Adult Attachment and Experiences of Childhood & Adolescent Sexual Maltreatment

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ADULT ATTACHMENT AND EXPERIENCES OF CHILDHOOD & ADOLESCENT SEXUAL MALTREATMENT

BY

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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Abstract

This study looked at retrospective self-report recall of childhood or adolescent sexual maltreatment experiences and current attachment status in a university student population. The instruments used were K. Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) and D. Demare's Sexual Abuse Questionnaire (Demare, 1995). The results suggest that child or adolescent sexual maltreatment is related to adult attachment. In general, Secure attachment had the strongest correlation (in a negative direction) with sexual abuse while Fearful attachment had the strongest positive correlation. Three types of sexual maltreatment (Harassment, Noncontact, and Contact) were examined for their relative contributions to attachment status. Harassment sexual abuse appeared to have the greatest role in contributing to Secure, Fearful, and Insecure (combination of three insecure attachment styles) attachment types.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Kelly, a thirty year-old single Caucasian woman, was the younger child of a disturbed and chaotic family-of-origin. Her parents were both alcoholics and fought often, both verbally and physically. Beginning when Kelly was two, her mother experienced mental health problems and was hospitalized on and off for many years. Her family never discussed the cause of her mother's illness with Kelly. In fact, Kelly eventually came to the conclusion that her own behaviour, childhood illnesses, and tantrums, were the cause of her mother's illnesses and subsequent absences from the family home. Her parents divorced when Kelly was eight and, typical of the era, Kelly remained with her mother. Kelly's maternal grandmother became an alternate caregiver, but when Kelly was twelve, her maternal grandmother committed suicide. Kelly was taken to live with her father, but the reason for this move was never explained to her. A harsh and critical stepmother did nothing to enhance Kelly's experience. Kelly recalls much chaos and unpredictability in her childhood. This left her desiring invisibility and being afraid of getting close to others (Sable, 1983).

Margaret grew up with several siblings in a home with little parental warmth. The children were often left with the nanny in a home ruled by their father with tyrannical precision. At his hands Margaret was subjected to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Margaret's attempts to solicit her depressed mother's help, by a series of unusual "accidents", were met with rebuffs to go to the nanny. In her mid 40's, Margaret is depressed and has episodes of panic. She is experiencing her life as futile, feeling paralyzed over a life decision about whether to settle near her mother or to move where she spent many of her adult years (Holmes, 1995).

In a somewhat similar fashion, experiences of childhood abuse and neglect may impact on the adult's ability to want, to seek, and to tolerate a healthy sense of closeness or attachment to other people.

Bowlby (1977) theorized that early caregiver-infant attachment formed the basis for the ability to relate to others in later life. This occurred through the development of mental models of self and other which laid the groundwork for expectations in relationships with others. Children who had had satisfactory secure attachment with caregivers had positive ideas of both the self and other and would develop the ability to be comfortable in close relationships. Babies and children who experienced unsatisfactory early nurturing (for Bowlby, he usually saw this as a separation or loss of the caregiver) went on to establish negative models of self and/or other and subsequently had difficulty in relationships with others. Further inquiry (for e.g., Ainsworth, 1982; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Main, 1995; Bartholomew, 1990) described several patterns of attachment and has expanded these patterns to include children, parents, and other adults. Patterns of attachment included secure as well as several insecure patterns.

Attachment theory may be used to account for the different outcomes related to early experiences. This applies to both positive and negative early experiences and both 'normal' and 'abnormal' developmental effects. Through interactions with caregivers, children learn the value of their own worth from how others treat them. They can also learn whether others are a source of security and nurturance or create cause for fear and anxiety. That is, early life experiences with others give rise to the individual's view of self and view of others. In this way, attachment theory can be used to account for observed differences between people who have experienced child maltreatment and people who were not abused as children.

People who develop a secure attachment style are those who have been nurtured in infancy and childhood. They have been treated well by sensitive caregivers and have come to develop positive mental models of self and other as a result. They believe that others will be there for them and that they themselves are worthy of good treatment.

Conversely, people who have been maltreated as infants and children, may go on to develop one of the insecure attachment styles. These individuals may have had early experiences of interruption in their access to their caregiver, or they may have been the victim of child maltreatment.

> While separation and loss and ... sexual abuse may seem, at first glance, to be rather different events, they all represent fundamentally unacceptable and, for the child, incomprehensible violations of the attachment system, with its inherent expectations of protection, safety, and security. (Adam, Keller, & West, 1995, p. 337)

The person who has experienced child abuse may come to develop negative mental models of themselves and of others. They come to believe that they do not deserve to be treated well and/or that other people are not able to provide support or protection. The caregiver-child relationship may give rise to mental models of self and others that are then generalized to other relationships throughout life. Negative child mental models of self and attachment figures can give rise to adults who believe they are unworthy of care and love and who view relationship partners as unavailable, mean, or uncaring.

Purpose of the Study

In the past much of what we know about attachment and child maltreatment has come from research with children. There is a dearth of studies using adult

participants to look at child maltreatment experiences and adult attachment status. Much of the research literature available has been done by student researchers completing graduate degree requirements at the doctoral level. These studies used self-report questionnaire style instruments and a quasi-experimental research design. Childhood maltreatment data was based on retrospective recall. Populations have been convenience samples of undergraduate students and studies have mainly looked at female participants (for example, see: Cook, 1995; Fossel, 1997; Katsikas, 1995; & Marcy, 1998).

This study will be looking at an adult population to explore adult attachment and child and adolescent sexual maltreatment experiences. The purpose will be to determine the category of current attachment (secure, insecure/preoccupied, insecure/dismissing, or insecure/fearful) in a university student sample. This project is also concerned with assessment of students' reports of childhood and adolescent sexual maltreatment experiences including harassment, noncontact, and contact sexual abuse. As well, this study will explore several questions about relationships between students' attachment status and experiences of childhood and adolescent sexual maltreatment.

Research Questions

Question one - Are experiences of maltreatment related to attachment status?

Question two - Which type of attachment pattern is most affected by child and adolescent sexual abuse?

Question three - How much of a role does each type of sexual maltreatment (sexual harassment, noncontact abuse, or contact abuse) have in contributing to each insecure attachment pattern and to all three insecure attachment patterns?

Definitions

Attachment. Attachment has been defined variously throughout the literature, usually dependent upon the context in which it was used. In a general sense, attachment is an enduring connection between people which provides an extremely important base for continued development (Reber, 1996).

Attachment has also been conceptualized as the tendency for people to strongly bond to certain others (Bowlby, 1977). Berman and Sperling's (1994) working definition of adult attachment states that

> adult attachment is the stable tendency of an individual to make substantial efforts to seek and maintain proximity to and contact with one or a few specific individuals who provide the subjective potential for [overt and mental] models of attachment, which are . . . built from the individual's experience in his or her interpersonal world. (p. 8)

Mental models have become important in defining attachment and in tying attachment to early experiences. Berman and Sperling (1994) expanded on the above definition by describing mental models of attachment as cognitive representations based on both past history and current interactions with the attachment figure. These models include parts of the self, the other, and affects between the two. Mental models also define the rules guiding interactions with the other, including actions, emotions, and cognitions. Because the rules are based in part on past history, the result may be responses and behaviours that are not congruent with the current situation.

Adult attachment in the context of romantic love has also been defined as approaches to relationships. In 1987, Hazan and Shaver approached attachment as a process, looking at romantic love as being a form of attachment. They included three

categories of attachment based on individual's comfort level with closeness to others and ability to depend on others. The avoidant individual is uncomfortable with being close to others and with depending on others. The anxious-ambivalent adult tends to want more closeness than others and worries about losing the other person. The secure individual is comfortable with closeness to others and with dependence on others and seldom is concerned about abandonment or being too close to others (Shaver & Hazan, 1994).

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991a; also see Bartholomew, 1990) proposed a two-dimensional, four category model of attachment, based on mental models of self and other and defined four categories of attachment. (See figure 1.) Each category was defined by whether the individual's mental models of self and other were positive or negative. Secure individuals felt a sense of worthiness about both themselves and others. Bartholomew's preoccupied group combined a view of the self as unworthy with a positive view of others. Individual's who were dismissing had a positive view of the self but saw others negatively. Bartholomew's fearful category carried a sense of unworthiness about both the self and others. Those individuals in the preoccupied, dismissing and fearful categories are collectively described as insecure.

Bartholomew's definition of attachment based on mental models of self and other will be the basis of attachment for this paper. The concept of mental models relates to Bowlby's theorizing on the quality of caregiving being related to development of mental models of the self and other. These mental models also relate to the ability to form attachment relationships with others as adults.

Child sexual maltreatment. Much of the literature about mistreatment of children uses the term child maltreatment, although child abuse is also used. For ease

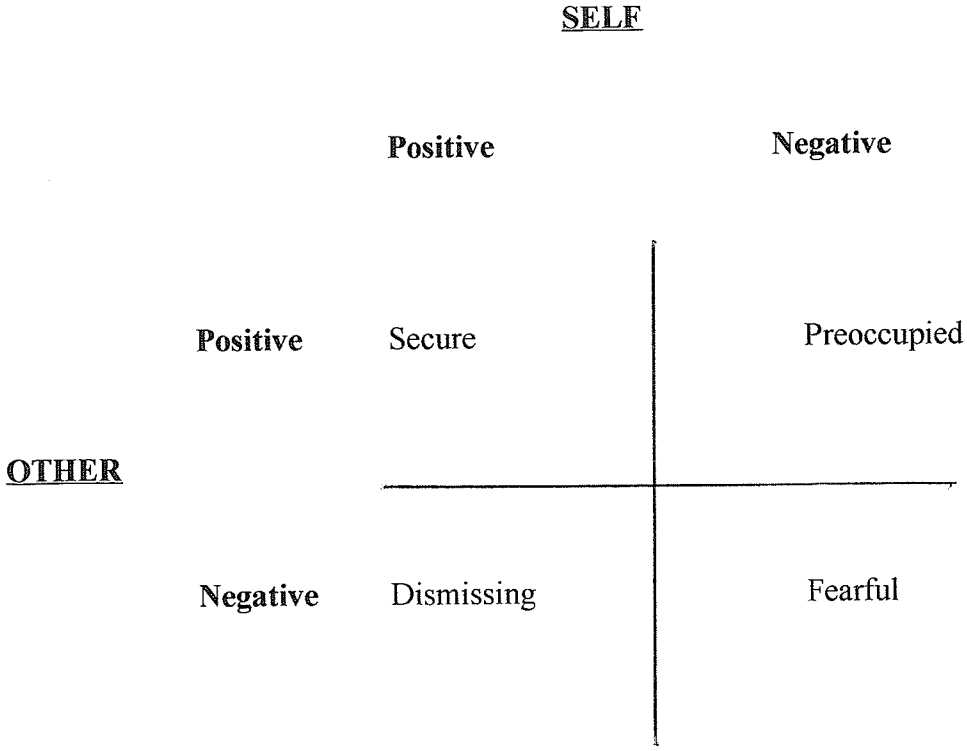

Figure 1. Bartholomew's two-dimensional four-category model.

(Adapted from Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

of presentation, the terms abuse and maltreatment will be used interchangeably in this paper.

The challenge of defining sexual maltreatment has been well documented in the literature (see, for example Haugaard, 2000). There are several issues around defining sexual abuse such as what acts constitute sexual abuse and what age discrepancy does there have to be. Is parental nudity in front of a 10 year-old of the opposite sex sexually abusive? Can a 19-year-old have consensual relations with a 15-year-old or is that sexual maltreatment?

> Browne and Finkelhor (1986) have defined child sexual abuse as consisting of two overlapping but distinguishable types of interaction: (a) forced or coerced sexual behavior imposed on a child, and (b) sexual activity between a child and a much older person [an age difference of five or more years], whether or not obvious coercion is involved (p. 66).

Finkelhor (1984) has argued that children are not able to consent to sex with an adult. Children are immature and inexperienced and may not have the power to say no in a situation where the adult has authority over the child.

Some acts are clearly sexually abusive, for example, Wekerle and Wolfe (1996) describe acts defining sexual abuse as including "touching (fondling) of the breasts or genital areas of the child (or having the child perform acts on the adult), vaginal or anal intercourse, exposure to indecent acts, sexual rituals, or involvement in child pornography" (p. 496). These acts include those involving a perpetrator more than 5 years older than the child and may include non-parental figures such as teachers, coaches, or strangers. Becker and Bonner (1998) define child sexual maltreatment as including "various forms of sexual exploitation such as voyeurism,

fondling, masturbation, oral sex, genital and anal intercourse, and involving children in pornography and prostitution" (p.370).

Demare (1995) has operationalized a definition of sexual abuse which will be used in this study. Demare's has defined sexual abuse clearly, specifying both non-contact and contact forms of child sexual abuse. Non-contact sexual maltreatment includes acts related to seeing or showing a sexual body part as well as sexual harassment behaviours such as looking at or talking in a sexual way. Contact abuse is clearly defined by actions that involve touching a sexual body part or touching that is done in a sexual way. Demare considers sexual abuse to have occurred prior to 18 years of age with either a non-parental figure who was at least five years older than the respondent or a parental figure. Demare's instrument is explicit, has an age difference built in, and considers both non-contact, as well as obvious contact behaviours to be sexually abusive.

Contributions to the Counselling Field

Counsellors who are aware of attachment and relationship issues will be able to work much more effectively within relationships. "It would be reasonable to suppose that an understanding of the role of attachment difficulties in psychopathology should have implications for therapeutic interventions" (Rutter, 1994, p. 565). In considering attachment concepts in counselling, it will be useful to pay attention to real life experiences as well as the client's mental models of such experiences and of relationships (Rutter, 1997).

Bowlby (1977) noted many years ago that a variety of psychopathological outcomes occur in relation to either deviations or failure in the development of attachment behaviour. Bowlby adds that

> if we are to help such a patient therapeutically it is necessary that we enable him to consider in detail how his present modes of perceiving and dealing with emotionally significant persons, including the therapist, may be being influenced and perhaps seriously distorted by the experiences which he had with his parents during the years of his childhood and adolescence, and some of which may perhaps be continuing into the present. (Bowlby, 1977, p. 202)

It is hoped that this paper will add to the knowledge of those working with people who have experienced childhood sexual maltreatment and/or people who have had poor attachment experiences. Cognizance of attachment concepts may have significance to counsellors working with such diverse populations as those experiencing relationship difficulties, people coping with loss, adolescents manifesting severe psychopathology, families of adolescents, clinical populations who have difficulty forming close relationships, and elderly clients including the old-old.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

Attachment

The Foundations of Attachment: Infants and Children

Bowlby and institutionalized children. In 1950, John Bowlby, a child psychiatrist in England was invited by the World Health Organization to advise them on the mental health of homeless children. He wrote that "what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother-substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Bowlby, 1951, p.11; Bowlby, 1969, pp. xi-xii).

"The study of attachment began as research into the earliest developmental origins of childhood and adult psychopathology with John Bowlby's work at the Tavistock Clinic" (Berman & Sperling, 1994, p.3), in England. Bowlby stressed the impact of caregivers' real acts, including violence, threats of abandonment, and the overall negative emotional tone of interaction (Carlson, Cicchetti, Barnett, & Braunwald, 1989). Bowlby developed attachment theory in response to the significant negative effects he observed in babies and small children confined in hospitals or other institutions (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Bretherton, 1985), and because of "what he considered difficulties present in traditional explanations of the behaviors of young children faced with separation from familiar caregivers" (Cafferty, Davis, Medway, O'Hearn, & Chappell, 1994, p. 312).

Ainsworth and three categories of child attachment. The concept of attachment has its base in John Bowlby's original work with children who were either separated from their parents or who were exposed to a negative or harsh upbringing.

However, Bowlby only delineated between those who demonstrated secure attachment and those who showed evidence of insecure attachment. Although Bowlby did not differentiate different types of insecure attachment, Mary Ainsworth, a Canadian psychologist, went on to identify two categories of insecure attachment and described a relationship between parenting behaviour and attachment style demonstrated by infants (Karen, 1994).

In 1950, Mary Ainsworth moved to England and began to work with Bowlby on research into the developmental effects of early maternal-infant separations. Several years later, Ainsworth traveled to Uganda, Africa and was able to observe attachment in a naturalistic setting. Ainsworth began compiling data on early attachment between unweaned babies and their mothers, residents of several small villages near Kampala (Karen, 1994).

Based on her work in Uganda, Ainsworth observed three attachment patterns in these infants.

> Securely attached infants cried little and seemed content to explore in the presence of the mother; insecurely attached infants cried frequently, even when held by their mothers and explored little; and not-yet attached infants manifested no differential behavior to the mother. (Bretherton, 1995, p. 58)

Securely attached infants appeared to use their mothers as a 'secure base' from which to explore the world; these mothers were noted to be particularly sensitive to their infants' signals. In contrast, the mothers of nonattached babies had consistently shown rejecting and neglecting behaviours to their infants (Karen, 1994).

Attachment and ethology. While Ainsworth was compiling her Ugandan data, Bowlby began work on Attachment (1969), the first of a three volume trilogy Attachment and Loss . Bowlby's theory was based in part on ethology, particularly

imprinting, observed in various species of birds. In a simple explanation, imprinting is an instinctive behaviour in which a newly hatched chick, during an early "critical period" of development, "attaches to" and follows the first object that it sees, usually its mother. Bowlby surmised that a similar "critical period" existed in human babies, during which attachment to a caregiving figure would develop, and after which, attachment behaviour was less likely to occur.

In 1958, Harlow reported his now famous experiments with rhesus monkeys. He demonstrated that these infant primates, separated from their mothers shortly after birth, preferred a cloth substitute more than a wire surrogate regardless of which "mother" provided food. They showed affectional ties to their preferred cloth surrogate mother, even after long separations, and clung to "her" when exposed to new, fearful environmental stimuli. Additional experiments would show that these baby monkeys, as adults, despite having had a passive surrogate mother, had difficulty parenting and relating to their peers. It was not difficult to make the connection that these infants, deprived of a mother who taught them, were lacking in emotional skills to help them get along in life and to help them parent (Karen, 1994).

Bowlby's (1969) awareness of these bird and sub-human primate results seemed to confirm for him that what he had been seeing with human babies and children was a similar need for attachment to an adult caregiver. When such an early, healthy attachment to an adult was disrupted there was deficits in these children's ability to relate to others. Bowlby surmised that early attachment in humans was not just to reduce an instinctual drive for food to satisfy hunger and was in fact, necessary for optimum relating abilities to develop in the child. "Harlow's studies dealt the first scientific blow to the belief that affectional ties were based on nursing: For rhesus monkeys, at least, cuddly contact proved far more important" (Karen, 1994,

pp.124-5). As well, Harlow's (1958) work indicated that satisfactory maternal (or other adult) care was required so monkey infants learned how to live with others (Karen, 1994).

Internal working models. Bowlby (1969) also surmised that the complex regulation of such a system in humans would require the development of internal representations of self and others during childhood. These internal working models would guide understanding, prediction of outcomes, and planning of behaviour and would persist during the child's life time, providing a basis for later relationships. Bowlby, building on Ainsworth's Ugandan data (and some early new data from Ainsworth's studies, now in Baltimore), also noted that a parent's sensitivity and ability to respond when the infant signals its needs are major contributors to the development of secure attachment.

Child attachment and caregiver behaviour. In 1963, Ainsworth began another naturalistic study of mothers and their babies, this time in Baltimore. Ainsworth found similarities between these American babies and the Ugandan infants she had observed several years ago. However, the Baltimore infants were more used to their mothers coming and going than the Ugandan infants and were less likely to protest the mother's absence when she left the room in the home setting (Karen, 1994).Therefore, Ainsworth devised the Strange Situation laboratory procedure in order to classify these babies' attachment patterns. The Strange Situation method is a 20-minute miniature drama designed to observe attachment behaviours of infants in situations of separation and then reunion with their mothers in a laboratory. The laboratory is a comfortable, well-equipped playroom which is unfamiliar (or 'strange') to the infant (Bretherton, 1995).

Ainsworth was able to describe three distinct behaviour patterns of infants in each of three attachment classifications, similar patterns to what she had observed in the Uganda babies. The securely attached infant appeared sure of his mother and her availability, became distressed on her absence, and welcomed her return eagerly. The insecure avoidantly attached baby was less confident of his mother's availability, demonstrated avoidance of her, and appeared to ignore his mother's absence and her return. At home, the avoidant infant was at times angry with his mother, sometimes even striking her. The insecure-ambivalent/preoccupied child was the most obviously anxious, fretting in his mother's presence and frequently checking on her location. Furthermore, while becoming very distressed at her absence, he tried to avoid her on her return and refused to be soothed (Main, 1995).

Perhaps an even more important observation was the fact that the infants' classifications coincided with different maternal styles of relating to the infants. Securely attached infants' mothers were most sensitive to their infants' needs, responding appropriately and promptly to the babies' cues for care and attention. The mothers of insecure-avoidant babies had shown rejection and withdrawal in response to their infants' bids for attention. Insecure-ambivalent/preoccupied babies' mothers were noted to be unpredictable in responding to their infants' needs. They were sometimes warm and caring and other times were inept, but did not openly reject their babies (Main, 1995).

Bowlby (1973) continued his attachment trilogy with Attachment and Loss: Volume II Separation. He noted that distinct sources of childhood fear are the presence of danger and/or the absence of an attachment figure. Bowlby also built on his previous work on internal working models of self and attachment figure, tying these directly to interpersonal interaction between infant and attachment figure. Adult

positive or negative responses color the child's working models of self and other as valued or unworthy, respectively. In Bowlby's (1980) third volume of Attachment and Loss, Loss, he said internal working models became increasingly stable as they became more habitual and less available to awareness. Defensive exclusion of new information may prevent the updating of outmoded models and result in behaviour that might be based more on past learnings, than present reality.

In the mid 1970's, Mary Main began an ambitious study at the University of California in Berkley. Main's work followed on the heels of Bowlby and Ainsworth who believed that attachment in children paralleled attachment behaviour that the children had experienced with their caregiver(s). Main took Ainsworth's work with childhood attachment even further, discerning a third category of insecure attachment. Starting with a look at twelve to eighteen month-old children, Main and her colleagues noted that some of the children did not clearly fit Ainsworth's secure, avoidant, or ambivalent attachment categories. In fact, there was a group of children, clearly not securely attached, whose behaviour was more disturbing than either the avoidantly or ambivalently categorized children. These children, whom Main labeled disorganized/disoriented demonstrated behaviour that fit both the avoidant and the ambivalent classifications. They approached their mothers but in bizarre and unusual ways, for example, backwards, or with movement toward her alternated with freezing stillness (Main, 1995; Main & Hesse, 1990; Main & Solomon, 1990). Main and her colleagues had noted similar attachment behaviours in abuse situations. Children who were frightened of their caregiver were placed in an irresolvable conflict whereby their fear of the attachment figure activated the attachment system. However, their caregiver was the source of their fear, and as a consequence, usual behavioural

strategies broke down with resultant displays of disorganized and disoriented attachment behaviours (George & Main, 1979).

Meanwhile, Sroufe (1983) was conducting attachment studies at the University of Minnesota. This multi-faceted project included follow-up assessments of toddlers and pre-school children whose attachment patterns had been assessed as infants using Ainsworth's Strange Situation. The results showed clear correlations between pattern of attachment, and autonomous behaviour, expression of affect, social competence, ego-resilience, and adaptability. The children who had been assessed as securely attached as infants functioned at a much higher level as toddlers and preschoolers than the anxiously attached children. Furthermore, these results which were initially reported for a middle class sample, were subsequently replicated with a high risk 'poverty sample' of mothers who had low income and few resources. These children's attachment patterns also correlated with the behaviour of their mothers. The mothers of secure children were supportive and provided assistance to their children without withdrawing or meddling. Mothers of insecurely attached children did not maintain an appropriate distance. They were either very intrusive, helping too much and not allowing the child to solve problems himself, or they provided no help so the child could not solve his problems and experienced little success (Karen, 1994).

Meanwhile, Crittenden (1988) took Main's work even further, offering more support for a fourth attachment category in children who had experienced abuse. Crittenden was studying high-risk families in Miami. In examining relationships between mother and child, Crittenden also noticed a correlation between maternal behaviour and child attachment. Crittenden noted that those children who had experienced severe maltreatment, demonstrated behaviours similar to that described

for Main's disorganized/disoriented attachment classification. These children were extremely anxious, showed both proximity-seeking and avoidance behaviours, were resistant, as demonstrated by whiney petulance and noncontextual aggression, and appeared stressed as evidenced by "face covering, head cocking, huddling on the floor, and rocking and wetting" (Crittenden, 1988, p. 146).

Adult Attachment

Parents.

Main was one of the first researchers to review adult attachment status, albeit adults who were parents, and whose attachment status was related to their children's. Main and her colleagues continued research into the attachment of children and their parents at Berkley (Karen, 1994). The Adult Attachment Interview was devised to assist in assessment of attachment of children and their parents. This tool consists of a series of questions surrounding the parent's early relationships. Although the context of the interview focused on the adult's early attachment experiences, the assessment looked at the participant's state of mind with regard to attachment. (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985)

Main and her colleagues were able to identify four categories of adult attachment which paralleled Ainsworth's three original childhood attachment categories as well as the disorganized/disoriented category. Furthermore, the categories demonstrated a pattern of matching parent attachment style with infant attachment style. Secure-autonomous adults valued attachment and were objective in describing attachment relationships. Their discussion of early relationships was coherent whether early experiences were positive or negative. These parents most typically matched to secure infants (Main, 1996).

Dismissing parents gave short, contradictory descriptions of their early life, often maintaining that their memories were absent. Positive descriptions of parents

were not supported by specific memories. Parental dismissing responses predicted a link to avoidant infants (Main, 1996).

Parents who were classified as preoccupied were noncollaborative and demonstrated a confused, angry, or passive preoccupation with their experiences. Their responses were long and sometimes seemed irrelevant. As well, grammar was at times mixed up and included psychological jargon, nonsense words, and childlike speech. This parental response was linked to infant ambivalence (Main, 1996).

Parents who were judged unresolved/disorganized had lapses in their discussion of loss or abuse where they fell silent. Lapses may have also appeared as an alteration is reasoning. Some examples were talking about a dead person as if alive, or abruptly switching to eulogistic speech when discussing loss or abuse. The unresolved/disorganized adults were linked to infants with disorganized attachment patterns (Main, 1996).

Romantic, Peer, and Other Relationships. Although Bowlby's theory of attachment primarily attended to attachment of babies and young children and their caregivers, Bowlby also recognized that attachment behaviour is characteristic of humans throughout their life (Feeney & Noller, 1996). "Whilst especially evident during early childhood, attachment behaviour is held to characterize human beings from the cradle to the grave" (Bowlby, 1979, p. 129). As studies of attachment began to expand across the life-span, researchers began to look more at adult attachment relationships. For example, Bowlby and Parkes (1970) studied adult bereavement (see also Parkes, 1972) and Weiss (1982, 1991) examined marital relationships.

A Three-Category Adult Model. In the late 1980's social psychologists, Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver proposed that romantic love could be conceptualized as an attachment process. Although Bowlby had proposed that attachment was applicable

to the entire life span, Hazan and Shaver (1987) were among the first to consider attachment status in romantic relationships between adults, without relating current status to their children's attachment style. "Attachment theory...explains how both healthy and unhealthy forms of love originate as reasonable adaptations to specific social circumstances" (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, p. 511).

Although recognizing that romantic love consisted of the integration of three behavioural systems, attachment, caregiving, and sex, Hazan and Shaver (1987) described several features common to both infant attachment and adult romantic love. Behavioral and emotional likenesses as well as similarities in dynamics are seen. Both types of attachment include frequent eye contact, smiling, holding, wanting to share discoveries and reactions with each other, and powerful empathy. In both cases, feelings of security are engendered by the other's availability while responsiveness and unavailability of the attachment figure leads to signaling or coming closer until feelings of security are reestablished (Feeney & Noller, 1996, pp. 24-25). Hazan and Shaver contended that the "characteristics of parent-child relationships identified by Ainsworth et al. as the probable causes of differences in infant attachment styles are also among the determinants of adults' romantic attachment styles" (1987, p. 513).

Shaver and Hazan (1994) supported their arguments with research results. They began with exploratory research using a newspaper quiz to gain respondents. The researchers based their description of attachment patterns on Ainsworth's original three descriptions of infant attachment categories. A forced choice type of questionnaire was used in which the respondents were asked to choose the attachment category that best described the romantic feeling and relationships in their lives. Descriptions of the categories were meant to be adult parallels of corresponding infant categories. The attachment categories were

> [Insecure/]Avoidant. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
>
> [Insecure/]Anxious-ambivalent. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this sometimes scares people away.
>
> Secure. I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me. (Shaver & Hazan, 1994, p. 120)

Shaver and Hazan (1994) also asked other "kinds of questions, dealing with: each respondent's most important love relationship, his or her feelings of loneliness, beliefs (internal working models) about self and relationship partners, and memories of childhood attachment relationships with parents" (p.120). This study was subsequently replicated with a university student population. The results of these two studies showed that self-described secure people reported warmer relationships with both parents and between both parents than both insecure categories. Secure respondents were easy to get to know and believed in the existence and permanence of romantic love. They described their romantic relationships as happy, friendly and trusting. Avoidant respondents felt romantic love wanes in intensity and rarely lasts. They were afraid of intimacy and had difficulty in accepting their partners. Anxious/ambivalent people felt misunderstood and had self-doubts, finding it easy to fall in love. They felt that true love was rare and others weren't willing to commit. Anxious/ambivalent respondents described obsession and jealousy, strong sexual

attraction and desire to be united, coupled with extremes of emotion (Feeney & Noller, 1996).

Further research based on Hazan and Shaver's attachment measure continued to be carried out. Hazan and Shaver (1990) themselves examined relationships between work (as representative of exploration) and attachment style. Secure respondents reported feeling positive about their work experiences while avoidant people were unhappy with their coworkers but satisfied with other aspects of work. Anxious/ambivalent people were generally dissatisfied with their coworkers and the work experience in general (Shaver & Hazan, 1994).

Subsequent studies verified the correlation between category of attachment and different aspects of romantic relationships. The scope of this research covered such varied topics as internal working models, trust, self-esteem, and partner communication (Collins & Read, 1990), obsessive love (limerence), love addiction, self-esteem, partner idealization, relationship characteristics and attitudes towards the partner's social network (Feeney & Noller, 1990, 1991), and coping with a breakup and emotional distress (Simpson, 1990). Some of the research attempted to improve conceptualization and measurement. For example, Simpson (1990) broke down Hazan and Shaver's three category measure into individual sentences, each rated on a Likert-type scale.

A Four-Group Adult Model. At around the same time that Hazan and Shaver's three-group measure and its derivatives were being assessed, Bartholomew (1990) proposed a two-dimensional four-group model of adult attachment. Bartholomew based her model on Bowlby's concept of internal working models, positing positive or negative views of both the self and of the other (the attachment figure). Combining these two dimensions gives rise to four adult attachment styles.

In Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991a) model, the secure group feels generally lovable or worthy while viewing others as accepting and responsive. They are comfortable in a close relationship and with being autonomous. The insecure/dismissing group has a sense of worthiness but views others with a negative slant. Dismissive individuals may behave independently, avoiding disappointment by avoiding close relationships, thus promoting a sense of invulnerability. The insecure/preoccupied pattern includes those who consider themselves unworthy of love, but view others in a positive light. These people may attempt to improve their sense of self by striving for the acceptance of others whom they value. These three groups are similar to Hazan and Shaver's secure, insecure/avoidant, and insecure/anxious-ambivalent styles respectively. Bartholomew's insecure/fearful style is characterized by a sense of unworthiness or unlovability and a negative view of others, with an expectation of untrustworthiness and rejection. There is a fear of intimacy with others and these people may avoid social contact. In Bartholomew's model, secure adults correspond to secure children, while insecure adults, that is dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful groups are similar to avoidant, ambivalent/preoccupied, and disorganized/disoriented children, respectively.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991a) did some research designed to validate their two-dimensional four-group model. In one study, interview, self-report, and friend-report of attachment style ratings, as well as measures of self-concept, sociability, and interpersonal problems were collected from a male and female university student sample. Generally, there was consistency between interviews, self-reports, and friend-reports. The data indicated significant differences between the four attachment groups. The secure group rated highly in interview coherence, intimacy of friendship, warmth, balance of control in friendships and amount of

involvement in romantic relationships. The dismissing group scored high on self-confidence but low on emotional expressiveness, frequency of crying, closeness (including self-disclosure, intimacy, and romantic involvement), elaboration, and caregiving. They also demonstrated high control of friendship and romantic relationships. The preoccupied group's results were essentially opposite those of the dismissing group. They scored high on elaboration, self-disclosure, emotional expressiveness, frequency of crying, reliance on others, caregiving, and romantic involvement, while their ratings were low for coherence and control in friendship relationships. The fearful group was significantly lower than the secure and preoccupied group for self-disclosure, intimacy, romantic involvement, and reliance on others. They were also low in self-confidence and control in romantic and friendship relationships. These results were subsequently replicated in another study which also showed peer and family attachments to have a similar style. The results indicate that assignment to one of the four attachment ratings were related to measures of self-concept and interpersonal functioning.

Bartholomew and her colleagues have also examined attachment as a theoretical construct and as an issue of measurement. Bartholomew discussed the advantages of dimensions, categories, and prototypes in conceptualizing adult attachment, concluding that the prototype or four-category model has merits in measuring attachment (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Bartholomew and Shaver (1998) questioned whether adult attachment measurements converge. Bartholomew and Shaver compared Main's Adult Attachment Interview, arising out of work with young children's parents, and Hazan and Shaver's measure, focused on adult romantic relationship. They also compared both of these instruments to Bartholomew's four-category measure of attachments. The authors suggest that these

measures may assess a single core aspect of attachment and that domain-specific attachments may differ significantly. Adult attachment measures differed in a number of ways including method used (self-report, interview), domain (family, peer, or romantic), and dimensionality (prototypes, categories, or dimensions). Bartholomew and Shaver argued that these measure nevertheless do converge to varying amounts, and that all are "compatible with the possibility that various forms of adult attachment arise from a continuous but branching tree of attachment experiences, beginning in infancy and developing throughout the life course" (p. 42).

Further Explorations in Adult Attachment. Since Bartholomew's presentation of her four-category model of attachment, researchers have explored a variety of avenues around adult attachment. Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) produced a four-category model of attachment based on two dimensions. Brennan et al. incorporated numerous self-report attachment measures in a large-sample factor-analytic study. The first step produced a pool of items assessing 60 attachment-related constructs. Factor-analysis of these 60 subscales then resulted in two independent factors corresponding to the Anxiety and Avoidance dimensions and giving rise to four attachment groups which were conceptually similar to Bartholomew's four types.

Hazan and Zeifman (1994), exploring the development of adult attachments, found that almost all such attachments are romantic (or sexual) in nature. Some researchers investigated links between adult attachment styles and caregiving and sexuality. Hazan and Shaver (1994) proposed that attachment, caregiving, and sexuality are linked in romantic relationships. Support for this has come from several studies linking attachment style and caregiving (Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1996; Kunce & Shaver, 1994) and linking attachment style and sexuality (Brennan &

Shaver, 1995). These results suggest secure attachment is related to more beneficial care occurring between partners and to sexual expression occurring more as part of an established relationship than as a casual encounter, for example, a one-night stand.

Kirkpatrick (1992, 1994) applied attachment theory to the study of religiosity in Christians. Relationship with God was found to be similar to attachment relationships in that prayer was seen as proximity seeking, belief in God provided a secure base, and religious support in stressful times gave a safe haven.

Some researchers looked at attachment behaviour in response to stressors. For example, in a laboratory situation, Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992) found differences between attachment groups among dating couples. Particularly in stressful conditions, secure individuals were more likely to seek and to offer support than were avoidant people. Mikulciner, Florian, and Weller (1993) found similar results studying individuals in the "naturalistic" setting of the Gulf War during missile attacks. As well, Mikulciner et al. found differences between secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent groups in emotional reactions and strategies used to cope with the missile attacks. In general, these results indicated that a secure attachment style prompted more constructive responses to stress (see also Mikulciner & Florian, 1995; 1998).

Several studies have also tied attachment style to personality dimensions. Higher self-esteem has been found in secure individuals than in avoidant and anxious/ambivalent people (Feeney & Noller, 1990). Some investigators have also explored correlations between the "Big Five" personality dimensions (neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) and attachment style. Links have been found between secure subjects, lower scores on neuroticism, and higher scores on extroversion than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent

individuals. Secure people also scored higher on agreeableness than avoidant subjects (Shaver & Brennan, 1992). However, Griffin and Bartholomew (1994), in further exploring the ties between personality factors and attachment styles caution that "the attachment dimensions are not reducible to the fundamental factors identified in personality measures" (p. 36) and that there is "considerable variance in the attachment dimensions that cannot be accounted for by the Big Five" (p. 37).

Research into attachment style and well-being has also supported the advantages of secure attachment. Greater overall well-being of securely attached individuals has been shown by lower scores on measures of loneliness and depression, anxiety, irritability, and physical illness than in avoidant or anxious/ambivalent individuals (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Other studies support the link between attachment and adjustment (Feeney & Noller, 1996). For example, Adam (1994) in his model of risk factors for suicidal behaviour has pointed out that early negative attachment experiences could lead to serious attachment difficulties and may adversely affect the capacity to develop close relations. Adams argues that insecure attachment contributes to suicidality as a predisposing factor and that conversely, secure attachment offers a protective effect against suicidal inclinations.

Recently, researchers have looked at stability in attachment classification. Studies generally support the notion of stability of attachment, with the secure category evidencing more continuity than insecure categories (Hamilton, 2000). As well, where discontinuity in attachment security occurred, negative life events, for example physical or sexual abuse, were important factors in change (Hamilton, 2000; Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim, 2000; Waters, Hamilton, & Weinfield, 2000; Waters, Weinfield, & Hamilton, 2000; Weinfield, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2000). Attachment in these studies was assessed in infancy with the

Ainsworth Strange Situation and as adolescents or adults using the Adolescent or Adult Attachment Interview respectively.

Other investigators have looked at attachment security utilizing Bartholomew's four-category attachment model. Klohnen and John (1998) devised and empirically verified a prototype of working models of attachment based on Bartholomew's model. They applied this measure to data collected at age 27, 43 and 52 years from women who graduated from college in the late 1950's. Results indicated distinct working models for the attachment groups that were stable over time. As a whole, the preoccupied prototype scores decreased over time, while the secure prototype increased.

Adult Attachment and Child Maltreatment

In the past, most research linking child abuse and attachment style involved child and/or parent participants (for example, see George & Main, 1979). There has been little research relating adult attachment to child and adolescent sexual maltreatment, in particular, type of sexual abuse. Much of the research literature available has been done by student researchers completing graduate degree requirements at the doctoral level. These studies used self-report questionnaire style instruments and a quasi-experimental research design. Childhood maltreatment data was based on retrospective recall. Populations have been convenience samples of undergraduate students and studies have mainly looked at female participants (for example: Cook, 1995; Fossel, 1997; Katsikas, 1995; & Marcy, 1998).

The studies that have been done have considered relationships between maltreatment experiences (including sexual, psychological, and physical abuse), attachment status, and a variety of outcome variables. One researcher (Fossel, 1997) looked at severity of sexual abuse in relation to attachment style while several studies

(Cook, 1995; Fossel, 1997; Katsikas, 1995) considered attachment status as mediating the effects of childhood maltreatment. As well, much of the work in this area has based assessment of attachment on Bartholomew's two-dimensional four-category model (see Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991a). As stated above, Bartholomew based her model on Bowlby's concept of positive or negative internal working models of self and other. Because the available research on adult attachment and child maltreatment is scarce, the following four studies will be presented in some detail.

Katsikas (1995) examined long-term sequelae of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse during childhood in a sample of female college students. Katsikas hypothesized that maltreatment affects attachment which then has direct influence on manifestation/absence of psychological trauma symptoms in the adult. In other words, the author hypothesized that attachment mediated the effect of childhood maltreatment.

Katsikas (1995) employed self-report methodology to collect data from 196 female undergraduate university students and 69 female community college students. Measures used included Bartholomew's (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991a) RQ to assess attachment, as well as 2 tools to assess View of Self and View of Others. The Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory was used as a measure of View of Self while several subscales of the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems were utilized to assess View of Others. The Trauma Symptom Inventory was used to assess evidence of trauma effects. Katsikas utilized structural equation modelling to assess for causality between maltreatment history, attachment status and trauma symptomatology.

In Katsikas' (1995) study, history of childhood maltreatment was more likely to be associated with an insecure adult attachment style. Katsikas also found that respondents reporting abuse in childhood, but who demonstrated a secure attachment style, tended to have a more positive View of Self (higher self-esteem) and a more positive View of Others (fewer interpersonal problems) than those who reported childhood abuse but were insecurely attached.

Katsikas (1995) found that a history of abuse impacted on attachment categorization, but that attachment also mediated effects of the abuse. As well, both physical and emotional abuse were alike in their effects on Trauma Symptomatology as well as View of Self and View of Others. Katsikas also found that View of Others and presence of trauma symptoms significantly affected each other. Katsikas concluded that adult attachment (View of Self and View of Others) is useful in comprehending how trauma symptomatology is expressed in adults who were maltreated as children.

Fossel (1997) investigated attachment as a mediation between childhood sexual abuse and long-term adjustment, including self-esteem, social adjustment, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychological symptoms. Fossel utilized self-report methodology to collect data from 565 female undergraduate university students, using Bartholomew's (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) RQ to assess attachment. Other measures used included the Life Experiences Questionnaire (to assess sexual abuse and its severity), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Social Adjustment Scale Self-Report Form, and the Symptom Checklist 90-R.

Fossel's (1997) results indicated that a greater severity of abuse was associated with lower levels of self-esteem and with lesser social adjustment. However she did not find a significant moderating effect of attachment on either

self-esteem or social adjustment. As hypothesized, greater abuse severity was also associated with both more PTSD and more psychological symptoms. However, Fossel did find a moderating effect of attachment on PTSD and total psychological symptoms. As predicted, at higher levels of fearful attachment, the association between abuse severity and PTSD and total symptoms was strengthened. Fossel also detected less PTSD and total symptomatology with greater secure attachment, however, secure attachment did not exhibit a moderating effect on PTSD and psychological symptomology.

Fossel's (1997) results indicated that attachment has strong direct effects on adjustment and has some moderating effect on symptomatology. While fearful attachment moderated the effect relationship between abuse severity and symptomatology, secure attachment did not have a moderating effect. It seems reasonable that increasing fearful attachment (by its very nature incorporating negative Views of Self and Others) should be related to increased symptomatology. However, it is puzzling that secure attachment (holding positive Views of Self and Others) did not minimize symptomatology. Fossel suggests that these results may differ with a more representative community sample. A university student population tends to be generally well adjusted and has fewer experiences of severe abuse.

Cook (1995) studied the mediating effect of perceived relationships with parents and of current attachment style on the effects of reported child maltreatment. The researcher collected self-report data from a sample of 264 female undergraduate college students. Cook used Bartholomew's attachment questionnaire to assess current attachment and utilized the Parental Bonding Instrument to measure relationships with parents. Other measurement tools included the Child Abuse and

Trauma Questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory, and the Perceived Social Support from Friends and Family scale.

Cook's (1995) results indicated that all forms of maltreatment were strongly associated with poorer outcomes. Attachment style was significantly related to outcomes with the secure style reflecting more positive adaptation than insecure categories. Cook also found that current attachment style was related to parental attachment. It appeared that quality of parental attachment significantly impacted attachment style, which then influenced outcomes, although Cook identified that this needs to be backed up with further research. Cook's results also indicated that parental attachment was a better predictor of outcomes than child maltreatment.

Marcy (1998) studied the relationship between retrospective reports of child psychological, physical, and sexual maltreatment and attachment security, symptomatology, self-esteem, and dissociation in male and female college students. The researcher collected self-report data from 80 male and 130 female undergraduate students. She used Demare's Child Maltreatment Questionnaire to assess history of child abuse and Bartholomew's Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) to measure current attachment style. The RSQ is a continuous measure which scores for the four attachment categories of secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing. Other tools used included the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the Hopkins Symptom Checklist, and the Dissociation Experiences Scale.

Marcy's (1998) results show significant positive correlation between psychological maltreatment and dismissive and fearful attachment scores for women. In contrast, attachment security for men did not significantly relate to emotional abuse. Physical abuse was positively related to dismissive attachment for women. There was no significant relationship between attachment security and physical

maltreatment for men. Sexual abuse was also related to attachment security for women but not for men. For women, non-parental sexual abuse showed significant positive correlation to fearful attachment scores, while parental sexual abuse was significantly and positively related to preoccupied attachment only.

These results are different than what Marcy (1998) expected. She had anticipated a strong relationship between all types of child abuse and insecure attachment, especially the preoccupied and fearful categories. Marcy suggests possible explanations for her findings. The results for physical abuse could represent a lack of experience and sophistication in significant relationships, in attachment experiences, and in feelings in intimate relationships. That men showed no correlation may suggest a later maturation for men than for women. For psychological abuse, although there was some correlation with attachment in women, there was none for men. Differences also emerged between subscales of the psychological scores. Subscales that related to attachment status suggested an environment lacking emotional support (for example rejecting and denying emotional responsiveness) in contrast to more active, verbal types of abuse. Marcy points out that this is in line with basic attachment theory that suggests that cold, inconsistent parental-child interaction gives rise to insecure attachment (particularly anxious and dismissive types). Marcy's results indicate that such effects are long-lasting and related to adult attachment.

Summary

As early as 1950, there was a beginning awareness that positive childhood experiences with caregivers contributed to the well-being of the child. Just as positive experiences were associated with good outcomes, poor childhood experiences with caregivers such as separation, inconsistent care, or abuse were seen to be correlated

with insecure attachment. Bowlby posited that internal working models of self and other were related to caregivers' behaviour and subsequent attachment type in the child. Several attachment categories have been described and refined, first in naturalistic, and then in laboratory settings. One Secure and three Insecure categories have been defined.

Adult attachment categories paralleled those of children, with studies looking first at parent and child and later work examining attachment in romantic, peer, and other relationships. Adult attachment categories have also been developed to include Secure and three Insecure categories -- Dismissing, Preoccupied, and Fearful. Bartholomew's four-group model and instrument to assess attachment status was based on internal working models of self and other (the caregiver or attachment figure) as being either positive or negative. These two dimensions gave rise to four attachment styles. The Secure category feels positively about the self and other. Dismissing has a negative view of the other and a positive view of the self. Preoccupied is the opposite of Dismissing, having a positive regard for the other and a negative regard for the self. Fearful attachment includes those who have negative views of both the self and other. Other adult attachment work has included creation of other instruments, adult attachment and caregiving and sexuality, religiosity, stress responses, personality dimensions, well-being, and attachment stability.

There has been very little research done which looks at adult attachment in relation to child maltreatment, and none that looks at type of child sexual abuse. In general, child abuse has been associated with more Insecure attachment and poorer outcome measures (e.g., lower self-esteem and higher trauma scores). However, it also appears that attachment may mediate abuse effects. As well, some research has shown attachment to be correlated with child abuse experiences for women but not

for men while non-parental sexual abuse correlated most highly with Fearful attachment and parental sexual abuse correlated most highly with Preoccupied attachment.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

This study had a nonexperimental research design and involved both descriptive, correlational, and multiple regression research. The sample used was a convenience sample from a university student population and the design included collection of retrospective or ex post facto data.

The sample consisted of male and female University of Manitoba students recruited by the main researcher. The sample was taken from both undergrad and graduate students in the Faculties of Education and Nursing. Recruitment took place in classes where mutual agreement had been reached for access to the class between the class professor and the main researcher. The sample size was 114 participants. Four hundred and seventy-nine questionnaires were distributed and 126 were returned. Of these, 12 were incomplete and were not included in the analysis.

The analysis included a correlational matrix which looked at all possible pairs of the predictor and dependent variables. The analysis also included a multiple regression for each type of attachment, each involving four variables -- sexual harassment, noncontact sexual maltreatment, contact sexual abuse and one of the attachment styles. These analyses required a minimum of 10 respondents for each variable. Therefore the ideal data base would have included a minimum of 40 completed questionnaires. It was recognized that not all of the returned questionnaires would be completed in entirety and some may need to be discarded. It was seen as advantageous to attempt to recruit more than 40 respondents in order to finish with at least this many to analyze. It was also recognized that more than 40 responses would tend to produce stronger data (R. Renaud, personal communication, November 22, 2001).

Measures

The data was gathered using self-report questionnaires. The measurement tools utilized were the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991a, 1991b; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994), and the Sexual Abuse Questionnaire including parental and non-parental versions (Demare, 1993; 1995; 1996; Demare & Briere, 1994). A demographic questionnaire was also included.

Before answering the attachment questionnaires, the respondents were asked to reflect on a current close romantic relationship and to answer the questions with that relationship in mind. If they were not in a current relationship, then they were asked to consider their most recent close romantic relationship. If they had not had a close relationship, then the respondents were asked to answer the questions according to the way they believed they would be in a close romantic relationship. Attachment style was measured using the RQ (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991a, 1991b; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) measure.

The RQ (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991a, 1991b; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) consists of four short paragraphs describing one secure attachment pattern, and three insecure categories: dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful. For example, the secure category is described as "It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me" (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991b, p. 1). The respondents were asked to read each description and decide which description best describes them. Then the respondents were asked to rate the degree to which each description corresponded to their relationship style on a 7-point Likert scale.

Scharfe and Bartholomew (1994) looked at stability and change in adult attachment representations in young adults over a period of 8 months. Moderate stability was demonstrated using the RQ measure, with 56% of males (kappa = .26) and 63% of females (kappa = .53) maintaining the same attachment pattern. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) reported on correlation between interview ratings and self-report rating of attachment style using the RQ. Convergent validity was .22 for the Secure category, .33 for Preoccupied, .40 for Dismissing and .50 for the Fearful Classification. These results may be suggestive of self-report bias for the secure rating which demonstrated the lowest convergent validity. Generally the results indicate differences between interview and self-report using the RQ assessment of attachment.

The Sexual Abuse Questionnaire (SAQ) (Demare, 1995;1996) is a retrospective-report questionnaire for adults that assesses childhood sexual maltreatment which occurred prior to 18 years of age. It has identical parental (SAQ-P)and nonparental (SAQ-NP)versions. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from never (1) to very often (5).

Instructions for the SAQ-P version directed respondents to consider parental figures as including parents, step-parents, foster-parents, or other adults who were routinely in charge of them as a child or adolescent. Participants were asked to consider those experiences which occurred with at least one parental figure prior to 18 years of age. Respondents were instructed to select how often they had experienced the described item in relation to at least one of their parental figures. In the case where the behaviour occurred with more than one parental figure, the participants were asked to respond for the parental figure who behaved that way most often (Demare, 1995; 1996).

Additional instructions for the SAQ-NP version directed the respondent to answer for behaviours experienced by a person other than a parental figure before 18 years of age. The instructions added that in cases where the participant did not want the behaviour to occur, they were to answer for a person of any age who was not a parental figure. In cases where the respondent wanted the behaviour to occur, they were instructed to answer for a person who was five or more years older, but who was not a parental figure (Demare, 1995; 1996).

The SAQ (Demare, 1995; 1996) consists of 44 items, 22 each for identical parental and nonparental sexual abuse versions. The SAQ has 3 subscales which essentially separate contact and noncontact behaviour. The Sexual Harassment subscale includes six items such as "talk to you in a sexual way." The Noncontact Sexual Abuse subscale also has six items such as "show you a sexual or private part of their body." The Contact Sexual Abuse subscale contains 10 items addressing such behaviours as "kiss or hug you in a sexual way" and "engage in vaginal or anal intercourse with you." The Chronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients for the SAQ-P and SAQ-NP versions are .98 and .96 respectively. Chronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients for the Harassment, Noncontact, and Contact subscales are .93, .91, and .96 (SAQ-P) and .95, .82, and .96 (SAQ-P) respectively. These results are acceptable.

Data Analysis

Before the analyses were done, scatterplots were created for each of the independent and dependent variables. The data was examined for outliers which were defined as results more than three standard deviations from the mean for each variable. There were outliers for three participants. These questionnaires were examined for concerns such as the same response to every or most questions. The

questionnaires did not have any concerning patterns in the responses and were included in the data analysis.

As stated above, the data was examined using multiple regression and correlational matrix analyses. For the correlational matrix, each independent and dependent variable was correlated with each of the other variables. The statistical analysis examined relationships between all possible sets of two variables. This data was looked at to determine presence and strength of correlations in these relationships.

For the multiple regression, the three subscales of the SAQ (Harassment, Noncontact, and Contact) were each considered predictor variables. Each of the four attachment categories (Secure Preoccupied, Dismissing, and Fearful) were considered dependent variables. As well, the three insecure attachment categories were combined as another dependent variable. The statistical analysis looked at all possible subsets of predictor variables for contributions that sexual abuse experiences may make to attachment categories. The data was examined for information suggesting presence and strength of explanatory power that each sexual abuse subset contributes to each attachment type.

Reliability and Validity

Available data on reliability and validity of the instruments to be used has already been reported. The RQ has demonstrated moderate stability over 18 months (Scharfe and Bartholomew, 1994). Convergent validity between the RQ and interview ratings is low (.22) for the Secure style of attachment and ranges from .33 to .50 for the Insecure categories. These results indicate only fair convergence and suggest that the two methods of measurement are not equal.

The SAQ questionnaire has not been compared to other measures of sexual

maltreatment, and data is not available on its validity. However, the SAQ was based on questionnaires by experts and authors in the field, such as D. Finkelhor. As well, the instrument was submitted to a process of review, revision and re-review by a panel of ten clinical psychologists, virtually all of whom have had clinical experience working with children who have been abused and/or adults who had experienced childhood sexual maltreatment. Reliability of the SAQ has been reported as acceptable (Chronbach's alpha for the subscales ranges from .82 to .96 and for the entire SAQ from .96 to.98; Demare, 1995; 1996).

Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the Education/Nursing Ethics Review Board prior to initiating any research, and the writer abided by all requirements of the Review Board. The participants were adult university students enrolled at the University of Manitoba. Recruitment has been described earlier.

Consent in writing was obtained from each participant. The written consent included information stating that the participants were given several written questionnaires to complete. The questionnaires were described as asking questions of a personal nature including questions about participants' experiences of childhood or adolescent sexual abuse experiences and about their present status. The consent form indicated that participants had the right not to participate without any cost or risk to them. The consent form also indicated that those who consented to participate could omit any questions or decide to withdraw anytime without any penalty. As well, the written consent specified that the study had been approved by the Education/Nursing Ethics Review Board, and that any complaints about the process could be reported to the Review Board. Participants were also given a concluding statement in the first person including a summary of the information that had been received, the consent

form, and the date and participant's signature, as well as the researcher's signature. There was no deception practiced.

An opportunity for feedback was offered. The consent form included a question as to whether participants would like feedback. If yes, participants were asked to provide an address in order to forward feedback. Feedback was a brief summary of the study results and was compiled by the main researcher with supervision by the thesis advisor. There were 54 respondents who indicated that they wanted feedback.

Potential risk was seen as including emotional distress such as troubling thoughts or feelings as a result of the sensitive nature of some of the questions, particularly those relating to sexual maltreatment. The students were all provided with the questionnaires, two copies of the consent and a stamped envelope addressed to me. This enabled those participants who chose to participate to complete the questionnaires in privacy. The consent form included phone numbers to reach both the main researcher and the thesis advisor. Participants were encouraged to call if they had any questions or concerns about their participation in the study. None of the participants did in fact call either the main researcher or the thesis advisor. In addition, a debriefing form was included which listed several no cost or low cost counselling resources available to students. These included the University of Manitoba Student Counselling Services, a 24-hour crisis line, and external agencies.

Direct benefits to participants included the opportunity to receive feedback about the study results. The results of the study may provide greater understanding about adult attachment and child and adolescent sexual maltreatment. Attachment issues can be an important consideration when providing counselling and the findings

of this study may provide important knowledge about the relationship between sexual abuse and adult attachment style. No compensation was provided.

Anonymity and confidentially were maintained. The consent forms were kept separate from the questionnaires. Participants were advised not to place their names or any other information that may have identified them on the questionnaires. No recording devices were used.

Chapter 4

Results

Descriptive Data

There were 114 participants who returned completed questionnaires. For the age question most participants indicated they were either less than 25 years (54 or 47.4%) or 25 to 34 years (39 or 34.2%). There were 12 (10.5%) students who endorsed ages 35 to 44 years and 9 (7.9%) who selected 45 to 54 years. Results for the gender question indicate a predominantly female distribution with 96 (82.4%) females and 18 (15.8%) males. For ethnicity most of the respondents selected Caucasian (93 or 81.6%) with the Asian-Canadian (9 or 7.9%) and Other (6 or 5.3%) categories following at a distant second and third. There were 3 (2.6%) Aboriginal-Canadian, 2 (1.8%) African-Canadian, and 1 (.9%) Hispanic-Canadian respondents. The marital status question indicated that over half (63 or 55.3%) of the subjects chose single status and about 40% (45 or 39.5%) selected the married or cohabiting category. There were 6 (5.3%) who indicated they were divorced. For income in the participants' families of origin, the majority of participants (51 or 44.7%) selected More than $50,000 and a significant proportion chose $35,000 to $50,000 (36 or 31.6%) or $20,000 to $35,000 (19 or 16.7%). There were 8 (7.0%) students who selected Less than $20.000. The Current year of university question showed 57 (50%) people had selected five or more while 37 (32.5%) chose four and 17 (14.9%) selected year three of university. There were 3 (2.6%) respondents who endorsed year one.

For the forced choice attachment style question Secure was the most frequently selected response at 74 (64.9%). The number of respondents who chose

Fearful, Preoccupied, or Dismissing were 19 (16.7%), 10 (8.8%), and 11(9.6%) respectively.

The Likert-style questions about attachment type had minimum and maximum scores of 1 and 7 for all 4 categories. The Secure category had a mean of 5.29 (standard deviation of 1.73). The Fearful, Preoccupied, and Dismissing types had means (and standard deviations) of 2.79 (1.93), 2.55 (1.89), and 3.31 (1.79) respectively.

The scores for nonparental and parental types of sexual maltreatment were added together to give total scores for each category (Harassment, Noncontact, or Contact) of abuse. The minimum and maximum scores were 12 and 42, 12 and 34, and 20 and 60 for Harrassment, Noncontact, and Contact abuse respectively. The mean for the Harassment type of sexual maltreatment was 17.91 (standard deviation 6.88). Noncontact abuse had a mean of 13.62 (standard deviation 3.41) while the mean for Contact maltreatment was 24.69 (standard deviation 8.71).

Correlational Matrix

Correlations between all possible pairs of the four attachment categories, Insecure attachment (total of Fearful, Preoccupied, and Dismissing), and the three types of sexual maltreatment were performed. Table 1 contains the results of the correlational matrix. All results are one-tailed Pearson correlations. Stastically significant results ($p < .05$) follow.

Secure attachment had a strong negative correlation with the Fearful and Insecure attachment categories. There were also moderately strong negative correlations between Secure attachment and both the Preoccupied and Dismissing attachment styles. Fearful attachment had a moderately strong positive correlation

Table 1. Correlational Matrix

	SAS	FAS	PAS	DAS	IAS	HSA	NCSA	CSA
SAS	1 00							
FAS	-.693**	1 00						
PAS	-.408**	.377**	1 00					
DAS	-.461**	.385**	0.096	1 00				
IAS	-.721**	.819**	.685**	.667**	1 00			
HSA	-.413**	.397**	.241**	.165*	.373**	1 00		
NCSA	-.293**	.199*	.246**	.170*	.283**	.635**	1 00	
CSA	-.347**	.303**	.251**	0.135	.319**	.755**	.757**	1 00

Note. Abbreviations are as follows: SAS= secure attachment status; FAS= fearful attachment status; PAS= preoccupied attachment status; DAS= dismissing attachment status; IAS= insecure attachment status (FAS + PAS + DAS); HSA= harassment sexual abuse; NCSA= noncontact sexual abuse; CSA= contact sexual abuse.
* = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$

with the Preoccupied and Dismissing attachment types and a strong positive correlation with the Insecure attachment category. Preoccupied attachment correlated positively with Insecure attachment as did Dismissing attachment.

Each of the sexual maltreatment categories correlated with each other. There were strong positive correlations between the three pairs of sexual maltreatment.

Secure attachment correlated negatively with the three types of sexual maltreatment. Harassment had the strongest correlation followed by Contact abuse and Noncontact abuse. In contrast, Fearful attachment correlated positively with each of the three types of sexual maltreatment. Similar to Secure attachment (but in the positive direction), Fearful attachment correlated most strongly with Harassment abuse, then with Contact abuse and Noncontact abuse. The moderately strong

positive correlations between Preoccupied attachment and each of the three types of abuse were similar to each other. Dismissing attachment had even smaller positive correlations with Harassment and Noncontact abuse. The Insecure attachment category had small to moderately small positive correlations with the three abuse types. Again the strongest correlation was with Harassment abuse followed by Contact abuse and then by Noncontact abuse.

Multiple Regression

Multiple regression was used to examine how much each type or combination of sexual maltreatment (Harassment, Noncontact, of Contact) contributed to each type of attachment (Secure, Fearful, Preoccupied, Dismissing, and Insecure). An alpha level of .05 was used.

The Harassment type of sexual maltreatment contributed more to Secure attachment than either Noncontact or Contact abuse. (See Table 2) Including Contact with Harassment Maltreatment did not increase the contribution of Harassment at all. As well, combining Noncontact with Harassment gave a similar result. Combining Noncontact and Contact abuse was the same as that for Contact alone and a small increase over Noncontact by itself. Including all three independent variables did not increase the contribution; it stayed the same as Harassment alone or Harassment with either Contact or Noncontact abuse.

For Fearful attachment, Harassment alone again contributed more than either Noncontact or Contact abuse. (See Table 3) As well, Harassment added noticeable contribution when combined with either Noncontact or Contact abuse. When Noncontact and Contact were combined there was an increase over either of these variables alone. Including Harrassment, Noncontact, and Contact sexual abuse led to similar results as the contribution of Harassment alone.

Table 2. Multiple Regression for Secure Attachment

	R2	F
HSA	0.17	(1,113) = 23.10**
NCSA	0.09	(1,113) = 10.55**
CSA	0.12	(1,113) = 15.30**
HSA + NCSA	0.17	(2,113) = 11.57**
HSA + CSA	0.17	(2,113) = 11.67**
NCSA + CSA	0.12	(2,113) = 7.74**
HSA + NCSA + CSA	0.17	(3,113) = 7.72**

Note. Abbreviations are as follows: HSA= harassment sexual abuse; NCSA= noncontact sexual abuse; CSA= contact sexual abuse.
** = $p < .01$

Table 3. Multiple Regression for Fearful Attachment

	R2	F
HSA	0.16	(1,113) = 20.92**
NCSA	0.04	(1,113) = 4.61*
CSA	0.09	(1,113) = 11.32**
HSA + NCSA	0.16	(2,113) = 10.74**
HSA + CSA	0.16	(2,113) = 10.37**
NCSA + CSA	0.09	(2,113) = 6.77**
HSA + NCSA + CSA	0.17	(3,113) = 7.24**

Note. Abbreviations are as follows: HSA= harassment sexual abuse; NCSA= noncontact sexual abuse; CSA= contact sexual abuse.
** = $p < .01$ * = $p < .05$

Table 4. Multiple Regression for Preoccupied Attachment

	R2	F
HSA	0.06	(1,113) = 6.88**
NCSA	0.06	(1,113) = 7.19**
CSA	0.06	(1,113) = 7.50**
HSA + NCSA	0.07	(2,113) = 4.33*
HSA + CSA	0.07	(2,113) = 4.11*
NCSA + CSA	0.07	(2,113) = 4.18*
HSA + NCSA + CSA	0.08	(3,113) = 2.96*

Note. Abbreviations are as follows: HSA= harassment sexual abuse; NCSA= noncontact sexual abuse; CSA= contact sexual abuse.
** = $p < .01$ * = $p < .05$

For Preoccupied attachment, the contribution of all possible subsets of abuse were similar to each other. (See Table 4) They each contributed only small amounts to the Preoccupied attachment category.

For Dismissing attachment, Harrassment by itself was the only independent variable with a statistically significant contribution. (See Table 5) Similar to Preoccupied attachment, the contribution was quite small.

For Insecure attachment (Fearful, Preoccupied, and Dismissing attachment combined), Harassment sexual abuse again contributed more than either Noncontact or Contact abuse. (See Table 6) Combining Harassment with either Noncontact or with Contact lead to results equivalent to the contribution for Harassment alone. Choosing Noncontact together with Contact increased their individual contributions a small amount. Combining all 3 independent variables also produced results similar to that for Harassment alone.

Table 5. Multiple Regression for Dismissing Attachment

	R2	F
HSA	0.03	(1,113) = 3.81*
NCSA	0.03	(1,113) = 3.32
CSA	0.02	(1,113) = 2.08
HSA + NCSA	0.04	(2,113) = 2.27
HSA + CSA	0.03	(2,113) = 1.58
NCSA + CSA	0.03	(2,113) = 1.65
HSA + NCSA + CSA	0.04	(3,113) = 1.36

Note. Abbreviations are as follows: HSA= harassment sexual abuse; NCSA= noncontact sexual abuse; CSA= contact sexual abuse.
* = $p < .05$

Table 6. Multiple Regression for Insecure Attachment

	R2	F
HSA	0.14	(1,113) = 18.05**
NCSA	0.08	(1,113) = 9.74**
CSA	0.1	(1,113) = 12.71**
HSA + NCSA	0.14	(2,113) = 9.22**
HSA + CSA	0.14	(2,113) = 9.20**
NCSA + CSA	0.11	(2,113) = 6.57**
HSA + NCSA + CSA	0.14	(3,113) = 6.13**

Note. Abbreviations are as follows: HSA= harassment sexual abuse; NCSA= noncontact sexual abuse; CSA= contact sexual abuse.
** = $p < .01$

Harassment sexual abuse had the most explanatory power for Secure and for Fearful attachment. In contrast, the contribution of Harassment to Preoccupied attachment and Dismissing attachment was much smaller.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Attachment -- Forced choice

For the forced choice attachment style question some of the categories differed a large amount from previous reports of both clinical and normative populations. In one report (Cichetti & Toth, 1995) of figures for a clinical population (women survivors of childhood incest) only 14% of the participants self-rated themselves as Secure, compared to approximately 65% in the present study. In a normative population, the same researchers found self-rated frequencies for Secure as 49%. These differences may be explained by the university population in the present study being much higher functioning than the clinical population cited. The same argument could be made for the current study's sample also functioning at a higher level than a sample of a normative population.

Cichetti and Toth (1995), in the study cited above also stated that the clinical population reported a frequency of 49% for the Fearful category, much more than the 19% reported for the present study. This may also be explained by the notion that it requires a high level of functioning to cope with the demands of university.

Cichetti and Toth (1995) also reported that the frequency for the Fearful group of the normative sample was 21%. This is more than the present study which found 17% endorsing the Fearful category. This may be the result of some self-report bias.

The Preoccupied group frequencies were similar for the clinical (13%) and normative (12%) frequencies in the study cited above (Cichetti & Toth, 1995). As well, the Dismissing group frequencies for the clinical and normative samples were reported as 16% and 12% respectively. In contrast, the present study reported less

endorsement of these categories (9% Preoccupied and 10% Dismissing). These figures may also be accounted for by the idea that the current sample is a high functioning portion of the population and is less likely to endorse an insecure attachment category.

Attachment

The Secure and Fearful categories had a strong negative correlation with each other. This is an expected result with Bartholomew's model in which these two attachment styles are conceptual opposites of each other. Secure attachment represents positive views of self and other while Fearful attachment has a negative view of self and other.

Less strong, but significant negative correlations also occurred between Secure and each of the Preoccupied and Dismissing attachment classifications. This may also be explained by the Preoccupied and Dismissing attachment groups representing views of self (self is viewed negatively by Preoccupied) and other (Dismissing has a negative of other) that were each different from Secure attachment.

Fearful attachment had a moderately strong positive correlation with both the Preoccupied and Dismissing groups. This correlation is similar to, but in the opposite direction of the correlations between the Secure and both the Preoccupied and Dismissing categories. This may also represent differences in the views of self and other that are reflective of Bartholomew's model.

The Insecure category had a strong negative correlation with the Secure group. This was not unanticipated, given that the Insecure classification is a compilation of the three insecure categories, each of which correlated negatively with the Secure category. The Insecure attachment type also had a strong positive correlation with each of the Fearful, Preoccupied, and Dismissing Categories. Again

this is not surprising, given that each of these attachment styles is part of the Insecure category.

Sexual Maltreatment

It is also not unexpected that each of the sexual maltreatment categories has strong correlations with each other. As reported earlier, Chronbach's alpha for the entire SAQ was .96 to .98 (Demare, 1995;1996). Such results suggest that occurrence of one category of sexual maltreatment tends to occur with experiences of other types of sexual abuse.

Attachment Status in Relation to Abuse

The first research question asked if experiences of maltreatment are related to attachment status. The results suggest that indeed, maltreatment experiences are related to attachment status. Secure attachment with its positive view of self and other had small to moderate negative correlations with each of the abuse types. This suggests that higher scores on Secure attachment tend to occur with lower amounts of child or adolescent sexual maltreatment.

Fearful attachment also had small to moderate correlations (however in a positive direction) with the three types of sexual abuse. Fearful attachment includes negative views of self and other. These results suggest that Fearful attachment tends to be stronger when greater amounts of sexual abuse have been experienced.

The Preoccupied attachment group endorses positive views of self but negative views of other. This group had moderately small but significant correlations with each of the abuse categories. These results suggest that there may be a small tendency for higher levels of Preoccupied attachment to occur with higher levels of sexual abuse.

The Dismissing group with its positive view of self and negative view of other, had small correlations with Harassment and Noncontact. However, the correlation with Contact abuse was not statistically significant. Dismissing attachment tends to have higher scores with greater amounts of Harassment or Noncontact abuse.

The Insecure attachment category correlated moderately with all three types of abuse. This suggests that increasing amounts of Insecure attachment tend to occur with more sexual maltreatment experiences. This probably represents the fact that Insecure attachment type is comprised of the three insecure attachment groups, all of which had some correlation between attachment and abuse experiences.

Sexual Maltreatment and Most Affected Attachment Type

The second research question inquired as to which type of attachment pattern is most affected by child and adolescent sexual abuse. Generally, the strongest correlations were negative and occurred with the Secure attachment category. The strongest positive correlations were present with Fearful attachment. That the correlation of Secure with maltreatment and Fearful with maltreatment are in opposite directions appears to support Bartholomew's theory, if it can be assumed that sexual abuse contributes to the individual's increasingly negative views of self and other. With Secure attachment the negative correlation with maltreatment suggests that those who have experienced less maltreatment have better views of both self and other. This of course is reflected in higher Secure attachment scores.

The results are opposite for those with Fearful attachment. This attachment type correlates positively with maltreatment. Higher scores of maltreatment tend to occur with higher scores of Fearful attachment. This may represent more negative views of self and other, hence higher Fearful attachment scores.

Type of Abuse and Insecure Attachment

The third research question asked how much of a role does each type of sexual maltreatment have in contributing to each insecure attachment and to all three insecure attachments combined. For Fearful attachment, sexual Harassment had more effect than either Noncontact or Contact abuse alone. In fact, combining Harassment with Noncontact or Contact abuse or both Noncontact and Contact added no more to the contribution of sexual Harassment alone. This suggests that neither Noncontact nor Contact abuse contributed significantly more to the degree of Secure attachment. Contact abuse did have more contribution than Noncontact abuse, however, combining Noncontact and Contact Abuse did not contribute more than Contact alone. It appears that Noncontact abuse does not add any more predictability to Secure attachment than that of Contact alone.

Preoccupied attachment status had similar contributions from each of the independent variables alone. As well, combining any two or all three independent variables did not increase their contributions to a large degree. This suggests that each type of sexual abuse had similar explanatory powers toward the degree of Preoccupied attachment.

For Insecure attachment, Harassment again gave the largest amount of contribution. Combining Harassment with each of the other independent variables or both of these variables served to keep the contribution at the same degree as that for Harassment alone. This suggests that neither Noncontact nor Contact abuse contributed significantly more to the Insecure attachment category.

Harassment had the greatest effect on attachment status in general. Could harassment really have a greater impact on attachment than Noncontact or Contact abuse? The results suggest that even what could be viewed as 'mild' or noninvasive

sexual maltreatment can have deleterious effects on attachment status. It may be important not to lose sight of the fact that 'even just' sexual Harassment may negatively affect how one regards others and how one regards themselves. This can have implications for counsellors working with children or adults who have attachment issues or who in the past have experienced Harassment sexual maltreatment as children or adolescents.

Another explanation may be that the results are related to the strength that each of the Harassment, Noncontact, or Contact sexual abuse items may have in contributing to attachment status. If Noncontact or other items were weighted to reflect different contributory amounts the analyses may have had different results. For example, if any or all of the Noncontact items carried more influence and were weighted to reflect this difference, then Noncontact may have been found to have more contribution than Harassment to the Fearful attachment category.

Limitations

There are a number of factors limiting this study. The design has been limited by ethical considerations and resources. It uses a convenience sample, has no randomization, and is not experimental in nature. Participants' recall of past events may be incomplete or distorted with the passage of time or life events. As well, retrospective studies preclude drawing conclusions about causation. There is no control for other past events that may have contributed to attachment status such as other types of childhood or adolescent abuse, parental death or separation, other significant losses, parental warmth, and home environment. The generalizability of these results are limited. A university student sample is high-functioning and people who have been affected to a greater degree by experiences of sexual abuse may be

selected out by their inability to function at the level required to attend university. The generalizability will be restricted to a similar population of students.

Conclusions

This study looked at retrospective recall of childhood or adolescent sexual maltreatment and current reports of adult attachment status. The sample was taken from a university student population of undergrad and graduate students in the Faculties of Education and Nursing at the University of Manitoba. The frequencies of attachment type differed from previous work examining clinical and normative populations. Participants in the present study endorsed the Secure category more often than those seen in a clinical and a normative population. Generally, the Insecure categories were chosen less frequently than in a clinical or a normative population. Reasons for these findings were thought to be the higher degree of functioning required in a university student population or some self-report bias.

The Secure attachment type had significant negative correlations with each of the Insecure groups. In contrast, there were positive correlations between each pair of the Insecure categories, except for the Preoccupied and Dismissing pair which are conceptual opposites.

Not surprisingly, each of the sexual maltreatment categories had strong positive correlations with each other. This probably represents the tendency to co-experience different types of sexual abuse.

The results suggest sexual maltreatment as a child or adolescent is related to adult attachment. Secure and Fearful attachment categories appear to be affected more by maltreatment than do the Dismissing and Preoccupied categories. Secure attachment correlated negatively with sexual abuse and the Fearful group showed the strongest positive correlation with abuse. The results suggest that view of self and

view of other may be affected by experiences of sexual maltreatment with more abuse being related to negative views of self and other (Fearful Attachment) and lesser maltreatment coinciding with more positive views of self and other (Secure attachment). Those who have shown higher levels of Secure attachment have experienced lower levels of sexual abuse. Conversely, the results suggest higher levels of Fearful attachment indicate those who are more likely to have experienced greater amounts of sexual abuse in the past.

Harassment sexual abuse appears to have the greatest role in contributing to Secure, Fearful, and Insecure (comprised of Fearful, Preoccupied, and Dismissing results combined) attachment groups. Adding either Contact or Noncontact abuse or both to Harassment had little or no effect on the amount of contribution to the attachment type. It appears that even what may seem 'mild' sexual maltreatment can impact on attachment style. This has implications for counsellors working with people who have experienced Harassment sexual abuse. Alternatively, the findings may reflect a disparity in strength of each type of sexual maltreatment and if items were weighted to match their actual strength then the findings may have been different.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further study are that a larger sample would have made it possible to include measures of other independent variables. For example, measures of resilience factors or negative life experiences could be added. There are a number of factors which may contribute to resiliency. These include having received counselling, the perpetrator having taken responsibility for the abuse, and for females, having a positive relationship with their mother. There are also several negative life experiences which can contribute to the likelihood of having an insecure

attachment. These include having experienced other types of abuse, parental warmth, and experience of loss such as death of a parent or other close family member. Including measures to assess resilience factors and negative life experiences would allow those factors to be accounted for and could provide a clearer picture of the contribution of sexual maltreatment to attachment status.

Some researchers have examined attachment as a mediating factor for child abuse effects. It would be useful to be able to construct a prospective study which would permit greater understanding of the causative and possible mediating pathways involved with attachment status and childhood or adolescent sexual abuse occurrence. It is recognized that there would be huge resource and ethical issues to be addressed before such a big undertaking could be contemplated.

The present study did not consider differences or influences in relation to gender or age. Another avenue of study could examine the relationship between attachment, child or adolescent sexual maltreatment, gender, and age. Marcy (1998) found that for men, experiences of child sexual abuse were not related to attachment security. She suggested this may reflect a later maturation for men. It would be helpful to replicate this study and to expand it further. Does correlation of child sexual maltreatment with attachment security occur later for men? How much later? Why?

Another approach would be to create a study similar to the present one but including some qualitative components comparing secure and insecure participants and comparing those who have experienced child or adolescent abuse with those who haven't. A general topic could look at ways in which child sexual maltreatment has affected the participant. Does the experience of childhood sexual abuse interfere with coping today? How? How has having experienced sexual maltreatment impacted how

you get along with others? Is it easy or hard to be in a relationship? What does that look like? Why is it easy or hard?

Another qualitative focus could be to look at how people endorsing different attachment categories perceive positive and negative factors in their lives. How does this perception differ between people who have experienced sexual abuse and those who haven't had this experience? Some specific questions could include the following: What do you have for resources in your life? What internal strengths do you have? How have they helped you? What internal weaknesses do you have? How have they hindered you? What else do you have in your life that is helpful? What do you have in your life that is harmful? How have these affected you? What other positive or negative experiences have you had? How have these experiences helped or hindered you?

Recommendations also include those made to counsellors. Attachment is an important concept in clients' relationships with others in their lives. Being aware of clients' attachment issues as well as addressing how earlier attachment experiences could impact on present experiences may be crucial to positive counselling outcomes. As well, especially in long-term therapy, the client-counsellor relationship can have therapeutic properties. Clients who have previously experienced primarily insecure attachment may derive benefit from being in a relationship with the counsellor that reflects a secure style of attachment.

Attention to use of language is also very important in clinical work with people who have experienced childhood or adolescent sexual maltreatment. This point is particularly noteworthy given the present results suggesting that harassment abuse can contribute significantly to insecure attachment types. This type of abuse

includes sexual comments about the victim as well as sexual talk. It is essential that counsellors be sensitive to use of language in their counselling practice.

The present study looked at adult attachment and child and adolescent sexual maltreatment. Recommendations include using a randomized, normative sample, and including other types of measurements that reflect resilience factors and negative life experiences. A large prospective study could also make more of an argument for causative and mediating factors. It may be enlightening to consider gender and age contributions to attachment security in the face of child or adolescent sexual maltreatment. As well, a qualitative approach may be helpful to explore questions such as what effect child sexual abuse has had and perception of positive and negative life factors and how these relate to attachment security and sexual maltreatment experiences. Recommendations to counsellors include the importance of paying attention to attachment experiences and issues as well as the client-counsellor relationship. Counsellors must also be aware of language use in their practice.

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