A Preliminary Descriptive Model of Expertise Related Competence in Child Sexual Offending

By

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TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other university for a degree:

Patrice Bourke_____ Date _____

This thesis is dedicated to

Bryan & Joyce Porter

Without whom my dreams would still be dreams

Love always

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They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

-Laurence Binyon

Conventions Used in the Thesis

All of the tables and figures in this thesis are numbered according to the chapter in which they appear. They are numbered as table or figure $x, y.$, with x referring to the chapter number, and y, the order in which the table or figure is presented with that chapter.

Abbreviations

Although abbreviations have been described in the text, it may be helpful to refer to the following list:

CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
SRM	Self-Regulation Model
RP	Relapse Prevention
MO	Modus Operandi
LTM	Long term memory
SA	Situation Awareness
ERC	Expertise Related Competency
ORC	Offence Related Competency
ORB	Offence Related Behaviour

Abstract

Child sexual offending is a great area of concern to the public and researchers alike. The damaging effects of Child Sexual Abuse are numerous and frequently enduring. Research in sexual offending has tended to focus on therapeutic interventions and effectiveness as well as the aetiological aspects of offending. Much of this research has focused on offender deficits associated with sexual crimes that are the target of intervention programs. There has been little attention paid to the view that sexual offenders appear to learn from their previous offending and in some cases acquire a considerable degree of offence related competency. In other words, some sexual offenders appear to develop high levels of expertise. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether there are 'expert' offenders within the child sexual offending arena who display greater competence in utilising grooming techniques, selecting targets, interpreting and evaluating social and environmental cues, and who possess extensive offence scripts. In this exploratory study, 47 male child sexual offenders were interviewed in New Zealand prison based Sexual Offender Rehabilitation Units about their offences as well as their lives prior to and post offending. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using Grounded Theory to generate a model of offence specific decision making. Results indicated that child sex offenders vary on the above dimensions and effectively span the range from 'novice' to 'expert' offenders with respect to the quality of their decision making and their domain relevant knowledge structures. By using the general principles of expertise as a conceptual framework, a developmental model of expertise in child sex offenders in New Zealand was constructed. The implications of the constructed model for theory and treatment are discussed and suggestions are made for the direction of future research.

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Introduction

The effects of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) can be crippling for victims, families and communities. Considerable research has been directed at understanding this serious social problem in order to facilitate the prevention and intervention to stop CSA and the perpetrators of such serious human rights violations. A substantial amount of research has been conducted in the last 30 years on CSA predominantly centred on aetiological theories of the perpetrators of this crime. In addition to aetiological theories, which focus on the identification of casual factors which attempt to account for the onset, development, and maintenance of sexual predatation, research has also concentrated on offence process models and offence chains/ cycles. Models of the offence chain or relapse process endeavour to identify features of sexual offending including cognitive, behavioural, motivational, and contextual factors which are then explained by subsequent theory. By trying to understand the methods used by offenders and the extent of their crimes, researchers and clinicians strive to identify areas for prevention, intervention, evaluation, and the rehabilitation of child sexual offenders.

Child Sexual Abuse in New Zealand

While The New Zealand Crimes Act (1961) places the age of consent at 16 for sexual activity, the results from New Zealand based studies suggest that there are those within New Zealand's population for whom age does not constitute a barrier for sexual activity to take place with a minor. The prevalence rate of CSA in New Zealand can not be accurately calculated with many incidents of CSA going unreported. However, three New Zealand studies have estimated that anywhere between 13% - 30% of New Zealand's women have been victims of CSA (Anderson, Martin, Mullen, Romans, & Herbison, 1993; Fanslow, Robinson, Crengle, & Perese, 2007; Fergusson, Horwood, & Woodward, 2000; Morris & Reilly, 2003). Estimates of male CSA go largely understudied, but from the limited amount of research available for a New Zealand sample estimates ranging between 3% - 6% have been reported (Fergusson, et al., 2000; Morris & Reilly, 2003).

In the New Zealand Ministry of Justice publication of the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims (NZNSCV) 2001 (Morris & Reilly, 2003) it is suggested that sexual interference or sexual assault goes largely unreported for three main reasons. First, victims may not define their experience as a crime because the

perpetrator is known to them. Second, victims frequently experience feelings of fear, shame, embarrassment, guilt or self-blame and consequently do not disclose to anybody what they have experienced. Third, fear or worry about how their family, friends, and community may respond to them after disclosure can prevent victims from reporting an offence. From a sample size of 5,147 people in New Zealand 13.5% of females and 3.8% of males reported sexual interference or sexual assault before the age of 17. The NZNSCV acknowledge that their results may grossly underreport instances of CSA for the above reasons as well as the general unwillingness of victims of all forms of crime to inform police and related authorities (Morris & Reilly, 2003).

The Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS) is a longitudinal study of an unselected birth cohort of 1,265 (635 males, 630 females) sample born in the Christchurch region over a four month period during mid-1977 (for an overview of the study see Fergusson, Horwood, Shannon, & Lawton, 1989). At age 18 years sample members were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. They were asked if anyone had ever engaged them in any of a predefined list of 15 sexual activities which they did not want to happen prior to the age of 16 years. Findings from that study reported that overall 10.4% (17.3% of females and 3.4% of males) reported having experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16 years. Sample members were again interviewed on the same structured questionnaire at the age of 21 years. Of the original 1,265 cohort, 980 sample members (478 males, 502 females) participated in this latter sexual abuse analysis (Fergusson et al., 2000). Findings from sample members at age 21 years varied from responses at age 18 years. Results showed from the age 21 years report that overall 8.5% (13.9% of females and 2.7% of males) reported having experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16 years. Fergusson and colleagues further raised the issue of the possibility of combining both the age 18 years and age 21 years' reports. In an attempt to understand the variability in the results of the two studies, Fergusson et al. (2000) applied a latent class model to the data. The latent class analysis revealed that while those not abused did not report falsely being abused, a number of individuals who had been abused provided unreliable reports. The results indicated that overall 18.5% of the sample (30.4% of females and 6.1% of males) experienced CSA before the age of 16 years. Fergusson and colleagues concluded that estimates of abuse prevalence based on a single report

are likely to clearly underestimate the true prevalence of abuse (Fergusson et al., 2000).

In a more recent study based on the replication of the WHO Multi-country study, Fanslow, et al., (2007) reported that from a household based sample of 2,855 female subjects (aged 18 – 64 years) from both urban (Auckland) and rural (Waikato) regions of New Zealand, a total of 573 experienced sexual abuse prior to the age of 15 years - 23.5% of urban women and 28.2% of rural women respectively. These results fall midway between the results of Fergusson et al. (2000) and Anderson et al. (1993) suggesting that estimates of CSA in New Zealand may fall anywhere between 18% - 30%. While useful, the study by Fanslow et al. (2007) is however limited as its sample is restricted to women only. While it is widely accepted that females form the majority of victims of CSA, it is important to also include males in recent prevalence population samples as literature on the victim-offender cycle steadily increases (Lambie, Seymour, Lee, & Adams, 2002).

The Cost of Sexual Abuse in New Zealand

Estimates of the financial cost of CSA in New Zealand run into millions of dollars. New Zealand's Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) is a Crown entity which administers New Zealand's accident compensation scheme, providing personal injury cover for work and non-work injuries for New Zealand citizens, residents, and temporary visitors (www.acc.co.nz). Since 1974, the ACC have processed claims for mental injury arising from sexual abuse occurring at any time in a person's life. In 1992 the ACC established the Sensitive Claims Unit which processes claims for sexual abuse or sexual assault when there is evidence of physical or mental injury, for example, a psychological condition such as depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, requiring treatment. Claims that are accepted are processed through ACC which provides support and payment for counselling sessions and related costs (loss of earnings, child care, and home help). In 2005 more than 3,800 claims were lodged with the Unit, at a total cost of more than $25 million (ACC, Sensitive Claims Providers Newsletter June 2006). From 1st July 2006 to 31st June 2007, the Sensitive Claims Unit received 678 new claims from children aged 14 years and younger. The ACC currently receives an estimated 4,000 claims per year, the majority of which are lodged as historical cases. Although the ACC is able to

estimate the cost of sexual abuse or sexual assault through accepted claims, the true cost of CSA can not be established when this type of crime goes largely unreported.

The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

The effects of the sexual assault of a child are far reaching and devastating to not only the victims, but also to families and communities. Much research has been published on the lasting effects of a sexual abuse and the implications it has for victims from the initial experience of abuse through to adulthood. A variety of psychological, social, behavioural, and physical problems have been associated with being a victim of CSA.

Psychological problems found to be associated with CSA victims include increased risk of depression, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorders (Finkelhor & Hashima, 2001; Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001; Putnam, 2003) substance use, and eating disorders. These results have been confirmed by numerous researchers who have conducted studies into the effects of CSA (Nelson, Heath, Madden, Cooper, Dinwiddie, Bucholz, et al., 2002; Neuman, Houskamp, Pollack, & Briere, 1996; Putman, 2003; Read, Agar, Argyle, & Aderhold, 2003; Whitaker, Le, Hanson, Baker, McMahon, Ryan, et al., 2008). For example, a New Zealand birth cohort study (n= 1,265) found that CSA was associated with depression, conduct disorder, anxiety disorder, substance use, and suicidal behaviours (Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynsky, 1996). In addition, social and behavioural studies have identified increased risk of future sexual adjustment and dysfunction (for reviews see DiLillo, 2001; Leonard & Follette, 2002; Loeb, Williams, Carmona, Rivkin, Wyatt, Chin, et al., 2002; Rumstein-McKean, & Hunsley, 2001), as well as increased risk of promiscuity (Wyatt, Guthrie, & Notgrass, 1992) and early teenage pregnancy (Dietz, Spitz, Anda, Williamson, McMahon, Santelli, et al., 1999; Fergusson et al., 1996; Romans, Martin, & Mullen, 1997; Widom & Kuhns, 1996).

Physical effects of CSA include neurobiological effects (Putnam, 2003) and long term health problems such as heart disease, lung disease, and cancer when coupled with other adverse childhood experiences (Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, Williamson, Spitz, & Edwards, et al., 1998). Findings from the Otago Women's Health Sexual Abuse Study (NZ) initiated in 1989 found that victims were statistically more likely than those not abused to experience chronic fatigue, asthma,

and cardiovascular problems (Romans, Belaise, Martin, Morris, & Raffi, 2002). From the copious amount of research findings on the effects of CSA, it is clear that sexual abuse adversely affects all aspects of individuals' lives from their physical functioning to cognitive processes, emotions, behaviours, and interactions with others.

Structure of Thesis

The emotional, physiological, and financial costs of CSA to victims, families, and communities drives the need to continue to move beyond and evolve current theory and research in an effort to provide the most powerful interventions and treatment procedures for the perpetrators of CSA. By continuing to construct, discuss, and collaborate on new theories regarding child sexual offending, we are better able to understand why sexual abuse of children occurs, what strategies and factors should be targeted, and how they should be implemented in order to provide the most effective interventions and rehabilitation treatments, in the ultimate goal of reducing re-offending.

In the first chapter of this thesis I will briefly discuss a metatheoretical framework proposed by Ward and Hudson (1998a) which aims to guide researchers in the development and construction of theory and also help identify explanatory gaps within existing theories of CSA. Leading on from a description of the levels of theory model, I outline the self-regulation pathway model and related modus operandi process models (level III theories) to contextualise my research within the sexual offending literature.

In Chapter Two I move away from sexual offending research to a review of expertise and expert performance with a particular concentration on skill acquisition and general principals of expertise. Research from a variety of domains within this field is used to illustrate different forms of expertise. Expertise research is discussed in order to demonstrate the utility of knitting two otherwise different theoretical domains (expertise and sexual offending) to present a new perspective to researchers and clinicians (treatment providers) on the behaviours and strategies of sexual offenders. From this standpoint, such research also serves as a reminder of the heterogeneity of this criminal population.

Chapter Three begins to bridge the gap between the previous two chapters with the application of expertise principles and decision making strategies to criminal

populations. Research within this field is limited, however those studies which have been published provide insight and relevance to research conducted in this thesis. Chapter Three will close with a discussion of an article written by Tony Ward (1999), in which he offers a theoretical analysis of the application of expertise concepts to the sexual offending domain.

Chapter Four weaves together the main themes from the previous chapters and outlines the research questions and rationale for the current study, which leads onto Chapter Five where the methodology used throughout the research process, is detailed. Chapter Six discusses the resulting descriptive model of offence related expertise, with Chapter Seven providing two example case studies to illustrate different facets of model.

In Chapter Eight I discuss and link the major findings of my research within current and previous literature and offer suggestions for the implications it may have for treatment interventions. Limitations of the research will also be discussed before providing concluding remarks.

Chapter One: Theories of Child Sexual Offending

The focus of professional attention on the perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse is directed at understanding why they do what they do, how they do it, and what prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies can be enacted in order to stop its reoccurrence. The construction of theory is paramount in this regard as it not only attempts to answer questions of why sexual abuse occurs, but it also offers possibilities for intervention and treatment.

In a review of child sexual offending literature, Ward and Hudson (1998a) found that theories of CSA have often been developed in isolation of one another. In order to be able to organise previous and current research, Ward and Hudson (1998a) suggest a way in which to locate research based on their explanatory focus and also how to unify theories of offending based on their level of comprehensiveness.

Levels of Theory

With the ultimate goal of providing researchers with a means to locate and unify theories into a global theory of sexual offending, Ward and Hudson (1998a) distinguished between different levels of theory based on their explanatory focus. By providing a basis of classification of levels of theory it was anticipated that researchers may be able to integrate theories of sexual offending and provide a richer global view of the phenomenon. Within this framework Ward and Hudson (1998a) distinguish between level I (multifactorial), level II (single factor), and level III (micro-level or offence process) theories. Ward and Hudson (1998a) make a further distinction between levels of theory by highlighting the importance of taking into account the distal-proximal distinction. Distal factors are vulnerability or genetic factors which emerge from developmental experiences and history. They are essentially trait factors which make a person vulnerable to offending (i.e., psychological mechanisms such as deviant sexual preference or intimacy deficits). Distal factors are more concerned with the 'why' of sexual offending and attempt to explain why the presence or absence of specific factors are related to sexual offending. Proximal factors are triggering events or processes that in conjunction with distal factors (underlying psychological mechanisms) precipitate sexual offending. Proximal factors describe psychological state variables such as negative emotions, as well as contextual or situational variables such as life stressors or substance abuse. Proximal factors operate to inhibit the individual's ability to control

or self-regulate internal states such as deviant sexual arousal or negative thoughts and feelings. Proximal factors function as 'micro-explanations' that attempt to discern the 'how' of events (Ward & Hudson, 1998a; Ward & Sorbello, 2003).

Level I: Multifactorial Theories

Level I theories take into account core features of sexual offenders in an effort to provide an account of what causes sexual offending and how these various causal factors interact and result into sexually abusive actions. A level I theory is sketched out on a broad explanatory canvas and attempts to provide a complex and comprehensive account of sexual offending (e.g., Finkelhor, 1984; Hall & Hirschman, 1992; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990).

Level II: Single Factor Theories

Level II theories are intended to provide explanatory accounts of each of the variety of casual factors contained in level I theories (Ward & Siegert, 2002). For example, intimacy deficits (Marshall, 1993), cognitive distortions (Ward, Hudson, Johnston, & Marshall, 1997), and empathy deficits (Marshall, Hudson, Jones, & Fernandez, 1995). In essence, Level II theories expand on the causal features identified in level I theories, by taking each of these factors and attempting to elucidate their mechanisms in considerable depth.

Level III: Micro-Level Theories

Level III theories are descriptive models of the relapse process or offence chain. Essentially level III theories are temporal in nature taking into account the cognitive, behavioural, motivational, and social factors associated with committing a sexual offence over time (e.g., Bickley & Beech, 2002; Pithers, 1990; Polaschek, Hudson, Ward, & Siegert, 2001; Ward & Hudson, 1998b, 2000; Ward et al., 1995; Ward & Siegert, 2002). Level III theories focus on the 'how' of sexual offending and describe individuals' behaviours, actions, and decisions made during the sexual offending process. Level III theories incorporate both distal and proximal factors whereby predispositional factors which make individuals vulnerable to offending are identified, however focus is given to the pathway to offending. Once this task has been accomplished, different types of sexual offenders should be identifiable with reference to proximal factors such as degree or planning and offending style (e.g., degree of violence, threats, coercion) (Ward & Hudson, 1998a).

The Levels of Theory Model proposed by Ward and Hudson (1998a) is intended to help researchers locate theories within an explanatory grid and by doing

so increase the potential for collaborative research and theory development. It is anticipated research will be progressed by the detection of theoretical gaps and conceptual overlaps between different theories. The remainder of the chapter will discuss in detail micro-level theories (Level III) of the offence process of sexual offending.

Micro-Level Theories of Sexual Offending

With the major aim of offender rehabilitation being to reduce harm to the community, a variety of treatment approaches have been suggested and implemented. Most notably the Relapse Prevention framework previously used in the addiction field, particularly alcoholism, has been the foremost adapted treatment approach utilised in therapeutic institutions for sexual offenders. Adapted by Pithers, Marques, Gibat, and Marlatt (1983) from Marlatt's (1985) Relapse Prevention (RP) Model on substance abuse, the relapse prevention framework advocates the utilisation of cognitive behavioural principles in the treatment of sexual offending. The RP Model appeared to have face validity and intuitive appeal in its treatment application, and in helping therapists understand how a sexual offender could lapse and ultimately relapse (i.e., sexually offend). What was particularly useful to practitioners was the focus of RP type programs on the cognitive, affective, and behavioural antecedents and components of sexually abusive actions. (For a full description of the Relapse Prevention framework see Laws, Hudson, & Ward, 2000a, 2000b; Pithers et al., 1983; Polaschek, 2003; Ward & Hudson, 1996; Ward, Polaschek, & Beech, 2006). In brief, the RP model makes the assumption from the outset that all sexual offenders are motivated to change following treatment and that they are consciously and confidently able to abstain from offending. Through an apparently irrelevant decision (which may be sparked by a negative emotional state) that may initially appear harmless (i.e., a decision to engage in deviant sexual fantasising or to drive past a community park) an individual steps closer to possible relapse. If the offender recognises his irrelevant decision and subsequently actively avoids or escapes from the problematic situation his continued 'abstinence' can be maintained. If, however, the offender fails to cope, an ensuing high risk situation may develop. Once in a high risk situation, if the offender fails to make an adaptive coping response or makes a maladaptive one, a lapse will likely occur. A lapse is defined as an immediate precursor to any form of abusive behaviour (e.g.,

masturbating to deviant fantasies). Once a lapse has occurred, failure to deal with its cognitive and emotional consequences could result in an abstinence violation effect (essentially a catastrophic evaluation of the lapse and its cause), and ultimately, sexual offending.

It initially appeared that the RP model was able to provide both guidelines for treatment and a model of the offence process (Polaschek, 2003). However, despite its clinical popularity little empirical analysis and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of RP was conducted until Ward and colleagues (Hudson, Ward, & Marshall, 1992; Laws, Hudson, & Ward, 2000a; Ward, 2000; Ward & Hudson, 1996) challenged the theoretical basis underpinning the RP model. Specifically, they argued that there were significant conceptual problems with the model, it lacked applicability to all sexual offenders (advocating only one pathway to relapse), and there was a lack of empirical evidence supporting its use in practice (Laws, 2003; Marshall & Anderson, 1996; Ward, Bickley, Webster, Fisher, Beech, & Eldridge, 2004). Ward and colleagues did not advocate the abandonment of the RP model but instead made significant revisions to its formulation and application (for revisions see Laws, Hudson, & Ward, 2000b; Laws & Ward, 2006; Ward & Hudson, 2000). Ward and colleagues' resulting revision of the RP model was based upon a grounded theory analysis of offenders' descriptions of their offence process. Furthermore, the Self-Regulation Model (SRM) drew upon the theoretical resources of self-regulation and control theories to produce a more comprehensive and integrated theoretical model of the offence and relapse process. Before examining the SRM in further detail, the original offence process model (Ward, Louden, Hudson, & Marshall, 1995) underpinning the SRM will be discussed.

Offence Process Model

Ward et al.'s (1995) model of the offence process included background problems and factors that made an individual vulnerable to offending. It also included a series of planning steps (both active and passive), distortions about the victim and offender's rights and needs, sexual fantasy and deviant arousal, and the cognitive and affective states which contributed to a sexual offence. Ward et al. (1995) based their analysis on the transcripts of 26 male child sexual offenders. With the use of grounded theory analysis techniques, nine stages emerged which described

the sequence of events which led the offender through the offence chain. As a foundation of the SRM, the Offence Chain Model will be described briefly.

Stage one contained background factors such as the offender's perception of his general circumstances including work and leisure activities, general affective state and self-image, and relevant vulnerabilities which arose from adverse childhood experiences.

The second stage of the offence chain was that of distal planning, referring to the process of 'seducing' the victim. Three subcategories were identified: covert or implicit planning, where the individual did not acknowledge planning the offence but where contextual features were manipulated to increase the likelihood of contact: explicit or conscious planning, whereby the individual deliberately initiated contact for sexual purposes: and unintentional or 'chance' contact with the victim (i.e., being left to unexpectedly baby-sit). Contributing factors increased the likelihood of sexual contact occurring, such as the relationship with the victim, substance use, and victim vulnerability (e.g., victim upset and needing comfort). Within the second stage the cognitive distortions of offenders were particularly influential. The offender's perceptions of the willingness of the victim to engage in sexual offending dictated the level of explicit planning. Distal planning was also influenced by the offender's degree of sexual arousal which was a significant motivator for an offence if the offender was experiencing a positive mood state.

The third stage included non-sexual contact with the victim for the purpose of offending. The fourth stage was marked by the conscious or unconscious cognitive restructuring or evaluation of what had occurred or of their present situation. The fourth stage was mediated by the offender's degree of sexual arousal and cognitive distortions which led to two major outcome states; negative affective states typically left the offender viewing himself as having little control over the situation and his actions and therefore not responsible, and positive affective states typically resulted in indulgent behaviours, enhanced by fantasy. Offenders that experienced a positive affective state often began the offence chain in that manner and more likely perceived their victims as willing participants.

Stage five contained the immediate precursors to a sexual offence with proximal planning and cognitive restructuring which was highly influenced by cognitive distortions and sexual arousal. The manner in which the offence was carried out was influenced by three foci: a self-focus, where the needs of the offender

were paramount: a victim focus, where the needs of the victim were considered: and a mutual focus, with offenders viewing sexual contact as part of an ongoing 'relationship'.

The sixth stage was the offence itself, with further evaluation and cognitive restructuring occurring following the offence in stage seven. Offenders either viewed their behaviour positively or negatively. Negative evaluations typically resulted in guilt, shame, and/or disgust, while positive evaluations may have resulted from restructuring the offender's participation in the offence to minimise any self-blame.

In the eighth and ninth stages of the offence chain, offenders made future resolutions which were determined by the outcome of their self-evaluation post-offending. Where negative evaluations were made of their behaviour and the impact on their victims, offenders resolved to cease the offending. Offenders with positive evaluation outcomes were more likely to persist with sexual offending misguided by the perception that the victim was not harmed or enjoyed the offending.

The Offence Chain Model developed by Ward and colleagues (1995) was able to accommodate different types of offending by drawing attention to the importance of both chance factors and explicit planning in the commission of an offence. Most notably it accounted for those offenders that entered into the offence chain in a positive affective state and not out of built up stress or negative affect. As a result the offence chain was able to account for different types of offending throughout the model. Ward et al. (1995) conducted a second study in which 12 new offence descriptions found that approximately half followed a negative affective pathway, and the other half a positive affective pathway. Hudson, Ward, and McCormack (1999) further investigated the utility of the pathway by classifying 86 new offences. Evidence of eight distinct pathways was found, with almost three-quarters of offences captured by three patterns, a third of which followed a positive affect pathway marked by explicit planning and pre- and post-offence positive affective state.

Limitations of the Offence Chain Model were noted by Polaschek et al. (2001), which included the use of a sample of men who had volunteered for treatment, and this therefore questioned the broader implications for those unidentified or untreated offenders (including deniers). A lack of clarity was further noted as to the limited detail during the offence itself and the impact victim behaviour had on subsequent actions and cognitive restructuring of the offender.

Despite those weaknesses the Offence Chain Model of child sexual offenders (Ward et al., 1995) offered a clear and more thorough description of the process of sexual offending with the integration of cognitive, affective, behavioural, and environmental factors than previous research, whilst it also provided empirical data from which to ground future theory development.

The Self-Regulation Model

As offence process models (including that of RP) tended to focus exclusively on the role of negative affect states prompting offending behaviour and maintaining the offence process, the implication was that individuals lost control of their behaviour which resulted in sexually abusive actions. By assuming that all sexual offenders were attempting to abstain from committing sexually abusive acts, negative emotions were portrayed as "disrupting the self-regulation of behaviour or as being regulated by maladaptive responses (e.g., drinking alcohol when angry) that increase the probability of offending" (Ward, Hudson, & Keenan, 1998, p. 143). In addition planned offences committed by offenders were seen as covert or implicit. In contrast to the above viewpoints, Ward and Hudson's (1998b) SRM acknowledges that individuals may commit offences while experiencing positive emotions and can explicitly plan their offences in an attempt to maintain or heighten positive affect states through goal directed actions. Based on the work of Baumeister and Heatherton (1996) Ward and Hudson (1998b) stated:

> Self-regulation consists of the internal and external processes that allow an individual to engage in goal-directed actions over time and in different contexts (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Karoly, 1993). This includes the monitoring, evaluation, selection, and modification of behaviour to accomplish one's goals in an optimal or satisfactory manner (Thompson, 1994). Therefore it is clear that self-regulation is not solely concerned with inhibiting or suppressing behaviour but can include the enhancement, maintenance, or elicitation of behaviour as well. On some occasions the enhancement of emotional states (e.g., when steeling oneself to tackle a difficult situation such as writing an exam) or precipitation of activity are legitimate goals. (p. 702).

Ward and Hudson (1998b) cite Carver and Scheier's (1981, 1990) control theory of self regulation to describe goals as "cognitive structures stored in memory in the form of behavioural scripts or knowledge" (Ward & Hudson, 1998b, p. 703). Information is contained within these cognitive representations that enable individuals to guide their own actions and interpret the actions of others. Goals and their accompanying behavioural scripts vary according to their level of abstraction and are organised on the basis of hierarchy (Ward & Hudson, 1998a, b).

Given that goals guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of behaviour, the use of Cochran and Tesser's (1996) distinction between acquisitional (approach) and inhibitory (avoidance) goals serves as practical demarcation for desired states, situations, or events which an individual strives to achieve or avoid. Acquisitional goals involve approach behaviour, moving forward in order to make gains by increasing a skill or situation. Inhibitory goals function to decrease or inhibit a behaviour or situation by exercising avoidance behaviours.

The SRM proposed by Ward and Hudson (1998b) and Hudson, Ward and McCormack (1999) has its foundations in empirical and theoretical work of the Offence Process Model. As previously discussed, in the initial development of the model, written descriptions from 26 child sexual offenders were used to develop a descriptive model of sexual offending (Ward, et al., 1995). This model was later tested and validated by Ward and Hudson (1998b) and Hudson et al. (1999) by incorporating 86 offence descriptions from child molesters and rapists into the descriptive model. At this time the earlier Offence Chain Model was revised and transformed into the SRM.

Nine phases were identified and four pathways embedded within the SRM which categorised sexual offenders with the use of "distinct regulation styles in relation to sexually offensive contact (under-regulation, mis-regulation, and effective regulation)" (Ward & Gannon, 2006, p. 87). The four possible pathways were avoidant-passive, avoidant-active, approach-automatic, and approach-explicit. Avoidant-passive and avoidant-active were characterised by the intention or aim not to offend, and two pathways associated with approach goals were characterised by the desire to offend. All four pathways reflected variation in decision-making strategies of the sample population of sexual offenders. The nine phases with the four pathways are described below.

Phase 1: Life Event

In Phase One, an individual attempting to remain abstinent from sexual offending is challenged by the occurrence of a life event or stress. The event may be employment related, such as loss of job, or interpersonally or emotionally related, for example an argument or loss of a loved one or the exclusion from a social group or rejection from an individual. How the offender evaluates this event is thought to be precipitated by external experiences and processed automatically. Knowledge structures are activated in comparison to an individual's goals and needs which in turn trigger specific patterns of thoughts, emotions, and intentions. It may be the case that such processes have in the past been associated with the event or life stress. An individual's self-concept and goals influence the information that is attended to, recalled and processed. For example, the exclusion from a social group may reinforce long held beliefs of inadequacy and abnormality, and the individual may feel worthless, and harbour feelings of resentment towards the world.

Phase 2: Desire for deviant sex or activity

In response to the life event and an individual's subsequent evaluation, a desire for offensive sex or inappropriate activities associated with these emotions may emerge. The activation of an offence script (information that guides offending behaviour) with sexual and aggressive fantasies may act as mental simulations operating covertly by accessing core dysfunctional beliefs and attitudes, ultimately restricting the individual's attempts to inhibit the indulgence of deviant fantasies. In the absence of awareness, offence scripts can be activated effortlessly implementing sequences of actions linked to an individual's goals. Decisions and actions appear to the individual as irrelevant and unrelated to the subsequent encounter of a high risk situation (Ward, et al., 2004). Affective states accompanying phase two might be happiness, curiosity, sexual arousal, anxiety, and anger.

Phase 3: Offence related goals established

The establishment of an offence related goal results in a desire to engage in deviant sex or maladaptive activity. During Phase Three the individual decides what to do, if anything, about the acceptability of his maladaptive desire. At this stage the accompanying affective state will be considered and will be relative to two possible goals: avoidance or approach goals. Avoidance goals are associated with the desire to avoid sexual reoffending. The affective state accompanying avoidance goals is likely to be negative as the individual is likely to be fearful or anxious about the possibility

of offending. Avoidance goals typically produce higher levels of psychological stress than approach goals as the individual attempts to abstain from offending. In contrast, approach goals reflect the motivation to sexually offend. Both positive and negative affective states may be related to approach goals depending on the aims of the offender. For example, if the aim is to humiliate or punish a person then the affective state is likely to be negative. However, if the goal of the individual is to be sexually gratified, then the affective state is likely to be positive.

Phase 4: Strategy selected

At this point the individual selects strategies designed to achieve their goal. Strategy selection may not necessarily be explicit as the activation of behavioural scripts (action sequences for well learned and habitual behaviours) may result in the automatic selection of goals and their accompanying strategies (Ward & Hudson, 1998b). As discussed, there are four possible pathways: avoidant-passive, avoidant-active, approach-automatic, and approach-explicit. There are two pathways associated with avoidance goals (the aim is not to offend) and two pathways associated with approach goals (the desire to offend).

Avoidant-passive

The avoidant-passive pathway is characterised by the will to abstain from offending but the individual lacks the coping skills and affective strategies to be able manage his will and actions. This pathway reflects an under-regulation coping response.

Avoidant-active

The avoidant-active pathway is characterised by mis-regulation which means that the individual attempts to control their thoughts and behaviour but uses ineffective or maladaptive strategies which are unable to inhibit deviant thoughts and fantasies.

Approach-automatic

The approach-automatic pathway is characterised by the willingness to sexually offend by employing over learned behaviour scripts often resulting in impulsive and poorly planned behaviour as a result of under-regulation.

Approach-explicit

The approach-explicit pathway is characterised by the use of careful planning to execute offences to actively implement harmful goals in the desire to sexually offend. Individuals following this pathway are generally effectively able to self-

regulate, and it is suggested by Ward et al. (2004) that it is the initial goals of the individual which are maladaptive and should be targeted rather than self-regulation.

Each of the four pathways is associated with specific affective states that relate to the type of goal an individual is trying to achieve. The two avoidance pathways will likely produce negative affective states following the offence as the individual evaluates their failure to avoid offending behaviour. In contrast, the two approach pathways will likely yield positive affective states following the offence due to the perception that goals have been achieved.

Phase 5: High-risk situations

Previous explicit planning or counterproductive strategies result in contact or the opportunity for contact with a potential victim. The situation is appraised by the individual in relation to his goals. For those individuals attempting to avoid offending, the high risk situation signifies failure with affective states likely to be negative. For those individuals with approach goals with an aim to offend, a positive affective state will likely be experienced with the anticipation of success arising directly from the high risk situation. At this time some individuals may be placed unexpectedly in a high risk situation, however, the type of goals that they hold will still play a determining role in how they interpret and respond to a high risk situation.

Phase 6: Lapse

The lapse phase of the SRM concerns the immediate precursors to a sexual offence where the individual's intention is to engage in an offence. For those individuals following the avoidance pathways it is suggested that their avoidance goals are replaced with approach goals. Individuals following avoidance-passive pathways may only temporarily revert to a lower level of control with the inability to inhibit his self-regulatory processes. Individuals following an avoidance-active pathway will also see their inability to control deviant sexual desires as failure and as a consequence temporarily adopt an approach goal. Individuals with avoidance goals may recommit to abstinence following an offence, however, during the 'lapse' negative emotions may be replaced with the anticipation of sexual gratification from which individuals are hypothesised to experience positive affective states.

Phase 7: Sexual offence

From the original study Ward et al. (1995) identified three subcategories concerning offenders' *perceptions* of their goals and victims at the time of the actual sexual assault. Different offence styles were associated with the three subcategories

and determined the amount (if any) of violence employed during the offence and the level of sexual intrusiveness conducted. The three subcategories were; *self-focus*, where the needs of the offender are paramount; *victim focus*, where the offending was considered to be 'showing love'; and *mutual focus*, where the offender considers the offending to be reciprocal and centred around a 'relationship'. A self-focused offending style was associated with short duration but high intrusiveness; a mutual focus was marked by longer duration and typically less intrusiveness (because both he and the victim desire sexual contact); and a victim focus was not clearly associated with either pattern as offenders may come across as aggressive in their efforts to please the victim, or alternatively, see themselves as nurturers or teachers. Unlike other phases of the model, it is not clear if each of the three subcategories were associated with a particular self-regulation pattern. It is suggested that individuals following avoidant pathways are likely to be self-focused, presumably because they succumb to their desires and are intent on meeting their own needs (sometimes by any means, i.e., greater levels of violence, and/or extreme intrusiveness). Individuals following approach pathways may have varying foci depending on their goals. For example, a self-focused individual may have goals directed at humiliating or punishing the victim, whereas a victim focused or mutual focused individual may concentrate their efforts on the needs of the victim.

Phase 8: Post-offence evaluation

An evaluation process is likely to occur following a sexual offence. Individuals following the avoidant pathway are thought to evaluate themselves negatively and feel guilt, shame, or failure because they were not able to achieve their goal of abstaining from offending. At this point, if the individual attributes the cause of his offending to uncontrollable internal factors then there may be little or no attempt to inhibit ongoing deviant behaviour. For those individuals operating at the most basic level of behavioural control (described by Ward & Hudson (1998b) as cognitive deconstruction – concentrated processing of information specific only to the achievement of a desired goal) evaluation of their behaviour may not occur until some time later. Individuals with approach pathway goals are thought to experience positive affect due to the achievement of their goals.

Phase 9: Attitude towards future offending

The final stage of the model concerns the impact of sexual offending on future intentions and expectations. Individuals with avoidance goals may decide to

either (a) attempt to reassert control and resolve not to reoffend, or continue misregulation, (b) re-evaluate their goals and decide that they are not able to control deviant behaviour and therefore continue sexual offending, or (c) actively choose to change their goals to approach or acquisitionary ones as sexual offending represents a positive option in their lives. Individuals characterised by the approach-automatic pathway are likely to have their offence scripts reinforced and strengthened due to their 'success', whereas individuals following the approach-explicit pathway will continue to learn from their experiences and refine and develop their offence strategies accordingly. Individuals with approach goals are likely to continue pursuing their goals of sexually offending with the unlikelihood of cessation.

Evaluation and Critique of the Self-Regulation Model

A number of studies investigating the content validity of the SRM have been conducted and published in the sexual offending literature. Using cluster analysis on 44 untreated extrafamilial child molesters in Canada, Proulx, Perreault, and Ouimet (1999) distinguished between coercive and non-coercive pathways, which are comparable to the avoidance-approach pathways in the SRM, with the majority of their sample falling into the approach-goal category.

Bickley and Beech (2001) conducted a study to validate the SRM with 87 UK child sexual offenders. They found that the majority of the sample could be reliably categorised into four pathways. Of the sample 41.4% were classified into the approach-explicit pathway, 34.5% to the approach-automatic pathway, 16.1% to the avoidant-active pathway, and 8.1% to the avoidant-passive pathway.

Webster (2005) conducted a study with 25 men who had reoffended following sex offender treatment in the UK. Webster found that 11 of the 25 participants could be allocated to a pathway both pre- and post-treatment, with 10 of the 11 allocated to an approach-explicit pathway. Ten participants could be allocated to a pathway at either pre- or post-treatment, but not at both time points. Of the sample, only four could not be allocated to a pathway either pre- or post-treatment, but appeared to be characterised by multiple pathways running concurrently throughout the nine phases at both time points. Even though Webster concludes that the study provides initial support for the pathways model, with the predominant pathway being approach-explicit both pre- and post-treatment, the results indicate

that not all offenders could be reliably coded, and the model does not account for multiple pathways running concurrently throughout the nine phases.

Yates, Kingston, and Hall (2003) conducted a validation study of the SRM and its relationship to dynamic and static risk factors with a mixed sample of 80 Canadian sexual offenders. The results support the SRM, with the reliable allocation of the entire sample (child molesters and rapists) to the four pathways, with the majority (58%) following an approach-automatic pathway.

The SRM is a an advance on previous models as it does not assume that all sexual offenders do not want to commit offences, have skill deficiencies, and respond to negative life events/stressors with sexual offending, but suggests there are men who make conscious decisions which are reflected in their reports of positive affect and goal-directed actions. One weakness of the SRM, however, is that it does not expand exactly on how those goals are achieved through sexual offending. In the approach-explicit pathway, socially harmful goals are pursued by individuals with effective self-regulation; the SRM does not expand on why or how sexual offenders choose those goals. Further questions have been raised about the explanatory depth of the approach goals pathways (Ward, Polaschek, & Beech, 2006), that is, the level and complexity of the detail in the explanation to fully capture the underlying processes that are taking place. It has been suggested that the avoidance pathway has been thoroughly developed as a result of its advance on the Relapse Prevention Model, and while the inclusion of approach goals increases the scope of the model, further development is needed to provide a comprehensive view of the functionality of approach goals. In the approach-automatic pathway it is suggested that offences are triggered by situational events which unfold in a relatively automated way by following pre-established offence scripts. Automated behaviour is under-regulated because the behaviour can occur efficiently without taking up cognitive resources. However, the model does not explain at what point (if any) and how the individual resumes conscious control if/when the victim disrupts or threatens goal achievement (i.e., if the victim says 'no' or 'stop', or does not respond to grooming behaviour). Under-regulation within this pathway describes an offender unable to stop his behaviour regardless of whether he recognises that he is not achieving his goal.

Despite these weaknesses, the SRM represents an advance over the Relapse Prevention Model by directing attention to offender's goals and seeing them as problematic rather than concentrating primarily on offence strategies. Some

offenders may not be deficient in the skills that are currently being taught in treatment programs, and instead may be choosing not to use skills to inhibit their offending. The refusal to utilise existing skills could be associated with the fact that their offending behaviour is an attempt to meet important personal goals and their associated needs.

The SRM is one type of Level III theory which is not only a descriptive model of what offenders do, but also draws on theoretical constructs and mechanism to provide greater explanatory depth.

Summary of the Offence Process Model and the SRM

This chapter has discussed the current theories underpinning treatment interventions based on the understanding of the commission and relapse of a sexual offence. Pithers' Relapse Model (Pithers, 1990; Pithers, et al., 1983) has been reworked by Ward and colleagues (Ward, Bickley et al., 2004; Ward & Hudson, 1998b, 2000; Ward, Hudson, & Keenan, 1998; Ward, et al., 1995) to account for the shortcoming of its lack of coverage of all the possibilities involved in reoffending. Pithers' emphasises skill deficits as the major mediators of relapse, failing to account for situations in which individuals consciously decide to engage in sexually abusive actions and behaviours. Ward and colleagues suggest that a model of relapse needs to contain a number of pathways to offending, and to account for those individuals whose firmly entrenched beliefs legitimise sexual contact with children producing positive emotions as a result of sexual offending.

An alternative approach to the Offence Process and Self-Regulation Model, are studies conducted on modus operandi of child sexual offenders from the criminology field. Leclerc, Beauregard, and Proulx (2008) suggest that the Offence Process Model is designed to describe the psychological processes that drive relapses, and can only provide clues as to the specific strategies adopted by sexual offenders, as well as situational factors which may influence the offender's choices. Leclerc et al. (2008) believe that the Rational Choice perspective represents a useful framework to better understand the modus operandi of offenders. The Rational Choice perspective emphasises the importance of behaviours to understand how individuals commit crimes. It focuses on criminal decision-making in relation to

crime commission and includes criminal strategies adopted by offenders. Modus operandi studies will now be discussed.

Modus Operandi of Sexual Offenders

Modus operandi (MO) has been defined by Kaufman, Hilliker, and Daleiden (1996) as "the pattern of behaviours that perpetrators display in the periods prior to, during, and following illicit sexual contact" (p. 18). From the criminological perspective of the modus operandi of child sexual offenders, the Rational Choice perspective (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994) has largely been employed as a theoretical framework for the decision making processes of individuals with a commitment to sexually offend. Individuals commit crimes in an attempt to satisfy their needs such as sexual gratification and excitement (Clarke & Cornish, 2001). Offenders attempt to minimise the risk of apprehension and to maximise their gains even though they may be restrained by time factors, cognitive ability, and the availability of relevant information (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). The choices made by offenders are considered to be directed by the value, cost, and likelihood of obtaining the desired outcome (Leclerc et al., 2008). Offenders' decisions are influenced by situational factors (i.e., the resistance of the victim) and operate to provide supplemental information to inform strategy selection in the commission of a sexual offence.

Proulx, Ouimet, and Lachaîne (1995) conducted an exploratory study of child sexual offenders concentrating on the decisions and behaviours employed in the commission of a crime. Underpinning the research the suggestion was made by Proulx et al. (1995) that before sexually offending against a child, the offender makes a series of decisions. Among those decisions, the offender has to choose locations where he is likely to encounter a potential victim (i.e., hunting ground), and the optimal time to offend. The offender then selects the victim according to criteria: erotic value (age, gender, and physical characteristics), victim vulnerability (physical and/or psychological), and to victim familiarity. Finally the offender decides which strategy to employ to approach the victim and then sexually offend against him or her. The outcome of this study suggested that situational factors may play a substantial role in the strategies adopted by offenders.

In 1994 Cornish conceived the idea of crime scripts to aid in the analysis of the process of crime commission. Crime scripts are step-by-step accounts of the

strategies used by offenders to commit crimes. Crime scripts provided a framework to systematically investigate the process of a specific crime in as much detail as would allow by identifying the decisions offenders made and the situational factors taken into account which would dictate a particular strategy selected and any alteration of that strategy (Cornish, 1994). Cornish (1998) (as cited in Leclerc, Proulx, & Beauregard, 2009) outlined a crime commission script for child sexual offenders with two particular scripts identified: a script related to the sexual abuse of male victims, which accounts for offences committed against stranger victims in public places, and a script related to offences perpetrated within residential institutions. Cornish's Crime Commission Script Model was not empirically verified, however, the work influenced a study by Beauregard, Proulx, Rossmo, Leclerc, and Allaire (2009) which analysed 361 criminal events reported by 72 serial sex offenders. The authors identified three crime commission scripts: (1) coercive, (2) manipulative, and (3) non-persuasive (no particular strategy). Coercive scripts were demonstrated with the use of physical force, threats, or violence. Manipulative scripts reflected the use of bribery such as the giving of gifts and desensitising the victim to sexual contact (from non-sexual physical contact to sexual contact). The non-persuasive category was marked by the use of no particular strategy whereby the individual may wait for an opportunity rather than create or attempt to force the victim, which may be used particularly on younger children as they may not understand the sexual nature of the physical contact. Results from the study suggested that sexual offenders can switch from one strategy to another in accordance with environmental factors, such as the location of the crime, when committing offences.

Initial studies analysing the modus operandi of child sexual offenders were conducted in the late 1980s (Berliner & Conte, 1990; Budin & Johnson, 1989; Christiansen & Blake, 1990; Conte, Wolf, & Smith, 1989; Lang & Frenzel, 1988) which provided data about the strategies selected by child sexual offenders. For example, gradual desensitisation of physical contact is used by many offenders before sexual contact begins (Berliner & Conte, 1990; Christiansen & Blake, 1990). According to Leclerc, Proulx, and Beauregard (2009) these studies were lacking reliable measures of offence related decisions and actions and therefore were unable to adequately assess all stages of offenders' modus operandi. As a consequence,

specific strategies at various stages could not be identified and several stages of sex offenders' modus operandi could not be systematically investigated either.

The Modus Operandi Questionnaire was developed in 1991 by Kaufman to provide a framework for the collection of data on all aspects of the offender-victim interaction in the commission of a crime. The framework places offence related behaviours on a temporal continuum starting with offenders' strategies to access a victim, and includes tactics adopted to gain the trust and cooperation of the victim. Kaufman and colleagues undertook a series of studies based on this framework, which was then adopted by other researchers (Leclerc, Proulx, & McKibben, 2005; Smallbone & Wortley, 2000). Overall, research conducted on child sexual offenders revealed that modus operandi may vary according to situational variables, the offender's age (Kaufman, Holmberg, Orts, McCrady, Rotzien, Daleiden, et al., 1998), and the age of the victim (Leclerc, Carpentier, & Proulx, 2006).

While the age of the offender, age of the victim, gender of the victim, and the offender-victim relationship are all important factors in the commission of a sexual offence, the presence of deviant fantasies is also a relevant factor regarding modus operandi. Leclerc et al. (2006) found that offenders who had deviant sexual fantasies 48 hours before the offence were significantly more likely to adopt a manipulative rather than non-persuasive strategy. Adult offenders adopting a manipulative strategy were also likely to have more deviant fantasies than those offenders who used a coercive strategy. This finding is inconsistent with results obtained by Carter, Kaufman, Barber, Galindo, and Marnane (2002) with their sample of 247 adolescent offenders where they investigated the relationship between deviant sexual fantasies and violence. Furthermore, offenders using extreme violence were discovered to have a higher frequency of deviant sexual fantasies. Carter et al. (2002) also found that adolescent offenders who used violence were likely to report a higher frequency overall of deviant sexual fantasies (deviant and non-deviant). This finding was hypothesised to be the result of an increase in sex drive and sexual activity and interest in adolescent males as part of normal process associated with adolescent development.

Carter, Kaufman, Estes, and Stotler-Turner (2005) examined the link between specific types of fantasy and various modus operandi strategies such as access to drugs and alcohol, giving gifts, desensitising the victim to sexual contact, and giving/withdrawing benefits. In this study, a relationship was found between

coercive sexual fantasies and drug/alcohol use for adult offenders. In contrast, they found that the presence of fantasies in adolescent offenders was not associated with preferred modus operandi strategies.

The complexity of the relationship between modus operandi and deviant sexual fantasies indicates that further research must be conducted in order to provide more conclusive results. It is suggested by Leclerc et al. (2009) that offenders can adopt strategies which are similar to prosocial behaviours such as demonstrating love, and giving attention and showing appreciation for someone. For example, in order to gain the victim's trust the offender can spend time with them, give them attention, play with them, or take them on outings. Gradual desensitisation from physical touching to sexual activity may be reinforced by saying loving things to the victim. Investigation of modus operandi strategies during treatment increases knowledge of the particular behaviours adopted by an individual and has the ability to assist offenders in recognising patterns in their behaviour (Kaufman et al., 1996; Leclerc et al., 2006).

Situational Crime Prevention Models

Developed within the framework of Rational Choice Theory, the application of Situational Crime Prevention Models to child sexual offenders is a relatively new approach within criminology. From this perspective, crime is regarded as being the outcome of choices and decisions made by the offender (Clarke, 1980). The main goal of situational prevention is to encourage the offender to change his mind from committing an offence by reducing crime opportunities and targeting situational factors associated with crimes before perpetration of an offence (Cusson, 1992; Cusson et al., 1994) (as cited in Leclerc et al., 2009). Little research has been conducted on the application of situational crime prevention to child sexual offenders. As Wortley and Smallbone (2006) point out, this may be because child sexual offending has commonly been thought of as the product of pathological and irrational individuals, which has lead researchers and clinicians to focus on the deficits of the individual rather than on situational factors. However, recent studies (Kaufman, Mosher, Carter, & Estes, 2006; Wortley & Smallbone, 2006) suggest that situational crime prevention can be applied, and it can provide an additional means to identify and prevent opportunities and reduce environmental elements conducive to

offending within the child sexual offending domain (for situational prevention initiatives refer to Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

Summary of Modus Operandi Models

A rational choice approach to the modus operandi of child sexual offenders implies that some sexual offenders utilise highly sophisticated offence strategies, often employing tactics which they have found to be successful with previous sexual encounters (Leclerc et al., 2009). Offenders adopt a variety of strategies to attain sub-goals (e.g., gaining the trust and cooperation of the victim, maintaining silence through the abuse) which enable them to perpetrate their crimes successfully.

Rational crime perspectives view criminal behaviour as a dynamic process in which individuals are seen as improving their decision-making through experience, and learn to modify their strategies to commit crimes (Leclerc et al., 2009). It has been proposed by Leclerc et al. (2009) that adolescents successfully committing sexual offences are more likely to re-offend in adulthood; if that is the case, Leclerc et al. suggest future research may need to explore whether behaviours and actions undertaken by an offender determine or are reformulated towards future strategies.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed work from both the psychological and criminological research fields in relation to the actions, behaviours, and decision-making processes of child sexual offenders. Both the SRM in psychology and the MO studies from criminology suggest that individuals actively make decisions to achieve their goals, of which committing a sexually abusive act against a child, is one. The rational crime perspective of criminological theory, in particular, views criminal behaviour as a dynamic process whereby the decision making process associated with sexual offending is improved through experience and the subsequent modification of strategies to commit future sexual offences. Individuals gain experience and improve decision making over time as new skills are acquired and strategies reformulated and adapted. The following chapter deviates away from the sexual offending arena to reviewing work conducted on non-criminal populations and the decision-making processes and actions taken by individuals considered to be experts in their specific domains.

Chapter Two: Expertise and Expert Performance

Chapter One demonstrated that psychological and criminological theory agree that some child sexual offenders are more successful at identifying cues and actively making decisions in the achievement of goals related to committing sexual abuses against children. With those perspectives in mind, this chapter investigates how one individual differs from another in the acquisition of knowledge and skill in the attainment of goals and achievement a high level of success within a particular domain.

An expert is a label given to a person who has superior skill and the ability to be able to perform at exceptionally high levels in a particular domain. Researchers have analysed and outlined expertise in varying ways, reflecting their particular area of study. For example, Ericsson (2006) describes expertise as referring to "the characteristics, skills, and knowledge that distinguish experts from novices and less experienced people" (p. 3). However, Chi (2006b) defines expertise as "the manifestation of skills and understanding resulting from that accumulation of a large body of knowledge" (p. 167). Researchers studying expertise attempt to understand how experts perform and why they are more capable than non-experts. In order to do this researchers have concentrated their efforts on discerning how an experts' knowledge is structured and organised, and how their representations differ from non-experts.

The study of expertise covers remarkably diverse domains such as chess, music, sports, medicine, aviation, and the arts and sciences. It involves a range of mastery from beginners to world class performance (Ericsson, 2005). The theoretical and empirical connections between these studies are united under the assumption that very high levels of achievement in virtually all domains are mediated by mechanisms acquired during an extended period of training and development (Ericsson, 2005). Expertise studies can focus on individual characteristics and strategies (Shanteau, 1992) or on the cognitive mechanisms underlying performance such as memory capacity and perception of patterns (Glaser & Chi, 1988) as well as processes underlying cognitive activities such as problem solving.

This chapter does not (nor can it) comprehensively cover all the viewpoints, theories, themes, and empirical work conducted on expertise and expert performance to date. This chapter therefore describes the general characteristics of expertise and expert performance detected by empirical studies conducted within the expertise

field as it is relevant to the topic of this thesis (therefore it will not include research on artificial intelligence, child prodigies and the exceptional ability of the genius).

Approaches to the study of expertise

Our knowledge of people and how we see the world is organised into cognitive models. They are activated whenever we interact with the world, people, and the environment. Information and experiences are continually processed in an understandable and relatable structure to give meaning in reference to our lives. Expertise specifically or in general has been the subject of considerable empirical investigation in modern psychology. In cognitive psychology a focus on expertise is evident in research on human memory and the nature of knowledge and its associated structures and processes. While expertise research attempts to answer questions of how new information is received, categorised, labelled, and assigned to the relevant location within memory, the development of expertise cannot be studied in isolation from other processes, such as situation awareness, problem solving, planning and uncertainty management (Salas & Klein, 2001).

Exploration into the nature of expertise has involved a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches. Continuing to be of debate is whether the development of expertise is related to innate talents or is the result of learned behaviours and skills. At this time there continue to be researchers advocating both sides of the debate, with no conclusive evidence swaying the argument either side. There are however, general ways in which experts differ from others in aspects of their performance which will be commented on throughout the chapter.

Methods for studying expertise

According to Chi (2006a) there are two approaches to studying expertise. The first is the 'absolute approach' which identifies and studies exceptional individuals and their outstanding performances in a particular domain. Second, is the 'relative approach' which focuses on the study of experts in comparison to novices, and makes the assumption that expertise is a level of proficiency which can be acquired or achieved by those deemed to be novice.

Several methods have been used to identify individuals who are considered truly exceptional experts (the absolute approach). One method is retrospective, whereby looking at the product or outcome an experts work can be judged. For

example, in music a composer may be judged on how often the composition was broadcast (Kozbelt, 2004). A second method of use is a rating system, such as that used in chess or an examination (Masunaga & Horn, 2000). A third method may use a time task where an expert must complete the task given as fast as possible, for example in chess the Knights tour task requires a player to complete a series of moves in which the time it takes is a reflection of skill level (Chi, 1978). Overall, the absolute approach attempts to distinguish the individual from the masses on some form of measure of performance (Chi, 2006a). It makes the assumption that those individuals considered experts have 'greater minds' and utilise powerful domain-general heuristics that non-experts are not aware of. This assumption lends itself to the debate supporting 'innate' qualities of expertise.

The 'relative approach' studies experts in comparison to novices. The underlying assumption in this approach is that the group of experts is more knowledgeable than the group of novices or non-experts. Experts, in this sense, are defined as relative to novices on a continuum (Chi, 2006a). The goal of this approach is to understand the way in which experts gain their skills and knowledge so that those skills and that knowledge can also be acquired by novices. Knowledge is thought to be gained as an accumulation of learning, studying, and deliberate practice. A level of proficiency can be assessed by measures such as qualifications (graduates versus undergraduates), years performing a task, or in terms of domain-specific knowledge or performance tests.

The advantage of the relative approach is the aim is to understand how experts gain knowledge so that less skilled individuals can learn to become more skilled and knowledgeable. Chi (2006a) identifies three theoretical assumptions which underpin the relative approach. First, the assumption is made that experts are people who have acquired more knowledge in a particular domain (Chi, 2006a; Ericsson & Smith, 1991) and that the knowledge is structured and organised (Bedard & Chi, 1992). Second, it is assumed that there are no differences in the fundamental capacities or general reasoning abilities of experts and non experts. Third, differences in performance of experts and less skilled individuals are determined by the way in which knowledge is structured (research literature on expertise has identified and discussed in length behavioural manifestations of expertise. For more in depth examination readers are referred to the edited volumes by Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988;

Ericsson, 1996; Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, & Hoffman, 2006; Ericsson & Smith, 1991; Feltovich, Ford, & Hoffman, 1997; Hoffman, 1992).

It would be useful at this point to clarify the types of knowledge that are studied and referred to in the expertise literature. Expertise is demonstrated in everyday feats such as reading and writing as well as in the exceptional accomplishments of athletes, scholars, and artists. From the psychological perspective expertise reflects individuals' active engagement in the world around them. Wagner and Sternberg (1985) defined tacit knowledge as "knowledge that usually is not openly expressed or stated…is not directly taught or spoken about, in contrast to knowledge directly taught in classrooms" (p. 438-439). Wagner and Sternberg (1985) consider tacit knowledge to be a critical aspect of expertise as it is reflected in practical intelligence and behaviour. It is the expertise demonstrated by people in their everyday lives where they utilise environmental cues and tools, and implicitly alter their behaviour or techniques to get the very best out of those cues or tools, often correcting their actions in optimal ways. Practical knowledge is defined as "the ability to acquire tacit knowledge from everyday experience and to apply this knowledge to handling everyday practical problems in which the information necessary to determine a solution strategy is often incomplete (see, e.g., Sternberg, Forsythe, Hedlund, et al., 2000)" (Cianciolo, Matthew, Sternberg, & Wagner, 2006, p. 616).

The remainder of the chapter will refer to specific expertise and empirical studies which demonstrate knowledge structure and acquisition. However it is important to keep in mind that the study of expertise attempts to reveal the content, processes, and application of knowledge not evident in less skilled individuals. Summarised below are the characteristic ways in which experts excel and also ways in which studies have shown they do not.

Domains of Expertise

Expert performance has been studied over a range of different domains such as chess, music, medicine as well as a variety of sports (Chase & Simon, 1973a; Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch – Romer, 1993; Patel & Groen, 1991; Starkes & Ericsson, 2003). The research has stressed the comparison between the expert and novice and thus it is a relative approach to the study of expertise.

Over the last two decades, Karl Anders Ericsson has stressed the expertise approach to performance which has influenced much of the research literature. Through his research he has argued that the notion of innate abilities or special gifts plays little or no role in the acquisition of expertise for a given domain (Ericsson, 2004; Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch – Römer, 1993). Ericsson and colleagues argue that expert performance is the result of complex skills and physiological adaptations obtained through many years of intensive practice and competent instruction (Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Ward, 1999). Research and reviews conducted by Ericsson in a range of fields from chess, music, sports and the arts has concluded that expert performance has very little to do with an inheritable talent, although individual personality characteristics may influence the acquisition of complex skills allowing them to succeed in a particular domain. Continued research into expertise suggests that skills associated with performance at a high level are context bound or domain specific, and therefore do not generalise to other settings (Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Perkins & Salomon, 1989). The following research gives examples of domain-specific knowledge from which a general set of characteristics of expert performance begin to emerge.

Chess

Chess is the earliest domain of extensive research conducted on the expert/novice distinction with seminal research being undertaken in 1946 by de Groot. His earlier work (de Groot, 1946; 1965) (as cited in Ericsson, 2006) found that chess masters and weaker players had much in common in the structure of their thought processes and he was unable to discover any quantitative differences that might underlie chess skill. However, de Groot did find a difference in experts' ability to perform a task involving perceptual and short-term memory processes, for example, a player's accurate ability to reconstruct chess positions after having only viewed the board for 2-25 seconds. The findings from de Groot's earlier studies on chess indicated that exceptional performance does not appear to be related to superior memory skills or an unusually high IQ. Indeed the necessary factor appears to be extended and intense practice beginning from an early age and maintained at high levels for more than a decade. The amount of years of extensive practice to achieve a level of grandmaster chess player has been shown to be between 9 and 10 years (Simon & Chase, 1973a, b). The 10 year rule appears to hold for other

disciplines including that of physical activity (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993).

According to Chase and Simon (1973a, b), a chess expert's ability to recognise situations is based on many thousands of chunks of information in memory, each encoding a specific set of pieces indicative of a position on a chessboard. Chunks provide access to information such as what plan to follow and what move to play. They theorised that due to extensive playing experience, skilled players had incorporated a large number of chunks into long-term memory (LTM). Research has supported this theory of 'chunking' by administering a series of recall tasks (Chase & Simon, 1973a, 1973b; de Groot, 1965; Gobet & Simon, 1996). Chase and Simon (1973a, b) argue that the recall effect occurs because more highly skilled players hold larger amount of information chunks in LTM and are more likely to be able match a group of pieces from any game position to chunks held in LTM. Research also suggests that when positions are generated randomly on the chessboard, experts are no better at recall tasks than novices. Chase and Simon argue that this is due to skilled players not being able to find corresponding chunks of pieces in LTM to those displayed randomly on a chessboard.

The presence of information chunks has been used to explain why experts can recall larger amounts of information than novices. Instead of storing each component separately in short term memory, experts are able to store chunks that have been built up in long-term memory. The theory also suggests that it takes a great deal of time (about 10 years) to acquire the necessary amount of chunks it takes to be an expert (Gobet, 1998). Gobet and Simon's Template Theory (1996) has extended the Chunking Theory by proposing that expert or highly skilled players hold memory structures (templates) that represent whole board positions of pieces, as opposed to only parts of positions.

Though it has been widely accepted that chess skill is based on chunks of information in memory, the exact content of these chunks is less well understood. Previous views have thought that (1) the closer two chess pieces are on a board, the more likely they are to be in the same chunk, and (2) expert players encode the exact locations on the board of pieces. Research conducted by McGregor and Howes (2002) offers an alternative view by suggesting that the information that is encoded in a chess chunk is determined more by developing evaluations of attack/defence associations. This argument directly challenges views of proximity and location

theories of chess pieces glued together in memory. The overall findings from their research suggest that the influence of attack/defence interactions on memory for a position is closely connected to the process of skill evaluation. When an expert evaluates positional play in chess, they utilise chunks encoded in terms of attack/defence relations between pieces rather than in terms of proximity and location. Though the authors argue that attack/defence relationships are more important determinants of chunk content than proximity and location, they do not discount previous research in favour of the traditional chunk theory, but suggest that memory is likely to consist of many types of representation (McGregor & Howes, 2002).

In 'think aloud' studies conducted by de Groot (1946) he found that grandmasters in chess chose better moves than lesser skilled players, generated moves faster, reached a decision faster, and during their search examined moves and sequences of moves which were more relevant. Saariluoma (1990) however, found that international masters and grandmasters of chess can sometimes carry out shallower searchers than masters, indicating perhaps that they can adapt their search mechanisms to the demands of the position.

Sport

Expertise in sport provides the best opportunity to view expertise in *action*. With the popularity of sport, media attention, and vast numbers physically involved, it is not hard to understand the need to breakdown the components of sporting expertise to better inform players and coaches alike. Expert performance in sport has been defined by Starkes (1993) as the consistent superior athletic performance over an extended period.

The theory of deliberate practice has been extensively studied in the area of sport. Although the concept of deliberate practice was not originally proposed for this purpose, sports appear to be the latest arena in which to incorporate this idea. Within the sporting research itself a variety of disciplines have been covered: figure skating (Starkes, Deakin, Allard, Hodges, & Hayes, 1996); wrestling (Hodges & Starkes, 1996; Starkes et al., 1996); soccer and field hockey (Helsen, Starkes, & Hodges, 1998), and martial arts (Hodges & Deakin, 1998).

Deliberate practice refers to the type of practice which is structured to provide optimal opportunities for learning and skill acquisition. It is carried out over extended periods of time and guided by conscious awareness in order to monitor and evaluate the achievement of specific goals and the elimination of errors (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). Ericsson and colleagues (1993) consider deliberate practice to be the preparatory period for the improvement of performance which is effortful and not immediately gratifying. It involves receiving appropriate feedback about performance obtained from objective observers or the generation of self-generated feedback by comparing one's own performance against a 'gold' standard. The effects of deliberate practice may not in themselves be necessarily rewarding or improvements in performance immediate (Ericsson et al., 1993). Research supporting the conclusion that experts practice significantly more than non-experts was conducted by Hodges and Starkes (1996). However they did not concur with the notion that activities performed were not necessarily enjoyable. Helsen, Starkes and Hodges (1998) found that participants that they studied in team sports rated relevant activities as being enjoyable.

There have been critics of the deliberate practice theory as it relates to expertise. Singer and Janelle (1999) suggest that although the amount of practice affects the level of ability attained this is also influenced by the trainability of the athlete which is directly influenced by their genetic inheritance. Singer and Janelle (1999) also advanced the theory of deliberate practice by demonstrating that the 'what' and 'how' an individual practices is crucial to the development of expertise.

Baker, Côté, Abernathy (2003) set out to investigate the role of different forms of training in the development of skills previously thought to have characterised expert performance and decision making in team sports, at the same time examining the differences between the nature and quantity of training by both experts and non experts within these sports. The participants were 15 Australian national athletes from netball, men's and women's field hockey, and men's basketball thought to be among the best decision makers in their sports in the world. The control group consisted of 13 non-experts coming from a pool of athletes whose highest participation levels were that of state representation. The subjects were asked to complete a structured interview in which they were asked to provide detailed information of activities undertaken in their off-seasons as well as competitive season for each year of involvement. Athletes were then asked to provide estimates

of the number of hours per week and months of the year engaged in each activity. Cumulated hours for training activity were then calculated. Participants were also asked to rate each of the undertaken activities on a scale of 0 (no help) to 3 (very helpful) with respect to apparent effectiveness in developing necessary skills in perception, decision-making, movement execution, and physical fitness. An additional aim of Baker et al.'s (2003) work was to identify training activities necessary for the development of skills and abilities in top-level team sports. From the results the authors were able to obtain findings that indicated the following: (a) competition, video training, organised training, and watching games on television were helpful for developing perceptual skills necessary in team sports; (b) competition, video training, organised training were helpful for developing decision-making skills; (c) individual instruction with the coach, practice alone, organised training, and playing with friends were useful for movement execution skill, and (d) aerobic training, competition, organised training, and weight training were helpful for developing physical fitness. The results of this study also confirmed previous work in the field (Ericsson et al., 1993; Helson et al., 1998; Starkes et al., 1996) demonstrating that not only do experts spend more time overall in practice but they also spend more time participating in specific activities (e.g., competition, video training, organised team practice, and individual instruction with the coach). However, there are a few limitations evident in to Baker et al.'s expertise research. Namely that the sample size was too small to be able to accurately gauge the differences between experts and non-experts, and the information on the non-experts was not validated giving way to a potentially unstable comparative group. Despite these problems, the research was able to show which specific activities are deemed most helpful, by athletes, to the developing skills characteristic of expert performance.

Expertise research in sport has also been used to identify which specific goals and strategies are essential to learning a new skill. Cleary and Zimmerman (2001) aimed to evaluate the differences in quality and quantity of self-regulatory processes in basketball players. The use of microanalytic studies enabled the authors to assess the specific cognitive and behavioural processes as they occurred and changed in basketball players while they practiced their free-throws. By highlighting three microanalytic phases, forethought (which is related to strategy choice and self motivational beliefs), performance control, and self-reflection, the authors

demonstrated that highly self-regulated individuals ascribed outcomes to strategy use and make better strategy choices following failure. The basis of this study was built on self-regulation theory which describes how and why "certain processes influence and athlete's motivation, ability of correct mistakes, and ability to self-manage behaviours, thoughts and feelings" (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2001, p. 188).

More specifically, the participants in the study were 43 male students from seven high schools. The expert group consisted of 15 basketball players whose free-throw percentage during the current season was 70% or higher; the non-expert group (less skilled basketball players) contained 13 players who made less than 55% of their game free-throws during the season, and the novice group was composed of 15 participants with limited organised basketball experience. The experts were the same age, practiced the same number of hours per week, had played basketball for a similar number of years, and exhibited the same number and type of free-throw techniques. Participants were asked to practice their free-throw shots for 10 minutes, during which time questions were asked intermittently throughout the task. Before the subject began the practice, they were asked if they had any goals when practicing free-throws. They were then asked what they thought they needed to do in order to accomplish that goal, targeting strategy choice. Questions of shot confidence and shot satisfaction were asked before and after both successful and unsuccessful shots. Participants were asked to respond orally to questions based on the 100 point scale across a variety of measures. They were also asked about reasons why they were either successful or unsuccessful when taking their free-throw shot (e.g., technique, focus, distractions, rhythm etc). The participant's verbal responses were recorded and rated into categories and they were also rated on their overall accuracy with their free-throw shots.

Findings from the research reported that free-throw accuracy was significantly higher in experts than non-experts, which in turn was significantly higher than that of novices. Experts set significantly more goals relating to their free-throws as well as using more specific technique oriented strategies to achieve those goals, than non-experts and novices. The results indicate that experts appeared to plan their practice sessions more than non-experts and novices with respect to their choice of technique oriented processes. The results showed that experts had a higher sense of self-worth at the outset of shooting free-throws as well as after successfully making the shots over non-experts or novices. The authors also interpreted these

findings by suggesting that non-experts' lower perceptions of self-worth, non-specific goals and inefficient choice of learning strategies impeded their development as free-throw shooters. Essentially, "experts appear to be at a greater advantage for improving and sustaining high levels of skill and motivation because their specific goals and strategies enable them to focus on the essential form components" (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2001, p.200). The use of the three phase model of self-regulation enabled to authors to better understand the cognitions and behaviours of the basketball players during practice sessions. Findings from Cleary and Zimmerman (2001) suggest that expert athletes display a higher quality of self-regulation during self-directed practice activities than non-experts or novices.

These results are in accordance with those found by Kitsantas and Zimmerman (1998) and Locke and Latham (1990), in that when individuals had set specific goals and chose form related strategies, processes related to performance and motivation increased.

Medicine

Researchers in medicine use a variety of ways to study expertise. Clinical reasoning in medicine refers to the cognitive processes that are necessary to evaluate and manage a patient's medical problems. Such cognitive processes include problem solving strategies. One strategy is forward versus backward reasoning. Backward reasoning is used mainly when the data is rich enough on its own to reach a solution. It is a method of predicting the outcome of a hypothesis based on the premise that the data will prove or disprove the hypothesis. This reasoning has been used with competing hypotheses. Forward reasoning is the use of data to substantiate hypotheses. It is used when possessed knowledge is relevant to solving the problem. Research has shown that forward reasoning is fast and efficient (Patel & Groen, 1991).

Models of problem solving in medicine have been used to assess the cognitive processes of the expert-novice differences. The clinical reasoning approach (sometimes referred to as the scientific approach) draws on the physician's ability to utilise cognitive processes in the development of a hypothesis. Formulation of hypotheses and subsequent data analysis are used by scientists and physicians in the course of reasoning and problem-solving. According to Elstein (2000) however, "it is likely that experienced physicians use a hypothetico-deductive strategy only with

difficult cases and that clinical reasoning is more a matter of pattern recognition or direct automatic retrieval" (p. 730). The Hypothetico-Deductive Model is characterised by the generation of competing hypotheses from initial patient cues and collection of data to confirm or refute each hypothesis. If the clinician is unable to formulate a correct hypothesis, then he or she continues with hypothesis generation and testing. The psychological mechanisms that are behind this process remain largely unknown (Elstein, 2000).

Early diagnostic hypotheses guide data gathering (Barrows, Norman, Nuefield & Feightner, 1982; Lesgold, Rubinson, Feltovich, Glaser, Klopfer & Wang, 1988) in such a way that further processes tend to eliminate early diagnoses rather than add new ones. Consequently the problem of how early hypotheses are selected is crucial in medical reasoning. Acquisition of expertise in medical diagnosis is suggested to be related to an individual's ability to select appropriate information and hypotheses (Custers, Boshuizen, & Schmidt, 1996).

In a study conducted by Raufaste, Eyrolle and Marine (1998) the aim was to investigate how an expert learns to detect pertinent data and hypotheses, which the authors call pertinence generation. The study aimed to look at how relevancy of information identified by experts increases with experience and asked how it is created by the expert's mental processes. Participants consisted of four groups. The first group was made up of four super experts who had practiced radiology for at least 13 years after residency, and were teachers and researchers. The second group, the basic experts, consisted of four experts who had practiced radiology for at least 6 years after residency. The third group were six intermediates who were third and fourth year residents. The fourth and final group consisted of eight 'novices' who were first and second year residents. Each physician was asked to examine two cases. For each case subjects were asked to produce a diagnosis from a chest x-ray. The x-rays were the only source of information provided to the subjects. Participants were asked to 'think aloud' and their verbalisations were recorded. The x-ray was then taken away from the participants who were then asked to draw a diagram of what they had seen, labelling everything they could remember. In the third step, the physicians were presented with the x-ray again, and also a playback of their recorded think aloud session, and asked to explain what had been said in the first step. Results from Raufaste et al.'s (1998) study suggested that subjects make more inferences as they gain more experience. A significant effect was found for the integration of

knowledge and relevancy of information. Experience, however, was found to have minimal effect on overall accuracy, chiefly because 'basic' experts did not detect every critical feature; however, this was not the case for super experts. Content richness of verbalisations was found to be more highly correlated with accuracy than with pertinence, though differences were seen in the processing of data. Residents were found to have more difficulty than experts differentiating between correct diagnosis and ruling out incorrect diagnosis, and super experts were found to use a specific kind of deliberate reasoning. The authors interpret their results in terms of a descriptive model that stipulates how relevant diagnostic hypotheses are "triggered and integrated into a representation" (Raufaste et al., 1998, p. 17). Through the model they also explain how in typical cases, performance is enhanced by experience. Super experts are able to explore all the diagnostic possibilities, whereas basic experts tend to limit their inferences to typical diagnoses. The authors note the importance of this work by identifying the ability of super experts to find diagnostic solutions for typical cases and well as atypical cases.

Another way of looking at expertise in the medical literature is to compare the performances of students at various levels of training. In the results of such studies it has been easy to see marked differences in performance from 1st year students through to 4th year and interns. Research outcomes have also shown that 4th year and interns outperformed practicing clinicians on clinical reasoning examinations. This phenomenon has been coined the *intermediate effect* (Ericsson, 2005; Patel & Groen, 1991; Patel & Ramoni, 1997; Schmidt & Boschuizen, 1993a, b). The *intermediate effect* is where students/ interns demonstrate greater ability to accurately diagnose or identify patient symptoms than their expert counterparts. Research has shown that quite often there are declines in performances on certain measures by experienced clinicians. Several hypotheses can be generated to explain this phenomenon. It is possible that students possess their most extensive body of formal knowledge at graduation, that they perform better on tests due to the testing culture embodied in student life, or that it is a point in their life where they are most motivated to perform at high levels (Patel & Ramoni, 1997).

In the medical expertise arena, Patel and Groen (1991) believe that the best way to understand the development from novice to expert is by a three-stage process. In the first stage there is the development of adequate knowledge representations. The second stage involves distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information

in a problem, with the third stage being the ability to identify and apply the relevant information in an effective and efficient manner.

Schmidt, Norman, and Boshuizen (1990) suggest that knowledge representation in medical reasoning has four stages of development. Medical students begin to develop complex casual networks that explain the causes and consequences of disease in relation to underlying pathophysiological processes. When asked to recall information students relay everything they know about the topic as an accumulation of isolated pieces of information (Schmidt et al., 1990). The second phase of medical training is characterised by the continued substantial and repeated application of acquired knowledge, and exposure to patient problems, which start to become organised into models that explain signs and symptoms and allocate diagnostic labels. These models begin to take form as the student is exposed to real patients, giving them an opportunity to reason about a case by relating symptoms to the relevant casual networks. Multiple hypotheses are generated and there is the ability to recognise particular findings as relevant but the inability to account for them (Patel & Ramoni, 1997). As more cases are presented, the student begins to take short cuts in their reasoning. Instead of activating all the possibly relevant knowledge possessed, only that which is pertinent to the patient will be retrieved.

In the third phase of medical reasoning the emergence of illness scripts is evident as the collapsing of categories continues to take place with continued patient contact (Schmidt et al., 1990). In the final year of medical school students show clear knowledge of clinical rules and the ability to store patient encounters as instance scripts (Schmidt et al., 1990). Illness scripts emerge as a result of extended practice through exposure to patients. Schmidt et al. believe that it is the memories of previous patients that aid in the formation of diagnosis in new cases. A script is an acquired network of relevant knowledge and experience that directs the selection, interpretation, and memorisation of that new information.

In a study based on the theory of illness scripts, Rikers, Winkel, Loyens, and Schmidt (2003) predicted that sub-experts and students would rely on more generic illness scripts to approach a problem as a result of their deficient specific expertise, and would also spend more time establishing significant clinical case representations. As a result their diagnoses would be less accurate and less complete than that of expert physicians. The authors also predicted that sub-experts and students would show a different focus when processing clinical cases than the experts who primarily

focus on contextual information such as a patient's history and physical examination (Hobus, 1994) (as cited in Rikers et al., 2003). Sub-experts and students would divide their attention equally among all the case components and would be highlighted by their lack of specific case component recall (Patel, Arocha, & Kaufman, 1994).

The participants were 8 advanced medical students and 16 senior physicians. The physicians consisted of 8 cardiologists (the experts in the study) and 8 pulmonologists (the sub-experts).The subjects were required to diagnose and recall two clinical case descriptions within the cardiology domain. The case descriptions were divided into four components (patient's history, physical examination, laboratory data, and additional findings –chest x-ray, ECG etc.) that were presented on a computer screen. The participants were given two descriptions of the cardiology cases, after which, they were ask to recall and to provide an accurate diagnosis. The cases were presented on four consecutive computer screens, each containing one component of information. New information was presented when subjects pressed the mouse button. Reading times were recorded after the mouse had been pressed. When the participants had read a complete case they were asked to write down everything they remembered and to provide a diagnosis. The results of the study showed that experts were more accurate in their diagnosis than sub-experts and students and that there was a gradual increase in accuracy as a function of expertise. The total number of propositions recalled revealed no significant differences between levels of expertise although students remembered more about a patient's history and less about additional findings than the other two groups. All of the participants recalled more about the patient's history and physical examination than they did about other information. Additional results showed that the main difference between experts and sub-experts was in speed and accuracy of processing a clinical case. The authors also noted the importance of contextual information for sub-experts and advanced medical students. All groups considered the patient's history and physical examination to be the most important information to focus on, however it was only experts that had the "specific expertise to understand most of the signs and symptoms displayed in these components and to link this information to the main diagnosis" (Rikers et al. 2003, p. 222).

The script model offers explanations of both content and structure within a physician's knowledge construct. In medicine, when a physician sees a patient,

symptoms, signs, and details from the patient's environment are perceived and activate networks of knowledge containing those features and their relationship to illnesses.

Methodological Concerns

The largest methodological concern regarding all of the above studies is the fact that they vary so widely from domain to domain. It has been shown that although there are a set of general characteristics that can be derived from the research, the methodology applied to those areas is not standardised. Each domain has its own ideas and competing theories about how to best extrapolate the necessary data to either prove or disprove hypotheses.

The use of the verbal reports of subjects thinking aloud has been employed by many prominent researchers either while subjects are solving a problem or retrospectively constructing representations of the problem-solving process (Elstein, 2000). Considering that a great deal of cognitive processing occurs unconsciously, a degree of caution is needed on the part of the researchers when drawing conclusions about the nature of expertise. Both Schmidt et al. (1990) and Norman (1985) agree that experience is idiosyncratic and that verbal reports are hard to reproduce. It is not surprising that at times research has shown that it is difficult to achieve consensus amongst experts. An additional concern with the 'think aloud' methodology is the requirement that knowledge is expressed in a manner dictated by the experimenter, possibly resulting in findings that did not in fact reflect the actual cognitive processing or organisation of specialist knowledge within experts (Proctor & Dutta, 1995).

Overall, however, while laboratory studies of skill acquisition attempt to control the conditions of training by isolating the effects of independent variables to determine factors which influence the acquisition, retention, and transfer of skill, it must be remembered that for many expertise studies subjects have previously acquired the necessary training and experience prior to the investigation of how expertise was developed and maintained. As such, the reliance on self reports (though they can also provide substantial data) to determine changes in the processing of information and the optimal conditions under which expertise is acquired continues to be a methodological concern.

General Principles of Expertise

Expertise research has covered a vast array of disciplines and although specific methodologies used to study experts vary, there are similarities concerning the general features typifying expertise and expert performance across the different domains of research. The accumulation expertise literature informs us that across a variety of domains, expertise is measured according to task criteria within the studied domain to account for the exceptional ability of those that excel in their chosen field. General characteristics of expertise widely accepted are:

1. Experts perceive complex, meaningful patterns in their domain. Experts have knowledge structures which enable them to encode information into large meaningful chunks. For example, in x-ray films experts can detect and recognise patterns and cue configurations that novices cannot (Lesgold et al., 1988).

2. Experts represent problems at a deeper, more principled level than novices (Chi, Feltovich, & Glaser, 1981).

3. Experts are faster and more accurate (Klein, 1993) than novices at solving problems and generating the best solution within their own domain. Hardin (2003) gives two reasons for this: experts display automated skills applicable to the problem, and the database from which they receive this information is organised.

4. Experts, due to their superior organisation of knowledge, have excellent short-term and long-term retention for domain specific information.

5. Experts spend more problem solving time examining and evaluating a problem before beginning work on it.

6. Experts are better able to recognise their own mistakes or limitations and therefore take appropriate measures to correct their performance.

Expertise and Situation Awareness

Much of this chapter has focused on the skilled performance and acquisition of expertise. In addition to aspects of performance, decision-making, and problem-solving, Situation Awareness (SA) forms a critical aspect of expertise in most domains. SA develops alongside more observable features such as physical

performance. It is often considered implicit in expertise research, and frequently taken for granted in everyday activities.

In sports, a high level of SA allows individuals to understand what is happening in a game and to anticipate the movement of team mates, opponents, and/or the ball. For example in football (soccer), a high level of SA involves a player, when attacking in the opposition half of the field, anticipating when a cross or a pass is delivered, and knowing the position of opponents so as to remain in an 'on-side' position. Within this domain a high level of SA is often referred to as a player's ability to 'read the game'. In other domains, such as military operations and aviation, including air traffic control, SA plays and even more important role, as human life is at stake. Keeping track of many factors which can change quickly and interact in complex ways depends on a high level of SA, and in turn effective performance. A general definition of SA describes it as:

> The perception of the elements in the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning and the projection of their status in the near future. (Endsley, 1988; 2006, p. 634).

Endsley (2006) identifies three components constituting levels which are central to SA: perception, comprehension, and projection. The first level of SA is the perception of relevant information in the environment. This information may be perceived through visual, auditory, or tactile sensory organs, or via other means of information extraction. Without the perception of important information the odds of forming an incorrect assessment of the situation are increased. While accurate perception of situational cues is important, it is equally important for individuals to understand the meaning and significance of what they have perceived. Thus, comprehension of relevant information encompasses how an individual combines, interprets, stores, and retains information, which is then processed in relation to the relevance associated with the individual's goals. At the highest level of SA is the ability to predict future situation events. Forecasting future events, situations, and their implications allows for effective decision making, most notably seen in experts (Endsley, 2006).

Summary

Experts were originally thought to have superior general powers of speed, memory, and intelligence. However, empirical research on expertise and expert performance has revealed that no such general superiority exists and instead, it was discovered that experts demonstrate domain specific superiority (Ericsson, 2000). For example, chess experts' superior memory was confined to regular chess positions and did not generalise to other domains (Ericsson, 2000). It was also found that IQ was not able to distinguish experts from non-experts among chess players (Doll & Mayer, 1987), or among successful and creative artists (Taylor, 1975). In Ericsson and Lehmann's (1996) review it was found that: (1) measures of basic or general capacities do not predict success in a domain; (2) experts' superior performance is domain specific and does not cross to other domains; (3) differences between experts and non-skilled or non-experts' performance nearly always reflects attributes acquired as a result of an expert's amount or length of training.

The research on expertise and expert performance covered a variety of domains. The overall outcome of research within the expertise arena has been a set of general characteristics of expertise which can be applied and account for outstanding skills and abilities seen in workplaces and everyday pro-social behaviours and activities. The next chapter discusses principles of expertise applied anti-social behaviours and activities with criminal populations and individuals working with criminals under study.

Chapter Three: Criminal Expertise

Chapter one provided an initial outline of effective self-regulation and goal management, strategy selection, and decision making skills of child sexual offenders. As explained in Chapter Two the term 'expert' is used to describe individuals who have attained their superior performance by instruction or extended practice often with the use of comparing one sample set to another in a particular domain, for example, highly skilled performers in sports, such as soccer and basketball, the arts, such as music and painting, and games, such as chess and bridge. Concepts derived from research discussed in the previous two chapters indicate that expertise research and child sexual offending research potentially have more in common than previously thought. This chapter will discuss the recent application of the expertise framework to criminal populations.

The Rational Choice Perspective, as discussed in Chapter One, argued that offenders make conscious choices to commit offences designed to benefit them in some way. Offenders also have a specialised form of knowledge about the most effective way to commit crime which is a product of personal histories and criminal experience. Offenders have goals (though they may be short sighted) based on cost/ benefit analysis for potential rewards and success, and engage in criminal activities on this basis rather than as a result of a loss of control or poor coping skills. This chapter will explore research conducted on the decision making and problem solving of offenders which has largely come from the perspective of Rational Choice theory in criminology.

In addition to decision-making research, previous studies and discussions have questioned whether criminals are specialists, generalists, or both: does a rapist only engage in sexual offences against women or does he commit a broader range of criminal offences, such as burglary, traffic offences, or distribution of illegal substances? Research directed at career criminals has found that criminals have a general propensity towards all types of crime with sexual offenders more likely to be convicted for a non-sexual offence than convicted for a sexual offence both before and after receiving a conviction for a sexual offence (Broadhurst & Maller, 1992; Hanson & Bussiere, 1998; Smallbone & Wortley, 2004; Soothill, Francis, Sanderson, & Ackerley, 2000). It may be equally or more appropriate to determine the decision making process and goal structures of offenders to determine the extent of individuals' criminal knowledge and target selection in the commission of a crime.

To this end, this chapter will not address the generalist versus specialist discussion but will concentrate instead in the areas of decision-making, problem-solving, and criminal expertise within specific crimes.

Domains of criminal expertise

There are few criminal domains in which research on knowledge structure, decision-making, and skill acquisition principles of expertise have been conducted. The areas of burglary, car crime, violent offending and sexual offending will be discussed in this chapter alongside their relationship with principles identified in expert performance.

Burglary

Wright, Logie, and Decker (1995) set out to investigate the decision-making of burglars' target selection in residential burglary. The study examined both target selection and memory recognition in active burglars. The experimental group consisted of 47 active residential burglars from St. Louis, USA, heavily involved in burglary. The mean number of break-ins was 148 per participant with a median of 50. The mean and median years of experience for the group was 11 years (see Wright, Decker, Redfern, and Smith, 1992; or Wright and Decker, 1994, for details of subject recruitment and participation). The control group consisted of 34 non-offending participants comparable to the experimental group with respect to age, sex and race who were recruited from two non-profit centres in the same city. A series of photographs were taken from 20 houses located in a suburban neighbourhood in St. Louis. The houses were photographed in their original state and then again with features added to the property. Those features were anything from an alarm box, a 'beware of dog' sign, to a change in the mailbox or decoration on the front door. The photographs were randomly assigned to one of two sets, with the corresponding photograph (either with or without the added feature) assigned to the opposite set. Each of the subjects was interviewed separately, using a questionnaire to establish their offending history. The subjects were then given the target selection task where half of the subjects were shown cards from set one, and the other half viewed cards from set two. The participants were asked if the houses would be attractive to burglars based on the information shown in the photograph. A checklist was then readout, consisting of 40 physical characteristics of houses, and the participants were

asked what on the checklist would make a house more attractive, less attractive or would make no difference to a burglar. Finally participants were given the second set of photographs and asked to indicate if the photographs were identical to the ones previously shown.

The findings revealed that active burglars use a variety of environmental cues to directly inform their decision, whereas control subjects did not. Furthermore, the burglars also showed better memory recognition for such cues compared to the control group of non-offenders. From their results Wright et al. (1995) concluded that burglars possess and use specialist knowledge when selecting and recalling targets and that this knowledge is based upon experience. The authors argue that understanding the type of environmental cues used by burglars can be helpful in designing crime prevention strategies.

In a more recent study, conducted in the Republic of Ireland, Nee and Taylor (2000) observed how combinations of cues related to property vulnerability to burglary interacted. Slides of five detached houses were constructed, four of which existed together naturally, and a fifth was made to appear as the next one in a row of houses. Each had a front garden overlooked by another row of houses on the opposite side of the road. They also had large back yards that opened out onto a quiet lane. The houses varied in terms of décor, design and overall appearance. The participant sample was made up of 15 burglars drawn from a local prison and control sample from a relatively affluent neighbourhood or university. Houses were labelled A, B, C, D, and E. Burglars responded positively and negatively to each of the houses in turn. House E was rated by two-thirds of burglars as 'highly likely' or 'definite burglary', reasons being ease of entry and exit position and decreased surveillability by neighbours as it was situated at the end of the row and set back slightly from the other houses. The study also showed that the control group utilised many more slides than offenders when arriving at their decision about which houses burglars would target. The results of Nee and Taylor's study appear to indicate that there are no single set of cues which can be identified as central to target selection. Responses did however demonstrate how position, cover, security or lack of any of these as well as relative wealth contribute to a burglars' target selection. Burglars have shown to select targets in relation to the criminogenic environment with no one particular cue being any more important than another. The research also demonstrated that in

comparison to the householder, the burglar behaves in an expert and routine based way, based on prior learning (Nee & Taylor, 2000).

Car crime

In research published by Santtila, Korpela, and Häkkänen (2004), expertise of police officers in linking a series of car crimes was examined. The study was carried out to examine the problem that exists in solving car crime whereby the amount of information received by police investigators sometimes exceeds their capacity to be able to link a series of car crimes to a particular offender. Santtila et al. (2004) proposed that experienced car crime investigators would be expected to have domain-specific knowledge regarding features of the offence that would be useful to link the offences together (e.g., method of breaking into the vehicle), whereas all experienced investigators would have domain-general knowledge regarding general features of criminal behaviour (e.g., distances between crimes committed by the same person tend to be low) that may aid in linking car crime.

It was thought that domain-specific knowledge, domain-general knowledge, and general problem-solving skills could be distinguished by using groups of experienced car crime investigators (n=9), experienced investigators of other types of crimes (n=9), inexperienced investigators/ novices (n=7), and laypersons/naïve participants (n=8). The authors hypothesised that experienced car crime investigators (experience being determined by the number of car crime cases worked on per month) would be more accurate in linking a car crime series than the other groups. It was also expected that experienced investigators of other types of crime as well as inexperienced investigators/ novices would be better at linking a series than novices. It was predicted that use of time, evaluation of own performance and level of focusing would show results consistent with level of experience (e.g., experienced car crime investigators would be faster at linking a series etc). Crime reports concerning thefts or taking a vehicle without permission were used. Participants were given a total of 30 cases split into two parts to make the material more manageable. Each of the 15 cases consisted of 3 separate incidents per series, totalling 5 series per group. Participants were to try to link the thefts committed by the same person into a series. The participants were instructed to 'think aloud' while trying to link the cases. After the first group of cases a semi-structured interview was conducted in which the participants were asked for justifications for their choices of linked cases. They were

also asked to report on their own performance and on their perceived level of difficulty for each of the series. The next 15 cases in the task were presented followed by a semi-structured interview in the same format.

The results of the study indicated that experienced car crime investigators were initially more accurate at linking a crime series, and further statistical analysis showed that naïve/inexperienced participants were less accurate in linking a car crime series. Santtila et al. (2004) interpret this finding in light of Patel and Groen's (1991) findings (discussed earlier), as evidence that expertise in linking car crime has a domain-general component. There were also no differences between the groups when testing for speed, and experienced car crime investigators did not appear to be any faster than any of the other groups when arriving at their decisions. During analysis of the 'think aloud' variables, it was found that experienced car crime investigators reported less features than members of other groups. This finding suggests that experienced car crime investigators used schemas based on previous experience and knowledge selecting relevant information in the research task. Though there were problems with the present study with sample size, the results suggest that experience does lead to differences in linking effectiveness.

Violent offenders as experts

Topalli's (2005) work with violent offenders attempts to distinguish between perceptual skills and procedural skills of offenders' decision making and expertise. Topalli understands criminal expertise as the combination of two factors: perceptual skills, which are those cues used in assessing a crime scene, and procedural skills, which reflect knowledge and decisions of how to carry out a crime. Topalli criticises studies on offence related expertise for not distinguishing between these two factors when conducting research on offenders' cognitive mechanisms. Although the previously mentioned studies in this chapter lack a social component (i.e., non-confrontational crimes such as residential burglary), Topalli (2005) argues that it is necessary to include social inferences and attributions (which are based on perception, see Berkowitz & Troccoli, 1990) when studying interpersonal crime such as robbery, assault, rape and murder. Perception of social interactional cues is argued to be fundamental to an offender's decision to commit a crime as well as calculation of the perceived outcome.

Topalli (2005) attempted to address the limitations of previous research by exposing active violent offenders (drug dealers, robbers and carjackers recruited off the streets of St Louis, USA) and non-offenders to ambiguous videotaped social stimuli within a laboratory setting to measure the perceptions and judgements of his research population. Specifically, three groups of participants (n=44) were recruited for the study: active offenders, demographic controls (participants living within the same or similar neighbourhoods as offenders but with no participation in criminal activities), and first year undergraduate college students from the University of Missouri- St Louis. Participants viewed three Point Light Display (PLD) segments. The segments portrayed two males of the same approximate height, weight, and age filmed wearing dark clothing against a black backdrop with reflective patches on ankles, knees, hips, elbows, and shoulders. Contrasting was used during editing so that only the reflective patches were visible in the final segments used in the experiment. Three segments were created for the purpose of study with actor A (in all three segments) approaching actor B from the front and tapping him on the shoulder with the interaction lasting between 5 and 7 seconds. The manipulated condition in each of the three segments was the pace at which actor A approached actor B - slow, medium, or fast paced. Participants were asked to respond verbally to questions designed to gauge their perception of what was happening in each of the three segments, and once participants identified a social interaction had taken place, were asked to respond to the nature or interpretation of that interaction (see Topalli, 2005 for detailed methodology).

The results of the data show a clear distinction between the three groups. Offenders' descriptions of both the slow and medium paced segments often rated the interaction as aggressive, threatening and unfriendly, and descriptions of the fast paced were often rated non-threatening or affectionate. College students in contrast, rated segments with actor A walking slow or medium paced as non-threatening, and considered actor A's fast pace as hostile. Participants in the demographic control group agreed with both offenders and students. Demographic controls agreed with students that the interaction when actor A was walking slowly was considered non-threatening and in fast paced segment was considered hostile. However, demographic controls agreed with offenders on the medium paced segments, perceiving the interaction as hostile or potentially hostile. Interestingly, Topalli explains the phenomenon of the demographic control group as a reflection of the

sociocultural environmental similarities of the offender sample. While demographic controls are not participants in criminal activity they do however share crime-specific perceptual tendencies as a result of extreme ongoing violence and victimisation within their neighbourhoods.

Topalli (2005) concluded that offenders and non-offenders differ in their perceptions of PLD's along dimensions related to crime, hostility and physical confrontation. Procedural and perceptual skills are grounded in environmental and behavioural experience, providing information for offenders on how to commit a crime as well as which criminal situations to target and under what circumstances. Topalli's research supports and extends the work conducted by Wright and colleagues (Wright & Logie, 1998; Wright & Decker, 1997; Wright et al., 1995; Decker, Wright, & Logie, 1993) on criminal expertise and specialised offending knowledge by viewing the notion of expertise as a multi-faceted concept in which differences in perception may be considered indicative of differences in expertise.

Expertise in child sexual offending

A sexual offence committed against a child is not a phenomenon that is understood. Causal theories attempting to explain this phenomenon have attributed deficiencies to these individuals such as: intimacy deficits, low self-esteem, empathy deficits, and distorted beliefs, in addition to deviant sexual preference. Deficit models widely used in treatment are based on the premise that child sexual offenders are unable to meet their needs in more pro-social ways (i.e., maintaining relationships with adults). While it is necessary to examine areas in which offenders are lacking in order to provide them with effective coping mechanisms, it has been suggest by Ward (1999) that it might be helpful to also understand areas of competence and skill which facilitate sexual activities.

Though no empirical research has been conducted linking child sexual offenders with expertise to date, the proposition has been put forward by Tony Ward (1999) that child sexual offenders with a long history of offending with many victims, especially preferential child sexual offenders, will possess knowledge structures related to their offending which may be qualitatively different from those late-onset offenders with relatively few victims. Ward proposed that an element of competency or expertise is exhibited by some child sexual offenders (e.g., their ability to effectively manipulate children), and that by looking for competencies

related to offending behaviour it may be possible to identify factors which would be helpful in formulating a more accurate risk assessment and ultimately would have important treatment implications.

The theoretical position from which Ward (1999) draws his suggestion is arguably underpinned by work resulting from the Offence Process Model and Self-Regulation Model described in Chapter One (in addition to other published works). As stated earlier, the approach-explicit pathway in the SRM portrays the individual following this pathway as a careful planner when executing offences with goals specifically designed to successfully commit a sexual offence and the ability to effectively regulate his affective state. It is thought by Ward (1999) that whatever offenders learn in a particular offence episode will be processed according to existing implicit schemas, influencing the way in which life events and future offence possibilities are interpreted with self-regulation styles also affecting how such life events are appraised and managed.

Specifically it is theorised that knowledge is structured around behavioural scripts (offence scripts) which aid in the automation of processing information and associated decisions. Information stored about past victims and offences may be stored as interconnected scripts which are readily available in the facilitation of strategy selection for a current offence. Offence scripts contain instructions about how to perform certain actions, in what order, and potentially what the likely outcome of such actions would be. For example, how to select and groom victims, how to plan and carry out an offence, how to ensure victim compliance and what to do in the face of resistance, including how to avoid being detected. The ability of some offenders to avoid detection over many years with numerous victims is suggested to be the result of developed offending skills such as precautions taken within offences (location choice), deceiving people close to them, as well as the capacity to regulate their emotional state giving the appearance of leading a seemingly normal life.

It is further suggested in Ward's theory that exposure to pornography, victim variation, and social networks with other offenders (i.e., paedophile groups) may facilitate the development of rich knowledge structures and further engrain offence-supportive core beliefs. Frequent masturbation to deviant sexual fantasies could arguably provide a form of practice based on mental rehearsal outlined by the expertise and expert performance literature. The more individuals mentally rehearse

and think about performing offences the greater likelihood of behaviours being actioned (Taylor & Pham, 1996).

The expertise literature emphasises the importance of knowledge and skill acquisition beginning at an early age (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). The same could be said for child sexual offenders as many individuals have offence histories beginning during adolescence (Abel, Mittleman, & Becker, 1985). The psychological mechanisms thought by Ward to be related to the acquisition of expertise and offence skills are "covert modelling and rehearsal (e.g., in the form of sexual fantasies), observational learning (via other offenders), symbolic modelling (e.g., cultural products such as film, literature or pornography), and finally through an offender's own experience of early sexual or physical abuse" (Ward, 1999, p. 302).

Ward summarises his theoretical suggestions by identifying the type of skills experienced sexual offenders would be thought to exhibit enhanced ability

> …at detecting emotional vulnerability in potential victims; be able to respond appropriately to this perceived vulnerability (e.g., reassure or threaten, depending on the particular offender's issues and accompanying deficits); have developed risk appraisal skills that enable them to avoid detection; possess the capacity to befriend, groom, or disarm victims; be able to lead a seemingly normal life while offending; be able to deceive authorities, friends, and family; possess effective affect regulation skills (be able to control negative emotions before, during, and following an offence); and finally, have better problem solving and planning kills in the sexual offending domain (although they may not generalise to other areas of their lives) (p.302).

Sexual offender experts are therefore likely to make quicker, more intuitive decisions and are more likely to be highly skilled at avoiding detection as a function of experience. Novice sexual offenders by comparison are hypothesised by Ward (1999) to have shorter sexual offending histories with a distinct lack of case examples and actual memories. This implies that their knowledge structures related to child sexual offending will be less integrated, resulting in less successful planning, grooming and victim evaluations, which may ultimately lead to their apprehension.

In addition to the likely skills exhibited (or not) by offenders, Ward speculates that sexual offenders may escalate the frequency and severity of offending over time (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990), and that the escalation of offending may be the result of the reformulation of goals and the tasks undertaken to achieve them.

Ward's conceptualisation of sexual offenders as 'experts' ranging down to 'novices' is intuitively appealing and concurs with studies conducted in the criminology field. What Ward does not stipulate (as empirical studies have not been conducted) are the actual salient features of domain specific knowledge and how those features are structured to facilitate offending. What Ward does do however, is provide clues to future researchers as to what the outcome of those features may look like.

Summary

The small, but growing, body of research conducted thus far (Carrol & Weaver, 1986; Decker et al., 1993; Hochstetler, 2002; Nee & Meenaghan, 2006; Topalli, 2005; Wright et al., 1995; Wright & Logie, 1998) indicate that offenders perceive stimuli within the context of their crimes differently to non-offenders and such differences are based on specialised knowledge related to their domain of offending. In particular, in child sexual offending domain, Ward (1999) suggests that offenders exhibit a range of competencies in their ability to successfully plan, carry out an offence, overcome the victim's protests, avoid detection, and maintain their offending over a number of years.

Research conducted on expert performance, criminal expertise and Ward's (1999) theory of competency and expertise provides the impetus for the research questions addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Rationale and Research Questions

Rationale

To recap the main ideas from previous chapters, limitations of the Relapse Prevention Model (i.e., offenders following a single pathway to reoffending, and stress on deficiencies of offenders to meet their needs in more socially acceptable ways) prompted Ward and colleagues (through their own experience working with sexual offenders) to develop the Offence Process Model (1995) and finally the Self-Regulation Model of the offence and relapse process (Ward & Hudson, 1998 a, b). As a result of this theoretical and empirical work, they identified four pathways to offending, with two approach and two avoidant goals, representing an individual's trajectory towards committing a sexual offence. The two approach goals offer interesting potential for further study, and prompted further discussion as to the nature of these individuals' knowledge structure. On closer examination Ward (1999) postulated that those following approach pathways, and in particular approach-explicit pathways, contain features not uncommon to those found in the expertise literature. Interestingly, approach pathways described offenders as planners, strategists, and effective decision-makers with goals aimed at the commission of a sexual offence. These individuals purposely and with effort integrate into their routines behaviours and actions to ready themselves for an offence.

Drawing from characteristics of expertise and expert performance the current research explores the possibility of conceptualising some child sexual offenders as 'expert' decision-makers and problem-solvers. The area of chess for example provides a good theoretical and methodological basis from which to show the accumulation of knowledge structures (i.e., chunking) and the acquisition of proficiency in child sex offenders.

In the research on expert performance in sport there are studies indicating special skills that are displayed by the expert individual. Experts exhibit goal-oriented behaviour and are aware of techniques and strategies to improve their performance, and any failure in their performance can be specifically pinpointed. In the medical reasoning research specific attention is drawn to the medical expert's use of illness scripts as a method of reaching the correct diagnosis.

The significance of Baker et al's. (2003) research and their findings that participation in competitive games is rated as the most helpful form of developing perceptual and decision making skills, offers the suggestion that the act of

committing a child sexual offence and the grooming process leading to it may be sufficient in the development of skills required to engage in child molestation. Due to the covert nature of sexual offending, it could be argued that fantasy and masturbation may be considered additional practice outside of victim contact, with activities performed within actual offences deemed the largest contributing factor towards skill acquisition.

From work conducted on criminal expertise and decision making, Wright and Decker (1994) found that burglars possess rational and habit driven processes (cognitive scripts) which enable them to successfully navigate their way around the inside of a property with minimal risk and maximum gain. Nee and Meenaghan (2006) also discovered that burglars used fixed patterns of behaviour based on prior learning of what had successfully worked in the past. Moreover, Nee and Meenaghan (2006) suggested that the cognitive mechanisms used by experienced burglars were similar to characteristics displayed by experts in other domains: the ability to make instantaneous decisions, unconsciously recognise cues, make quick systematic searches, and have the ability to multi-task (Nee, in press).

At present there is only the theoretical assumption (Ward, 1999) that sexual offenders learn and continue to evolve during their careers to a degree of automaticity only seen in experts. The purpose of the current research is to investigate the possibility that sexual offenders have deeply entrenched procedural and structural knowledge, which is evident in an individual's level of competency in continuing to successfully offend against children.

Therefore the major aim of the present study is to explore the possibility of using characteristics of expertise research as a guiding theoretical construct, in the hope of discovering the presence and depth of proficiency/competency in child sex offenders. Recent literature has begun to bridge cognitive and criminal psychology with script theory and decision making. However, in depth empirical research into sexual offenders as goal setters and strategists in this field has largely been untouched. In particular, the aim of the current study is to investigate whether there are 'expert' offenders within the child sexual offending domain who demonstrate high levels of competency in grooming techniques, target selection, interpretation and evaluation of environmental cues, and possess extensive offence scripts. Research on sex offenders suggests that they may possess knowledge structures

which contain information relative to the facilitation of problem solving and decision-making during the offence process, in addition to levels of automaticity previously seen in experts across a variety of domains.

Research Questions

Both the expertise literature and work conducted by Ward (1999) aided in the overall conceptualisation of the current research (along with several other key areas of interest to the researcher) as a way of focusing the topic of study for the following research questions:

1. What are the key cognitive, behavioural, contextual and affective components involved in the commission of a sexual offence against a child? In an effort to identify key components the aim of the research was to construct a descriptive competency based model of child sexual offenders.

2. What factors are salient to knowledge and skill acquisition of child sexual offenders and are those factors a function of experience? By using key characteristics derived from the expertise and expert performance literature it is hypothesised that specific skills and knowledge related to sexual offending can be identified. In addition, within this research question the current study also seeks to investigate whether child sexual offenders draw offence related scripts from their knowledge structures as identified in the SRM and modus operandi studies. Further, what role does deviant sexual fantasy play within script structure and mental rehearsal and simulation?

3. Do child sexual offenders display a variation of skills and knowledge as a function of their experience? This question targets participants' offending over time and across offences. The aim is to investigate whether child sexual offenders escalate in severity and frequency of offending over time, and if so, is this due to them acquiring and refining more complex skills and strategies? Embedded within this research question it was hoped that the research would be able to examine whether skills and techniques utilised by child sexual offenders (i.e., grooming strategies, victim management) may become automated with practice and/or experience.

4. What roles do affect regulation and self-monitoring skills play in the maintenance of offending and does this enable child sexual offenders to appear to lead seemingly normal lives?

Chapter Five: Method

Ethical Considerations and Permissions

Victoria University of Wellington School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee (SOPHEC) approval was sought and gained prior to commencing data collection. Similarly, approval was also sought and gained from the New Zealand Department of Corrections to facilitate entry into special treatment units and to recruit male child sexual offenders into the participant sample.

Participants

A total of 51 male child sexual offenders consented to participate in the current study. Of those, one consented and then withdrew before the interview was conducted due to a family bereavement. Three interviews were discarded due to poor/damaged quality of the digital recording of the interview, which meant that the principal researcher was unable to transcribe the interview successfully.

A total of 47 male child sexual offenders successfully participated in the current study. Twenty-eight of the participants were child sexual offenders incarcerated and engaged in a treatment programme at Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit, Auckland Prison, Auckland. Three of the participants were incarcerated in medium security at Auckland Prison after having successfully graduated from the treatment programme, Te Piriti. Sixteen participants were incarcerated and engaged in a treatment programme at Kia Marama Special Treatment Unit, Rolleston Prison, Christchurch. Of the 47 participants: 18 men had completed the rehabilitation programme, 14 men were on the programme at the time of interview, and 15 men were waiting to start their rehabilitation programme. At the time of taking part in this research all participants were serving a sentence for a child sexual offence.

Demographics

All demographic information was collected from offender files, records, interview data, and work completed as part of the rehabilitation programme. When discrepancies occurred between interview data and offender files and records, files and records were given priority.

Of the 47 participants, 30 identified as being of New Zealand European descent, 11 identified as being of New Zealand Maori descent, 1 identified as being of Pacific Island descent, 1 identified as being Canadian, 1 identified as being South

African, 1 participant identified as being of both New Zealand European and New Zealand Maori descent, 1 participant identified as being of both New Zealand European and Pacific Island descent, and 1 participant identified as being of both New Zealand Maori and of Pacific Island descent.

The age of the participants (n= 47) at the time of their current index offence ranged from 15 years to 76 years with an average age of 36 years (SD = 14.05). However, the age of participants at the time of their first sexual offence (for which they may or may not have been convicted) ranged from 8 years to 76 years with an average age of 29 years (SD = 15.67) .

With six of the participants receiving an indeterminate sentence of Preventive Detention, the average sentence length for the remaining participants (n=41) for their current index offence was 5 years and 6 months, with a minimum of 2 years and maximum of 12 years (analysis performed in months, SD = 35.43). Participants ranged in child sexual offence charges from 1 to 39 charges each, having an average of 7 charges and a total of 338 charges across the 47 participants (SD = 8.06). Participants also varied in non-sexual chargers and had a total of 582 charges for 161 different non-sexual offences.

Based on offence history information obtained from prison files, conviction records and interview data participants were classed as intrafamilial offenders, extrafamilial offenders, or committing both intrafamilial and extrafamilial offences. Intrafamilial offenders were those participants who offended against a child in their immediate or extended family, and extrafamilial offenders were those participants who committed an offence against a child who was not a family relative. In the current sample 13 were classed as intrafamilial, 17 were classed as extrafamilial, and 17 participants committed both intrafamilial and extrafamilial offences.

As two participants admitted having offended against a very large number of victims - between 70-100 victims each - over the course of their offending, their offending rates were not included in the total number of victims. Participants (n=45) abused a total of 202 victims with an average of 4.5 victims each over the course of their offending and a range of between 1 and 40 victims, SD = 7.5.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in this study, participants were required to be in the process of undertaking treatment, on a programme, or having recently completed

a treatment programme for sexual offences committed against persons under the age of 16. This was necessary as the researcher required access to the offence records of each participant prior to the participant's involvement in the study. Offence records were reviewed for several reasons. First, to provide the researcher with an understanding of the participant's offence prior to the interview so that the researcher could detect any falsified information given by the participant regarding offences. Second, to provide background information for the researcher that was not going to be covered by the interview. Lastly, offence records were reviewed to record demographic information about the offender and his offence histories.

Child sexual offenders within New Zealand's special treatment units were singled out, as after discussion with research supervisors TW & DP, it was agreed that men in the treatment programmes would be more responsive and more likely to disclose their offence(s) to the principal researcher. This was thought to be the case as the nature of the treatment programmes is voluntary, and while participants need not admit to offences of which they have been convicted, persistent denial of offending through the modules may result in discharge from treatment.

Department of Corrections Special Treatment Programmes

The Department of Corrections has four strategic themes, and one of those strategic themes aims to contribute to an overall reduction in the level of re-offending by providing programmes for rehabilitation and successful re-integration of offenders in the community. While New Zealand Department of Corrections has been recognised as implementing some of the most effective treatment for child sexual offenders in the world (Hanson, Gordon, Harris, Marques, Murphy, & Quinsey, 2002), there remains room for these programmes to increase their effectiveness. The Department of Corrections operates two child sexual offending special treatment units in New Zealand; Kia Marama and Te Piriti. The goal of the Department of Corrections for both Kia Marama and Te Piriti programmes is to reduce and avoid re-offending among men who have offended sexually against children.

Both treatment programmes are 60-bed, medium security, stand alone units operated by the Department of Corrections Psychological Service, exclusively for men who have committed sexual offences against children. Offenders may be referred by the Department of Corrections Psychological Service during their parole period or by psychologists in prison. They are assigned to a therapy group and each

group consists of 10 men who work through the treatment programme from start to finish. Participation in the programme is voluntary, and though they commit to finishing the programme, they are free to withdraw and refuse treatment at any time.

Both treatment units view sexual offending through a relapse prevention framework based on cognitive behavioural principles. In the first phase of the programme, the men work on developing a thorough understanding of their offending pattern. In the second phase, men are helped to gain knowledge and skills to deal with the problems linked to their offending. Therapy modules include: taking responsibility for offending, understanding the effects on victims, developing and understanding of their own and others' cultures, and preparing for release and understanding high risk situations leading to re-offending. Corrections Officers at both units receive ongoing training on how to create an environment which supports the therapy programme and encourages further development as a result of gains made during treatment. Offenders complete the treatment programme as near to their release date as possible with the hope that skills learnt and knowledge gained would best facilitate re-integration into the community. Every offender serves a parole period after release which ranges from a minimum of six months upwards. Graduates are usually required to attend monthly relapse prevention support groups facilitated by trained Probation Officers.

Kia Marama Special Treatment Unit

The Maori name Kia Marama means 'let there be light and insight'. Kia Marama was New Zealand's first specialist prison treatment programme for men who commit sexual offences against children and was opened in 1989. Located within Rolleston Prison, Rolleston, Christchurch, it is a structured programme based around three hours per day, three days per week for a total duration of approximately 33 weeks.

The effectiveness of the Kia Marama Special Treatment programme was assessed with an evaluation conducted in 1998 by Bakker, Hudson, Wales, and Riley. Results suggested that the programme had a significant treatment effect with a reported sexual reconviction rate of 8% (n=238) (with an adjusted final rate of 10%) for men graduating from the Kia Marama treatment programme compared to an untreated control group (convicted between 1983 and 1987) with a sexual reconviction rate of 21% (n=284) (with an a predicted rise to 22%). Additional

details of the effectiveness of the Kia Marama programme can be found in "And there was Light" (Bakker, et al., 1998) and further details of the programme content are provided in the publication "Kia Marama: A Treatment Programme for Child Molesters in New Zealand" (Hudson, Wales & Ward, 1998).

Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit

Opened in 1994, Te Piriti is located at Auckland Prison (Paremoremo) in Auckland. The treatment programme at Te Piriti is approximately 40 weeks long (including time spent in the preparatory groups). The core treatment programme requires that men attend Monday to Wednesday for three hour therapy sessions each day. Groups of 10 men participate in rolling groups with an average attendance period of about six months that can range between four months and twelve months or longer in exceptional cases. The programme has a particular emphasis on incorporating a bicultural approach to treatment and therefore includes a far stronger Maori content than its closely modelled counterpart, Kia Marama. This is done by integrating philosophies of Western Psychology into a tikanga Maori framework. It does this with the use of Maori philosophy, values, knowledge and practices to emphasise the relationship of the individual with their social and cultural environment. The Maori name, Te Piriti, means 'The Bridge, a crossing over to a better life' and represents a transition from the previous, negative and damaging lifestyle to a more positive and rewarding way of life.

In an evaluation study by Nathan, Wilson and Hillman (2003) of the Te Piriti programme they found that the treatment programme was effective in reducing sexual reconviction for both Maori and non-Maori men with a sexual recidivism rate of 5.47% as compared to the untreated control sample (both Maori and non-Maori) recidivism rate of 21%. Of particular interest in their findings was that Maori men who completed the Te Piriti programme had a significantly lower recidivism rate (4.41%) than Maori who completed the Kia Marama programme (13.58%). These results were obtained after a 2 ½ to 4 year follow-up post release from prison analysis. Though these results may be preliminary in nature (as this is the first published findings for the Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit) they are encouraging as they suggest that the programme at Te Piriti is at least as successful in reducing sexual recidivism amongst child sexual offenders as the Kia Marama treatment programme, and for Maori offenders in particular, perhaps even more successful.

Materials

Audio recording equipment

All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder using Olympus DSS-400 recorder, with external microphone. The use of audio recording equipment for the purposes of later analysis was specifically highlighted during the research information sessions as well as immediately prior to interviews, gaining participant's knowledge and consent. On completion of the interviews, each individual audio file was downloaded directly from the recording device to transcribing software (Olympus 2000) on a laboratory computer within the School of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington.

Participant Information Sheet

All prospective participants were given an information sheet outlining details of the study, their rights as a participant, and extent of involvement required to participate in the study, including asking them for permission to check their prison records if they decided to take part (see Appendix A). The information sheet was read aloud by the principal researcher, with a copy given to all prospective participants to follow along. It was expected (through prior discussion with treatment staff) that not all child sexual offenders would have an adequate level of literacy to read the provided documents and therefore this was deemed the best possible approach. Assurance was given that participation in the research would in no way impact on how each individual was subsequently treated in the unit or affect the conditions under which the individual is released. As this research was conducted independently of the Department of Corrections, confidentiality was assured, and participants were made aware that any information obtained from them, including information about past offences would not go on their Department of Corrections file. Participants were informed that information regarding disclosures would be anonymised before removal so that it would be ineffective from the point of view of identifying former crimes or victims. Participants were also assured that information would be kept confidential under the rules and regulations of the New Zealand Psychological Association, unless information they provided indicated that they may be of harm to themselves or anyone else. Participants were told that if they did

disclose any information that indicated that they might harm themselves or jeopardised the safety of others that staff in their unit would be informed.

Participant Consent Form

On consenting to participate, each offender was provided a consent form (Appendix B) which was also read aloud by the principal researcher, and each were given the opportunity to ask further questions. Participants were asked for their permission to: access their Department of Corrections files, digitally record the interview, and use direct quotes from the interview material in order to capture an accurate portrayal of the offence/offences. This was with the understanding that their name and any identifying information would be kept confidential by the researcher and that it would not be possible to tell that they took part in the study.

Participants were given the opportunity to receive feedback about the results at the completion of the study if they so wished. The consent form was signed before arrangements were made to conduct the interview. At the beginning of the interview, the participants were again reminded of their rights to withdraw from the research. Participants were made aware that a copy of the consent form was to be placed on inmates' prison file as a record of their participation, as required by the Department of Corrections as proof of informed consent.

Debriefing

As part of the written consent procedures, participants were informed that they could receive a brief outline of the research findings if they wish. They could either have this sent to them at the prison, or to someone that they trust in the community. If the results of the study were requested this was indicated by the participant on their consent form (Appendix B).

At the conclusion of the interview participants were informed that if they suffered significant or ongoing distress or discomfort as a result of the interview that a therapeutic staff member would be made available to them. During the course of data collection no participant requested the consult of a therapeutic staff member at either unit as a result of the study. It should be noted that while most men became upset at some point during the disclosure of their narratives, in no instance during data collection did any one participant become so distressed that the interview process was terminated.

Semi-structured interviews

An interview schedule was developed and used to guide the researcher through the interview, ensuring all aspects of the offence process were captured. The guide also served to standardise the interview process across all participants. There was however, flexibility within the guide to allow for modification of the schedule content depending on the nature of the specific interviews.

Open-ended questioning was given priority in the development of the semi-structured interview schedule. This gave participants the opportunity to answer more freely and to provide a richer understanding and description of the events and beliefs held in the lives of the subjects (McCormack, Hudson, & Ward, 2002). At times, however, it was necessary to be more direct in questioning to order to clarify the links between psychological variables and behaviour during offending. There were instances where questions were repeated from an earlier section or after a time lapse in order to obtain an accurate account of the offending. This technique often afforded a richer response with participant recollection increasing as they described elements of their offences that they had previously not considered or remembered.

Brief Overview

Crucial features of the research (a group based qualitative study using data from semi-structured interviews and file information) was drawn from a combination of studies from different domains of the expertise literature to best represent previous research and apply general principles of expertise to a domain that cannot be captured in the laboratory.

The largest methodological concern regarding all previous expertise studies is the fact that they vary in the methodology used to examine 'expertise' (i.e., laboratory settings or naturalistic observation) from domain to domain. It has been shown that although there are a set of general characteristics of expertise that can be derived from the research, the methodology applied to those areas is anything but standard. Each domain has its own ideas and competing theories about how to best to extrapolate the necessary data to either prove or disprove hypotheses.

During interview development the aim was to encapsulate critical aspects of the offence process, including the how and why of offending behaviour. Many of the questions asked were derived from different theories proposed over a variety of

expertise and sexual offending domains, for example, whether fantasy could be said to be a form of rehearsal (i.e., deliberate practice in expertise terms).

The interview guide (see Appendix C) was divided into thirteen sections in order to target offence related expertise and the offence process of child sexual offending. As mentioned earlier however, there was flexibility within this guide to modify the content upon what seemed appropriate in the context of the conversation.

Interview Development

The interview started by introducing the researcher, explaining the purpose of the research, limits of confidentiality and again explaining the purposes of digital audio recording the interview. This was to be followed by some relatively unthreatening questions concerning lifestyle, relationships and more demographically focused questions to ease both interviewer and participant into the interview in order to establish a rapport, which would then be followed with questions regarding their offence(s). However, in discussion with research psychologist supervisors (TW and DP), experienced with interviewing child sex offenders, it was brought to attention that the participants were aware that they would be asked about their offending and therefore it would not be considered inappropriate to commence the interview with elements leading up to the offence, followed directly by details of the first sexual offence. In many cases participants expressed comfort at beginning the interview with their offences and in such cases, introductory questions were forgone.

Interview Structure

Each section of the interview was broken up in order to target one or more aspects of participants' offences and their role in the development of expertise. Participants were asked to talk about their lifestyles prior to, leading up to, and around the time of the first sexual offence (for which they may or may not have been convicted), before being questioned about the offence process and changes in mood regulation that were apparent as a result of the offence. Questions pertaining to affect and emotional management at the time of the offence helped establish offenders' abilities to control and regulate their mood during times of stress and pressure.

Further questions were asked of any additional offences committed (for which participants may or may not have been convicted) in order to establish any

patterns, changes, or improvements of style to their offending. Offending style in this study includes but is not limited to the approach (how the offender engages a potential victim), overcoming victim protests, offence behaviours, eluding detection, and maintaining their offending over a number of years. At this point the question of 'do you think it became easier to offend the more times you did it?' would emerge in one form or another during the context of the conversation.

A series of questions were then asked about victim contact and grooming: the general characteristics of victims and their relationship to the offender, how they came into contact with the child/children, and locations where the victim was identified, as well as location of offence. The amount of time that the participant spent with the victim prior to, during, and post-offence was also canvassed to establish if the time it took to offend increased or decreased as a function of offence frequency. The relationship that was developed (if there was one) with a victim was also examined and if that relationship extended to the victim's family and friends.

The next set of questions referred to community and parental awareness variables which were taken into account by the participant in order to avoid detection. If it had not previously been discussed, techniques to prevent a victim from disclosing were explored as well as the identification of victims and opportunities to offend.

Shifting the focus of the interview slightly, questions about sexual fantasies and fetishes were asked. Queries concerning the visualisation of sexual practices were derived from the idea that fantasy can be regarded as rehearsal/practice, which is an underlying theme in the expertise literature (and in addition links to script theory). Questions surrounding fantasies and fetishes were asked in an attempt to tap into that phenomenon.

Participants were asked about early sexual learning experiences prior to their first offence. It is here that participants discussed their own sexual victimisation. However, because of the potentially distressing nature of this area, it was merely canvassed as part of a process of establishing with participants whether they thought that early experiences of abuse or even sexual interaction with peers, may have in some way informed their own offending. Participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on their own abusive experiences if they wished, and in most cases additional information was disclosed. An important aspect of the expertise literature suggests that early learning facilitates expertise while the sexual

offending literature also stresses the importance of learning evident in establishing offence styles and cycles. Though this was generally left towards the end of the interview, at times it was necessary to let the participants continue with their train of thought and let the narratives unfold.

In order to bring the interview back to a seemingly less distressing topic, a range of additional questions were asked regarding offending aids which may legitimise and strengthen pro-offending attitudes. Participants were asked about sources and usage of pornographic material, i.e., internet, magazines, movies or catalogues and associated fantasies. These questions were followed up with queries about sexual networks or child sex offenders known to the participants. A small number of questions concerning drug and alcohol usage were asked to try to establish what, if any, dependencies the participants had, if their offending relies on these, or if they can carry out their offending without the need for drugs and alcohol.

Finally, a small range of demographic questions were asked in order to bring the participant slowly down from any distress or anxiety that talking about his offending or own abuse may have caused. This proved to be effective.

Procedure

Institutional co-operation

Once ethical approval was received from the New Zealand Department of Corrections, the researcher contacted the Principal Psychologists at both Te Piriti, Auckland Prison, and Kia Marama, Rolleston Prison, to arrange a suitable time for data collection. As Te Piriti is a bicultural treatment community, the researcher was welcomed into unit with a traditional Maori Powhiri (greeting) by the therapeutic staff before discussing the nature of the research and level of assistance the researcher was seeking. Staff were informed that the collection of information from participants would take place over one interview conducted at the convenience of the special treatment units and that the collection of additional material from the participants' files would occur over several days. Similar protocol was followed on arrival at Kia Marama without the traditional Maori welcome (Powhiri).

The therapeutic unit staff and custody staff at both Te Piriti and Kia Marama, were very supportive and extremely helpful in assisting the researcher to conduct and complete data collection at their units. In addition, as three participants were held in medium security of Auckland Prison, the Relapse Prevention Co-ordinator at Te

Piriti was instrumental in obtaining access and special permission for the researcher to enter and bring recording equipment into the main prison.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were initially approached during a weekly community meeting between offenders and correctional staff in the treatment units, where the principal researcher was introduced and the current research was briefly discussed. Participants were then invited to participate during one of their group sessions. The group sessions allowed the principal researcher to discuss in detail the current research and what participation entailed. Approaching prospective participants in this manner also facilitated opportunities for questions regarding the information sheet (Appendix A) and any other questions regarding the research in what would be for them a familiar and supportive environment.

During this time, the participants were made aware that their participation would not be anonymous, but the information collected from them would be kept confidential. Informed consent to participate was obtained from participants, including a consent form and information sheet, prior to any data collection.

Offenders then had the opportunity to complete the consent form in the company of the researcher or taking the information sheet and consent form away with them for consideration. Those who wanted to take some time to think about participation were asked to inform their group therapist, who would in turn inform the researcher, should they choose to participate.

Obtaining Background Data

Initially the aim was to collect demographic and offence related information from participant's files before the interview took place to maintain a check of reliability of the offender's self-report account of their offence(s) and potentially draw attention to aspects of the offending that may be highlighted during the interview. In some instances however, this was not possible and was collected following the interview as the principal researcher was subject to prison routine, prisoner employment, and therapy timetabling and scheduling.

Prison files generally contained: conviction history, demographic information, police summary of facts for the current conviction, judge's sentencing

reports, psychological reports prepared by probation officers and/ or psychologists, as well as a variety of information regarding medical and educational issues relating to their current sentence.

Interviews

Venues for interviewing were often at the discretion of the prison unit and took place in a variety of settings within the special treatment units. At Te Piriti, interviewing rooms that are part of the therapeutic unit were utilised during psychological staff hours, and interviewing rooms in the custody unit were made available during other times. At Kia Marama, interviewing took place in the therapeutic unit as well as the education classroom and office. All locations afforded privacy to ensure confidentiality of disclosed information.

Before the interview began participants were advised that the interview would be audio-recorded so that it could be transcribed for analysis, and that once it had been transcribed, the audio-recording would be destroyed to protect each participant's identity in accordance with ethical guidelines.

Participants were also once again reminded of the limits of confidentiality and that should they disclose any information that indicates that they might harm themselves or jeopardise the safety of others staff in their unit will be informed. Participants were reminded that should they begin to experience discomfort during the interview the interview will be initially halted, and if the participant continued to experience discomfort or distress, the interview would be terminated and the participant referred to their therapist/unit workers.

Limits of confidentiality came into question early in the data collection process, where an interview was stopped and the participant was informed by the researcher that a comment that he made signified a future risk to a member of the public and the appropriate staff member would be informed. The participant was then made aware of the protocol for such an occasion and was dealt with accordingly by Te Piriti treatment staff. Only the material that signified a risk to a member of the public was disclosed to the appropriate psychological staff member, and no other material discussed as part of the interview was divulged. The participant in question was interviewed early in the data collection process and though it was thought by the researcher to have a possible impact on other subjects' level of disclosure, it was found that this in no way impeded future interviews with remaining participants. An

additional instance similar to the above occurred late in data collection, and there was one disclosure of potential self-harm. Appropriate treatment staff were informed in all instances of threat to self and others.

Participants' account of their offending was cross-validated with their prison file, and on the whole, was found to be consistent. Where discrepancies occurred, the interview provided an opportunity for clarification, and when the interview preceded the collection of background information, the prison file was taken as correct for the current offence. In many instances offence information gained from the interview was more detailed than that provided in prisoner files.

Interviews ranged in length from 58 minutes to 3 hours and 21 minutes across 47 participants. Participants were told prior to the commencement of the interview that should they need or want to take a break at any point, then they were free to do so. Very few participants took the opportunity, and when reminded during the interview, chose to continue on. Prior to termination of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to talk further about any issue brought up as a result of the interview, or to voice any questions regarding the research. It was generally at this time that participants' acknowledged that while at times the interview surfaced upsetting thoughts and feelings, they viewed the opportunity to discuss their offending as positive and generally felt comfortable with the interviewer throughout their disclosure.

Data Collection Time Frame

Data collection took place over three months from February to April 2006. As both locations of the special treatment units required extensive travel and financial costing from the origin of the research, all men consenting to participate in both Auckland and Christchurch were interviewed during the principal researcher's stay in both locations. Upon return from collecting data from both locations, transcription of all 50 interviews began. It was at this time that it was discovered that 3 interviews were inaudible and subsequently excluded from the study. Transcription of all audio files was verbatim including interviewer questions, though it should be noted that interviewer questions were not included in the raw data analysis but provided the framework for narratives to unfold.

Though this cannot be considered formal use of grounded theory, during data collection initial reflection of early interviews prompted the researcher to

accommodate and sometimes modify sequence of interview questions in order to obtain a fuller description of the offender's narrative.

An initial set of 14 transcripts, randomly selected, were then analysed in the preliminary stages of model building and development. An additional 16 were included and reinforced model development, with the remaining 17 transcripts subsequently analysed to confirm whether saturation had been reached. No new categories were identified.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative analysis facilitates research into the ways in which people interpret, experience, and respond to the world in which they live. Qualitative research attempts to develop understanding of phenomenon by generating meaning through relating descriptions and explanations of phenomena in their context. The term 'qualitative research' is not well defined and at times has been denoted as that which is not quantitative research (Tesch, 1990). It cannot always be fully captured by an experiment or laboratory setting, or be quantified numerically. It does not attempt to reduce or condense the data to summaries or statistics. It is quite different to the traditional experimental approach which would be labelled positivist and/or hypothetico-deductive (Stratton, 1997), whose methods involve counting and measuring, also known as quantitative methodology.

Qualitative research is employed when the aim of the researcher is to "understand and represent the experiences of people as they encounter, engage, and live through situations" (Elliot, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999, p. 216). Within the broad category of qualitative methodology, a variety of approaches are utilised. These include but are not limited to: empirical phenomenology, ethnography, qualitative discourse analysis, conversation analysis, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry. Though they have developed their own philosophies of method, all these approaches have in common a central purpose "to contribute to a process of revision and enrichment of understanding, rather than to verify earlier conclusions or theory" (Elliot et al., 1999, p. 216).

A qualitative research design reflects the researcher's aim of focusing on the interpretive understanding of the meaning of human actions and experiences as opposed to the quantitative measure of human behaviour with its focus on causal relationships and the statistical generalisations drawn from such analyses. Although

the differences between qualitative and quantitative research may come down to the technical aspects of the research as often they are both employed (Bryman, 1988), typically qualitative research utilises a smaller sample size, often producing a richer and more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study, but which has in the past raised questions of generalisability to a wider, and larger population.

Qualitative research is difficult to define as it doesn't have a distinct set of practices or methods that are entirely its own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This has led its opponents in the past to label it unscientific, exploratory, or subjective, in direct contrast to quantitative research with the employed 'scientific method'. A more recent response to these challenges has seen qualitative researchers supporting the benefits of qualitative methods in the early phase of theory generation and the interpretation of phenomena in relation to the context or setting in which they occur.

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory provides researchers with a set of procedures and techniques to generate i.e., 'ground' theory directly from data. It offers a suite of systematic approaches for studying individual and interpersonal change and maintenance processes (Charmaz, 1995). The purpose of grounded theory is to develop theory about a phenomenon of interest which is derived solely from the data. It consists of a set of inductive guidelines and strategies for analysing data and involves a continual process of constant comparison between contrasting members of a group of interest in order to arrive at a rich, patterned understanding of the relevant features of the group. Essentially there is a process of category development, revision and re-conceptualisation at more abstract levels until a point of category saturation is reached (i.e., when no other categories can be identified or collapsed).

Grounded Theory methodology was originally developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in the 1960s. Since then a branch of the original grounded theory has been developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) which was the variant used in the present study.

In their original version of Grounded Theory Glaser and Strauss developed 'systematic methodological strategies' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 4) which could be adopted by social scientists over a variety of domains. These strategies advocated the development of theories derived from data rather than drawing and inferring hypothesis from existing theories (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded Theory emerged out

of dissatisfaction with the dominance of quantitative methods in sociology as it was felt that such analytic approaches inappropriately reduced complex human qualities to quantifiable variables. As quantitative research looks to test existing theory, the division between theory creation and research increased. Glaser and Strauss (1967) provided a methodological framework that explicitly articulated the analytic procedures and strategies used by qualitative researchers that had previously remained implicit (Charmaz, 1995). As Grounded Theory has been increasingly adopted by social scientists its interpretation has evolved and unsurprisingly a number of versions of Grounded Theory have recently emerged.

The division between Glaser and Strauss came about after having not collaborated for over 20 years (Corbin, 1998) and their later interpretations of the theory they jointly created differed: for Strauss this simply reflected an evolution in process of theory development, while Glaser remained adamant that the theory must be discovered from the data and he asserted that the 'developments' highlighted in Strauss and Corbin's work essentially distorted the purity of the original Grounded Theory approach (Pigeon & Henwood, 1997). Glaser (1992) argued that Strauss and Corbin's (1990) version was too prescriptive because of their elaboration of a step-by-step guide which oriented the researcher to particular patterns in the data (adding a deductive element to the research) rather than letting the data speak for itself (Willig, 2001). Glaser's (1978, 1992) position advocates gathering data without forcing either preconceived questions or frameworks on it, and comes from positivist epistemology with its "assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, reductionist inquiry of manageable research problems, and objectivist rendering of data" (Charmaz, 1997, p. 250). In essence, Glaser argues that the researcher should not have any predesigned questions in mind or knowledge of the domain when constructing Grounded Theory research. Strauss and Corbin's position assumes an "objective external reality, aims toward unbiased data collection, proposes a set of technical procedures, and espouses verification" (Charmaz, 1997, p. 250). Strauss and Corbin (1990) argued that researchers should be able to use existing knowledge and theory from an area of study and apply this to data collection to ensure the data will address the dimensions of interest to the reader.

Grounded Theory takes on a realist orientation in that the studied processes take place irrespective of the presence or documentation of the researcher. It is the idea that knowledge is already 'out there' to be captured by the researcher, and that

they are a witness to the studied phenomenon. This idea also reflects a positivist approach to knowledge building, which has been challenged with the Social Constructivist approach introduced by Charmaz (1990). Social Constructivism versions of Grounded Theory argue that the researcher is more than a bystander because categories cannot exist without the researcher there to create them, and that those categories can never fully 'capture the essence' of a concept in its entirety (Willig, 2001). Those categories are influenced by the researcher's philosophical, theoretical, methodological, and personal experiences and background. In the case of the present study, the expertise framework and the offence process of child sexual offenders was used to construct questions in the semi-structured interview. Employing Grounded Theory offered a systematic approach to studying the maintenance and change of child sexual offenders.

The objectivist versus subjectivist versions of Grounded Theory provides another dimension to the debate. In the objectivist perspective "the researcher attempts to identify and map social processes and relationships and their consequences for participants" (Willig, 2001, p. 44) thereby cataloguing and evaluating the lives of the participants from the outside. Meanwhile, in the subjectivist approach "the researcher attempts to capture the lived experience of the participant" (Willig, 2001, p. 44) by focusing on the richness of the participant's perspective.

The following research draws from both the objectivist and subjectivist perspectives as not only is it concerned with process in child sexual offending, it also explores offenders' cognitive or knowledge development. It utilises a social constructivist grounded theory approach in that discoveries in the data are the result of an interactive process of the temporal, cultural, and structural contexts (Charmaz, 2003) which the researcher and participants bring to the study.

Rationale for use of Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is seen as both a method of inquiry and the product of inquiry (Charmaz, 2005), and has been chosen for the analytical approach for this study for a number of reasons. The research aims to link two aspects of psychology (expertise and child sexual offending) which have only previously been theoretically merged by Ward (1999). As such, the nature of the study was largely exploratory as it meant that the research was open to the discovery of data which would investigate

the links between expertise and child sexual offending. The major difference between Grounded Theory and other approaches to qualitative methods is its emphasis on theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and grounding of a theory from within the data.

In deciding the most appropriate qualitative procedure for the current research, other approaches were found to be unsuitable, including content analysis, phenomenology, and discourse analysis. Grounded Theory is different from content analysis in that Grounded Theory does not seek to "allocate instances to a set of predefined, mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories" (Pigeon & Henwood, 1997, p. 256). At the commencement of Grounded Theory work the researcher comes from a stance of flexibility in the generation of new categories from the data. Though phenomenology works with transcripts of semi-structured interviews it is interested in the "content of consciousness and the individual's experience of the world" (Willig, 2001, p. 52). This approach was not considered the best analytic approach for the current study as it studies a participant's perspective of the world and does not account for behavioural aspects of the offending process. Discourse analysis has two major versions: Discursive psychology, and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, both of which are concerned with the role of language in the construction of social reality. Discursive psychology is focused specifically on the strategic use of language and its function of how particular versions of reality are created and manipulated in conversation. Meanwhile, Foucauldian discourse analysis is concerned with how particular versions of phenomenon are constructed through language and how the power of language constructs objects, including the self (Pigeon & Henwood, 1997). Neither forms of discourse analysis were deemed appropriate for the current study as emphasis is placed on the subjective interpretation of reality, while Grounded Theory utilises both objective (constructed by the researcher) and subjective (perceived by the offender). Both of these versions are important for the current research in order to "theorise contextualised social processes and to map individuals' categories of experience" (Willig, 2001, p. 48)

A major contribution of Grounded Theory methods is the systematic analytic procedures it provides researchers that enable them to check, filter, and develop ideas and insight about significant aspects of human experience and psychological processes.

Analytic Procedure

The analysis of the data gathered in this study was undertaken by way of a Grounded Theory methodology. On completion of the first 14 transcripts, transcription was temporarily halted to provide the opportunity for initial data analysis. These 14 transcripts were used to provide the initial basis for the subsequent model of offence related expertise.

Transcripts were worked with one at a time, with each entire transcript subject to analysis. The first stage of analysis with individual transcripts equated to what is known as line by line coding. Raw data were broken down into their most elementary meaning units by virtue of reference to ideas, thoughts, actions, or commentary. Though initially this meant that one full sentence would often reflect one meaning unit, it could also be the case that multiple meaning units could be identified in one full sentence. The following is an example of extracted meaning units from one passage of transcription where the participant talks about his life prior to the first sexual offence. One participant stated:

Raw Data:

"…but I was still living with my partner, just living day to day, sort of… wondering where the money was going to come from next to support the family…"

This raw data was then broken down into three meaning units as follows:

First-order Meaning Units:

- I was still living with my partner
- living day to day
- wondering where the money was going to come from next to support the family

First order meaning units were written onto a copy of the transcripts themselves, whilst the researcher concurrently recorded any thoughts or notes to self (memos) pertinent to meaning units in a separate book. Memos were used all through the analytic procedure and contained a written record of thoughts, idea linkages, future questions, and theoretical implications to be examined throughout the model construction process.

Coding refers to naming segments of data with a label that depicts what each segment is talking about. It simultaneously categorises, summarises, and accounts for each piece of data. It builds levels of abstraction directly from the data in the formulation and foundation of theory building. The following is an example of the transcript version of first-order coding. Three meaning units are depicted in the following passage with a forward slash (/) denoting one meaning unit.

Raw Data:

"…but I was still living with my partner,/ just living day to day, sort of…/ wondering where the money was going to come from next to support the family/…"

The first order meaning units were then reworked into second-order categories. The purpose of the second-order categories is to convey a general meaning and/or description of the emerging clusters or ideas.

Second order Categories:
- Living with partner
- No long-term goals
- Worried about money to support family

Meaning units are first checked for relevance to an existing second-order category, and if the meaning unit is not represented, a new second order category is created. This illustrates the process of saturation when no more data collection or analysis of further examples reveals additional information. For example, if another participant shared the family home with their wife or partner, or they struggled to make enough money for food for the family, then these meaning units would already be covered and would not offer anything new to the coding categories. Meaning units occasionally found themselves in more than one category.

As analysis continued it was found that there were cases for multiple sentences focusing on one theme. In this case, coding would band subject narrative into one unifying category or meaning unit reflecting questions of 'what is this about?' The following is an example of identifying meaning units for multiple sentences by a unifying category, and was subsequently coded as 'estrangement from partner':

"…..the closeness between myself and my partner had sort of drifted apart and there was no contact there and I couldn't talk, wouldn't, well did talk to her but when we did we'd be arguing. I'd just pick a fight with her just because 'you know, hey, at least she's talking to me'. At least she's talking to me, she might be yelling and screaming at me…."

Figure 5.1: Example of multiple sentences used to convey a single meaning unit or unifying category.

The next stage of analysis involved grouping second-order categories by similar meanings. For example, in Figure 5.1, the initial coding category of 'estrangement from partner' was then grouped with similar categories from other transcripts and bracketed together under the banner of *relationships*, which in turn was encapsulated by the higher and more abstract category of 'Lifestyle'.

The abstract category of 'Lifestyle' reflects the highest order category which not only epitomises themes in the data, but also the nature in which they interact and influence one another. These conceptual categories form the basis of the diagrammatical form of the final model.

Each of the transcripts was read, re-read, and checked against the model in the search for new meaning units and categories. The principal researcher was confident at this point that emerging raw meaning units could be accommodated by existing categories, and that no new categories of meaning could be created. At this point it was clear that a reasonable level of saturation had been reached.

Reliability Checks

Reliability checks can be a useful indicator that researchers are able to detect meaning units in similar ways and thus accurately grasp the same meaning within the data. An independent researcher (a fellow PhD student) was approached and asked to code one page from 12 interviews chosen randomly by number (with an internet research randomizer programme) from all the transcribed interviews. The independent researcher was familiar with qualitative research and the process of Grounded Theory. After a brief training period with practice interviews, the independent researcher was asked to partition statements from the semi-structured interview into meaning units. The aim was to check if it would be possible for a different researcher to have reached similar conclusions from the data. The coding was then compared with that of the principal researcher to obtain an overall level of

agreement in the identification of meaning units. A satisfactory independent inter-rater level of agreement of 92% was achieved. Where differences were found, these were generally distinctions between function rather than meaning in the text, and after short discussion full agreement was reached.

Case Study Design

Case studies integrate information from a variety of resources to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2001). Often case studies allow research to take place in an otherwise inaccessible area of study (Creswell, 2003), such as child sexual offending.

Case study research takes a holistic approach whereby the dimensions of the case interact or relate to the environment within its social, psychological, biological, physical, and cultural context (Willig, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989). As such, components of a case cannot be studied in isolation but must be studied as a whole, acknowledging that it is made up of a complex integrated system. Important features of case study research concentrate on change and development over time. Insights resulting from case study research facilitate theory generation (Gersick, 1988) and are also often used to test existing theories (Pinfield, 1986) or to clarify and possibly extend theories, for example with the use of extreme or deviant cases (Willig, 2001).

Case studies as a research strategy incorporate different types of research design and, as such, Willig (2001) proposes that case study research may be: intrinsic versus instrumental, single versus multiple case studies, and descriptive versus explanatory, which allow the researcher to target and address a variety of questions arising from the cases under investigation.

Intrinsic case studies focus on the particular of a case. They are chosen by the researcher for a specific aspect which is of interest rather than a larger phenomenon or general problem, for example in the expertise literature it might be a musical savant such as Mozart who was considered a child prodigy. Instrumental case studies however are chosen for a more general phenomenon and provide the researcher with opportunity to study exemplar cases in order to explore "how the phenomenon exists within a particular case" (Stake, 1994, p. 242). The use of case studies in this thesis was instrumental in nature in that child sexual offenders were studied in order to illustrate a wider phenomenon of how their offending changes over time in addition to discovering the mechanisms involved which facilitated their offending.

The use of multiple case studies was considered the most appropriate strategy for the current research as multiple case studies provide comparative analysis and refinement of an emerging theory for a series of cases (Yin, 1994; Willig, 2001). In contrast to single case studies, which may be used to test the applicability of existing theories, multiple case studies afford the researcher with the prospect of generating new theories and allow for the modification of an emerging theory with each new case to account for all instances associated with the phenomenon under investigation (Smith, 1997; Willig, 2001).

Willig (2001) further differentiates case study design on the basis of descriptive versus explanatory cases. Descriptive case studies describe the phenomenon of interest in detail. Descriptive case studies do not explore the case within existing theoretical formulations, instead focusing on the detail provided in the description of the case to generate new insights and understanding of the subject under study. Explanatory case studies, however, "aim to generate explanations for the occurrences for which they are concerned" (Willig, 2001, p. 74). Descriptions of a case and its components are accompanied by explanatory concepts to abstract a more comprehensive understanding of the occurrence, implications, and meanings of the behaviour of the person or the phenomenon under investigation (Bromley, 1986; Willig, 2001).

Application to the current study

Case studies in chapter seven are provided to illustrate and facilitate understanding of the findings of the research with the use of extreme cases outlined during model construction by distinguishing between an 'expert' and a 'novice'. Case studies are concerned with details of an individual participant's life events (Willig, 2001). As such, to protect the anonymity of the participants, the case study examples were modified in two ways rending the cases unrecognisable, whilst still preserving their form and content. Firstly, each of the two case studies presented in the results reflect the participation of one individual, however, additional information from other participants also featured within a case study. Secondly, alterations to participant demographic and lifestyle information, as well as criminal history, were also made to further protect the identity of participants. Overall, in this research case studies were used to demonstrate the relevance of expertise framework by exemplifying the expert versus novice distinction with child sex offenders.

Ethical Considerations and Limits of Confidentiality

The informed consent process (described earlier) included reminding the participants of the limits of confidentiality and the mechanisms for protecting the participants' privacy. Prior to beginning the interview, it was repeated again to participants that should they disclose any information that indicates that they might harm themselves or jeopardise the safety of others that staff in their unit would be informed. Therapeutic staff was informed on three occasions of potential harm during the entire interviewing process, with an example described in the *Interview* section. Two occasions referred to potential harm against an adult member of the public on release from prison, and one potential threat of harm to self.

Participants were assigned a research number that would identify and link their data. The participants' identity would only be recorded on the written consent form and thereafter only the research number would be used on all other paper and electronic data. All paper and electronic data would be securely stored in Professor Tony Ward's university laboratory. A copy would be kept of the participants' written consent records and a list matching participants' identity and research numbers in a locked cabinet that is separate from any paper copies of data. A copy of the consent form would go onto the prisoners' institutional files as required by the Department of Corrections. In addition, when quoting participants or referring to participants in the results chapters, additional coding was used to further protect participant identity.

Cultural considerations

The research aimed to recruit Maori and non-Maori participants for this study. It was anticipated that this project would be of benefit to Maori through the investigation of expertise and its dimensions in child sexual offending. By including Maori participants in the study, it ensured the results obtained are representative and valid for both Maori and non-Maori populations. The researcher is aware that cultural explanations and implications should be considered when interpreting Maori participants' data. However, given the small sample size and use of primarily qualitative methods of analysis it was not anticipated that analyses conducted separately for Maori and non-Maori would produce meaningful results.

       Consultation with Te Piriti's cultural advisor and therapeutic staff members ensured that methods used for approaching and gaining information from offenders was the best way to invite and encourage Maori men to participate in the study. This was achieved by interacting with participants in a cordial, professional, and culturally sensitive manner to facilitate rapport and respect.

Chapter Six: Results

This chapter outlines a descriptive model of expertise related competency of child sex offenders derived from a Grounded Theory analysis of 47 interviews with incarcerated child sexual offenders (see Figure 6.1). As the process of Grounded Theory unfolded, as described in the previous chapter, several core categories emerged. It was found that six phases of the model adequately captured sexual offence related competency.

The first phase of the model (see Figure 6.1 for all six phases) is titled *Primary Skill Acquisition.* This phase described elements of the offender's early life in which he may have acquired deviant attitudes, beliefs and behaviours around sexual development. The second phase encompassed *Lifestyle* experiences which may either directly or indirectly have added additional layers to an offending pathway. The third phase of the model (and the main focus of the expertise framework) is *Offence Related Competencies* which identified those elements facilitating offending. These elements were identified as the indicators or cues which highlighted differences in levels of sophistication and experience. Following on is *Offence Related Behaviours* which speak of the execution of the offence itself. The fifth phase, *Masking*, referred to the attempts of the offender to ensure that he was undetected and the various steps taken in order to remain so. The sixth and final phase of the model, *Reflection,* described the ability of the offender to consciously process and contemplate actions, emotions and thoughts in response to his victim, himself, and the offence(s).

Two core mediating categories also emerged in conjunction with the six phases (above). These categories contained contextual features, and psychological and social processes which consistently interacted with the six phases at a variety of points, and with varying strengths, across the participants. The two mediating categories were *Internal Moderators,* consisting of subcategories of: Affect Regulation, Arousal, and Cognition; and *Contextual Features*, consisting of the subcategories: Triggers and Victim Availability/Opportunity. The mediating categories will be discussed both within and between the fourth and fifth phases of the model to demonstrate how they emerged and were evident through the developmental and offending stages.

Figure 6.1: Model of Expertise Related Competency in child sexual offenders.

The category of *Internal Moderators* referred to the internal state of the participant and their wide range of emotions, cognitions, and arousal levels felt and controlled as part of the offending process. *Contextual Features* were those variables which were external to the participant's control but for which there was a response, activating internal behavioural mechanisms.

At the end of Phase VI – *Reflection*, a diagrammatical illustration of a Competency Continuum is presented (see Figure 6.1), with inexperience or novice sitting at one end and expertise at the other. The continuum explains variation in offender behaviour. It proposes that some people are more extreme than others on a competency or expertise based dimension.

The continuum is a dimension, no part of which is noticeably different from the parts adjacent to it, although the ends or extremes do differ from each other. The continuum was been included in the model to illustrate where, after moving through the six phases, the participants were positioned in relation to each other and to their actions. For those at the novice end of the continuum it may mean that their lifestyle might have been heavily impacted as a result of the offending. For example, the participant may have abused substances at an increasing rate to deal with the emotional impact that offending caused, or perhaps overworked themselves in their employment to escape the guilt or shame felt as a result of their offending. It may have also meant that the participant had limited child sexual offending experience, perhaps even having been apprehended after their first offence. At the expertise end of the competency continuum, participants may have had no visible impairments which would highlight nothing more than a seemingly normal lifestyle to an outsider; they may have had a high volume of victims and extensive histories in child sexual offending. The implications of the continuum will be examined in further detail throughout Phases I-VI, and it will be given additional consideration to illustrate extremes in the example case studies in Chapter Seven.

Descriptions of core categories have been provided based on a hierarchy of categories and subcategories which represent phenomenon defined as significant to participants in the current research sample. Although each core category was broken down into sub-categories (with corresponding figures) for the purposes of conceptually illustrating the model, it must be remembered that the core categories were not mutually exclusive - they continually overlapped and impacted/ affected

each other. Therefore, when subcategories have overlapped they have also been re-discussed in relation to the sub-category where the overlap occurred.

Wherever possible, quotes have been used from participant interviews to illustrate notable aspects or features of coded categories. For the most part, adequate quotes are provided, however in some instances an appropriate quote could not be found/used and as such no quote is provided. Identities linked to each of the presented quotes have been masked by assigning random numbers/values, and in subsequent chapters new random numbers/values were assigned so that links between chapters cannot be made. This measure was employed to protect the anonymity of the participants across the research described in all chapters. The term 'offending' refers to child sexual offending, and any other offences have been referred to as non-sexual offending or by index offence.

This chapter will now proceed with a description and explanation of an Exploratory Model of Expertise Related Competency in adult males who sexually offend against children.

Phase I – Primary Skill Acquisition

In addition to the collection of data from case files, participants were also given the opportunity during the interview to describe developmental experiences, ranging from early childhood abuse, family relations and more general childhood and adolescent experiences. The core category of *Primary Skill Acquisition* (see Figure 6.2) described the concept that many early learning experiences impacted on future offence related behaviours and competencies. Psychological and criminological theories have invested much research into the area of developmental experiences and its' impact on future behaviour. The area of expertise research has also placed much emphasis on formative years of development, viewing them as pivotal learning years for exceptional performance (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). It is for this reason that the present study questioned participants about their early developmental experiences and events which they believed may have impacted their future offending behaviour.
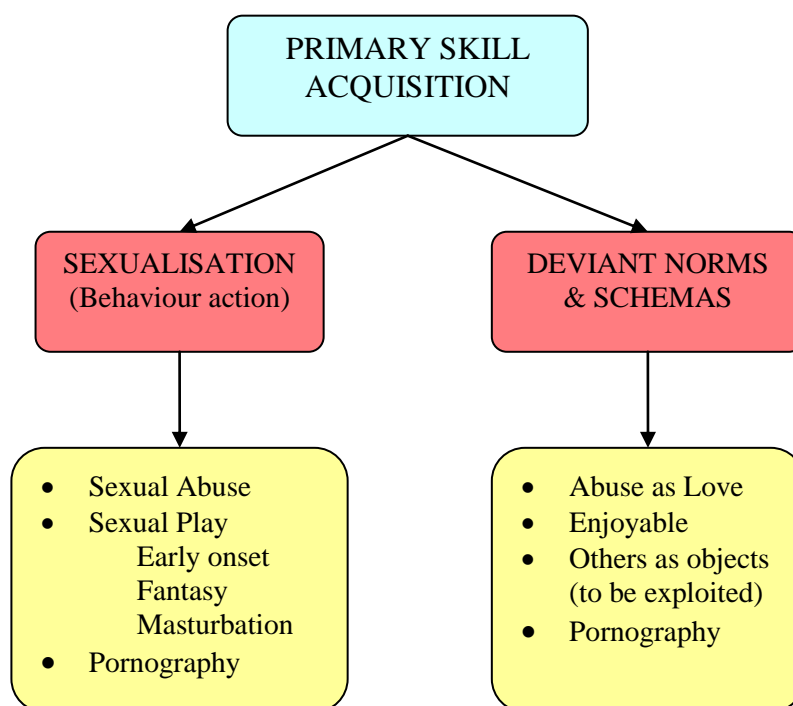
Figure 6.2: Phase I: Primary Skill Acquisition of the ERC Model

Categories of meaning were grouped together with other instances or occurrences from early learning years to describe phenomenon defined as significant

across the current sample. *Primary Skill Acquisition* comprised of two subcategories: 'Sexualisation' and 'Deviant Norms and Schemas', each with three to four further subcategories that illustrate the properties and dimensions of the core category. As stated earlier, subcategories provided greater explanatory power to the higher order category to which they were linked. The categories were related to the tangible experiences and the resulting maladaptive thought pattern.

This category took precedence in the model, as the childhood and adolescence narratives from most of the participants were considered (by participants and the researcher) to be the first introduction to a maladaptive learning environment.

Sexualisation

The first major sub-category of *Primary Skill Acquisition* referred to the sexualised behaviour and actions of the participants exhibited from early childhood through to adolescence (see Figure 6.2). The sub-category specifically targeted the behavioural aspects of the participants' sexualisation, and as the model continued, speculated on the future impact of those early experiences. The 'sexualisation' sub-category described sexual abuse and sexual experimentation and experiences which produced both positive and negative reactions from the participants.

Sexual Abuse

With many of the participants reflecting on their own sexual abuse during the interviews, responses varied as to the nature and impact of their abuse. A few participants saw their abuse as an extremely traumatic experience which greatly impacted on future aspects of their lives. Some participants saw a clear pathway from their own sexual abuse to then becoming abusers, while others believed that they didn't think their own abuse influenced their decision to offend. But for those of the sample population that were sexually abused (n=31), they all were able to comment on their experiences either positively, negatively, or both. For the most part though, participants that acknowledged being abused commented on "getting on with their life". Participant data indicated that more often than not, a connection was not made between the individual's own abuse and his later behaviour of child sexual offending.

All of the participants that had been subjected to sexual abuse knew the perpetrator, ranging from father, uncle, auntie, sister, brother, cousin, grandparent,

school friend, or neighbour. Some participants were abused by more than one perpetrator.

Often reasons for continuance of the abuse were either negative consequences, or positive reinforcements. Negative consequences ranged from threat of punishment (either physical or emotional), not being believed if they disclosed, or guilt or blame that somehow it was their fault. Conflicting emotions often emerged as participants would see their bodies responding to the abuse, but knowing that it was inappropriate, bad, or violated (especially if it was someone they loved or trusted).

Positive reinforcement was often in the form of the giving of gifts and the expression of love given from the perpetrator to the participant. A small number of participants believed their own abuse was an enjoyable experience. The physiological stimulus resulting from the abuse was sufficient to ensure its continuance. It is from the small group of participants that enjoyed their abuse that onset of offending began at an early age. The abuse of other children of the participant's own age (providing early practice for future offending) was said to be easy to mask as childhood exploration play. Participants found abusing others as a child easy, as sleepovers are a common occurrence for young people, and nothing is thought of children playing together after school for example.

> *"...we used to spend basically all of our time together...I'd either be at his place or he'd be at mine, um and we used to crash in the same bed at his place and um yeah we um we were just, we talked about what we would do if um one of us was a girl, what you'd do to the guy and things like that, and so we swap roles and things like that, um, and we covered basically everything but anal.." ERC1148*

For a small group, the participants' own abuse also provided a means to meet others. This may have been through other children that were abused by a common abuser or through sexual play.

Sexual Play

Sexual play was an element of early experiences that many of the sample population participated in. Sexual play was considered consensual and most times performed with children within one to three years of the participants own age. Sexual play was considered by the participants as fun, harmless, and curiosity based. It

would consist of 'spin the bottle', 'doctors and nurses', or 'dares'. Sexual play also included group masturbation at an early age.

> *"...when I grew up as a kid, we learnt sex in the gutter, we had sex games that happened with the neighbourhood... we had games as kids...we were all under 16 so it was 10 to 12 year olds or whatever, and we just learnt it by playing cards and strip poker and strip touching and all this, these touching games you see..." ERC1003*

For some, sexual play became the early onset of a future career in child sexual offending with fantasies of childhood gaining a steady foothold during adolescence and into adulthood.

Pornography

Sexualisation included the early introduction to pornography, whether via magazines, any other form of media, or voyeuristically, e.g., seeing parent(s) or an older sibling having sexual intercourse. Pornography provided both a means of sexual education (of learning how to perform sexual acts) and desensitisation (a facilitator for deviant norms).

> *"**How did you know that's what boys and girls do?** / Oh, I saw it on Sky TV....it was pretty graphic too..." ERC1025*

Pornography also provided a means to educate participants on the acceptance of unrealistic sexual practice by attributing characteristics of what is seen via media to everyday human interactions and relationship development.

Deviant Norms and Schemas

The second sub-category of *Primary Skill Acquisition* referred to the maladaptive norms, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour acquired as a result of the participant's own abuse or early experiences (see Figure 6.2). Many of the participants exhibited deviant standards/ norms or irregular thoughts or behaviour. At some point during their childhood/ adolescence participants began to bridge links with pornography, abuse, and a culture of violence with standards of how humans interact. These deviant norms and schemas were separated into the areas:

pornography, seeing their own abuse as love, finding their own abuse enjoyable, and viewing others as objects to be exploited.

Pornography

While the impact of pornography on society is highly debated, exposure to pornography for some of the current sample at an early age facilitated desensitisation and created the basis of value laden norms that would continue to govern their decision making processes through to adulthood. Participant's reliance on the principle that pornography is a healthy and useful source of information about sex and is a legitimate way to induce pleasure, its continued usage from adolescence to adulthood further reinforced its maintenance in the inducement of deviant sexual practices. For some participants, the family environment promoted sex, either by instilling the idea that sex was for sale, or that it was considered natural or normal for adults to be naked around children regularly.

Abuse as Love

Though a minority of the participants in the sample identified abuse as love, those that interpreted their abuse as a form of affection felt it was attention that they would not otherwise get. The nature of the physical and emotional abuse experienced at the hands of immediate and extended family overshadowed the sexual abuse. One participant in particular believed that abuse received was the only love shown by his family. He saw his father's abuse as love; it was the lesser of two evils of his parents.

> *"….he sexually abused us but it wasn't painful, it made us feel at the time, wanted, you know…the dragon, she, hers was physical and emotional pain that just make you feel like you were fuckin' useless you know, that you were pathetic and that you were just not wanted full stop." ERC1008*

The understanding that love was expressed through sexual behaviour was a norm which was engrained early, and for those participants whose onset of sexual offending was in childhood or adolescence, the targets of their 'love' were often family members first. For other participants the principle that 'love equals sex' was not evident until adulthood with a menagerie of unsuccessful platonic and intimate relationships.

Enjoyable

A small sample of participants found their own abuse to be enjoyable. The stimulation was pleasurable and therefore must be right, rather than wrong. No harm was done to them because instead participants enjoyed the sexual contact; hence no harm is caused by having sex with children. Adults have sex with children, therefore it must follow that it is acceptable for children to have sex with or touch children. It was this category/sample of participants where formative years of learning were greatly utilised in future offending. Having felt their own abuse to be pleasant, they had chosen to continue with (certain) sexual acts and found other children amply able to fulfil those requirements/needs. Other children would find sexual contact as pleasurable as the participants found it; pleasure and enjoyment in life is gained through sex. Often then, participants had gone on to recruit other children into their cycle of abuse in large volumes, and this may either have been as an adolescent or as an adult. The following is a quote from one participant that enjoyed offending done to him over a six year period, and continued onwards to abuse others.

> *"...it was something that I enjoyed when I was a kid and I just continued on with it" ERC1248*

Others as Objects (to be exploited)

A culture of violence within the home and surrounding environment, marked by domestic violence between the parents and emotional and physical abuse as punishment with the children, was reported as a way of learning how to control and dictate another person's behaviour. After watching all forms of violence (emotional and physical) in the home, many participants vowed to never use it in their own home to maintain power and control, though for some it was a powerful lesson in one of the techniques used to maintain the status quo. It was clear that from an early age, regardless of future violent behaviour, that people could be used purely as a means to achieve ones' own ends. Whether it is through coercion, physical force, deceit, or bribery, participants understood that in order to meet their needs people were open to exploitation and could be manipulated into doing what they wished. Manipulation became another tool to achieve goals as opposed to other pro social behaviours and attitudes.

It was evident from the sample population that participants believed that you can do to others what has been done to you. Even bullying behaviour at school taught some participants that 'the weak are vulnerable', 'you must fight back', and 'not to take injustice lying down'. Values such as those were not only advocated by parental figures but also peer groups.

Summary

The *Primary Skill Acquisition* category encompassed a vast range of childhood and developmental experiences reported by participants. Through early sexualisation and acquiring maladaptive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, participants began to acquire a toolbox of strategies available to them to utilise through to adulthood. The above quotes are an indication of the future affects those experiences had on participants and their functioning as adults. Participants that are considered to be toward the expertise end of the continuum exhibited extensive exposure to early sexualisation practices as well as heavy introduction to deviant norms and belief systems. The following sections will break down those effects in the everyday lifestyle areas described by participants.

Phase II – Lifestyle

Early learning experiences of childhood and adolescence were integrated into cognitive structures and processing to inform behavioural responses through to adulthood. The Internal Moderators and Contextual Features displayed in the model were mediated by a perceived event or experience, which for many of the participants had origins in early learning and developmental experiences, the outcomes of which were most commonly observed as participants reached adulthood. The core category of *Lifestyle* (see Figure 6.3) described and provided the framework to discuss the realms in which individuals functioned as part of their daily lives, such as family, work, and social and leisure activities. This core category was included in the model as whole because, by their own admission, this was where many of the participants identified a notable breakdown in their lives and the starting point or cause of their offending. However, for those participants whose offending was a continuation of childhood offending, their lifestyle was considered in relation to their
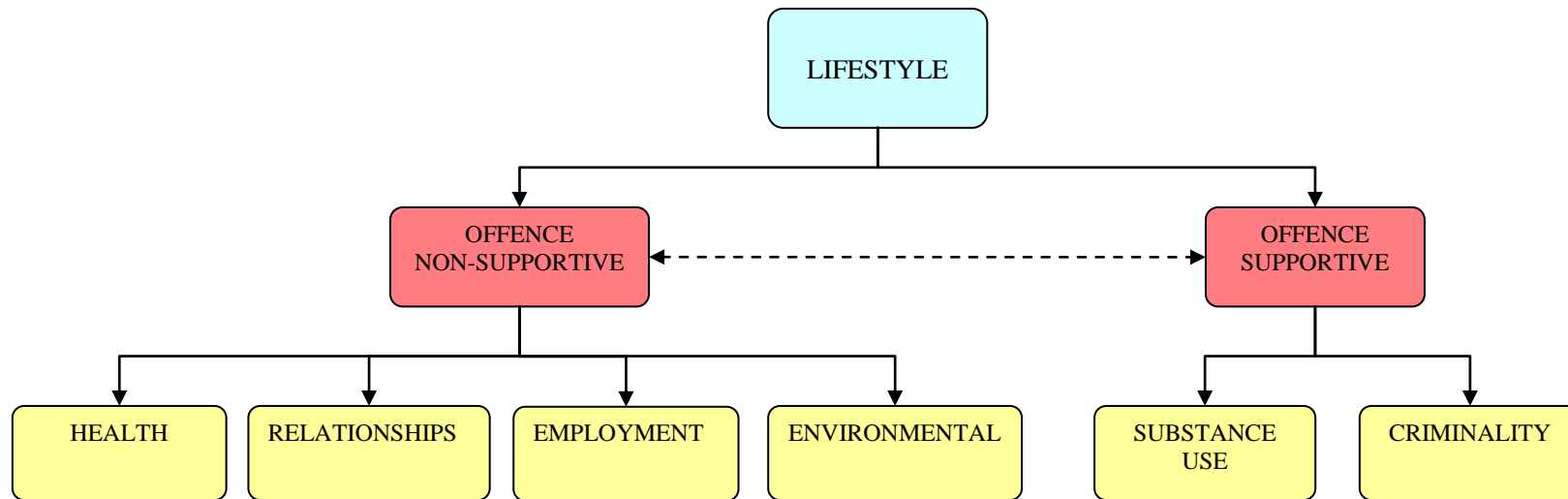
Figure 6.3: Phase II: Lifestyle variables identified in the ERC Model

day to day adult functioning and associations. When participants discussed circumstances and aspects of their lifestyle, they identified a number of factors which were particularly influential. As the data emerged, the *Lifestyle* category was separated into two subcategories on the basis of supporting pathways to child sexual offending: *Offence Non-Supportive* and *Offence Supportive.* These subcategories were divided into further subcategories, and the latter described elements of the participant's lives and how they impacted upon the offender. The dashed link between O*ffence Non- Supportive* and *Offence Supportive* (see Figure 6.3) highlighted the subtle interaction between the two subcategories, for example, a lack of employment may have pressured the individual to find money through criminal means, or relationships with friends and family may have perpetuated substance abuse.

Offence Non-Supportive

Categories of meaning not directly leading to an offence were considered to be Offence Non-Supportive variables. The subcategories separately did not directly support the onset of sexual offending. However, many participants believed that when the following aspects of their life broke down they became vulnerable and were inclined to meet their needs by other means.

Health

Diagnosed and prescriptive mental health issues were not a common theme in the current sample. Few men were institutionalised for problems related to stability of mental health; for the most part, this became an issue after the disclosure of offences. However, while they may not have been given a clinical diagnosis, many participants described their own mental health prior to offending as unstable, often experiencing depression and anxiety. Participants believed that mental health issues may not have caused their offending, but did contribute to the frailty of their mindset prior to offending. For those participants where physical health was a concern, happiness was closely linked to medical status and the regulation of emotions. If their health was good it had a positive impact on the participant's emotional state and if their health was poor it would negatively impact on them, and at times they blamed their bodies for giving up on them.

Participants affected by poor physical health tended to have a bleak outlook on life and stated that they often felt as though life had no meaning or purpose for them, that when their health started to diminish, so too did their zest for life. Physical disabilities were also not prominent in the majority of the sample. However participants with disabilities described being dominated by Internal Moderators such as negative 'Affect Regulation' with feelings of worthlessness, feeling outcast, inadequate, and a burden on loved ones.

Relationships

Connections with family, friends, and on a romantic level were discussed briefly as an introduction to the interview schedule. Relationships continued to be referred to throughout the interview where the participant considered it relevant.

For those participants in an adult intimate relationship at the time of offending (n= 24), several issues were described as problematic around this period. Participants' partners were described as unsupportive, rejecting, and critical of the individuals in regard to both their emotional and sexual needs. Participants found that their needs or wishes were disregarded and they felt stripped of authority in the family home. They at times felt dominated by their partners and believed that they had to meet the partner's seemingly high or unachievable expectations. Participants identified several factors related to themselves that they viewed as having a negative impact on their relationships, including that of distrust, lacking interpersonal skills, and being/ feeling sexually dissatisfied. In addition, a lack of interpersonal skills was found to perpetuate difficulty communicating not only with partners, but people in general.

> *"...my marriage wasn't going well, I didn't feel loved, I felt unwanted in my marriage, it just wasn't going well really..."ERC1034*

During data analysis it was also found that participants' relationships were often characterised by conflict or violence. When trying to communicate with their partner they would often resort to violence to get their way or their message across to their partner. At times this would be seen by children that were in the household. Some participants felt that conflict or violence was a recurrent event in their lives. Having seen or experienced violence in childhood or adolescence, some participants

carried the belief that you get what you want by using your fists with them through to adulthood

> *"…when* (the arguments) *got too hurtful, when the arguments turned into that sort of thing, I used to swing. I shouldn't of but I did. In the finish all I learnt from that behaviour was if* (wife) *opened her mouth and I didn't like it – thump her…"* ERC1007

Work and financial difficulty caused the most problems for their relationships, with the participant's job taking time away from the relationship and both participants with and without a job experienced financial difficulty.

For those in the sample that were single (n= 23), issues described by those in relationships were frequently also experiences sort after by single men, such as the need for emotional and physical intimacy. Many single participants described being single as a constant theme in their life, often having a history of short-term relationships or a total lack of romantic/ intimate relationships. Single participants often found that they had trouble forming and sustaining intimate relationships which left them feeling inadequate or undeserving, and this in turn reinforced the individual's negative self-beliefs. Some participants were idealistic when it came to relationships and expectations that they had of their partners, often using media, pornography, and fantasy based schemas as hallmarks of successful relationships. Those participants acknowledged that they were unaware of those expectations they had placed on family and partners during the time of their offending, but recognised the significance of idealised relationships through retrospective analysis during incarceration. Single participants with limited relationship experience in particular tended to have fairly idealistic expectations of how intimate relationships should be, often striving for media portrayed idealistic relationships, including those portrayed in pornographic images and material (embedded in belief structures gained from *Primary Skill Acquisition* that what is seen, must be true).

Several participants struggled with homosexuality issues, of not knowing what their preferences were and wanting to try same sex practices. Children were seen by those people as less threatening and less rejecting than that of an adult. A number of participants considered themselves gay (n=2) or bisexual (n=15) and saw the offending as a means to try new things. Relationships with younger partners (even underage partners) were not uncommon. Participants admitting to relationships with significantly younger partners often did so because they were not able to secure

and maintain relationships with their own age groups, feeling they were mentally (as well as a physical attraction) compatible with a younger person. Having a relationship with a younger partner was the starting point for the boundaries to become blurred. The difference then between seeking sexual relationships with even younger partners did not appear to be such a big leap.

> *"...I never looked at girls underage as being minors. You know, I've been with a few 14yr olds and um, to me that was normal..." ERC1024*

Participants' relationships with family members varied across the sample. The majority of participants in the interview reflected on the relationship that they had with their parents. Some participants had good relationships with their parents whilst others had very poor relationships. They described their relationships as supportive or unsupportive, close or distant. Some participants felt betrayed by their family and believed that not protecting them from their own childhood abuse was the ultimate betrayal, which for some continued to be unforgivable. Participants' desired acceptance from their family and friends and sought a sense of emotional intimacy or closeness, where they could depend on their friends and family for support. As most of the participants were unable to find this, they found themselves turning to children to seek solace, acceptance, love, and emotional and physical intimacy.

> *"...dad never spoke to me for years. He used to spoil my brother rotten take him places, but he never had anything to do with me...I've always sort of been the black sheep of the family..." ERC1010*

It was found that only a few participants had a very good network of friends around them at the time that they were offending. However many more participants felt that their friends were more acquaintances than people that they could trust and lean on for support, or divulge their concerns to. A lack of trusting adults, friends and family, was also an issue that led to a lack of disclosure and admitting the need for help.

Employment

Almost half of the participants were employed at the time of offending. Work for some participants was a means to increase their personal sense of value. It made many feel independent and needed as the provider for the family. For those that were employed, they would frequently overwork to the point of physical, emotional, and

intellectual exhaustion in an effort to maintain their status in the family as the provider.

> *"...I felt a lot financial pressures to keep the mortgage up, buy the appropriate clothing for my daughters...I felt I needed to be driving a nice car for myself and my wife and I guess keeping up appearances...also working long hours to keep up the money..." ERC1134*

There were a variety of reasons for those that were unemployed: they were on disability benefits, their substance abuse interfered with their ability to hold down a job, their lack of interpersonal skills meant staying in one job for any length of time was not concrete, they lacked motivation, they liked to live off the government, or they undertook illegal activities to support themselves and their families. Those that were unemployed reported feeling worthless because they could not get a job, which lead to boredom and loneliness if their partner or friends worked during the day.

Environment

Living conditions prior to offending were less than ideal with participants often living with others, including their victims. Financial pressure was commonly seen as the reason for shared living space that was not a result of a consensual relationship.

> *"...I was unemployed, very depressed. I'd been two years out of jail. Um...moved out of my parents from, solo parent too, my boy was living at home. I couldn't get on with him. My days were working, drinking, drugs. Um...I was moving from place to place, no permanent place..." ERC1124*

Offence Supportive

The sub-category of Offence Supportive Lifestyle represented elements of the offender's life that contributed to, or encouraged illegal behaviour and associations on the part of the participant, as criminal associates actively supported the antisocial behaviours of the individual. This category had a more direct link to the onset of child sexual offending through criminality and offence supportive cognitions. Participants noted that decreased sensitisation to law-abiding behaviour through consistent participation in antisocial activities facilitated the mindset that boundaries cease to exist once they are crossed. Criminal history, illegal substance use, and criminal networks were all considered to be offence supportive variables.

Substance Use

Many of the participants were abusing alcohol or illegal drugs prior to and/or around the time of their offending, as well as after their offences, as a means to cope with their lives and/or stressful events. Alcohol consumption emerged as a contextual feature and facilitator which the individual believed enticed him to seek an outlet for his desire. A small number of participants believed that their substance abuse directly contributed to their offending, whilst others claimed that it maintained their offending. For example:

> *"Um, I think it dis-inhibited me to maybe think um, that obviously took away some level of responsibility coz I notice that when I gave up drinking and drugs about a month later I was disclosing what I had done you know…"* ERC1002.

One perceived way of suppressing negative emotion (*Internal Moderators*) and/or dealing with stress was through the abuse of substances such as alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), and solvents. Participants used substances as a way of dealing with, dampening, or forgetting any pain caused to victims or emotion felt on the part of the participant. Any form of substance, or combination of substances, was used as pain relief to create a numbing effect. It was thought that the more substances individuals were taking, the more they were able to escape from the reality of their lives. Substance use post-offending would help participants to forget what they had done, which also lessened the severity of the crime. One participant could not recall details of his offences which spanned 30 years due to heavy alcohol abuse in both his offending and other aspects of his life.

Early onset substance abuse was noted within the data to be linked with long-term substance abuse behaviours by participants as adults, as well as criminal activities associated with maintaining such habits.

Criminality

Gang membership, criminal associates, and peer groups engaging in antisocial behaviours were often mediated by both *Internal Moderators* and *Contextual Features*. Inclusion within such groups provided protection and support in an otherwise isolating environment. Criminal conduct as a result of associations was a function of group activities and context *(Contextual Features)*. Status within the group was reliant on actions performed and success in meeting group goals. In

turn, increased status affected self-esteem, regulation of emotional response, and further reinforced offence supportive cognitions (*Internal Moderators*). The consistent participation in antisocial activities increased desensitisation to law-abiding behaviour and societal norms of morality and conduct.

> *"...the work area and everything that I was in, pretty much desensitised me to a certain level so therefore I was working in an immoral situation with immoral acts happening all the time..." ERC1042*

Illegal activities and criminal associations served as a platform for some participants to meet their victims, whether they believe it was by accident or design.

> *"...I had women working out of the house prostituting and that sort of thing so...then these young girls came along so it was the opportunity, so I started predatory behaviour towards them..." ERC1040*

The majority of participants had an established criminal record prior to incarceration for child sexual abuse. Non sexual offences ranged in severity from traffic offences to grievous bodily harm, and attempted murder.

Though there has been little research on the social networks of child molesters, many crime theorists recognise the importance of peer groups in the development of both normal and deviant behaviour (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 1994; Bandura, 1977; Elliot, Huizinga & Ageton, 1985; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). In the current study criminal networks were linked by drugs, nonsexual criminal behaviour, or known to the participant through child sexual offending. This could have been a member of the participant's family that was either currently abusing (at the time of participant apprehension), or had sexually abused in the past, a social group, or as a victim of the abuser.

A small number of the sample offended in collusion with someone else or were aware that friends were also abusing children at the time. Affiliation with social groups, in the current sample, aided in the distribution of child pornography and provided social protection from society. The offending was so deeply entrenched that one participant in particular claimed to have believed that it was the rest of society with the problem and not him.

"...it drove me into the arms of those people that were doing it themselves. They were my role models, my support people…By talking about it in that environment and having people around that were doing it, it made it much easier for me…" ERC1348

Collusion with other offenders, although only mentioned by very few participants, produced opportunities to identify victims through competitions at public pools to see who could '*accidentally touch children in sexually inappropriate ways the most times*' *ERC1448*. Games such as those were reportedly so much a part of one participant's lifestyle that as a child growing up, he was instilled with the belief that it wasn't him and his associates with the problem of sexual offending; it was society's stranglehold on adolescent natural curiosity. Competitions and games surrounding sexual offending heightened enjoyment and encouraged habitual sexual behaviours. The volume of offending for those men was high, and the length of their sexual offending histories long. For the majority, however, participants in the current sample acted alone in their sexual offending.

For participants who began offending during childhood and adolescence, the level of criminality ranged from only ever having committed offences against children to having extensive criminal networks and becoming deeply entrenched in all forms of criminal behaviour. Habitualised offending of all forms was a necessity of day to day functioning.

Summary

The dashed link between the two subcategories of Offence Non-Supportive and Offence Supportive pathways reflected analysis of participant's experience of using criminal means to financially support the family (i.e. selling drugs, dealing in stolen goods), as well as those who may have increased their substance use (including the increase of illegal drugs) either prior to or during their child sexual offending.

Offence Non-Supportive variables were indirect in their contribution to sexual offending but were liable to heighten vulnerability when conditions within those variables failed to achieve the desired outcomes for participants. Evaluation of participants' lifestyles most commonly regarded relationships, health, employment, and living environment as malignant aspects prior to sexual offending. The general day-to-day living which represented values, commitment and attitudes was often

considered, in retrospect, to be factors affecting the interpretation of social information and moral judgement. Antisocial and Offence Supportive Behaviours such as criminal history, criminal networks, and substance use (both legal and illegal) had a more direct relationship with the onset of sexual offending. Breaching the parameters of societal norms with law-breaking behaviour and associations further reinforced Offence Supportive cognitions.

Phase III – Offence Related Competencies

Primary skills acquired from early childhood experiences, values, attitudes, and beliefs guided the participants' day to day living and social interactions. Information processed as a function of acquired developmental (Phase I- *Primary Skill Acquisition*) and social and contextual experiences (Phase II- *Lifestyle*) provided resources from which participants' drew upon in the orchestration of an offence. *Offence Related Competencies* emerged from the model as the most important category which described the psychological competences utilised by participants in the commission of an offence (see Figure 6.4). Offence related competencies were the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural resources used by participants to plan and successfully commit abuses against children. While most participants did not identify their actions and decision making as part of a larger capability, the category was constructed as a result of analysis and in response to comments about how participant's actions tended to become automated after a period of continued offending.

> *"…It was just like, very compact but one decision followed the other, so fast that um…it's sort of like driving a trolley down a hill, you got to steer, dog runs out- you got to steer. Those decisions – bang, bang, bang, it's just like driving, just automatic, almost like autopilot offending…" ERC1018*

In general, choosing the appropriate actions and implementing them effectively in a particular domain indicated the existence of sufficient skill or knowledge within an individual's repertoire to do something well or effectively. Competency in this research specifically referred to an individual's ability to interpret a situation appropriately in its context and to arrive at a series of potential actions which could be applied in a given scenario. In addition, competency was also found to be the ability to use multiple sources of knowledge to successfully meet a
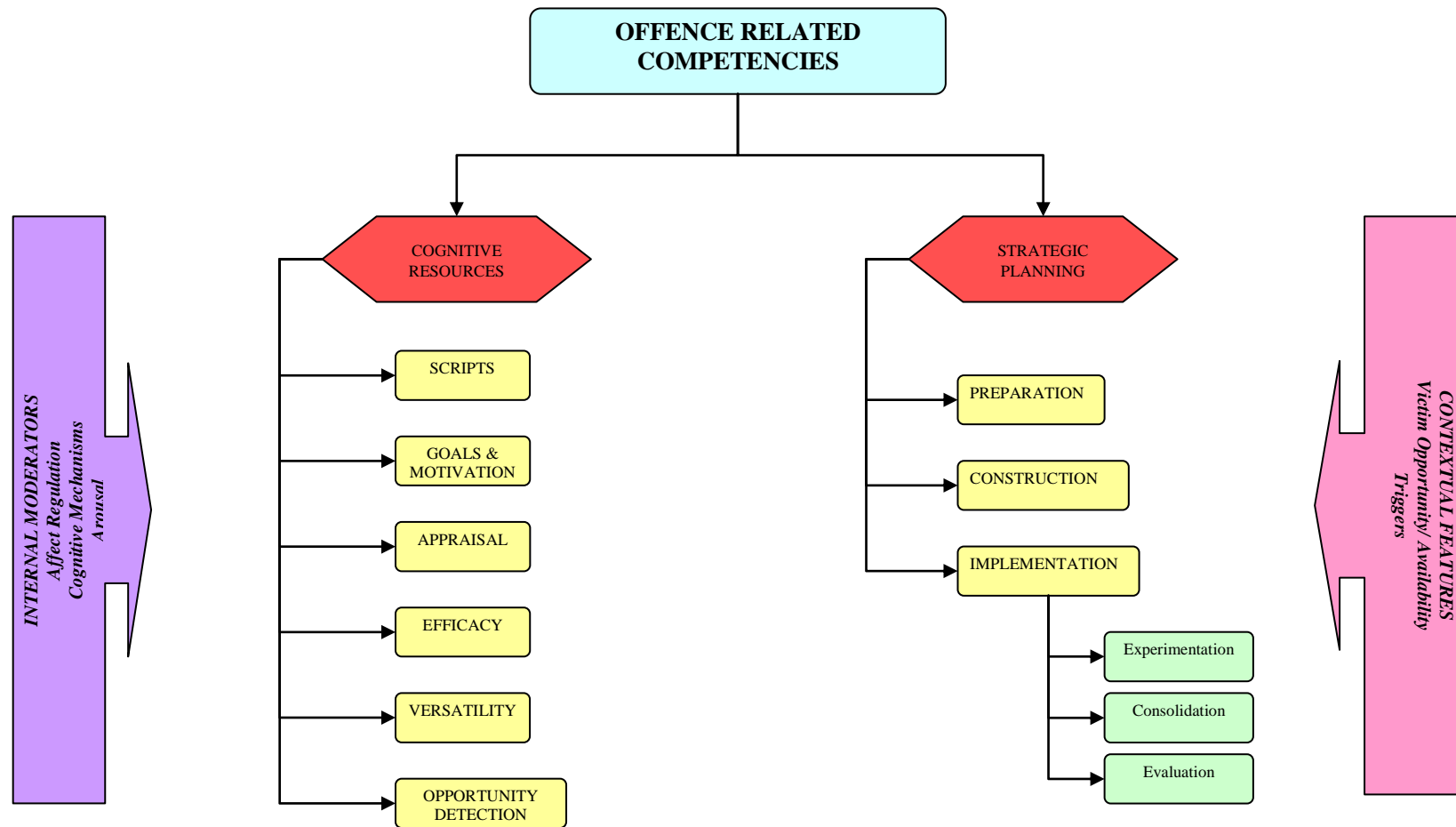
Figure 6.4: Phase III: Offence Related Competencies identified in the ERC Model

desired end. For the current sample, competency referred to the skills, abilities, capacity, and behaviours utilised to facilitate and improve offending techniques during the *offence process*. The following phenomena were a reflection and demonstration of elements and properties identified from data analysis.

In this study the participants exhibited a range of offence related competencies which suggested the existence of a continuum whereby some participants were more extreme than others on a particular skill dimension. By analysing interview and relevant file data, it was possible to derive a higher order category (with its associated properties and dimensions) of Offence Related Competencies (ORC). The resulting core category was divided into two subcategories; '*Cognitive Resources*' and '*Strategic Planning*' to reflect the underlying structure and process of ORC (see Figure 6.4).

Cognitive Resources referred to the internal representations of ideas utilised to represent, process, and communicate information (Huesmann, 1998). The use of knowledge structures for perception, interpretation, decision-making, and action selection provided a way of classifying knowledge so that it made sense to its user. Cognitive resources provided a platform from which the structure, preparation, and implementation of a plan were sourced. The findings supported the view that the more deeply complex and entrenched cognitive resources become, the more sophisticated the plan.

Strategic Planning was process orientated and highlighted the construction, preparation, and the implementation of a plan for offending. Whilst the preparation and the implementation of a plan reflected conscious decisions on the part of the offender, the actual formulation of a plan for offending, for some, was initially devised at an unconscious level.

The ORC is an intricate and complex phase of the model, and while the most significant subcategories are illustrated in Figure 6.4 which demonstrates this category as a whole, the complexity of this core category requires the necessity to unpack the subcategories and components embedded in this phase to offer greater explanatory depth.

Cognitive Resources

The term cognition refers to "the basic operations involved in human perception, memory and thinking (Solso, 1998)…and involve a complex interplay of

OFFENCE RELATED COMPETENCIES

Cognitive Resources

INTERNAL MODERATORS

CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

Scripts

SOURCE OF SCRIPTS
- Own abuse
- Sexual gratification
- Own offending
- Media

ADHERENCE
- Strict / Loose
- Co-opting normal sexual scripts
- Compulsivity / habit
- Rules

COMPLEXITY
- Rich or detailed

CONTENT OF SCRIPTS
- Victim focused
- Entitlement –self focused
- Mutuality/ romance
- Seduction/ seduced (opens both ways)
- Education
- Punishment
- Substitution
- Assertion   - Taboo

STRUCTURE (Components)
- Personal
- Victim
- Offence related

Goals & Motivation

SOURCE OF GOALS
- Self-generated

FUNCTION OF GOALS
- Offence Planning/ learning
- Rules / norms for offending (boundaries) e.g., setting limits of who to offend against & who not to.

STRUCTURE OF GOALS

CONTENT OF GOALS
- Tension release
- Thrill seeking
- Sexual gratification
- Power & control
- Love
- Childhood regression

Appraisal

CONSCIOUS PROCESSING

AUTOMATED

Explicitness
Effortful

Intuitive/ Spontaneous
Over time
Effortless

Rehearsal/ Practice

Efficacy

Stability

Degree

Evolving

Versatility

- Ability to change tactics with ease
- Multiple contexts

Goals & Motivation

Figure 6.5: Cognitive Resources sub-category of Phase III Offence Related Competencies.

perceptual (e.g., attention), thinking (e.g., concept formulation) and memory processes (e.g., retention, retrieval)" (Gannon, Ward, Beech, & Fisher, 2007, p. 1). In the current research six further subcategories were identified within this sub-category (see Figure 6.5) as being utilised by child sexual offenders in relation to their offending or leading up to their offending. They were scripts, goals and motivations, appraisal, efficacy, and versatility, and will be discussed in length as the sub-category of *Cognitive Resources* is unpacked.

Scripts

Scripts are integrated sets of actions designed to achieve a final goal and a number of subsidiary ones for a given situation (Schank & Abelson, 1988). For example, when you enter a restaurant you choose a table, order, wait, eat, pay the bill, and leave. People continually follow scripts which are acquired through social learning and lived experience, and subsequent practice. Following scripts is cognitively useful because it reduces time and mental effort in ascertaining what constitutes an appropriate behaviour each time a situation is encountered. Scripts also act as a guide for behaviour when an unfamiliar situation is presented, at which time an appropriately related script is applied.

The source of many of the participants' scripts was often procured from the *Primary Skill Acquisition* phase in childhood and adolescence. Lived experience may have either been acquired through participant's own sexual gratification including masturbation and fantasy, the media and pornographic material, or through personal experience (including their own abuse and early developmental experiences and sexual experimentation). Previously acquired scripts from childhood experiences may have also transpired into adult violent behaviours by identifying viewed physical force (or threat of physical force) as a means of manipulation, power, and control.

Participants' adherence to their scripts ranged from being very strict and closely following their scripts, to quite loose, utilising it as a guide to be flexible enough to adapt to the situation. Some co-opted their scripts from other sources and experiences, for example, previous sexual relationships with adults (including courting rituals), their own previous abuse, or for one participant in particular alternative sexual practices such as cross-dressing. Co-opting from other scripts was often necessary when the offender had no prior sexual contact with children, or

substituted the child for what they would have liked to have tried in an adult relationship.

> ***"Did you think you would be interrupted?"*** */ "…Nah coz of my cross-dressing and that, if someone does come over you have that time to be able to cover yourself, so it didn't matter if anyone came around, and in this case it would be quicker coz I wouldn't have to re-change…" ERC1047*

The following is a quote from a participant who was able to adapt a previously learned abuse script and utilise it as a loose guide for his own actions.

> *"…I think having sexual contact when I was younger and being groomed through it myself taught me how to be effective…" ERC1048*

Compulsive and habit forming scripts followed more rigid guidelines. One participant likened himself to an alcoholic and further referred to himself as a sexoholic, with the constant desire he had for sex, with both his daughter and his wife. His offending did not vary a great deal because he was always looking to fulfil the same need, his sexual gratification. From the research sample, scripts formed out of habit did not greatly vary, were usually initiated and maintained with the same offence related behaviours, and tended to be used on one victim at a time primarily.

At times the adherence to a script was also governed by a set of rules that the participant had set himself, that he would not go any further than a certain point. The guidelines were in place to provide false barriers, but as mentioned earlier boundary lines were malleable.

> *"…how young is too young? Anyone under 12 is too young, but I still went under that anyway and broke my own limits…I think I broke my own limits just being in the moment…" ERC1548*

The nature of a script may be straight-forward and easy to follow or detailed and rich in content. If a script is straight-forward then only one component is considered; the offenders' personal gratification is paramount. Participants have taken what they wanted and left. The victim was not considered. The offender wanted to fulfil his needs and terminated his offending when that was done. A participant's script became more complex when the victim was taken into account (with not just himself to consider), whether during sexual contact or outside of it where a relationship, in the mind of the offender, may have begun to be established.

Complex scripts were also prevalent when the offending was extrafamilial due to the need for elaborate stories or explanations required to account for time alone with a child that was not the participant's son or daughter or otherwise related too.

Script content pertained to the aim, purpose, storyline, or premise through which the participant operated. A number and variety of themes emerged from participant data: entitlement, assertion, punishment, substitution, taboo, victim focus, mutuality/romance, seduction, and education. At times participants displayed interplay between script content, demonstrating the fluid nature with which they employed their scripts.

Entitlement themes centred on the belief that the participant had the right to do as he wished. This may have been because he viewed his family as property and therefore had ownership of its members. This may have also been the result of maladaptive learning from within the participant's own family growing up (*Primary Skill Acquisition*). Along this vein was the notion of the participant deciding when and with whom his family members were sexually active with, and resolved to be their victim's first sexual partner. In addition, entitlement to have sexual relations with a child was also the result of the participant having felt that the victim(s) owed him for the care (financial or emotional) that he bestowed. Generally, entitlement from this viewpoint transpired in two ways: as a response to the participant believing he had missed out on opportunities because he had been forced to look after family members and become the primary provider, or because he was a victim of abuse and therefore had the right to sexually abuse someone else. The right of retribution or punishment because of what was considered to be a 'ruined life' was alluded to by a small number of participants.

> *"...I felt a little bit of 'you owe me' and you know, 'I'm here in this position I don't want to be so I'll have what I want', and I think that's what triggered the offending to start..." ERC1311*

The following is an example from a participant illustrating both retribution and negative rationalisation, i.e., because the participant hadn't been caught and because the participant had been sexually abused, it was acceptable for him to abuse his victim.

> *"...I basically look at it as, I was abused from the age of 4 so I basically said to myself, one I haven't been caught, no one in the house had found out about it, no one had walked in so it was ok to carry on, and the other one was 'I was abused so if it's ok for people to do it to me then it must be alright for me to abuse them', and that's how I made it seem ok..." ERC1036*

Sexual preference for the victim specifically was not necessarily the primary aim of offending, however the victim(s) became the recipient of the punishment (restorative justice).

Educating the victim in adult sexual practices provided an invitation to begin discussion about his or her body and pubertal changes taking place during adolescence. Erotica on the television, sexual education talks at school, 'mistakenly' leaving pornographic images where the victim may find them, and child questions of 'where did I come from?' proved to be effective conversation starters. It provided a means of talking about relationships and the sexual practices of adults, extending to showing victims pornographic images, followed by demonstrating how to perform sexual acts. Participants felt that because they were teaching their victims about sex, their victims would know how to better 'please' future partners.

> *"...I started using teenage porn websites to teach* (victim)*, to make her aware of her sexuality, to make her more curious about sex and to be able to talk to me about it more..." ERC1333*

Education was not always the primary content of many participants' scripts; however elements of this theme were present across much of the sample population as the offending continued.

The desire for intimacy and/or sexual activity was a frequent theme applicable to most participants, and when participants were not able to achieve this with age appropriate partners they believed that their needs would be met by their victim(s). For those participants that were in relationships, they believed their needs were not being met by their partner and for reasons such as "too lazy to have an affair", "not wanting to have an affair", or "not having time to have an affair", turned to victims who were more readily available. For participants who were single, a fear of rejection from age appropriate partners, seeing women as deceitful and game playing, and finding children to be more accepting, emerged as the justification for their offending.

"…if I went out to a bar or somewhere to try and find and extramarital affair, there was always the chance of rejection and I did not want to be rejected. So really, to sum it up, the really simple answer is coz she was there…" ERC1234

The number of *taboo* scripts which emerged in the sample was relatively small as a primary script, although many of the participants indicated that they enjoyed the "adrenaline rush" accompanying the offending. For those for whom the forbidden nature of offending against a child was a key theme or principle script, awareness of its immoral and/or illegal position fuelled participant's excitement and subsequent motivation for further offending.

A victim focused script centred on the participant's efforts to please the victim. By performing acts that the participant thought the victim would enjoy, it was believed that he or she would be less likely to disclose the offending. This set of beliefs may have been acquired from sexual activities from the participant's own childhood (*Phase I – Primary Skill Acquisition*). A victim focused script often overlapped that of the substitution script, in the participant wanting to 'pleasure' the victim as he would his partner.

*"…it wasn't about me getting her off; it was about me making her feel good…"*ERC1433

A 'victim focused' and 'substitution script' at times also combined with a mutuality and/or romance script where both participant and victim were thought by the participant to be in a consensual and loving relationship. For those participants utilising a mutuality or romance script, it was common for individuals to substitute their wife or partner for the victim. For those participants that were single, and utilised this script, individuals believed and treated the victim as his girlfriend/boyfriend.

"…I started to see the whole thing not as me offending, and me doing her harm, but as her being my partner and me being in a relationship…" ERC1533

Romantic gestures and courtship rituals featured as part of the participant's romance script. By treating the victim as an adult, participants believed that their victim(s) could or would have had the capacity to terminate the 'relationship' if he or she was not happy. A very small number of participants believed that they

themselves were seduced by their victim, and/or they seduced their victim. The victim is seen as a sexual being in his or her own right.

> *"…I walked past the toilet door and* (victim) *was sitting on the toilet with the door open and showing off her private parts and I said 'shut the door' and then the penny dropped and I thought 'gosh, it was almost like she was advertising herself'. And I sort of went back and said 'did you want sex?' and she said 'yeah'…I think she was keen to experiment and go further and find out about sex…" ERC1411*

Claims of being 'seduced' by the victim included references to sexy clothing worn by the victim for the purpose of 'parading' in front of the participant, or the victim sitting a particular way (e.g., with legs open). The seduction script described the sexual attraction felt toward the victim but the unwillingness of the offender to acknowledge any accountability for the onset of offending. At times it was found that the small number of participants identified as using this script also utilised this script to facilitate greater levels of sexually aggressive actions than those evident in previous scripts. As one participant states, "*it was thrown in my face, so I just took it*" *ERC1511.*

The content of a participant's script appeared to be fluid in nature, with the selection of the appropriate script responsive to the dynamics of the relationship with the victim. The majority of participants revealed the utilisation of more than one script over the course of their offending, and even at times, over one offence.

The structure of the script referred to how the participants' scripts were organised and how participants interpreted their scripts. From the data a pattern of relationships was found based on three main components: personal, victim focused, or offence related. Personal aspects of a script were what the offender kept telling himself to rationalise the offending and to provide ongoing reassurance, for example, that his actions we not harmful or that the victim was consenting. This was often seen in the form of specific rationalisations (discussed in 'Internal Moderators' section) and minimisation of harm. It was also a set of personal rules of conduct that the offender abided by e.g., "*I'm not going to do anything to others that I didn't enjoy being done to me*" *ERC1648*. The creation and maintenance of rationalisations provided a false barrier to allow the offender to maintain a reduced (or negligent) amount of guilt. When a participant's script was structured around the victim, then he or she (the victim) was the sole focus. A victim script in this regard included actions

and behaviours performed (that of a 'scripted' dialogue with the victim(s) as a precursor to offending), and in addition the victim script also included features of the victim (physical, emotional, behavioural, and psychological) that may have matched previous victim characteristics or preferences of the offender. One participant in particular followed the same victim script post offending by always wanting to maintain a friendship even after the offending ceased.

> *"...as the guys got older and they decided that they didn't want to do things anymore, which happens, I'd still hang out with them...the door was always open and I was always there for them if they needed to be around..."*
> *ERC1748*

Participants with scripts structured around the actual offence itself contained (sexual) actions and dialogue during the offence (e.g., I love you so much, you're beautiful). In addition, an offence script could also be played out according to a fantasy or with the adaptation of another script. Many offenders continued to utilise the same offence related scripts from previous offences or sexual episodes. Repeated employment of regular offence scripts helped to establish a pattern (including performing the same sexual activity with each occasion of sexual connection) and further facilitated the integration of offending into day to day routine (for both the offender and victim). For those with extensive scripts, offence related scripts were evolving and became a catalogue of 'possibilities' from which to draw upon. Participants early in their sexual offending careers may have initially performed similarly from one offence to another, but as confidence grew the nature and form of their sexual behaviours evolved, frequently starting where they left off after the last offence.

> *"...you sort of carried on from as far as you got from the time before and it snowballs..." ERC1235*

Goals and Motivations

Goals allowed individuals to focus their efforts in a specific direction allowing them to work towards their own objectives and often provided a sense of purpose in their activities. Motivations, whether conscious or unconscious, provided reasons for engaging in a particular behaviour or course of action. Goals are the end result of a course of action, they are what a person works towards in order to achieve

a desired outcome, where as motivation is the source, reason, or driving force underlying achievement of one's goals (the reward of what the desired outcome might bring or mean). Goals and motivations were broken down by: source, function, structure, and content. This reflected the wide ranging explanations and responses that were observed and emerged from the data within the sample population.

For many of the participants in this research, the source of an individual's goals was self-generated. Goals originated as a result of a deficiency or need which subsequently activated behaviour. Often the inability to regulate affective states resulted in relying on committing offences to alleviate negative mood states. Contextual features or situational variables also prompted the offender to make goal orientated decisions if presented with a victim who was particularly attractive to him.

> *"I saw* (victim) *by our driveway and I asked who he was, I was told and so then it was pretty much a strong campaign on my part to get to meet him…"* ERC1848

The functional aspects of goals, for many of the participants, had two main components. Not only did goals help to plan an offence or plan future offence(s) opportunities, but they also enabled the offender to set the limits on what he would and would not do in relation to the actual offence and the characteristics of the victim (e.g., the age line that participants would not offend under). A small number of participants also set themselves boundaries and rules of conduct in relation to the level of intrusiveness performed during the offence. As mentioned previously, rules of conduct often provided the participant with justifications and rationalisations for the offence, which in turn, acted to minimise the internalised shame or guilt. Participants' excuse-making was more commonly heard post hoc as they compared the details of their offending against other sexual offenders in group therapy or penal institutions. For example, *"At least I didn't have sex with her like some of the guys in here, I only touched her" (Generic statement used by many participants).*

Participants' goals were structured and organised by short-term and long-term goals based on what the most important needs were to the individual. Often individuals considered vulnerability or causal factors such as the need for intimacy and the fulfilment of that need to have been one of their long-term goals. The steps taken or the sub-goals created to achieve long-term goals varied within the sample population. For some participants with primary deviant sexual preferences towards

children the long-term goal was to have sexual relations specifically with a child. The steps taken in pursuit of the long-term goal were spending time with the identified victim to gain his or her trust. Non-sexual physical contact may have been the next step to 'test' the level of receptiveness of the victim before beginning sexual contact such as placing a hand on the victim's buttocks, breast, or genitals. Initially first sexual contact would have the appearance of an 'accidental touch', before the next step of making an explicit attempt to engage the victim in sexual activity, and subsequent prolonged sexual activity. For a small number of participants, long-term goals spanned over a number of years. A victim was identified for future sexual intercourse; however, the participant did not believe that (at the time) the victim's body was physically developed enough for full sexual intercourse to take place and therefore continued inappropriate sexual contact until such time.

> *"...she'd have to wait till she was bigger...wait till you go to high school..."*
> *ERC1335*

For other individuals in the sample population, goals involving sexual contact with a specific victim did not operate at the conscious level and victims were used as substitutes to fulfil deficiencies unable to be fulfilled in more pro-social ways. For men identifying as being bisexual, but had only experienced heterosexual relationships, the goal of having intimate relations with another man was substituted to a young boy out of fear of rejection from an age appropriate male partner. Short-term goals or goals of immediate gratification operated at both the conscious and unconscious level for participants. Conscious short-term goals often reflected the participant's desire to alleviate a high sexual arousal level and previously identified victims were viewed as objects of use to fulfil sexual needs. Short-term goals operating at the unconscious level operated to fulfil the emotional needs of participants and like conscious goals, victims were used to regulate mood states, however the victim may not have previously been identified and the participant was non-discriminatory in the selection of his victim(s).

The content of participant's goals revealed the type, motivation, meaning or substance of their goals, i.e., what their goals essentially were. When participants discussed the content of their goals, they identified a number of themes which were at times mediated by *Internal Moderators* and were occasionally overlapping:

tension release, thrill seeking, sexual gratification, power and control, love, and reverting to pleasurable childhood memories.

Many of the participants' goals were concerned with improving their state of happiness as well as, or in addition to, the significance offending held for them. This would include thrill seeking behaviour (the act of the offence itself) or engaging in sexual activity when there was a chance of being walked in on (i.e., wife in the lounge watching television). Tension release and sexual gratification were also goals where the needs of the offender were primary.

An additional motivating factor was the establishment and maintenance of power and control over family / individual / victim. The need to express control over victims with the goal of maintaining the individual's status within the family was a further motivation to offend (supporting the use of an 'Entitlement' script). It was clear from the data that participants may not have been initially aware of this goal in regard to offending, but the desire to control the victim subsequently resulted in the facilitation of continued offending.

The participant's need to be loved is a very strong response amongst the sample population. Many participants found children to be non-discriminatory when it came to sharing love. Participants commented on finding a more powerful emotional connection with their victim than with adult sexual partners. Victims paid participants more attention and were always able to sense when the participants were lonely or seeking support. While for some participants love and intimacy remained the motivating factor, for others it transformed into a need for tension release or sexual gratification over a period of weeks, months, or years of continued offending. The release of sexual tension or the experience of sexual gratification as a means of solely improving the participants' mood state resulted in the status of the victim becoming an object. There were, however, goals relating to the victim's needs and based on a desire to pleasure the victim. Those goals were often reflected in descriptions of the sexual relationship with victims as "loving 'relationships" which were perceived to be reciprocal.

The participant's desire to revert to pleasurable childhood memories proved to be another motivator for child sexual offending, though only a few participants stated that this was their goal. As previously mentioned, the need for some participants to return psychologically to a time when they felt secure and without judgement provided individuals with a kind of emotional refuge. For one participant

in particular, sexual play from an early age (*Primary Skill Acquisition*) continued to produce images and fantasies through to adulthood that facilitated the onset of offending. For him, childhood signified a fun and safe period of his life which he found most enjoyable. As the onset of offending (as an adult) got closer he more frequently escaped into his childhood fantasies.

> "… prior to me feeling lost these thoughts started to come back about…it was, the fantasies around those games…and I just started, in my dreams at night, and I'd wake up at 2 o'clock in the morning thinking these, how good they were and all this kind of thing. I started to get all these inappropriate fantasies back again… the fantasies were, oh well in the games what would happen is, is you know, it was a touching game so you know, if it was your turn you won the card or you spin the bottle, you'd take her off and, or she'd take you off, you'd go off together and touch each other and touch their private parts and all that sort of thing…yeah over their knickers or…mmm….I fantasised being back at that age…" ERC3103

Appraisal

The category *Appraisal* (see Figure 6.6) was constructed as a sub-category of 'Cognitive Resources' to reflect the ease (and for some the difficulty) with which participants were able to make accurate assessments of both a victim and situation/ environment in order to choose appropriate strategies in an offence related context. Attending to environmental and sensory inputs functioned in relation to the desire to meet or successfully achieve the participant's needs or goals.
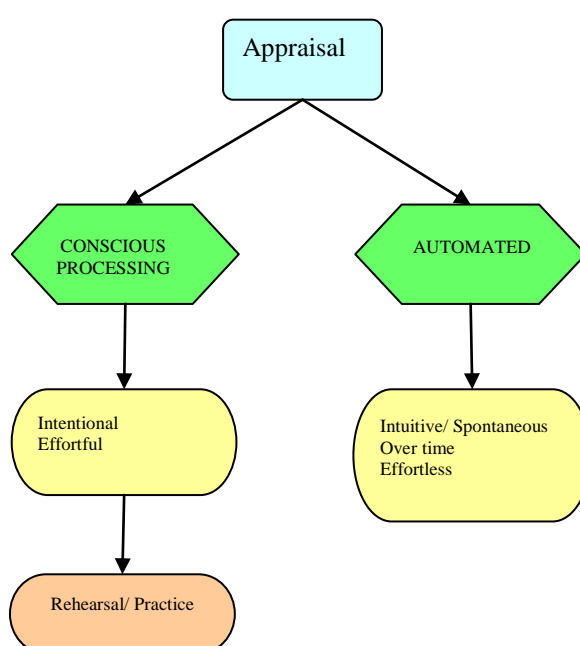
Figure 6.6: Sub-category 'Appraisal' of Cognitive Resources

The sub-category of *Appraisal* referred to the method with which participants were able to make assessments based on their ability to attend to and interpret external stimuli within an offence related circumstance. *Appraisal* had two further subcategories based on the conscious or automatic processing of context and victim related information. The conscious processing of information referred to the control of participants' internal psychological processes activated by external stimuli and events which were intentionally directed and put into operation. In contrast, the automatic processing of information derived from external stimuli and events often occurred without knowledge or awareness to the individual (Bargh & Williams, 2006). Participants demonstrated wide variability in the complexity of their level of appraisal for both environmental stimuli and victim-related information. Both participants with and without experience of offending were consciously able to attend to cues from both the victim and situational context and intentionally action what was thought to be the most appropriate strategy. However, the conscious processing of offence related information was commonly a function of inexperience and demonstrated in earlier offences committed by individuals in the sample population.

The conscious processing of offence related information and the intentional or effortful implementation of appropriate actions in the goal of sexual offending, often directed individuals to create opportunities to offend or begin the planning of an offence. Participants consciously making appraisals and decisions frequently practiced or rehearsed scenarios and fantasies to visualise the successful outcome and achievement of their goals.

> *"...I was role playing with my inner self, saying like 'this is what I'll do first...'" ERC1015*

Participants mentally rehearsed the dialogue that they would use and the sexual actions that they wanted to perform with the victim(s). Repeatedly thoughts of a previous or potential victim would result in a state of physiological arousal which would frequently be reinforced with masturbation. Pornographic images and media also provided a platform for additional offence related scripts which would be role played whilst masturbating. By imagining a sequence of events or specified sexual

action in their mind, participants were able to plan an approach, potential dialogue, and anticipate the desired outcome of the offending.

> *"…I fantasised about all kinds of things; anal, oral, masturbation…all kinds of things would happen in my fantasies…as I've gotten older my fantasies have become a lot more deviant…"* ERC1141

Due to the covert nature of child sexual offending, a small number of participants used grooming itself as a form of practice to be able to sharpen their approach techniques and the establishment of a relationship with a victim. For participants with multiple victims, the act of sexual offending was practice in itself. It provided an opportunity to expand their repertoire of preparatory statements in anticipation of sexual offending. Victim response was not uniform, and with that in mind a small number of participants were able to formulate 'back up' plans from their anthology of offence scripts.

Inexperienced participants did not always interpret cues elicited from victims accurately which in turn left them at times unsure if their explicit goals and needs would be achieved from offending. Confidence in their ability to offend was often low. As a result, offences were either committed with the use of rudimentary strategies or on the basis of the presentation of an opportunity without the full knowledge of what the implications and consequences were likely to be for offending.

In contrast to inexperienced offenders, experienced participants were able to unconsciously make quick evaluations and implement a variety of strategies (scripts) appropriate to their goals in an offence related situation. Automated appraisal referred to the intuitive and spontaneous decisions made in a given offence related situation which over time became effortless. For example, some participants were quickly able to single out a potential victim from a group of children and successfully offend against them, identifying vulnerabilities of a particular child with ease. For participants who acquired this ability they frequently commented on the effortlessness of offending and that it was generally a function of volume of victims and length of offending.

Many participants with sustained offending against a particular victim considered their actions whilst offending to be 'going through the motions'. Experienced participants often were unable to describe how or why they reached

their decisions, but just knew that they were making accurate assessments of the situation. Accuracy was defined by the successful achievement of offence related goals, or accuracy in knowing when to tactically withdraw from a high risk situation. Participants who were generally effective in achieving their offence related goals were confident in their ability to secure access to a victim and successfully offend.

Participants reporting the automated nature of offending were often unaware that they had unconsciously assessed the likelihood of successfully offending against a potential victim and had already begun to implement actions or a strategy to ready the victim for offending. One participant in particular found that he had more than one victim 'ready to go' without realising. This was sometimes the case when a participant was grooming one child and found another child was groomed concurrently but not deliberately.

> *"...I'd made the decision not to touch* (victim)*, but because they were always together they were both basically groomed at the same time..." ERC1948*

For participants offending against a single victim over a sustained period, automatically evaluating the victim and environmental stimuli or context occasionally educed pre-offence actions functioning as cues to the victim. For example, it might have been a 'look' given to the victim (that the victim would recognise as what was about to happen next), helping with homework, or reading a bedtime story and the realisation without having thought about it that the opportunity to offend had presented itself.

> *"...when I was reading stories to her it became another opportunity..." ERC1102*

Though participants with large volumes of victims and extensive offending histories more often operated without conscious knowledge or awareness by appraising the likelihood of successfully offending against a potential victim and implementing actions automatically, the resumption of cognitive control or conscious awareness would be triggered by an unaccounted for victim response (or contingency script in the participant's repertoire) such as 'stop' or 'no'. At such time the participant frequently returned to the conscious processing of victim-offence related

information in order to continue to achieve their goal of offending or to console the victim and cease offence related behaviours.

Marked variability was displayed within the sample for a participant's ability to accurately make assessments by attending to and interpreting external stimuli within an offence related context. Conscious processing and appraisal of external stimuli and events in an offence related situation was intentional and effortful often requiring rehearsal and/or practice and was more commonly a function of inexperience. In contrast, automated appraisal referred to the intuitive and spontaneous decisions made in a given offence related situation which over time became effortless. Participants functioning at an automated level were more likely to be situated towards the right side of the Competency Continuum closer towards the expertise end of the spectrum.

Efficacy

Efficacy referred to the participants' belief in their ability to exercise control over their own functioning and events that affected their lives. Efficacy was distinct from other subcategories of ORC because it directly influenced all other subcategories by the degree to which more or less emphasis was placed on scripts, goals, appraisal, versatility, and offence opportunity. Participants' demonstrated a range of confidence levels and in all cases confidence was influenced by the participant's emotional state (*Internal Moderators*). The sub-category of efficacy was divided into three components: stability, degree, and evolving (see Figure 6.5).

The stability of an individual participant's confidence was often a function of experience. For those participants with a great number of victims and a long sexual offending history, their confidence was consistently high. Their belief in their ability to successfully offend was strong even if the victim refused or asked them to 'stop' once offending had commenced (which did not happen frequently for those individuals). Participants with high levels of self-efficacy reported finding rejection from a victim a challenging experience. The actions of the victim did not impact on their confidence levels which remain unwavering and unchanged.

> "...with the amount of young people hanging around it didn't matter if one or two offended me by saying no and leaving..." ERC2048

For those individuals with low confidence, rejection from a potential victim reinforced low self-esteem and a negative self image. Participants from the sample that were low in self-confidence also saw children as 'vessels' and 'objects' to experiment with, and found children less rejecting than adults.

> *"…it's gone from a curiosity type thing to more um, I guess um, where I saw it from it was easier to get what I wanted sexually from children than it was adults… Um… but the more vulnerable were easier to exploit so I guess that's what lead me to targeting them. Like I've said I've never been in a relationship with an adult, um… I guess I was quite shy, intimidated by women…" ERC1241*

Degree of confidence was not only measured by choice of offence location but also by actions that were performed and level of risk taken. A log or photos were kept by a small number of participants with one participant rating his victims in a diary or 'little black book'. Entries of what victims liked and didn't like was recorded along with a rating scale of satisfaction achieved by the participant.

Efficacy appeared to also be evolving. According to participants, their level of confidence increased with each successful sexual connection made with a victim because the victim did not reject the participant (from the participant's perspective) nor did the victim disclose the offending. When, after each sexual incident, a victim did not disclose the offending the participant gained more confidence in their ability to 'get away with' their offending and even considered victim non-disclosure as a level of acceptance or consent from the victim. Heightened confidence as a result subsequently began to mirror the degree of sexual intrusiveness conducted during offences. Sexual connection initially may have started off with showing and touching of genitalia (when the participant was uncertain of the victim's reaction) and moved on to more intrusive behaviours such as digital penetration, oral sex, anal sex, and full sexual intercourse. Participants also remarked that instead of having to previously opportunistically "steal" moments with the victim, an increase in confidence allowed offenders to be bolder by actively creating opportunities.

> *"…it progressed from touching right through to rape, and then the consistency and the boldness and the repetition increased until it was part of my life and part of* (victim's) *life…" ERC1334*

The level of intrusiveness of sexual offending, and corresponding victim response, was monitored so that the victim was less likely to report the offending.

Grandiosity or high self-efficacy emerged as a further sub-category of *Efficacy* to describe those participants with an inflated sense of self worth which lead them to set rules and boundaries for their offending. For some participants those rules were governed by what they did and did not enjoy themselves when they were the same age as their victims. Those participants believed their offending to be manageable and under their control. *They* were able to dictate the offending process. Participants saw themselves as better than others and believed that their offending was not that bad as other child sexual offenders because they were able to control what they did. By performing sexual acts that they themselves enjoyed, participants believed it not only gave them permission to offend, but in some cases they were introducing their victims to the world of sex. Many of the participants demonstrated some aspect of 'rule setting' criteria, however, they often found themselves breaking those rules and thus blurring or shifting the line that they had drawn between permissible and forbidden sexual behaviours.

Versatility

Versatility was a defining category which ultimately distinguished less experienced participants from offenders that were at the height of their offending career and who exhibited considerable offence related expertise. Being versatile was a key aspect to the secretive and covert nature of child sexual offending. Versatility emerged as a further sub-category of *Cognitive Resources* as a result of offenders being able to quickly and easily change tactics or approaches to victims if one was not working. As variables were checked across the sample it became clear that the few participants able to make quick assessments of the situation and the victim could draw from a multitude of strategies and scripts to facilitate their offending. It became clear that when circumstances demanded those few participants were able to disengage from grooming the victim whilst maintaining equilibrium, in order to avoid overly alarming or concerning the victim. Any opposition (by the victim) or a perceived lack of success (in the achievement of the goal of sexual offending) was more often seen as a setback rather than total rejection and, as mentioned earlier, was therefore considered 'a challenge' to the offender to engage the victim in sexual activities.

> *"...there was this one boy I liked quite a lot. I abused him a few times and then he started not wanting to do it, so I just thought 'ok, let's try another approach', so I started bribing him by buying him lollies or buying him little things, you know, and basically he'd come around after that..."* ERC1210

The sub-category of *Versatility* also exemplified how many offenders did not have the ability to change tactics or approach if one method or approach was not working. Without a repertoire of 'possibilities' to draw from their 'Cognitive Resources', for those men with limited experience, force or coercion was considered the next probable step to engage the victim in sexual activity. That may have then started to encompass other variables such as a sense of entitlement, when the participant was blocked from achieving his goal, and subsequently the individual may have then taken what was wanted (sexual contact) by force. Versatility allowed the participant to offend with multiple techniques in multiple contexts. The ability of the offender to be versatile may also have be related to societal changes and could arguably be considered a product of technologies often used to establish a relationship and groom victims, for example, many of the participants' utilised video and computer games to ingratiate themselves with their victim.

Opportunity Detection

Offenders did not necessarily need to be highly skilled to be able to detect an opportunity. For some, opportunities were considered obvious (to the offender) and were externally imposed, for example babysitting, bathing a child (factors considered within *Contextual Features*). The 'presentation' of a victim or the prospect of beginning sexual connection with a victim was able to provide the catalyst to begin the process of trying to gain the victim's trust, or to begin speaking sexually with the victim in order to probe/gauge victim interest and response.

> *"...* (victim) *she had a sore meme* (vagina) *and she hurt it on the bike seat, that gave me the opportunity and I took the opportunity straight away..."* ERC1040

Participants considering themselves to be good at opportunity detection reported the ability to create an opportunity out of the smallest signal or cue from a victim. Implementation of the appropriate script became effortless when the offender was highly tuned to detect an opportunity. Confidence would be high, and if one method was unsuccessful, the experienced offender would easily be able to source another

script. It also appeared that for the most experienced offenders, the ability to detect offence opportunities was one that individuals continually refined and improved through the experience and subsequent reflection of sexual offending.

Strategic Planning

The *Strategic Planning* sub-category of ORC was constructed simultaneously with *Cognitive Resources* to illustrate variation of the cognitive ability of participants with regard to child sexual offending. *Strategic Planning* was differentiated on the basis of depicting the participant's ability to construct, prepare and implement (execute) a plan for offending (see Figure 6.7). Though the sub-categories of *Cognitive Resources* and *Strategic Planning* are separated and unpacked for the purpose of outlining the model, the two categories both describe the cognitive functioning of participants with regard to child sexual offending. The (strategic) planning of an offence was process orientated or goal directed, and referred the participant's ability to operationalise *Cognitive Resources* by applying participant's knowledge to a specific task, in this case the execution of sexual connection with a child.

For participants not yet on a rehabilitation programme, many thought that they did not have a plan at the onset of offending and therefore did not take steps to put themselves and their identified victim in a position to offend. Observations and inferences of cognitive functioning were able to be made during data analysis for those participants. Participants on a programme or having completed the rehabilitation programme at the time of the interview were able to provide insight to their seemingly innocent decisions resulting in child sexual offending.

Construction

The construction of an idea or plan for sexual offending may have been created at the conscious or unconscious level. Participants were not always aware until after the fact that the source of their sexually abusive actions was grounded in their extensive offence related knowledge and experience. The source of constructed plans for many of the sample population was drawn from personal experiences of the participants. This may have been experience from an early age (Phase I - *Primary Skill Acquisition*) or from age appropriate partners (relationships in Phase II - *Lifestyle*). The source of a plan may have also resulted from a desire to try a new sexual activity with the view that children are less rejecting than adults.
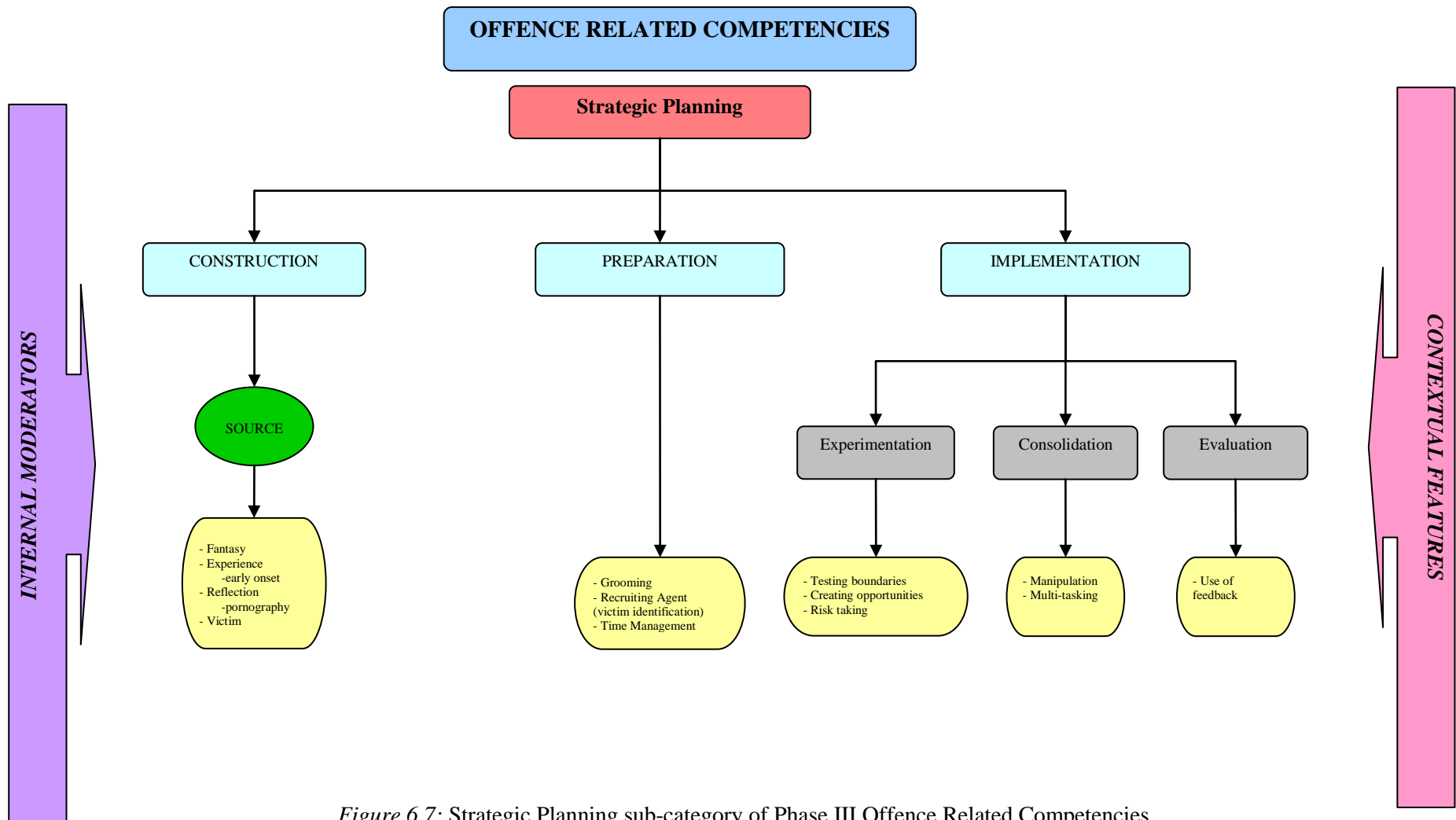
Figure 6.7: Strategic Planning sub-category of Phase III Offence Related Competencies

An encounter with a potential victim also functioned to initiate a desire to offend and the formation of a plan. A particular victim may have caught the participant's attention and he then began to take steps to initiate sexual contact. A few participants believe that the victim made themselves available which then elicited sexualised thoughts towards the victim. Other participants identified a potential victim not known to them but desired them nonetheless, and began to make preparations. It must be noted that not all participants in the current sample had a victim in mind when they began to develop ideas around child sexual offending.

In conjunction with the ORC sub-category of *Appraisal* (within *Cognitive Resources*) masturbation to fantasies served as stimulants to sexual offences. Participants were asked questions about their masturbatory fantasies and it was found that the source of their fantasies included the consumption of pornographic material such as internet pornography, magazines, videos, and clothing catalogues.

> *"...I used to look through clothing catalogues and pictures of children in underwear, then from around I think 2000, I got internet access and I was looking at child pornography on the internet…" ERC1341*

Masturbatory fantasies were also found to be the result of previously committed offences against victims and the future possibility of committing offences against a victim or victims.

Sexual fantasies functioned to enhance sexual desire in general and, more specifically, for a potential victim. Fantasies also functioned as a breach of boundaries and a plethora of possibilities where participants imagined what it would be like to commit sexual acts not previously tried. The content of fantasies reported by participants included bondage, rape, age appropriate partners and practices, and inappropriate fantasies with children. Fantasies with children centred on victim characteristics desired by the participant and included anything from physical appearance to specific fantasies concentrating on genitalia. Fantasy as mental simulation served as a mechanism for rehearsal, and a potential source for the construction of a plan for offending. Daydreaming was also reported by one participant to have been the source of constructed plan for offending. Sitting and thinking about the young boy that he liked and possibilities of how he could get the victim to like him sparked an elaborate plan to offend against the boy.

"…I was actually sitting there on my day off, nothing on, just the radio, just looking outside having a smoke and the idea just sort of came into my head…I was thinking about all of it and thinking how it would come about, or how I would start to make my move…" ERC1115

Preparation

In preparation for an offence, a number of participants performed reconnaissance on their victims and their familial situations, also noting potential victims' likes and dislikes in order to establish rapport. In many cases familial ties were the only necessity to gain access to a victim. A minimum amount of grooming or nurturing was required for those participants offending within the family. Reliance on the relational connection was sufficient to ensure compliance from victims. Grooming of the victim(s) for those participants was said to be done over the course of knowing the victim(s) and presented as regular or normal actions performed in the familial role such as an father, brother, uncle, grandfather, or cousin.

For those participants not related to their victims, groundwork needed to be undertaken in order to increase the chance of successfully abusing a child. By identifying and exploiting the needs and wants of a possible victim(s), the participant was able to provide leverage and tip the balance of power in his favour. Material goods desired by the victim were frequently used as currency by most of the sample of both intrafamilial and extrafamilial offenders. In addition, participants engaged in activities and interests of the victim(s) to further ingratiate themselves with him or her. Those activities were anything from attending sporting matches, playing games, or engaging in other non-sexual activities at the request of the victim. Many participants also recognised the value of engaging in activities (deemed by the participant on reflection) that were intended for individuals older than the victim. That tactic gave victims the opportunity to participate in activities they would not ordinarily be allowed to do, for example, staying up past regular bedtime hours, or letting victims smoke or drink alcohol.

In preparation for offending, a small number of participants reported recruiting victims through acquaintances as well as from previous or current victims. By identifying victims' friends or siblings, or relying on victims to approach other children, the level of suspicion on the participant was lessened. A small number of

participants reported potential victims being more comfortable and accepting of the participant's behaviour in the presence of other children or youths.

> *"...with all the guys (other victims) around and the fun stuff that we did, sometimes I would get someone else to try something on my behalf. If they weren't interested I'd leave it alone, or try something else..." ERC2148*

Only a small number of participants did not believe that grooming of the victim was required. Two reasons were discovered for this: first, the victim's needs were secondary or non-existent to the participant's and therefore the participant did not care how the victim reacted or of being discovered, and secondly, participants subscribing to this method were more often than not known to the victim and therefore felt that the relationship with the victim was strong enough to sustain sexually abusive actions without being discovered or the victim disclosing to a third party.

Implementation

The execution or implementation of a plan or strategy consisted of three components: experimentation, consolidation, and evaluation. Each of these categories will be discussed in turn.

Experimentation

Participants utilised a number of techniques to test and experiment with the boundaries of their victim's knowledge of permissible relationship and social norms. Experimentation was for the purpose of the participant collating the necessary information in the final attempts to weigh up the cost and benefit of proceeding with sexual offending. The testing of those boundaries included the use of games, play-fighting, dialogue (sexualised talk and questioning), teasing, and flirting with the victim. By stretching the borders of what was deemed acceptable and unacceptable to the victim, the creation of offence opportunities could be increased. This most commonly took the form of physical connection, the use of games such as 'dares', or through the escalation of sexual conversations.

By testing the limits of what a victim would and would not tolerate the participant was able to gauge and monitor the level of acceptance of sexual activity conducted by the participant. For example, such testing may have taken the form of a misplaced hand over the genitals while play-fighting. Little or no reaction from the

victim was viewed as a cue to try again or to begin to initiate actions aimed at resulting in sexual offending

> *"...I think it was a gradual process in the way that I went from holding, pulling them close to physically touching. First it was incremental steps, and so basically just testing the water, testing the boundary, and then if that boundary was crossed and wasn't rejected, it was another little step, then another little step..."* ERC1434

Participants also used 'question and answer' to test the boundaries and begin to gain a level of acceptance by the victim. Those men described how they would get the participant to answer a seemingly innocent question before turning the answer on its head and breaking down the conversation in such a way as to get the victim to accept and agree to offending. Victims were lured into conversations where they admit that the offending is 'not so bad' or even something that they may enjoy or did enjoy.

> *"...we got into this conversation, well it was my conversation, um it was like what do you think about what happened? And she was like, she didn't say very much as you can imagine. So you ask a different way and each time she answered in a negative or made no comment, it was like well it wasn't that bad. And that's what I was doing; I was answering my questions for her and basically backing her into a corner. Um so in the finish I basically got her to agree and that gave me the permission to do it because she had said it was ok, well actually she hadn't said anything, but that was how I made it work. I think that the scary thing is that I didn't really have to think about it, it was, it just kept happening..."* ERC1107

By experimenting with the victim's boundaries and the victim's knowledge of relationship and social norms the participant was then able to escalate offence procedures.

The culmination of testing victims' limits and the creation of opportunities required an element of risk taking. The escalation of seemingly innocent actions and behaviours involved an element of chance on the offenders' part and participants ran the risk that their true intentions would be unwittingly revealed. Participants were aware that once the line was crossed where the victim realised the nature of sexualised contact that no sufficient explanation could be given should the participant and victim be discovered.

Risk taking behaviour was also exhibited by participants with reports of inappropriate touching of the victim(s) in the presence of other children and/ or

adults. A smacking of the bottom revealed itself to be an opportunity to touch the victim.

> *"…I would pretend I'm smacking* (victim)*, as she goes past, but actually having a touch, you know, innocent sort of thing, seemingly…"* ERC1045

A further sub-category of 'Experimenting' referred to the participant's ability to be resourceful. An individual's ability to be inventive and imaginative increased their chance of successfully offending. A small number of participants showed a high level of competency in their ability to use prior knowledge of an environment/ situation and utilise personal resources to conjure a previously unused plan or strategy to offend. In fact, such offenders presented as 'entrepreneurs' who displayed a high level of expertise and creativity in the execution of offence related competencies. One participant in particular advocated the use of previous and current victims to recruit other potential victims to increase his selection choices.

Across the sample population participants varied in their ability to utilise resources (both cognitive and material) to entice the victim to participate in sexualised activities. Those that were highly adept were quickly able to assess a potential victim's needs and process all knowledge of the victim and environmental factors to inform decision making prior to offending.

Consolidation

Consolidation referred to the sewing together of all known information about the victim, the environment, and the most opportune moment to offend to ensuring that the most effective strategy was implemented. Consolidation consisted of two main categories: multi-tasking and manipulation.

Multi-tasking referred to the ability of an individual to perform multiple tasks related to the offending process concurrently. Within this category, a further three subcategories were highlighted as the foundation for this Offence Related Competency: Multiple grooming, deceptive strategies, and detection risk management.

Multiple grooming described grooming the victim and their parent/guardian at the same time, or multiple victims at any one time. Participants found that grooming behaviour often went unnoticed because of the relationship they had built up with both parents and victim concurrently.

Deceptive strategies had two parts. Firstly, it referred to the ability of the offender to commit a sexual offence in the presence of others (in close proximity to an adult or other child), for example,

> "…I would supposedly be talking to the victim about whatever pitiful little argument that I had raised, which was just an excuse to get (victim) into the bedroom to offend against her, so I was offending against (victim) while her mother was in the lounge…" ERC1534

By listening out for possible interruptions, the participant was able to monitor environmental cues while committing an offence. Whilst not reflected in the above quote, it was clear from the data that for some participants the risk of getting caught with the victim provided its own excitement. Secondly, deceptive strategies were used to engender trust, and were coupled with multiple grooming (of the parent(s)) to ensure that the onset of the offence not only remained undetected but also began to reflect a natural progression in the relationship.

Detection risk management referred to the participant's ability to identify possible areas or people that would threaten the likelihood of success of offending and took some form of action to counter that threat. An example of such risk detection and management was an offender giving his partner money and telling her to take the boys shopping with her every weekend so that the house was unoccupied for a specified time period giving the participant both time and a secure location to abuse his victim. The participant in the following example continued to encourage his wife to get a night job in order for him to be alone with his daughter.

> "…I planned things ahead. I probably planned a lot of things like agreeing that her mother could go to housie, encourage her to go to housie…Perhaps encouraging her to have a night job or something. Like I think she used to go to housie (bingo) but then she also had a sewing job she did. Worked fish n chip shop for a while. Go to meetings maybe. Things like that. You'd encourage them to do that, just so you'd have them out of the house…" ERC1611

Only a small number of participants revealed high capabilities in all of the above areas. Those participants tended to have elevated confidence levels in their ability to remain undetected. For the most part participants were able to recognise possible risky situations and took some form of action to alleviate that risk or waited for a more opportune moment.

Manipulation of victims and environments was a general technique employed by almost all participants. Manipulation of a victim took a variety of forms. Many aspects have already been discussed throughout the chapter, such as the use of material objects to bribe victims into sexual connection, the use of the participant's status to coerce the victim, and exploiting victim vulnerabilities to lure them into an offence situation. However, the most successful participants were able to establish a strategy where the victim had an illusion of control. By empowering the victim with control over which actions are performed, the participant was able to normalise the offending and convince the victim that all offending was on his or her terms.

> *"...It wasn't until I actually got sort of right into her offending, then I was 'oh do you like that?' 'do you want me to stop?' 'nah I don't want you to stop, I like it' so...so I'd say 'I'm not hurting you am I?' or anything like that..."* ERC1213

By treating the victim as an adult the participant is able to convince the victim that that is how adults 'show love' (potentially a long held belief instilled in the participant stemming from childhood). Participants utilising this strategy also state that the victim is even less likely to disclose the offending if they are in control.

Evaluation

Most participants reported that no strategy or plan was implemented without carefully evaluating if the participant had chosen the most successful course of action. Participants relied on feedback from the victim which dictated their next move. Some participants in the sample considered zero feedback from the victim as consent/approval to take the next step, and may have then coerced the victim into sexual activity. A lack of effectively evaluating both the victim and the situation leading to coercion also increased the level of risk the participant was prepared to take.

Careful consideration of environmental obstacles was weighed against the next available opportunities by the offender, as was the amount of time required to perform sexual activities. Even opportunistic offences required the participant to be alert, and to have made an accurate environmental assessment in case of potential interruption. Flexibility and versatility of an offence script or strategy was utilised by the most experienced of participants. Through feedback from the victim or potential victim, the participant was able to modify aspects of a plan and its offence related

actions that were not working or which required too high a risk on the part of the participant.

All the while during the implementation of a strategy or plan for offending, the level of risk was increased. For the most part, risk taking evolved through establishing higher levels of confidence in the offender, with the belief that the victim would not reject his sexual advances and participant and victim would not be discovered. By making incremental gains in cultivating the victim's trust, the level of confidence in both the chances of offending and in the participant themselves, increased.

> *"...once you've got the confidence of them I think it was easier to offend, but until you've got that confidence you didn't offend..." ERC1037*

When the participant believed the time was opportune and the chances of offending would be successful, he began to engage in Phase IV - Offence Related Behaviours.

ORC Summary

Competency in the current research included the ability to use multiple sources of knowledge to successfully meet a desired end. It was the ability of the participant to interpret a potential offence situation in its context and to devise a series of potential actions which could be applied in a given situation. Though the structure and contents of Offence Related Competencies may not have always been consciously available to the participant, the constructed model of Figure 6.4 reflected the organising framework for processing offence related information. It must be remembered that not all participants subscribed to each and every one of the variables identified. The presence or absence of some of the subcategories depended on the participant's experience with sexual offending against children, skills acquired during childhood and adolescence, and knowledge supplemented by lifestyle choices, which in turn dictated participants' position on the Competency Continuum.

As understanding developed of the participants needs from the victim, and the methods to achieve those needs, participants commented on the ease with which they were able to offend. Utilising previous stages of the model, more experienced participants drew scripts and knowledge from previous offences and experiences to control their victims and achieve their goals.

As noted earlier, *Internal Moderators and Contextual Features* traversed different phases of the model. For example, as a 'Contextual Feature', sexual triggers to a child's actions could also be encompassed into the offender's sexual script and victim preferences, just as an adult may be attracted to a certain type of person or physical features/characteristics.

Offence Related Competencies (ORC) in Phase Three of the model were the identified variables participants used and strengthened during the offence process and through offending histories. A return to the ORC phase was common in the sample with participants with more than one victim, or those who had offended against the same victim on more than one occasion. Over time ORC's (and the consistent utilisation and refinement of those competencies) aided in the automation of a participant's behaviour progressing them towards the more experienced end of the Competency Continuum.

Phase IV – Offence Related Behaviours

The use of multiple sources of knowledge, (compiled as *Offence Related Competencies*) to interpret a situation in its context and to have a series of potential actions which could be applied in an offending scenario, facilitated and drove the actions performed during child sexual offending.

Offence Related Behaviours (ORB) were those behaviours and actions of participants (both verbal and physical) performed during sexual contact with the victim(s). The category of Offence Related Behaviours was constructed from three subcategories to account for descriptions by participants of committing sexual offences (see figure 6.8). At the apex of Figure 6.8 the sub-category of *Victim Selection* explains how participants selected the victim(s), such as whether selection was based on opportunity or whether a specific victim was sought. The selection of a victim(s) determined the actions of the participant for both *Typology* and *Victim Management* (see figure 6.8). *Typology* of offending described the duration, onset, type, and offence location. ORB's operated on a series of dimensions. For example the 'type' of offending included sexual intrusiveness of the offence which would range from touching genital areas over clothing to vaginal or anal penetration. The typology of offending was affected by and conversely affected *Victim Management*.

Victim management contained subcategories describing victim response during an offence and the participants' ability to cope with risks associated with offending.

Victim Selection

   Victim selection encompassed variables resulting from the data which signified concepts and ideas around whether the participant had predetermined victims or not, and if so, what were those characteristics? Participants were asked if there were any similarities between their victims (if there was more than one victim) and what features or characteristics drew them to a particular child. This was asked to see if offenders had physical feature scripts for victims. For the most part the participants believed that they did not discriminate on the basis of physical features but rather chose victims on the basis of opportunity or proximity, or emotional connection. However, there were a small number of participants that recognised targeting children and youths with specific physical features. The age of the victim was also considered to be important by participants. When asked if a particular age range was ideal the majority of participants were able to identify their personal preference for age.

VICTIM SELECTION

Predetermined
 Characteristics
Opportunistic
 (Psychologically driven)

OFFENCE
RELATED
BEHAVIOURS

TYPOLOGY

Duration
Onset
Type
Location

VICTIM MANAGEMENT

Risk Management
 Coercive v. persuasive
Response
 Disengaged
 Seductive
 Habituated
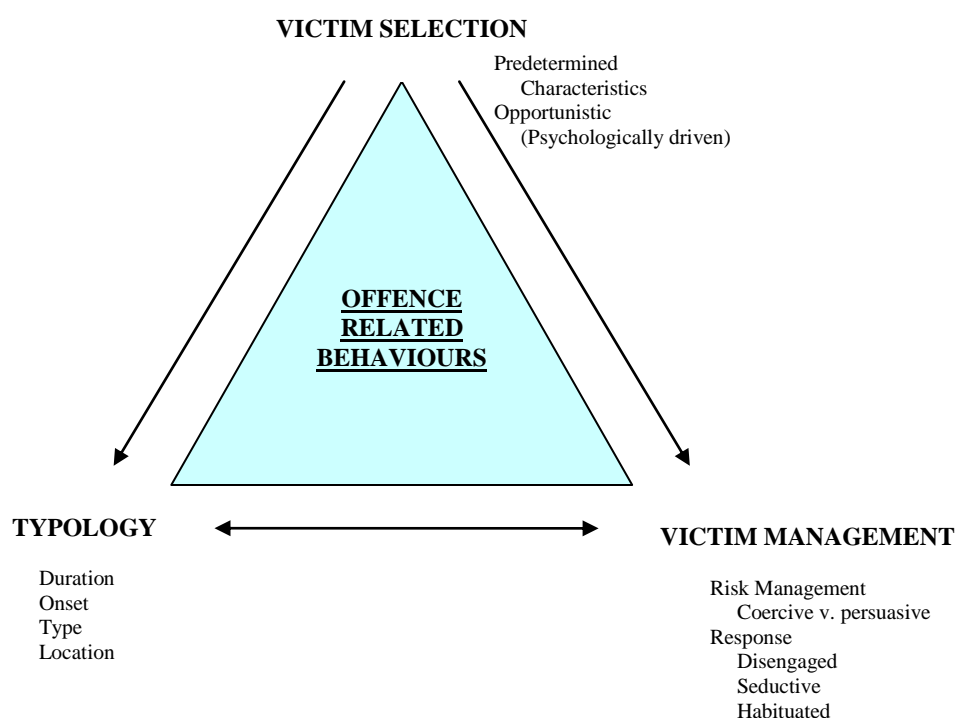
Figure 6.8: Offence Related Behaviours identified in the ERC Model

The age range stated by participants in the current sample varied from 2 to 14 years old. A small number of participants (mostly extrafamilial) in the current sample spoke of victims 'ticking all the boxes'. Victims had to be both attractive to the participant, physically and emotionally. The victim's age was also taken into consideration for both the likelihood that the victim would disclose the offending and the physical maturation of the victim.

> *"...it was sort of one of those 'oh he looks cute and, you know, I wouldn't mind getting to know him'..." ERC1215*

Participants on the whole found that victims who were easy to get along with, trusting, and whom the participant found an emotional connection with, were often victims they were more likely to target. Sexual offending considered to be more opportunistic in nature, was non-discriminatory of special features or physical characteristics of the victim. For those participants the sexual offending itself was more likely to be psychologically driven to achieve the desired goals of participants.

Typology

The type of offence performed by participants was characterised by the duration, type, onset, and location of the offence. Duration of offences included the further sub-category of 'offence progression' where it was possible to observe and track an escalation of frequency and/or level of intrusiveness of the sexual acts committed. The data revealed repeated patterns both in the way participants approached potential victims as well as the kind of actions performed during an offence.

> *"...like the ones on the streets it was, I'd try to talk to them, try and build up their confidence a little bit, you know, ask them what colour their knickers are, stuff like that..." ERC1105*

The duration of offences traced abuses of a child or children by participants over weeks, months, and sometimes years. Duration of offending also referred to the length of time it took to commit a single offence episode, such as seconds, minutes, or hours. Participants varied in the allocation of time spent with a victim, with some participants offending over hours while others were able to sneak quick moments or touches during game playing.

The 'type' of offending conducted by participants referred to the nature of the actions performed in a single abuse episode as well as the nature of sexual contact across a series of episodes or offences. Over the course of many participants' offences, escalation of offence behaviours was reported. Participants may have begun the offending in much the same manner as a previous occasion and then taken the level of intrusiveness a little further in each subsequent encounter until their primary goal was achieved. Participants regarding themselves as experienced offenders reported making larger rather than smaller incremental gains with respect to how fast goals of sexual satisfaction were achieved. Repeated patterns of offending often contained similar sexual activities with no deviation from the offence script. Participants subscribing to repeat pattern offending stated reasons such as obtaining their goals from activities performed, not wanting to take the sexual activities too far, not wanting to hurt the victim, and minimising the risk of disclosure, for their offending practices.

Sexual offending practices of participants in the current sample were either episodic in nature or suggested continuity across sexual encounters. Participants with a high volume of victims spoke of one off encounters with victims as well as offending over a sustained period with a single victim. Participants varied in the length of time they were involved in sexual offending, from a single abuse episode (minutes/ hours) to up to 11 years. Only a very small number of participants had one-off encounters with only one or two victims before being apprehended. Those offences often reflected instances of opportunism, and also revealed a lack of appraisal, lack of resources, and poor use of scripts from which the participant drew upon. In contrast, some participants described their offences as containing an element of continuity where the sexual connections naturally flowed in escalation, mirroring courting and dating rituals more commonly seen in adult sexual relationships.

By normalising the offending in terms of everyday behaviours or common behaviour in the household, the participant was able to create a pathway of least resistance which, for some, resulted in the misconstrued belief that the offending was a mutual encounter or relationship.

"...My rate of offending was virtually every day in some description, whether it be a kiss, we're talking about kissing her like a husband and wife would kiss, for example. Yeah, so it would go from there right through to rape and it was...so the offending was happening on a daily basis, and it was making it, it was just part of her life, I made it, that's how bad it was, I was making it part of her like, her daily routine..." ERC1634

The cessation of offending was either at the discretion of the participant or the victim. Only a small number of participants described instances where they were having difficulties controlling the victim and therefore had to stop all forms of sexual connection. For the most part, relations between participant and victim ceased because the participant was apprehended, the victim stopped the offending, the offender stopped the offending through guilt or moved on to another victim, or the victim or participant moved away. If the participant was apprehended it was mostly due to the victim disclosing the offending, the participant disclosing the offending to a confidant or authorities, or the participant was caught in the act.

Some participants described their type of offending as mutual where both parties were consenting. This often echoed adult-like practices from the participant's perspective. The type of sexual relations performed by participants varied across the sample and included asking the victim to show the participant their underwear and/or genitalia, touching the genitalia of victims outside of their clothing, touching victim genitalia directly, masturbation (victim masturbating participant or vice versa, as well as participant masturbating while touching victim), simulated sex, oral sex, digital penetration, anal sex, and full sexual intercourse. Participants at times revealed having to coerce victims into performing sexual activities or be directive in their demands for which activities participants wanted victims to perform.

"...I did a couple of times basically say 'stop fucking around and just do it' and yeah I guess there were times when I had to make her do it, but not physically..." ERC1207

The onset of offending for the current sample ranged from 8 years to 76 years old, with a mean age of 29 years old. Participants engaging in childhood sexual play in the form of 'doctors and nurses' etc. (described in Phase I - *Primary Skill Acquisition*) were not included in onset of offending for first offence. Those participants starting offending in childhood and adolescence recalled being manipulative and goal orientated in their offence practices. Those participants also

stated the ease with which they were able to identify potential victims and were well practiced in their offence related techniques.

> *"…I think the worse thing is you learn skills on kids' behaviours or what to say to them or what to do to them to make them feel more relaxed, so you can do more things…" ERC1310*

The location of offending varied across the sample population and for participants whose offending was intrafamilial it mostly took place in the home or sometimes a car. Generally, sexual activity occurred within a domestic setting where participants were able to control and monitor their environments. For those participants whose offending also included extrafamilial offences, public places such as parks, beaches, and shopping malls as well as domestic locations were possible sites for offences to occur. Experienced offenders with a high volume of victims considered public locations and communal areas as easily accessible and therefore did not feel constrained to only commit offences in the privacy of domicile settings. Location choice for experienced offenders also appeared to be indicative of the level of confidence exhibited by the participant in his inability to be apprehended and his ambivalence toward discovery. Some participants (both intrafamilial and extrafamilial) experimented with public locations for offences to take place and described an increase of adrenaline while performing sexual acts which further heightened and reinforced the excitement of offending.

Victim Management

Victim management strategies have reportedly been used to persuade, coerce, direct, and entice victims into offending. The use of several different victim management strategies have been found to be used by the participants, as well as combining multiple strategies over the course of offending.

In much the same way that flirting and flattery work in adult interactions, participants attempted to seduce their victims by telling them how pretty or attractive they were and to use their responses to increase the chances of sexual abuse actually occurring. By boosting a child's ego, and exploiting his or her vulnerabilities, especially with a particularly shy or unconfident victim, participants were able to convince potential victims that they understood them and could be trusted.

> *"…I would you know, show her extra attention, tell her that she was beautiful
> and you know really, um, yeah just try and make her feel special…"*
> *ERC1302*

Though this technique was also used in the preparatory phase of ORC's, leading up to ORB's participants claim to use it during offending as a way of reassuring and comforting the victim, as well as conveying their affection. Time spent with the victim playing games and paying him or her attention (that they may not otherwise be getting) was seen by many participants as a long term risk management strategy. The investment of time not only reassured the victim of 'love' from participants but also acted as currency or trade off for the participant to achieve the greater goal of offending.

Persuasion was used by participants to convince victims to let certain sexual activities occur. The most experienced of participants made the victim believe that they were performing acts which to he or she had consented to ('Illusion of Control', as described in *Offence Related Competencies*). This strategy was used to share blame and otherwise make the victim partially accountable for the offending. The sharing of blame was utilised as both a tool to persuade the victim to comply with the offender's requests as well alleviate any guilt arising from the act of offending. When persuasion alone did not work, often bribery and coercion would follow.

> *"…I would just be persistent and just try and convince her with bribes 'if you
> do this I'll buy you that t-shirt that you were looking at' or 'this pair of jeans
> you were looking for' as a way of convincing her to let me offend…"*
> *ERC1734*

Only a small number of participants were physically directive, bordering on violent, to achieve their goals. One participant employed a fantasy game where the participant role-played being someone else to deceive the victim into performing sexual activities. By utilising cultural practices the participant was able to convince the victim that the victim's girlfriend had inhabited his body, and that she was the one performing sexual acts on him. The level of risk involved, of the victim believing him, was outweighed by the potential success of the offence.

Risk of being apprehended was escalated in sexual offending when participants threatened or assaulted victims. For the majority of participants this was not part of their offence strategies. A few participants engaged in high risk behaviours such as marking the victim with 'love bites', or touching the victim in the

presence of other children or adults. One participant revealed touching his daughter while masturbating with his wife asleep in the same bed next to him. Risk was reduced for participants when they reported having seduced or befriended the victim, as the victim was less likely to want to get participants into trouble. Participants typically monitored victims' responses to assess the level of risk they were taking. A participants' ability to accurately gauge victim response was entwined with ORC's sub-category of 'Appraisal'.

Victim response was not monitored by all participants in the sample. A small number of participants reported being so focused on their own sexual gratification that they were unaware of any facial expression or emotion on the part of the victim. For those participants attending to their victim, statements that victims exhibited no response, was common. Victim responses also become habitual in some situations, with victims receiving cues from their abuser (i.e. putting a knife in the door to 'lock' it; fully undressing) and automatically engaging in pre-offence and offence behaviours. A small number of participants believed that victims responded positively to the offending, occasionally employing seductive practices to prompt sexual activities.

> *"...she would end up saying 'if you buy me this, this will happen tonight'..."*
> *ERC1834*

Questioning victims on their ability to keep secrets and their desire to be involved in secret keeping was also a means to gauge the likelihood of discovery.

> *"...By asking them certain questions about 'can you keep a secret?' or 'do you have secrets?' or 'have you ever lied?' Just talk to them about certain things to find out their state of mind, can they be trusted?" ERC1410*

Questions directed at the victim during offending were also used to determine victim compliance and enjoyment. A number of participants reported wanting to sexually gratify their victim and would perform activities at his or her direction. By giving the victim control over activities performed, as mentioned earlier, it was thought by the participant that the victim would be less likely to disclose the offending.

When victims showed signs of discomfort and discontent, the participant would weigh up the cost/ benefit of continuing. The point at which the offending becomes too risky, when the victim has said 'no' or 'stop', appeared to be a function of how well the participant had evaluated the victim in conjunction with the desire to

fulfil his needs. Participants were found to both continue (all the while trying to reassure the victim) with sexual activities in order to achieve their goals, and stopping the offending in order to calm the victim.

> *"…and though at times I would back off. And when I did back off with* (victim)*, I'd be back again the next day to try again. And just persistence and pestering. And I think she just gave in, she just gave in to me…" ERC1934*

Variables such as feeling a sense of entitlement provided a small number of participants with sense of empowerment and ownership over their family and their victims. By controlling others, the participant's needs were met on his terms. Control over victims also extended to trusting the victim not to disclose the offending.

> *"…I thought nothing more of it than having sex with my wife. That was how I equated it to being. Yeah, that was how I was equating it because that was how I thought, that she was my girlfriend, and I felt I had an entitlement to have sex with her… I was at the time, the man of the household, with that came I guess, through my upbringing and my wife's upbringing, a certain perception that I was the man of the household, the person who was to be listened to, who had the final say…" ERC2034*

Summary

Offence Related Behaviours described the sexual practices and behaviours conducted by participants during sexual abuse encounters. Sexual practices and activities performed by participants further displayed the heterogeneity of child sexual offending. Participant's identification and selection of victims varied across participants as well as offences. The typology of offence related practices indicated that participants varied across dimensions of duration, onset, type, and location choice. The range of participant experience was a function of both volume of victims and length of offence history. The extensiveness of individual's experiences whilst offending was a further indication of offender's position on the Competency Continuum. Participants' ability to monitor victim response and manage the level of risk appeared to be related to how attentive the participant was to the victim as well as the desire to achieve one's goals. Though some participants in the current sample did not have extensive 'Risk Management' or 'Victim Response' strategies during offending, all of the participants were aware of the consequences of their offending, should they be apprehended. All participants in some form tried to take measures to

hide or mask their offending with strategies employed pre-, during, and post-offending.

Internal Moderators and Contextual Features

Maladaptive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours acquired during childhood and adolescence provided foundational resources for the establishment of adult coping mechanisms. The moderating factors of Internal Moderators and Contextual Features displayed in the model were affected by and conversely affected participant's perceptions of an event, experience, or situation. Through the data it emerged that there was no one clear point where either of the two major mediating factors (*Internal Moderators* and *Contextual Features*) could be accounted for because Internal Moderators and Contextual Features varied across the sample and continually changed in the way they present through participants' offence histories. The *Internal Moderators and Contextual Features* described by participants are visible on the either side of the overall model of Figure 6.1.

Internal Moderators

The category Internal Moderators referred to the regulation of emotional, physiological, and cognitive mechanisms used, felt, and controlled by participants as part of the offending process. Internal Moderators is situated to the left of the model as it was found that this category mediated many aspects of the precursors to offending. Additionally, Internal Moderators also regulated internal states that surfaced whilst offending and those that occurred after sexual activity. Through participants' interviews key areas of functioning were identified as ways in which offenders controlled their emotions and internal state to project personas (lives of normality) which allowed their offending to remain undetected.

Affect Regulation

Affect Regulation is the management of emotional states and elicitation of emotional reactions. It refers to the set of processes by which emotions themselves are regulated (Gross, 2007). The sub-category of Affect Regulation was not viewed as peripheral to the participants' functioning because it was found to be integrated with all aspects of the model, and was inextricably related to functioning and development of evolving maladaptive attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. It did

however require its own sub-category as its emergence through analysis of the data illustrated how self-regulation actions developed and changed subsequent behaviour. Emotion based Internal Moderators may have either been controlled or automatic, conscious or unconscious. Emotions not only created unique phenomenological experiences they also motivated and helped to organise actions (Frijda, 1986; Ward, Yates, & Long, 2006). The construction of categories and participants' descriptions of their emotions and subsequent behaviour will now be described.

Some etiological theories of sexual offending (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990) propose that sexual offences occur partly because of problems of self-regulation dysfunction due to adverse experiences during formative years, or that offences are associated with negative emotion and low self-esteem (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). Current research has found that there were those who prescribed to this theory as well as those who committed offences because of positive emotions and high self-esteem, and that actually planned future opportunities for offending simply because they found it enjoyable.

> *"…I enjoyed being naked with them, I enjoyed them naked; I enjoyed being close to them and being nude with them…" ERC1005*

A number of participants reported sexual offending as a positive experience because of the mood enhancing effects that it had on them. Offending would generate intense excitement and in that instance provide them with a sense of euphoria and relief. For a few participants excitement and exhilaration was also generated from the sense of committing an immoral and forbidden act.

> *"…felt like I was doing something wrong and getting away with it…" ERC1103*

A small number of participants commented that they were truly happy when they were offending because they felt that their victim paid them more attention, understood them, and felt a 'closeness' not evident in their adult relationships. Participants would increasingly attempt to recapture the positive mood state in subsequent offending. Participants would then become reliant on sexually abusive activities to escape from negative moods and began to take steps to plan future opportunities.

> *"…when I wanted to feel good, I would do it. It became a habit. And the trouble is, the more you do it, the easier it gets to do. You just go and do it…"* ERC1011.

Emotional ambivalence emerged periodically during participant's interviews. Participants would describe how they were unsure about the nature of their child molestation, seeing it as both good and bad at the same time. This was most commonly the case when individuals' knew that what they were doing was socially unacceptable and wrong in the eyes of the law, but also acknowledged that it enhanced their mood considerably. The positive emotions experienced as a result of the offending greatly outweighed any negative response. However, participants oscillated between moments of elation (how they felt during the offending) and subsequent feelings of guilt/shame (after some form of sexual connection or activity had taken place).

> *"…I didn't like what I had done, you know, but it's conflicting you see, because you don't like what you do, but you like what you did, right? You don't like yourself for doing it but you like what you did, and it gets conflicting because there are two emotions that go on at the time…"* ERC1111.

Emotional disinhibition emerged through a failure of affect regulation and participants described their inability to control powerful and overwhelming emotional responses. The experience of emotional upheaval was most commonly reported in the form of anger. Being angry with themselves, and chastising themselves for their actions and thoughts, participants would often displace that anger onto those closest to them at times resulting in arguments with family members or friends. Reports of domestic violence and/or emotional abuse of family members tended to result from an outburst of anger. Of note, some participants found that during the time-frame of their offending their anger and aggression became worse (especially for family and friends). Only for a small group of participants did their guilt overwhelm them so completely that the offending ceased, and in some cases, participants reported their sexual abuse to authorities.

The ability of some participants to suppress emotion allowed those individuals to ignore any negative thoughts or emotions in response to sexual thoughts or actions committed. Participants revealed that they knew what they were doing was wrong but that they were able to ignore those feelings because their

motivation and goals were stronger. By suppressing negative emotions some participants found that their guilt and associated feelings disappeared after a while, while other participants found that their negative emotions could only be avoided temporarily before they resurfaced.

The inability to cope with stress, encompassed by the sub-category of poor emotional modulation, resulted in participants engaging in seemingly distracting behaviour such as substance use and over-commitment to work. Sexual offending provided a quick release of stress from pressures felt both internally and externally.

> *"…I wasn't coping with stress very well…I was working 12-14 hour days…and it was just a mask for what was actually happening at the time…" ERC1203*

Participants also referred to the stress which presented as a result of committing their first offence(s). The stress of keeping the offending secret, knowing that it was wrong, worrying if someone was going to find out, and maintaining normality in both home and work life frequently resulted in depressed mood, further arguments in the home, alienation from social groups, and an increase in substance abuse. An additional way of coping and managing emotional responses to sexual offences was to become dependent on others and look to them for protection. By disclosing the problem themselves to someone else the problem was thought to be made more manageable, probably due to perceived support. The participants saw themselves as less likely to be in as much trouble if they disclosed what they had done to someone else. The emotional weight lifted as a result of disclosure and a need for help, prompted a small number of participants to turn themselves into local authorities.

Many participants coped with their emotional response by distancing themselves from the roles they played in their family and wider community. From an early age participants identified separating themselves physically and emotionally from their peers, with many commenting that they did not have many friends and were considered a 'loner' at school. Participants believed that they could dissociate their role as a father or caregiver from that of being a sexually abusive man.

> *"…you just turn it off. You say 'what the hell? I quite enjoyed it' 'I shouldn't be doing it but I'm going to do it' and 'I liked it, and I'm going to do it' and that's what you do. You just switch off the other part of the conscious that's telling you 'you shouldn't be doing it', yeah…" ERC1211*

Participants believed that they could lead and effectively manage a dual lifestyle by assuming different roles for different contexts (the role of employee at work, father at home, and coach at sport).

The displacement of sexual intimacy needs very clearly emerged through analysis of participant data. Displacement of sexual intimacy was generated in the sample by two means. First, some individuals' substituted their partner for the victim, and second, others experimented sexually with a victim in place of a consenting adult out of fear of potential rejection from an adult. The estrangement and rejection from a partner and the 'close' relationship with the victim, for one participant in particular, gave rise to a need for intimacy, and as that need was increasingly met by his daughter, possible rejection from the wife ceased to be of consequence and the role of the daughter became more important. Functionally, the daughter replaced his wife on both a physical and emotional level.

> *"...my communication with* (wife) *stopped altogether and I looked for someone to talk to, to confide in, and saw* (victim)*...I basically replaced* (wife) *with (*victim*) emotionally...I started sharing business responsibilities with her even though she was only 13..."* ERC1033

Displacement also occurred in the current sample when participants were too afraid to sexually experiment with peers and instead resorted to children who were considered less rejecting. Displacement was also a way to action previously suppressed emotions. For example, one form of suppression was that of homosexual thoughts, where fears surrounding homosexual contact with an adult partner lead some individuals to experiment with children.

Participants taught themselves how to avoid and manage excessive emotional arousal (Ward & Nee, 2009). By controlling distracting, interfering, or otherwise debilitating emotions and feelings, participants were able to maintain an emotional equilibrium so as to not impair functioning. Large amounts of guilt were evident in many participants, in spite of this it appeared to not be intrusive enough to impact upon their offending, possibly because their needs were being met by the offending, i.e., intimacy or sexual gratification. A few participants reported being easily able to overcome any guilt or remorse that they feel by the use of strategies such as ignoring it, coping with drugs and alcohol, blaming the victim or saying that the victim was

consenting, choosing to pretend that nothing happened or minimize its impact in some way, or fragmenting themselves "*I'm not that person all of the time*".

> "*…I don't know if I ever felt guilty, I guess I pretended it never happened…*" *ERC1041*

Some offenders in fact felt no remorse whatsoever because the experience had been pleasurable. However, it was suggested through further analysis of the data that for many participants the guilt manifested in other aspects of their lives.

Arousal

Sexual arousal was also reported by participants as an internal activator (physiological state) for sexual offending. A sexual attraction to children featured not only as a stimulated internal state but was also presented in the model in 'victim selection' as part of Phase IV - *Offence Related Behaviours*. As an *Internal Moderator*, however, this was where the offender attributed adult sexual courting practices to that of a child and saw children as sexual beings in their own right where children were able to make and consent to adult sexual decisions. Some participants' desired and groomed children as most adults would court potential adult partners. Their sexual attraction appeared to be displaced from an adult onto a child.

Cognitive Mechanisms

Cognitive mechanisms presented as a regulator and facilitator used by participants to strengthen attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours to maintain offending (many times resulting from *Primary Skill Acquisition*). They were the participant's explanations to himself for the onset, continuation, and justification of child sexual offending.

Rationalisations referred to the inner dialogue that participants had with themselves to make the offending acceptable, and to sustain it. Rationalisations provided appeasement to their conscience by inventing specious reasons to explain their conduct. For example many of the participants believed that "*if the victim didn't like it, then they would have told or stopped*" and that "*it's okay because I'm not hurting them*". Rationalisations may have also been utilised in external or temporary circumstances to excuse or justify participant's behaviour, such as alcohol or drug

usage. Nearly all of the participants in the current study were able to rationalise their offending whether they were aware of it or not.

Denial and/or minimisation of an offence were other mechanisms used by participants to downplay feelings of self-loathing, guilt, shame, and to protect identity and self-esteem. By minimising his offending or denying that any actual harm was being done to the victim(s) the participant was able to cognitively deconstruct (Baumeister, 1991; Ward, Hudson & Marshall, 1995) the self. Emphasis was transferred from negative feelings of the self, which may have ceased the behaviour, to sensation based receptors focusing on arousal and self gratification. Participants were set on meeting *their* needs alone and processed information according to the achievement of those needs.

Participants often attempted to shift the blame for offending onto the victim or at least partially onto the victim by claiming that the victim consented to the sexual connection. The externalisation of blame allowed the participant to bypass any cognitive barriers that might otherwise have made the participant question or inhibit his actions. Because of this the individuals believed their victims to be consenting, and that because victims were consenting; offenders were not doing anything wrong.

"...I asked her why she let me do it..." ERC1233

The externalisation of blame was manifest throughout the model, whether it was blaming parents, siblings, or the victim for the offending. The participant was able to share or transfer accountability thereby relieving himself of (unnecessary) emotional punishment. It may have also been the result of the participant feeling persecuted or traumatised by early childhood and adolescent experiences for which the immediate and extended family might have been blamed.

Contextual Features

Contextual Features was positioned on the right of the model (rather than inside it) because as the data emerged it was found that variables within the category could not be confined to a singular phase and were found to exert an influence at various stages of the model. Identified components constituting Contextual Features were considered to be variables which were external and beyond the control of the participant. Contextual Features were external or situational and referred to important

elements of the pre-offence and offence situations i.e., the presence of a trigger or cue, or the presentation of a victim or opportunity.

Triggers

A sexual offender's trigger was anything that activated and subsequently elicited a response to the desire to offend against a child. Triggers were emotional, contextual, or interpersonally based. Emotionally based triggers included low affect and perceived low self-worth and have been discussed in relation to the *Internal Moderators* above.

Triggers may have also been contextual in that they were in response to an event or incident that occurred which had adversely affected the participant. A bad day at work, wife leaving, receiving bad news, or watching the victim sleeping for example can set off the offending in a downward spiral.

> *"...I'd had a shit day and if it was any other normal day, it would never have happened..." ERC1023*

Interpersonal relationships were also frequently commented on as being factors affecting sexual offending. Intense or negative verbalisations of issues (arguments) affecting the couple or family members may have produced high levels of anger or physiological arousal. The following quote illustrates the breakdown of a relationship between participant and partner.

> *"...me and (*partner*) had a real big fall out and I just got so angry and I just wanted to, I just wanted to put my fist through her head, because I'd just had enough of the relationship, you know, I think we'd both had enough, just didn't want to be there..." ERC1013*

Relationships and family difficulties provided a catalyst for emotional collapse with the resulting affect reportedly resolved with a "closeness" achieved through sexual connection with a child. The victim was chosen as they were deemed less rejecting than adults. The impact of affect and interpersonal relationships overlapped with other categories which have been discussed throughout the chapter.

Triggers were at times elicited by the actions of others, and were therefore considered situational. Though those actions may be deemed innocent to the victim, to the participant the activity performed was perceived as a stimulant or encouragement. For example, a participant may have seen a child wearing a dress

and thought that she was wearing it for him. In the following example a participant describes the actions of a 10 year old girl, and his subsequent interpretation of those actions:

> *"…if we were playing cards up in the lounge a lot of times she'd sit opposite me with her legs apart, she knew what she was doing…" ERC 1035*

Fetishes and fantasies were also triggers for sexual offenders if the actions were performed by others and in turn activated a behavioural response. Participants have been aroused by watching a child lick a lollipop, or seeing a baby/child wearing diapers and find it provocative, or they have been aroused by adult erotica and then turn to a child as the closest or most desired outlet.

> *"…one of my sexual triggers is um, getting people to um, to um swallow things watching the muscles in the throat move um, looking in the mouth and at the tongue, saliva, the smell of it…" ERC1002*

Triggers were not necessarily needed once an offending pattern had been established, though for a small handful of sample participants it remained a central precursor to their offending.

Victim availability/ opportunity

Though the availability of a victim overlapped other phases of the model, it was still at times out of the offender's control and highly contextual or situational. It may have been initiated within any of the phases, and would set the pace/ tone / speed that the offender worked through the offence process. The sudden presence of a potential victim or the presentation of an opportunity, such as babysitting, may have initiated the participants offence cycle. For example, for one or two individuals, the primary reason for offending against a particular victim was "*because she was there, because she made herself available*". Statements such as those were very common from the sample population.

The identification of an opportunity at times also progressed into the participant creating future opportunities.

> *"…the first one* (offence) *was 'well here's an opportunity', I planned the second one…" ERC1303*

The identification or the creation of an opportunity may have been the result of being introduced to their victims by other offenders, or in the knowledge that another adult had offended against a child which was then identified as a potential victim for the participant.

> *"...* (a friend) *said to me a couple of days later that he'd been in the toilets with* (victim) *and what a fantastic kisser he was…"* ERC1123

Summary

Internal Moderators effected participants prior to offending (possibly as a result of childhood and adolescent trauma), as well as with the onset of offending. The entire range of variables and emotions emerging from analysis of the data were often felt by most participants at various times. Offenders taught themselves through a variety of experiences how to avoid and manage excessive emotional arousal and how best to stop that from impairing functioning.

Contextual Features were temporal in nature as they often could not be captured by a specific time or phase. In the current study contextual or situational features presented as triggers or cues which activated a behavioural response. Victim availability or offence opportunity was included as a contextual factor because it was acknowledged in the data that at any given moment a potential victim may "present themselves" to an offender. In addition, whilst in the presence of a victim, an opportunity to begin sexual offending may have presented itself. The detection of an offence opportunity was also discussed in relation to Phase III – *Offence Related Competencies*.

The following sections describe the remaining phases of the model presented in Figure 6.1, with additional references to how *Internal Moderators* and *Contextual Features* affected the participants in the current sample.

Phase V – Masking

Throughout much of this chapter emphasis has been placed on the development of offence related opportunities, characteristics, competencies, and behaviours. The core category of *Masking* (see Figure 6.9) was constructed to address how participants were able to remain undetected for the length of their

offending career. Although elements of masking behaviour appear throughout the model and at various stages of planning and contact with a victim, it is in Phase V of the model where it is especially evident and will be discussed in length.

Masking was an activity involving intentional concealment, and in the case of the participants its aim was to allow them to remain undetected for offences committed. The category of masking also encompassed actions performed to make them appear to be something else, for example, creating an illusion of play-fighting, when the aim was to use an encounter with a victim to touch him or her sexually. Within the core category of *Masking* were three subcategories: threat disarming, avoiding detection, and contingency management. Avoiding detection was what offenders 'did' so that they were not discovered, and was proximate to the offence, whereas threat disarming involved lowering the inhibitions of those around them (adults and children) so as not to raise any suspicion over their actions. Contingency management, however, initially masked the true intentions of the participant with the use of behaviour modification tactics.

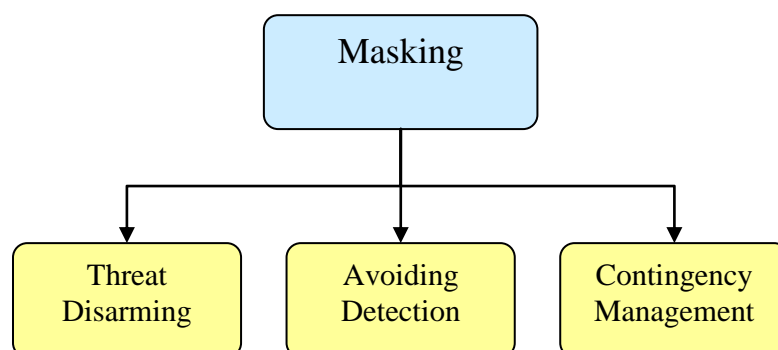*Figure 6.9:* Masking variables identified in the ERC Model

Threat Disarming

Threat disarming emerged as a result of many participants range of tactics that were used to lower the apprehension and suspicion of parents, other adults, and the victims involved. The establishment of trust was paramount to successful offending. Grooming of parents, and gaining their trust could involve using drugs

and alcohol to socialise with parents, purchasing gifts for them, or inviting parents along on day trips and outings. This may also include having an adequate answer prepared for any questions that arose, as well as accounting for time spent alone with a child. The grooming of parents may take place prior to a first sexual contact with a child and be ongoing during the offending, or it may result after first sexual contact as a way to lessen the chances of the victim being believed should they disclose. Threat disarming is a way of not drawing attention to the participant and a means of normalising the behaviour.

Many participants used their status with the victim and the victim's parent to establish trust. This could draw upon the fact they were a parent themselves, a family member, partner to a parent, teacher, or mentor. Adults are frequently seen by children to be in a position of power and providing protection. Established trust through role modelling was more frequently the modus operandi of intrafamilial offenders.

> *"...I was her uncle, I'd never given her any cause not to trust me...I was relying on her affection of me not to get me into trouble..."* ERC1108

Threat disarming is more covert in nature. It is embroiled in secrecy. The threat of being caught is so great that often participants would engage in post offence contact or isolation, distraction, bribery, and friendship. Isolating the victim was generally employed if the participant felt that the victim was likely to disclose the offending if they spent too much time with other adults and children. Isolation was a method of controlling that disclosure.

> *"...I didn't want her to be left alone* (after the offending) *in case she said something to somebody, so all through the day I was doing stuff, housework, and I was trying to appease her, make her happy by asking if she wanted to go shopping...I guess I wanted to take her mind off it, hoping that she would forget..."* ERC1208

Bribery was often employed by most of the participants to both keep the victim silent about the offending and also to continue to let it happen. Distracting the victims often occurred immediately after sexual contact. Games, toys, shopping, eating, or watching television, were repeatedly used to distract the victim from any negative affect resulting from sexual contact. Distracting the victims was another way of minimising the threat of disclosure.

Maintaining a friendship post offending was important for some offenders. Continuing contact, when offending ceased, was a way of preserving the relationship as well as monitoring chances of disclosure. A small number of participants stated that they continued to have an ongoing friendship with their victims up until incarceration.

Another aspect commented on by participants were occasions when complete denial of the offence was called for. Not many participants were asked straight out by partners or other adults if offences had been committed, but for those who had been asked some admitted to the offending, stopped all sexual contact, and others completely denied it (before Police or authorities were informed). By denying any interference with a victim the participant is able to reduce anxiety of the person asking as well as remaining undetected.

> *"...it was my father that discovered me with* (victim)*; she had her pants pulled down, I tried to turn the blame on her and say that she pulled down her pants and but um… my penis was exposed so I had to explain that so I made up a story that she was showing me her vagina and I was showing her my penis and um... my parents talked to me about it and they decided to take my word for it and leave it at that. They thought it wouldn't happen again but I continued to touch her after that…" ERC1441*

Within the category of threat disarming, deception emerged as a tool utilised by the participant performed not only on the victim and those around them, but also for the participant themselves. Offenders were able to regulate negative thoughts of the self through self-deception or blocking/ ignoring thoughts to shut out the internal monologue of what the implications were for his actions. By pretending nothing happened i.e., *"if I don't talk about it, it didn't happen"* the participant was able to maintain equilibrium of behaviour that was not drawn attention to by freaking out. Lessoning the impact on oneself provided the necessary means to function in a seemingly normal fashion/ environment.

Avoiding Detection

Avoiding detection referred to methods and tactics employed to minimise the chances of the offending being reported. Participants' found that this was often something thought about before the offence, though reinforcement of the need for secrecy was required post offending.

Participants frequently reported the use of a tactic labelled as *"this is our secret"* as a method of controlling disclosure on the part of the victim. Secrecy was frequently reportedly used by participants. However the degree or scale of secrecy and disguise ranged from little to none, to constantly reminding the victim not to tell anyone, to the comprehensive use of highly technical computer encryption software to protect child pornographic images and films.

> *"...kids love secrets, kids like someone to notice them. Kids who are with other kids tell each other what's going on. A kid who's by himself wants people to notice him, he's more likely to keep a secret..." ERC1510*

Participants reported that they "got good" at hiding their offending. When asked what that meant to them, the majority of elements involved in ORC were cited, such as normalising touching behaviour, giving the victim an illusion of control, recognising an opportunity, and the ability to manipulate the victim to do what he wanted. Disguise, in much the same way ranged from little or none to masking the sexual contact, normalising it, for example, to the point where it looked like behaviours were part of what any father would do for his daughter. For example, one participant was able to do this by soothing the victim by rubbing her stomach when it ached, progressing slowly to her genitalia, all the while continuing to rub in circular motions.

Avoiding detection, like threat disarming, included full denial of the offence if confronted, questioned, or apprehended. Though suspicion of sexual offending at that point had been established, maintenance of innocence was still a method employed to ultimately escape conviction.

> *"...deny everything until you're blue in the face..." ERC2248*

Location selection, securing location, and threat location were all elements manipulated to avoid being detected. Location selection often took forethought or planning on the part of the participant so that sexual contact was successful and participants' goals achieved. The location for offending was often chosen on the basis of least amount of threat as well as higher capacity to secure the location. Securing the location, for one participant, meant putting a knife in the bedroom door so that it could not be opened easily from the outside.

By securing the location it was generally known which direction a threat was likely to come from e.g., through the door. Threat location also referred to the participant knowing where other members of the household were and their expected time of arrival home. For those offenders who committed offences in public places, not knowing where or when a potential threat may come from provided an element of excitement. For example, offending in public toilets created the excitement of not knowing if someone would walk into a public bathroom at any minute. Often offender's senses were tuned to noises outside which indicated the presence of another person. For many participants the time of day was also a contributing factor incorporated into their offending. Some felt that the darkness of night provided a form of camouflage for their offending whereas for other participants the time of day bore no impact of their ability to successfully offend.

Highly skilled sexual offenders tended to take a more nonchalant approach to avoiding detection but concentrated more on threat disarming. Those participants with less experience were more inclined to concentrate on both threat disarming and avoiding detection. One participant in the sample stated that he didn't care if the victim told or not, that no one would believe her anyway; disclosure was not even a consideration in the offending or post offending reflection.

Contingency Management

Contingency management was based on the principle that if behaviour was reinforced or rewarded, it was more likely to occur in the future. Contingency management is used in a variety of everyday behaviours. For example, parents use pocket money or the promise of dessert to encourage their children to do chores or to eat their vegetables. In the area of child sexual offending, contingency management was seen with some men offering sweets and money, and others rewarding victims with special attention and love. According to participants, using emotional "blackmail" was integral to offending; that is, using loyalty, love and friendship as bargaining tools and currency.

Reinforcements were both positive and negative with the giving and withdrawing of privileges. Within the population sample it was possible to distinguish rewards based on age, gender, and interest. For example, a 12-14 year old boy might have been rewarded with alcohol, drugs, money, or games such as a

Playstation, whereas a five year old girl might have been rewarded with toys, dolls, games, and attention paid to her.

More sophisticated methods of behaviour reinforcement were displayed with the more experienced offenders in the population sample, an example of which will be discussed in case study two.

Summary

By masking their behaviours and making them appear to be something else, participants remained undetected in much of their offending. Many participants in the current study were not apprehended and convicted directly as a result of offences committed and were only identified years later. For some participants in the current sample, many offences continue to remain undisclosed. Techniques employed (such as the reinforcement of behaviours) to minimise the threat of disclosure as well as completely avoiding detection for offences have been successful for many participants.

Internal Moderators were crucial to masking offence related behaviours and actions. Participants unable to control their emotional responses, both positive and negative, brought attention to themselves from friends, partners, or family (though suspicion related to child sexual offending may not have arisen). A small number of participants unable to control their responses were consumed by guilt, shame, and self-loathing, and reported their actions to local authorities or counsellors. Maintaining emotional equilibrium for more experienced offenders and those with plans to continue offending (if not for the disclosure of the victim) allowed them to project seemingly normal lives, totally masking all sexual offending history.

Phase VI – Reflection

The majority of participants in the sample offended on more than one occasion, whether it was with the same victim or multiple victims. The core category of Reflection was constructed to describe the level of introspection and offence reflection performed by the participant. This was in response to how they believed their offending might have changed from the first to the last time that they had sexual connection with a child, and whether they were consciously aware at the time of any changes they had made. Many of the participants talked about how they thought

about their offences afterwards, whilst paradoxically often trying not to think about the offending. Observations were not always made by the participants but were revealed during data analysis concerning their sexually abusive actions.
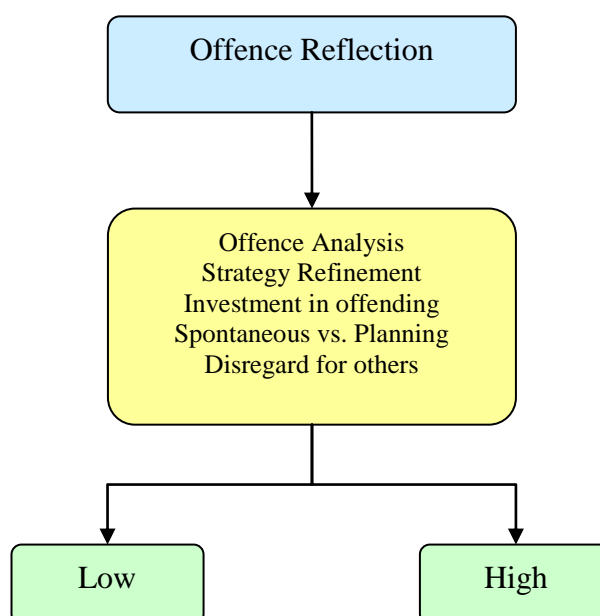
Figure 6.10: Offence Reflection variables identified in the ERC Model

Reflection emerged as a separate core category during data analysis because it was during this phase of the model that the offender evaluated whether his goals and needs were being met by the victim and how or if those goals changed. Five distinct subcategories were represented in the data: offence analysis, strategy refinement, investment in offending, spontaneous versus planning, and disregard for others.

Offence analysis ranged from the participant having no insight into his offending and very little consideration of events related to the offence, to consciously evaluating his actions and having an explicit awareness of his goal directed behaviour. The latter type of offence analysis may have led to strategy refinement if the participant found that he was not getting exactly what he wanted out of the offending or if he tried to offend and was unsuccessful.

For those who had a high level of reflection, this category was the platform for an evolving offending style (and can be mapped along the Competency Continuum). Through strategy refinement a small number of participants considered

how they could gain more compliance from the victim or what needed to be improved to make the offending go more smoothly. Strategy refinement may have continued to occur until a pattern was established or all potential situations accounted for. Participants would think about what to say/ do/ react until his script was well learnt and effective.

Participants strongly invested in their offence related behaviours commented on difficulties they had in ceasing to offend. Participants sometimes felt that it was harder to stop than to continue. Reflecting on aspects of an offence, particularly aspects the participant found pleasurable, may have triggered fantasies. This in turn may have made the participant want to masturbate, subsequently solidifying an offence script by providing a form of rehearsal or practice, as mentioned in Phase III Offence Related Competencies.

Offence rehearsal or practice in turn increased the likelihood that the next offence opportunity required an element of planning rather than relying on spontaneity. For some participants, the element of planning an offence also extended to victim identification and the characteristics of a victim which would allow the offending to continue more smoothly. For example, participants who enjoyed their own abuse as a child (Phase I - *Primary Skill Acquisition*) were frequently able to identify victims who were similar to them, and thus assumed that they would also enjoy the sexual practices used on them as children.

A disregard for others emerged through offence reflection for a small number of participants who commented that they had no regard for their victims and did not care who they were or how they felt as a result of the offence. Their offence reflection extended to their own gains made and goals achieved through sexual connection with the victim. Those participants were exclusively intent on the achievement of their own goal of sexual gratification and abused their victims when they chose rather than relying on more opportune moments. The offences, as a result, were more coercive/ forceful, and often put them at a higher risk of discovery.

> *"…Well, yeah push them down and I maybe grabbed their hand or squeezed their fingers so that it hurt, like pinching the tips of their fingers and just squeezing them and that kept them quiet or other times I would place my hand over their mouths and say, and cover their mouth and block their nose at the same time and I'd say 'if you make a noise I'll leave my hand there', so they can't breathe…" ERC1029*

The level and quality of offence related reflection emerged from the amount of experience of sexual offending. For those that had one or two offences there appeared to be very little insight as a result of offence(s) committed. A low level of reflection and undue consideration of the enormity of the offence may have had a significant impact on the participant's lifestyle and resulted in a substantial increase in substance abuse and/or estrangement from family and friends. A low level of offence reflection may have also increased the chance of apprehension for a previous offence or potential future offences.

Summary

Reflection and analysis of an offence, and ORC and behaviours, provided the participant with an opportunity to understand whether their goals or needs were met. Reflection of an offence, whether positive, negative, or mixed appeared to have an impact on the participants' lifestyle as well as their future offence behaviours. Negative thoughts resulting from reflection of an offence may have adversely affected the individual's lifestyle with increased substance use or additional time spent working as a coping mechanism in an attempt to ignore or escape from feelings of guilt or shame. Positive emotions evoked as a result of offending produced an increase in the volume of offences committed (not necessarily an increase in the volume of victims) with more consideration given to the improvement and refinement of future offence opportunities and practices. Opportunities to offend were created rather than spontaneous and the chances of the participants' ceasing the behaviour decreased. Offence reflection, though not always performed to a high level with all participants in the current sample (considered to be at the novice end of the Competency Continuum), was nonetheless an important process in the offence cycle.

Competency Continuum

From the data participants were conceptualised on a continuum based on their competencies and abilities to successfully sexually offend against children. Participants next to each other on the continuum did not appear to have noticeable differences in their offence cycles; however those at the opposite ends of the continuum differed markedly. For those participants that progressed along the continuum a gradual change in behaviours and strategies emerged, and this was

apparent through their offence histories. Those participants with a high volume of victims and/or offences appeared to have evolved in their capacity to offend.

The Competency Continuum represented behaviours which were acquired in the same way any new talent is and therefore consideration was given for the utilisation of the novice/expertise framework. For many in the population sample, maladaptive beliefs and behaviours were acquired at an early age. Child sexual offending for the most experienced offenders began at an early age, indicating a closer relationship to the expertise framework through early skill acquisition and the modelling and subsequent refinement of behaviour.

From interviewing child sexual offenders it became clear that the majority of offending for some participants has gone undetected. Those participants have been offending against children for over ten years and have countless victims. Their anthology of scripts, for both victims and offences, allowed them to be versatile in their approach and execution of offences as well as providing a resource base in which to identify potential victims.

Participants pushed the boundaries of their offence behaviours through goal-directed actions, and many reported starting the next sexual contact where they left off from the previous sexual connection in order to meet the desired end. Participants were asked during data collection if they performed all the sexual acts with their victims that they had wanted to, and many responded that they would have liked to have done more before their offending was disclosed, or the victim stopped the participant. Had their offending continued then their repertoire of offence related strategies and behaviours would have no doubt increased and their place on the continuum progressed.

To illustrate clearly, Table 6.1 was constructed to emphasise key concepts of the ERC Model and draw attention to the features characteristic of opposing ends of the Competency Continuum ("experts" versus "novice" distinction).

The application of the Competency Continuum will be illustrated further with case study examples in the following chapter, and the implications of its use will be examined further in the Discussion.

EXPERT	NOVICE

Phase 1: Primary Skill Acquisition
    Sexually abused as a child
    Sexually abused others from an early age
    Exploitive of other young children/ peers at an early age
    Frequent masturbation
    Use of pornography at an early age
    Own abusers viewed as role models
	Phase 1: Primary Skill Acquisition
	    Potentially sexually abused as a child

Phase 2: Lifestyle
    Frequent sex and masturbation   Relationships are superficial
    Use of pornography   Known associates are sex offenders
	Phase 2: Lifestyle
	    Sex and masturbation not frequent
	    Little use of pornography
	    Able to sustain relationships

Phase 3: Offence Related Competencies
    Confident   Detailed scripts
    Goal oriented   Accurate appraisal of victims
    Plans offending   Strategic
    Versatile   Experimental –tests boundaries
    Entrepreneurial   Risk- taker
    Effective use of feedback
    Creates opportunities and easily detects opportunities
    Identifies victims early and makes quick assessments
	Phase 3: Offence Related Competencies
	    Not confident
	    Little application of acquired scripts
	    Goals self-serving
	    Inaccurate appraisal of victims
	    Not versatile
	    No plan for offending
	    Does not test boundaries
	    Minimal risk taker
	    Does not pay attention to feedback

Phase 4: Offence Related Behaviours
    Countless victims   Both male and female victims
    Intrafamilial and extrafamilial victims   Multiple victims at one time
    Detection and exploitation of victim vulnerabilities
    No force used   Finds 'no' a challenge
	Phase 4: Offence Related Behaviours
	    Abuse of others starts during adult years
	    Does not employ methods used in own abuse to abuse others
	    Few victims
	    One victim chosen at a time
	    Does not consider needs of the victim
	    Victim chosen based on opportunity

Phase 5: Masking
    Masks offending   Avoids detection
    Ability to multi-task
    Ability to reassure others and disarm potential outside risk
	Phase 5: Masking
	    Masking behaviour based on least amount of risk
	    Does not disarm potential threats

Phase 6: Reflection
    Highly reflective and self-evaluative
	Phase 6: Reflection
	    Little reflection and self-evaluation

Internal Easily able to regulate emotions Portrays seemingly normal life	*Internal* Victim chosen to fulfil adult roles Feels guilt/ shame/ self-loathing
General Offending evolves over offending history Long offending history	*General* Incarcerated for offence(s)

Table 6.1: *Features characteristic of 'Experts' versus 'Novices' on the Competency Continuum*

Conclusion

This chapter has presented, in diagrammatic form, a description of an exploratory model of Expertise Related Competence in child sexual offenders. Phases of the model, which have been identified through grounded theory, are not necessarily sequential in nature; though the first phase of the model *Primary Skill Acquisition* is a foundational platform. The results have revealed the importance early learning experiences have had on participants and their ability to acquire skills proven useful for future offending. Maladaptive learning strategies have carried over into adulthood for the majority of participants. Participants' functioning as adults impacted in a variety of ways on their *Lifestyle* prior to and post-offending. Perhaps the most significant finding in this chapter was the discovery of *Offence Related Competencies* expressed in Phase III of the ERC model.

For many of the participants, offending was often moderated by *Internal Moderators and Contextual Features* and their belief that by having a sexual experience with a child would improve their mood. Often those responses would have a significant impact on the participant engaging in sexual activity with the victim and continuation of that activity. Very few participants ceased offending as result of their initial sexual activity as the resulting positive affect outweighed any social conscience, consequence, or negative affect or response.

The Competency Continuum is a dimension conceptualised to reflect the variation among the sample based on participants' abilities to successfully sexually offend and explain the nature of individuals' offence histories and the pathway through which they were able to achieve their goals. Results of the current research has provided insight and support for skill based techniques and practices, which has implications for future classification and treatment models and will be considered further in the Discussion.

In the next chapter, two case studies have been chosen from the data set to illustrate extremes or prototypical cases on a Competency Continuum for child sexual offenders. The case studies will be discussed in terms of the model presented in this chapter.

Chapter Seven: Results: Case Studies

The purpose of Chapter Seven is to illustrate the Expertise Related Competency Model (ERC) outlined in the previous results chapter with the use of specific examples from two case studies. Case illustrations may help the reader to better visualise and understand the analytical points being made, especially when the analytic points might be otherwise difficult to absorb (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Two participants were chosen as case studies to further facilitate the understanding and application of the model to child sexual offenders. The case studies represent prototypical cases at polar opposites of the competency continuum, that is, 'expert' versus 'novice'.

The first case study, "Bill" (novice), was selected because even though there were participants in the current sample who were apprehended after one-off encounters with one victim, "Bill" was a clear example of how offence related competencies and behaviours did not necessarily evolve even when multiple victims were targeted. The second case study "George" (expert), however, exhibited extensively refined offence related competencies (demonstrated through the complexity of the case study) resulting from the countless victims and wide ranging strategies employed over 15 years of offending.

The case studies present an overview of each participant's life based on their collected file material, conviction records, and interview data. This information is also explained in terms of the ERC model outlined in the previous chapter. A summary table is also provided for each case study (Table 7.1 "Bill", and Table 7.2 "George") which outlines specific features for each individual derived from the ERC model.

<u>**Case Study 1: Bill**</u>

Bill was a 40 year old, bisexual male, of New Zealand European descent and was a single parent to one son with whom he lived with at the time of the offence. At the time of data collection, Bill was serving a 3 year sentence for his current offence (Indecent Assault on boy under 12) which occurred while he was on bail for a previous offence. Bill had a total of three victims (aged 9, 10 & 12 years), all of which were male and known to him, though not related. All three victims disclosed the abuse and Bill was convicted for offences against all three victims.

Bill grew up as one of five children in a home characterised by violence and alcohol abuse. He was frequently moved from residence to residence within the family, and his childhood was marked by physical abuse from an alcoholic father with whom he claimed he was not close to. Bill reported that he was close to his mother but found it difficult to watch the domestic violence characterising his parents' relationship. Bill reported having completed high school and he had many friends whilst growing up. At the time of Bill's current offence he was attending a community polytechnic institute of higher learning.

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the features described in Bill's case study which were specific to him, and were directly related to the constructed ERC Model.

Phase I - Primary Skill Acquisition

Bill was the subject of periodic sexual abuse from both his male and female relatives from the age of five until he was eleven years old. He told nobody about his abuse until his incarceration, but says that his auntie used to give him sweets and toys to prevent him from disclosing, and that his male cousins used to threaten him with violence if he disclosed the offending. Bill did not consider his abuse from his auntie as particularly traumatic as he liked receiving gifts from her, however he did state that he was scared his male cousins would beat him up if he did not do as they asked.

"...I was just happy I was getting toys and stuff..."

NOVICE - Bill

Phase 1: Primary Skill Acquisition
    Sexually abused as a child

Phase 2: Lifestyle
    Unemployed / part-time work / student
    Longest relationship – 3years
    Alcohol and drug abuse
    Previous convictions for sexual offending and non-sexual offending

Phase 3: Offence Related Competencies
    Not confident
    Did not use scripts from childhood abuse or any other learnt script
    Goals were self-serving, strictly focused on one goal -to have sexual contact with a male
    Inaccurate appraisal of victims
    Not versatile
    No plan for offending
    Did not test boundaries
    Minimal risk taker, abuse in own home
    Did not pay attention to feedback
    Opportunistic

Phase 4: Offence Related Behaviours
    Abuse of others started during adult years
    Few victims
    One victim chosen at a time
    Did not consider needs of the victim
    Victim chosen based on opportunity
    No victim management strategy

Phase 5: Masking
    Waited till son went to bed

Phase 6: Reflection
    Reflected only on content of goals

Internal Moderators
    Sexually attracted to males
    Found children less rejecting than adults
    Saw victims as a vessel to achieve ultimate goals

Contextual Features
    Opportunistic, victim chosen based on proximity and accessibility

General
    Incarcerated for offence(s)

Table 7.1: *Summary of features specific to "Bill" described in Case Study One within the context of the ERC Model.*

Bill also reported that the topic of sex was never discussed in the family unit and that he learnt about it through pornography on television and through his own sexual experiences, including his abuse. Bill's early sexual experience outside of his abuse began with masturbation at 11 years of age, and his first sexual experience took place at 13-14 years of age with a girl two years older.

Phase II – Lifestyle

The Lifestyle phase of the model concentrated on Bill's life, living circumstances, and vulnerabilities prior to his current index offence with emphasis on offence non-supportive (relationships, employment, living environment) and offence supportive pathways to offending (previous criminal history and substance abuse).

Bill was a single parent, living alone with his son (age 9 years at the time of Bill's incarceration) who had primarily been receiving government benefits on and off for the last 20 years. He had been employed in a variety of jobs but with the birth of his son, became the primary carer for his child and again went on social welfare. Prior to incarceration, he had been undertaking courses at a local Polytechnic institution to further his education and career prospects. Bill reported having a good relationship with members of his family (except his father) and was close to his sister who periodically came to stay with him.

Bill's longest relationship of 3 years was with the mother of his son, however the relationship dissolved after his son's birth, and soon after the break-up she relinquished all parental responsibilities. Bill had no further contact with her. He continued to have relationships with women on and off over the next few years but had not found a suitable long term partner. Bill stated that he had become bored with relationships with woman, and began having thoughts about intimate male contact and what that experience would have been like.

> *"…I've had relationships before, it's just that I, I don't know, I just went off relationships with women and I started looking at males in that kind of way…"*

Bill's thoughts about being with a male became more frequent, and although he claimed to have known several homosexual men, he stated that he was too scared to

approach or initiate sexual contact for fear of rejection and social stigma associated (in his mind) with homosexuality.

Bill's lifestyle had been characterised by heavy alcohol and drug usage. Bill had been a frequent user of a range of drugs since his teenage years. Since the birth of his son, and the responsibility he felt as a parent, Bill stated that his substance abuse had been mostly limited to weekend activities.

Bill has previous convictions for child sexual offending against 2 other victims who were not related to him but were known to him, with an 11 year span between his first and third victim. Bill also has previous offences for the receiving of stolen property, the possession of cannabis, and failure to appear in court, all of which were prior to the birth of his son.

Phase III - Offence Related Competencies

Offence Related Competencies (ORC) are the cognitive and strategic resources utilised in the commission of an offence. As was evident in comparison to participants like "George" (Case Study 2), Bill was limited in his ability to cognitively and strategically implement a plan for offending. While Bill's early developmental and sexual experiences (of his own abuse) and lifestyle (experience as a parent) would arguably have provided resources from which to draw upon offence related scripts (i.e. how to coerce or bribe a child), Bill lacked the capacity with which to extract the necessary tools and skills which would aid in the achievement of his goals. The little ORC's Bill did possess had their foundations in fantasy based scripts solidified through rehearsal and masturbation, which were governed by his goals and motivations to sexually experiment with a male. Masturbation to fantasies had served as a type of script and rehearsal whereby (in the fantasy) the victim was able to perform all sexual activities desired and further solidified his offence supportive cognitions.

> *"...with* (the victim) *the first time, this is when I started looking at males, yeah I was curious about being with a male when I offended against* (victim)*, he was someone I could try things with…"*

Bill remarked that the content of his fantasies revolved around sexual activities performed with males, though this was usually with an adult male.

> *"...I was thinking about his penis but I was thinking of it as an adult's one..."*

Bill finally admitted that he did not care if the male was adult or not, he wanted to live his fantasy. Bill employed none of the sexual scripts characterised by his own abuse (i.e., the giving of gifts or coercion).

Resources which Bill drew upon were governed by his goals and motivation to have adult sexual relations with a male. Those goals were mediated by his Internal Moderators, specifically his displacement of sexual intimacy which did not allow him to confidently approach an adult male (due to the social stigma he associated with homosexuality and his fear of rejection). As children were seen as less threatening and less rejecting than adults, Bill's goal of touching a man's penis was transferred to that of touching a young boy's penis.

Bill showed little confidence in both his everyday life as well as his offending. With the ultimate goal of wanting to have sexual relations with a man, he resorted to the victim as a vessel to make new sexual discoveries. Bill's offending was characterised by opportunism which was the result of being a secondary caregiver to his son's friend, as his son's friend spent more time in Bill's home than with his own family. He did not groom the victim as more experienced offenders would, but relied on his role as a parental figure to allow him to gain the victims' trust and compliance.

Bill's ability to make accurate assessments of both the victim and the context was limited and revealed a low level of information processing for both the victim and the context, as on three occasions he incorrectly judged that the victims would not disclose the offending.

> *"...somehow I knew he wouldn't tell, that was one of the biggest reasons why I knew I could do it to him, coz I was quite confident that he wouldn't tell..."*

Bill's clear lack of appraisal was apparent when he was shocked and angry at the victim for slapping his hand away from the victim's genitals, when he thought that the victim would let Bill touch him.

Bill lacked the ability to multitask as evident in his offences as he did not consider grooming the parents of the victim a consideration. Bill did not go out of his way to ingratiate himself to his victim's parents but relied on the expectation of trust granted to him as a parent himself.

Bill showed little versatility in his offending. He preferred instead to use the same pre-offence behaviours that were unsuccessful twice previously. In the last offence when he was rebuffed by the victim, he walked off, sulking and annoyed instead of attempting to manipulate the situation to gain compliance from the victim. In contrast, more experienced offenders in Bill's place, might have used the emotional rejection to then pressure or coerce the victim into some form of sexual activity. Bill, however, had no desire to continue to pressure the victim as he was emotionally wounded due to the victim's initial rejection.

Bill did not test the boundaries of the relationship prior to initiating sexual contact, nor did he employ games as a technique to ingratiate himself with the victim. Instead, he relied on the establishment of trust granted to him on the basis of the victim's relationship to his son. On all three occasions Bill's victims were victims of opportunity within his home, with no real forethought or planning taking place, or consideration for consequences of his actions. Both of Bill's first two attempts at sexual connection were outside of the victim's clothing and were unsuccessful in satisfying Bill's needs.

> *"…I was still curious and I still wanted to experience the feeling of touching someone else's which wasn't my son's…"*

By the third offence Bill commented that he had made the conscious decision to offend after having seen the victim in the bath, however he had no real plan for how he was going to achieve his goal of touching another male's penis.

Bill's internal representation of information, or Cognitive Resources, did not provide him with an organising framework from which to draw evolving or enduring strategies for offending. His ability to strategically plan for an offence was limited and he relied solely on the presentation of an opportunity within his home. At no time did he report that there was any forethought as to how he was going to achieve his goals. Bill's narrative of his offences revealed that there was no construction, preparation, or implementation of a larger plan to meet his needs.

Phase IV - Offence Related Behaviours

Bill's Offence Related Behaviours during the actual offences themselves, did little to meet his goals of achieving sexual connection with another male. The first two victims were one-off attempts to sexually offend against the two boys on

separate occasions, both of which he was apprehended for. Bill's third victim however did not report Bill's offence until after the third incident took place. In the first two incidents, he touched the victim outside of his clothing in the genital area, but on the third occasion he directly touched the victim's genitals underneath the victim's clothing. Because the victim had not disclosed the offending after the second incident Bill attempted a third.

Though his offences did demonstrate incremental progression from touching outside the clothing to underneath the clothing, there appeared to be a distinct lack of Offence Related Competencies (identified through the use of Grounded Theory in the sample population). Bill comparably was not very skilful in the execution of his offences. His first offence (against his first victim) left an obvious mark on the victim (in the form of a 'love bite'), showing no thought for trying to disguise or mask his behaviours.

Bill's offence progression was more a function of the victim not disclosing the offending and Bill wanting to achieve his goals than any other well thought out strategy. Bill walked up to the victim without saying anything and placed his hand on his genitals. At no point did Bill engage in dialogue with the victim with regard to sexual activity that he wanted to take place or that which had taken place. Having previously been arrested for similar offences he did, however, appear to pay more attention to the victim post offending than he had on previous occasions.

> *"…oh I was a bit wary, I kind of paid more attention to him to see if would show anything…he was a bit withdrawn the first day, he wasn't as talkative as he usually was…"*

However, Bill did nothing to comfort or reassure the victim even though he noticed the victim's reserved behaviour and the victim withdraw from him. In addition, Bill considered the victim's non-disclosure as acceptance and proceeded with a second and then third attempt. Prior to his first incident with the third victim, he did not engage in any behaviours, activities, or games which would have otherwise provided an indication to how the victim(s) would respond.

Bill's victim management strategy was based on proximity and familiarity with the victim (his son's friend spent most of his time in his home). The location of Bill's offending was always in his home though his offences were all extrafamilial in nature. Bill gained confidence from being within his home and the security it

provided, in the hope that he would be able to achieve his desired goals as well as remain undetected for his offences.

> *"…he was a safe way of being with a male, I knew I could control* (3rd victim)*, keep him, have him where I wanted him…"*

As Bill's organising framework lacked any real depth, he grossly overestimated his ability to accurately assess the victim's response and the amount of control that he would be able to exert over his victim.

> *"…when he was around home I knew I could control him…"*

When Bill was finally rebuffed by the victim, he was unable to comprehend the implications of his actions past his own sense of rejection.

> *"…I was shocked and pissed off coz he slapped my hand away, and I didn't feel that I got, was pleased…he slapped my hand, and then, yeah I got shock, got up, called him a little bastard, and then walked out…"*

The only indication that Bill displayed during his offending that he was well aware of the immorality and illegality of the act he wanted to commit was through his delay of offence related behaviours by waiting until his son had gone to bed before approaching the victim.

As all of Bill's victims were extrafamilial, during the interview Bill was asked why he didn't offend against his own son. He responded by saying that such a thought was abhorrent, and made him sick to think that his son would be a victim. Bill's victim selection was psychologically driven and mediated by his fantasy to have sexual relations with an adult male. He claimed that he had no sexual desire to be with a child but instead found them to be less rejecting than adults and therefore suitable substitutes with which to practise fantasised sexual encounters.

Bill's offending was more opportunistic in nature and as such he did not discriminate based on the physical features of his victims. At no time did he attempt to use victim management strategies from those used on him as a child or any others.

Internal Moderators and Contextual Features

Bill's Internal Moderators referred to his ability to control his psychological, physiological, and affective states which mediated his offending. Bill was not confident enough to sexually approach an adult male and instead used the rapport he

had with children, as a parent himself, creating for himself a safe and comfortable environment within which to achieve his goal. Bill was able to suppress his negative emotions as his goals and motivations outweighed the guilt and shame associated with child sexual offending.

> *"...yeah I knew it was wrong but I didn't really care, coz I wanted to have the experience of seeing what it was like to touch another penis..."*

Bill stated that while he did feel guilt momentarily after the offence, it did not last long as he ignored his feelings and concentrated on achieving his goals. Bill finally reached a point where he rationalised and minimised his offending (Cognitive Mechanisms) so that the guilt and shame became virtually non-existent.

> *"...I didn't think it would be harmful because I didn't think that putting your hand over the clothes was wrong..."*

The main Contextual Feature mediating Bill's onset of offences were the availability/accessibility of a victim within his own home, which was not his son. Bill did not have to extend himself in order to meet his needs. Bill's offending was externally triggered with the third victim by seeing the victim's genitalia when the victim got out of the bath. The excitement of seeing another male's genitals, which were not his son's, prompted thoughts of wanting to have sexual relations with a male, and he saw the victim as ideal for experimentation.

> *"...after tea they had a bath and I went in to take the towels to them, to* (the victim) *and my son, and that's when I had actually, the first time I had seen* (victim's) *penis...yep and that thought of his penis stuck in my head, and I was feeling aroused when I saw it, and I wanted to touch it...then I walked out and I kept on thinking of that image of his penis..."*

Bill used child sexual offending as a means to secure his ultimate goal of having sexual relations with an adult male.

> *"...I just started thinking what it would be like to be with a male and then I looked over at* (victim)*..."*

Phase V - Masking

Phase V – Masking, were the activities undertaken by Bill to conceal his offending, or at the very least, make those activities appear to be something else, for

example, play-fighting. Bill employed only limited forms of masking behaviour following his offences. In his attempts to avoid detection, he waited until there was nobody around or awake (waiting until his son went to bed) to disrupt his attempts to molest his victim, though no other strategies were employed to disguise his actions. No use of bribery or coercion was employed to convince the victim to let him touch them.

Bill did, however, watch his 3rd victim the day after the first attempt, and the second attempt, to see how the abuse may have affected him. When there were no obvious indications of a change in behaviour (to his awareness) Bill incorrectly assumed that the victim didn't mind him touching him.

Bill was able to rely on his role as a parental figure to establish trust with his second and third victims, and their parents. Though he had two previous convictions for unlawful sexual connection with a child, Bill appeared to have no need to convince his third victim's parents that their child was safe in his charge.

Bill's attempts to conceal his offending were based on the premise that nothing happened in three offences, and he continued to minimise his actions when his offences became known to the local authorities.

Phase VI - Reflection

As mentioned in Chapter Six, offence analysis may range from the participant having no insight into his offence actions to consciously evaluating actions performed in relation to his goals. Subsequently that offence analysis may have led to strategy refinement in an attempt to achieve one's goals. In Bill's case however, though he was aware that he did not achieve his goals, he did not alter his strategy in any way. He did not focus on what methods would aid him in achieving his goals; rather he focused on the content of his goals.

> *"…the thoughts of when I touched him before just came back into my head and I was thinking 'yeah I wouldn't mind doing that again but this time feeling'…"*

Bill continued to approach and touch his victims in much the same way as previous attempts and continued to not employ any form of dialogue to engage or comfort the victim. Bill (falsely) believed that he would get another chance to

sexually molest the victim after he had slapped his hand away. However he did not change or refine his strategy despite being unsuccessful with all previous attempts.

> *"...after* (2nd victim)*, I didn't really think of anything, but when* (3rd victim) *came, yeah, I remembered how easy it was with* (2nd victim)*, but not realising it, and I knew* (3rd victim) *was around and trusted me…"*

Competency Continuum

Bill was considered to be at the novice end of the Expertise Continuum with little or no change across his offences as each of his attempts at sexual connection with three victims resulted in the unsuccessful achievement of his goals/ needs and his apprehension and incarceration in all cases.

Bill's Summary

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the salient features discussed as part of Bill's case summary. The distinct lack of any evolution in his offence cycle placed him in the 'novice' end of the Competency Continuum. Bill's ability to accurately interpret the situation in its context and have a series of potential actions was extremely limited. Over the course of Bill's offending, he did not appear to develop skills, abilities, or behaviours which would otherwise facilitate and improve his offending techniques during the offence process.

Bill did not appear to have gained any learnt behaviours as a result of his own abuse as a child. His childhood abuse was characterised by the giving of gifts from one abuser to threats of physical punishment from his other abusers. Bill at no time utilised either of these techniques in the commission of his offence(s) to either gain compliance from the victim or to remain undetected for sexual activities which took place. His offences were characterised by the belief that children were less threatening and more accepting than adults. Bill's self-esteem and confidence were very low and it is primarily this negative affect that prompted his sexual intentions towards his victims.

Case Study 2: George

> *"I don't know why but people still have this 1950s/1960s preconception of an old man standing in the corner with a hat on and a trench-coat, handing out lollies to kids….it doesn't work like that anymore…"*

George is a 28 year old New Zealand Maori male who grew up between the homes of his mother, his grandmother, and the care of government Social Services agencies. He described having a difficult relationship with his mother who became pregnant with him at age 17. George's mother had numerous partners over the years and he described her as bisexual. George has one younger brother (to a different father). George left school after the Fourth Form (age 15) with no qualifications.

George is serving a five year sentence for sexually offending against a ten year old boy who was not previously known to him. He has five previous convictions for sexual offending against boys under the age of sixteen as well as numerous convictions for non sexual offending, and at the time of data collection he was serving his third jail sentence for child sexual offences. Though George could not specifically identify the true number of his victims, he estimated that he had well over 100 victims over the course of his 15 years of offending. His first conviction was at age seventeen for cannabis possession.

Table 7.2 provides a summary of the features described in George's case study which were specific to George, and were directly related to the constructed ERC Model.

Phase I - Primary Skill Acquisition

George's early learning experiences had a considerable influence on the subsequent offences that he committed as an adult. George's early acquisition of offence related skills, knowledge, and attitudes and beliefs will be discussed in relation to the subcategories 'sexualisation' and 'deviant norms' outlined in Chapter Six.

EXPERT - George

Phase 1: Primary Skill Acquisition
   Sexually abused as a child
   Sexually abused others from an early age
   Exploitive of other young children/ peers at an early age
   Frequent masturbation
   Use of pornography at an early age
   Own abusers viewed as role models
   Children can make adult decisions
   Sex = Love
   Love is a natural progression of friendship

Phase 2: Lifestyle
   Superficial relationships
   Established network of paedophile friends

Phase 3: Offence Related Competencies
   Confident   Detailed scripts
   Goal oriented   Accurate appraisal of victims
   Versatile   Experimental –tested boundaries
   Used network to identify further victims   Risk- taker
   Effective use of feedback
   Main Strategy 'ignore/ reward/ secret/ test/ escalate'
   Created & easily detected opportunities
   Identified victims early & made quick assessments

Phase 4: Offence Related Behaviours
   Countless victims (male & female)   Multiple victims at one time
   Intrafamilial and extrafamilial victims   Found 'no' a challenge
   No force used
   Detection and exploitation of victim vulnerabilities

Phase 5: Masking
   Masked offending   Avoided detection
   Ability to multi-task
   Ability to reassure others and disarm potential outside risk

Phase 6: Reflection
   Highly reflective and self-evaluative
    Kept a log of victims and their sexual preferences and ratings

Internal Moderators
   Easily able to regulate emotions
   Portrayed seemingly normal life

Contextual Features
   Creates own opportunities
   Always prepared and ready if an opportunity presents itself
   Triggered by physical attraction to victim
General
   Offending evolved over offending history
   Long offending history (15 years)

Table 7.2: *Summary of features specific to "George" described in Case Study Two within the context of the ERC Model.*

Sexualisation

George reported having been sexually abused from the ages of 8-12 years of age by a cousin and also by friends of his mother's and their associates who were paedophiles. During that time he reported first starting to abuse other children. Case files indicated that George first began abusing his cousins, although he considered his first victim to be a friend who participated in mutual masturbation and oral sex. George described his own sexual abuse as a child as mostly enjoyable, and any activities which were not he made sure were never performed on his own victims.

> *"…Some of the abusive experiences I went through as a kid I look back on and think of as still being pleasurable…"*

The sexual satisfaction and enjoyment that George gained from his own abuse was such that he wished it to continue. George offended against children his own age and younger while he was still being sexually abused. When George turned 14 he became a male escort until the age of 17, all the while continuing to offend against boys younger than himself. George stated that at the age of 13, he took the techniques that he learnt from his abusers and refined them, including the grooming of victims and how to manipulate them.

> *"…Stuff that I learnt when I was younger I refined really, like the whole grooming process…I saw the guys doing it to other younger people and I thought 'hang on' and I refined it from there…"*

George was exposed to all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation including participating in photographic and film images. Whilst he indicated that much of his abuse was enjoyable, there were aspects of his abuse which he hated and was forced upon him.

> *"…there were ones that just weren't pleasurable and I would have done anything I could have to get out of them…"*

George stated that he masturbated daily from age eleven, and reported having used pornography on almost a daily basis for self stimulation up into adulthood.

Deviant Norms and Schemas

George's mother worked as a prostitute in a massage parlour and had a range of associates that would come and go in the home and throughout George's

developmental years, leading him to become increasingly desensitised to adult sexual practices.

George's role models growing up became his abusers.

> *"It was what all of the adult role models or male role models in my life were doing… These men were introduced to me by my mother. It was my life. It was normal. There was nothing wrong with it. It was the rest of society that had issues…"*

Because his own father was not present in his life and his mother was often working, George looked to his mother's male associates, who were also his abusers. By George's own admission, when those men weren't abusing him, they were able to provide George with a sense of belonging and with emotional support and guidance through his formative years. The sexual abuse George was subject to and the attention and support he was receiving created a belief structure where George understood intimacy to equal sex, and sex to equal love. Thus, he viewed sex as a natural progression of friendship, and the giving and receiving of pleasurable sexual activities was acceptable as long as all parties were consenting.

The early introduction to the sexual practices of adults prematurely gave George the responsibility of making adult decisions as to the consensual nature of those activities. For although those sexual activities were not entirely consensual on George's part, coercion, bribery, and the desire to maintain the friendships of his abusers assured its continuance. He quickly learnt that for immediate gratification at minimal personal cost, the fastest way to get what he wanted was to take it by any means available.

When George became too old for his abusers 'tastes' he quickly realised that by bringing other children to the attention of his abusers he was able to maintain a close relationship with them, effectively insuring that emotional ties were not severed as well as maintaining his status within the group.

> *"…I met young people through them and ultimately started introducing more kids to them as I got older…"*

Material and emotional goods which George gained through his associations with his abusers became a currency which he also learnt could be used to exploit others to fulfil his needs.

> *"...Gained the resources of the older guys...started getting money coming in that I would use to expedite the process of buying people around to my way of thinking...by resources I mean, the cash, the people that they know, the places to go to get things..."*

George initially began applying learnt manipulation techniques with the ruse of convincing his friends that they would need to practice sexual activities on each other for when they had girlfriends. Though the ruse was quickly dropped, the sexual activities continued. Those foundational beliefs continued to guide him through his teenage years and were deeply entrenched by adulthood, greatly impacting on his lifestyle choices.

Phase II - Lifestyle

George's day to day living and social interactions were guided by his childhood experiences, values, attitudes, and beliefs, and proved to have a dramatic influence on his lifestyle choices and associations through to adulthood.

George considered that he had a bad relationship with both of his parents. George was raised by his grandmother and mother, and his mother had become pregnant with him at age 17 years. His father left at his mother's announcement of pregnancy, and he had no contact with his father until age 15 years. His relationship with his father after their reunion quickly deteriorated when his father became aware of George's offending. His relationship with his mother had bordered on ideation of killing his mother for introducing him to his offenders. In addition, he felt resentment toward his mother because she informed many of his friends and acquaintances (including schools he attended) of his offending. George considered himself to be closest to his grandmother, though it appeared from his case file that he used to steal money from her and threaten her.

George had limited romantic relationship experience as he saw monogamy as boring and dull, although when he was in a relationship his offending was less prolific. George considered himself to be bisexual but found female companions uninteresting and unable to fulfil his sexual needs. He had been in two homosexual relationships during which time he continued to commit offences against underage boys, though not at the same rate as when he was single. Prior to his current imprisonment George established a relationship with a man considerably older than himself.

George's relationships with friends also extended to his victims. He reported having remained in contact with a few of his victims as they shared many commonalities. George also considered friendships with past victims to be an additional safety net to minimise disclosure of offending, and felt that those victims that did disclose did so out of spite because he did not like them or because George terminated the offending. George's friendships, like his intimate relationships, were superficial, and were essentially an additional form of manipulation and control.

George became embroiled in a network of adult males committing sexual offences against children (initiated by his own abusers). He continued to be friends with his abusers from childhood through to adulthood, and later became an adult member of the network and considered those people to be some of his closest friends. He reported playing games and having bets with his friends to see who could get the most phone numbers off of young boys.

> *"..We would go to the swimming pools and have competitions to see who could pick up the most young guys in one day, not to offend against them there, but to pick them up for grooming at a later date…"*

George's association with sex offenders further solidified his beliefs that offending was a natural curiosity exhibited by young boys and that if they were consenting then sexual connection was acceptable.

> *"…It was something that I never looked at negatively because there were so many people around me doing it…I mean, we're not hurting these guys, these guys are coming back and seeing us. These guys are instigating it, how can it be wrong?..."*

By George's own admission, his associates considered him to be very good at identifying and grooming children, and he believed he was respected by his paedophile friends for his abilities.

He was not employed in a full time capacity with any employer and was receiving a government benefit prior to incarceration. George reported having a variety of jobs from the age of 15 years but was unable to hold down a job for any length of time due to his habitual drug usage. His drug use was high and on a daily basis. He considered himself to be an addict and found that he was unable to function without the use of some form of illegal drugs (marijuana, methamphetamine, speed, and cocaine). His drug use also maintained his offending and chaotic lifestyle, and he

made money by dealing drugs. George reported the use of drugs from an early age in an effort to manage his emotions and reduce his inhibitions. His heavy drug usage spanned over the fifteen years of his offending. He did not believe that his drug usage caused his offending, although he did believe that it made it easier, and reported:

> *"...if there was someone that I was unsure of about how they were going to react then, if I was doubting myself, 'have I assessed this person properly' or whatever, have a couple of smokes and then I'd think 'yeah I have, they'll be sweet'..."*

George's alcohol consumption was limited to social occasions and he did not consider it to be heavy.

George had an extensive history of previous offending. His sexual offending included five convictions for sexual offences against males under the age of 16 years. His non-sexual offending included convictions for dishonesty, drugs, violence (threatening to kill, GBH, common assault, and unlawful possession of a pistol), the possession of objectionable material, and a number of more minor convictions (failure to answer bail and breach of periodic detention). On each of the three occasions George had been convicted of sexual offences he received sentences of imprisonment.

Phase III - Offence Related Competencies

Offence Related Competencies were the cognitive and psychological means used by George to be able to make offence related judgements based on his own needs, the vulnerabilities of the victim, and the social and environmental cues surrounding the interaction between himself and a child. Acquired developmental, social, and contextual experiences provided George with sufficient resources from which to draw enduring and evolving strategies for offending. George's cognitive resources provided him with an organising framework for interpreting and classifying information in its context, allowing him to think strategically about how to create possible offence situations.

The volume of victims and the manner in which George spoke of them over the course of the interview prompted the spontaneous question of how he rated his ability to successfully offend against a child. Often, he gave the impression that he thought of himself as a 'Casanova' with young boys. On a rating scale of one to ten,

ten being outstanding at committing his sexual offences, George rated himself an eight.

> "...I don't think I was very far off from getting to the ten mark. I think I could have reached ten..."

When asked what it would have taken for him to be a 'ten' he replied "*I would not have to have a conscience*". George believed that he was able to discriminate between victims who would suffer serious repercussions from offences committed against them, and so 'chose' not to offend. Ironically, he admitted to crossing his own boundary lines and breaking his rules with several victims.

> "With (victim) *I had actually made the choice that I wasn't going to offend against him, that I'd focus more on his older brother...He wasn't interested...I went from thinking about* (victim) *to making sexual contact after we went swimming. We were roughhousing* (play-fighting) *and it was just the physical contact, the closeness..."*

Cognitive Resources

George exhibited extensively refined offence related competencies which resulted from a variety of techniques employed consistently on countless victims over the course of his 15 year offending period. The variety of victims (and their individual responses) provided an internal catalogue of detailed scripts which he was able to apply in a range of situations. George reported frequently using the same opening lines (as it proved successful) to bait his victim and gauge their response; an example of one of these conversation starters was:

> "...I would do the big 'oh, have you got a girlfriend? And they'd be 'yes' or 'no', and they'd ask me the same thing and I'd say 'nah, I don't have a girlfriend or boyfriend at the moment, and they'd be confused, and I'd say 'I'm bisexual, I do it with boys and girls'. That was a conscious thing, it wasn't men or women, it was boys or girls, it's all about planting the seed..."*

The source of George's scripts was initially constructed from his early learning (elements of his own abuse) and then primarily concentrated on his need for self-gratification. As George's scripts expanded and evolved over the years, his adherence to those scripts became more flexible, relying on aspects of his personality to also generate compliance from his victims. He reported having found himself in positions to offend without realising, and had found that his "approach automatic"

technique (automatically start the grooming process without his conscious awareness) occasionally left him wondering if anyone else had noticed his grooming methods.

> *"…Approach automatic is like when you're driving along in the car and suddenly you're actually where you get to and you're not sure how it is exactly that you got there and your thinking 'how many people did I run off the road in this period?' that's the kind of thing that was going on in my head.."*

George believed that he was accurately able to assess all young persons and decide if they would be "keen" for sexual activities. His confidence was extremely high and was not easily rebuffed. A 'no' appeared to have only fuelled his advances and tactics, though he also stated that there were so many victims around that it did not matter if one or two left his group. George had the ability to change tactics with ease and reported being versatile in all contexts. His goals and motivations were always directed at self-gratification and control over others. He set himself goals with regard to particular victims he would like to offend against. Identifying a child and then deciding the best course of action to get to know a potential victim was what George considered his speciality. He believed that he was easily able to identify a potential victim and decide by looking at them what kind of sexual activity would be acceptable to the victim, and the best course of action to ensure that it took place.

> *"With men I can tell which ones are going to go off and what ones just aren't worth approaching. I've been able to do that for years…I got good at recognising the cues…I was really proud of that…"*

As part of George's goal setting, he also set limits on what children he was going to incorporate into what he termed his 'harem'.

> *"I had what I used to affectionately call my harem, which was a group of boys who were younger than me that were hanging around…"*

George considered two parent families heavily involved in a child's life riskier, but on occasion George had been willing to take that risk. His motivations to offend were primarily derived from the enjoyment that he got from socialising and offending against young males. Over the course of his offending he established himself as a popular and friendly guy known for his lack of rules and appealing

lifestyle. His status with his victims continued to feed his self-esteem over the course of his offending to such a point where he believed that he was in control of a 'harem' of victims at his beck and call. Opportunities were created out of fun activities, such as paintball and four-wheel motor-biking at the financial expense of George and his older associates. George was able to utilise the resources of his associates with the use of alcohol, drugs, and a seemingly endless flow of money.

> *"…I also had access to large amounts of ready cash through one of the other guys I was offending with,* (friend). *He basically bankrolled me. If I needed a car, I got a car. I got cash, cash for drugs, alcohol, anything from him. In return* (friend) *got introduced to the guys…"*

George's level of resourcefulness extended from material goods and developed over the course of his offending with the discovery of the ease in which current victims could introduce him to new victims to create a network; the victims themselves became a resource.

> *"…I haven't had to go to places to meet potentials for the last five or six years, that's why the network worked for me…"*

Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning subcategory of ORC's referred to George's ability to operationalise his cognitive resources and knowledge to the task of committing a child sexual offence. The subcategory 'Strategic Planning' of ORC's had three further subcategories of construction, preparation, and implementation.

The 'construction' or source of George's overall strategies was derived from his own experiences and pleasures associated with child abuse during his formative years. That experience continued to be fuelled by the large volume of pornography consumed over many years as well as a general attraction to young boys (the result of the fusion of inappropriate sexual preference during adolescence). George admitted to frequently masturbating and fantasising about a potential victim before anything would happen, effectively mentally rehearsing a scene before him.

> *"…it was the whole, 'well this could happen, and yes, this sort of thing is going to happen'…my favourite fantasy is just that very first time that something happens, the very first sexual contact…"*

George continued to add that "*a lot of my fantasies came true*". George would fantasise about young boys in his network that he was currently abusing as well as those that he hadn't yet approached, sometimes masturbating up to five times a day. George reported that he was careful not to over elaborate on his fantasises with the victims he was actually abusing.

> "*…I'd revisit things we'd actually done with people that I was actually having sexual contact with at the time, but I wouldn't really fantasise about things that weren't happening or hadn't happened with them…*"

He was aware of each victim's boundaries, and to picture those victims performing acts outside of what was actually happening, was likely to result in George making his victims feel uncomfortable (during the actual offence) and risk cessation of offending.

George's 'preparation' was consolidated with 'implementation' for his main overarching strategy and, as such, will be discussed as a whole to describe the intricacy of George's mindset with regard to offending.

By the time George reached his early 20's he had a main overarching strategy which had evolved over the course of his offence history, in addition to a few core techniques which he utilised. George's planning had been refined to what he considered his "*ignore/ reward/ secret/ test/ escalate strategy*". The first part 'ignore' was used initially to entice young people to want to spend time with him. By not talking to a young person directly and letting other victims brag about what activities he would take them on (not taking a potential victim themselves), George attempted to create an environment where a young person would think they are missing out on a lot of fun and want to spend time with him. Once a potential victim had established that he would like to participate in George's activities, he would initiate the next step 'reward'.

At the 'reward' stage George would allow an identified potential victim to participate in activities and spend time with him and the other young people he associated with. He stated that by this point he had identified the needs/wants of a potential victim (by what they thought they were missing out on most) and would then exploit those vulnerabilities; George would provide material goods (e.g., Playstation games, money etc.) and make those goods available and difficult for a victim to refuse.

After an established period of time George would allow the other young people he was offending against to let a potential victim know what they were doing with him when they were alone with him. By allowing other victims to disclose his 'secret' an element of peer pressure and acceptance was applied in the revelation of George's 'extra' activities. If the 'secret' was disclosed, and the potential victim hadn't left the company of the group, then he would then begin to 'test' the young person.

The 'test' was usually physical contact which would have the appearance of being accidental and could be easily explained away if there was a negative response. By testing the boundaries of what would be acceptable to his victims, George would often start with play-fighting and then inappropriately touch his potential victim and gauge their response. If there was none, he would then proceed to the next step of his strategy.

The 'escalation' stage of George's strategy would involve spending more time with a potential victim either alone or included in more group activities. Physical contact which was established through the 'test' phase was then increased to sexual contact; all the while he continued to monitor the victim for an adverse reaction to any physical or sexual contact. If at any point a potential victim responded negatively to either the secret they were told or advances that were made, he would try an alternative technique/approach, or they would be excluded from group activities and the strategy would resort back to 'ignore'.

> *"…I would respond to 'no' by going back to that Ignore/ Reward/ Secret/ Test/ Escalate and if they said 'no' and they were someone that I was really actively after, then they'd still hang around but they wouldn't be in that inner circle anymore, the group that would go out and spent shitloads of money. Once they said 'ok' they were straight back in…"*

George noted that if his main strategy was not employed then one of his other core techniques was used. In preparation for offending he began with casual references to sex within what he considered a fun and good natured conversation. At times this also included the use of pornographic material to spark teasing and flirtatious behaviour; the joke that was responded to fairly well, was then quickly followed by physical contact.

One of George's core techniques for offending was to give the victim an illusion of control whereby the victim dictated the sexual activities performed and

the right to terminate any activities if they felt uncomfortable. George maintained that at no time was force used against his victims, as he used loyalty and friendship as currency. By treating his victims as adults (as had been done to him during his formative years) he believed that he was able to manipulate the boys with honesty and therefore leave them accountable for their own actions.

George also reported another form of preparation for offending which he found to be more labour-intensive if the parent also needed to be groomed and an opportunity needed to be created. This would often include providing drugs and alcohol to a parent, or relieving pressure from a parent by babysitting one or more of their children. For the most part though, as George got older he sent his network of victims out to go and recruit new victims to bring into the fold.

> *"...Typically I would get another boy to intervene. That was one of the reasons that I had a network of young people that were all hanging around..."*

George's strategy for offending with the implementation of a network of victims proved to be highly successful to him when he no longer went out searching for potential victims but instead began to be approached by young boys wanting to join his network.

Phase IV - Offence Related Behaviours

Offence Related Behaviours (ORB's) were those behaviours, actions, and dialogues performed by George during the commission of an offence. As previously mentioned, ORB's consist of victim selection, typology, and victim management.

Victim Selection

George selected his victims on the basis of physical appearance, likeability, and ease of accessibility. Physical appearance and personality were paramount in the selection of victims for him, however ease of accessibility was not necessarily important (and often considered a challenge) if he felt the victim was going to be worth the time and effort.

George tried to identify young boys who were much like him at a similar age, as he felt that he would not only be more successful in his offending but also would be able to relate to them emotionally, even at times convincing himself that he was a

role model that his victims might not otherwise have. He prided himself on the selectiveness of his victims and the high standards that he held to meet his requirements.

> *"...I have preferences for olive skin – dark hair, blonde with blue eyes, and young European guys...and if availability, looks, being ok about talking about sexual things and being comfortable with physical contact, if all of those things are covered then approach automatic goes in earnest..."*

George's victims were primarily extrafamilial and he freely claimed that he had a sexual preference for 7-14 year olds, but believed that he did not discriminate on the basis of age if he was feeling emotionally low and needed sexual gratification to alleviate his mood.

> *"...I like that age group because of their independence, their adventurousness. Most things in life are new and experimental and they would pretty much give anything a go..."*

George had set himself a rule that he would not offend against a child under the age of seven. He stated that he would often have multiple victims that he would be offending against at any one time; having a maximum of four victims in one day, and revealed that at one point at he was offending against eleven victims at one time (over the course of a few days).

Typology

The type of offence performed by George was dictated by the duration of offending, type, onset, and location of the offence. The duration of George's offending (15 years) was the element of time over which his offences progressed and evolved. George's offence progression ultimately resulted in his ignore/ reward/ secret/ test/ escalation strategy, and the construction of a network of victims.

George's offending began during his adolescent and teenage years, where he found that time alone with another young child was effortless and was easily masked as friendships. As he grew older however, he was aware of the suspicion which would surround a nearly grown man spending copious amounts of time with young boys.

The progression of the offences themselves (though initially starting out as masturbation with a friend) quickly included a full array of sexual activities. He

participated in oral sex, anal sex and masturbation with his victims. He would
however, only perform certain acts with some victims and kept his liaisons with
those victims strictly within the bounds of what each of his victims was comfortable
with. In order to keep track of which sexual acts his victims enjoyed/consented to, he
kept a log book where he would record the victim's name, acts performed, and a
rating scale of how good/bad the sexual encounter was, restricting his activities to
only that which the victim was consenting to (in his mind).

> *"…My whole way of thinking was 'well if it's something that they're going to enjoy, that they get off on, at the end of the day it's less likely to be reported by them, and they're more likely to keep coming back, and if I do anything that pushes those boundaries that they set, then chances are that it's not going to happen or it's going to be reported, and the whole thing will come crashing down around my ears…"*

George's offending was both episodic in nature (one-off offences) as well as
maintained with an element of continuity (with the use of his log). He was capable of
offending for a couple of years against a victim as well as having single encounters.
He declared that he offended against the majority of his victims on more than one
occasion.

The length of the offences themselves did not change overtly over the course
of his offending, though he did find himself better able to manipulate the
environment and the victim. George was capable of stealing minutes to touch a
victim as well as spending hours engaging in sexual activities. A quick encounter
may have been to test a potential victim, whereas allocated time alone signified the
victim being fully absorbed within his network. The longest George offended against
any one victim was up to three years, whilst also offending against others.

For George, there was no one 'good' time to offend as all occasions (social or
private) were considered opportunities. He was able to offend against his victims in a
variety of locations, from the home (his or the victim's), schools, beaches, arcades,
swimming pools, cars, on day out excursions, or camping.

> *"…the kinds of places I found easiest to offend was basically everywhere…it doesn't matter where…if it's at night, basically the world is available…"*

George's high self-efficacy also allowed him to commit offences within the vicinity
of parents and other adults. For example, on one occasion a victim was sitting on his
knee, he had his hand up the shorts of his victim, touching the victim's penis, with

the victim's father was sitting on the opposite side of the table. He also had no difficulties in performing sexual acts in front of other victims (who he gauged as open to such things, usually in the form of a 'dares' game).

> *"…I make opportunities to offend even if I'm in a position where I know I shouldn't…Nothing stopped me…"*

The cessation of offending with George was most often at the victim's discretion. He felt that when victims wanted to stop it was mostly due to them growing up and wanting to explore other avenues and relationships.

George was able to normalise his offending and easily integrate it into his lifestyle. By exposing his victims to his lifestyle, he was able to create a secure environment where his victims accepted his activities as everyday occurrences.

Victim Management

George had a vast range of victim management strategies. His most commonly used was '*ignore/ reward/ secret/ test/ escalate*', however he often supplemented that strategy during his offences by allowing the victim to believe that they dictated and consented to all sexual acts performed. The illusion of control had the dual effect of alleviating George's own guilt, as well as sharing blame with the victim, and manipulating the victim into being accountable for the offending.

The habituated nature of George's offending served to offer cues to victims as to when George would want them to begin engaging in pre-offence behaviours; a certain look given, or a small comment by him to a victim, would indicate what was to happen next.

> *"…I used to let him know that I wanted sexual contact by the way I went 'yeah/ no?' He knew what I meant by that…"*

George maintained his vigilance however, in monitoring a victim's response through dialogue and physical touch, always ensuring that he had compliance before going a step further. George admitted to being both persuasive and using coercion to manage his victims. The temptation of material objects, participation in fun activities, and accessibility to drugs and alcohol, was used to ensure membership within the group.

As a management and victim response strategy, George frequently used pornography to introduce victims to sexual activity and normalisation of sexual behaviour. From George's anthology of conversation starters, he further pressed a potential victim into a sexualised conversation to discover what stage (of sexual promiscuity and knowledge) a potential victim was at, and to try and gauge a level of tolerance for sexualised physical activity.

> *"…The first things that I would say would be 'have you got a girlfriend?' yes/no. If it's yes then 'what's the furthest you've ever been with her?' then it's 'have you ever done anything with another guy? I have'. Before giving him the chance to answer, answer so suddenly so that it's not a trap question. Sometimes you get a 'yes, sometimes you get a 'no' and sometimes you get a 'what?' You bring up the subject of a boyfriend in the most laid back way possible so that it isn't this really huge thing that you're asking them, and you have a laugh about it…*

George frequently relied on laughing, teasing, and joking about sex to test a potential victim's reaction to the subject matter. He focused on activities and conversations that the victim enjoyed in order to gain acceptance and compliance. Should one particular method or tactic not be successful, he had the ability to change tactics with ease and fluidity.

Initially the following victim management strategy was thought to be included solely part of George's 'typology' of offending (within the overall category of Offence Related Behaviours). However, on closer examination it displayed the bidirectional nature of the two further subcategories 'victim management' and 'typology' (see Figure 6.8, Chapter 6) as George also used the following strategy as a means to control and manipulate his victims. George would perform oral sex on certain victims and end the sexual encounter at the victim's ejaculation. He would then excuse himself on the pretence of having something else to do i.e., making coffee, or rolling a smoke, and go away to masturbate in private. When asked why not have the victim reciprocate? George responded that he had three main reasons for restricting acts to only those which the victim seemingly consented to: Firstly, he did not want to perform any sexual acts which he did not like himself as a child; secondly, if the victim was enjoying only those acts which he consented to, then there was less likelihood of the offending being disclosed; and thirdly, because he did not want the victim leaving and ruminating over issues associated with their own sexual preference and potential homosexuality. By *only* performing oral sex on

certain victims (which he gauged would be the only likely sexual act they would comply with) George believed he was able to achieve his own goal and give the victim pleasure without guilt or fear of questioning their own sexuality.

> *"...Seeing someone laying there masturbating, having just given them a blow job may make them take a giant leap closer to this whole 'people are seeing me as gay coz I'm doing this thing'..."*

For George, when one measure did not work, he always tried another. His early skill acquisition and lifestyle experience comprised his offence related competencies and provided a thorough resource from which to draw evolving and enduring offence strategies. With the large volume of offences and victims over the length of his offending history, George knew of only six complaints against him.

Internal Moderators and Contextual Features

George's Internal Moderators referred to the emotional, physiological, and cognitive mechanisms used, felt, and controlled by him which mediated his offending. George employed a number of cognitive mechanisms to regulate his internal response to a perceived event or experience which facilitated attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in the maintenance of his offending.

George was sexually abused himself as a child and stated that he enjoyed much of his abuse which was initially the reason for his own offending. The attachment that George felt toward his abusers and the possible severance of such attachment drove George to seek possible alternatives which would fulfil his needs. The praise received for his new found talent of luring new victims into his circle of abuse fuelled a constant need to maintain his status with his abusers and associates.

> *"...I was really proud of that, because suddenly all these older guys are all like heaping praise on me because I'm introducing them to all these young people that they're not having any problems with as they put it..."*

The frequent reference to his own abuse suggested that he was using those childhood and adolescent experiences to preserve his reasoning for the continuation of his own sexual offending. Those aspects of his own abuse which he did not like, he carried with him emotionally to remind himself of 'what not to do' with his own victims. George was able to reconcile his offending further by giving his victims the option to stop.

George rationalised his offending with the belief that if his victims did not like what they were doing then they could stop the offending at anytime. George would shift the blame of the offending onto his victims by always giving them the opportunity to stop the offending if they felt uncomfortable. However, the result of cessation or refusal had its own consequence which included exclusion from the group or from fun activities.

Though George had many victims and had previous sexual offences, incarceration for his index offence was due to negative comments from his partner's friend, to which he took offence. In turn, it drove him away (physically - he left the company of his partner and friends) and resulted in heavy drug use. George firmly believed that had he not been under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and had he not been feeling 'bad' about himself, that the offending would never have happened. Like many participants in the current study, children were used as a way to alleviate negative affect at times when George had been emotionally vulnerable.

In contrast to much of the population sample, most of George's offending was also the result of positive emotions and high self-efficacy. He enjoyed the offences he committed and because he considered his victims to be consenting, negative affect did not present as a product of offending. His inflated sense of self-worth led him to set rules and boundaries for his offending. George believed that he was not doing anything wrong because he would never do anything to his victims which he had not enjoyed having done to him when he was his victims' age.

> *"...as long as physical force wasn't used, the boys always consented to it, I saw no harm in it whatsoever..."*

George projected the persona that he was a rebel, and allowed those around them to do as they wished. He treated his victims as adults which allowed him to remain guilt-free, because as adults, his victims were accountable for their own actions. He provided all forms of entertainment for his victims and younger friends, including having a constant supply of drugs and alcohol.

George claimed that the reason he did not feel bad or guilty for most of his offending was because it was a normal part of his everyday behaviour and lifestyle. It was assimilated to the point where he considered that society had the problem and not himself. By surrounding himself with people committing offences against children, he was able to internalise and normalise his offending and functioning.

"…That was the life I knew…It was the life I've lead for so many years…I had so much fun doing it. I had a really good time…"

Contextual Features were external or situational and referred to important elements of the pre-offence and offence situations i.e. the presence of a trigger or cue, or the presentation of a victim or opportunity. For the most part George created his own opportunities, but on occasion when the victim or opportunity presented itself, he was able to capitalise on the situation and began to formulate an appropriate action (towards sexual offending). The availability of a victim or opportunity was frequently presented as everyday living in his life (by his own creation). Every child was considered an 'opportunity' for George whether victims were in his home, at a skate park, or on the opposite side of a room. His triggers revolved around the use of drugs, socialising with young people, and on occasion a bad day became another trigger.

George's ability to identify possible offence opportunities and potential victims was apparent with his index offence when two boys wandered into his backyard to collect a ball. The contextual features presented as triggers or cues in his most recent offence were the introduction of two boys in the yard. The presentation of the potential victims as well as the need to improve his mood state prompted George to implement a strategy for offending.

Though not always required, the presentation or observation of a physically appealing child also activated George's offence cycle.

"…it was normalised to the point where if I met a young person that I found aesthetically pleasing, that fitted into the little box of what I like to look for, it was all being processed subconsciously…The grooming process would automatically start, because the grooming process always starts when all the little boxes are ticked…"

Once the offence cycle was started, it was not easily stopped, and on occasion, he was left wondering if anyone else had noticed his behavioural change towards the potential victim.

Phase V - Masking

George was able to successfully remain undetected for the majority of his offences. His ability to avoid being detected evolved over the course of his

offending. Having being identified at a young age by family members that he was sexually active with other young boys, he began to take steps to ensure that his future offending went unnoticed. George utilised a strategy of contingency management whereby the network of victims was made aware that they did not talk about what he did with other young boys (unless he said to) otherwise privileges were lost. George used loyalty and friendship as bargaining tools to perform his offences on his victims. He withdrew games, substances, and privileges if any from his network betrayed him. George extended his repertoire with the utilisation of computer encrypted software to hide vast amounts pornographic material stored on his computer (which he was also distributing to his associates). Ultimately George believed that if he was confronted about the issue of child sexual offending, then "*deny, deny, deny*" was the best strategy. For all of George's victims, well over 100 over the course of his offending career, he was successfully prosecuted only twice previously.

George's ability to disarm potential threats to his offending was well rehearsed. He not only groomed a potential victim but also the victim's parents. In particular George produced drugs and alcohol to ingratiate him with family members. At times when his intentions were questioned (or the parent was hesitant) he invited the parent out on activities which had been planned for the day, often commenting that he was going to be joined by a friend who was also bringing his own son along. It proved to be an effective technique as once a parent heard that there would be other adults involved, they consented to their child attending whatever activity had been planned. Though George would utilise the opportunity to offend, he was always mindful that he and the victim actually did the activity which was planned (in case the child was questioned later). George's masking strategies proved to be effective as he claimed that one parent in particular stated that he was a good influence on her child.

George further lessened his chances of the offending being disclosed with continued contact and friendship with a victim once offending had stopped. It was both to ensure that the victim was not traumatised by any sexual activity that had taken place and also to monitor the chance of the offending being disclosed to a third party. George reported that he remained friends with many victims, even after incarceration. He believed that his victims maintained their friendships with him as

they were consenting, and by making the offending enjoyable, they were less likely to disclose the offending.

George standardised his behaviour with all young people, being very careful not to ostracise those young people that he wasn't offending against. It ensured that no unwanted attention was directed at time spent with those young people he was offending against.

> *"...when you've got the two siblings and your grooming one, then if they're there together, you've got to give them both the same attention otherwise eyebrows get raised, questions get asked, umm, but if it's a uniform show of generosity then its, it's not questioned as much as it would be otherwise..."*

By making the offending appear to be something else (e.g., a game) or at the very least something which victims were consenting to and enjoyed, he was able to stay undetected for the majority of his offending.

Phase VI - Reflection

By reflecting on offences committed by him, and against him, George was able to refine techniques in order to create offences in addition to altering techniques and strategies during offences against his victims. George exhibited a high level of reflection and strategy refinement for offences committed over the course of his offending history, and stated that when analysing his offences he often thought about how to change his offending to get desired results from his victims. If one particular attempt didn't work then he kept trying until he was able to make a break through; it might have been a subtle change such as altering the course of a conversation, or as much as working out that victim was into music, drugs, and alcohol as opposed to adventure activities.

> *"...I've had to alter my approach to groom a child heaps of times. Try different tacks. If you're going one way and it's not working then you try something else instead..."*

Through his offence analysis George often felt that he was able to meet all of his needs through his offending, as he believed that younger boys were less complicated than adults. He often felt he identified better with younger boys, and that many of his victims were a lot like him.

George made special mention of having to alter his strategic approach during his teenage years. He found that as he got older it became more difficult to mask activities performed with younger victims, as it was considered suspicious that a teenager/young adult would choose to have friendships and spend time with young children. He soon discovered that he was able to use other victims to pick up children from their homes and bring them back to his house.

> *"…When I was younger and closer to the guys age range it was easy to go round because I was their mate. But when you've got a guy turning up around my age wanting to hang out with a 13yr old, alarm bells start ringing. Parental controls were much harder to get around…"*

In addition to reflecting on offences whilst he was offending, George made other observations of his offending as a whole. He believed that his offending primarily changed in four ways. Firstly, that the grooming period became reduced. He stated that the time it took to groom potential victims decreased over his offending history and, with the help of his network of young people, he no longer needed to canvas past locations that had previously proven successful. The time between each of his stages of grooming also decreased, moving at a more efficient pace through his 'ignore/ reward/ secret/ test/ escalate' strategy.

Secondly, that his internal radar of being able to detect a possible victim that would be 'consenting' to his advances became highly tuned. George believed he could walk into a room and knew instinctively which child to target, making the process of detecting potential victims faster.

Thirdly, he discovered that the offending spanned over longer time periods. George felt (towards the end, prior to most recent incarceration) that the volume of victims decreased but the quality of victims (he became fussy) and the quality of time spent offending against them increased (because he had created an environment which was secure).

Lastly, George noticed that the parental controls became stricter as he got older, and found allowances could be made with the use of his network (both to introduce new victims and to collect and provide alibis for existing victims).

George was aware that his offence strategy was becoming more successful as the number of complaints against him lowered over time, even though he was an identified sex offender.

By his own admission, he believed that one of his most successful 'angles' employed during his offence history had been his age and his appearance.

> *"…I would absolutely play on the fact that I didn't look like a stereotypical child sex offender…One of the things that I had in my favour was that I'm young, relatively intelligent, I had money…I don't fit into what people expect to see when they hear 'he's a child sex offender'…"*

George was a social man who seemingly engaged in everyday activities which were viewed as particularly favourable to young boys. George had his own view of stereotypes of child sex offenders (older, beard, long trench-coat etc.) and prided himself on the notion that to an outsider he was never considered dangerous to children.

> *"…Given my age and the fact that I'm not grey, wrinkly, smelling of decay, and drive around in a Lada and think it's the world's gift to modern motoring, then I think I'm more successful than the men that taught me…"*

Ultimately George was so highly invested in his offending he believed that it would have been too difficult to stop as he enjoyed his lifestyle and his friendships with his victims and associates far too much.

> *"…I thought about getting out but that's where all my friends were. It would just be too difficult to detach myself completely…"*

George was able to make clear links between actions performed on him and by him to his future offence behaviours and believed that he learnt from his abusers what worked and did not work in the recruitment and abuse of other victims. George's future offending was a continuation of his childhood abuse and childhood offending.

Competency Continuum

On the Competency Continuum, which was conceptualised on the basis of participants' competencies and abilities to successfully sexually offend against children, George was considered an expert. His offending was predominantly extrafamilial with the majority of victims being male between the ages of 7 to 14 years old. Not only did he have over 100 victims over the course of his fifteen years of offending but he had only received five complaints against him, and two previous penal sentences for child sexual offending.

George understood what he liked and did not like from his own abuse and took measures to ensure that his potential victims not only felt as comfortable as they could, but also manipulated them into a form of consent. In order to groom victims to such a position George continued to actively pursue a range of techniques which could be applied in a given situation. He rehearsed in his head all possible outcomes and responses in a pre-emptive attempt to coerce the will of his victims.

Through George's descriptions of his offences and relationships with his victims, from early offences to later offences, major shifts in George's Offence Related Competencies took place. As he made the transition from a juvenile to an adult sexual offender he was able to manipulate those around him to agree to any suggestion that he made. As George aged, he contrived a series of alternatives through testing and refinement in order to achieve his goals.

George was able to identify and adapt. Recognition of early techniques used and the complications from trying to pursue the same avenues brought about a shift in his thinking toward his offending. Identifying the dangers of exposure and adapting his approach to be able to spend time with his victims meant that he was always aware that other adults may question his motives in the company of young boys. His reflection of an offence further generated and solidified ORC in a circular capacity.

The majority of George's offending went undetected. The ingenious use of a network of victims at his disposal continued to be developed through the later part of his offending which both increased his supply of victims as well as maintained a low profile.

George was able to maintain a seemingly attractive lifestyle to his victims with the outward appearance of normality to adults around him not associated with offending. Fifteen years of offending with sophisticated strategies and behaviours, acquired in much the same manner in which a person learns a new talent, indicated that George had immense expertise in the area of child sexual offending.

George's Summary

George's ability to accurately interpret a situation in its context and have a series of potential actions was highly refined. From early in his development the acquisition of skills used in an offence related context have had a concrete and stable presence. Maladaptive beliefs and attitudes further solidified and gave direction to

his future offences. George was highly tuned to his environment which gave him confidence to evolve in his Offence Related Competencies as he developed into an adult. He was able to maintain his bravado by regulating his emotional response to such actions with the belief that he was both a role model and a source of emotional support (just as his abusers were to him) to his victims. The regulation and evenness of his temperament was supported by two main beliefs: firstly, that he did not and was not going to do anything to his victims that he himself did not enjoy as a child, and secondly, that, like him, his victims consented to the relationship being elevated to a physical level. George instructed his victims (as he had been taught) on his belief that the highest form of showing love and friendship was through a physical relationship. By believing that his victims could stop the offending at any time (a choice he was sometimes not given himself) he believed he was superior to his abusers and associates and was therefore inflicting less harm. The effort that he exuded in order to ready his victims to that stage was precisely the outcome of years of refinement and reflection of advanced techniques of offending. Though George was incarcerated for his most recent offence, an undercurrent during data collection suggested that there is always a chance he will test a group of boys to see if he "still has it".

In comparison to Bill, George's summary features (see Table 7.2) were highly evolved and took considerable concentration and practice to develop him into the expert child sexual offender that his is.

> *"…there was no force used, as I'd said earlier, that it was something that I'd always driven into them that they were a mutual part of, that they had consented to that, if they didn't want to do it, it wouldn't happen, all of that, so it was shifting blame onto them as well…um, and there was this whole thing of loyalty and friendship and all that going on as well, and if (George) goes down then we lose out on all of the shit that had basically become their lives, hanging out with me and going and doing all the shit with me on my dollar basically was their life, and that was how I wanted it…it was yeah, it's just a really big wide ranging victim control strategy, it wasn't with one, it was working with the whole pile of them all at once…"*

Case Studies Summary

Two case studies were used in this chapter to emphasise the uniqueness and particularity of the polar ends of the Competency Continuum, and clearly emphasised differences between a "novice" and "expert" within the heterogeneity of child sexual offending. The continuum demonstrated variation in human behaviour and it proposed that some offenders were more extreme than others on a particular dimension. Case Study One, Bill, was a 'novice' child sexual offender chosen on the basis of having multiple victims and subsequent penal sentences. Each of Bill's victims were subject to similar pre-offence and offence behaviours from Bill which proved to be unsuccessful (to Bill) in the commission of an offence. In stark contrast to Bill, Case Study Two, George, was an example of a prototypical 'expert' at committing child sexual offences.

George's early skill acquisition (through his early sexualisation and embedded deviant norms) carried forth maladaptive attitudes and beliefs which were ingrained in his day to day living and lifestyle choices. George's offence related competencies were expanded, rehearsed, and refined through reflection of his offences much like an expert acquires new skills and competencies. The eventual outcome of George's efforts enabled him to automatically identify and successfully groom potential victims without his conscious awareness. The occasional victim presenting 'irregular' responses to his advances/ techniques provided George with the motivation to extend his repertoire of strategies and anthology of scripts, much the same as a doctor may approach an illness not physically seen in their career.

For those participants positioned between the novice and expert ends of the spectrum, characteristics reflected elements of both aspects of the novice and expert distinctions. As participants' offending evolved, more characteristics/features demonstrated from the expertise end (see Table 6.1) were present, with the development of increasingly comprehensive methods and techniques employed in the commission of an offence.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

Overview

This thesis began by identifying in earlier chapters the current rehabilitation and theoretical models of the offence process of child sexual offenders. Rehabilitation and treatment perspectives and interventions have concentrated efforts on areas where perpetrators of sexual abuse are deficient, neglecting areas where offenders actively seek and strategically plan sexual offence situations and scenarios. While sexual offenders may be deficient in some aspects of their lives, there are domain relevant competencies such as the selection and manipulation of victims, decision making and problem solving, and eluding detection, in which some sexual offenders appear to excel (Ward, 1999). Previous research in criminological domains suggests that decision making and problem solving strategies employed in the commission of a criminal offence demonstrate domain specific expertise. Ward (1999) further extended the suggestion of offender competency by loosely linking concepts aligned with expertise literature to the domain of child sexual offending.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 47 male child sexual offenders in New Zealand and analysed using Grounded Theory to generate a model of offence specific decision making. Key characteristics derived from expertise and expert performance literature provided a loose foundational construct in the overall framework from which to view the current study. Specifically, Ward's (1999) theoretical assumptions of sexual offenders demonstrating sophisticated strategies and techniques underpinned and guided four research questions (Chapter Four) which will be addressed in this chapter along with the key findings. The outcome of the research was a descriptive model of expertise related competency of child sexual offending which emphasised variability of knowledge and skill acquisition among child sexual offenders.

Discussion of findings

The discussion that follows is centred on the research questions mapped out in Chapter Four, followed by the implications for both child sexual offending and expertise literature to succinctly organise and contextualise the present study. The primary aim of the research was the development of a preliminary descriptive model of expertise related competency of child sexual offending by identifying the key

cognitive, behavioural, contextual and affective components involved in the commission of a child sexual offence. The second research question sought to identify the salient features of knowledge and skill acquisition and to determine whether those features were a function of experience. To this end, the contribution of all six phases of the ERC Model will be discussed with particular significance placed on Phase III Offence Related Competencies. The third research question set out to discover whether child sexual offenders displayed a variation of skills and knowledge as a function of experience. Within this research outcome the significance of the Competency Continuum will be discussed. The role of affect regulation and self-monitoring skills in the maintenance of offending was queried in research question four to further understand how child sexual offenders control excessive emotional arousal, and for some, continue to lead seemingly normal lives.

The continual process of constant comparison between contrasting child sexual offenders allowed for a rich understanding through the ERC Model. The development of categories was repeatedly revised and re-conceptualised to a point of saturation where no further categories could be identified or collapsed. The outcome of analysis resulted in six phases and two mediating categories which identified and described salient features of knowledge and skill acquisition of child sexual offenders.

Competency Model of Child Sexual Offending

The major goal underlying the aim of this research was the identification of offence related decision-making skills, by investigating whether there were offenders within the child sexual offending domain who displayed greater competency in the selection, execution, and evaluation of victims and environmental cues during the offence process. To this end, it was found that six phases of the model and two mediating categories captured the offence process of child sexual offenders. The emphasis was on the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and the application of those skills specific to committing a sexual offence against a child.

Offence Process Models or Offence Chains, account for not only the series of steps that lead to a sexual offence but also the background variables and mediating factors which make an individual vulnerable to offending (Ward & Hudson, 1998a). Level III theories are temporal in nature as they encompass the cognitive, motivational, behavioural, and social factors associated with committing a sexual

offence over time (Ward & Hudson, 1998a). The Expertise Related Competency Model (ERC) can be conceptualised as a Level III theory with its focus on the 'how' of child sexual offending, through descriptions of what offenders actually do whereby the behaviours, actions, and decisions made during the sexual offending process are described. In addition, by discovering the role early learning experiences play in the offence process the ERC enabled preliminary exploration into elements of 'why' child sexual offenders do some of the things they do. However focus was given to the pathway of offending and the acquisition of related skills.

In light of research conducted on an individual's expertise, the current research adopted a 'relative approach' (Chi, 2006) to the study of child sexual offending by contrasting the actions of novice and expert offenders. This methodological approach was also consistent with Ward's (1999) hypothesis that prolific sexual offenders were more likely to exhibit offence related knowledge and expertise than individuals with few victims and offences (i.e., "novices"). In this sense, the ERC Model was able to define expert child sexual offenders as relative to novice or non-expert sexual offenders on a continuum, with the aim to discover how an expert's knowledge is structured and organised and how their representations differ from those of non-experts. For those individuals considered 'experts', such as George (Chapter 7), knowledge was gained by an accumulation of learning, deliberate practice (fantasy and simulation), and the effortful reflection of offences and subsequent strategy reformulation. George's knowledge of sexual offending and deviant sexual preference evolved over time and stemmed from his own extensive history of child sexual abuse, early sexualised practice, and the acquisition of deviant behavioural norms and schemas.

Salient Features of Knowledge and Skill Acquisition of Child Sexual Offenders

The second research question in Chapter Four guided the attempt to identify the salient features of knowledge and skill acquisition in child sexual offenders. Through the process of Grounded Theory (described in Chapter Five) the phases and mediating categories of the ERC Model emerged as the salient features. The first phase of the model 'Primary Skill Acquisition' described elements of the offender's early life in which he may have acquired deviant attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in regard to sexual development and experimentation. This concerns the conscious and unconscious interpretation of environmental stimuli and interpersonal interactions

during childhood and adolescence. This was assimilated with the existing knowledge of the world possessed by individuals in the construction of an organising framework for the processing of new information. Acquired knowledge and experience informed the creation and interpretation of the actions of the people surrounding them in the foundation of behavioural scripts. Two sub-categories (Sexualisation and Deviant Norms and Schemas) emerged within this phase. The results indicated that some participants were able to draw on deviant sexual scripts as adults derived from their experiences of early child abuse as well as abuse that they themselves performed against other children.

It was found that individuals considered experts in the sample started sexual activities at an early age. They chose victims who were vulnerable and easy to manipulate. Often these men varied the ages of their victims to find their most suited age range. As they themselves have got older, their sexual preferences were locked into a specific age range; in essence, their sexual preferences did not develop as they matured. Many behavioural traits were acquired by expert sex offenders in their early life and were utilised in the commission of their sexual offences. Thus, in later life they were able to manipulate others and viewed them as objects to be exploited to meet their own needs. Whether this critical learning was acquired vicariously through immersion within a culture of violence in the home (i.e., watching their father physically and emotionally abuse their mother) or as a result of their being a direct victim of manipulative techniques themselves, such individuals learned how to gain control over others (maintain power in a relationship) and exert power within their relationships. The key finding from the data associated with the process of Primary Skill Acquisition was that prior to their offending some individuals already possessed engrained deviant behaviour scripts that strongly influenced how they treated other people and how they viewed the world around them.

The second phase of the model, 'Lifestyle', addressed issues of importance representing beliefs, commitments, and attitudes with regard to the way in which participants lived their life. For those participants whose offending was not a continuation of childhood and adolescence, it was during the 'Lifestyle' phase that the offence relevant triggering event or stress occurred. Maladaptive coping responses resulted in offenders seeking to meet their needs (e.g., for intimacy) by whatever means necessary. Categories were constructed on the basis of offence supportive and offence non-supportive pathways to offending. Failure to achieve

desired outcomes in employment, health, relationships, and living conditions resulted in maladaptive coping responses to secure primary needs (Ward & Stewart, 2003). Offence Supportive factors such as substance abuse and criminal networks were found to have a more direct relationship through causing the suspension of individuals' moral judgement and reinforcement of their offence supportive cognitions. During an 'experts' lifestyle phase individuals may utilise sexual offending to secure primary goods even though it might be through anti-social means. Participant's lifestyle often reinforced deviant schemas and long term problematic self beliefs.

The most notably key finding from the study was the existence of core skills and knowledge, discovered in Phase III of the model 'Offence Related Competencies'. Offence Related Competencies were the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural resources used by participants in the commission of an offence. This particular phase of the model was very complex in its construction because all of the identified features used by participants functioned interdependently for each individual. Two sub-categories (Cognitive Resources and Strategic Planning) represented the organisation of knowledge and skills that facilitated offending. Cognitive resources were gained through developmental histories as well as through the lifestyle experiences, decisions, actions, and belief systems held by participants. It was discovered that participants once again displayed considerable variation of their scripts, goals, depth of appraisal, opportunity detection, and range of versatility. Of significance within the subcategory of Cognitive Resources was the reliance on scripts and script structure. It was found that scripts were not only created and utilised by participants committing offences themselves, but also that scripts were co-opted from both the participant's own sexual abuse histories as well as from other sources related to their lifestyles and social interactions (both from criminal and non-criminal means). Scripts drawn from abuse committed against the participants consisted of manipulation, coercion, bribery, and emotional blackmail. Goal structure and content related to sexual offending further facilitated the onset of offence preparation. Goals in this regard functioned to motivate offenders to achieve objectives not otherwise obtainable through pro-social means (e.g., intimacy). Goals, as with scripts, did not always operate at the conscious level and, for the most experienced of offenders were automatically employed when contextual variables were conducive to potential offence situations.

As hypothesised in Chapter Four, and derived from previous literature and research (Gee, Ward, & Eccelston, 2003; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990), the role of fantasy and masturbation was found to serve as stimulants to sexual offences. Sexual fantasies and the reinforcement of fantasies through masturbation functioned to enhance sexual desire in general as well as strengthen the desire for a specific victim. Practiced and rehearsed scenarios, including the use of dialogue and sexual actions, were used to visualise and simulate the successful outcome of goal achievement. Sexual fantasies provided individuals with a plethora of possible deviant behaviours, and more broadly, drew from past offences to contribute to the future planning of sexual offences.

The Strategic Planning of Offence Related Competencies referred to an individual's ability to operationalise his Cognitive Resources by applying knowledge, experience, and information of the victim and context in the execution of a sexual offence. The construction of a plan or idea for offending was created at a conscious or unconscious level depending on individuals' experiences and personal development histories. For the most experienced child sexual offenders, the preparation of victims and environments for the occurrence of a sexual episode and the implementation of a strategy was also conducted at an unconscious level if optimal conditions for offending were present. Extreme variation existed between individuals in their ability to both utilise Cognitive Resources and operationalise those resources to successfully implement the most appropriate strategy. In most cases in the sample population, variation was a function of the successful achievement of goals and fulfilment of needs through the past abuse of victims and offences. The reliance on what had worked in the past, and whether goals or needs had been successfully met, maintained offending behaviour.

Offence Related Behaviours referred directly to the actions performed during sexual contact with the victim. Three subcategories were constructed to describe the selection and subsequent sexual interaction that took place between the participant and victim; Victim Selection, Typology, and Victim Management. It was found that participants varied considerably in both the content and application of knowledge which was reflected in the Offence Related Behaviours and ultimately participants' success in the achievement of their goals of committing a sexual offence.

The two mediating categories which emerged peripherally to the six phases of the ERC, and were no less important, were Internal Moderators and Contextual

Features. Internal mechanisms were evaluated and responded to in accordance with a perceived event or experience. The regulation of emotion, arousal, and cognitive mechanisms was pivotal to the onset, maintenance, and reinforcement of goal creation and success, while Contextual Features presented as triggers, cues, and externally created opportunities conducive to offending. The two mediating categories are discussed further in this chapter in relation to the role they play in the maintenance of offending.

The fifth phase of the ERC Model was Masking, which alluded to both behaviours and actions performed by participants that appeared to be something else (e.g., "patting" a victim's bottom when it was in fact an excuse to inappropriately touch him or her). In addition, Masking also described the participants ability to remain undetected for the offence(s) committed. Those participants that appeared to excel in such areas were able to perform numerous offences against their victim(s), and continued to remain undetected for much of their offence histories.

The level of introspection and offence analysis, and subsequent refinement of strategies as a result of analysis, was encompassed by the sixth phase of the ERC Model, Reflection. Participants differed concerning the amount of insight and consideration given to their actions and emotional responses post-offending. The assessment of whether their goals were achieved and what possibilities existed for future victim/offender encounters were considered and enhanced during Offence Reflection. For example, the continued refinement of strategies early on in George's offence history ensured his ongoing success of both remaining undetected for his offences and facilitated the fulfilment of his needs. Individuals considered to be toward the 'expertise' end of the spectrum found that in their later years of offending that continued refinement of goals and strategies was no longer necessary in order to secure victim/offender interaction and success, as their skills and techniques had become automated and polished. The resulting knowledge system provided the expert with an effective basis for selecting, organising, representing, interpreting, and manipulating information in the environment, including that of his victim.

As an outcome of the six identified phases and two mediating categories of the ERC Model, a continuum based on degree of competency epitomised the extreme variation of skills, techniques, and knowledge demonstrated by individuals in the sample in the commission of a sexual offence. Experts, such as George, most notably

displayed marked variation compared to novices, such as Bill, in the continual reformulation of offence strategies.

Variation of Competency of Child Sexual Offenders

Results of the research indicated that major differences of skills and knowledge existed between child sexual offenders and that the disparity was able to be mapped onto a continuum with less experienced or novice offenders positioned at one end and expert or highly experienced offenders positioned at the other. The continuum is a dimension, no part of which is noticeably different form the parts adjacent to it. Dimensions may be conceptualised in terms of the extent to which features described in the ERC Model may or may not be present. Offenders may find themselves moving along the continuum with each aspect of phases II-VI improving, evolving, or gaining momentum and going through a gradual transition from one practice to a different practice, without any abrupt changes or disruptions. Participants entrance and subsequent progress along the continuum will be reflected by previous aspects of the model, as well as their subsequent offending experience.

The clearest example of the heterogeneity of offenders is demonstrated in the two case studies. George was considered an expert with the effortful transition from adolescent to adult sexual offending. George adapted his offending as he got older through the explicit testing and refinement of a number of strategies and techniques. In contrast, while Bill reflected on his offending, he was restricted by the content of his goals, unable to effectively problem-solve in order to achieve his needs.

While previous research stressed the importance of behavioural scripts and goals of sexual offenders in the commission of a sexual offence (Ward & Hudson, 1998b), the ERC Model further identifies factors which support the structural and procedural knowledge of offenders. The ability of the participant to correctly appraise circumstances of a situation further increased his chances of successfully committing sexual offences. Offenders varied in their capacity to accurately appraise the victim and/ or the situation or environment. Inexperienced offenders often made inaccurate appraisals which in turn lead to their apprehension. However, more experienced individuals that were apprehended appeared to become complacent with their ability to either appraise the victim or the offence location, almost reaching a plateau of learning and experience before apprehension. In a sense, taking their offence related skills and techniques for granted.

Versatility emerged during the construction of categories to describe the ability of offenders to alternate between strategies when a particular plan was implemented. Being versatile was a key aspect to the secretive and covert nature of offending. The ability of expert participants to be versatile set them apart from the other participants. Versatility appeared to be a function of the consistent refinement of skills through the volume of victims and offences. Expert offenders were quickly able to change strategies with fluidity and ease and without alerting or alarming the victim.

Maintenance of Offending

The fourth research question examined the role of the self-regulation and monitoring skills of child sexual offenders in the maintenance of offending. It was found that affect regulation and self-monitoring skills mediated all stages of the model. Though the first phase of the model, Primary Skill Acquisition, referred to early childhood and adolescence, affect regulation in this regard addressed the interpretation and internalisation of behaviours and belief systems of what was considered appropriate and normal behaviour conducted by adults surrounding the participants. It was the first exposure of how adults interacted with other adults and children, and participants' interpretation of those actions that provided a foundational belief system for the participants, one that influenced their own future social interactions and behaviours. For participants who had been abused, difficulty deciphering the appropriateness of sexualised behaviours produced conflicting responses as to the nature of whether such behaviour was right or wrong. Some participants had felt aroused by the abuse and interpreted such actions as positive because of the pleasurable physiological response. In addition, regardless of participants' interpretation of the physiological response to sexually abusive actions, (for the most part) the abusers of participants were attractive role models. Whether participants thought of the abuse as good or bad, people that they trusted were performing acts upon them which produced conflicted emotional responses.

Participants' interpretation of their early learning experiences developed through adolescence into adulthood. The continued reinforcement of long held beliefs during participants' Lifestyle phase affected their moral judgement and ability to cope with adverse conditions, such as breakdown of a relationship or living environment. Internal Moderators such as Affect Regulation affected their

perceptions of an event, experiences, and situations. The management of emotional states and elicitation of emotional responses affected the actions and decisions made by participants, and also had the power to change their behaviour.

Participants experienced both positive and negative affect before, during, and after their offending. They oscillated between periods of elation, from how the offending made them feel, to subsequent feelings of shame and guilt for their perceived immoral actions. Shame and guilt associated with offending was often outweighed by the generation of intense physiological pleasure and relief during a sexual offence. Many participants told themselves that they would not touch their victims again; however the inability to cope with negative emotional responses to internal or external stimuli resulted in the re-engagement of sexually abusive actions to provide a 'quick fix'. Participants with little offending experience more frequently reported negative affect during their offence cycles and lives prior to offending. In contrast, more experienced offenders reported positive affective states which continued to provide the impetus for the planning of future offences. The regulation of emotion and self-monitoring skills was found to be a function of volume of offences and victims.

Offenders taught themselves to avoid and manage excessive emotional arousal by distracting themselves from thinking about the offending. It was not uncommon for employed participants to increase their work load. Participants would also suppress emotion in an effort to totally avoid thinking about what they had done. At times this would lead to emotional isolation from family and friends, and/or the increased use of both legal and illegal substances. Offenders reported being able to fragment themselves by living a dual lifestyle and convincing themselves that they were not the person that was performing those actions.

Cognitive Mechanisms were used to regulate and facilitate attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours to maintain offending. Through the use of an internal monologue, participants would provide explanations to themselves for the onset, continuation, and justification for offending. Participants often provided specious reasons for their conduct to temporarily excuse or justify their behaviour. The externalisation of blame was a method used by both inexperienced and experienced offenders. Justification for their actions because the victim 'wanted' it, and consented to the abuse, emerged as a common reason for ongoing abuse.

While most participants in the population sample exhibited negative affect in relation to the offences that they committed, there were those whose positive affective response was a constant theme of their offence histories. As a result of positive affective states participants, such as George, continued to set progressively higher performance standards. This included engaging victims in more riskier or dangerous environments. The consistent refinement of strategies and offence related behaviours and mounting confidence in his ability to perform and accomplish his goals was clearly evident and resulted in increased offence related competencies.

Implications for Child Sexual Offending literature

Research in this field has tended to concentrate on the absence of core skills and competencies of offenders as a logical explanation for their actions. Deficiencies in areas such as (but not limited to) intimacy, empathy, distorted beliefs, deviant sexual preference, and self esteem have thought to be contributing reasons for why men sexually abuse children and why they are unable to meet their needs by more pro-social means (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Ward & Hudson, 1998b). Prior to the Ward, et al. (1995) Offence Process Model and subsequent SRM, offence process models, such as RP (Pithers et al., 1983), made the assumption that all sexual offenders were attempting to abstain from sexual offending, and that those offences which contained elements of planning were seen as covert or implicit. Consistent with the SRM the ERC acknowledges and extends the argument that individuals may commit offences while experiencing positive emotions and can explicitly plan their offences in an attempt to maintain or heighten positive affect states through goal directed actions.

The research findings in regard to the early acquisition of offence related behaviours are consistent with Ward and Siegert's (2002) argument that deviant sexual scripts are learned behaviours stemming from developmental experiences, often derived from offenders themselves being abused. Offenders utilised actions performed against them when considering what strategies to undertake in the commission of their own offences against children. For participants such as George, this also included decisions concerning which actions not to perform against children and instances of abuse which were to be avoided. The decisions which were made as a result of George's own abuse greatly affected his later offending strategies

including the principle that no offences would be committed without the 'consent' of the victim (which was not always the case for instances of his own abuse).

The first stage of the Offence Process Model (Ward, et al., 1995) and the SRM (Ward & Hudson, 1998) also places a life event or stress as the catalyst for future offence cognitions. To recap, the Offence Process Model constructed by Ward and colleagues (1995) included background problems and factors that made individuals vulnerable to offending. It included a series of planning steps, distortions about the victim and offender's rights and needs, sexual fantasy and deviant arousal, and the cognitive and affective states which contributed to an offence. Nine stages emerged from the research which described the sequence of events which led the offender through the offence chain. In contrast to the OP Model, the ERC identified six phases which described the critical events and decisions made by an offender, ultimately leading an individual to the commission of a sexual offence or re-offence. The first stage of Ward and colleagues (1995) Offence Process model captured both relevant vulnerabilities from adverse childhood experiences as well as general living circumstances as an adult including work and leisure activities. The ERC in contrast makes a distinction between childhood and adolescence experiences and those factors affecting lifestyle influences on the basis of key areas where individuals initially acquire specific knowledge and skill which can later be co-opted from existing cognitive structures and utilised in a sexual offence.

A weakness noted by Polaschek, Hudson, Ward, and Siegert (2001) of the original offence process model was that it was limited in the detail it provided for the offence itself and further did not describe how an offender reconciled the actions of the victim if the victim did not 'consent'. The ERC in this regard extended the original OP model by clarifying the role of the victim (as a willing or unwilling participant) and subsequent response of the offender to connect the desire to sexually offend with the necessary steps needed in the achievement of the goal.

The role of affect regulation in regard to fantasy and simulation has previously been suggested by Ward, Fon, Hudson, and McCormack (1998). Fantasy and masturbation serve the dual function of alleviating negative mood states and reinforcing or enhancing neutral or positive mood or psychological states. While the findings in the current research are not new, they suggest that fantasy is a form of practice in itself and facilitates the maintenance of offending. Fantasy in the current

sample functioned as a form of rehearsal in which offenders were able to re-enact or simulate sexual behaviours.

Implications for Expertise Literature

Expertise research is united under the theoretical assumption that very high levels of achievement in almost all domains are mediated by mechanisms acquired through extensive training and development (Ericsson, 2005). Studies focus on individual characteristics and strategies (Shanteau, 1992) as well as memory performance and pattern perception in addition to underlying cognitive processes and activities such as problem solving. How individuals see and engage with the world is organised into cognitive models that are activated by environmental stimuli and interpersonal interactions. Complex skills and physiological adaptations are obtained through a number of years of learning, studying, deliberate practice and instruction (Chi, 2006; Ericsson, 2004; Ericsson, et al., 1993). However, skills associated with performance are context bound or domain specific and do not generalise to other settings (Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Perkins & Salomon, 1989).

The importance of separating early childhood experience from later adult circumstances is evident in the research discussed in the expertise literature. Research conducted on expertise and expert performance emphasises the role of beginning a new skill at an early age to best develop a specific skill or initial mastery of a domain (de Groot, 1946, 1965; Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Ericsson, et al., 1993). While no 'formal' teaching is given from an abuser to a victim, participants appeared to model much of their offending on experiences derived from their own abuse. In this regard abusers and role models of participants can be loosely credited with instructing future adolescent and adult abusers. For experts in the current sample such as George, training and development began at an early age with the acquisition of skills and techniques used to manipulate victims into consensual sexual activities. Mechanisms used by George were improved over the course of his offence history through the effortful refinement of strategies.

It is argued that the considerable number of victims abused by the most 'talented' of offenders (such as George) accumulate knowledge in chunks representing separate sexual offences (and separate victims) which are then stored in long term memory and are readily available for retrieval at any given moment. Chunks provide access to information such as what plan to follow and what actions

to perform next. It takes a great deal of time to acquire the necessary amount of chunks (about 10 years) to become an expert (Ericsson et al., 1993; Gobet, 1998). More experienced offenders hold a larger amount of information chunks in LTM and are therefore more likely to match clusters of information related to environmental and victim/offence cues in order to choose the most appropriate strategy to offend. While in general agreement with Chunking Theory, research conducted by McGregor and Howes (2002) further suggest that information encoded in a chunk is determined by the relationship of attack and defence patterns and associations which is a function of skill evaluation. They further suggest that memory is not confined to one specific type of representation. From the current research experts were found to have contingency strategies in the event that the victim was not conducive to offending (defence strategy) which through the reformulation of a strategy ultimately result in victim compliance and subsequent offending. In contrast, novice offenders employed one of two methods when faced with opposition from a victim: cease the offending (without any form of damage control to stop the victim from disclosing), or enforce coercive or violent strategies, taking what they want by any means necessary. Novice offenders arguably do not have the necessary components or chunks held in long term memory to implement a strategy which will ensure the compliance of the victim.

Deliberate practice refers to the type of practice which is carried out over extended periods of time and which is structured to provide optimal opportunities for learning and skill acquisition. The achievement of specific goals is monitored and guided by the conscious awareness of the individual to eliminate errors (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). Ericsson et al. (1993) consider the preparatory period of deliberate practice to be effortful and without immediate rewards or gratification. In contrast however Hodges and Starkes (1996) found that participants enjoyed practice activities related to their sport. While at face value it does not appear that child sexual offenders participated in deliberate practice, if Baker and colleagues (2003) research is considered within the context of child sexual offending, then the act of performing a sexual offence or actions taken to secure the successful achievement of committing a sexual offence can be considered practice in its own right. The significance of Baker et al.'s (2003) work in relation to the acquisition of expertise of sex offenders relates to their findings that participation in competitive games is rated as the most helpful form of developing perceptual and decision making skills and is

rated highly for developing skill execution and physical fitness. The finding implies that the act of committing sexual abusive acts on children and the grooming that takes place leading up to it are instrumental in developing the skills required to continuing performing at high levels of child molestation. The offending process is all encompassing, in that little additional practice (e.g., masturbation, script rehearsal etc.) outside of the target/s is required to undergo and complete successful child offending. In addition, if Hodges and Starkes (1996) research is considered, then the act of committing a sexual offence as well as fantasy and masturbation (simulation) are enjoyable practices with immediate gratification and rewards. Masturbation and fantasy simulation were used to rehearse offence scenarios. In addition, masturbation to previous offences heightened positive mood and psychological states which further reinforced offence supportive cognitions.

Scripting theories propose that extended practice and exposure to a particular domain directs relevant knowledge in the selection, interpretation and memorisation of new information (Schmidt et al., 1990). Scripts offer explanations of both the content and structure of knowledge and information and the subsequent activation of networks of knowledge. Following scripts is cognitively useful because it reduces mental effort and time to ascertain and implement an appropriate behaviour each time a situation is encountered (Schank & Abelson, 1988). In general, experts have been found to be faster and more accurate (Klein, 1993) than novices at solving problems and generating the best solution within their own domain. Experts display automated skills applicable to the problem at hand, and the database from which they receive this information is organised (Hardin, 2003). George referred to an internal radar whereby he was able to make an instantaneous evaluation of a potential victim and determine whether the victim would likely participant in sexual activities, the method with which to engage or groom his victim, and which particular sexual activities would likely be acceptable to the victim; all within moments of meeting a potential victim.

Experts are also thought to spend time examining and evaluating a problem before working on it (Chi, 2006). In this regard Phase IV Reflection was particularly crucial in describing the level of introspection performed by offenders. Experts were better able to recognise their own mistakes or limitations and therefore take appropriate measures to correct their performance. In contrast, participants such as Bill continued to be unsuccessful in the achievement of his goals. Bill was unable to

identify and correct mistakes he was making and was therefore unable to implement any strategy which would lead to the successful commission of a sexual offence.

Situational Awareness is the perception and comprehension of environmental factors and relevant information within a specified timeframe which is then processed in relation to an individual's goals. The subsequent forecasting of future implications informs effective decision making and problem solving (Endsley, 1988, 2006). The ability of participants to detect opportunities for offending is particularly relevant to SA. Offenders did not need to necessarily be highly skilled to detect opportunities as this was at times externally imposed, for example, being asked to babysit. However, for participants considered experts within the sample, the identification of victims and opportunities for offending could be created out of the smallest signal or cue. Quick evaluations and assessments of environmental factors became effortless when the offender was highly tuned to detect an offending opportunity. For George, the automatic processing of information derived from external stimuli and events further reinforced his reliance on his internal radar.

Implications for Criminal Expertise

The Rational Choice perspective of offender decision making argues that individuals make the conscious choice to commit crimes designed to be of benefit to them rather than as a result of poor coping skills or loss of control. In this regard, the Rational Choice perspective is in agreement with the SRM and further the ERC Model. Findings from Wright et al. (1995) study of burglars concluded that burglars possess specialist knowledge in the selection and recall of target homes and that the knowledge is based on the amount of experience of the burglar. Furthermore, the results of Nee and Taylor's (2000) study on burglars indicated that there was no single set of clues utilised in target selection but that a number of factors influence target selection, with no one cue being any more important than another. Research conducted on solving a car crime (Santtila et al., 2004) suggests that schemas are based on previous experience and the selection of knowledge relevant to the task.

Perceptual and procedural skills provide information for offenders on how to commit a crime, including which criminal situations to target and under what circumstances (Topalli, 2005). Topalli's research is an extension of Wright and colleagues (Wright & Logie, 1998; Wright & Decker, 1997; Wright et al., 1995; Decker et al., 1993), underpinned by the notion of expertise being a multi-faceted

concept in which differences in perception can be considered indicative of expertise. The ERC Model further supports the notion of expertise being a multi-faceted concept with the identification of Offence Related Competencies and behaviours which function interdependently in the commission of a child sexual offence.

The findings of the current research support Ward's (1999) theory that knowledge is structured around behavioural scripts. Information about previous, current, and future victims is stored as interconnected scripts which is accessible for the facilitation of strategy selection for current and future offence strategies. It must be remembered however, that well contrived strategies based solely on offence related scripts and goals are not sufficient to warrant the label of an expert offender, but are more likely to reflect an offender midway along the continuum. Additional factors such as the detection of opportunities and the versatility to interchange offence strategies with fluidity and ease (as well as other features described by the ERC) are also indicators of expertise.

Ward further suggested, and was supported by the current research, that expert offenders would exhibit an enhanced ability to detect emotional vulnerability of potential victims, avoid detection for offences committed, effectively regulate and manage excessive emotional arousal, and have better problem solving skills than less experienced offenders. To this end, the ERC Model demonstrates the heterogeneity of sexual offenders and highlights variation of the structural and procedural knowledge of offenders utilised in the commission of a sexual offence which has been acquired and refined over numerous years of offending.

To date, research conducted on criminal expertise advocates that criminals obtain specialist knowledge and skills relevant to their domain, and that the successful execution of knowledge and skills is a function of learning and experience.

Summary of Key Findings

With the use of grounded theory an offence process model based on level of competency or expertise was constructed reflecting the transitional nature of the complexity of behaviours of these men. The nature of the data collection technique (semi-structured interviews) lent itself to the emergence of categories and resulting discovery of theory that would offer further insight into the structural and procedural knowledge associated with child sexual offending.

The descriptive model of Expertise Related Competency of child sexual offending is supportive of Ward's (1999) suggestion that some sexual offenders display competencies relevant to the commission of their offences. The ERC extends ideas presented by Ward, by highlighting the importance of early learning of sexualised behaviours and deviant norms from childhood through to adulthood. Interestingly, child sexual offenders who began offending against other children during this phase, continued to offend with little or no intervention or consequence for their actions through to adulthood. During adulthood this particular group of offenders further solidified their offence related beliefs, which in turn, continued to guide their actions over a period of ten or more years of sexual offending practice.

The concept of expertise refers to the manifestation and application of knowledge and skill which is accumulated over a long period of time and which is able to distinguish experts from novices and less skilled individuals. The results of the current research are in accordance with several key concepts derived from the expertise literature. First, for those individuals positioned at the expertise end of the continuum, knowledge and skills relevant to the process of offending had been acquired through extensive sexual offending histories (with ten or more years of experience starting from childhood and adolescence) with a high volume of victims in contrast to individuals positioned at the less experienced or novice end of the continuum who had with fewer offences and victims. The reason for the offence related expertise is that they were able to accumulate and store an anthology of offence scripts which could later be drawn upon in specific situations.

Second, the knowledge of an expert sexual offender is structured and organised through salient features identified in Phase III Offence Related Competencies. Third, they engage in deliberate practice in the form of fantasy, masturbation, and simulation. Four, experts are able to accurately and quickly appraise offence situations and environmental cues and are able to generate the "best" solutions to offence problems. At times this is conducted without the conscious awareness of the expert until the victim disrupts or threatens goal achievement at which time cognitive control is resumed and is often considered by the individual as a prompt to re-evaluate alternative strategies. Five, experts are better able to recognise their mistakes and take time to think about how they can alter their approach should one particular strategy prove unsuccessful. Lastly, experts

offend out of positive affective states and are able to regulate their emotional state to appear to lead a seemingly normal life.

The ERC Model is an Offence Process Model of the decision making and problem solving capabilities of child sexual offending. Expertise relies on an organising framework with which to store and retrieve knowledge. The current research has identified key aspects of a child sexual offender's knowledge framework and has identified key resources from which they are able to generate evolving strategies. The richer and more organised the framework, the greater success a sexual offender is likely to have in the commission of his offences.

Clinical and Rehabilitation Implications

The current research represents an exploratory study conducted to investigate the conceptual utility of restructuring the way in which offenders, treatment professionals, and researchers view the commission of a child sexual offence. The results from the current research of viewing child sexual offenders as 'experts' ranging down to 'novices' offers further evidence of the heterogeneity of child sexual offenders when it comes to offence related competencies. By looking at dimensions of experience, and knowledge and skill acquisition it may be possible to identify the cognitive mechanism used in blocking or delaying treatment initiatives as well as those that may be used to aid it. The implications resulting from the research suggest that experienced offenders may be more difficult to treat and therefore treatment may need to be slower and to revolve around providing alternative ways of interpreting and accounting for certain situations. Experienced or 'expert' offenders may feel that because they are good at what they do, they do not want to relinquish that feeling of mastery and the rewards gained as a result. Sexual offenders have firmly established beliefs that may be resistant to change. In contrast, it may be easier to treat late onset or less experienced offenders because their offence related knowledge, skills, and interpretation of their offences are not as well assimilated as experts and therefore easier to disrupt.

The inability of the offender to cope with their self-regulatory response to these events began to greatly impact on their emotional wellbeing, which implies as Day (2009) points out, that more emphasis may need to be placed on clinical interventions targeting self-regulation as a result. Day argues that effective self-regulation management currently is a bi-product of the modules taught during

rehabilitation, such as empathy towards the victim, however it might be more fruitful for self-regulation and emotional management to be targeted specifically. An entire range of emotions can be felt by all persons in any one day, and it is our ability to cope with those emotions which greatly impact on our effective decision making. How offenders deal with their emotional states will largely impact on their ability to remain offence free after release from incarceration and rehabilitation programmes.

While the New Zealand Department of Corrections has been recognised as implementing some of the most effective treatment programs for child sexual offenders in the world (Hanson, et al., 2002), there remains room for these programmes to increase their effectiveness. The development of a descriptive model of Offence Related Competency for child sexual offenders has implications for the formulation of a more accurate risk assessment by making judgements about an individual's degree of severity or offence history (expertise indicators), and in turn the likely impact and delivery of rehabilitation programmes.

It is important to know where offenders are positioned on the expertise continuum and if they have advanced from previous offences. It helps if offenders are able to recognise patterns in their behaviour (Kaufman et al., 1996; LeClerc et al., 2006; Ward & Hudson, 1998b) in order to better identify the vulnerabilities and cues which may indicate a possible relapse. Breaking down the offence process to small decisions and consequences also allows individuals to identify where maladaptive coping strategies have been employed and such areas where a poor coping response is likely to manifest in future offence situations. In addition, it would be useful to know if offenders follow multiple pathways in order to make more accurate risk assessments and highlight the modules likely to be of the most benefit to offenders.

Offence scripts contain instructions of what actions to perform, in what order, and forecast a likely outcome in the achievement of goals. Modules targeting the goals and behavioural scripts of offenders need to be tailored to the offender. The research in this thesis has shown that offender's goals and scripts may vary considerably. The case studies of Bill and George are particularly useful in illustrating the heterogeneity of child sexual offenders as well as reminding researchers and clinicians alike that current interventions based on classic relapse prevention assumptions are not sufficient to target child sexual offenders alone. George actively and explicitly chose to commit sexual acts against children.

During the course of data collection it came to my knowledge that there are a number of individuals that burn the material produced during treatment, flush it down the toilet, or destroy it in other ways. The research in this thesis tells us that unless offenders continue to deliberately practice tools and skills learnt through therapy then they will loss that ability to draw effectively from that knowledge. What then? Will they go back to the deeply entrenched knowledge acquired over years, habits of a lifetime? Therapists need to know what their habits are in order to alter them rather than rely on generic instances of offences. Individuals are told, if they have many victims, to use the most common strategy employed for their offence process models. Unfortunately for experienced offenders, though there may be generic scripts, they will likely have an anthology of scripts and returning to any one of them may be heightened if cognitive skills and techniques are not identified as part of the offence chain.

Limitations

It is acknowledged that this research cannot really capture what happens in 'real life' and therefore there are limitations applicable to the current research. As with many studies conducted with child sexual offenders there may be a selection bias with the use of treated as opposed to untreated child sex offenders, as they agree to the conditions of participating in the rehabilitation programme. One of those conditions is taking accountability for the offence for which they are charged which means that the sample population may not reflect the entire population of child sexual offenders as it did not include those men continuing to deny their offending and those not apprehended. Research tells us that we only treat a small number of child sexual offenders (Koss, 1992; Marshall, 1997) which means that many offenders manage to avoid coming to the attention of policing agencies, prosecution, and subsequent incarceration. A plausible, though only speculative theory, however is that those individuals that remain undetected for their offences may possess knowledge and skills which reflect a considerable degree of offence related competency. In addition, a possible limitation of the use of incarcerated child sexual offenders particularly salient to the current research was the prospect of only recruiting child sexual offenders with limited sexual offending experience due to the very nature of being apprehended for their actions. Fortunately, however, the sample population proved to display large variation in extensive sexual offending histories

ultimately leading to the construction of a continuum based on experience and competency, with expertise represented at one end of the continuum and novice at the other, as demonstrated by the case studies of George and Bill.

As with all research conducted with sexual offenders, due to the covert nature of offending, researchers are unable to apply traditional methods of research conducted in laboratory settings and must therefore rely on the retrospective accounts of child sexual offenders and case file information. Retrospective studies lend themselves to the unreliability of reporting in terms of honesty and motivation to participate in the study. However, as Feeney (1986) points out, 'if headway ever is to be made in dealing with crime, we must access the information that offenders have' (p. 68).

A further limitation is that the participants will only be able to recall and report consciously accessed knowledge, which does not test beliefs held implicitly by the subject. However, by identifying key skills and features of the offence process it was possible to indirectly infer the structure of the participants' knowledge through the use of grounded theory.

The use of qualitative research and in particular utilising grounded theory had its own limitations in regard to generalisability and reliability of results. This problem was addressed by the process of saturation; essentially a process of category construction carried out until no further variations were discovered, in an attempt to ensure no contradictory material was missed. The problem of small sample size, common to most grounded theory studies, was also another limitation. The current research was conducted on a larger than normal sample size for this type of study, with a total of 47 individuals consenting to participation and as such it was hoped that a comprehensive account of the offence process could be obtained. Moreover, any limitations of grounded theory based on sample size needs to be weighed against the richness and complexity of the material obtained from participants.

Further conceptual limitations of the current research were posed by the use of applying expertise principles to the domain of child sexual offending. Specifically, the lack of formal teaching and coaching programmes normally applicable to the development of skill or talent within the expertise arena suggests a further limitation of applying the expertise approach. In addition, no formal criteria or standard for the determination of expertise or expert performance can be gauged as with traditional

domains such as chess with its rankings from novice to grandmaster. All suggest that it could be misleading to construe aspects of sexual offending from an expertise perspective.

Certainly, there are clear limits to the application of the expertise framework to sexual offenders. The term 'expert' is more commonly associated with positive connotations of someone being good, talented, and of some repute. The current study challenges those preconceptions by applying principles associated with advanced skill and talent at a level of abstraction not previously empirically associated.

With the identified limitations in mind, it must also be noted that the research was conducted as an exploratory study and therefore a preliminary investigation which will undoubtedly lead to the generation of further questions and answers.

Future Research

As the current research was exploratory in nature it would be necessary to examine the external validity of the ERC Model by reliably classifying offence chains with a new sample of child sexual offenders. In addition, it may be useful to broaden the scope of the study to sexual offenders in general, for example, applying the model to rapists to further investigate the utility of conceptualising offenders as experts.

The results of the current research produce intriguing avenues in which to pursue future research. With the Self-Regulation Model in mind, it would be interesting to conduct future research with the application of the SRM to the population used in the current study. Previous studies have been able to assign offenders to one or multiple pathways described in the SRM. One of the strengths of the SRM is its utility in identifying a number of pathways to offending and allowing for both planned and unplanned offending. Whilst the current study aimed at identifying the offence related expertise and the decision making process of individual offenders, it would be useful to test the current sample against the pathways identified in the SRM. Preliminary speculation during data analysis invites the hypothesis that there will be participants that cannot be categorised into one of four pathways but instead multiple pathways run concurrently for experts in the sample population. This is speculated to be a function of the variety of offence strategies implemented over the course of their offence histories. The continuum

derived from the current research also offers the suggestion of fluidity between pathways. Inexperienced sexual offenders, at the onset of offending, may follow an avoidant pathway, however, as experienced is gained and needs are met by the individual the pathway may shift to that of approach goals being sought. At the beginning of a sex offender's career he may oscillate between avoidant and approach pathways until he is able to reconcile his emotional response to offending.

Given that the current research identified the early acquisition of knowledge and skills through the participants' own childhood abuse, priority needs to be given to the identification and assessment of knowledge structures of adolescent sexual offenders. Efforts need to be made to halt their possible transition into experts with this criminal domain.

Having established in this research that there are child sexual offenders who possess competencies related to child sexual offending it may be possible to adapt future research to more traditional expertise studies. As expertise is domain specific it would be interesting to conduct studies with child sexual offenders who commit other types of crime. Adopting methods and designs from criminal expertise literature it may be possible to examine the way in which child sexual offenders encode, represent, and recall a variety of offence-related information. The use of memory and recall tasks may further explore the argument that expertise is domain specific by demonstrating that the recall of information from stories or pictures within their own domain of expertise (i.e., child sexual abuse) is more accurate than that of their other types of offending.

Conclusion

Child sexual offenders represent a small subset of identified criminals due to underreporting of incidences of abuse; however the impact of the crime is arguably one of the most serious and devastating for victims, families and communities whereby the effects of the abuse can span a lifetime. The research presented in this thesis represents a unique perspective from which to view the behaviours and strategies adopted by child sexual offenders to commit their crimes. Offenders often employ strategies that have been found to be successful in previous sexual offences, in addition to modelling behaviours learnt from instances of early sexual abuse and the development of deviant sexual preference. The overall findings show that child sexual offenders have cognitive structures and competencies related to their

offending that for some have become deeply entrenched from childhood and adolescence and have continued to be reinforced through years of sexual offending. Findings related to the model may assist in identifying key areas of offenders' procedural and declarative knowledge which may not be targeted by current treatment modules. Understanding that sexual offending for some men makes them masters of their own domain means that it might be harder for some individuals to relinquish that mastery if equally effective means and strategies to achieve their goals are not substituted and reinforced in their place. The lingering question as a result of conducting this research is whether the standardised approach to treatment and rehabilitation of nine to twelve months is enough for some men to change the habits, actions, decisions, and behaviours of a lifetime? With George's comments in mind, we are reminded again that child sex offenders do not conform to any ideal type and therefore they should not be treated as a homogenous group. George and Bill are startling reminders that one size does not fit all when it comes to understanding why such individuals commit offences and what factors ought to be targeted in an intervention program. While sex offenders may be novices in the broader game of life they are sometimes masters of their own domain.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui

INFORMATION SHEET

What is the purpose of this research?
You are invited to take part in the study about the offence process of sexual offending. The aim of this study is to talk to people who have committed sexual crimes against children. The project is an investigation into the levels of competency and expertise in the area of sexual offending. It will look specifically at offence chain behaviours, that is, what planning takes place before the offence, during the offence, the ability to overcome victim's protests, mood regulation, eluding detection, and maintaining offending behaviour over a period of time.

Who is doing this research?
The research is being carried out by Patrice Bourke, Professor Tony Ward and Dr Devon Polaschek from Victoria University of Wellington. The results will be written up as part of Patrice Bourke's doctorate (PhD) research thesis. The study is being conducted with the School of Psychology at Victoria University and is supervised by Professor Tony Ward, PhD., and Dr Devon Polaschek.

This research is NOT for the Department of Corrections. If you decide to take part, NONE of the information obtained from you will go on the Department of Corrections file. We will put a copy of the consent form you sign on your Department of Corrections file though, to show that you have taken part in the study. Whether or not you choose to participate will not affect how the rest of your sentence goes, how the staff here manage you, or the conditions under which you are released.

You are reminded at this time that if you say anything that indicates that you might harm yourself or jeopardises the safety of others that staff in your unit will be informed.

What happens if you agree to take part?
Your involvement in the study will require you to take part in an interview that should take approximately two hours of your time. In the interview you will be asked questions about your offending. This includes offences that you may or may not have been charged with or convicted for. Information that you disclose to the researcher will be kept confidential unless you pose a risk to yourself or another individual.

If you choose to participate in this study, the information that you supply will add to the knowledge of how best to understand sexual offending. In this way, therapists can better assist those who sexually offend and lessen the harm done against children and others. In addition, although it may be difficult at times, participation in this research will give you an opportunity to talk openly about your offending.

Examples of some of the questions that may be asked include:
> How many children have you sexually offended against that you haven't been convicted for?
> How did you get the child to take part in sexual activity? What did you make them do when you were together?
> Have you found that the time needed to offend against a child has become shorter or remained the same from the first time you offended against a child?

Your interview, with your consent, will be digitally recorded so that nothing will be missed. If you find the interview distressing, you have the option to talk to your group/individual therapist. You are under no pressure to take part and if you want to leave the study at any time you can. If you choose not to participate this will have no effect on your current legal status or your treatment programme.

If you decide to withdraw, we will ask whether you give permission for the information you have already given us to be used in the study or whether you want all the information withdrawn and destroyed. We will not include information you have given us in the research without your permission.

You will also be asked to provide permission for your Department of Corrections records to be accessed and reviewed, as this is necessary to collect additional information. All information collected about you, whether from you personally or your file, will be kept confidential by the researchers. None of the information you provide, including information about your past offences, will be provided to the Department of Corrections or put on your Department of Corrections file.

What happens to the information you provide?
The information obtained from you will be kept in a secure place at the University. A research number will replace your name on all information collected so no one can identify that the information is yours. We will keep a master list linking your name with your research number in a separate locked cabinet just for the duration of the study. Once the study is complete the master list will be destroyed so it will not be possible to link your name to information obtained from you.

The consent form you sign will be kept in a locked cabinet, separate from any other information you provide us. All the information you give us will be entered in computer files, mainly as a series of numbers. These files will contain no identifying information. If you agreed to the interview being recorded, the recording will only be listened to by the principal researcher. Once the interview is transcribed into paper format, the recording will be wiped.

Once the research is completed we will keep your interview material, without identifying information indefinitely. Further research may be done with the material, however in no instance will it be possible for anyone else to tell that you took part in the study

Thanks for taking the time to read and hear about this research. It has important implications and we hope you will seriously consider participating.

If you have any concerns or further questions about taking part in the study the researchers can be contacted at the following address.

Patrice Bourke and Professor Tony Ward, PhD
School of Psychology
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui

Statement of Consent to participate in a study of the offence process of sexual offending.
(Two copies will be signed so that one can go into the participant's prison file, as required by the Department of Corrections)

I have read and understand the information sheet about this research, or I have had the information sheet read to me, and any questions I wanted to ask have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that the study involves an interview in which I will be asked to discuss my past offending with an emphasis on behaviours and actions during the offence(s), as well as feelings, attitudes, thoughts and experiences. I will also be asked additional personal questions which I may decide not to answer should I feel uncomfortable at any time.

I understand that the information that I give will be kept, without my name on it, in a secure place at Victoria University. I understand that a lot of care will be taken to keep the information obtained from me private and confidential, and that none of the information obtained from me will be given to the Department of Corrections or placed on my Department of Corrections file. I have had the limits of this confidentiality explained to me.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw my consent at any stage before the end of the study. If I decided to do this, I will be asked whether I want all the information withdrawn from the study. If I do want all the information withdrawn, the information will be destroyed.

I understand that in order to capture an accurate portrayal of the offence/ offences it may be necessary to use direct quotes from interview material I provide the researcher. I understand that my name and any identifying information will be kept confidential by the researcher and that it will not be possible to tell that I took part in the study.

I agree for the researcher to use direct quotes from information provided by me

Yes _____   No _____

I agree for the researcher to access my personal files held by the Department of Corrections

                    Yes _____   No _____

I agree for the researcher to record the interview

                    Yes _____   No _____

I agree to take part in this research and give my permission for the researchers to use the information I provide for the purposes described on the sheet.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Unit: _____

If you would like to receive a brief summary of the research when we finish please give us a postal address for us to send this to.

Address for summary to be sent to:

              _____

              _____

              _____

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Lifestyle
Describe life *prior to offending*, personal relationships, work, leisure, and friendships? Financially/ emotionally stable?
Describe life *at the time of offending*, personal relationships, work, leisure, and friendships?
Emotional difficulties
Factors/ events that may have contributed to offending
Stressful incidents
Relationships
Involvement in any organisations/ clubs
Free time/ hobbies

Offence Process
This section of the interview is directed at the first sexual offence committed against a child.

Participant asked to walk through the day of their offence. Giving an overview of what happened that day, from the time they got up in the morning until the time after the offence?
Thoughts and emotions at the time.
At what point does it become increasingly sexual? Sexual Drive.
At what point is contact made?
Knowledge of the child and environment
Gaining access to the child (e.g., force, threat, coercion)
Victim reaction
Details of the offence
After the offence

Emotional Regulation
Emotional well being after the offence
Guilt?
Coping mechanisms
Further contact with victim
Views on how they saw the victim
Accountability
Harm reduction
Likes and dislikes about the offence

Second Offence
This section of the interview is directed at the last or most recent sexual offence committed against a child.
(If the participant has only one offence skip this section and ask all additional questions pertaining to the one offence)

Participant asked to walk through the day of their offence. Giving an overview of what happened that day, from the time they got up in the morning until the time after the offence?
Thoughts and emotions at the time.
At what point does it become increasingly sexual? Sexual Drive.
At what point is contact made?
Knowledge of the child and environment
Gaining access to the child (e.g., force, threat, coercion)
Victim reaction
Details of the offence
After the offence
Confidence levels. Competency in offending.
Similarities and differences in the two offences. If things were different, how? What was done in response?
Length of time offending against any one child.
Use of props

Victim contact and grooming
Questions based on children that participant has had sexual contact with and how they came into contact with these children or child.

Number of children participant has had sexual contact with? Related / unrelated.
Environments of offending / environment of initial contact
Number of convictions
Offences without convictions
Bribes / coercive techniques
Amount of time alone with victim
Parental grooming

Relationship development
Questions directed towards how participant developed a relationship with the child or children and their families.

Establishing trust / length of time to gain trust of parent / child
Romantic relationship with parent?
Does this alter with different victims? Approach change?
Friendship or loving relationship with victim
Length of grooming time before sexual contact

Avoiding Detection
Parental knowledge of time spent with child
Parental knowledge of sexual contact with child
Ability of child to lie to parents/ peers about sexual contact
Techniques to prevent child from reporting sexual contact e.g., gifts, threats etc

Fantasy
(This section specifically taps into the concept that fantasy could be seen as rehearsal/ practice, which is an underlying theme in the expertise literature).

Fantasising about victim. How often? Where? What happens in the fantasy? What is the participant doing while fantasising?

Planning the offence

Playing over the offence in the mind /dialogue etc before the offence

Playing over the offence after committing it. How often? What would you change?

Any record or mementos kept of sexual contact? (photos, computer, diary, calendar, etc)?

Are the characters in the fantasy strangers or are they known to the participant? What ages are they?

Continued offending of child/ children

How did you get the child to take part in sexual activity? Physical force. Drugs and /or alcohol. Threats to family or pets?

If there were multiple victims, were the same things always done?

How was each child different?

Did you ever make them feel that there was nothing that they could do to stop it?

What things stopped sexual activity with the child (e.g., yelling, screaming, fighting back, crying, telling you they were scared, etc). What was done about it?

Opportunity to offend. Volunteering in child or teen orientated organisations.

Ability to identify individuals to offend against

Use of screening questions to identify individuals

Sexual Learning Experiences prior to the first offence

Participants may also be asked about experiences of sexual victimisation, early mutual sex play, and witnessing of sexual acts between others. However, because of the potentially distressing nature of this area, it will only be canvassed as part of a process of establishing with a participant whether he thinks that early experiences of abuse or even sexual interaction with peers, may have in some way informed his own offending. This is an important aspect of the expertise literature that suggests that early learning facilitates expertise.

We would begin enquiry in to this area by asking the man whether he thinks he had any particular experiences prior to his first offence that may have, in retrospect, contributed to the way he carried out his first offence. If he asks what we mean, we would then prompt with examples such as exposure to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, being abused oneself or early experiences of consensual sex.

Internet usage and/ or additional offending aides

Use of the internet? *(If not, then skip this section)*

Used to access sexually explicit pictures and information?

Frequency of use

Contact with clubs, chat-groups or individuals involved with distribution of pictures or film of children involved in sexual activity.

Contact with clubs, chat-groups or individuals involved in sexual activity with children

Contact with victims via internet? Arrangement of meetings?

Membership to clubs/ organisations

Hobbies

Viewing and ownership of sexually explicit pictures or movies of children

Have pictures of children been collected from clothing catalogues or other advertisements because they were sexually interesting? (For example children modelling swimwear or underwear)

Drug and Alcohol use

Questions concerning drug and alcohol usage are trying to establish what dependencies the participant has and if their offending relies on these, or if they can carry out their offending without the need for drugs and alcohol.

Alcohol consumption –How much? If the participant thinks he has a drinking problem.

Drugs – What kinds? Frequency?
Is substance abuse related in any way to the current offence?
What typically happens when they have had too much to drink?
What typically happens when they do drugs?
Are they easily provoked under drugs or alcohol?
Is substance use related to their involvement in sexual behaviours?

General Questions to wrap up interview

Relationship with parents
Marital status / Occupation /Education level
Any previous counselling / mental illness / rehabilitation programmes