



INCEST TRAUMA CENTER - BELGRADE
Support Group for Child Sexual Abuse Survivors
and War Survivors of Sexual Violence

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Canadian
International
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CAMPAIGN AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE "THE ME NOBODY KNOWS"

Before the paper goes to print...

Check!

- Images of women and children are not degrading or humiliating
- Confidentiality of all victims has been maintained
- The stories are objective and factual
- Stories are not sensationalized
- Violence is not turned into entertainment

Maintain Professional Ethics!

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INCEST TRAUMA CENTER - BELGRADE IS...

WOMEN'S NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

SPECIALIZED SERVICE AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN, OFFICIALLY REGISTERED IN 1994.

9 REPORTED CASES PER WEEK ON AVERAGE

OUR STATISTICAL DATA IS PART OF:

1. Framework of National Strategy Against Violence - provisional version - Ministry of Law, Employment and Social Policy (October 2005.)
2. Shadow reports of women's NGOs on the status of women in Serbia sent to the UN Committee for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women- CEDAW (2002. and 2007).

WE WERE THE ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE TO DESIGN THE ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIES REGARDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON THE TERRITORY OF SERBIA FOR THE NEEDS OF THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR WOMEN IN THE NEXT THREE-YEAR PERIOD. This document is the strategy of Republic of Serbia in accordance with the Beijing platform - global document regulating the position of women. We worked during 2006. as part of the activities of the Gender Equality Council, a governmental body within the Ministry of labor, employment and social politics.

WE ALSO WORKED AS A 24-HOUR CRISIS SERVICE FOR TWO YEARS (2004. -2006.)

TRAINING-CENTER (4718 COLLEAGUES FROM THE TERRITORY OF SERBIA COMPLETED OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SO FAR; 2/3 FROM GOVERNMENTAL AND I 1/3 FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.)

WE SPECIFICALLY TRAINED: POLICE MEMBERS (2001.-2003.), EMPLOYEES IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR (2005.-2006.), PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF PRISON INSTITUTIONS FOR WOMEN AND JUVENILES (2006.-2007.), HEALTH SECTOR (2005.-2006.), SOCIAL CARE CENTERS AND OTHER SOCIAL PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS (1995-) AND MANY OTHERS...

4156 CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS TOOK PART IN OUR VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

13 OFFICIAL LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO OUR WORK FROM STATE MINISTRIES (Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy; City educational secretariat and City secretariat for child and social welfare; as of 2001 to the this day).

WITH THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE
«THE ME NOBODY KNOWS»

WE ASK THE GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO URGENTLY INTRODUCE THE TOPIC OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND WOMEN INTO THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOKS ON ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS.



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DO YOU REALLY TRUST THE CHILD'S WORDS?

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS ANY KIND OF EXPLOITATION OF A CHILD YOUNGER THAN 18 WITH THE AIM OF SEXUAL GRATIFICATION AND ENJOYMENT OF THE ADULT AND INCLUDES: OBSCENE TELEPHONE CALLS, SHOWING OF OTHERWISE COVERED BODY PARTS, VOYERISM, CARESSING, RAPE ATTEMPT, RAPE, INCEST, CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND CHILD PROSTITUTION.

INCEST IS SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD BY A TRUSTWORTHY ADULT WHO IS IN POWER POSITION AND REPRESENTS AUTHORITY TO THE CHILD.

New annual statistical data of the Incest Trauma Center - Belgrade
(period: September 2006-September 2007)

In 14th year of work, the Incest Trauma Center-Belgrade publishes statistical data based on 9 reported cases per week. Our data from previous years became parts of two official documents:

1. Framework of National Strategy Against Violence - working text - Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Politics (October 2005.) and 2. Shadow reports of women's NGOs on the status of women in Serbia sent to the UN Committee for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women- CEDAW (2002. and 2007).

For each of the cases that became part of our sample for the period September 2006 - September 2007 we have all the parameters included in our database (1-14) and these data can be compared from year to year. To each child or adult who survived sexual abuse and whose experience is part of the sample, we provided short-term or long-term psychological support in personal contacts. Reports of others cases to our service were: 1. on the level of information according to which we gave telephone support to the person calling or, exclusively on her demand, eventually reported to the other authorities, or 2. on level of consultation given to the other services (GO and NGO) that met with cases of abuse of children and women in their work. These cases were not part of the represented sample.

IN PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2006 - SEPTEMBER 2007.:

SAMPLE 47.06 % children who survived sexual abuse (up to 18 years old)
52.94% adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse
(18 to 32 years old)

1. Sex structure

- Persons who survived sexual abuse (88.24% female, 11.76% male)

Out of 5 children who survived sexual abuse, 4 are girls and 1 is a boy.

- Offenders (92.11% male, 7.89% female)

It is usual that number of female offenders is up to 10% for years. Childhood sexual abuse is a crime done mostly by the males and is based on abuse of power by the violent men.

2. Types of incest and frequency

- Father - daughter 31.59%
- Person outside the family known to child - girl 18.42%
- Stepfather - stepdaughter 7.90%
- Grandfather - granddaughter 7.88%
- Person from extended family - girl 7.88%
- Brother - sister 5.27%
- Cousin - sister 5.27%
- Father - son 5.27%
- Stepfather - stepson 2.63%
- Person outside the family known to child - boy 2.63%
- Mother - daughter 2.63%
- Female cousin - sister 2.63%

In 100% of the cases reported to our institution in the previous 12-months period, offender is a person known to child. Out of these, in 78.95% of cases sexual abuse happened in the family.

3. Offenders and frequency

Father 36.86%; Person outside the family known to the child (e.g. family friend, neighbour, «private» professor (coming home to help the child in some school subject), daughter of family friends) 21.05%; Stepfather 10.53%; Grandfather 7.88%; Person from extended family (e.g. uncle, cousin...) 7.88%; Brother 5.27%; Cousin 5.27%; Mother 2.63%; Female cousin 2.63%;

In 36.86% the offender is biological father, and in 47.39% it is father figure (biological father and stepfather). It is also important to see the frequency of grandfather as abuser as a potential risk that abuse happened in the previous generation (a possibility that he abused his daughter while she was a child, but it was never disclosed).

4. Age of the first incident

- 6 years and 6 months

It is expected this age to be lower, having in mind that these are reported cases that are always tip of the iceberg regarding the «underreported», or all those situations of sexual abuse that children reported and adults didn't recognise, or children forever were silent about their experience.

5. Abuse lasted

- For months 14.71%
- For years 85.29%

Persons who survived childhood sexual abuse spent 5 years and 10 months in abusive situation in average. Almost NEVER expect it to be only one incident of sexual violence (do not support the stereotype «it happened only once» offered by the offender)

6. Reporting in acute situation

- In 29.41% of cases sexual violence was reported while still happening (20.59% were the cases of children under 14).

7. Period between the first incident and reporting

- 11 years and 2 months in average.

In 70.59% of cases there was minimum of 2 years up to the maximum of 26 years from the moment abuse stopped until reporting to our service.

8. One child was sexually abused by

- One offender in 85.3% of cases
- Two offenders in 8.82% of cases
- Three and more offenders in 5.88% of cases

Revictimization often happens due to violated and weakened child's personal boundaries.

9. One offender sexually abused

- One child in 88.24% of cases
- Two children in 11.76% of cases

It is usual that sexual offenders repeat the abuse and have a big number of victims. This is direct responsibility of the persons from victim's surrounding who do not report their doubt or knowledge of the sexual abuse to the authorities. Therefore offenders get the «green light» that they can be violent, that the secret will be kept and they won't be punished.

10. Sexual abuse consists of (look at the violent sexual acts given in definition in the beginning of the text)

11. Use of physical force

In 17.65%.

In cases of child sexual abuse, use of physical force is not necessary. Power, authority and control are the central points (and «enough») for child sexual abuse. Physical force was used in cases of adolescents who were 14 to 18 old and threatened to disclose the abuse. Also, these 17.65% include families where a history of physical violence has always been present, e.g. mother and child were battered, and the offender started sexually abusing child when she/he reached a certain age.

12. Who is reporting and frequency?

- The person who survived sexual violence 43.59%
- Mother 23.08%
- Grandmother 12.82%
- Other institutions in charge (social and health care and police) 15.39%
- Supportive person outside the family (e.g. a friend, mother's friend...) 5.12%

State services lack the understanding and investing into building of the support system for survivors of sexual violence. They mostly work on the cases in isolation, within their institutions, and do not respect the obligation to report violence as a criminal act (which would lead to starting of the criminal procedure and punishing the offender). Because of this practice, the police often has no data to act on. This observation is allarmingly true for schools and preschool units that are busy with the popular issue of peer violence, while the topic of violence against children in the family is not tackled. Connecting of state services and (women's) NGOs is necessary because, according to all the surveys of women's NGOs, victims of violence have very little trust in state institutions to protect them from violence.

13. Reporting to institutions

Children and adults who survived sexual violence reported to the following institutions:

- YES 55.89%
- NO 44.11% (a long time has passed since the abuse stopped, so the criminal offence lapsed in Serbian law system - or do not want to prosecute the offender, just to work on sexual trauma)

Institutions and frequency (when YES):

- Social care center 63.16%
- Health system 52.63%
- Police 47.37%
- Court 42.11%

14. Support given

We gave psychological support in personal contacts (clients coming to the Incest Trauma Center-Belgrade):

- Short-term support (up to 6 months) in 32.35% of cases
- Long-term support (more than 6 months) in 67.65% of cases

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In previous 12-months period:

- Cooperated with the Sex Offences Department of City Police on cases of sexual abuse of women (rape by familiar persons such as ex boyfriend's friend, boyfriend's friend, a known person...)
- Cooperated with women's NGO ASTRA on cases of sexual violence against women who found themselves in the chain of human trafficking.
- Received reports (8.20% of total reports to our service) of emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children and women by helpers in the following institutions: homes for children without parental care, institutions that permanently take care of disabled children and women, so-called special schools, and institutions where women with mental illnesses are placed. One experience: in view of the fact that the Incest Trauma Center - Belgrade in previous three years issued more reports against helpers working in homes for children without parental care (based on statements of the children placed there), a consequence is weakened cooperation with the homes and closing of their staff for our service.
- Issued 12 expert opinions in written form for the needs of law procedure for protection of abused children (and showed up as witnesses when asked by the court)
- In 2 cases sentences were pronounced according to criminal prosecution (IN ONE CASE THE VERDICT WAS PRISON SENTENCE OF 9 YEARS, WHICH IS IN OUR 14 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE THE LONGEST PUNISHMENT FOR ONE SEXUAL OFFENDER)
- Of all the cases currently processed by the Incest Trauma Center-Belgrade, five are still under criminal prosecution.

Belgrade, September 24, 2007.

Incest Trauma Center-Belgrade team

Snežana Bogavac
(Journalist, born in 1961. Lives in Germany since 1994.)

Sex sells? - Journalists and sexual violence

"Sex sells" - it is one of the simplest "wits" of (boulevard) magazines. Sex-stories sell the newspaper. They are not only photographs on the verge of pornography, but also stories about marital and extramarital relationships of public figures, about secret sexual orientation of famous show business or art figures, intimate life confessions... But in that "package" there are also reports of the other kind - on sexual abuse, rape, women trafficking, forced prostitution... Because, "sex sells"...

Is it realistic to expect that the media will report about the sexually abused children with more consideration than about the victims of a mass murderer or the ones killed in a tragic airplane crash? There will always be some media and journalists / photo reporters who will gladly "dissect" the murderer's life, or with an easy conscience publish in the least a blurred picture of the place of accident with dead passengers' body parts scattered about..

Let us remember how it was a year ago, when young Natascha Kampusch from Vienna after eight years escaped from the underground hiding place where she was kept against her will by the man who kidnapped her when she was ten years old. Public admiration of Natascha's bravery in fleeing her terrible imprisonment did not last long. Not satisfied by the tormented young woman's refusal to disclose details about her sexual life during imprisonment, just a few days later, the first media (with the full support of readers, whose letters could be read on Internet web pages) started to speculate that Natascha Kampusch may have had sexual intercourse with her kidnapper and torturer willingly, even with pleasure (!!!???). Soon it was necessary to include media experts into the team of psychologists' that took care of Natascha, in order to return things to relatively reasonable proportions.

Of course, not every case of sexual violence / crime causes this kind of media attention and public reaction. The public usually reacts according to the same pattern - showing compassion and pity for the victim and loathing the offender. This is invariably accompanied on both sides by those unconstructive feelings that cannot lead to objective evaluation of the issue or support to the societal and legal efforts to fight it.

Even in those states whose public has been facing the issues of sexual abuse and sexual crimes for a long time, it took a long time before the question of the attitude of the journalists and journalism toward them was posed. In many European countries today there are seminars on the topic, organized by the psychological societies and with the support of journalists' associations, in the tradition of American **Dart Centre für Trauma & Journalism**. The main idea is to support those journalists who have to report on terrible events that are neither floods, traffic accidents nor devastating earthquakes, but those facing the body of a raped and murdered girl or the face of a man suspected of being multiple rapist. Because only the journalists who learn how to deal with their own feelings in cases like this will manage to find a reasonable tone in their reports.

Furthermore, journalists' organizations generally have official rules laid down in their documents on how to write about crime and violence, victims and offenders. Their importance is perhaps the most obvious precisely in cases of sexual violence or sexual offences. The victim is not helped by public sorrow or by tacit concessions that "perhaps it was her own fault", just as the most cruel offender is not punished by public outrage and being sent to the gallows. Therefore, both victims and offenders should be treated exactly as prescribed by law in the media - that is, full protection of the victim and objectivity to the offender until the level of responsibility / guilt is determined. And the best preparation for such reporting is definitely regular, and not just "incidental" reporting about the issue - the sexual abuse and the social environment in which it takes place.