior position in society and view the sexual abuse of females as “normal”.

A major criticism to the feminist theory is that it fails to explain at what point the victimized males become the male offender. In their model the feminist tend to give much more importance to the socialization of women rather than the socialization of men. The feminists tend to ignore the fact that boys can also be

sexually abused by adult males. The study of boys as victims of sexual abuse is new, and it is believed that boys have greater difficulty in disclosing this abuse because they are socialized to be more independent and self-reliant. Furthermore, the feminists tend to place more importance on the father-daughter incest. Herman.J and Hirschman.L, (1977) maintained that as long as rigid sex role stereotyping exists; in which mothers are relegated to being the nurturers and fathers the monetary providers, father-daughter incest will continue. Rape and incest meet the male need for power. Herman.J (1990) stated "sexual assault asserts male dominance and intimidates women; it also provides the aggressor with sexual pleasure" (cited in Whetsell-Mitchell Juliann, 1995:49).

Diana Russell (1984b) argues that there are several factors to explain the gender gap among perpetrators, namely why the large majority are males. She states that "women are socialized to prefer partners who are older, larger, and more powerful than themselves", while men "are socialized to prefer partners who are younger, smaller, innocent, vulnerable, and powerless" (1984b:229, cited in Bagley and King, 1990:186).

To sustain this argument Finkelhor (1982) identifies some of the socialized differences between men and women which predispose men to sexual abuse of children. Factors mentioned are;

- Men fail to distinguish between sexual approach and affection
- Men see heterosexual success as part of their gender identity

- Men tend to isolate sexual activity from the context of a relationship
- Men want younger and smaller partners

All these arguments are part of the cultural package surrounding the feminist's idea of the male socialization process.

Taylor.B (1981) suggested that the reason behind why most abusers are male is, because women are expected to provide affection to children independently of any sexual context. The way in which males are socialized provides difficulty in relating to children in non sexual ways, whenever they become physically close with children. (cited in Bagley and King, 1990:211).

2.2.2. The family perspective

Bentovin (1987) argues that the family perspective proposes that the individual's behaviour is influenced by the behaviour of the other family members. Therefore even if the child is the victim of abuse, the child is part of the pattern of family interactions and the child's behaviour could have in some way triggered forms of abuse .Similarly, Dale *et.al* (1986) maintained that the non-abusing partner contributes to the abuse by not acting, or by supporting the process of abuse Goldner *et al.*, (1990) argued that this approach has been particularly debatable when applied to child sexual abuse. Here abuse is thought to serve the function of restoring the equilibrium in these dysfunctional families. Inside 'conflict

regulating' families, the child is 'sacrificed' in order to keep the family together and regulate conflict. The mothers in these families are described as not fulfilling their expected sexual or emotional roles, thus the abusing fathers whose needs are not met, turn to the child to derive sexual pleasure and fulfilment. Moreover, this approach sees women not only as doing nothing to prevent the abuse from taking place, but also as actively encouraging it, because it serves their own purpose, for example by lessening the chances of themselves being subject of domestic violence.(Goldner *et al.*,1990 cited in Dallos and McLaughlin,1993).

Family theories suggest that the child becomes 'parentified', in that he or she assumes the caretaking roles involving care of both the physical and the emotional needs of the parents. This is carried to the extreme when the child becomes sexually involved with one or the other parent, or both parents. Here the needs of the children are given very little recognition by the parents. The child gives up 'the self' to meet the needs of the parents. (Whetsell Mitchell Juliann, 1995).

2.2.3. The stress theory: Environmental factors and child abuse

Parke.R.D. stated that; "Abuse... is an orderly outcome of a network of cultural and community forces that, in turn; affect the development of family interaction patterns leading to abusive incidents." (cited in Valiant Cook and Bowles, 1980:3)

According to the environment stress model, factors such as financial problems, income mismanagement, poverty and unemployment weaken the parents' control and may result in abusive behaviour (Tower Crosson, 1996)

Valiant Cook.J and R.T.Bowles (1980) argued that the level of stress experienced within a family increases the probability of child abuse or neglect. Families lower in the income structure of the society have fewer resources with which to meet family needs and are subjected to insecurities of numerous kinds. Moreover large families place more demands on parents than small families do. Children, who require special care, perhaps due to handicaps or hyperactivity, place heavy demands on parents. Life changes such as moves and job changes disrupt routines and require new energy for adjustment .The stress hypothesis sees parenting as a role requiring substantial energy and the parent as playing many roles each of which requires energy. Some people in stressful circumstances are not able to meet all the demands placed on them. As a result, they may fail to perform some expected tasks, such as child care, or express their frustration in the form of aggression.

Stress can explain why persons do not meet all of their role obligations. However, Valiant Cook. and Bowles believed that the stress theory cannot explain why persons under equal stress respond to their children in different ways. They argued that child abuse is more likely to occur in those families which are socially isolated than it is in those families which make part in a network of social support. It is assumed that families with social support are

more likely to have occasional relief from child-rearing duties. Hence, if social support is present; families are less likely to build up stress in child rearing and less likely to express the stress they do experience in abusive and neglectful treatment of children.

Gelles.R.J and C.P.Cornell (1985) add that clinical, official reports and survey data in USA are consistent in the finding that economic factors are significantly related to abuse. Low-income families have the highest rates of physical abuse and are the most likely to be reported. Those in the lowest income groups have two or three times greater rates of abuse than upper income families. Again, it is important to remember that abuse does occur in all economic groups, but it is most likely to happen among the poor or disadvantaged.

Given that poverty and unemployment are linked to violence towards children, it is likely that other forms of personal and family stress are associated with violence and abuse. Other stressful situations include the presence of a new baby, presence of handicapped person in the home, illness, death of a family member and child care problems. Poor housing conditions and larger than average family size are also risk factors for maltreatment of children.

(Gil, D.1970; M.Straus et al., 1980; B.Johnson and H.Morse, 1968 cited in Gelles.R.J and C.P.Cornell, 1985)

2.2.4. Cycle of violence: many times the abusers themselves are victims

I molested my [daughter] about the same age I was molested...The feelings that I had for my uncle at that time, I had the same feelings for [my daughter]...As far as what I was feeling when...my uncle was molesting me like that, I was thinking he must really love me, He's the only one that does that. None of the others do it. And at that time that's what I thought.

(Douglas.W.Pryor, 1996:35)

The above is part of an interview conducted by Douglas.W.Pryor which was found in his book *Unspeakable Acts: Why men sexually abuse children*.

Wolfe.D.A (1987) stated that being a victim of child abuse or the indirect victim of interpersonal violence has long been associated with the perpetuation of a cycle of violence across generations. Looking back, abusive parents often report that they were mistreated or abused during their own childhood. According to Valiant Cook and Bowles (1980), the neglect and abuse of children in any culture represents a breakdown in child socialization; being the process by which the child is taught the cultural norms and accepted and expected ways of behaviour. They maintained that a deficiency in the socialization process can lead to abuse and neglect of children later on in life. In addition they held that abusive parents were themselves abused and neglected, physically or emotionally, as children. Due to abuse experienced as children, these parents have suffered early fundamental damage to certain aspects of personality with the resulting inability

or serious difficulty in controlling aggression and tolerating frustration. (Carter,J, 1977)

One can conclude that previous childhood experiences involving abuse and family violence, predispose an individual to using similar methods during adulthood (Wolfe.D.A, 1987) On the other hand Gelles and Cornell (1985) believed that this cycle of violence does not mean that all victims will grow up to be abusers, nor are people who have no violence in their childhood experience result unaffected by violence.

2.3. The sexual abuser

Abusers of children have been for the most part divided into two separated and distinct categories, intrafamilial and extrafamilial abusers. (Pawlak, Boulet, &Bradford, 1991, cited in Whetsell Mitchell Juliann, 1995:35)The first category includes father-daughter, stepfather-daughter, mother-son, mother-daughter sexual abuse. Pedophiles and extrafamilial abusers are usually considered to be a separate and distinct group from intrafamilial abusers.

2.3.1. Extrafamilial Abusers

2.3.1a Pedophilia

Pedophilia is “sexual deviation which drives an adult to seek sexual gratification by involving children” (Riley, 1991, Cited in Doyle, 1994:17).

Howells (1981) argued that children are known to engage in various forms of sexual activity quite frequently during childhood. However, not all sexual experiences encourage pedophilia. While Howell's theory easily explains how sexual attraction begins, however, it does not explain why so many people pass through adolescence, having had adolescent sexual experiences without becoming adult pedophiles. One of the most widely acknowledged explanations of pedophilia is the preconditions model (Araji and Finkelhor, 1985, 1986). Essentially, this categorizes factors that characterize offenders motivating them to abuse, and the circumstances lead to offending into four basic types;

- i. *Emotional congruence*-Pedophiles are attracted to children because they lack dominance, this may include persons who cannot declare their position within their family, for example the mother may be considered to be the domineering figure in a particular family and so the father may feel useless and tries to fulfill his need for dominance by expressing it against children. Another factor can be that pedophiles have been sexually abused in childhood and cope with the experience by the repetition of the offence or by identification with the aggressor.
- ii. *Sexual arousal*-This concerns why children are sexually arousing to offenders, in fact laboratory tests show that some pedophiles get erections

to deviant images of children. In addition pedophiles are socialized by child pornography or advertising to regard children as sexual objects.

- iii. **Blockage**-This includes men who find difficulty in relating to adult females, have unresolved oedipal dynamics and have disturbances in adult sexual romantic/sexual relationships. There appears to be two categories of blockages: developmental (for example; castration anxiety, dysfunctional social skills, or marital discord); and situational, which includes strict beliefs about masturbation and extramarital sex.
- iv. **Disinhibition**-This explains why pedophiles do not have inhibitions or are able to overcome the moral and legal sanctions against performing sexual acts with children. Pedophiles may not feel guilty after performing a sexual offence and this may be the result from symptoms of senility, mental retardation and alcohol (cited in Cicchetti.D and V,Carlson,1989:103)

2.3.1b Cognitive Distortion Theory

Wyre (1990) argues that pedophiles try to justify their actions in various ways, so sometimes pornography is used as a way of reassurance. However, he rejects the idea of pedophiles using pornography as a 'safety valve' to keep them away

from the act of abuse. He makes it clear that pedophilia is an addiction, not cured by turning to other offences such as pornography.

Child abusers tend to put the blame of their offence on their family breakdowns; such as separated or divorced parents and on certain social problems such as unemployment. In addition, blame is attributed to wives who refuse sex and thus not satisfying their husbands' desires. Pressure at work is indeed another variable which child abusers tend to mention. However, the author makes it clear that these are nothing but excuses.

When they eventually become honest about it if they do they admit they are sexually attracted to children and that their masturbation fantasies, far from being those of normally adjusted men, are those of fixated pedophiles who have had and will continue to have sex with children (Wyre, 1990:56 Cited in Howitt1995:137)

Glasser.D (1989) suggested that the degree of psychological disturbance in the offender may be related to the age of his victim. He added that the younger the victim, the greater the psychological disturbance and the abuser tends to have negative feelings towards adult sexuality. This may include feeling of fear or condemnation or a mixture of both. He also added that; the age of the children to whom he is attracted is generally the age at which he was himself sexually molested. He identified a second type of pedophilia which is the consequence of

other pathologies such as schizophrenia; personality disintegrates, leading to a range of perverse behaviours. In the primary type of pedophilia, he saw an integration of the pedophile's ego and consequent stability of his personality. Here he identified between two broad classes of primary pedophilia;

the invariant which involves a long-term and exclusive involvement with children or adolescents who usually are boys. The invariant has no sexual and social interest with adults and expresses little or no shame or guilt about offences.

The other type of pedophile is the *pseudo-neurotic* where one appears heterosexually oriented towards adults, however pedophilic fantasy may be used to enable apparently normal intercourse with the adult partner. In contrast to the invariant pedophile the pseudo-neurotic claims to have great feelings of shame and guilt about the offences. (cited in Howitt,1995)

2.3.1c Society as a Contributing Factor in Pedophilic Behavior

Finkelhor (1984) determined that frequently children are in some way related to the pedophile, thus giving easy access to the children. He sustained that certain forms of socialization contribute and maintain sexual abuse. He listed eight forms of socialization;

- Men are not taught to express intimacy in any other way except through sexual interactions.

- Women are oppressed members of society with little status of power.
- Parents who are rigid, authoritarian and punitive and do not ever discuss sexual matters with their children place them at increased risk for being sexually abused.
- Blended families place females at greater risk for abuse by a stepfather or mother's boyfriend.
- Traditional values that sanction against incest are less important than in the past.
- An increase in child pornography.
- Adults may turn to sex because their peers are not really sexually available.
- Children have been eroticized by the media.

2.4. Intrafamilial Abusers

Gelles.R.J.and C.P.Cornell (1985) identified a number of models that explain family violence. They argued that this model focuses on the abuser's personality characteristics as the first determinant of violence and abuse. Holden.G.W (1997) holds that maltreatment is inflicted by parents who are mentally ill or emotionally disturbed. According to this theory, abusive parents are significantly different from the rest of the population in terms of their mental health. In contrast to the above model the *sociological model* takes the position that the abusive parents are not abnormal but simply respond to the circumstances in

which they live. Such circumstances include culture, social class, poverty, stress, isolation, and lack of social support all combined to incline parents to abuse. Moreover in our society, individuals are constantly exposed to aggression and violence on television and at the movies.

A third theoretical approach to the maltreatment of children is the *social interaction model*, which attempts to understand abuse by focusing on the quality of behavioral interactions, because abuse occurs within social interactions, those events, must be the centre of attention. (Reid, 1986, cited in Holden.G.W, 1997:151).The last theoretical approach is the *ecological model* which combines the characteristics of children and their parents. The model predicts that maltreatment is likely to occur when there is an incompatibility, or conflict between the two components.

Tanti Dougall.M(1994) argued that more often than not, child sexual abuse and incest, tend to take place within the family context. Giddens .A (1997) argued that the 'dark side' of the family life is extensive and goes beyond what is usually shown on commercials and other popular media. He maintained that there are many aspects of the oppressive side of the family, including conflicts and hostilities. Among the most devastating in their consequences, however, are the incestuous abuse of children and domestic violence. Giddens.A (1997) claimed that the home is in fact the most dangerous place in modern society. He insists that in most cases, incestual relations involve father-daughter relations but father-son, mother-daughter relationships also occur.

2.4.1. Father-Daughter Intrafamilial Abuse

Female children are regularly subjected to sexual assaults by adult males who are part of their intimate social world. The aggressors are not outcasts and strangers; they are neighbors, family friends, uncles, cousins, step-fathers and fathers. To be sexually exploited by a known and trusted adult is a central and influential experience in the lives of countless women. (Herman.J, 2000)

Justice and Justice (1979) identified four categories of fathers who sexually abuse their daughters: symbiotic, pedophilic, psychopathic-sociopathic and other.

i. Symbiotic type

This category of abusers is the largest and includes those who did not receive enough love and protection during their childhood years, so they turn to sexual relations in order to get the affection needed. Symbiotic fathers have been categorized into four subgroups;

- a) *Symbiotic introverts* appear to be 'normal' fathers who are family oriented and loving, in addition they tend to spend little time outside their family boundaries. These people appear to be extrovert. However it is just a false image that they present. Symbiotic Introverts often feel stressed by work responsibilities and

dysfunctional with their wife and so in turn substitute their daughter for their wife.

- b) *Symbiotic rationalizers* are fathers who rationalize their incestuous acts and see them as a form of sexual education. In addition they see their act as preventing their daughters from other men. The father sees the daughter as his property and so has the right to perform this 'loving game'.
- c) *Symbiotic tyrants* see themselves as head of the family and thus are entitled to complete obedience. The engagement of the daughter with another man is seen as a betrayal toward him. Here Symbiotic tyrants may physically abuse males in the family instead.
- d) *Alcoholic incestors* use alcohol to lower the sense of guilt and put the blame of the act, on the alcoholic exercise. In this situation, the mother has abandoned her husband emotionally if not physically as well, and so the daughter replaces the mother's role. The alcoholic incestor engages in sexual molestation and then drinks to 'numb' the feelings of guilt.

ii. Psychopathic-sociopathic fathers

These types of fathers use sex with their daughters as a 'thrill-seeking' type of behavior. These fathers are not able to have enduring relationships with

anyone and use the sexual act with their daughters only for their gratification and not to get close to her.

iii. Pedophilic incestuous fathers

These fathers are characterized by a sexual attraction to a prepubescent daughter. This offender loses interest once the daughter reaches puberty and may begin to sexually abuse other younger females in the family.

iv. Other types include the **psychotic** or **culturally-permissive** fathers. Here the fathers were nurtured in a family where sexual behaviors are seen as normal and are encouraged. This may include instances where sexual behavior is part of daily life and so makes part of the cultural aspect.

2.4.2. Father-Son Intrafamilial Abuse

“...father –son incest is rarely reported, perhaps because it violates two moral codes: the one against incest and the one that has previously existed against homosexuality” (Justice and Justice, 1979, cited in Whetsell Mitchell Juliann 1995:67). Male children are culturally socialized as from a young age to be tough and not express feelings of tenderness. Boys are taught to be rough and not to cry when something goes wrong or when they are hurt.

Although males may have increased difficulty in disclosing sexual transgressions against them, literature presented reveals that male children and adolescents are

indeed sexually abused. Kempe and Kempe (1984:190) argued that boys tend to react worse than girls when they are sexually victimized. They argued that both father-son and mother-son incest leave a boy with great emotional distress, this makes boys unable to handle stress situations and block emotional growth.

2.4.3. Mothers as Intrafamilial Abusers.

Ogilvie.B.A. (2004) argued that the majority of sexual abuse literature has focused on male-perpetrated abuse or primarily father-daughter incest. Until recently, mother-child incest was considered to be virtually nonexistent. She makes reference to what Finkelhor and Browne (1985) wrote; that females are more likely than males to be victims of childhood sexual abuse. In addition they estimate that roughly 70 percent of sexually abused victims are females. Sexual abuse of females starts earlier than does abuse of males, and females are more likely than males to be assaulted by a family member. The author maintained that despite the increase in research into what was once a taboo subject, information still tends to be limited, when compared to specific areas of child sexual abuse; especially intrafamilial sexual abuse and sexual abuse of females by male perpetrators. Society remains ignorant about the lives of female offenders. Although the research evidence still indicates that fathers are most frequently the perpetrators of incestuous abuse and daughters are most frequently their victims, new research and clinical evidence indicate that mothers, in larger numbers than had previously been indicated, may be

accomplices to or co-offenders in father-child incest or may also be sole perpetrators with children of either sex. (Courtois.C.A, 1988)

2.4.3a Mother-daughter Intrafamilial Abuse

Recent research suggests that mother-daughter incest is not rare; it is underestimated and underreported because its occurrence involves the breaking of two taboos; incest and homosexuality. In a 'homophobic' society such as ours; a mother's incestuous wishes towards daughters are far more forbidden and shameful than towards sons. Mother-daughter incest is a greater moral taboo than other types of family incest. (Oglvie.B.A, 2004). The author expands the argument by saying that several factors contribute to the underestimation and underreporting of the phenomenon of mother-daughter incest. These factors are;

- *Societal denial of the possibility that mothers may sexually exploit their children*-female pedophilia has been reported in the literature as infrequent, and female sex offenders have rarely been studied and poorly understood. Moreover, the extent of sexual abuse by females remains a controversial issue. Society continues to assume that very few females are perpetrators due to the general disbelief that this can occur. It appears that incest by a male or father is viewed by our society as

more normal and acceptable than similar behaviors perpetrated by a female or a mother.

- *Cultural images of motherhood*-women, and in particular mothers, are not viewed as sexual, violent, or aggressive, but rather as gentle, passive, and non-sexual. Mothers are expected to nurture and rear children with warmth, caring, and guidance. To deal with the knowledge that a mother, the primary protector, is abusive to her child, much less sexually abusive, is to strongly challenge our cultural images of motherhood. This is because, society tolerates a greater degree of closeness, of physical intimacy, between mothers and daughters; thus making recognition of incestuous acts between mother and daughter, is more difficult.
- *Stigmatization*- Mother-daughter incest survivors often report that the sexual abuse they experienced at the hands of their mothers is the most hidden aspect of their lives. During their childhood, the majority of mother-daughter incest victims do not tell anyone about their abuse. Mother-daughter incest survivors describe their sexual abuse as shameful and stigmatizing due to the uniqueness of the experience and the isolation of the abuse. In fact they are left with a deep sense that something is significantly wrong with them. This happens because in addition to the sexual abuse, there is also a homosexual connotation.

Moreover victims see their type of sexual abuse as more rare than any other type of sexual abuse.

2.4.3b Mother-son Intrafamilial Abuse

Krug (1989) suggest the following as a way of explaining why males rarely report sexual abuse by their mothers;

- Men cannot become impregnated
- Mothers are viewed as “all good”
- Males are ashamed to disclose anything regarding maternal incest
- The myth has been perpetrated in society that males are not affected by molestations from females
- Both clients and professionals have been unaware to the correlation between mother-son incest and adult male interpersonal relationship difficulties.

Often when sex occurs between a mother and a son, the male may view himself as being responsible. In addition, maternal incest can be seen as a form of affection.

Nasjleti (1980) responded to this notion by arguing that boys fear that they have a mental illness specifically because they are having sex with their mothers, because mothers are seen as non sexual beings who are incapable of abusing their own children. So boys tend to take all the blame of the molestation. (cited in

Whetsell Mitchell Juliann 1995:71). In addition there is what is referred to as the conspiracy of silence that has to do with the male ego, particularly that of being able to defend himself and the stigma of homosexuality.

2.5. Factors Affecting Trauma

Groth.A.N (1978b) considers the amount of trauma experienced by victims of child sexual abuse and argued that the nature of the victim's relationship with the offender and the duration of the relationship make a difference in the amount of trauma a child go through. Additionally the type of activities endured and the degree of aggression of force involved during the sexual act, also play an important role. (Cited in Bagley and King, 1990:115)

Finkelhor (1986) provides a model of four traumatizing factors based on the subjective reactions of the victim. The four factors identified are listed below;

Traumatic sexualisation can occur when a child is constantly rewarded by an offender for sexual behavior that is inappropriate to his or her level of development. Abused children may have been rewarded for actions such as grabbing of genitals or breast of an adult, by affection, since this can be part of the plan of the abuser.

Betrayal is the dynamic in which children discover that someone on whom they were vitally dependent and who was trusted has abused that trust and has caused them harm. Bannister, A. (1992) argued that building trust with someone who has been sexually abused means being sensitive to the fact that the abused

may be afraid of all men with beards if their perpetrator wore a beard or being afraid of all women in white coats if the sexual abuser used to wear a white coat. She added that being alone with a stranger can be frightening unless reassurance is given by familiar friends close by. On the other hand having a number of adults in the room, can still be an ordeal for a child who has been betrayed.

A sense of *powerlessness* can be experienced by the victims of abuse where the child's will, desires, and sense of efficacy are continually disregarded. In addition the child feels helpless to influence events whatever her or his wishes or desires or sense of what should be. This sense of powerlessness refers to the victims' sense of being unable to do anything with the situation and in addition they tend to feel stuck. Bannister added that extreme feelings of powerlessness can lead to dissociation. Dissociation is a defense mechanism which the mind employs to escape an unbearable situation.

Stigmatization refers to the process by which negative connotations, such as badness, shame and guilt, is communicated to the child around the experience and then become integrated in the child's self-image. Here the child's own perception of self becomes damaged, with feelings of being 'dirty' and degraded. Here again the author held that those who have been sexually abused feel a particular stigmatization that is not necessarily present in other forms of abuse. This sense of stigmatization is even greater when the reaction of family members, and friends, to the disclosure of sexual abuse is often to blame the child, unless the child is very young. It can be said that disbelief is a form of blame.

Bagley and King (1990) said that keeping the secret of having been a victim of sexual abuse may increase the sense of stigma, since it reinforces the sense of being different.

2.6. Effects of sexual abuse

The lasting effects of child abuse and neglect on children are varied and have been widely studied in literature. Cicchetti.D and V.Carlson (1989) identified a number of manifestations in child victims which are strongly linked to the sexual assault experience. These are; passivity and compliance, anger and aggression, betrayal and mistrust, and hypersexualized behaviour. In addition after the disclosure process, when the sexual activity has stopped, the child must deal with the social meaning of abuse. In addition an abused child can experience a number of symptoms. These symptoms can be noted during early stages of abuse. Such symptoms can be physical including; headaches, stomachaches, vomiting, appetite changes, genital complaints, urinary tract infections and gynecological problems. Psychologically ; the child may be unable to concentrate, preoccupied with daydreams, depressed, less involved and interested in usual activities, anxious when around strangers, and generally more anxious and angry. Sleep disturbances and nightmares may also be present.

My nights were often as frightening as the days, haunted by nightmares. I would sometimes wake up in the dark room and cry for my mother without

thinking, but as soon as I heard her stamping towards the room I would instantly regret it, curling up into a ball, pulling the covers over my head to counteract the inevitable blows that would rain down. (Lewis.K.2003:13)

Behaviorally, children may be sexually oriented and masturbating openly: seductive in actions, language, or dress. Most authors agree that the effects are mainly harmful; emotionally, psychologically, physically and socially. Finkelhor (1986) on the other hand says that clinicians have not been able to prove that sexual abuse is traumatic, however in a review of the research, he concludes that accumulating evidence shows quite clearly that sexual abuse causes mental health problems in a significant portion of its victims. He separates effects into initial effects and long term effects. He preferred the word 'initial' to 'short term' because he says that the latter implies that the effects do not persist. He sums initial effects of child sexual abuse to include fear, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, anger and hostility together with inappropriate sexual behaviour. The author regards other effects of emotional instability, truancy, running away from home, guilt and shame and lowered self esteem, as 'sketchy' because the studies lacked adequate comparison groups and standardized measurements.

The author, confirms that many of the long term effects mentioned in clinical literature, namely that victims of sexual abuse in childhood, grow up to suffer from depression, self destructive behavior, anxiety, feelings of isolation, stigma, poor self esteem, mistrust in others, sexual dysfunction and a tendency of re-

victimisation. Groth.A.N (1986) in Finkelhor (1986:165) makes the following statements based on his clinical experiences. The greatest trauma occurs when:

- a. Sexual abuse continues over a long period of time.
- b. Occurs with a closely related person.
- c. Involves penetration.
- d. Is accompanied by aggression.

Mac Farlane (1978), in Finkelhor (1986) includes three items to the list. These are: lack of support by parents to the disclosure, a degree of participation by the child, and if the child is older and knows about social cultures and taboos. The latter statement gives one the impression that since the pre-schooler will probably have no knowledge of the stigma of incest or social rules, it is permanent to assume that she or he will experience less shame, if at all, than older child victims. However the bulk of the studies found no significant relationship between age at onset and impact.

2.7 Conclusion

This dissertation is confined to only sexual abuse because it is important theoretically and practically, to differentiate acts of sexual abuse from other harmful but non-violent coercive acts. Sexual abuse is qualitatively different from other means of injuring people. Thus although sexual violence shares with other harm producing acts, the central characteristics of sexual abuse are unique.

Unless sexual abuse is treated separately from other abusive acts, it may be difficult to determine both the causes and solutions of parental sexual abuse.

3. Methods and Methodology

This section shall describe the methodology, the methods, the research design and the processes used in collecting data. The research question is 'Are fathers, more likely than mothers to turn to sexual abuse in child rearing?' The objective of this dissertation is to take the perception of a number of professionals in relation to this research question. Questions were asked to prove or disprove the research question set and uncover other areas of interest.

3.1. Qualitative Interviewing

It was decided that for the purpose of my research, qualitative analysis would be the most appropriate, as this is the only way in which perceptions of people could be analysed and the nature of the subject is also in itself a detailed form, so a quantitative method would be deemed as inappropriate. Bogdan.R and S.J.Taylor (1975) argued that qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour.

Consequently by means of qualitative methodology meaning is more significant while interpreting. Blumer.M (1984) stressed that while in quantitative social research concepts tend to be pre-formed and fixed, in qualitative research they tend to be fluid and emergent. By resorting to the use of the semi-structured interviews, which are derived from the qualitative technique, certain information was gained unexpectedly thus exploiting the technique while extracting unexpected, useful information. This was done by probing and asking further

questions from those that were previously set. All of this would not have been possible if a structured questionnaire was used.

Nevertheless, general statements and theories is not the aim of this dissertation as it will be based only on perceptions of professionals regarding the topic under study. In addition general statements are the objective of large scale quantitative studies not of qualitative research. The researcher seeks not truth and morality but understanding (Bagdon.R and S.J.Taylor, 1975)

3.2. Sampling

Qualitative and quantitative researchers move towards different ways of sampling. Quantitative researchers focus on the representativeness of a sample while qualitative researchers focus on the particular information which gives insight into social life. In quantitative research a population is precisely defined and so researchers make use of probability sampling. Thus the sample permits the probability that each sampling unit will be included in the sample. Alternatively, qualitative researchers gather data where it is impossible to draw up a probability sample. Therefore qualitative researchers go for non-probability sampling.

The sample in this research consisted of fifteen professionals; three counsellors, one psychiatrist working at St Luke's Hospital, six psychologists (three of them

were child psychologists), three social workers, a police inspector of Vice Squad (as only three inspectors work within this area) and the Head of Home of *Dar Merhba Bik* (a shelter for battered women and their children) . The counsellors were the Policy Coordinator of the Ministry of Education and a counsellor at the Child Safety Services at the Education Unit in Floriana. These two were chosen to make part of this research as they occupy an important role in cases of Child Abuse; being the only two who work within The Policy Unit and Child Safety Services. The other counsellor deals with adult survivors of child sexual abuse. One of the psychologist who was interviewed works at the Agency APPOGG and she has been the only child psychologist within this agency for the last ten years, while the other psychologists work on an independent basis; that is do not work with a particular agency against domestic violence. The social workers who were interviewed work within APPOGG, *Support* and *Dar Merhba Bik* respectively.

This sampling unit was chosen with the technique of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling may simply be defined as a technique for finding research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on. (Vogt, 1999).

This type of sampling method was used due to the fact that there were a number of gatekeepers. Moreover contact with the perpetrators and victims of child sexual abuse was not possible because victims and perpetrators of abuse are all

protected by the Data Protection Act in terms of confidentiality. The ideal number of links in snowball sampling varies and depends on the purpose of the study. Fifteen participants were chosen as it is quite an appropriate number in order to give essential information. The data collected is varied that is it gives a number of view points and at the same time it is a quite manageable number in order to provide an adequate in-depth study and data analysis of information given by respondents. The process was initiated by phoning up a well known psychologist who works within this area and asked whether she knows other professionals who might be willing to talk about the subject under study. Sequentially, after each interview the respondent was asked to indicate another professional working with victims or perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

The assumption for using this type of sampling method is that a bond or link exists between the initial respondent and others in the target sample, that is different types of professionals team up to solve a case of Child Sexual Abuse . Furthermore this type of sampling technique was chosen because the aim of this dissertation is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive. Becker's comment on this method of creating sample is interesting: "The sample is, of course, in no sense 'random'; it would not be possible to draw a random sample, since no one knows the nature of the universe from which it would have to be drawn" (Becker 1963, cited in Bryman.A, 2001:98)

Through the use of such a sampling method, respondents were obtained although they are few in number; some degree of trust was required to initiate a

contact. Trust was developed as referrals were made by acquaintances or peers rather than other formal method of identification. With the use of snowball sampling in-depth results were produced. A detailed recount of a particular incident of child abuse was given by each professional while giving general information about other cases of child sexual abuse. A point in favor of snowball sampling is that using the quantitative tradition can lead to lack of responses from the subjects. On the other hand using snowball sampling ensured that all contacts were willing to participate in this research and helped to attain and comprehend data regarding the research question set.

3.3. Research Management

The data for this project was obtained buy utilizing an interview, which was more in the form of a conversation held at the professionals' work premises and offices. The interview was not totally structured and face-to-face interviews were conducted. Further questions from those pre-set where asked, this means that probing was used to extract further information from the respondents. Although further questions were asked to give more detail and provide clarification, the process of leading and forcing the person in any direction was avoided as much as possible. In other words the respondents were left free to express themselves and give their perceptions. Bryman.A. (2001) argues that questions in a semi-structured interview may not follow on exactly in the same outline schedule.

Questions which are not included in the interview guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees. However, more often than not, all questions were asked and similar wording were used from one interview to another.

The interview included only questions which are open ended as these type of questions allow respondents to compose their own answers rather than choosing between a number of preset answers. This may be more likely to provide valid data since respondents can say what they mean in their own words. (Haralambos.M. and Holborn.M, 2000). Since face-to-face interviewing provides such detailed information, and being very time consuming, each interview varied significantly in length. The length of each interview varied from three quarters of an hour to one hour and a half, however this depended on the amount of experience and knowledge the interviewee had to share.

3.4. Pilot Study

Having selected a research method and chosen a method of selecting a sample, a pilot study was conducted. Haralambos.M and M.Holborn (2000:998) argue that “a pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted before the main research in order to check the feasibility or to improve the design of the research.”

Piloting the interview schedule proved to give experience of conducting such interviews and elicited a greater sense of confidence. The pilot study included interviews with three professionals whose results are not published in this study. The pilot study was conducted in order to provide a more holistic analysis of the questions and check the feasibility of each question while providing the required data.

3.5. Recording the interviews

The interviewer's data consists almost entirely of spoken material that come through the interview and these are overwhelming in volume. The interviewer cannot just sit back, listen and jot down each and every uttering that is said, as it is not the aim of this study, to reproduce in detail all information. To solve this problem, all interviews were tape recorded with the professionals' consent, and transcribed afterwards. As a matter of fact tape recording was used because;

the interviewer is supposed to be highly alert to what is being said following up interesting points made, prompting and probing where necessary and drawing attention to any inconsistencies in the interviewee's answers. It is best if he or she is not distracted by having to concentrate on getting down notes on what is said. (Bryman.A.2001:322)

Since tape recording can only capture utterings, voice tonalities and silence gaps, any striking non-verbal expressions made during the interview were recorded.

Consequently minimal notes that did not interfere with the flow of the conversation were taken, with 'filling the blanks' of data afterwards during the transcribing process.

Another point worth mentioning is that the interviewees did not find any difficulty in the conversation being recorded and they were all willing to share the information and data they possessed, while respecting confidentiality of the perpetrators and victims of child sexual abuse.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

"Conducting research that may violate the rights and welfare of research participants is neither the intent nor the major interest of social scientists. The sole objective of research is to contribute to development of systematical verifiable knowledge."(NachmiasD. & Nachmias C., 1996:77)

3.6.1. Informed Consent

Research involving human participants should be performed with the informed consent of participants. Each and every respondent in this research was provided with a letter of consent, which had to be signed prior to initiating the actual interview. Primarily the respondents were contacted by phone and asked whether they wished to participate in the research project, following this, an appointment was set. Subsequent to this, a letter was presented indicating the aims of study and how the information was to be processed. Most importantly

the letter of consent indicated that the interview will be tape recorded and when the process of transcribing will be done, all the recordings will be erased.

3.6.2. Confidentiality

Commonly used methods to protect participants are anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity, as regards professionals was not possible in this type of research as professionals were known by name, contact numbers were available and there was a face-to-face contact with the respondents. Yet there was total anonymity where perpetrators or victims of child sexual abuse were concerned. No identifiable features were asked about any of the subjects under study.

Conversely, participants in this research were told that the information they provided will be treated as confidential, that is even though the participants are identifiable, the information provided will not be revealed publicly.

3.7. Limitations

The main limitation in this type of study was that the participants were not the victims and perpetrators themselves but the professionals working with them. Hence, their opinion may be biased and generalized. However this was done because of ethical considerations and the research is ethically obliged not to harm the victims and perpetrators and intrude in their privacy.

In the sampling process, several limitations were encountered. Data was supposed to be collected from primary sources being the perpetrators and victims of child sexual abuse. However agency APPOGG could not give access because these people are protected by the Data Protection Act were personal data can not be given out without the subjects consent when dealing with information related to an identified or identifiable natural person. An identifiable person is one who can be identified directly or indirectly in particular by reference to factors specific to the physical, psychological, mental, economic, cultural or social identity.

The second attempt was to interview social workers within the same agency, however, access was once again denied due to the number of caseloads APPOGG was supporting at that time. Following this, snowball sampling was employed using contacts. This means that one professional led the researcher to another professional. Such reference was possible because, when a case of child sexual abuse is being investigated, different professionals such as; psychologists, social workers and the police, work together to support the case.

Due to these limitations data collection shifted to secondary sources that is professionals who assist cases of child sexual abuse were interviewed. It is important to emphasize that the data obtained is based on the perceptions of professionals as regards the perpetrators and victims of child sexual abuse, therefore one must allow for misperceptions. The fact that during these

interviews one tended to answer questions abruptly, defined to a particular line of thought, can also be viewed as another limitation. In fact no professional had the chance of going through the questions before actually answering. Another point worth mentioning is that although in-depth interviewing was used, the answers given were not on a individual case but regarding a broader idea of the cases that professionals dealt with before.

4. Presentation of Findings, Analysis and Discussion

This chapter represents the findings of the research through the face-to face semi-structured interviews. These were conducted with fifteen professionals dealing with cases of Child Sexual Abuse. Here the findings will be analysed and presented with the work of other researchers so as to present a stronger argument. Data will be categorised in different topics, to make the analyses more flowing however all topics are related to one another. Different topics regarding Child Sexual Abuse, from the perception of professionals will be discussed and put forward. Some citations of direct speech; collected from the interviews conducted, will be presented to provide a more clear picture of the topic under

discussion. Although the respondents who were interviewed vary in their profession, they all assist cases of Child Sexual Abuse. Some of the respondents deal specifically with the abused children, some with people who have been abused when they were still young, and others with the perpetrators themselves. The following table is a simple synthesis of the professionals who were interviewed.

Table 6-Respondents

Profession	Number of Participants	Work Location
Counsellor	3	CSS, Policy Unit, Counseling Service
Psychiatrist	6	St Luke's Hospital
Psychologist	3	APPOGG, Personal Clinic
Social Worker	1	APPOGG, <i>Support, Merhba Bik</i>
Police Inspector of Vice Squad	1	Police Force
Head of Home	1	<i>Merhba Bik</i>
Total	15	

4.1 What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Taylor (1992) argued that child sexual abuse exists when;

another person, who is sexually mature, involves the child in any activity which the other person expects to lead to their own sexual arousal. This might involve intercourse, touching, exposure of sexual organs, showing pornographic material, or talking about things in an erotic way (cited in Giddens.A; 2000:160)

With Child Sexual Abuse, professionals meant any person under the age of eighteen. Above this age it would be considered as rape, sexual assault but not Child Sexual Abuse. Respondents differentiated between two types of sexual abuse: contact sexual abuse and non-contact sexual abuse. Contact sexual abuse means contact between the body of the perpetrator and that of the victim that will involve anything from petting, kissing, intercourse, anal, vaginal and oral sex. Non-contact sexual abuse includes voyeurism; looking at the body of a child in a sexual manner while the child is undressed or washing. Other types of Child Sexual Abuse include exhibitionism; which involves a person exposing themselves to a child, sexual innuendos, and verbal sexual abuse. Pornography is another dimension of Child Sexual Abuse, which involves showing a blue film to a child or showing pornographic magazines for one's own stimulation. Another accomplishment of pornography is taking pictures of children, videos of children in pornographic situations or including also the use of the internet. Pornography is defined as a form of Child Sexual Abuse because you are;

"Opening the door for sexual knowledge which is beyond what children would know at that time"

Taking it to the other side, professionals argued that if adults bar any type of sexual knowledge, this can also be viewed as sexual abuse. Here children are given the impression that any type of sexuality is wrong; for example a couple kissing their partner in front of the kids or a couple hugging. Both extremes are

seen as from of abuse. Professionals tend to stress that pornography includes also a child seeing another child or an adult engage either in sexual intercourse or else in anything that has to do with intercourse, for instance: fondling genitalia, oral intercourse or masturbation. Additionally sexual advances referring to physical and sexual characteristics of the child in a way to make the child feel sexually excited is also seen as Child Sexual Abuse. Sexual abuse can also be seen as the;

“Level of intimacy to which a child is not prepared for; neither physically, emotionally and psychologically. Furthermore they do not know the consequences that this intimacy will bring about”.

The police inspector of the Vice squad provided a more systematic definition saying that:-

“Meta ahna nakkuzaw lil xi hadd b’ abbuz sesswali; ikun ikometta atti indidenti fuq persuna jew fil- prezenza ta’ persuna taht l-eta’ ta’ 18-il sena. Dawn l-atti jistaw ivarjaw bejn bewsa li ma kienx hemm kunsens ghalija sa l-att sesswali komplet, u ma taghmilx differenza jekk ma sarx fuq tifel jew tifla”

“When we accuse someone of sexual abuse, he/she would have committed indecent acts in the presence of a person under the age of 18. These acts can vary from a kiss which was not permitted, to the complete sexual act. It does not make a difference whether it is a boy or a girl”

One of the respondents further amplified the definition, by saying that she has encountered cases where the child was coached by a parent on what to say. She said that this is almost the worst kind of sexual abuse that can be done, because

there is a blurred vision of reality and non-reality. She stressed that if the child repeats a story a few times, she or he will think it really happened, but this also depends on the age of the child.

4.2 The incidence of Child Abuse

The data obtained shows clearly that the incidence of Child Sexual Abuse is not increasing, however awareness and disclosures among the general public have increased. The police inspector maintained that because children are made more conscience of what is appropriate touching and what is not, more reports to the police are being made. An informant argued that when *Child Protection Services Unit* (CPSU) started out in 1994, there were no statistics and professionals were told that child abuse does not exist in Malta. However within the first few months of operating many referrals were done. It was stressed that in the two entities which cater for Child Abuse; mainly being agency APPOGG and *Child Safety Services* of the Educational Division, both have statistics. If one compares the past five years of Child Safety Services and the past ten years of agency APPOGG one will see an increase in reference. One can say that the disclosures have increased. It was found that there is a new referral of child abuse each day from the school system, making this number to 350 cases per year or 400 cases per year being referred to the school. This increase in reference has occurred due to the great emphasis that has been given to this issue, both on a national level by media campaigns from agency APPOGG and also on a school level from the

Educational Division which currently offer prevention programs to schools. Trained staff go to schools and dutifully meet class by class and spend a whole day delivering a day seminar on the issue of child abuse. These types of programs are delivered to students, parents as well as teachers. What has happened is that with more exposure from the media, more services available and the perception of the general population being heightened because of media campaigns, more referrals of child abuse are being sent out. Another point worth mentioning is that children are more exposed to sexual material on the media, so this could be another form of abuse. Although there is no direct contact with the child, certain information is being fed to them without them being aware of the consequences.

Unfortunately what happens because of an increased awareness is that, people who have not been actually sexually abused will categorize their experience as sexual abuse. Very often this may be the reason why the number of sexual abuse cases seems to increase. The psychiatrist who was interviewed argued;

“I have come across cases where there was no sexual abuse, but the person retained herself to have been sexually abused because the counsellor, social worker or whoever told her that that was abuse but up to that moment she didn't think it was abuse...”

The respondent added that the experience of abuse depends on the way the person perceives the abuse, the experience of abuse, and the more violent the abuse is, the more traumatic it becomes however;

“At least from my experience, the way they process it, depends on what and how they are taught to process it, and the people around them.”

A case which sustains this argument is that of a young lad whose mother had a habit of putting him on her lap and touching his hair, chest, body and genitals;

“Hekk joqogħod jitfissed b’mod komplet”

“He used to be cuddled in a complete form”

However when this lad as an adult talked about it to the psychiatrist; he remarked that he did not perceive this experience as abuse. One can say that there is always the question of the person not seeing it as abuse yet society perceiving it as so.

4.2.1 Most common type of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse usually happens in a process it starts with emotional attention and then moves on to kissing, petting and fondling. All this occur as part of the “grooming process”, in which child sexual abusers desensitise children to touch by progressively moving from nonsexual to sexual touch (Hollin&Howells, 1991, cited in Whetsell-Mitchell Juliann, 1995:53) Mutual masturbation petting, and fondling of genitalia are the most common types of contact sexual abuse which were delineated by professionals. However one can find cases were perpetrators will carry on to intercourse. With non-contact abuse professionals held that little statistics are available. Very often this type of abuse is taken very lightly; if somebody exposes him or herself to a child or if someone says something in a

sexual manner it is unreported. Almost all respondents said that there is an increase in the use of pornography where the perpetrators are making contact with children through chat rooms. The “grooming process”; initial phase of abuse, is starting in a technological way, through chats, e-mails and sms, up to the point when adults agree to meet the child and that is where the sexual abuse starts.

While conducting interviews, the researcher found out that the majority of cases which professionals dealt with consisted of mothers abusing their sons and fathers abusing their daughters; however this is not the rule, as cases of mother-daughter and father-son incest were reported too. Earlier on the police force used to get more reports of girls who were abused rather than reports of boys. This may be because it is considered as a bigger taboo if a boy has gone through a form of sexual abuse. However this does not mean that girls were abused more than boys.

“‘Earlier on’ kien ikollna rapporti ta’ ‘girls’ mal- missirijiet pero illum ikollna ‘complaints of boys’ daqskemm ikollna ghal ‘girls’, jigifiri ma jfissirx li qabel kienu jabbuzaw aktar mill – ‘girls’ u issa mill-‘boys’. Ifisser li l-‘boys’ illum qed jitkellmu ukoll”

“Earlier on we used to have reports of girls being abused by fathers; however nowadays we have the same amount of complaints of boys as of girls. This does not mean that before they used to abuse more girls and now they abuse more boys. This means that boys nowadays are disclosing as well.”

This result is quite clear in statistics presented in the introduction of this dissertation; where from years the 1993 to 2004 the discrepancy between boys and girls who have been abused is only of 266 cases along the years. Moreover

one should take in consideration the number of abused cases which are unknown by gender. The number of abused boys is smaller throughout the years. This could be the result of three reasons; either boys are really at a minority of being abused when compared to girls, boys disclose their experience less or else some boys do not perceive such circumstances as sexual abuse. One could say that professionals agreed that many sexually abused children report a sense of isolation, feeling that they carry a guilty stigma and believing that their abusive experiences are unique. This stigma may be particularly burdensome especially for boys who have been abused by their father, because of the homosexual nature of their abuse, this burden actually lead to lesser disclosures by boys.

4.3 Sexual Abuse by Parents

Giddens (2000) commented that the phenomenon of child sexual abuse happens very much in the context of the family and termed this phenomenon as the “Dark side of the family”.

The absolute majority of cases regarding Child Sexual Abuse come from family members and among the most common is abuse by fathers and mothers. Professionals state that sexual abuse from strangers is very minimal. Furthermore this research study showed that sexual abuse comes predominately from male offenders, with all the professionals interviewed saying that abuse is perpetrated mainly by fathers, step-fathers, partners of mother, brothers, uncles

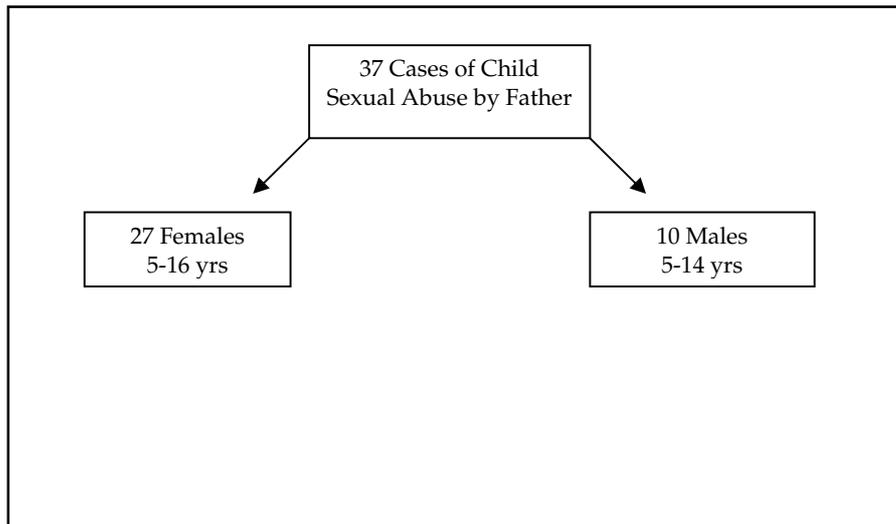
and grandparents. In fact a significant number of professionals said that they never dealt with cases of child sexual abuse where the mother was the perpetrator or they only came across a few cases along the years. For instance the child psychologist working within APPOGG reported that she only had two cases of sexual abuse by mothers on their children. Professionals stressed that cases of mothers abusing their children is not based on contact abuse but it is more concerned with pornography, exposure to sexual material and sexual acts. The police officer alleged that;

“Normalment il-‘perpetrator’ ikun il-missier. Jien ilni f’dan ix-xoghol minn 1993, u qatt ma kelli kaz fejn l-omm kienet l-‘abuser, speċjalment ‘sexual abuser.’ ‘Physical’ ; li jsawtu, jkollna, imma ‘sexual abuse’, jiena personalment bhala ‘investigating officer’ qatt ma kelli”

“Normally, the perpetrator is the father. I have been working here since 1993, and never had a case where the mother was the abuser, let alone sexual abuser. Physically violent; who beat up, we do get, but sexual abusers, personally speaking, as an investigating officer, I never had.”

The following figure was presented by the counsellor of *Child safety Services* within the Educational Division in Floriana. It shows cases of Child Sexual Abuse by fathers for the years 2000 to 2004. No cases of sexual abuse by mothers were indicated.

Figure 1



A counter argument was presented by Ogilvie.B.A (2004) where she commented that such low reference of abuse by mothers is because of society's ignorance about the lives of female offenders. She added that research does indicate a higher incidence of girls being abused by their fathers but this does not mean that abuse by mothers does not occur. The reasons behind this are stigmatization, cultural images of motherhood as a non-sexual being and societal denial of the fact that mothers can exploit their children.

4.3.1 Why do parents abuse their children?

Professionals found this question very difficult to answer because it is easy to understand literature and theories but when it comes to practice they found the issue beyond human comprehension. The whole argument of whether sexual abuse really has nothing to do with sexual attraction towards children was

debatable among professionals, and many of them said that there is some form of sexual attraction however the main thrust of why persons abuse is a question of power and control over somebody else. Giddens (2000:162) maintained that we cannot explain adult attraction to sexual involvement with children in terms of mental disorder. "Most child abusers do not seem to have a preference for sexual relationships with children as opposed to other adults. Rather it is a matter of availability coupled with power."

"While in a normal sexual relationship it is a comfortable, mutual and reciprocal fun, the person who has sex with his own kids needs to feel that he is totally in control of something which belongs to him, Now nothing can belong to me like my children and I can control nothing so much as I control my children."

Another reason provided was that abusive parents act accordingly because he or she was abused when still young, however a victim of abuse does not necessarily become a perpetrator of abuse. Alternatively, respondents pointed out that they encountered situations where people had inhibitions which they could have controlled and then at a certain point in their life, they lost control of these inhibitions and vent the attraction they had. This often happens with father-daughter incest. The socio-cultural aspect was also seen as a possibility of why parents abuse their children; here parents have a limited understanding of the harm sexual exposure to young children can do. Looking at all of the above possibilities, is actually giving a kind of a stereotypical answer of which one

reads about in books. One particular respondent claimed that an answer to why parents abuse their children is still not found, and that is one reason why therapy with abusers and perpetrators is so unsuccessful. It could be that each parent has his or her reasons, which are varied and so any form of generalisation is not going to result in a therapy which is suitable for everybody. Another reason which came out was that fathers may look at their daughter, particularly as a sexual object, and this maybe the result of some dysfunction within the relationship;

“Kelli missirijiet li ma jharsux lejn uliedhom bhala uliedhom imma bhala mara-‘like a sexual object’. Forsi minhabba problemi mal-mara.” “I had fathers who did not look at their children as children but as a woman-like a sexual object. It could be because of some problems with their wife.”

The following table summarizes the points discussed and some others mentioned;

Table 7-Reasons why parents abuse their children

Reasons why parents abuse their children	No. of Participants
power and control	7
cycle of violence	6
mother was sick	1
mental illness	4
sexual hang ups(can not express themselves sexually with adult so they use children instead)	1
dysfunctional relationship	2
look at child as sexual object	1
Socio-cultural	1
Stress	1

4.3.2 The parent as the abuser

The father was indicated by all fifteen professionals to be the most abusive parent towards both sons and daughters. Aggression is not so much present in sexual abuse; it is more of an emotional kind of aggression rather than a physical aggression. Penetrating a child is sexual aggression and there is clearly an amount of force which is very painful for the child but very often children are controlled and forced to do what the adult wants them to do through traits and emotional manipulation, rather than through hitting or beating a child. Aggression is used more in physical abuse by mothers towards their children rather than in sexual abuse.

“I don’t see abuse as aggressive but I see it as very seductive. It overcomes boundaries, in that way it is aggressive, but it is not explicitly aggressive. It might be physically aggressive, outwardly aggressive but it might have different ways of being aggressive.”

4.3.3. Do abusive parents admit?

Both mothers and fathers as perpetrators of sexual abuse deny such accusations;

“In the 100’s of cases I have been involved in, I find it difficult to actually remember a case where the perpetrator admitted in abusing the child.”

Professionals asserted that some perpetrators kept on denying even after sentenced to prison. Even after taking the responsibility of what parents have done, and they never feel guilty, they keep on insisting that it has not happened. On the other hand professionals gave encountered cases were the parent admitted of having sexually abused their child and they go on to give a really sad story of how sorry they are, and how they never meant to hurt any body.

“They say they did it out of love or sexual education on children. And so they say they are feeling guilty, but you are not really sure if they are doing it for the sentence or because they really are.”

Perpetrators tend to say that the child is lying and making up a story so as to get attention or else that the child is crazy. Another reason given is that the child must have been abused by someone else and is putting the blame on one of the parents. When some perpetrators finally admit, they give all sorts of reasons, such as; mental illness where abused themselves, lower inhibitions because of alcohol or drugs and finally putting the blame on the victim; saying the child encouraged him and so was given the strong temptation and could not resist.

“Ix-xitan ghamini! ghax nixba nismaha!”

“The devil blinded me! I am fed up of hearing it!”

“One blames the victim. Especially if they are girls, saying; Ahh she wanted to do it, or she let me do it, she used to come to my bed and stay with me ‘*tideddes mieghi fis-sodda u jiena ragel*’ And some of them go to explain it as they are men, it is like an automatic reaction for them to be turned on because there is someone in bed with them.

"Jiena ragel! x'tahsibni? Tad –demm u l-laham ux!" "I am a man! What do you expect? Made of flesh and blood!"

Glaser and Frosh (1988) pointed out that those men who sexually abuse children are particularly adept at rationalising their actions in terms of the provocations of their victims- the overwhelming seductive power of the children themselves. Occasionally, the language is that of concerned parent finding a particularly concrete way of educating his child.

More often it is the language of the male sexual animal, unable to control his passion in the face of desire. Sometimes, the language is specifically that of humiliation, familiar to all men, and to all women as recipients: 'she asked for it'. Such rationalises may appear extraordinary in the light of the realities of child sexual abuse ('poor man, brought down by the lust of that four-year old')

(Glaser.D. & Frosh.S, 1988:26)

Herman (1981, cited in Glaser and Frosh, 1988:27) quotes a psychiatry textbook which informs students that;

“The daughters collude in the incestuous liaison and play and even initiating role in establishing the pattern. The girls may be frightened and lonely and welcome their fathers’ advances as expressions of paternal love.”

However whatever fantasies or wishes children might have; professionals argued that it is adults who decide whether they will be the objects of sexual encounters, for adults have the power over children and can define and manipulate their desires as they wish. Giddens (2000) asserted that children are sexual beings, of course, and quite often engage in mild sexual play or exploration with one another. But the large majority of children subjected to sexual contact with adult family members find the experience repugnant, shameful and disturbing.

When perpetrators talk of the mother in terms of feeling guilty, they referred to her as the other victim of abuse to a certain extent not as an abuser. Mothers tend to have split loyalties, as they have to accept what their child is saying while supporting their husband, therefore they tend to feel torn apart. Mothers tend to go through massive guilt trips and asking themselves;

“Why didn’t I stop it?, Why didn’t I recognize it before? I didn’t satisfy my husband enough so he turned to my daughter or my son, I am not a good mother...”

4.4 The victim

4.4.1 Reactions of abused children

Some professionals commented that the trauma children go through when the abuser is the parent is even greater than if it was an in-law or a complete stranger. Chandler (1982) believes that incest is even worse than violent sexual abuse by a stranger. (cited in O'Hagan. K 1989). However what is also pertaining to parental abuse is when the child is not protected or believed by the non-abusive parent. All fifteen professionals stated that they have come across cases where the child was not believed after disclosing some form of abuse. The fact that the non-abusive parent knows what was going on and did not do anything about it to protect the child is even more traumatic for the victims. Herman (1981) notes that "many daughters believed that their mothers knew, or should have known, about the incest, and they bitterly resented the fact that their mothers did not intervene". He added that only a minority of girls told their mothers of the incest while they remained at home, and most of those who did were disappointed with the response.

"Most of the mothers, even when made aware of the situation, were unwilling or unable to defend their daughters. They were too frightened or too dependent upon their husbands to risk a confrontation...They made it

clear to their daughters that their fathers came first and that, if necessary, the daughters would have to be sacrificed. "(Herman 1981:81)

Here one could argue about the mother who has split loyalties between the father and the child- the mother wanting to protect the children but does not want to abandon her husband. As La Fontaine (1990) argued, the role conflict between mother and wife is not always resolved in favour of the child: some of them choose to give priority to the role of wife rather than that of mother; others may be forced to do so. Another point which could be added to this is that the mother might also be a victim of abuse and so she would be unable to protect her children.

Following this, professionals were asked if it is possible for a child to lie about an abusive situation. Ten professionals asserted that children do not lie, because even the details which are given regarding the abusive act are various, and even if children did lie, there is eventually another problem that should be tackled.

"What would a normal and stable kid get of it?"

On the other hand the remaining number of professionals maintained that this all depends on the age, while arguing that a three year old is incapable of setting up such a story but a fourteen or fifteen year old child is capable of doing so. This might be the source of the sexual dimension found in media. Or else, as a

child psychologist argued; a kid may be coached by another adult to relate a case of sexual abuse. La Fontaine (1990) argued that it is also believed by many people that children may say they have been sexually abused when they have not been, either to get the person they accuse in trouble or because they have been made to believe this or told to say it by another adult. A question that could be asked to link the above arguments is “Why would children tell lies about being sexually abused, when they are so often not believed?”

Table 8-Do children lie about an abusive situation?

Do children lie about an abusive situation	No. of participants
Children do not lie	7
If they lie, there is still a problem	3
Some children are capable of lying	5

The effects and reactions of children who have been sexually abused are in multitudes. First and foremost it brings about change in the way a child relates to others socially; this means change in behaviour, in mental stability and also in their physical being. Sexually abused children sometimes start to get sick and loose weight, which can result in eating disorders or obsessive compulsive traits. Sexually abused children feel a great sense of fear which can result in bed wetting and nightmares. Interviewees asserted a change in emotions, with children becoming withdrawn and shy or else become very aggressive. Victims of sexual abuse may become very promiscuous in attitude. One of the interviewed counsellors related a case where a seven year old girl, immediately

puts on a very seductive look when she meets a man and even the way she holds herself is very seductive. The professional detected this behaviour as abnormal and concluded that the girl must have been trained to act accordingly by her abuser, who in this case was her father.

“Now she thinks this is the way she should relate with all men and it is really very sad.”

Professionals reported that teachers often realize that something is wrong with a child; when an intelligent kid starts acting weird and all of a sudden starts doing very badly in school or becomes very violent and moody with their peers. Additionally, professionals commented that some children tend to feel very confused after an abusive act. This takes place because if the abuse did not happen in a violent way, but the children were introduced gradually from the non-sexual touch to the sexual touch, the body might react positively while the mind is questioning whether this should be happening or not.

“Jekk l-abbuz mhux qed issir b’mod vjolenti, u jekk dawn gew introdotti ghal abbuz ‘gradually’... allura jkun hemm din il-konfuzjoni; fejn il-gisem qed jiehu pjacir imma il-mohh is ‘rejecting it’.”

“If the abuse is not happening in a violent manner and if they were introduced for the abuse gradually...there is confusion; where the body is having pleasure while the brain is rejecting it.”

In addition to the guilt and self blame experienced by most sexually abused children, there is a wide range of other emotions that may operate to leave them confused or disturbed. The intimate sexual feelings evoked by the abuse and the

pleasure which some children derive from the sexual contact are often difficult for the child to voice and for professionals to hear. (Glaser&Frosh, 1988:117)

4.4.2. How is the child helped to disclose?

Actually coming to disclosure is the most difficult part of it all. Professionals maintained that they have to build a relationship based on trust before the child discloses. They continue saying that it is very unlikely to get a disclosure in one sitting; the episode is given in bits and pieces and then it is up to the professional to formulate the details. When children are not able to disclose because of their linguistic limitations or unwillingness to disclose; professionals make use of toys such as anatomical dolls, puppets, drawings and stories. As O'Hagan (1989) argued, skills and techniques for interviewing children under five and for facilitating disclosure of sexual abuse with the aid of anatomical dolls are two of the most popular learning areas. The author retained drawings, miniature homes and puppets to be other 'disclosure' aids. From drawings professionals can assess whether a child was sexually abused or not. Very often children who have been abused draw pictures which are very sexually oriented; which are beyond their age. Professionals referred to the details given by children to describe the sexual act. These may include details of the surroundings and smell of sweat making the sexual abuse more evident. Professionals pointed that children who have been abused by their father, or by any other male, tend to draw detailed pictures of the male sexual organ. Eventually children were able to

describe the process of erection and orgasm. An amazing case was that of a three year old girl who disclosed the whole story of abuse to the social worker without the need of any projective techniques. Difficulty in relating an abusive act is witnessed by professionals in court, where children are unable to explain what has happened because they do not have the linguistic capacity. Sometimes in court children are 'played around with' by legal experts in saying;

"Missek fejn imma? Misslek inniehek? halqek?Ma fija xejn hazin billi tmisssek hemm! U it-tifla jew tifel jwiegeb; U le missni...'And kids expect us to realize that'; isma missni f'postijiet fejn mhux suppost missni."

"Where did he touch you? Did he touch your nose? Did he touch your mouth? There is nothing wrong in touching you there! And the girl or boy replies; No he touched me ...And kids expect us to realize that; listen he touched me in places he shouldn't have."

A counselor relating a typical court case.

Apart from the linguistic limitations, children are very scared to talk about what has happened as they might have been threatened or else children are made to believe that if they talk, the family will break-up and he or she will be taken away from home. When children are taken to court to press charges against their offender, they might block up as they are brought in front of total strangers. In order to overcome this problem, courts are being oriented in a more 'victim-friendly' manner when it comes to child sexual abuse. Maltese courts are making use of the 'close circuit technique' and video conferencing. Here children are asked to testify and relate their story in front of the magistrate; so the abuser, advocates and police are not present. A close relative or a social worker can be

present to support the child without interfering. The persons not present are able to watch the prosecution on television, while the magistrate is consulted by questions to ask to the child through headphones. A counter argument which was presented during the research, to bring parental sexual abuse cases to court, was whether the trial would be of a further trauma for the victim. Some professionals said that nothing tops up the extent of trauma experienced during abuse; others argued that if the abuser is so close to the victim, further distress could be experienced.

“Yes the abuser has to be brought to justice but what price is paid when the abuser is brought to justice?(...)When the abuser is so close to me and I testify against him and I in front of everyone say what my father did to me, where does it put me? Is there any other way to make it stop?”

A counselor talking in the first person.

Another professional argued that she is convinced that kids want the abuse to stop and they are not so much interested in sending their father to prison.

4.4.3. Coping responses of abused children

After being sexually abused, children try to find a way out in order to cope with the situation. Coping responses that children turn to are varied and ultimately depends on the personality of the child. Some children go through a process of denial and try to forget the whole situation, while others may express their anger physically. Another coping response is resorting to self blame, or disassociation; which is a complete dissociation between body and mind. This type of coping

response can be very dangerous as it can lead to mental illness. Ordeal is not only experienced by the child as very often the families go through a sense of shock as well. Furthermore if the abuser is one of the parents, this will eventually lead to family breakdowns.

4.5 Cycle of violence

Table 9-Do abused children abuse other children?

Do abused children abuse other children?	No. of Participants
No	1
Yes	5
They might not always	9

Gelles (1987) argued that about a third of abuse survivors grow up to abuse their own children. This issue was very much debatable among professionals; as five reported that abused children do become abusers themselves while nine argued that they might but not necessarily become so. Then again, a counsellor related a case where an eight year old girl was touching and using digital penetration on her classmate. This case was referred to the counsellors by the class teacher and when investigation was completed they found out that the abusive girl was being sexually abused by her father. Holden. G (1997) argued that it is commonly believed that a major cause of maltreatment is that the abusive parent was abused as a child. The history of child abuse was also called the 'intergenerational transmission of abuse'. The author includes the fact that children learn about parenting from observing their own parents. If a parent uses

excessive physical punishment or inappropriate sexual practices, the child may accept those behaviours as appropriate and normal.

4.6. What needs to be done?

Perceptions of professionals seem to indicate that Maltese people are aware of child sexual abuse; however they are not aware of its extent.

“Trid tkun taħdem f’dan il-qasam biex tkun taf kemm hi kbira il-problema ta’ l-abbuz tat-tfal.” “You have to work within the section of child abuse to get to know the extent of child sexual abuse.”

People know about the Support line 179 offered by agency APPOGG, but they do not know the individual services offered by Child Protection Services at Education Division. Moreover children are becoming aware of protection services offered through educational programs held at school. However not all schools have received such programmes leading to a number of children who are not aware of what should be done in case of abuse. Professionals argued that in Malta we still have a long way to go in educating and creating awareness both amongst children and in the general public. All this can be done by means of media campaigns both on radio and television, where victims of child sexual abuse narrate their story to the public to create social responsibility. In addition, educational training programmes to build the children’s personality and assertiveness were suggested. Besides this, parental training programmes where parents prior to getting married should attend were also mentioned.

Professionals stressed that a lot of awareness should be provided along with preventive measures.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter offered the main findings and the analysis of the semi-structured interviews carried out in the research. Some cases of sexual abuse put forward by the professionals interviewed were also outlined. Apart from that, reference to direct speech of professionals was made in order to present a stronger argument. Some direct speech was presented in the first person with the professionals narrating what perpetrators and victims of abuse told them. This chapter provides an evaluation of what is understood by child sexual abuse and the incidence of child sexual abuse. Following this, an examination of the victim of child abuse is given while taking in consideration the reactions, disclosures and coping responses. Going on to the issue regarding cycle of violence, some issues of what can be done according to the interviewed Maltese professionals are presented.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Most of the major contemporary social problems of our society are closely tied to how well families are functioning. Violence is a problem that in our society is posing a serious threat to families. A very serious problem is child abuse. As the study points out child abuse can take several forms. The problem of Child Sexual Abuse has always been in society however greater awareness has led to more disclosure. This means that more children are willing to come forward, to disclose and try to seek help. Professional psychological help of counsellors, social workers and psychiatrists is proving to be more helpful for abused children.

This study also exposed that the main perpetrators of abuse are family members but the major abusers are the parents. It was found that both boys and girls are sexually abused by their parents, but the number of girls is even greater than that of boys. This is also shown in statistics. On the other hand national statistics regarding the abusers, indicating gender and age are not available, making it more difficult to present a clear picture regarding sexual abusers. This study shows that the main perpetrators of sexual abuse are the fathers. Fathers abuse

both their sons and daughters, however when compared to boys, girls tend to be more sexually abused. An explanation to this can be that men become more sexually aroused when coming to contact with a person of the opposite sex, and sometimes kinship does not make any difference. It seems as though it is a normal reaction for man to be turned on when they are in close contact with a female. Another point is that males may not be able to differentiate between love, affection and sexual connotations.

The reasons for abusing children can be varied but the reasons that were repeatedly encountered in this research were, power and control. Another cause of abuse is the cycle of violence, where the abusers were themselves abused when still young. Dysfunctional relationships and stress within the family can also be major factors leading to abuse.

Children are abused in many ways and it usually happens in a process, this means that it is not a one-off incident. The study shows that mutual masturbation, petting, and fondling of genitalia are the most common type of sexual abuse. Unfortunately many incidents of Child Sexual Abuse carry on to intercourse.

A very prominent point in this research was that most abusers never admit and take the responsibility of abusing. They tend to deny completely that anything has happened or when they admit of committing sexual abuse they blame other

forces or actually put the blame on the victim, saying that they were provoked and encouraged by the child making the situation very difficult to control.

The trauma that children experience after being sexually abused is devastating. Children have to cope with the situation while in addition trying to find a reason why they were betrayed and hurt so deeply precisely by their parents. All this brings about change in the children, change in the way they behave and relate to others. Additionally sexually abused children experience various physical reactions. These could be eating disorders such as Anorexia and Bulimia, obsessive compulsive traits, bed wetting and nightmares. Professionals who work with sexually abused children offer their help in terms of psychological and emotional support. To make disclosure easier professionals try to build a relationship of trust with children and make use of several projective techniques, such as dolls, puppets and drawings. Some children try to find a way out of this trauma and resort to various forms of coping responses. This study exposed that these type of responses can be denying, forgetting, expressing anger physically, self blaming and disassociation.

In Malta, we can say that the majority of parents love their children. However the number of abused children is increasing each year, making this a very serious social problem for which implementation and social policy is needed.

5.1. Recommendations

Efforts to minimise violence should be directed by principles which consist of protection for the victims of child abuse, support for their family and professional help offered to perpetrators.

Children should be provided with programmes regarding personality training as part of their educational curriculum, so as to learn to be assertive .Being assertive may lead children to built a stronger character and be less vulnerable to abuse.

Society provides a number of preventive and warning programs for children against the use of cigarettes and alcohol. Media campaigns and graphics are used widely, however when it comes to abuse, little concern is presented. Children are exposed to television programs, films, cartoons and internet sites which are full of violence and abuse therefore more campaigns should be implemented as part of the educational structures to teach and prevent children from such harm. In addition advertisements which can be easily viewed by both children and adults should be designed. Examples may include the use of billboards, and adverts on both television and radio.

In addition to awareness programmes in schools, kids should be presented with preventive courses as part of their learning process. More staff should be working within Child Protection Services so as to provide more help and be able to reach all primary and secondary schools in Malta. Multi-disciplinary efforts from a number of agencies, including the police force should be made so as all

sectors of the public is reached and given education regarding Child Sexual Abuse.

Historically, children have at one time or another been considered as property. It was primarily the nineteenth century reformers who challenged this philosophy and pressured for the legislation which protects children from undue hardships and provide for their more basic developmental needs (Maureen Cole, in Sultana and Baldacchino, 1994) As Holden (1997) stressed Child advocates are persons who recognise children as individuals with rights, distinct from their parents, and then provide the means for the social policy initiative. The most appropriate solution to this may be the implementation of Children's' Act in Malta were the rights of children are safe guarded. Additionally social responsibility of every citizen to do something if encountered with a case of Child Abuse should be built in all people and also it should be mandatory to report any form of Child Abuse.

To prevent sexual abuse of children and preventing parenting from becoming awry, parental skills should be thought to children when still very young. Moreover prior marriage programmes regarding parental skills should be done by all couples before getting married.

It can also be stressed that there is a need for more therapeutic and curative programs offered by professional people for both the victim and the perpetrator. Services offered to sexually abused children should serve a means of helping

them to eliminate fears, guilt and strengthen their self-esteem. While services offered to perpetrators should offer support and adequate psychological help to prevent these people from turning to sexual abuse on children once more. There should be appropriate residential setting for perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse were if these programs are not followed they would go to prison. On the other hand prison can prove to be an in appropriate setting for these people as they are not adequately helped to solve their problem. On ninth March 2004, France has expanded and augmented its legislation concerning child sexual abuse and sexual offenders through the launch of its latest law, Perban II. This new legislation will allow for greater control of past sexual offenders as their term of imprisonment comes to an end, through the creation of obligatory measures of documentation, surveillance, and psychological assistance, in hope of preventing a repeated offence (<http://caneet.net>). Personally speaking, I find this legislation very appealing and such implementation could be of great help in the Maltese context.

As some professionals indicated, for a child to give evidence in court about the abuse they have experience can often be more traumatic than the abuse itself. Therefore we need a court system that makes it easier for the children to give evidence, and encourages them to report abuse.

All these implications will definitely entail essential changes in society. Although there will always be some children who are not helped, most forms of child abuse can be prevented and taken care of in hope of a more respectable society.

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Appendix One

Incidents of Child Sexual Abuse

The following are incidents of sexual abuse, as referred by the professionals interviewed during this research study.

Incident number: One

The Victim/s: A three year old girl

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: The family consisted of her mother, father, and her sister. The parents were both professionals. Abuse started when the child was age 3. As in many cases there is a process. It started with the birth of the younger child. There was a 3yr old and a new born. Mother was taking care of the new born. She was engaged in feeding, changing and was also very tired by the birth experience. The father took a more active role with the old child. So he would bath her, put her to bed and play games. Eventually tickling started and the child enjoyed it tremendously. And up to that point everything was pretty normal. Then he ventured on to touching the child on her pajamas and clothes; the child started to become very uncomfortable. He went on to undressing the child and forcing the child to touch him and then masturbate him. Within a span of a year he was performing digital penetration on the child both anally and vaginally and by the age of 6 there was vaginal intercourse. There was a whole span of abuse which was taking place. The child felt very scared and very confused as well, because this was her special time with daddy but at the same time it hurt a lot. There was an amount of emotional trait, he was not violent, a very quiet man, a very nice person and was very popular in society and with his social circles. He used to tell her if you don't like what I am doing, do not worry I'll do it to your baby sister. The girl loved her baby sister and didn't want her baby sister to go

through these situations. The mother knew about what was going on. The child started to act out at school, changed in behavior, became very introverted yet at the same time she would have tantrums. She was very intelligent but was doing very badly at school.

Her classmates started not to like her and excluded her from games. Teachers also found her difficult to handle, very strange and moody. Up till one point where the child started to draw things which were very sexually explicit; beyond her age. The class teacher become very aware and very sensitive to the child and the case was referred. At first the mother did not support the child; she went straight into denial and said that this can not be true as she was at home at all times. She claimed that it is impossible that these things happen in her own home. The child was first withdrawn from home and stayed with relatives. Social workers tried as much as possible to place the child with relatives first, who gave her a great deal of support. Eventually, the mother started to see that what the child was staying was true. The parents separated, the case did not end up in court and both children still live with the mother. The father still keep insisting on seeing his daughters and in fact he does have access under supervision , which is very traumatic for the elder child, as she does not want to see him but today as a 9 year old she is not listened to .Therefore once a week she is forced to see her father.

Incident Number: Two

The Victim/s: An eight year old girl

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: Abuse started when she was about 8 years old. As she became stronger and was able to resist her father more, it became more violent, to the extent that her parents had to take her to a GP, as she was bruised all over and needed treatment. The GP was very suspicious and sent her to St Luke's hospital, and told the doctors of his worst suspicions. The doctors told the parents that the girl needed treatment and asked them to sign some papers; which they actually did. The story that the parents presented was that; the girl was going to fall down the stairs, her father tried to save her but she slipped. Eventually the girl went through a vaginal spear and the doctors found that she had been raped. The Father was taken up to court and found guilty. The mother knew what was happening, because she used to tell her daughter to stay away from father especially if left alone with him at home.

Incident Number: Three

The Victim/s: A Girl with down-syndrome

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: The girl used to ask her facilitator to be undressed while she pees. In addition when the facilitator started to clean the girl, she asked the facilitator to kiss her private parts because that is what her father used to do. When the father was confronted he sustained that none of the accusations happened and said that the girl is psychologically disturbed.

Incident Number: Four

The Victim/s: Two Girls

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: He used to ask them to undress, so he could touch them and eventually going on to intercourse. The abuse was spread over a number of years when the girls were still very young; however they pressed charges as adults. In this case the father used to talk about his daughters as though they were women not children. He negated the abuse. However, when the case was brought to court he was found guilty and was sentenced to prison.

Incident Number: Five

The Victim/s: A Girl

The Abuser/s: The Mother and Two Men

Content: A woman used to take her daughter to a place where two men would kiss, touch and photograph the child. The girl specified that she is not in her uniform when she is taken to this place. The girl also specified that they go by two buses to a place at Zabbar. She indicated that one of the men stayed at he computer (counsellor said that most probably he was using a webcam) .The girl said that the men gave her mother some money when the session was over. Teachers reported that the girl put her hands into her tights and starts rubbing her vagina and saying that it hurts.

Incident Number: Six

The Victim/s: A Boy between the age of eleven and fifteen

The Abuser/s: A Man

Content: A man who was a very good friend of the family. This man used to take the boy to swim, but when the boy was thirteen years, he was asked by this man to undress and change the swim suit in front of him, so he could see him doing so. The boy refused to undress and ran towards the van however the man followed and eventually undressed him. The man threatened the boy and told him to keep everything secret from his parents. This incident happened for another two times and the boy told his father about it. His dad found nothing wrong in all this and commented that if men undress in front of each other it is no- big- deal. However his mother was very preoccupied, to the extent of hiring an advocate and went to the psychologist, so as to do an assessment and take this man to court. The attitude of the boy changed from one of embarrassment and discomfort to one of hatred towards this man.

Incident Number: Seven

The Victim/s: A fifteen year old girl

The Abuser/s: The Boyfriend

Content: A girl who had a boyfriend of 19 years. The boy wanted to have sexual intercourse with the girl. However the girl refused as she felt she was still young and was afraid of becoming pregnant. Eventually he raped the girl. The psychologist did not detect a large amount of violence during the rape however everything was done against her will. The girl disclosed this rape with a priest, who sent her for psychological help. The victim never told her family for fear of being blamed.

Incident Number: Eight

The Victim/s: A Girl

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: A man was accused of sexually abusing his daughter, but kept on insisting that it was an accident. His daughter was disabled and when his wife was abroad she had an epileptic fit, so she kept on moving. The man had to insert a medication in the form of a suppository in order for the girl to calm down and fall asleep. When the man was accused of sexual abuse, he said that the girl kept on moving and instead of putting the medication in her anus, he put it up her vagina. However the doctors examined the girl, and reported a form of physical violence. When his wife returned from abroad she swore on her husband's innocence and remarked that her husband was not able to medicate his daughter as he has never done it before. Yet the man was taken up to court.

Incident Number: Nine

The Victim/s: A Boy

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: The boy was exposed to sexual acts. His father raped his wife and his wife's sister in front of the boy. The boy's teacher reported several behavioural problems. The boy acted weird and from time to time he started to scream and push his class mates off the chair. He was very physically aggressive even with his teacher. This uncontrollable behaviour lasted for about 15 to 20 minutes, and then he would calm down and pray to Jesus to become a good boy or else he would be taken away from his family. Teachers reported that they often saw the boy crying silently in the school corridors and he refused to go home.

Incident Number: Ten

The Victim/s: A fifteen year old girl

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: A girl old was being sexually abused by her father for about one and a half years. There was touching of genitalia and digital penetration. The girl disclosed the abuse with her school counsellor and they informed the mother of what was going on. The mother reported that she was not aware of what was happening as the relationship with her husband was good both on an emotional level and sexual level.

Incident Number: Eleven

The Victim/s: A Girl who was disabled and could not communicate

The Abuser/s: Both Parents

Content: Facilitators noticed a change in behavior. The girl started to touch her teachers at intimate places. Social workers dedicated something wrong as the girl must have seen something to act this way. When social workers investigated the case they found out that the girl's parents used to be sexually active in front of the girl. In addition, her older sister was a prostitute and became sexually active at an early age. The social worker reported that disclosures with children who are disabled are very difficult to be handled and verified.

Incident Number: Twelve

The Victim/s: A Boy

The Abuser/s: The Mother

Content: A woman was abusing her son. Her husband passed away and the boy started to sleep in her bed. The abuse started innocently with touches and caresses but then it moved on to mutual masturbation and sexual intercourse.

Incident Number: Thirteen

The Victim/s: A Girl

The Abuser/s: The Grandfather

Content: The young girl was taught and trained by her mother to say no to strangers. She thought her about private body parts, safe touch and not so safe touch. The girl was given full education on sexual things, however the abuser was her grandfather. The girl found it difficult to understand this type of abuse, as she was thought that strangers not family members can be abusers.

Incident Number: Fourteen

The Victim/s: Two Girls and their Mother

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: The girls reported physical violence to the victim support unit. The abuser was their father; he used to beat them and left them to starve. He used to lock them up in a room with their mother. The mother was also a victim of domestic violence. When the case was investigated, social workers found out that the father used to abuse his girls sexually too. The case was brought to court however he was not found guilty, even though both girls pressed charges against him.

Incident Number: Fifteen

The Victim/s: A 3 year old boy

The Abuser/s: The Father

Content: A boy witnessed his father in sexual activity that is having intercourse with a woman and watching pornographic material.

Appendix Two

Informed Consent Form

Dear Madam,

I am Alexia Nappa, reading a B.A. (Hons) in Sociology, currently working on data collection for my dissertation, which will study child sexual abuse and parental gender. I would like to thank you for accepting to participate in my research. The Research Question is 'Are fathers, more likely than mothers to turn to sexual abuse in child rearing?' Therefore a number of questions will be asked to get the proper answer from these questions. I am aware that the answers given will not be totally representative as I am more interested in taking the perceptions of expertise working within this area rather than obtaining answers that could be generalized to the total population. The information given will remain confidential and used exclusively for my study. Moreover if it is not a problem for you I will be recording the interview to comprehend better your thoughts and views, without the hassle of me trying to jot down each and every word you say. However I feel it is essential to inform you that when the process of transcribing is done, all the recordings will be erased.

Alexia Nappa

I accept to take part in the research. I was assured that the information given in this interview cannot be used against me and I can withdraw my information at any time.

Respondent

Appendix Three

Interview English Version

Section A: Introduction

1. What do you understand by Child Sexual Abuse?
2. Do you think that Child Abuse is increasing? Why?
3. Out of the cases you dealt with, how many of them were sexual abuse by parents towards their children?
4. Is it the mother or the father who usually is the perpetrators of sexual abuse towards one's own children? Why do you think parents abuse their children?
5. Can you give me a recount of some or one particular case which dealt with parental child sexual abuse?

Section B: The Abuser/the Parent

1. Who is the most abusive and aggressive parent? Is it the mother or the father?
2. Which is the most common type of sexual abuse?
3. From the cases you dealt with, did mothers sexually abuse their sons or daughters mostly?
4. From the cases you dealt with, did fathers sexually abuse their daughters or their sons mostly?
5. Do abusive parents admit and take the responsibility for abusing their children; or do they blame other forces?
6. If they blame other forces, what are these?
7. Do mothers and fathers offer different types of justification for their abusive behaviour towards their children?
8. Do mothers and fathers differ in their feelings; particularly in the degree they feel guilty, at the end of an abusive episode?

Section C: The victim/the child

1. Who is mostly abused by parents males or females? And by whom?
2. Which is the most common age bracket in which the child is sexually abused?
3. What are the reactions of the child after he/she has been abused?
4. How is the child helped to disclose this trauma?
5. Sex is a very sensitive topic especially where children are concerned, so how are children made to explain what has happened?
6. Is it easy for the child to explain what is done to them?
7. Do you know of any cases where the child was not believed after disclosing some kind of abuse?
8. Do you think it is possible for a child to lie about an abusive situation?
9. Do abusive children abuse other children?
10. Can you mention some coping responses of children who have been abused?
11. Is it the abused child who reports an abusive situation?
12. With whom are the abused children most likely to disclose their experience?

Conclusion/General ideas

1. What is your perception with regards to the effects of abuse?
2. How are the wounds inflicted on children by the crime of sexual abuse being healed? And how such abuse is prevented?
3. Is there some kind of effect on the family of the abused child? If yes, what are these?
4. Do you think that the Maltese people are aware of child abuse?
5. Is the general public aware of child protection services?
6. Are children aware of child protection services?

7. Do you think that more things should be done in order to create more awareness among the general public?
8. If yes what can be done?

Interview Maltese Version

Sezzjoni A: Introduzzjoni

1. Inti x' tifhem b' abbuz sesswali tat-tfal?
2. Tahseb li l-abbuz fuq it tfal qed jizdied? Ghalie?
3. Mill- kazijiet li kellek, kemm minnhom kienu abbuz sesswali mill genituri fuq it- tfal magghom?
4. Generalment minn ikun li jabbuza mit- tfal; l-omm jew il- missier?
5. Ghalie tahseb li certu genituri jabbuzaw mit- tfal tagghom?
6. Tista Taghtini rendikont ta' kaz jew xi kazijiet li kellhom x'jaqsmu ma abbuz sesswali mill-genituri?

Sezzjoni B: Il genitur li jabbuza

1. Liema hu l-aktar genitur abbuziv u aggressiv? Hija l-omm jew il-missier?
2. Liema huma it-tip ta' abbuz sesswali huwa l-aktar komuni?
3. Mill-kazijiet li kellek, l-ommijiet jabbuzaw sesswalment mill-iben jew mill-bint l-izjed?
4. Mill-kazijiet li kellek, il-missirijiet jabbuzaw sesswalment mill-bint jew mill-iben l-izjed?
5. Il-genituri abbuzivi, jammettu u jiehd u ir responsibilita' ta l-abbuz li jkunu wettqu fuq it-tfal jew iwahhlu f'affarijiet ohra?
6. Jekk iwahhlu f'affarijiet ohra, x'inhuma dawn?
7. L-ommijiet u l-missirijiet jaghtu gustifikazzjonijiet differenti minn xulxin ghall- att abbuziv tagghom?
8. L-ammont ta' htija wara att ta abbuz ivarja bejn l-omm u l-missier?

Sezzjoni C:Il –vittma

1. Minn hu l-aktar abbuzat mill-genituri, bniet jew subien?U min minn?
2. Liema hi l-aktar eta' komuni li fija it-tfal jigu abbuzati?
3. X'inhuma ir- reazzjonijiet tat-tfal wara li ikunu abbuzati?
4. It-tfal kif jigu mejghuna biex jtkellmu dwar dak li ghaddeu minnu?
5. Is-sess huma suggett delikat fejn jidhlu it-tfal , ghalhekk kif ikunu mejghuna it-tfal bix jispjegaw dak li ghaddeu minnu?
6. Taf b'xi kazijiet fejn it-tfal ma kinux emnuti wara li tkellmu dwar xi esperjenza ta' abbuz?
7. Tahseb li huma possibli li it-tfal jigdbu jew jivvintaw xi kaz fejn huma kienu abbuzati sesswalment?
8. Tfal abbuzati jabbuzaw tfal ohra?
9. Tista isemmili "COPING RESPONCES" ta' tfal li gew abbuzati?
10. Generalment huma it-tfal li kienu abbuzati li jirrapurtaw dwar sitwazzjoni ta' abbuz?
11. Tfal abbuzati, lil minn jghidu dwar l-esperjenza taghhom?

Konkluzjoni/Idejal Generali

1. X'inhom l-opinjoni tieghek dwar l-effetti li jhalli l-abbuz sesswali?
2. Il-griehi ta dawn it-tfal abbuzati, kif qed jigu imfejqa?U kif nistghu niprevjenu dan l-abbuz?
3. Episodju ta'abbuz sesswali, ihalli effett fuq il-familja?Jekk iva x'inhuma?
4. Tahseb li l-Maltin jafu dwar abbuz sesswali fuq it-tfal?
5. Tahseb li l-pubbliku generali jaf dwar *Child Protection Services*?

6. Tahseb li t-tfal jafu dwar *Child Protection Services*?
7. Tahseb li hemm aktar affarijiet li jistghu isiru sabiex noholqu aktar kuxjenza mal-pubbliki ingenerali?
8. Jekk iva, x'jista issir?