AN INVESTIGATION OF MEN WHO EXPERIENCED INCEST

IN CHILDHOOD: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

DISSERTATION

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* * * * *

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IN MEMORY OF RECTOR E. FRAZER
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CHAPTER I

GROUNDWORK

Sexual abuse is no longer the issue that no one discusses. Within the past fifteen years, there has been an explosion of information concerning the sexual victimization of children by family and non-family members (Vander Mey, 1988; Schlesinger, 1982). From researchers and clinicians to news media and televised talk shows, extensive attention has been devoted to this social problem.

Yet, even with this growing body of literature profiling sexual abuse victims and survivors, one of the most underreported areas of sexual abuse involves the male sexual abuse victim, and more particularly, the adult male incest survivor. In their comprehensive review of the then-current research on the long and short term effects of sexual abuse, Brown and Finkelhor (1986) did not include male victims. Furthermore, even less effort has been made to systematically explore the subjective here-in-now experiences of adult men sexually abused as children with a focus on understanding their psychology.

An investigation of the central phenomenological aspects of the adult male incest survivor's world was the purpose of this study. A phenomenological method developed by Seabaugh (1983) served as a guide for gathering and processing data obtained from the subjective experiences and reflections of the subjects. A grounded theory was
developed describing some of the salient psychological features of the adult male incest survivor and treatment recommendations for clinical social workers was given. The concept of "grounded theory" was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who stated that theory derived from phenomenological data must be firmly grounded in that data. The theory emerges from the discovery of relationships between the categorization of diverse data. Therefore, the theory can be considered grounded directly in the phenomenon.

The Problem: Its Emergence and Statement

The research literature devoted to determining the incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse, suggest that this form of child abuse may be at epidemic proportions (Geffner, 1992). Although there is wide variation in the statistical reports, particular studies over the past decade indicate that perhaps 20-35% of females and 10-18% of males are likely to be sexually abused at least once before they reach age eighteen (see reviews by Conte, 1990; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Peters, Wyatt, & Finkelhor, 1986; Russell, 1986; Siegal, Sorenson, Golding, & Burnam, 1987; Wolfe, & Best, 1988; Wyatt, 1985). Despite variations in the statistics, most investigators agree that even the best estimates of child sexual abuse are underestimates due to the difficulties inherent in conducting this type of research, the high rate of dissociation, repression, denial, and the refusal by both clinician and adults to report such abuse (e.g., Geffner, Rosenbaum, & Hughes, 1988). Nevertheless, the preponderance of child sexual
abuse, according to both clinical and epidemiological research, appears to be intrafamilial (Geffner, 1992).

Due to the fact that intrafamilial sexual experiences are usually well kept family secrets, it remains difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a true understanding of how frequently incestuous relationships occur within the general population (Pierce & Pierce, 1985). Male incest victims are particularly underrepresented in the literature. Finkelhor (1990) notes that although one fourth to one third of all sexual abuse victims are boys, less than that same ratio of studies are devoted to studying boy victims specifically. This may be due to several reasons as suggested in a study by Urquiza (1988). First, the literature appears to support a lower prevalence of sexual abuse for boys than for girls. Pierce and Pierce (1985), in an article comparing male and female victims, note that somewhere between 80% to 90% of all incest victims are female children. Given this level of discrepancy, fewer cases of male victims have come to the attention of clinicians and researchers. Second, Urquiza (1988) suggests that there may be underreporting of the sexual victimization of boys. Although the literature clearly documents the existence of the male incest victim, it appears to be reported less often.

As suggested by Finkelhor (1984), males are socialized with a male ethic of self-reliance that appears to inhibit their disclosure of victimization. Nasjleti (1980) suggests that the male victim is less likely to disclose sexual abuse because the involvement may cast doubt on his masculinity. Since males are not commonly given permission to express feelings of fear, helplessness, or vulnerability, they must confront the vulnerability prohibition in order to acknowledge the sexual abuse. Several studies have
found that prior to answering the research questions, the male subject had never told anyone about their victimization (Dean & Woods, 1985; Finkelhor, 1979; Fritz, Stroll, & Wagner, 1981; Johnson & Shrier, 1985; Nasjleti, 1980).

A third factor affecting the relatively sparse research attention to male victims addresses the matter of sexual bias when it comes to defining sexual abuse. Since males are stereotypically viewed as being more self-reliant and stronger than girls, the whole issue of vulnerability to coercion and ability to provide consent are brought into question. As a result, the perception may be that the impact of sexual abuse on boys is less serious than for girls (Urquiza, 1988). Whatever the reasons to account for the fact that very little information is available in general about male victims/survivors, there is considerable room for further investigation.

The focus of this study was to look at here-and-now subjective experiences of a selected sample of adult male survivors of childhood incest. In order to investigate the complex subject of the male incest survivor's lived-in-world, a phenomenological method of research was chosen as the most suitable approach for investigating the subjective experience and clarifying the meaning of the experience. A clear and concise explanation of the phenomenological approach is given by Giorgi (1966). He Stated:

A brief examination of any characteristically human phenomenon reveals that the qualities of that experience are important for the understanding of the phenomenon, and that a description of the qualities leads to the meaning of the experience for the subject, and that an explication of the phenomenon is necessary but not always sufficient, for ascertaining its meaning. The above three factors are possible only because the subject matter of the human sciences are human beings who respond intentionally to the world, and whose phenomena are thematically constituted only through varied manifestations. Lastly, it is
inevitable that in conducting research the experimenter also participates to some extent in the phenomenon the subject is experiencing. (p. 27)

The preponderance of research to date on male victims/survivors of sexual abuse has focused on issues of prevalence and behavioral symptomatology as generally measured by questionnaires or anecdotal impressions made by clinicians in an unstructured manner. To this researcher's knowledge, there are no current studies that have systematically investigated the experiential life of the adult male incest survivor with the intention of understanding how he structures his world.

**Statement of Purpose and Significance**

The major purpose of the present study was to make the inner world of the adult male who experienced incest in childhood explicit. The intent was to investigate and understand how the adult male survivor gives meaning to his present day experiences and how these meanings might have been influenced by the sexual abuse experience.

The second purpose was to generate a substantive theory, grounded in the perceived experience of the subjects, outlining some of the salient psychological themes of the adult male incest survivor.

The third purpose was to provide further clarification of the usefulness of the phenomenological method as a sound and comprehensible system of inquiry for the research-practitioner. Specifically, Seabaugh's (1983) method of requesting subjects to keep a journal, reflect upon their phenomenology, and become engaged in an interview
was paralleled and commented upon regarding its usefulness in investigating the adult male incest survivor.

A primary significance of this study is its usefulness to the clinical social worker who would engage the adult male incest survivor in treatment. By acquainting the clinician with the phenomenology of the adult male incest survivor, the treatment focus can be aided.

There are two major research questions that guided the collection of data as well as their analysis. One, what is the subjective experience of being an adult male survivor of childhood incest? Two, how do adult male survivors in this study understand (construe) these experiences?
Definitions

Childhood - for purposes of this study, childhood will refer to a person considered a child by legal definition.

Constant Comparative Method (Analysis) - specifies that upon completion of the interview, the researcher must analyze and code the data before moving on to the next interview. As new data are collected, they must be analyzed, coded and composed with all the other data already collected before moving on to another interview or new data.

Male Childhood Incest - incest is a particular manifestation of child sexual abuse. For purposes of this study, male childhood incest will be defined as unwanted sexual contact (genital fondling, fellatio, or anal penetration) between a child and a parent, stepparent, older sibling, or extended family members. Extended family members include grandparents, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, or cousins. The crucial psychosocial dynamic is the familial relationship between the incest participants.

Grounded Theory - According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the grounded theory "is inductively derived from the study of the phenomena it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection analysis, and theory stand in a reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a
theory and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge" (p. 23).

**Adult Male Incest Survivor** - refers to the adult male who was incestuously abused as a child.

**Structure** - by structure, this researcher is referring to the way in which the research subject structures a particular experience, the particular angle or perspective from which he views the phenomena of his world.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review on child sexual abuse is organized into three principal sections and will look at representative research and clinical observation which emphasizes psychological dynamics. In section one, some myths which surround the sexual abuse of male children are discussed and debunking evidence provided. The second section considers post-sexual behavior in order to provide the reader with insight into why victims remain secretive, feel helpless, accommodate to their perpetrator, give delayed disclosures and frequently retract their complaint. The final section will briefly consider the impact of sexual abuse on self structure.

Myths

As noted by Watkins and Bentovim (1992) there are a number of prevalent myths about the sexual abuse of male children. These include:

1. Boys are hardly ever abused sexually or that, when they are, the frequency of abuse is a tiny fraction of that of girls.

2. When boys are abused they are less psychologically affected than girls, both initially and in the long term.

3. If boys are abused the perpetrator is male and homosexual. (p. 27)
Myth #1: Prevalence

One needs only to review the literature to see how confusing, inconclusive, and lacking in continuity the prevalence data actually is concerning male child sexual abuse. Finkelhor et al. (1986) conducted an extensive review of the prevalence of sexual abuse, comparing males to females, where samples were drawn from volunteers, college students, and subjects from the community at large. Data from this study revealed considerable variation in the prevalence of child sexual abuse, ranging from 6% to 62% for girls and 3% to 31% for boys. Pierce and Pierce (1985) report that studies have found that between 10% and 17% of all reported sexually victimized children are males.

In a study by Urquiza (1988), a large cohort of male undergraduate students were asked to provide information about inappropriate and abusive childhood sexual experiences. Of the 2,016 responses received from the self-administered questionnaire, 31.9% identified some degree of inappropriate childhood sexual experiences.

Violato and Genius (1993), in reviewing the literature on male sexual abuse research problems, took the simple unweighted mean of prevalence rates from nine published studies of "normal subjects" and estimated the prevalence rate of male sexual abuse to be 11.5% (low=4.8%; high =16%). The prevalence rate for "non-normal subjects" (e.g., rapists, child molesters, runaways, etc.) are frequently greater than 50%. Clearly, these data reveal the prevalence of male child sexual abuse to be of significant proportions.

It is widely thought that the incidence numbers for male victims of child sexual abuse are low and do not accurately represent the scope of male victimization. In a study
by Risen and Koss (1987), 2,972 men in a representative national sample were asked about their childhood sexual experiences. Of this sample, 7.3% reported an abusive childhood experience before the age of fourteen. The vast majority of these men (81.2%) had told no one about their sexual abuse. An interesting finding by Reinhart (1987) is that boys were more likely to be identified as victims through indirect disclosure. Reinhart found that in a population of medical center referrals, 20% of boys versus 11% of girls were identified by a third party, with later confirmation by the child.

The research clearly reports that boys are less likely than girls to disclose sexual abuse (Neilson, 1983; Finkelhor, 1984). Some proposed reasons for the lack of disclosure by males include shame, fear of ridicule and rejection, and fear of being considered a homosexual (Beitchman et al., 1992; Bolton et al., 1990). As adults, societal pressures to avoid implications of vulnerability or homosexuality often preclude men from acknowledging childhood sexual abuse (Briere, Evans, Runtz, & Wall, 1988; Dimock, 1988; Shelden & Shelden, 1989).

The earliest article that addresses the silence of young male victims is Maria Nasjleti's (1980) "Suffering in Silence: The Male Incest Victim." Nasjleti found in her group work with sexually abused boys that they were consistently resistant to discussing their victimization. Her article explores the psychological factors in the young male victims' difficulty in disclosing and discussing his victimization. Nasjleti concludes that our society's role expectations of male children "create a climate conducive to their victimization, and in turn their victimization of others." (p. 274)
While the literature clearly documents the existence of sexual abuse of boys, and provides an indication of its prevalence; however, the sexual abuse of male children remains largely underinvestigated. As Finkelhor (1990) notes, there has been an obvious gap in the literature concerning the impact of sexual abuse on boys. He points out that although studies have for a long time suggested that one quarter to one third of all victims are boys, far fewer than one quarter or one third of all studies have studied boys specifically.

Myth #2: Effects of Sexual Abuse On Boys

Just as there is an underreporting of the incidence and prevalence of sexual abuse in male children, likewise, there is a scarcity of information about the effects of sexual abuse on boys, as distinct from the sexual abuse of girls. In commenting on the literature, Finkelhor (1990) notes that boys, like girls, show marked impact as a result of sexual abuse both early and long term.

The studies evaluating children shortly after disclosure show boys with the same patterns of stress-related symptoms as girls: fears, sleep problems, and distractedness. On the list of 37 symptoms evaluated by Conte et al. (1986), there were no statistically significant differences between boys and girls on 33 of the items. On the list used by the Tufts New England Medical Center, Division of Child Psychiatry (1984), there were no statistically significant differences on 31 of 33 symptoms. Other studies have similar findings (Briere & Runtz, 1987).
When differences between boys and girls do show up, the ones most often noted are along the dimensions called "internalizing" and "externalizing" (Friedrich, Urquiza, & Beilke, 1986, 1988). Boys are more often reported to be acting aggressively, such as fighting with siblings (Gomes-Schwartz, Horowitz, & Cardarelli, 1990), and girls are more often reported to be acting depressed (Conte et al., 1986).

Other studies that have looked at long-term sequelae of childhood sexual abuse show similar findings. For example, Briere and his colleagues report higher levels of psychological symptoms among both male and female survivors than among nonabused adults in clinical and nonclinical samples (Briere, Evans, et al., 1988; Briere & Runtz, 1988). Many studies have found survivors to have higher levels of anxiety, depression, self-destructive and suicidal tendencies, and difficulties with intimate relationships than do nonabused individuals (Briere, Evans, et al., 1988; Briere & Runtz, 1988; Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Feinaver, 1988). In a study by Dimock (1988) of a clinical sample of 25 adult male sexual abuse survivors, three common characteristics were found to be sexual compulsiveness, masculine identity confusion, and relationship dysfunction. Other symptoms reported by Brucker and Johnson (1987) include difficulty dealing with anger, poor self-concept, isolation, depression, and problems with substance abuse.

Myth #3: Who Are the Perpetrators?

Initially, research on child sexual abuse focused on strangers as the primary perpetrators. Subsequent findings have shown that more than half of reported cases involve family members as offenders (Hodson & Skeen, 1987; Saunders, 1988). Conte
(1990) notes that sexual assault by strangers is actually a relatively rare event, accounting for less than 4% of child victims in some studies. Many studies found that boys are abused primarily by adolescent or adult males who are known to them (Baker & Duncan, 1985; Farber, Showers, Johnson, Joseph, & Oshins, 1984; Pierce & Pierce, Johnson & Shrier, 1985). Finkelhor (1990) reports that half of the perpetrators were authority figures to the victims. He also reports that 83% of the perpetrators of male victims were male. A few studies report the majority of male victims in their samples were molested by females (Fritz et al., 1981; Dean & Woods, 1985; Petrovich & Templer, 1984).

Considering the research to date, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the myths about the sexual abuse of boys: 1) males represent a large percentage of sexual abuse victims; 2) male victims often suffer negative consequences, both initial and long term, as a result of sexual abuse; and 3) although the perpetrator of sexual abuse against males is most often someone outside the family, a significant percentage of reported sexual abuse against boys is intrafamilial (incestuous), including mother-son and sister-brother.

**Accommodation Syndrome**

Why would children remain silent about such a horrifying experience as sexual abuse? Why would they wait or avoid disclosure, sometimes giving the false appearance of "going along" willingly? When a child does disclose sexual abuse, why would the disclosure often appear unconvincing? Why would they retract or change their stories?
Summit (1983) discusses five factors which, when taken together, are termed the accommodation syndrome. These factors are: secrecy; helplessness; entrapment and accommodation; delayed, conflicted and unconvincing disclosure; and retraction of complaint. The accommodation syndrome provides a useful means for conceptualizing a psychological dynamic underlying the victim experience and behaviors.

1. Secrecy. Sexually abused children rarely disclose their sexual victimization initially (Finkelhor, 1979). They are not likely to volunteer that they were molested unless directly asked (Briere & Zaidi, 1989). Incest, in particular, is clothed in secrecy. Denial, guilt, shame, fear of disapproval from parents, and threats from the perpetrator inhibit disclosure and reinforce the conspiracy of silence. Threats may involve harm, but more often they are threats involving the loss of love and affection or loss of family security, such as, "Don't tell your mother or she'll get mad at me and I'll have to go away forever," or "If you tell anyone they won't believe you and everyone will be mad at you and not speak to you anymore." As Summit (1983) notes, whether the intimidation is gentle or threatening, the secrecy component makes it clear to the child that this is wrong. The requirement for silence can be both a source of fear and a promise of safety: "Everything will be all right if you just don't tell." (p. 181)

In many instances, this secret may either never be disclosed or withheld until adulthood. For instance, with regard to male victims specifically, the majority of men in retrospective surveys had never told anyone during their childhood (Dean & Woods,

2. Helplessness. Summit (1983) states, "the expectation of child self-protection and immediate disclosure ignores the basic subordination and helplessness of children within authoritarian relationships." (p. 182) Sexual exploitation by someone older and stronger serves to instill a sense of powerlessness in the victim. With regards to incest, the failure of a trusted and more powerful family member (caretaker) to respond in the best interests of the child creates confusion and only serves to underscore the helplessness and isolation of the child. In reaction to his/her fear and confusion, the child may "play possum" in bed as a means to cope. Children generally learn to cope in silence.

3. Entrapment and Accommodation. Summit (1983) proposes that for the child victim within a dependent relationship there is no place to escape. The failure to disclose the molestation and obtain protection leaves the child without options to stop the abuse. As Summit mentions, many children respond to the helplessness and secrecy inherent in acts of incest by psychologically adapting, or accommodating, to the molestation.

The child is not prepared to cognitively accept that a parent or trusted family member, who they want to believe is good and caring, can actually be bad and would do wrongful acts with them. These victims may accommodate in different ways, perhaps by accepting all the blame for these acts and hoping that by being good in other areas they can earn love and acceptance and stop the violation.
The child may be told by the familial perpetrator that he/she could destroy the family by disclosing "their secret." Therefore, as Summit states, "the child, not the parent, must mobilize the altruism and self-control to ensure the survival of the others ... maintaining a lie to keep the secret is the ultimate virtue, while telling others the truth would be the greatest sin." (p. 185) When faced with the apparent choice between possibly destroying the family by disclosing the molestation and preserving the security of the family by keeping the incest a secret, the child feels entrapped and maintains the secret.

Children who are thus entrapped and helpless may seek some type of escape by running away from home, emotional withdrawal, projection of rage, using drugs, or in some cases, regressing into a dissociative state. Society, in turn, may react only in response to the acting out behavior and fail to empathize with the underlying trauma.

4. Delayed, Conflicted and Unconvincing Disclosure. As Summit (1983) notes, most instances of childhood incest goes unreported. When disclosure does occur, it is usually the result of family conflict, third part discovery, or sensitive community outreach and education by child protective agencies.

Summit explains that when the victim does disclose, it is often delayed and unconvincing. He states, "the child of any age faces an unbelieving audience when he/she complains of ongoing sexual abuse. The troubled, angry adolescent risks not only disbelief, but scapegoating, humiliation and punishment as well." (p. 186) The victim may disclose the secret during adolescence when he/she has matured enough to gain
some measure of individuation and personal power (which explains the delay in
disclosure); however, the disclosure may appear unconvincing if it occurs at a time when
the victim is angry at the abuser for other reasons.

5. Retraction of Accusation. Given the level of pressure and stress imposed upon
the child victim, it is not surprising that accusations of incest are often retracted. Summit
(1983) notes that, "Whatever a child says about incest, he/she is likely to reverse it." (p. 188)

Disclosure of incest will typically set into motion a chain reaction of confusing
and threatening events. The victim may be removed from the home and placed into
protective custody, the familial perpetrator is questioned and possibly threatened with
incarceration, the victim may be called a liar by family and blamed for causing the
upheaval, the unoffending parent may react with shock, disbelief, denial, and/or rage and
may not be available emotionally for the victim at a crucial moment. This level of
confusion and pressure for the victim and family may cause him/her to retract the
accusation in order to restore peace and reunite the family.

Impact of Sexual Abuse On Self Structure

Sexual abuse in childhood is thought to be associated with a variety of long-term
psychological symptoms, including chronic depression, self-destructive behaviors,
feelings of isolation, confused sexual orientation, poor self-esteem, a tendency toward re-
victimization (repeated abuse in adult relationships), substance abuse, and difficulty
trusting others (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Kendal-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor,
1993; Wyatt & Powell, 1988). In their review of the sexual abuse literature, Browne and Finkelhor (1986) concluded that, "... sexual abuse is a serious mental health problem, consistently associated with very disturbing subsequent problems in some important portion of its victims." (p. 72)

As a way to conceptualize the array of symptoms reported in adults sexually victimized as children, Putnam (1990) proposes that many of these symptoms "can be understood as manifestations of continued major disturbances in the victim's sense of self." (p. 120) This can involve a generalized lowering of self-regard, a sense of inner badness or contamination, or pervasive guilt and shame (Westen, 1994). The experience of childhood sexual abuse may disrupt the normal development and consolidation of the self and a vulnerable self results.

A consistently reported long-term sequelae of childhood sexual abuse is a disturbance in the survivor's sense of self-esteem (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Coons, 1986). Although the clinical literature appears to have made modest efforts to explore this facet of sequelae, within the empirical literature, the areas of self-esteem and self-concept among survivor's of childhood sexual abuse remain underresearched. However, empirical studies by Briere and his associates found significantly higher levels of negative self-image among both male and female survivors than among nonabused samples (Briere, Evans, et al., 1988; Briere & Runtz, 1988).

Simply stated, sexual abuse is a profound blow to the victim's self-esteem. The sense of self may become fragmented in terms of what is good versus what is bad. The child victim may assume not only that they did something bad but also that they are bad.
The adult survivor may then be left with feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, guilt, shame, and worthlessness (Bradshaw, 1990). As reported by Blume (1990), shame takes on a secondary role when the victim assumes that he/she is bad rather than acknowledge that a loved one is bad and hurtful. Although sexual abuse is dependent on exploitation of the victim by the perpetrator, quite often it is the victim who feels guilty and stigmatized (Conte, 1985).

Another long-term sequelae that reveals a profound disturbance is one's self structure is self-destructive behavior (Putnam, 1990). In his study, Briere (1984) introduces the idea that a long-term effect of child sexual abuse may lead to the development of a "postsexual abuse syndrome" which includes, among other symptoms, uncontrollable anger and deliberate self-harm. Putnam (1990) writes that, "suicidal ideation and behavior, self-mutilation, and other forms of self-destructive behavior are common in adult victims of childhood sexual abuse." (p. 120) Drug abuse and alcoholism are significantly higher among survivors than among nonabused individuals (Finkelhor et al., 1986).

Browne and Finkelhor (1986) have noted that disturbances of sexual identity and sexual functioning are consistently found in survivors of sexual abuse. Drawing upon a clinical sample of sexually abused women, Jehu (1989) found that 94% of the subjects were sexually dysfunctional. Survivors may manifest a tendency to sexualize their relationships and exhibit seductive behavior (Faria & Belohlavek, 1984), or experience difficulty integrating intimacy and affection with sex (Gordy, 1983). Survivors may become involved in promiscuity resulting from their negative self-image. As reported by
Ratican (1992), "Having been unable to say no to sex as a child, the survivor may have difficulty rejecting unwanted sexual advances as an adult. Sex may become compulsive as a form of self-destructive behavior, a means of releasing anger, or a bargaining chip to attain attention, money, or security." (p. 34)

In summary, given the existing body of literature pertaining to childhood sexual abuse, it appears that the child victim may carry the effects of sexual abuse well into adulthood. In reviewing the literature, there is good evidence to conclude that boys are vulnerable to sexual abuse, they often experience detrimental effects on behavior, self-concept and functioning, and often carry the psychological impact of their victimization to adulthood.

Although there has been an explosion of research efforts within the last decade toward understanding child sexual abuse, the literature reveals a gap in studies that focus on adult males who were sexually abused as children and have not perpetrated sexual abuse. The information that is available underscores that the issues of socialized gender roles tend to discourage males from reporting abuse and thereby restrict access to research. Further research is needed in order to increase the level of understanding about the long-term sequelae of childhood sexual abuse among males.
CHAPTER III

PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This Chapter describes the process and procedures for investigating the lived-in-world of the adult male incest survivor. A qualitative/phenomenological process was used to analyze the data and develop a grounded theory describing the adult male incest survivor's psychology.

The research procedures chosen by the author were adapted and modified from those developed and implemented by Seabaugh (1983). In the same manner to which Seabaugh utilized Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method and Beck's (1976) model of cognitive processing, this author also employs similar concepts.

PROCEDURES

The methodological approach is presented in six phases that parallel those employed by Seabaugh (1983). The phases are: collection of data, reduction of data, co-researching of data, identification of emerging themes, validation of themes, and explication of the grounded theory.

Subject Selection and Collection of Data

Subject selection was limited to men who 1) were survivor's of childhood incest, 2) had at some point engaged in treatment around issues related to their incestuous
experience, and 3) had the capacity to reflect upon and articulate their past and present experiences. The author acknowledges the delimitation placed upon the study by sampling a select population; however, it was decided that such a sample was necessary in order to access the phenomenology of the adult male incest survivor. In order to understand how the male incest survivor gives meaning to and structures his present lived-in-world and how these experiential structures are perceivably connected to the incestuous experience, the subjects must be able to reflect upon their own psychology and be committed to the value of such an endeavor.

The author has a large network of professional colleagues who are practicing clinicians and therapists throughout the greater Cincinnati and tri-state area who had expressed an interest in this research project. Subjects were developed through referrals from this network of mental health professionals.

Initially, each subject was given a brief questionnaire designed to elicit pertinent information. The questionnaire was coded with a fictitious name to assure confidentiality. The demographic data obtained on each subject included: age of the subject; ethnic group; education; marital status; occupation and income; age sexual abuse occurred; gender of the perpetrator; relationship of the perpetrator to subject; duration and frequency of the sexual abuse; and a brief description of the sexual abuse (see Appendix A). Subject selection was limited to adult male individuals who had experienced intrafamilial sexual abuse (incest) in childhood. Anonymity was provided through the use of pseudonyms. Since the subjects were already in therapy or had previously been in therapy related to their sexual abuse experience, it was not anticipated
that the research process, with a primary focus on the here-and-now, would be particularly stressful. However, this was discussed with the subjects and appropriate arrangements were made for mental health counseling should a need arise.

Each subject was asked to keep an experience journal (small notebook provided by researcher) with instructions identical to those employed by Seabaugh (1983).

The instructions were:

For one week, at a set time each day, describe your significant experience(s) encountered during that day. Write a separate page for each experience and be sure and include in your descriptions the following three things: One, what happened; two, how you felt about what happened; and three, what you did in response to what happened. (p. 67)

The instructions were purposely brief so as to allow each participant complete subjectivity in deciding which of their experiences were "significant" and not be influenced in any way by the researcher. The subject understood that he would return the experience journal at the end of seven days and an interview with the researcher was scheduled.

Sample size was not pre-determined. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) concept of theoretical sampling was used to determine the sample size. The concept means that sampling of subjects can stop when no new data are being found that further extend the developing thematic categories.

Reduction of Data

Prior to the co-researching interview, the subject's experience journal was reformulated into a series of paradigms (categories) based upon Beck's model of
cognitive processing. Where similarities were found between journal entries, these descriptive data were combined and grouped. The paradigms consisted of the following steps: 1) Event; 2) Interpretation; 3) Emotional response (feeling); 4) Emotional construct; 5) Action; and 6) Action construct.

In reformulating the data into the paradigms, Seabaugh's (1983) use of Beck's model was replicated. The information for steps one, three and five came from the experience journal and was reduced by the researcher prior to the co-researching interview. The data for steps two, four and six were derived from the co-researching interview with each subject.

Co-researching the Data

During this particular interview phase of the study, the subject and researcher interacted as co-researchers so that the meaning and constructs of the subject's experiences could be explicated. Each of the experience descriptions formulated into the paradigms were presented to the subject for validation. Where there was any felt inaccuracy on the part of the subject, the data would be reformulated until the subject felt it to be accurate (Seabaugh, 1983).

The subject was next instructed to reflect (focus back) on what thoughts went through his mind during the experiences collected in the experience journal. Beck's (1976) concept of pre-reflective thinking or "automatic thoughts" is the point of reference here. The idea is to record how the subject interpreted the events, and what constructs were used to guide the typical emotional and behavioral responses to the experiences. The subject's verbal responses were reflected back for clarification. The responses were
then written onto the blank spaces on the paradigmatic forms. A validation process was followed as in the previous step (Seabaugh, 1983).

**Identification of Emerging Themes**

Following completion of the co-researching interview, the researcher began the exacting process of identifying the emerging intrapersonal themes.

This process was accomplished through a comparative method (Seabaugh, 1983) whereby each completed paradigm was compared serially looking to identify emerging similarities and differences. This resulting data were viewed as themes and labeled. As new paradigms were reviewed, and the information assimilated into the developing themes, the themes were clarified, expanded, revised and/or reduced. Theme charts were used to further reduce and catalog the information into a more manageable structure. (See Appendix B)

**Validation of Themes**

This phase of the study took place during a third interview. The three themes that emerged were presented to each subject for purposes of validation. (See Appendix C) Seabaugh's (1983) method of having each subject mark a "2" if the theme was "consistently true" for them, a "1" if the theme was "sometimes true" for them, and a "0" if it was "seldom, if ever true" for them was used.

**Explication of A Grounded Theory**

After all the subjects had responded to the themes, the researcher then reconstructed each of the validated themes for purposes of explicating (explaining with greater detail and developing its implications) a substantive theory of the adult male
incest survivor. The purpose of the final step, as stated by Seabaugh, "was to reweave the validated themes into a tapestry that accurately reflected this archetypal experience which was generated from, and grounded in the experiential lives of the subjects" (Seabaugh, 1983, p. 81).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe a phenomenological approach used to study a sample of adult male incest survivors. This was accomplished by describing the methods of subject selection, collection of data, reduction of data, coresearching the data, identification of themes, validation of themes, and explication of the grounded theory.

The theme charts are replicated in Appendix B for purposes of aiding the reader in understanding the process of phenomenological analysis as completed by this researcher. Three intrapersonal themes were generated which describe the psychology of the four adult male survivors studied. These three themes represent the researcher's grounded theory which will be presented in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER IV
THE ADULT INCEST SURVIVOR:
EXPLICATION OF A GROUNDED THEORY

Using the phenomenological method specified in the preceding chapter, this chapter details the experiential data on four adult male incest survivors. The primary focus for deriving the data was on the subjective, here-in-now life experiences as recorded by the subject in a journal and subsequently co-researched with the author.

Data collected were analyzed by condensing the journal entries, along with narrative information obtained during a co-researching phase, into individual theme charts. Journal entries were condensed into brief statements reflecting the event, feelings, and action of the subject, and recorded onto the chart. Following the completion of this phase, an interview was held with each subject for purposes of explicating the subject's interpretation of the event and his emotional and action constructs. The subject was further encouraged to reflect upon the overall meaning of each entry and add any comments deemed relevant.

The data, when taken together, suggest patterns of thinking and interacting that this author contends are valid descriptions of the adult male incest survivor's psychology. Using Glaser and Strauss' (1967) method of the constant comparative method, three themes emerged from the data that constitute a statement of the theory. Because each theme focuses on the self of the adult male incest survivor, the perspective of self
psychology will be discussed as the most appropriate psychological theory to elucidate
the developed grounded theory.

Each of the four subjects recorded seven journal entries for a total of twenty-eight
entries. Each of the following entries were taken from the subject's journal in a
chronological manner and co-researched in a chronological manner. A methodology
employed by Bauman (1985), whereby each entry is amplified to reveal reflective data
generated during the co-researching-researching phase, was paralleled.
Adam

Assessment Information

Adam is a thirty-four year old, divorced Caucasian male who works as a casemanager for a community mental health center. He also has a part-time job as a waiter in a restaurant. Adam is a college graduate and earns approximately $25,000 per year. Adam was raised in an intact family system. He is the youngest of three children. His parents and both siblings are college graduates.

Adam was sexually victimized by his brother who was five years older. The molestation occurred when Adam was age ten. The sexual contact randomly occurred over approximately six months and consisted of Adam performing fellatio on his brother on several occasions. The sexual abuse stopped when the brother decided to leave Adam alone. To Adam's knowledge, no one in the family has ever learned of the sexual abuse perpetrated by his brother.

Adam presented in a cooperative and friendly manner. Although he initially seemed tentative and mildly anxious, he quickly became more relaxed and trusting. He expressed considerable interest in the study. Adam's participation in personal therapy, apparently, has aided his ability to identify and express feeling content and has equipped him with good personal insight. He progressively became more comfortable in talking freely about his incestuous victimization and how that childhood experience seems to
have shaped the way in which he processes present-life experiences. It became obvious
during the co-researching phase that past and present experiences remain emotionally
connected for Adam. Adam handled the entire research process quite well and gave no
indication of psychological distress as a result of his participation.

Theme Chart

Entry #1. Adam reported that he came home from work and had a message on the
answering machine from his father. He interpreted the event to mean that his father
wasn't willing to make the effort to reach him directly. Adam explained that his father
knew of his work schedule and still he elected to call and simply leave a message.

Adam's feeling response was anger, guilt, and sadness. Adam stated that he
initially reacted with anger that his father would simply choose to call and leave a
message rather than call back another night and speak to him directly. Adam reflectively
explained that he later began to feel guilty and responsible for not being home when his
father called. He remarked that "somehow it always ends up feeling like my
responsibility." He stated that it made him sad to think that the conversations between
him and his father have been reduced to leaving telephone messages.

In co-researching the constructs that guided Adam's emotional response, he talked
about a long history of feeling "unimportant" with his family, especially with his father.
At this point in the co-researching phase, Adam reflected upon this issue of not feeling
important or not being able to please his parents. He stated:

I was pleased that dad thought enough to return my call but the fact that he didn't
feel I was important enough to speak to directly triggered a range of emotions.
Most of my life, I have felt like I was on the fringe of their life. You would think I was adopted. It's always been hard for me to please my parents.

Adam's response was to become tearful. He waited until his initial anger subsided and he called his father back and apologized for missing his call. The construct that guided his action came out of his need to maintain some measure of emotional connection with his father. Adam reflected and spoke further about this entry:

Throughout my relationship with my family, I ultimately will take responsibility and apologize. Overall, this is true throughout my life and across all important relationships. Whatever is wrong, I will generally own it. I realize I am too insecure to risk rejection. I am very vulnerable to what other people think or feel about me. I want people to like me and to affirm me and I will do whatever to please them.

Entry #2. Adam recorded that he had to drive alone to a professional conference located in another city. A co-worker who had originally planned to accompany Adam needed to cancel at the last instant. He interpreted the event to mean that he would not be able to rely on the co-worker for support.

Adam described feelings of insecurity and anxiety associated with having felt abandoned. He explained that his feeling of abandonment by the co-worker stirred up ongoing issues around self-doubt and control. He recalled several occasions in which he struggled with "appearing incompetent as a professional."

Adam's emotional construct focused on what he described as a dominant life theme of low self-confidence. He reflectively explained:

A persistent them in my life has to do with lack of self-confidence. Issues around feeling vulnerable to how others perceive me are prominent in my life. I am just
like my mother because I worry all the time. I even felt insecure about the drive to the conference thinking that I may get lost. Self-doubt and loss of control are powerful elements in my life. To feel less informed than everyone else at the conference caused me to feel out of control. Without my co-worker's presence, I felt vulnerable and alone.

Adam reported that he would sing songs while driving and make self-affirming statements. He explained that he had learned some helpful ways to overcome anxiety and self-doubt by refocusing his thoughts. A useful technique has been to remind himself of having emotionally survived other similar situations and that he will survive again.

Entry #3. This entry is similar in situation and theme issues to event #2. Adam reported attending a reception for certain people considered important to his employer. Adam interpreted this situation from the perspective of not knowing what to expect or what his role would be. His automatic thoughts were expressed as "these situations always make me uncomfortable."

Feelings associated with this event involved anxiety and insecurity. As with event #2, Adam's feeling construct had to do with unclear role expectations and not being in control. Reflectively, he explained that control issues exacerbate his vulnerability to self-doubt.

Adam explained his action and action construct in terms of presenting a persona that outwardly appears to be calm and in control. This is another technique he has learned in order to master anxiety. Adam stated that he learned from his family how to "pretend." He reflected on being raised in the church and how his family would "always dress up and look nice on the outside no matter what was going on in the home."
Pretending to have control is a persona Adam consciously displays as a means to hold himself together in social situations in which he may feel vulnerable.

Entry #4. The recorded event involved a conflict at work after Adam made a decision without first checking with the team manager. This event occurred at his part-time job where he works two evenings a week. Adam and the team manager had a heated argument and Adam was sent home. Adam initially interpreted the event as "childish and blown out of proportion." After he left work and calmed down, he concluded that a poor decision had been made on his part. He stated that he knew the rule and he knew better than to act independently.

Adam felt hurt and angered at the manager for challenging him. As a defense, he retaliated and began to argue with the manager. After leaving work and returning home, he reflected upon what happened and began to feel disappointed in himself and with his behavior.

Adam's emotional construct for his feelings were explained:

Being scolded by the team manager reminded me of being treated like a child. The initial confrontation with the team manager made me feel like I was talking to my father. She told me "I expected something better from you." This type of remark is exactly something my father would say. He has a way of making me feel both angry and disappointed in myself at the same time.

Adam reported that he tried to put the incident out of his mind. He later called the manager and apologized. Adam noted how this incident had reminded him of numerous situations with his parents and with other significant relationships where something goes wrong and he assumes ownership of the problem. His stated tendency is to take responsibility for correcting the conflict.
At this point in the co-researching process, Adam reflected on the overall meaning of this entry:

This all relates to the consistent theme of owning responsibility for any type of conflict that involves me. I was told by my brother who molested me that it was more my fault than his because I could have said no. For years he made me feel and believe that none of this would have happened if I really didn't want to go along. I should have been strong enough to protect myself. He tricked me the first time into going along and then he used the threat of telling our parents and my friends if I didn't keep going along. For years afterward I felt responsible. He had all the control and now he has respect because he appears strong and successful and I am weak for being the failure and underachiever. My brother has his family together, a good paying job, and active in the church. I have had two divorces and need to work two jobs to pay my bills. I cannot understand how molestation by a family member doesn't also affect the family perpetrator the way it does the family victim.

Entry #5. Adam reported that a women acquaintance turned him down for dinner. He explained that he had met the woman at an aerobics class and it had taken him several weeks to "get enough nerve to ask her out." Adam interpreted the event to mean that she only appeared to like him and he "misread her."

Adam's feeling response centered around rejection. He explained that having felt rejected in this instance led to feelings of unattractiveness and loneliness. He recalled feeling hurt and needing to be soothed. The emotional construct explicated focused on his struggle with bisexuality. His pattern has been to re-affirm himself through male companionship whenever he experiences "failure" in his heterosexual relationships.

Adam elected to reflect and expound upon this theme with the following thoughts:

When she turned me down, I felt hurt and rejected. Whenever I experience rejection, I immediately feel profound loneliness. After this experience, I needed to feel accepted and important. I knew that by going to the riverfront, I could find someone who would find me attractive and would want to do something with me. I have felt rejection primarily by women in my life. My first homosexual
experience came when I was 17 after my girlfriend left me for someone else. This same scenario would reoccur many times all the way through both of my marriages. One of the strongest compulsions is knowing I have never been rejected whenever I sought male companionship. I have the control in this context. I have what someone else wants.

Adam's action response was to go to the riverfront and "flirt around." The explicated construct that guided his action was to overcome narcissistic injury. Adam reflected on how self-affirming it feels whenever he experiences someone who wants him. He thinks of himself as physically attractive and perceives that other gay or bisexual men also find him attractive. He uses flirting in this context as a means to feel in control and to soothe narcissistic injury.

Entry #6. Adam's former wife called him to say that she was pregnant. Adam has a seven year old son from this marriage and he and his former wife have maintained a harmonious relationship since their divorce. Adam interpreted the event to mean that his wife wanted him to know that she is happy again and getting on with her life. His emotional response was to feel resentment and rejection.

In explicating the emotional construct, Adam explained that "she still has control over my happiness. She rejected me for someone else and yet she wants to keep in touch and tell all about her new life." Adam explained his felt need to maintain a harmonious relationship with his former wife:

Because my 7 year old son lives with her, I need to keep in touch with her and keep everything as smooth as possible. She knows about my bisexuality and I am fearful at times that she may try and use it against me to keep me from seeing my son alone. I talked with her about our past together and this only reminds me of the rejection issue. I try not to let my true feelings show when I talk with her. She still has too much control over my happiness.
Adam's response and construct was to call a friend and colleague and share his feelings as a way to work through the resentment. He reflected on how the fearfulness of possibly losing his son stirred up issues he has around helplessness and loss of control. He identified these as prominent themes in his life. Adam stated the whole situation with his former wife was like a re-enactment of the power and control his brother had over him.

Entry #7. In this event, a co-worker told Adam that she would be leaving his team and moving to another position. Adam explained that he had worked with this co-worker for three years and had become dependent upon her "superior skills." He interpreted the event to mean that his co-worker had been offered a position of greater responsibility due to her level of competence.

Adam's feeling response was ambivalent. Beneath his outward expressions of happiness and encouragement were feelings of rejection and abandonment. The construct that guided his feelings once again centered around abandonment issues and injury to his self-esteem. His thought was expressed as "here I go again. Another person I am close to is leaving me." When asked to reflect upon this construct, Adam stated:

This brought back some long-standing memories of how everyone important to me seems to end up leaving. My association initially was to my mother who left me with my older brother so she could go back to work. This is when the sexual molestation started. If she hadn't abandoned me none of that might have happened. I remember feeling close with my sister until she turned sixteen. She started dating and soon she wanted more privacy. My first wife never was happy. That marriage lasted less than three months. My second wife left me for a slob. When my co-worker told me she was leaving my team, I felt vulnerable all over again. I had become very dependent upon her and felt safe.
Adam's action response was to take a long walk with the co-worker and talk with her about how he was feeling. He stated that this helped him overcome any potential anger toward her and served to reassure him.
Bob

Assessment Information

Bob is a thirty-two year old, single (never married) Caucasian male who works as a maintenance supervisor at a college. He has an Associate's degree in Mechanical Engineering and earns more than $25,000 per year. His parents divorced when he was three years of age. He has one older sister. Mother remarried when Bob was age five and he subsequently was raised by mother and step-father.

Bob was sexually victimized by his step-father from the time he was age seven until he was nearly age ten. The sexual contact was random and consisted of performing fellatio on step-father three times and several instances of mutual genital fondling/masturbation. Although the molestation stopped after sister learned of the activity, Bob never told anyone until he first entered therapy at age twenty-five. Both parents are now deceased.

Although Bob presented in a cooperative and friendly manner, his demeanor was rather quiet and relaxed. Initially, he appeared mildly anxious and unsure about how to respond. Once he acclimated to the research process, he proved to be engaging, articulate, focused, and capable of serious and thoughtful reflection. He handled the interviews in an appropriate manner and showed no signs of emotional distress.
Entry #1. Bob identified an argument he had with his older sister after he refused to accompany her to their parents' gravesite. Bob explained how he has refused to help his sister clean and decorate the gravesite since his step-father's death three years ago. He interpreted the event as a continuing effort on the part of his sister to get him to let go of the past and to forgive his step-father for molesting him as a child.

Bob reported feeling angry and sad over the estrangement that develops between him and his sister every time this issue comes up. His emotional construct focused on the underlying anger he feels over having suppressed his feelings and pretending for years that nothing was wrong. He reflected on how angry he becomes whenever his sister suggests that he simply let go of the past by forgiving his step-father. He explained:

I can't bring myself to clean and decorate the grave of the man who molested me. I am angry at my sister because she appears to be getting on with her life and she expects me to put this behind me and let go of the anger. I can't let go because I am faced with the effects of having been molested every day.

Bob reflected on the "close bond" he has with his sister and how she was directly responsible for causing the molestation activity to cease. He spoke about how his sister believes that her religious faith restored her and could do the same for him. Bob has reached a place psychologically where he wants to express and deal with his feelings. It troubles him that his sister prefers "to block it all out" and would have him continue to suppress his feelings "just as I did at her request for fifteen years."
Bob's response to the angry argument with his sister was to call her up later and apologize. He noted that this was his typical pattern. He explained that he views his sister as the only "safe" person in his life and he cannot tolerate any degree of estrangement between them.

Entry #2. In this event, Bob needed to confront a trainee about a persistently poor job performance. He explained that the trainee was on probation and did not seem to be working out satisfactorily. Since Bob was the section supervisor, it was his responsibility to confront the trainee and terminate the trainee's employment. Bob's interpretation of this event was "another instance where I need to be assertive or confrontive." He talked about how, even when he is right, he feels anxious and lacking in self-confidence whenever he needs to assert himself in a potentially confrontational manner.

Bob's feeling response to this event was to experience anxiety and insecurity. The construct that guided his feelings focused on his tendency to "downplay" problems or conflict, to overlook it, or find a way to avoid it altogether. He struggles with rejection issues and to perceptively have someone think badly toward him is experienced as rejection. He explained:

This is true throughout my present life experiences. I feel timid and insecure in most social situations. I rarely will complain or appear upset or angry. For instance, at the office, if someone doesn't do something I had wanted or had expected to be done, I typically will let people off the hook by saying "that's okay, don't worry about it". In many instances, I have found myself going behind employees and correcting their mistakes so that I don't have to confront them as their supervisor. This also plays into the need I have to be liked by everyone. I will typically become dejected whenever I perceive that others may not like me or that they would see me as incompetent.
Bob's action response was to arrange a joint meeting between the trainee, himself, and the department supervisor to process the termination. Bob stated how the joint meeting allowed him to defer any potential confrontational issues to the department supervisor.

Entry #3. Bob reported that he placed an ad in the personal section of a newspaper hoping to meet a woman companion. He mentioned that this was the second time he had placed such an ad. He interpreted the event as a potential way to meet someone while affording him some control through anonymity. He explained that having someone respond to his ad by telephone feels less threatening than initiating contact face-to-face.

Bob reported feelings of embarrassment over having to place a personal ad in a newspaper in hopes of meeting someone. He talked of feeling frustrated with the "difficult process" of trying to meet a woman friend/companion. He described his life as lonely and he expressed a strong desire to become involved in a relationship that could potentially lead to marriage.

In explicating Bob's emotional construct, he centered the conversation around what he called "shyness" and lack of self-confidence. Bob described himself as "someone with a lot to offer in a relationship but shyness and poor self-confidence prevents me from being more assertive." He talked about feeling "too insecure to take risks." He does not handle rejection well and his tendency is to withdraw and become depressed. Bob made the following association between his current experience and his past:
During the time I was being molested, and for several years thereafter, I suppressed my thoughts and feelings associated with what happened to me. It was not until I was a senior in high school that I knew my life had some problems. I had a tendency toward extreme shyness and being timid, but not until I tried to mix more socially with girls did I become aware of how problematic my insecurities actually were. From that point on, I have never been able to overcome my issues of poor self-esteem and I continue to struggle with assertiveness.

Bob's response to the event was to screen any returned calls through his answering machine. He explained how this felt safe and allowed him some control over whom he may choose to talk.

Entry #4. The event Bob recorded involved helping a neighbor move from his home. Bob related that he had lived next door to the neighbor for the past four years but had only engaged the neighbor superficially. In the process of helping the neighbor move out, Bob learned there had been developing marital problems and the neighbor and his wife were planning to divorce. Bob interpreted the event in terms of his own felt inadequacy at not having been a good neighbor. Because of his timidity, he does not possess good social interaction skills and therefore, his tendency is to keep mostly to himself.

Bob's feeling response around the event consisted mainly of sadness and anger. He talked of feeling sad particularly over the two young children who will be affected by the divorce. The surprise over the neighbor's marital problems precipitated Bob to reflect upon his feelings of inadequacy, and more particularly, his struggle with poor social and engagement skills. Whenever he is faced with these feelings, he experiences personal frustration and anger. His reported tendency is to associate his present day struggles with
years of having to suppress his feelings and maintaining the secret of his childhood molestation. Bob reflected on how difficult it can be for him to be transparent with feelings, thus preventing others from becoming close.

In commenting upon his action and construct, Bob stated he responded by helping the neighbor, and in the process, was afforded the opportunity to share and interact with the neighbor around "problems with relationships."

Entry #5. Bob returned a telephone call to one of the respondents to his personal ad. After talking with the women for about thirty minutes, she decided not to pursue any further contact. Once again, Bob interpreted the event in terms of his perceived inadequacy around engaging people socially. He recalled thinking at the moment, "I must have said something wrong or come across as uninteresting for her to reject me so quickly without ever meeting me."

Bob reported an array of feeling responses. He talked primarily of feeling rejected, depressed and lonely and how these experiences represent such powerful issues in his life. In explicating his emotion construct, Bob commented:

I am beginning to think that I may never meet anyone. The idea of not having someone in my life or not ever having a family is very discouraging. My tendency is to get down on myself and feel sorry for myself and hurt. When I reflect on how my life seems to be passing me by without having anyone in my life to love and to love me in return I start to feel profound loneliness and sadness.

Bob's response to the event was to "try and put this out of my mind and keep from becoming overly discouraged." He indicated that there were two other calls on the answering machine and he intended to return those calls. He explained that he had
worked in therapy at not taking every unproductive social encounter as a personal rejection.

Entry #6. Bob took an overnight hiking trip with the Audubon Club. While on this trip, he met a woman with whom he shared many similar interests. He interpreted the event as "fate." His comment was "maybe something can come of this chance meeting since we have several common interests."

Bob was noticeably happy and experienced feelings of encouragement. The emotion construct that guided Bob's feelings centered around having his self-confidence elevated and being affirmed by the other person. Bob explained that he feels and presents in a much more self-confident manner whenever he can talk about areas in which he has knowledge and interests:

I always feel much more secure and self-confident meeting someone and talking with them around an area where I have knowledge and strong interest. One of my main problems socially is trying to carry on a conversation made up of chit-chat. I prefer to talk about hiking and related outdoor activities because I feel more confident. This is only the second time I have ever met someone who was single on one of these Audubon trips. I feel this may be fate.

Bob responded to the event by calling the woman on the telephone and arranging to meet her for a canoe trip. He stated, "I need to act quickly on this opportunity before I had time to become anxious and possibly back out."

Entry #7. Bob rejected an offer by his sister to attend a church social function. The sister thought this may be a good opportunity for Bob to meet someone. Bob interpreted the event as his sister's "relentless effort to bring me under the influence of Christian doctrine." Bob indicated how this had been an on-going issue between him and
his sister and centers around her belief that the church "is the answer for my emotional struggles." His emotional response was to feel frustrated with his sister's persistence around this issue.

The emotional constructs that guided his feeling response were framed in terms of disillusionment with the church and associations to the past. Bob described how his response to these periodic occasions is to remain calm and simply explain to his sister that he is not yet ready to re-involve himself in the church. He purposefully tries to avoid upsetting his sister because he knows she cares for him and wants to be supportive.

When asked to add any additional comments regarding this event, Bob reflected on the overall meaning of this entry:

My sister has tried for years to get me re-involved with the church. She feels I could possibly meet someone and use the Christian faith to heal my pain. My problems with religion go back to my childhood when I would pray that my step-father would leave me alone. I feel God did not protect me and neither did my mother. The one that protected me was my sister who forced the abuse to stop after she found out what was going on. She also is the one who persuaded me not to tell mother or anyone else. She said now that it has stopped, I would forget about it and no one should ever know.
Cal

Assessment Information

Cal is a forty-nine year old, married Caucasian who is professionally employed as a teacher. He holds two graduate degrees and earns more than $25,000 per year. He is the youngest of three boys. His father was absent from the family from the time Cal was approximately age seven. His two older brothers also left home when Cal was young, leaving him to be raised by his mother, grandmother, and aunt.

Cal was sexually victimized by a first cousin, who was four years older, and had come to temporarily reside in Cal's home. The sexual abuse reportedly occurred on a random basis from the time Cal was age nine to age twelve. The nature of the sexual contact involved perpetrator to victim anal penetration and victim to perpetrator fellatio. The sexual abuse stopped after the cousin moved out of the home. Cal indicated that he never told anyone about the sexual abuse until he was in his 20's.

Throughout the co-researching process, Cal presented in a cooperative and attentive manner. He is quite articulate, engaging, and possesses good psychological insight. He seemed completely comfortable with the process throughout and expressed no psychological difficulty processing the emerging material. He demonstrated the ability to remain focused yet he often would freely make connections and associations to
his developmental history. He is connected to and expressive with his feelings and able
to be transparent regarding the impact of troubling issues.

**Theme Chart**

Each of the following entries were taken from Cal's journal in a chronological
manner and co-researched in a chronological manner.

**Entry #1.** A conflict developed between Cal and his wife after she became upset
over Cal not being very responsive to her whenever she attempts to talk with him. Cal
interprets this event as "a common theme in our marriage." He explained that if he
doesn't respond as his wife would like then she complains that he doesn't listen to her.
She often will remark that Cal is willing to take time for other people but doesn't seem
interested in what she has to say. A secondary theme related to this centers on her
observation of Cal's non-verbal cues, particularly facial expressions, which his wife
interprets as daydreaming and interfering with his ability to listen to her.

During the co-researching phase, Cal was able to talk about how this is such a
repetitive theme and how the experience often takes on an element of frustration and adds
to his feelings of irritation toward his wife.

The emotion construct was explicated with Cal during the co-researching phase.
Cal explained that his role as a teacher necessitated interaction with people throughout
the day. When he comes home in the later afternoon, his tendency is to "quiet down."
Cal refers to himself as "introspective, with a tendency to daydream." He feels his wife
interprets his behavior as choosing to be distant and she responds in a personal and
negative way.
Cal described his action and action construct based on his tendency toward "conflict reduction." He stated that his common response is to stop whatever he is doing and focus more attention on his wife. Cal reflected on his life-long tendency to avoid conflict and move toward harmony. His present day experience was related to the past in the following way:

I do not like conflict. It seems that from early childhood I have found myself making whatever efforts necessary to reconcile and do whatever it takes to reduce or avoid conflicts. This was true of my mother also, especially toward my father. Even today, I try to do things and say things and behave in ways that reduce conflict and promote harmony in my marriage and other important relationships.

Entry #2. A conflictual issue developed between Cal's wife and teen-age son. Cal was subsequently brought into the middle and expected to defend his wife. Cal's interpretation of this event reflected his tendency toward passivity when confronted with conflict. He remarked that "if my wife was not the catalyst to these conflictual situations with our son, I would be more passive toward him."

In co-researching Cal's emotional construct, he explained the recurrent situation in which his wife "will typically stimulate issues with our son and expect me to intervene." Since Cal's tendency is toward being passive, he finds it difficult in these situations to be aggressive with his son. Cal explained that he sees his son as "troubled" and feels a strong need to be supportive rather than aggressive. In the context of his life experiences, Cal views conflict and aggression as destructive.

Cal continued by acknowledging that he usually ends up being more assertive with his son in these situations due to the process. Part of this has to do with the fact that there are volatile issues related to the son's behavior. Even more importantly, is Cal's
need to overcome his wife's complaints that he is "too passive" and not sufficiently protecting and supportive of her.

Entry #3. The event reported by Cal involved receiving positive affirmation from one of his students. He stated that the student expressed appreciation for the "passion" with which he taught an otherwise controversial subject matter. He interpreted this event as "self-affirming" in light of the student recognizing and acknowledging his efforts to be a good instructor. Cal's emotion response to this event included feelings of elation and pleasure at being rewarded.

Cal's emotion construct centered on his strong need for affirmation and acceptance. He explained how school had been the environment that "saved him psychologically." He stated that "teaching and mentoring are part of my identity, of who I am. The student's response helped me feel better about myself and what I was doing in class." Cal's affect during the co-researching phase of this event changed remarkably. He was much more animated and excited as he talked and reflected upon the experience.

In reflecting upon his response to the student, Cal stated that he simply thanked her for the compliment. He explained how important it is for students to like and respect him, and that this gives credence to his sense of self-identity. His comment was, "I am not worth much as a human being unless I am making a contribution to humanity."

Entry #4. Cal and a colleague had a discussion concerning the influence of religious fundamentalism on politics. The interpretation involved surprise and disappointment to learn of the colleague's favorable support toward this issue. Although
Cal was aware of developing mild angry feelings underneath his persona, he elected to keep his feelings suppressed.

When asked about the emotional construct which guided his feelings, Cal reflected that the event had touched off a long-standing, emotionally volatile issue in which extreme religious views nearly destroyed his marriage. He associates the "religious right" movement today with bigotry and destruction.

Cal explained that his response to the situation was a common theme in his life. He elected to suppress his feelings and not articulate his divergent opinions. He recalled from childhood:

I felt forced to concede in order to have my brother's love. I would typically find myself playing ball in a way that would make it easy for them to do that. In my family of origin, it took work to have harmonious relationships.

Cal explained this stance as having become a dominant trait in the way he chooses to relate when faced with possible disharmony or personal rejection. He expressed his action construct as, "I strive to be on good relationships with my family and colleagues. I will generally suppress whatever in order to avoid conflict."

Entry #5. The event involved a conversation between Cal and his former son-in-law in which Cal explained the estranged relationship he previously had with his father. Cal interpreted the event in a positive light. He felt it was a nice opportunity to share his own personal level of insight with someone who also experienced a troubled and dysfunctional childhood.

Cal's initial response to the situation was pleasure and gratification. While co-researching, he further explained his sense of self-approval at being able to share from his
experience and level of insight into those dynamics that helped provide meaning for his own childhood experiences. Cal recalled how his father was emotionally "shut down."

He stated:

Over the years, I learned that my father had no capacity to love and the issue was not with me but with my father. Any bonding efforts were always my responsibility.

Cal reflected on how closely he was relating at the time with his former son-in-law and that he found himself "wanting to heal the son-in-law's wounds with his father."

When asked about his action response and construct, Cal replied that his action was internal. Throughout the conversation with the son-in-law, he would re-affirm himself.

Cal introduced the idea of meaning as a driving force in his life. He remarked that, "throughout my life I have been making efforts to turn negatives into positives. The greater the amount of pain one has, the greater the amount of success necessary to overcome the pain." In reflecting on the event, and the issue of meaning, Cal recalled finding the experience "liberating; the ability to let go of the past or to rise above it."

Entry #6. Cal reported an interaction and discussion he had with his oldest daughter regarding her forthcoming trip to Europe where she will study for a year. He interpreted that his daughter was experiencing ambivalence and she wanted to talk with him about those feelings. His emotional response was to feel pleased that she would entrust her feelings to him. On the other hand, he felt a sense of helplessness and powerlessness to protect her so far away.
In co-researching his emotional construct, Cal talked about how self-affirmed he felt around his daughter opening up and confiding in him. What was stirred up in the process were issues Cal has around loss of control. His feelings of helplessness were tied in with his developmental issues around powerlessness and loss of control. Realizing that he would not be able to protect his daughter while she was living abroad served to exacerbate these underlying psychological themes of loss, helplessness, and powerlessness.

In reflecting upon his action construct, Cal remarked that he made a strong effort to be supportive and encouraging. He had come to see in his daughter a commonly shared trait of outwardly coming off as strong, but underneath there is an element of vulnerability.

Entry #7. Cal recorded another conflict between his wife and son that led to his wife threatening to leave him. Cal interpreted this as a recurring gesture by his wife. He explained that whenever she feels stressed from these instances her common reaction is to blame him for being too passive and non-protecting. Her instinct is to flee. Cal's emotion response initially included frustration and anger. Later, he began to feel depressed.

In co-researching his emotion construct, Cal talked about the history of his wife threatening to leave him. He stated it usually happened when she became depressed. Cal reflected at this point on issues he has around abandonment. His father and brothers all left when he was young. He particularly noted how women had become his primary caretakers and role models during his crucial formative years. He recalled memories of
being ridiculed by his brothers when he was younger "because I did not acquire manly skills."

Cal described how his response to these volatile family situations is to remain supportive toward his wife and allow her time to "settle down." He explained:

Although I resent this process, the fear of abandonment is too great and therefore, I tend to do what is necessary to hold my marriage together. Yet, even though my wife would prefer not to have our son around due to constant conflict, perhaps it has to do with abandonment issues, I am not about to abandon our son.
Don

Assessment Information

Don is a twenty-six year old, married Caucasian male who is the co-owner of an auto repair business. His wife works part-time as a registered nurse and their combined income is over $25,000 per year. He has been married for six years and has two daughters, ages three and five. Don's parents divorced when he was eight years of age. He is the only child born to that relationship. He has a younger half sister born after his mother remarried.

Don was sexually victimized by his maternal uncle who had temporarily come to reside with Don and his mother following his parent's divorce. The sexual abuse occurred on a random basis over a period of nearly three years from the time Don was age eight to eleven. The sexual contact always occurred in the context of the uncle being intoxicated. The sexual contact involved Don performing coerced fellatio and fondling his uncle's penis. Don eventually told his mother of the abuse after the uncle moved out. Criminal charges were successfully brought against the uncle and he served five years of a seven year prison sentence. Don received counseling for approximately one year at age twelve. He re-entered therapy approximately eight months ago for "unresolved issues related to the sexual abuse."
Don presented from the outset in an open and engaging style of relating. He was cooperative and seemed genuinely interested in the research project. Perhaps more so than the other subjects, Don required further instruction on the cognitive process of pre-reflective versus reflective thinking. Once this became clear, Don was able to remain appropriately focused through the demanding task of co-researching his experiences. Don displayed a noticeable sensitivity for his feelings and was able to process this feature quite well. As with all the subjects, Don handled the research process well and showed no indications of distress.

**Theme Chart**

Entry #1. Don recorded that he attended the fiftieth wedding anniversary of his maternal grandparents. The uncle who had molested him was also present. He identified the perpetrator as his mother's brother and his grandparents' youngest child. Don's initial reaction was not to attend the reception. He interpreted the event to mean that he would need to pretend in front of the family and appear controlled.

Don's feeling response to the event was anger, initially, that the family would place him in such an awkward and uncomfortable situation. He also felt insecure about interacting socially with other family and family friends and possibly wondering to what extent they may know of "the family sin."

The emotional construct utilized seemed to center around issues Don has with underlying anger toward the uncle and certain family members who want to explain away the uncle's behavior "due to alcoholism." Don reflected on how certain family members have told him that "since the uncle has apologized, paid for his mistake, and received
treatment, then I need to forgive him and put it behind me." Don continues to struggle with self-blame because he didn't report the abuse initially and prevent several years of sexual victimization.

Don's response to the event was to attend the anniversary celebration, avoid any type of confrontation and "pretend to be well-adjusted and in control." Don explained how important it was to appear in control of his emotions and behavior.

Entry #2. Don reported accompanying his wife and daughters to a birthday swimming party in honor of his oldest daughter. He became uncomfortable watching his daughters play around in the swimming pool with an older teen-age boy. He interpreted the event to mean that he had become suspicious and paranoid regarding the safety of his daughters. His feeling response was to become anxious over the situation.

In explicating his emotional construct, Don described that his experience of having been molested by a "safe" person has made him overly sensitive and cautious when it comes to his children. He realizes that he is overly protective and sheltering of the daughters, but issues around safety and trust are important to him. He reflectively talked about feeling uncertain when it comes to teaching his daughters about trust.

Don thought the appropriate action would be to join his daughters in the swimming pool and occupy their attention. He stated that he had wanted to talk with his wife about how he was feeling and reacting but his "over-protection" has been an on-going point of conflict between Don and his wife and he didn't want to make her angry.

Entry #3. Don recorded an event in which he had approached his wife for purposes of sexual intimacy. Her response was to discourage any sexual development.
Don stated this was a "typical response" from his wife and one that usually left him feeling rejected and insecure. His immediate thoughts were "she simply is not interested in me sexually."

The explicated constructs that guided his feelings centered around issues of poor self-esteem and insecurity. Don reflectively explained:

I am very insecure when it comes to being sexual. I was never sexual with a woman until I met my wife. I have a strong desire to be intimate with her but the fear of rejection, which is frequent, prevents me from risking initiative. She has not initiated sexual intimacy with me for more than four years. When we were dating, and after we were first married, she was more aggressive sexually. I often need re-assurance from her that she is not seeing anyone else. I sometimes find myself entertaining fears that she is not sexually attracted toward me because she would prefer to be with someone else.

Don explained that his typical response to sexual rejection is to become sullen and withdrawn and to display hurt feelings. He stated that he tries to re-focus his thoughts because he cannot tolerate the feelings of insecurity which surface whenever he and his wife have marital conflict.

Entry #4. Don reported an event where he had passed the testing sequence to receive his brown belt in martial arts. He interpreted the event as a personal accomplishment and to mean that he can be competent at something if he sets his mind to it. In response to his success, Don reported feeling excited and competent.

His guiding emotional construct focused on his sense of accomplishment and how this elevated his self-confidence. He reflectively explained:

Whenever I accomplish something important it makes me feel better about myself. Having all my colleagues congratulate me and show me respect helped my feelings of self-worth.
Don's response and construct was to go out and celebrate with his martial arts class. He stated that he wanted to enjoy the affirmation and to recover from having felt rejected sexually the previous night by his wife.

Entry #5. Don recorded having an argument with his wife over her desire to work on the second shift at the hospital. His wife works part-time as a registered nurse. She indicated to Don that the pay differential for the evening shift would be helpful and worth the shift change. Don acknowledged that financial issues are a concern and often lead to marital conflict. His main thought at the moment was that his wife would prefer to be at the hospital than to be with him in the evenings.

Don experienced feelings of insecurity, jealousy, and abandonment. As with previous entries, his construct focused on a deep-seated sense of insecurity. He explained reflectively how he often will have thoughts that his wife will leave him some day for someone else. He reflected further on this issue:

The only interest my wife seems to have anymore is the children and her work at the hospital. I have always felt insecure about her work and fearful that she would leave me for someone else. It can literally make me sick to my stomach when I think about the possibility of ever losing her.

As a way to ward off his abandonment anxiety, Don's response was to try and discourage his wife from making the job change. He reasoned that this arrangement would mean he would only see his wife four nights a week and not at all during the day.

At this point in the research process, Don was asked if he had any additional reflective thoughts around this theme of abandonment.
He provided the following insight:

I clearly felt abandoned by my father. Everything would have been different if he and mother had not divorced. Although my mother was angry and wanted her brother (perpetrator) to be punished for what he did, she never thought he would go to prison. The relationship between me and her changed soon after that and I felt later that she partially blamed me for allowing the abuse to go on for so long without telling anyone. She has reminded me that if I had told her after the first occurrence, my uncle could have gotten help instead of going to prison and I would not have been so hurt. I have often felt emotionally abandoned by mother and other family on her side. She knows I am back in counseling but she has never asked me how I am doing.

Entry #6. Don recorded that he had injured his hand at work and would be off from work approximately two weeks. Since Don is self-employed, this means a substantial loss of income. He interpreted the event to mean that this would serve to reinforce his wife's idea of changing work to the evening shift. His feeling response was to become discouraged and angry at his carelessness on the job. He blames himself for the accident.

The construct that guided his feelings focused around issues of competence, self-blame, and not being more productive financially. He noted how his wife's part-time income is almost equal to his full-time income. Don elected to explain this construct further as it seems to be a theme in his life:

I should have been more careful and not allowed the accident to happen. Because of my mistakes, my family will be affected. Other people's pain being caused by my negligence has been brought to my attention before. The pain and shame brought on our family through my uncle's prosecution for sexual molestation has been devastating. Everyone, including my mother has made it known that I shared in that tragedy.
Don recorded how he made efforts to re-assure his wife that they could get by financially for two weeks without her needing to change job positions. As with the previous entry, he was guided by insecurity and the dread of abandonment/loss.

Entry #7. For this entry, Don attended the Vacation Bible School graduation for his daughters. His immediate thought was how innocent and secure his children seem to be. He felt proud of their happiness and accomplishment.

In explicating his emotion construct, Don explained how seeing his children experience happiness and personal accomplishment allowed him to feel competent as a father. He reflected on the importance it has for him to be supportive and protective toward his children. His daughters, in turn, provide him with a source of personal self-worth.

His response to the event was to take the family on a cookout to the park. He expressed how he especially wanted to reinforce the specialness of the occasion for his daughters.
Statement of the Theory

The four adult male incest survivors involved in the study produced a total of twenty-eight journal entries. Following the constant comparative method, each of the twenty-eight entries was analyzed for common elements. This process resulted in an expansion of the analyzed entries to forty-six, since different elements of a single entry commonly emerged in more than one intrapersonal theme.

The following section identified three major themes that emerged from the data that constitute a grounded theory of the adult male survivor's psychology. The reader is referred to Appendix B, which provides each of the identified themes and entries from which the three themes emerged.

Theme #1: Emotional Distress Over One's Sense of Self as Inadequate. This theme was the strongest and most frequently reported theme. Eighteen of the twenty-eight entries contained references to the adult survivor's sense of self as inadequate.

Three of the four subjects reported profound insecurity related to issues of felt inadequacy and/or incompetence. Self-blame, self-doubt, and poor self-confidence permeated the adult survivor's experiential world. They frequently made statements like, "I have a long history of not feeling important with my family" or "I have profound issues with shyness and poor self-confidence" or "my wife is really not interested in me sexually."

The adult survivor's self-concept seemed especially vulnerable to injury based upon his self evaluation and/or perception of how others may perceive and/or behave toward him. Feelings of anxiety, frustration, insecurity, and sometimes guilt resulted
when the adult survivors were exposed - either to themselves or others - as incompetent or inadequate. For the adult survivor the anticipated, and feared, consequence of having his felt inadequate sense of self exposed is to be disapproved of and rejected. Examples of this area include, "I am insecure as a professional ... I thought everyone would be more informed than me and once I had to interact, everyone would think of me as incompetent" and "I must have said something wrong or presented myself badly for her to reject me so quickly."

In order to buttress his self-concept, and defuse negative emotions, the adult survivor requires substantial reassurance to feel affirmed. An example of this process was shown in the statement, "I sang songs to distract myself and made self-affirming statements. I needed to reduce my anxiety and appear calm and competent."

**Theme #2: Vulnerability to Narcissistic Injury.** Closely related to theme #1 was a sense of vulnerability to self-esteem ("narcissism") deflation ("injury") experiences. This theme was saturated with sixteen entries and reported by all four subjects.

Although it is reasonable to expect that most persons may feel deflated to some degree when self-esteem enhancing experiences are not forthcoming, for the adult male survivor, this experience would typically become exacerbated. Each subject described experiencing a significant deflation (injury) of their self-esteem when faced with perceived rejection, neglect, a failure to be approved or admired. Typical statements included: "Rejection in any form and from any source is hard for me to deal with"; "I have a need to feel needed and attractive to others"; "Why doesn't she understand how I feel ... understand my pain"; and "I wanted her to know that I felt rejected and hurt."
Narcissistic injury was particularly apparent when the adult survivor was faced with not feeling understood, cared for, or important by significant others, or when he experienced the dread of abandonment and loss. Examples of this theme include: "She doesn't understand how I feel"; "I am very insecure with my marriage ... I question whether she really cares for me - loves me"; or "I have been abandoned by all the important female relationships in my life ... I need to have her reassure me"; and "Whenever she threatens to leave, profound issues of abandonment come into play."

Each adult male survivor described a strong need for support, affirmation, and love. Feelings of insecurity, anxiety, guilt, hurt, and depression were common emotional responses whenever his fragile sense of self-esteem became derailed.

Theme #3: Protection of the Vulnerable Self Through Conflict Avoidance and/or Passivity. Each adult male survivor exhibited the above theme in journal entries totaling twelve of the twenty-eight. When faced with a potentially confrontative or emotionally difficult interpersonal situation, the male survivor conveyed a tendency toward passivity, conflict avoidance, or acquiescence in an effort to protect his vulnerable self.

Assertiveness or confrontation with significant others or authority figures was generally felt to be a threat to relationship harmony or security. As a means to protect his fragile self-esteem, the adult male survivor would typically avoid interactional conflict, often assuming responsibility for the problem, and withholding feelings.

Examples of the above theme include: "As usual, I own responsibility for conflict ... it was my fault and my responsibility ..."; or "I try to do things and say things and behave in ways that reduce conflict and promote harmony"; "My tendency is toward
being passive"; "It is difficult for me to be assertive with people"; and "I can't act on how I feel and make a scene."

**Validation of Themes**

An appropriate issue for phenomenological/qualitative research is whether or not the explicated themes are valid; whether they represent true and accurate descriptions of the phenomenon. In the present study, the data were validated by reviewing the above three intrapersonal themes with each subject and asking the subject to rate each theme reflective of their current life situation and their past situation (see Appendix C). The validation ratings indicated that each theme had a high degree of validity for each subject. Overall, twenty-two of the twenty-four ratings were either "consistently true" or "sometimes true." Only two ratings of "seldom if ever true" were recorded and both of these represented improvement from the past.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this section was to provide the primary data from which the intrapersonal themes emerged. Three major intrapersonal themes emerged from the data and were reviewed by each subject, who then responded with regard to the validity of each theme. The reader is asked to refer to Appendix B which provides each of the three identified intrapersonal themes and the entries from which the three themes emerged.

Discussion follows which draws upon the theoretical framework of self psychology to further explicate and add meaning and depth to the developed theory of the adult male incest survivor.
Integration with Existing Theory:

A Self Psychology Perspective

The following discussion offers a simplified overview of certain principles of Heinz Kohut's theory of self psychology. This author presents these principles as a means to augment an understanding of the explicated grounded theory of the adult male incest survivor.

Kohut (1971, 1977, 1984) developed a theoretical framework in which he described a "nuclear self" as the central structure of human personality. According to Elson (1986), this nuclear self, which is thought to be cohesive and enduring, is the basis for the sense of self as an independent center of initiative which serves as a focus of perception and experiences, including the vacillation of self-esteem. The self is the subjective core of the individual, that is integrated with ambitions, desires, ideals, feelings, and fears. Kohut believed that faulty caretaking or traumatic interaction experiences between the child (particularly during the formative years) and his/her caretakers can result in significant failures to achieve cohesion, vigor, or harmony of the self (Wolf, 1988).

According to Wolf (1988), a fundamental principle of self psychology is that the emergence of the self requires the presence of others, technically designated as objects, who provide certain types of experiences (functions) that will stimulate the development and maintenance of the self. These experiences are referred to as "selfobject experiences" or simply "selfobjects." Wolf states that "proper selfobject experiences favor the
structural cohesion and energetic vigor of the self; faulty selfobject experiences facilitate
the fragmentation and emptiness of the self. (p. 11)

Two major selfobject experiences which serve to promote and maintain the
cohesiveness and well being of the self are termed "mirroring transference" and
"idealized parent imago" (Kohut, 1977). Kohut and Wolf (1982) describe the mirroring
selfobject and the idealized one respectively as:

(1) those who respond to and confirm the child's innate sense of vigor, greatness,
and perfection, and (2) those whom the child can admire and merge with as an
image of calmness, infallibility, and omnipotence. (p. 45)

Mirroring needs are satisfied by empathic selfobjects of the surrounding
interpersonal world that permit the child to experience love, acceptance, and admiration
in order to know that he/she is recognized, appreciated, affirmed, and accepted in his/her
needs and experiences (Donner, 1988).

An equally important developmental need for the child is to become part of
something greater than oneself, requiring idealization of others with whom the child can
connect. By connecting (merging), the child experiences the powerfulness, calmness,
safety, and soothing qualities he/she lacks. The idealized selfobject experiences protect
the child against the child's sense of smallness and helplessness, thus allowing his/her
sense of self to feel enhanced through the experience of idealizing and merging with the
strengths and ideals of the parent (caretaker). Through a process termed "transmuting
internalization" the child begins to internalize the strengths and ideals of the selfobject
and they become self functions, leading to the formation of a cohesive nuclear self
(Donner, 1988; Wolf, 1988; Josephs, 1992). As Elson (1986) notes, "these self functions
are the capacity to regulate self-esteem, to monitor stress, to define and pursue realistic goals." (p. 5)

**Theoretical Integration**

The theoretical framework of self psychology provides an illuminating perspective for understanding the subjective data on the adult male incest survivor.

Kohut (1977, 1984) proposed that the basis for viable psychological human development is the organization of a unitary, stable concept of self and a healthy and adequate sense of self-esteem ("narcissism"). Inappropriate and traumatic selfobject experiences pose a negative impact on the formation of a cohesive self and render the individual highly vulnerable to narcissistic (self-esteem) injury.

For the male incest survivor, his sexual victimization is an experience in narcissistic injury. The reality is the adult male victim of childhood incest has suffered damage to his sense of self in relation to the selfobject world. Furthermore, his need for selfobject mirroring and idealization continue to be an important component of his efforts at self-restoration and sustenance of the self and will be searched for in adult interpersonal relationships.

Because childhood incest is so tightly wrapped in secrecy, the male child incest victim is left exposed and unsoothed in his vulnerability and helplessness. Having had his normal phase-appropriate helplessness exacerbated instead of soothed through idealized selfobjects, the child victim may not learn to internalize these important self-soothing qualities and make them a reliable part of his self structure. The adult survivor, when faced with self-deflating experiences and vulnerability, must channel his efforts to
self-soothe and regain internal control and offset the anxiety that results from being thrown back into that state of childhood helplessness.

The adult survivor's struggle to heal the narcissistic wounds of childhood shows up most often in his behavioral responses to self-endangering situations. For example, when faced with rejection, neglect, loss of control, or perceived abandonment, the subjects in this study experienced feelings of anger, hurt, insecurity, and depression.

Cal spoke expressively about this issue when his wife threatened to leave him:

This is a common theme in my marital relationship. Although I resent the process, the fear of abandonment is too great and therefore, I tend to do what is necessary to hold my marriage together. Abandonment has been prominent since my childhood.

After Bob became angry with his sister, he felt guilty and anxious about his behavior toward "the only safe person in my life," and immediately tried to recover and protect his self from possible rejection by apologizing. Both Adam and Don reported significant feelings of hurt, anxiety, and mild depression when faced with the dread of abandonment or loss.

In order to protect his vulnerable self and defend against rejection or abandonment, the male survivors' tendency was to accommodate or assume responsibility so that wounding abandonment or rejection would not occur. When Adam experienced abandonment from a co-worker (self-object), from who he vicariously experienced competence, he needed to talk with her and "pretend" everything would be all right in an effort to sustain his sense of self cohesion during this time of vulnerability.
Don spoke of having been physically abandoned by his father and emotionally abandoned by his mother. His comment was, "this would not have happened to me if they had not divorced." For Don, he believed that his victimization occurred because he had been abandoned by his "protecting parents." Adam spoke of having been victimized by his brother after his mother "abandoned" him by returning to work. In both instances, they felt unprotected and vulnerable. In adulthood, old wounds may be reopened when the incest survivor encounters a structurally similar situation and he is faced with helplessness and self-deflating feelings.

Because male incest survivors have had traumatizing selfobject experiences that may have left them with a negative self-concept and vulnerable to narcissistic injury, they must find ways to protect their fragile sense of self in order to maintain a level of self-cohesion. For example, when faced with an emotionally threatening situation involving a selfobject relationship, each of the subjects would typically respond in a manner designed to avoid or reduce conflict. Whenever interactions with selfobjects resulted in feelings of hurt, anger, insecurity, etc., the adult survivors' tendency was to acquiesce or become passive and withhold feelings.

In conclusion, the theory of the adult male incest survivor has focused on the traumatic selfobject experiences resulting in a fragile self structure. The abusive acts were damaging to the developing self structure due to the failure of a more powerful perpetrating family member to respond in the best interests of the child and the failure from other adults to protect the child. The child is damaged by what does occur as well as what does not occur. As a result, the child victim may reach adulthood with a self that
is incohesive and vulnerable. As a result of the selfobject deficits, each of the four subjects in this study showed a strong need to continue searching for mirroring selfobjects and idealized selfobjects through interpersonal relationships, as a means to sustain self-cohesion.

**Summary**

Chapter Four presented the data derived from phenomenological research of four adult male survivors of childhood incest. The data were discussed in terms of a grounded theory comprised of three major intrapersonal themes that were generated from the data: 1) Emotional distress over one's sense of self as inadequate, 2) Vulnerability to narcissistic injury, and 3) Protection of the vulnerable self through conflict avoidance and/or passivity. These intrapersonal themes describe some of the salient aspects of the adult male incest survivors' psychology and their experiences in the world.

Clearly, the issues of poor self-concept and damaged narcissism (self-esteem) are not necessarily reflective of the psychology of every adult male incest survivor, nor are these issues unique to incest survivors specifically. For instance, non-incestuous families can create selfobject failures that may result in a damaged sense of its members. Further, the efforts at protecting one's vulnerable self through passivity and/or conflict avoidance, as described by the subjects in this study, are not unique to incest survivors. Therefore, it would be speculative at this juncture to suggest that the theoretical results of the present study describes an objective measure for discerning the adult male survivor from the general population.
However, the relevance of Kohut's theory of self psychology in illuminating the explicated intrapersonal themes has been described. The three intrapersonal themes were compared with the existing theoretical framework of self psychology. Specific understandings regarding the development of a fragile self structure resulting from selfobject failures experienced by the four subjects were integrated into the emerging theory.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The adult male survivor of childhood incest has been referred to in the literature as the "silent sufferer." The literature consistently reports that men are far less likely to reveal instances of childhood sexual abuse and rarely do they present in treatment for purposes of consciously resolving issues related to their victimization. It is encouraging to see an increased recognition by clinicians and in the literature that males represent a significant percentage of child victims who possess their own salient psychological characteristics. An important recognition is that adult male survivors manifest certain psychological problems resulting from that experience.

Although there is a growing body of literature profiling the male sexual abuse victim, no study was found that focused on the psychology of the adult male survivor from a well grounded and structured phenomenological perspective. Further, there is a paucity of research that attempts to integrate descriptive findings with an existing theoretical framework and apply those findings to clinical practice.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the experiential world of the adult male survivor of childhood incest, and to generate a substantive theory, grounded in the data, about the psychology of the adult male survivor. A secondary purpose is to
extrapolate from the theoretical framework to recommendations for clinical practice. A brief review of the phenomenological method and the results follow.

Summary of the Methodology

The phenomenological method developed for this study was adapted from Seabaugh's research conducted on adult children of alcoholics. The theoretical perspective for the method was based on works by Husserl, Giorgi, Glaser and Struss, and Beck's cognitive processing model.

Four adult male subjects who had been incestuously victimized as children volunteered to be involved in the study. Each subject demonstrated a willingness to be involved in the study, a capacity to be open with their responses, and a desire to explore their own experience regarding the lasting effects of childhood sexual abuse on their current functioning.

All four subjects were Caucasian, gainfully employed, earning $25,000 per year or more, and either currently in therapy or had been in therapy previously for issues related to their sexual victimization. Two subjects were currently married, one was twice divorced, and one never married. The perpetrators of their sexual abuse included a stepfather, brother, maternal uncle, and first cousin. Only one of the subjects had ever disclosed the sexual victimization as a child.

Each subject was asked to keep an experience journal for one week where they recorded their significant experiences (at the rate of one per day), how they felt about these experiences, and what action they took in response to the situation. These data
were analyzed by the researcher and reduced into individual entry charts. An interview was then arranged with each subject to explicate how he cognitively processed these experiences; how he interpreted the events, and what constructs were used to guide feelings and actions. The subject responded to the process both pre-reflectively and reflectively. This information was added to the developing theme chart and in this manner the phenomenology of the subject was accessed.

After completing these steps for each subject, the researcher began the constant comparative process of identifying themes based on the emerging patterns in the data. Themes, rather than being predetermined, were allowed to emerge from the data by noting similarities and differences in the subjects' experiences. The objective was to look at what the data may be saying about the experiences without forcing it. A case synopsis was prepared for each subject that included brief demographic information, illumination of the co-researched data, and the researcher's clinical assessment and impressions.

Using the constant comparative method to identify repetitive patterns from the experience information provided by the subject, three saturated themes were generated that described various facets of these adult male survivors' psychology. Each subject was recontacted, presented with a description of the three themes, and asked to respond to them for purposes of validation. A particularly phenomenological form of validating, as suggested by Colaizzi (1978), is to have the subjects themselves determine whether or not the explicated descriptions of their experiences are accurate. The descriptions were deemed valid only when the subject considered it to be so. Once validated, a grounded theory of the adult male survivor was formulated using the three themes as its basis.
Because the themes all related to various self representations, the perspective of self psychology was integrated to add meaning and depth to the theory.

Because this study was designed to generate a substantive theory and not verify it, issues around generalizability were not considered to be of greatest importance. There was no control group and the subjects were not randomly selected. Subjects were selectively chosen who had the capacity for self-reflection and who could provide the kinds of data that was needed for a phenomenological study. Therefore, no inferences of generalizability can be made beyond the four subjects involved in this study.

**Summary of the Theory**

The result of this study was the generation of a grounded theoretical framework comprised of the three themes that emerged from the data. These themes describe some of the salient aspects of the adult male incest survivors' psychology and their experiences in the world.

The first thematic construct, sense of self as inadequate, was the most frequently appearing theme among three of the four subjects. These subjects reported experiencing considerable emotional distress related to a negative self-concept. The male survivor's subjective sense of weakness, incompetence, and perceived lack of environmental control can result in feelings of anxiety, insecurity, frustration, and self-doubt. When he views himself as vulnerably exposed - to self or others - he is subject to experience considerable emotional distress.
Closely related to the first theme was a sense of vulnerability to narcissistic injury. All four subjects experienced a significant deflation of their self-esteem when faced with perceived rejection, neglect, a failure to be approved or admired. Narcissistic injury was particularly apparent when the subjects experienced the threat of physical or emotional abandonment, or of not feeling understood or important by a significant other. Feelings of insecurity, anxiety, guilt, hurt, and depression were common emotional responses when the male survivor's fragile sense of self-esteem became derailed.

Thematic construct number three, protection of the vulnerable self through conflict avoidance and/or passivity, was revealed in slightly less than half of the journal entries. Being nice or acquiescent to others is a way to handle emotionally difficult situations. When interactions result in feelings of anger, irritation, hurt, anxiety, etc., the male survivor may try to avoid confrontation by acquiescing or becoming passive. Because assertiveness or confrontation with significant others or authority figures was felt to be a threat to relationship harmony and security, as a way to protect his fragile self, the male survivor will often avoid conflict and withhold feelings.

**Recommendations**

**Research**

One has only to survey the existing literature to be aware that few studies have been conducted on the topic of adult men who were sexually abused as children and who have not perpetrated sexual abuse. Clearly, further research is needed, not only to expand, but to modify and validate existing findings.
This author would like to see further work on varying victim populations, such as, men incestuously molested by a primary caretaker versus non-primary caretaker, or men who were sexually abused at an early phase of self development versus a much later phase. In addition, there is a need to learn considerably more about instances where there were developmental deficits prior to the sexual abuse that may have been conducive to symptomatology or psychological distress. The task for the researcher would be to ferret out and differentiate specific effects of sexual abuse from factors prior to the abuse.

Further research designed to expand the literature and provide depth on the psychology of men sexually abused as children will provide some answers to these questions and will probably suggest new questions for study. In any case, more work should be done if we are, in fact, going to fill the gaps in our research pertaining to male victims of childhood sexual abuse.

Clinical

The recognition that childhood incest interrupts the normal development and consolidation of the self has significant implications for treatment. As a result of experiencing traumatizing selfobject failures, the male survivor may reach adulthood with a vulnerable self that is prone to narcissistic injury.

An important task for the therapist is to develop an understanding and respect for the adult male survivor's phenomenology. These clients have a need to be listened to from the vantage point of their own perspective. By respecting and validating the male client's subjective viewpoint, he may feel better understood and responded to, rather than investigated and told what is wrong with him. Simple cause and effect answers fail to
provide therapeutic benefit for incest survivors. The therapist's empathic task when encountering the adult male survivor is to empathize with his experiences of inadequacy, incompetence, low self-esteem, and the dread of abandonment of selfobject relationships.

Through his/her ability and willingness to enter into the here-in-now experiential world of the adult male survivor, the therapist can gain a clearer understanding of the client's psychology and how he ascribes meaning to his experiences. The bringing of pre-reflective material into consciousness leads to greater self-awareness and decreased vulnerability to environmental triggers.

One way to enter the experiential world of the adult male survivor is to follow the phenomenological research process outlined in Chapter Three. Specifically, having the client keep an experience journal and co-researching the journal recordings with the client in the treatment session, will allow the therapeutic work to remain focused on aspects of the client's experiences that he finds troubling. The resulting selfobject linkage with the therapist will help strengthen his sense of self.
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Appendix A

Each subject was assigned a fictitious name. His responses to the following questionnaire were recorded and incorporated to establish a brief assessment profile.
PERSONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

The following information will be kept confidential. Your name is not required and your answers will be identified by code number.

1. Age: __________

2. Ethnic group (check one):
   White _____ African-American _____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____
   Other __________

3. Marital Status (check one):
   Single _____
   Married _____
   Divorced _____
   Not married but living together _____

4. Highest Grade Completed: __________

5. Type of Employment: __________________________________________

6. Yearly Income (check one):
   $0 - 5,000 _____
   5,001 - 10,000 _____
   10,001 - 15,000 _____
   15,001 - 20,000 _____
   20,001 - 25,000 _____
   25,001 & Over _____
7. How old were you when the incest began? __________

8. How are you related to the perpetrator(s)? ______________________
   ______________________
   ______________________

9. How often did the sexual abuse (incest) occur? ______________________
   ______________________
   ______________________

10. How old were you when the sexual abuse stopped? ______________________
    ______________________
    ______________________

11. Why did the sexual abuse stop? ______________________
    ______________________
    ______________________

12. Provide a brief description of the type of sexual abuse:
    ______________________
    ______________________
    ______________________
    ______________________
    ______________________

13. When did you first receive counseling/therapy related to the sexual abuse?
    ______________________

14. Are you presently in counseling/therapy: Yes _____ No _____
Appendix B

THEME CHARTS

The following theme charts are provided so that the reader can view journal entry data directly, and gain an understanding of how these data were condensed into charts.

The first set of charts represent each subject's journal data. The first column notes the specific situation encountered by the subject (in brackets), and the interpretation he made of that situation. The second column provides the subject's emotional response (feelings). The column ("emotion construct") gives the rules or self statements used by the subject to guide his feelings. The fourth column provides the action taken in response to the situation. The fifth column gives the rules or intentionality for this action.

The second set of charts represent the intrapersonal themes. Journal entries are presented under the heading of a given theme that includes all subjects. The portion of each theme that represents the intrapersonal theme is underlined. The left column denotes the subject and journal entry number for each intrapersonal theme.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>SUBJECT #1 (Adam)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
<td>FEELING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. (Came home from work and had message from father on answering machine.) He could have reached me personally if he had really wanted to.</td>
<td>Anger, guilt, sadness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (I had to drive alone to a professional conference located in another city.) I didn't want to be there without the support of my co-worker.</td>
<td>Anxiety, insecurity, vulnerability, abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (I attended a reception where I had to interact socially with people very important to my employer.) This was uncomfortable for me. I wasn't sure what to expect or what my role would be.</td>
<td>Anxiety, insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (I was sent home from work after making a decision without checking with supervisor.) Although she blew it out of proportion, it was a poor decision on my part. I knew the rule and I knew better.</td>
<td>Feeling hurt, angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (A female acquaintance turned me down for dinner. I go to the riverfront for male attention.) Her excuse seemed flimsy. I thought she found me attractive but apparently I misread the situation.</td>
<td>Rejection, needy, lonely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
<td>FEELING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (Ex-wife calls to tell me that she is pregnant.)</td>
<td>Resentment, rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (My co-worker informed me that she will be moving to a different position.)</td>
<td>Abandoned, anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
<td>FEELING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. (Argument with sister after I refused to go to the cemetery.) Why doesn't she understand how I feel? Why doesn't she understand my pain? She continues to make efforts to get me to forgive stepfather and let go of the past.</td>
<td>Angry, hurt, sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (I needed to confront a trainee at work and terminate his employment.) I am not comfortable with this responsibility. Another situation where I need to be assertive.</td>
<td>Anxious, insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Placed ad in personal section of newspaper. Left answering machine on to screen calls.) This is a safe and non-threatening way for me to possibly meet someone. I have tried everything.</td>
<td>Embarrassed, frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (Helped neighbor move out. He explained that he and wife were divorcing.) I am not a good neighbor. I made no effort to get to know them. I had no idea there were marital problems.</td>
<td>Inadequate, frustrated, sad, angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>SUBJECT #2 (Bob)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Returned call to one of the respondents to the personal ad. We talked briefly and she declined any further contact. I must have said something wrong or presented myself badly for her to reject me so quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Took overnight hiking trip with Audubon Club. Met women with compatible interests. This must be fate. I hope this can develop into something promising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Rejected invitation by sister to attend church social function. She can be very controlling. She believes the church is the answer to my problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
<td>FEELING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. (Wife became upset because she thought I was not listening or responding to her as she would like me to.) Common theme in our marriage. She perceives me as distracted and not attentive.</td>
<td>Frustration, irritation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (Conflicting issue between wife and teen-age son in which I was brought into the middle.) If wife was not the catalyst to these conflicting situations with our son, I would be more passive toward him.</td>
<td>Anger, frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Received positive affirmation from one of my students.) Student recognized my efforts to be a good instructor. She appreciated the &quot;passion&quot; with which I teach.</td>
<td>Rewarded, affirmed, elated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (Discussion with colleague concerning influence of religious right movement on particular political party.) Surprised to learn of colleagues favorable support toward this issue.</td>
<td>Mild anger, kept suppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (Conversation with former son-in-law regarding an incident between me and my father when I was age 16.) Opportunity to share personal level of insight with someone who also experienced dysfunctional childhood.</td>
<td>Pleasure, self-approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>FEELING</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (Conversation with oldest daughter about her upcoming trip to Europe.) Daughter possibly experiencing ambivalence around her feelings and she wanted to talk with me.</td>
<td>Affirmed, pleased, yet helpless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (Another conflict involving myself, wife, and son. Wife threatened to leave me.) Recurring gesture - whenever wife feels stressed, her instinct is to blame me for being too passive and non-protecting and threatens to leave.</td>
<td>Frustrated, resentment, depressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
<td>FEELING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. (Attended 50th wedding anniversary party for maternal grandparents. The perpetrator (uncle) was also present.) I can't act on how I feel and make a scene. Will need to pretend in front of family and appear calm and controlled.</td>
<td>Anger, insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (Accompanied wife and children to birthday swimming party for daughter's 5th birthday. Became uncomfortable with daughters playing around with older teenage boy.) I am too sensitive and overprotective with my children. I overreact.</td>
<td>Anxious, frustrated with self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (Approached wife for sexual intimacy. She wasn't interested.) She is really not interested in me sexually.</td>
<td>Rejected, hurt, insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (Passed testing sequence to obtain brown belt in martial arts.) I am competent at something. Why can't I feel like this with my family?</td>
<td>Competent, excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (Had argument with wife over her wanting to work evening shift at hospital.) She would prefer to be around her medical colleagues than home with me.</td>
<td>Insecurity, abandonment, jealousy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>SUBJECT #4 (Don)</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATION(S)</strong></td>
<td><strong>FEELING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (Injured hand at work and will be off work 2 weeks.) This was my fault. I was careless. Wife will use this as justification to work evening shift for more money.</td>
<td>Angry, dejected, helpless, fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (Attended vacation bible school graduation for two daughters.) This is a special occasion for children. They seem innocent, happy, and protected.</td>
<td>Proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(EVENT)</td>
<td>EMOTIONAL DISTRESS OVER ONE'S SENSE OF SELF AS INADEQUATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATION(S)</strong></td>
<td><strong>FEELING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam (2) (I had to drive alone to a professional conference located in another city.) I didn't want to be there without the support of my co-worker.</td>
<td>Anxiety, insecurity, vulnerability, abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam (3) (I attended a reception where I had to interact socially with people very important to my employer.) This was uncomfortable for me. I wasn't sure what to expect or what my role would be.</td>
<td>Anxiety, insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam (4) (I was sent home from work after making a decision without checking with supervisor.) Although she blew it out of proportion, it was a poor decision on my part. I knew the rule and I knew better.</td>
<td>Feeling hurt, angry</td>
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<td>Resentment, rejection</td>
</tr>
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<td>Adam (7) (My co-worker informed me that she will be moving to a different position.) She is more competent than I am and she is being rewarded with a promotion.</td>
<td>Abandoned, anxious</td>
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<td>EVENT</td>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>(Placed ad in personal section of newspaper. Left answering machine on to screen calls.) This is a safe and non-threatening way for me to possibly meet someone. I have tried everything.</td>
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<td>Bob (4)</td>
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<td>Bob (5)</td>
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<td>FEELING</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (3)</td>
<td>Rewarded, affirmed, elated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (5)</td>
<td>Pleasure, self-approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (1)</td>
<td>Anger, insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (2)</td>
<td>Anxious, frustrated with self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approached wife for sexual intimacy. She wasn't interested.) She is really not interested in me sexually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected, hurt, insecure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very insecure with my marriage. I question whether she really cares for me - loves me. I am insecure sexually as a man.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially, withdrew and pouted. Later, refocused thoughts to get over it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted her to know I felt rejected and hurt. I can't tolerate being upset with her because I'm fearful of losing her.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don (4)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Passed testing sequence to obtain brown belt in martial arts.) I am competent at something. Why can't I feel like this with my family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent, excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishing something important to me and having my peers congratulate me and show me respect helped my self-confidence and self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went out with martial arts class and celebrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed the affirmation and to feel better about myself after being rejected sexually by wife.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don (5)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Had argument with wife over her wanting to work evening shift at hospital.) She would prefer to be around her medical colleagues than home with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity, abandonment, jealousy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fearful of losing my wife. I am insecure about myself and with my wife. She will probably meet someone better than me at the hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted to discourage wife from making job change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know I'm insecure and jealous but I can't get beyond it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry, dejected, helpless, fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should be more productive financially - more competent. Wife earns more money part-time that I do full-time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted to re-assure wife that we could manage financially - asked her not to change jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In attempting to re-assure her I was attempting to re-assure myself. I don't want to give up our time together in the evenings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don (7)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Attended vacation bible school graduation for two daughters.) This is a special occasion for children. They seem innocent, happy, and protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are happy and well adjusted and this makes me feel competent as a father. They must never know what sexual abuse can do to one's life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took family to park for a picnic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to reinforce the specialness of the occasion and make my children feel special and loved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATION(S)</strong></td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cal (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Came home from work and had message from father on answering machine.) He could have reached me personally if he had really wanted to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(I was sent home from work after making a decision without checking with supervisor.) Although she blew it out of proportion, it was a poor decision on my part. I knew the rule and I knew better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adam (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Ex-wife calls to tell me that she is pregnant.) She wanted me to know that she is happy again and getting on with her life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Argument with sister after I refused to go to the cemetery.) Why doesn't she understand how I feel? Why doesn't she understand my pain? She continues to make efforts to get me to forgive stepfather and let go of the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATION(S)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob (2) (I needed to confront a trainee at work and terminate his employment.) I am not comfortable with this responsibility. Another situation where I need to be assertive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob (7) (Rejected invitation by sister to attend church social function.) She can be very controlling. She believes the church is the answer to my problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (1) (Wife became upset because she thought I was not listening or responding to her as she would like me to.) Common theme in our marriage. She perceives me as distracted and not attentive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (2) (Conflictual issue between wife and teen-age son in which I was brought into the middle.) If wife was not the catalyst to these conflictual situations with our son, I would be more passive toward him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION(S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (4) (Discussion with colleague concerning influence of religious right movement on particular political party.) Surprised to learn of colleagues favorable support toward this issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal (7) (Another conflict involving myself, wife, and son. Wife threatened to leave me.) Recurring gesture - whenever wife feels stressed, her instinct is to blame me for being too passive and non-protecting and threatens to leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (1) (Attended 50th wedding anniversary party for maternal grandparents. The perpetrator (uncle) was also present.) I can't act on how I feel and make a scene. Will need to pretend in front of family and appear calm and controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don (3) (Approached wife for sexual intimacy. She wasn't interested.) She is really not interested in me sexually.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

VALIDATION OF THEMES

A post co-researching interview was conducted with each of the four subjects for purposes of validating the three generated intrapersonal themes: 1) Emotional distress over one's sense of self as inadequate, 2) Vulnerability to narcississtic injury, and 3) Protection of the vulnerable self through conflict avoidance and/or passivity. Each subject was asked to rate each theme as "consistently true" ("2"), "sometimes true" ("1"), or "seldom if ever true" ("0").

Each subject was asked to rate each theme reflective of their current life situation and their past situation. The letter "N" refers to "Now" and the letter "P" refers to "Past."

The results of the validation responses are depicted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme #1</th>
<th>Theme #2</th>
<th>Theme #3</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>N 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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