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- ✓ Guessing the Number of Unreported Sex Crimes Is Not Science.
- ✓ Why the AI Black Box Doesn't Know Why It Condemns You; It Just Does.
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- ✓ Static-99 Timeline Tells the Tale
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- ✓ Guessing the Number of Unreported Crimes Is Just Guessing.
- ✓ Should the Confrontation Right Bar Testimony of Earlier Unconvicted Crimes by Experts as Hearsay Witnesses When a Judicial Finding of Thym Will Result in Lifetime Confinement?
- ✓ Categorical Internet Bans as Deprivation of Sight, Hearing & Amputation of Tongue and Fingers.

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Yet Another Political Assassination — This One Showing That No Person or Party Is Immune from Murderous Violence.

Eric Tucker, Allanna Durking Richer, Jesse Be-dayn & Hannah Schoenbaum, "FBI Photos Show Person of Interest in Kirk Killing," *Minnesota Star Tribune*, Fri., Sept. 12, 2025, pp. 1, 10.

Orem, Utah — "The shooter who assassinated conservative activist Charlie Kirk and then vanished off a roof and into the woods remained at large more than 24 hours later Thursday as federal investigators appealed for the public's help by releasing photos of the person they believed is responsible.

Investigators obtained clues, including a palm print, a shoe impression, and a high powered hunting rifle found in a wooded area along the path the shooter fled.... "[T]hey were treating [the shooting] as the latest act of political violence to convulse the United States across the ideological spectrum.

...The attack, carried out in broad daylight as Kirk spoke about social issues from a university courtyard, was captured on grisly videos that spread on social media.

The videos show Kirk, a close ally of Donald Trump who played an influential role in rallying young Republican voters, speaking into a handheld microphone when suddenly a shot rang out. Kirk can be seen reaching up with his right hand as blood gushes from the left side of his neck. Stunned spectators gasped and screamed before people started running away.

The shooter ...fired a single shot from the rooftop where [he was] perched before jumping off. 'I can tell you this was a targeted event,' said Rob-

ert Bohls, the top FBI agent in Salt Lake City. ... The university issued a statement last week citing First Amendment rights and affirming its 'commitment to free speech, intellectual inquiry, and constructive dialogue.'

Immediately before the shooting, he was taking questions from the audience about gun violence when the shot was heard....."

Editor's Comments: The alleged assailant has now been jailed and awaits judicial proceedings. The irony that Mr. Kirk was just starting to address the epidemic of gun violence in this country when he was gunned down should not be lost on anyone.

Nor should it escape note that Mr. Kirk was reportedly a strong supporter of President Trump. From this the lesson that must be drawn is that no political party or political advocate is immune from such murder aimed at silencing political views.

Such violence strikes at the very heart of American democracy, which depends on full and open discourse on all subjects of public concern in order to continue functioning. This is no time to give up on democracy.

To the contrary, it is time to take steps without delay to prevent such murderous actions intended to stifle debate and to cause all to cower in fear, when everyone must stand with courage and unshakable conviction in the unparalleled importance of speaking and listening to all sides about all matters of importance to the American public.

In the next two national elections (midterm and presidential), the electorate of the country from coast to coast will be called upon to decide questions of paramount history-making significance. Some may ask us all to endorse certain decisions that may be irrevocable.

Such decisions cannot be made without extremely close scrutiny and analysis. This is no time to leave the political decision-making to others, Mr. and Ms. Voters. Your futures and the future of all of us will turn on the collective response by all at the ballot box.

Let no one take this flippantly, or we all will suffer as a result. We must all take the right — indeed the obligation to vote with the deepest gravity — especially right now. But in order to be sufficiently informed to vote wisely, each citizen must pay close attention to the arguments advanced on every side of every issue, and be prepared to ask the crucial questions of each candidate and advocate to be able to weigh the comparative merit of their positions and the future governmental actions they advocate.

None of this is possible if candidates and advocates can be murdered by anyone with a gun. This campaign of violence to silence political opponents must cease, and we — the American public — must demand that all reasonable actions be taken to make such prevention effective. Let us all start governing ourselves accordingly — starting right now!

Candidates & Officials Aren't the Only Ones Targeted.

Public Offender Registries Are Hit Lists for Murderers.

"Timothy", "INSIDERS: Readily Available Hit Lists," 18(4) *the NARSOL Digest* p. 7 (Aug/Sep 2025).

Text: "...Violence is never the answer and will only dilute the legitimacy of one's grievance or cause. ...In a few states, there have been times when citizens have created a website which made readily available public information about various government officials. This information included their home address, phone number, and vehicle registration. Needless to say, these government officials were outraged that what they felt should be private was being published to the public at large. Lawsuits were filed demanding that these types of websites be taken down. However, most courts have ruled that the websites can remain, citing First Amendment protections and that the information gathered was from legal and public sources. But in this

hyper-polarized political age, such postings have become very dangerous, and we have seen all sorts of violence towards government officials on both sides of the aisle.

- <https://tinyurl.com/y5dbamuc>
- <https://tinyurl.com/47tyvvn2>

Jesse Grover was shot dead outside his Pennsylvania apartment on November 17, 2924, by Portez Smith. Gary Blanton was shot dead in 2012 by Patrick Drum in the state of Washington. Then Patrick Drum killed Jerry Ray. Mr. Drum was on his way to kill a third person before the police caught up to him. Charles Parker and his wife were slaughtered in their South Carolina home by Jeremy and Christine Moody. The Moodys were on their way to kill their next victims when they were stopped by police.

- <https://tinyurl.com/bdeskvuf>
- <https://tinyurl.com/4hz9krc>
- <https://tinyurl.com/3k77ryyr>

What do these murders have in common? The killers used the sex offender registry, where public information is made readily available, to choose their targets. It seems that as soon as



the sex offender registries were created, those on it and their families were becoming targeted for harassment, graffiti, assaults, arson, SWAT-ing, false accusations, and assassinations....

While much of this hysteria is fueled by television, social media has also played its role. Prime-time police dramas always sensationalize sex offenders as monsters who can't help themselves and are lurking behind some bush in every park. Though it makes for great television, it's rarely based on reality.

When the news makes a real sex offense into a spectacular headline, they whip the local community into a frenzy. Everybody grabs their digital torches and pitchforks while forming a social media mob that demands their government leaders do something now. Politicians use this outcry and buy votes to stay in power through the creation of tougher laws and the sex offender registries. Sadly, some see this as a 'green light' to persecute or even kill those on the registry.

Don't we need to stop and ask if all of this is

justified? Proponents of the sex offender registry argue that their neighborhoods will be safer by knowing where they live. But this has several fatal flaws. For one, approximately 95% of sexual offenses are committed by those not on the registry since they had no prior convictions. ...Also, 90% or more of sexual offenses are committed by someone the victims know and trust.

<https://tinyurl.com/58f336ae>
<https://tinyurl.com/bdedb9m5>
<https://tinyurl.com/5zmqwa8b3>

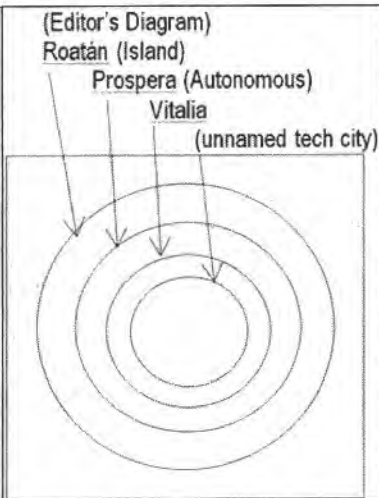
The reality of this is that the sex offender registry is ineffective at every level and does not make our neighborhoods safer. However, the registry succeeds in getting in the way of rehabilitation and reintegration with society; what it does is destroy opportunities, often keeping families with registrants in poverty and putting them at risk. In short, the sex offender registry is nothing more than a government-sanctioned, readily available hit list that targets those who already have paid their debts to society – and as such, should be abolished!"

CYBER- SECESSIONISTS - Islands of Freedom -- or of Fascist Dictatorship?

[Eds.], Kiera Butler, "Technofascist Takeover: Cyber Secessionists" 50(4) *Mother Jones* 16-21, 56 (July/August 2025).

Text Excerpts: [p. 18:] "Early last year, a group of entrepreneurs and tech enthusiasts from around the world gathered inside a newly built dome on the Honduran island of Roatán to grapple with a problem: For thought leaders who want to move fast and break things, what can be done about laws that get in the way? The conference sponsored by the Salt Lake City-based Startup Societies Foundation, was being put on in Vitalia, a longevity-themed 'pop city' that caters to American medical tourists side-stepping cumbersome FDA regulations. Its motto: 'We're here to make death optional.' Vitalia was in turn located in Próspera, a semiautonomous city on Roatán. Imagine a nesting doll, a city within a city within a city – all on a Caribbean isle.

Próspera, the project of entrepreneurs funded by venture capital firms backed by PayPal founder Peter Thiel and venture capital mogul Marc Andreessen, was established in 2017 and continues today, despite repeated efforts from Honduras to shut it down. An example of a 'special economic zone,' Próspera, is an autonomous jurisdiction with limited regulations. The general idea has been around for years – Mother Jones wrote about a failed Thiel-backed effort to build floating cities at sea back in 2012, for example. But in recent years, Silicon Valley founders, as they like to call themselves, reworked the concept into the 'network state,' as coined by entrepreneur and investor Balaji Srinivasan, a close friend of Thiel's and a former colleague of



Andreessen's. As journalist Gil Duran observed in a *New Republic* piece on Srinivasan last year, 'Balaji's politics have become even more stridently authoritarian and extremist, yet he remains a celebrated figure in key circles,' including multiple Signal chats that, Semafor reported in April, helped radicalize the Silicon Valley elite.

In a 2021 essay on his website, Srinivasan laid out his vision for people seeking to build a new utopia or, as he put it, 'a fresh start.' Sure, there were conventional ways to do this -- forming a new country through revolution or war. But that would be, well, really hard, not to mention unpredictable.... Far simpler and more practical was 'tech Zionism,' creating an online nation, complete with its own culture, economy, tax structure, and of course, startup-friendly laws.

Eventually, Srinivasan mused, such a community could acquire actual physical property where people would gather and live under the laws dreamed up by the founders – a 'reverse diaspora,' he called it – but that land didn't even need to be contiguous. 'A community that forms first on the internet, builds a culture online,' he said, 'and only then comes together in person to build dwellings and structures.' [H]e wrote, '[W]e can build a 1-10 million person social network with a genuine sense of national consciousness, an integrated cryptocurrency, and a plan to crowdfund many pieces of territory around the world.'

A network state would, like a kind of Pac-Man, gobble up little pieces of actual land, eventually amassing so much economic power that other nations would be forced to recognize it. Once that happens, laws in more conventional nations could become almost irrelevant. Why on earth would, say a pharmaceutical company with a new drug choose to spend billions of dollars and decades of mandated testing when it could go to a deregulated network state and take it to market in record time? As Sreenivasan argued in a Zoom talk at last year's conference, 'Just like it was easier to start bitcoin and then to reform the Fed,' he said, it is literally easier to start a new country than to reform the FDA.

Sreenivasan's post and a follow-up 2022 book, *The Network State: How to Start a New Country*, quickly gained a robust following: the week it published, it was No. 4 on the Wall Street Journal nonfiction best-

seller list. In 2023, Ali Breland wrote for Mother Jones about Praxis, a 'cryptocity' concept that drew tens of millions of dollars in investment from Srinivasan, Thiel, Palantir co-founder Joe Lonsdale, and other Silicon Valley heavyweights. While its promised physical city has yet to materialize, Srinivasan has produced two annual Network State conferences, as well as the Network School, a training program for aspiring nation founders located on an undisclosed island near Singapore.

Srinivasan isn't alone in envisioning these utopias. New projects with ideas similar to the network state are popping up all over the world. Srinivasan's friend Andreessen is a key backer of California Forever, an effort by a group of tech billionaires to turn part of the San Francisco Bay Area wine country into a new city with a 'dedicated Industry & Technology Zone.'

[p. 19:] ...Crecimiento wants to make Argentina the 'world's first crypto nation.' Saudi Arabia is in the process of creating an \$8.8 trillion special economic zone, flattening Indigenous villages in the process....

[p. 20:] ...I have written about the TheoBros, a group of mostly millennial and Gen Z ultraconservative men, many of whom proudly call themselves Christian nationalists. The TheoBros' beliefs are extreme....

[pp. 20-21:] Their highly networked movement communicates via podcasts and YouTube shows, on X, and at a seemingly never-ending series of conferences. Some are also in the process of acquiring physical space for their fellow believers. New Founding, an investment and real estate firm helmed by TheoBros Josh Abboty and Nate Fischer, says its goal is 'to shape institutions with Christian norms and orient them toward a Christian vision of life, of society, and of the good'...

New Founding is buying up land in rural Tennessee and Kentucky, where, according to its website, it aims to build conservative Christian neighborhoods 'conducive to a natural, human and uniquely American way of life.' The communities will be designed around cryptocurrency and 'digital self-governance,' all to promote a culture 'in which our patrimonial civic rights,' chiefly those of property, free political speech and civilian armament, can be maintained and perpetuated,' the project website says. The ultimate goal? 'To be connected to broader economic vitality, and to project cultural and political power'...

[p. 21:] Abboty says the network state concept doesn't fully capture New Founding's vision. He prefers the term 'charter communities,' which he describes as places 'chartered around particularized lifestyles or affinities. ...New Founding, he says offers 'a platform on which many localists can build their more particularized projects.'..."

Editor's Comment: Here we have the age – old notion of utopia – a modern version of two kinds of separatism that could claim their roots reach back to the utopianism practiced in the latter half of the 19th century in central and northern New York.

In that earlier experiment, the attractions included free love and the liberty of freed philosophical inquiry and social experimen-

talism and avoidance of social scrutiny and criticism from outsiders who disapproved.

In the case of Próspera, the allure of life extension for patrons and of enterprise freed to make very large profits for its owners unrestrained by government regulation are the claimed reciprocal benefits. Of course, the reality of benefit to patrons, some of whom are in desperation seeking to stave off life-ending illnesses such as teminal cancer may be more illuisory than real. (The sad experience comes to mind of Steve McQueen seeking out the drug 'laetрил' as a claimed palliative from the lung cancer that relentlessly took his life regardless.)

And then there are separatists such as the TheoBros, who, despite wrapping themselves in a claimed mantle of Christianity, are really much more about hate of those seen as unlike them and whose "nationalism," if allowed to exist in the pockets they seek to found in many places within this very country, would soon be revealed as more akin to the "nationalism" of the German *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) ultimately better known by its eventual acronym: the NAZIs.

The hard fact is that not all claimed halcyons ultimately turn out to be what they claim to be. Some were secretly intended from the start to be something altogether different from that propagandistic claim. Anyone who doubts this should brush up on the NAZI concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*, and the Enabling Act that allowed Hitler to ignore the German constitution. It certainly appears that an aim to achieve such exemption from all US law is part of what TheoBros have in mind. Strong hatred often includes denial even of the right to survival for the targets of the hatred, as Jews and Gypsies found out at the hands of Nazis. Once such atrocities are allowed in such self-declared enclaves for racists/ethnists, it isn't hard to imagine them spreading throughout the infected country. — Oh, would that be the USA this time? Cancer isn't just a biological disease.

And for those born and raised in the USA, but who now believe that the best strategy is to expatriate to some friendlier country, I recommend serious study of the book *Getting Out* for unexpected revelations of the difficulties of achieving citizenship in other countries and even of effectively cutting ties with the government of this country.

More recently than could have been addressed by that earlier book, the cumulative persecutions inflicted by the national sex-offender registry law (SORNA) make this especially hard for anyone covered by that legislative atrocity.

And then there is the irritating reality of surmounting whatever fundamental facts that make it very hard for native citizens of the receiving country to make an acceptable living. (Hint: bring lots of cash to finance whatever business you have in mind.)

**B4QR Review –
Stigma-Related Stress
– Including
Disclosure, Mental
Health & Loneliness**

B4QR Review: *Elchuk, D.L., McPhail, I.V., & Oliver, M.E.*, "Stigma-Related Stress, Complex Correlates of Disclosure, Mental Health, and Loneliness in Minor-Attracted People," (*Stigma and Health*, Advance online publication [2021]), 1(3) *B4U-ACT Quarterly Review* 9-11 (Summer 2021).
Review Excerpts: [p. 9:] "...The authors have identified three stigma-related stressors, based on previous research on the stigma against various other communities: 1) degree of outness to others, 2) perceived social support by family and friends, and 3) internalized stigma, which for their purposes, is called internalized pedonegativity. With these stressors having assumed the role of independent variables, the authors explore their (direct or mediated) effects on 'mental health outcomes' (i.e., the dependent variables). The mental health outcomes identified were psychological distress and suicidality. A key concept here is that of loneliness, which the authors hypothesized to mediate (i.e., to help explain) the relation between the above-mentioned independent and dependent variables...."

[pp. 9-10:] The results showed that higher levels of perceived social support are associated with less psychological distress and suicidality, highlighting the importance of a strong social network for MAPs. Loneliness played a significant role here, partially mediating the relationship between perceived social support from friends, while fully mediating that of support from family and mental health outcomes, suggesting that family can play a crucial protective role in affecting the levels of loneliness experienced by MAPs. Internalized pedonegativity was also associated with higher levels of psychological distress and suicidality; loneliness only partially explained this relationship, indicating that internalized stigma should be a pivotal focal point for clinicians dealing with MAPs in and of itself. The data analysis also revealed very interesting findings in relation to the third stressor (level of outness). Disclosure itself was not sufficient to improve MAPs' well-being; rather, it was the consequences of such disclosure, thus its quality, that mattered. As such, 'concealment may be a more functional strategy than a disclosure that has negative consequences' (pp. 21-22). It is also worth mentioning that 64.4% of participants had disclosed their attraction to someone in their lives (with mothers and close family members and friends being those to whom the disclosure was more likely to be made), but, in the majority of cases, the attraction was rarely discussed.

...[T]he authors also touch upon the problematic issue of mandated reporting by clinicians and stress the importance of educating professionals. ...[D]espite ...the severe stigma and the loneliness experienced by MAPs (which is greater than the

loneliness experienced by persons convicted of sexual offenses), the authors take care to also highlight the resilience of this group...."

YouTube Commenting on Pedophiles

B4QR Review: *Nematy, Z. et al.*, "YouTube Commentators' Discourse of Pedophilia: A Qualitative Social Media Analysis", (*Sexuality & Culture*, 2023; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-023-10117-8>); reviewed at B4QR: 3(4) *B4U-Act Quarterly Review* 5-10 (Autumn 2023).

Review Excerpt: [p. 5:] "Nematy et al.'s (2023) article is a qualitative examination of public perceptions towards minor-attracted people, conducted by analyzing public comments on YouTube videos provided by credentialed experts on the topic of attraction to minors. The authors generated several themes ranging from outright hate to compassionate support for minor-attracted people.

The introduction provides an overview of the important distinction between attraction to minors and child sexual abuse. The authors highlight two main factors that have historically contributed to their conflation: sampling bias within research as well as media portrayal of the topic. ...[T]he authors mention that within the media, terms such as 'pedophilia' and 'child sexual abuse' are constantly used interchangeably. ...The authors ...describe their own approach and goal, which is to examine public perceptions of minor-attracted people by attending to public comments posted in the comments section of YouTube videos of scholars/practitioners in the fields of pedophilia and/or sexual offending.

The YouTube videos selected by Nematy et al. ranged from 5 to 28 minutes and were all produced for a general audience. All videos involved an expert presentation of the topic, and one of the videos included a first-person perspective of a minor-attracted person along with the expert opinion. Another video included a short narrative written by a minor-attracted person, but the narrative was read by the expert in the video.

A total of seven videos were selected for analysis. The top 100 comments from these seven videos were analyzed; all comments were included in videos containing less than 100 comments. For videos with more than 100 comments, additional comments were included until the authors believed they had 'reached saturation,' which they define 'as a point when nothing new appears in the data.' This data collection strategy resulted in a total of 1234 comments for analysis. The authors present a total of four key themes that emerged for their analysis of these comments: 'Haters,' 'Critics,' 'Fence-sitters,' and 'Supporters.' Among these, eight sub-themes (described below) were also identified, two for each key theme.

[p. 6:] The first of the key themes, 'Haters,' highlighted variations of hate and anger

towards minor-attracted people within two subthemes, 'Violent haters' and 'Sophisticated haters.'

The 'Violent haters' subtheme consisted of comments containing violent, explicit, and graphic content towards minor-attracted people, negating sympathy and help while often denying the existence of MAPs who do not commit sex crimes.

The other subtheme, 'Sophisticated haters,' consisted of commentators harboring hate but attempting to justify or rationalize these attitudes. The authors note that the comments in this category 'typically suffered from misinformation, implausible comparisons, or incorrect premises,' giving as an example a commentator who argued that attraction to children is a choice by claiming that it is 'an acquired taste, just like doing drugs.'

Although not equally violent, both 'Violent haters' and 'Sophisticated haters' expressed punitive attitudes, with the less-violent haters tending to 'demand incapacitation such as long-term incarceration or civil confinement as strategies to control' all minor-attracted people.

The second key theme, 'Critics,' was divided into two subthemes, with the first being 'Victim erasure.' This subtheme is mainly characterized by a concern that victims of child sexual abuse would be erased if general public attitudes shifted to a more factual and understanding approach to attraction to minors. Comments in this category tended to present a false dichotomy between the goals of abuse prevention and destigmatization of attraction to minors, claiming, for instance, 'Instead of caring about victims, these scientists are part of the problem!'

The second subtheme, 'Not a sexual orientation,' contained comments disagreeing or attempting to correct the experts by stating that attraction to minors is not an orientation, and that conceptualizing it as such has harmful consequences. Arguments to that end could take different forms, but one example given by the authors is: 'Pedophilia is related to age, not gender; therefore, it cannot be a sexual orientation.'

The third key theme, 'Fence-sitters,' was also separated into two subthemes. The first, 'Ambivalent,' contained comments that included avoidance or hesitation surrounding the topic. A typical ambivalent commentator described the video they had just seen as 'really uncomfortable yet informative.'

[p. 7:] The second subtheme, 'Dispassionate arguers,' contained comments that refrained from expressing a concrete stance on the topic, yet frequently engaged other commentators in discussion. For instance, one such commentator mentioned: 'I have a cornerstone belief that most desires that are within us are or had been functional to survive. But the attraction to a kid seems like an enigma.'

The final key theme of the study, 'Support,' consisted of the subthemes 'Implicit confirmers' and 'Compassionate support.'

Comments of the first type provided indirect endorsement of the information provided by the expert, such as: 'If we could

be persecuted for our thoughts, we'd all be in trouble.' In contrast, comments included in the 'Compassionate support' subtheme directly supported the information and sympathy towards minor-attracted people. These were people who presented themselves as MAP allies, with varying words of encouragement, such as:

'My thoughts are with those non-offending teenagers and adults out there. I have massive respect for you. Fight the good fight, guys.'

'I hope this video helps many adults and children with this condition to understand that they are not alone and that we care about them. Never give up.'

'They spend their whole lives repressing their most fundamental desires, something the rest of us don't have to do, because they know not doing so would cause harm to others. I think it's incredibly brave of them.'

[p. 8:] The main strength of this article is the great care and respect with which the authors address its controversial topic. There is a clear concern to avoid stigmatizing language and to even denounce some of the unfounded generalizations about the MAP community found in the analyzed comments. The only terminological choice that can be questioned is the use of the expression 'people with pedophilia' (PWP) throughout this paper. By using the term, the authors most likely meant to emphasize the fact that 'pedophilia' is a *feature* or *characteristic* of an individual rather than an act; however, this expression has pathological undertones – we say 'people with depression' or 'people with cancer', but never 'people with homosexuality' – which is probably why it is the label least endorsed by MAPs, as revealed in Jahnke et al. (2022).^{2"}

Notes:

1. The authors mention the existence of at least four models of saturation, and they cite Saunders et al. (2018), but they do not further clarify their selection procedure beyond their remarks about 'nothing new' appearing in the data.

2. Reviewed in B4QR 3(1).

References:

Janhnke, S. et al. (2022), "Pedophile, Child Lover, of Minor-Attracted Person? Attitudes Toward Labels Among People Who Are Sexually Attracted to Children," 51(8) *Archives of Sexual Behavior*
Saunders, B. et al. (2018), "Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization," 52(4) *Quality and Quantity*.

**SOCC Program
Names Should
Reduce Stigma**

The Dobbs Wire. Jan 7, 2025 , Info@thedobbswire.com.

Names with More Stigma (8)

California

**Sex Offender Commitment Program (SOCP)
Iowa**

(Continued on page 4)

Civil Commitment Unit for Sex Offenders (CCUSO)
 Kansas
 Sexual Predator Treatment Program (SPTP)
 Minnesota
 Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP)
 Missouri
 Sex Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment Services (SRTS)
 North Dakota
 Sex Offender Treatment and Evaluation Program (SOTEP)
 South Carolina
 Sexually Violent Predator Treatment Program (SVPTP)
 Nebraska
 Nebraska Sex Offender Treatment Program Names with **Less Stigma (13)**
 Arizona
 Arizona Community Protection and Treatment Center (ACPTC)
 Federal Government (FBOP)
 Commitment And Treatment Program (CTP)
 Florida
 Florida Civil Commitment Center (FCCC)
 Illinois
 Treatment and Detention Program
 Massachusetts
 Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC)
 New Hampshire
 Secure Psychiatric Unit (SPU)
 New Jersey
 Special Treatment Unit (STU)
 New York
 Secure Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (STARC)
 Pennsylvania
 Sexual Responsibility and Treatment Program (SRTP)
 Texas
 Texas Civil Commitment Center (TCCC)
 Virginia
 Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation (VCBR)
 Washington State
 Special Commitment Center (SCC)
 Wisconsin
 Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center (SRSTC)

- Actually, saying that is harmful to the LGBTQ (or other) community.
 - Do you know what it's like to be gay (or some other minority)?
 - You should be careful about your language, you never know who you are speaking to.
 - That's just hurtful.
- ...And if none of those work:
- This isn't the first time you have said this, and I want to be clear that it isn't okay with me or in my home."
- *****

Predictive Limitations of Psychiatric and Psychological Evidence

Daniel W. Shuman, "§ 7:6. Validity of psychiatric and psychological theory – Chapter 7. General Requirements for the Presentation of Expert Psychiatric and Psychological Evidence, Nov. 2024 Update (Westlaw, Thomson Reuters, 2025).

"...Fueled by disclaimers of the professions themselves,⁵ broad-based psychiatric and psychological expertise in predicting future violent behavior has been questioned.⁶ The results of two generations of research are cause for ambivalence....

The techniques for prediction of future dangerous behavior are generally categorized as the clinical and actuarial methods.⁸ The clinical method of prediction, the one most commonly encountered in judicial proceedings, is an assessment based on a clinical examination of the patient, a history, psychological testing, and a variety of other soft variables. At the conclusion of the process, the clinician arrives at an impression of the likelihood of the patient engaging in a particular behavior in the future. The majority of studies that have focused critically on predictions of dangerous behavior have examined clinical predictions. These studies have, with limited exception, revealed large false positives, people erroneously identified as dangerous.⁹

The other principal method of prediction is actuarial. This method of prediction involves the application of statistics to prediction by assigning statistical probabilities to those variables that have been found to correlate with violent behavior and results in a numerical probability. Because crimes of violence are committed with greater frequency by males, for example, a patient who is male would be assigned a comparatively higher probability of engaging in dangerous behavior than a female. Other variables, including race, age, IQ, prior arrests, use of alcohol or drugs, and marital status are also considered in this type of prediction.¹⁰ Studies of actuarial predictions reveal no greater accuracy than clinical predictions;¹¹ moreover, their aggregate quality fails to account for the possibility of individual choice.¹²

...[B]ecause psychiatric and psychological education has not traditionally offered courses or training in prediction of future

behavior,¹⁶ the particular education, training, and experience of the purported expert witness should be examined to ascertain any basis for expertise. Any claim to expertise based upon experience should be examined to determine whether it provides a scientific basis for expertise. For example, the fact that a psychiatrist has made numerous predictions is not significant without a showing that systematic follow-up studies verified the accuracy of the earlier predictions or provided feedback on errors to improve future predictions.¹⁷ ...[I]f any predictions of future dangerousness are valid, they are short-term rather than long-term predictions.¹⁹ ...[T]he familiarity of the witness with the literature on prediction and the comprehensiveness of the information providing the basis for the witness's opinion are important areas of inquiry.²¹ ...[G]iven the absence of highly accurate predictions, some have proposed that psychiatrists and psychologists not offer conclusions about future violence but instead inform the judge or jury about group risk factors of the groups to which the individual belongs.²²"

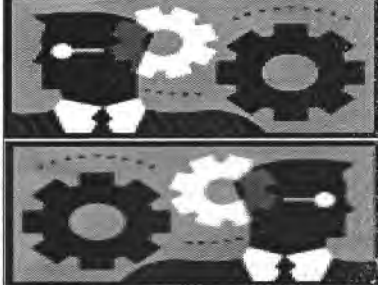
Notes:

5 *American Psychiatric Assn., Clinical Aspects of the Violent Individual* (1974); "Report of the Task Force on the Role of Psychology in the Criminal Justice System," 33 *Am. Psychologist* 1099, 1110 (1978).

6 *Monahan, The Clinical Prediction of Violent Behavior* (1981). See also *Monahan, "Mental Disorder and Violent Behavior: Perception and Evidence,"* 478 *Am. Psychologist* 511 (1992); *Skaggs, "Kansas Sexual Predator Act and the Impact of Expert Predictions: Psyched Out by the Daubert Test,"* 34 *Washburn L.J.* 320 (1005); *Monahan, "A Jurisprudence of Risk Assessment: Forecasting Harm Among Prisoners, Predators, and Patients,"* 92 *Va. L. Rev.* 391 (2006). *Browne & Harrison-Spoerl, "Putting Expert Testimony in Its Epistemological Place: What Predictions of Dangerousness in Court Can Teach Us,"* 91 *Marquette L. Rev.* 1119 (2008); *Shapiro, "An Overdose of Dangerousness: How 'Future Dangerousness' Catches the Least Culpable Capital Defendants and Undermines the Rationale for the Executions It Supports,"* 35 *Am. J. of Crim. Law* 145 (2008); *Cunningham et al., "Capital Jury Decision-Making: The Limitations of Predictions of Future Violence,"* 15 *Psychol., Pub. Pol'y, & Law* 4, 223 (2009); *Skeem & Monahan, "Current Directions in Violence Risk Assessment,"* 20 *Current Dir. in Psych. Sci.* 38 (Feb. 2011).

8 *People v. McFarland*, 29 Misc.3d 1206 (a), 2010 WL 3892252 (N.Y. Sup. 2010) (discussing the differences between clinical and actuarial methods of dangerousness prediction).

9 *Otto, "On the Ability of Mental Health Professionals to 'Predict Dangerousness': A Commentary on Interpretations of the 'Dangerousness Literature,'"* 18 *Law & Psychol. Rev.* 43, 65 (1994). See *Kozol, Boucher, & Garofalo, "The Diagnosis and Treatment of Dangerousness,"* 18 *Crime & Delinq.* 371, 390 (1972) (65.3%); *Steadman, "A New Look at Recidivism Among*



Patuxent Inmates," 5 *Bull. Am. Acad. Psychiatry & L.* 200 (1977) (58.67%). *M. Neil Browne & Ronda R. Harrison-Spoerl, "Putting Expert Testimony in Its Epistemological Place: What Predictions of Dangerousness in Court Can Teach Us,"* 91 *Marq. L. Rev.* 1119 (2008).

10 *Monahan, The Clinical Prediction of Violent Behavior* 71-75 (1981). *Skeem & Cooke, Is Criminal Behavior a Central Component of Psychopathy? Conceptual Directions for Resolving the Debate,* 22 *Psych. Assess.* 433 (2010) (critiquing the applications and interpretations of the results of the Psychopathy Checklist Revised); *Martens, The Problem with Robert Hare's Psychopathy Checklist: Incorrect Conclusions, High Risk of Misuse, and Lack of Reliability,* 27 *Med. & L.* 449 (2008).

11 *Wenk, Robison, & Smith, "Can Violence Be Predicted,"* 18 *Crime & Delinq.* 393 (1972) (86% false positives).

12 In the context of the imposition of capital punishment, the United States Supreme Court has rejected the use of decision-making criteria that fail to take into account individual rather than aggregate behaviors. *Lockett v. Ohio*, 438 U.S. 586, 605, 98 S. Ct. 2954, 57 L. Ed. 2d 973 (1978) (plurality opinion of Burger, Stewart, Powell, & Stevens); *Roberts v. Louisiana*, 428 U.S. 325, 331-34, 96 S. Ct. 3001, 49 L. Ed. 2d 974 (1976) (plurality opinion of Stewart, Powell & Stevens).

16 See §§ 4:4, 4:10.

17 Even this may pose problems for individuals confined based on the prediction of future dangerousness who do not act violently in the institution because of institutional constraints (medication, guards, etc.) or because the prediction was wrong. Individuals who are released based on a prediction of nondangerousness and not subsequently institutionalized may commit acts of violence not reported to the authorities.

19 *Monahan, "The Prediction of Violent Behavior: Toward a Second Generation of Theory and Policy,"* 141 *Am. J. Psychiatry* 10, 11 (1984).

21 *Dix, "The Death Penalty, 'Dangerousness,' Psychiatric Testimony, and Professional Ethics,"* 5 *Am. J. Crim. L.* 151, 175-77 (1977).

22 *Melton, Pettila, Poythress, & Slobogin, Psychological Evaluations for the Courts: A Handbook for Mental Health Professionals and Lawyers* (2nd ed., 1997).

Responding to Insensitivity

(Ed.), *The Broadcast* newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter, 2025), p. 3.

"Time had an article suggesting eleven ways you could respond when someone insults a disabled person [or a committed former sex offender], often by repeating jokes that are just in poor taste. Many of these retorts are equally valid when someone makes jokes about gays or any kind of minority. Here are my favorites:

- Can I ask why you think that's funny?
- Yikes! Is that who you really are?
- I will assume that came from a place of ignorance.

Forensic Psychologists Denied Absolute Immunity

Karen Franklin, Ph.D., "Forensic Psychologists Denied Absolute Immunity – Does working for a government agency give a forensic psychologist license to do or say pretty much anything without legal consequence, even if it violates a subject's Constitutional rights?" <http://forensicpsychologist.blogspot.com/2023/forensic-psychologists-denied-absolute.html>.

"That is the intriguing question addressed by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in a recent decision relating to the civil rights of people behind bars.

The ruling in *Gay v. Parsons* stems from a risk assessment by two psychologists working for California's Board of Parole Hearings. Omar Sharieff Gay, a California prisoner, filed suit against the psychologists, claiming that their opinion that he was at high risk for violence was influenced by racial and religious animus.

Gay was serving an indeterminate sentence of nine years to life for the attempted murder of a police officer. His crime took place in 1989, when he was a 21-year-old member of the Crips gang. A few years after going to prison, he converted to Islam and quit the gang.

In his civil rights claim, Gay described the psychologists' 2015 interview of him as feeling like 'a military or police style interrogation. He claimed that psychologists Amy Parsons and Gregory Goldstein asked hostile questions and made prejudicial comments, including:

'Why do you hate white people and Jews?'

'With everything going on in this world, at home with [Muslims], we don't know if you are just another radical Islamic terrorist.'

When Gay took offense and asked if they would be asking those questions if he were a white Christian, Goldstein allegedly replied, 'You're a high risk for violence with that sarcastic attitude.'

Absolute Immunity?

In their defense, the psychologists argued that they were absolutely immune from liability because they performed a function that was integral to the Parole Board, whose officers are immune from liability over their decisions. They contended that objectivity would suffer if psychologists had to worry about being sued over adverse opinions.

The Ninth Circuit disagreed.

Unlike the Parole Board officers, the psychologists did not have decision-making authority. Rather, their roles were merely advisory. Furthermore, the appellate opinion noted, they had not offered any evidence that their risk-assessment work subjected them to a burdensome volume of legal complaints. 'An abstract fear of vexatious litigation is not enough to merit immunity, the court held.

Further, Judge M. Margaret McKeown observed, the psychologists' argument 'ironically puts [them] in a position of hypo-

thetically violating their professional principles and standards [that require them to] 'exercise reasonable judgment and take precautions to ensure that their potential biases, the boundaries of their competence, and the limitations of their expertise do not lead to or condone unjust practices.'

...The case of *Gay v. Parsons* isn't over yet.

Qualified immunity?

There are two relevant kinds of immunity. There is absolute immunity, aka quasi-judicial immunity. This is the kind that judges get when acting in their judicial capacities. Similarly, legislators and government prosecutors.

Then there is qualified immunity. That's the 1967 SCOTUS doctrine that has enabled police to get away with so much corrupt and violent conduct. It bestows immunity to government representatives who unlawfully violate a person's constitutional rights unless they should have known at that time that they were violating 'clearly established law' based on a prior similar case.

With the Ninth Circuit ruling that the psychologists are barred from claiming absolute immunity, the case now reverts back to a district court for a determination as to whether the psychologists can claim this qualified immunity.

The psychologists may have more luck with this. I found several judicial decisions around the country in which psychologists were granted qualified immunity. These included one in Louisiana where the psychologist was assisting the state's psychology board, as well as cases in both Louisiana and Nebraska involving clinicians working at state hospitals.

In contrast, in a previous Ninth Circuit case, *Jensen v. Lane County*, the court held that a psychiatrist who was evaluating individuals for the county to determine their eligibility for involuntary hospitalization was not entitled to qualified immunity.

So it could go either way.

Whatever the outcome of his lawsuit, Omar Gay has moved on.

After he underwent a new risk assessment by a different psychologist who deemed him at only moderate risk, the Parole Board voted in October 2021 to cut him loose. He was 53 years old at the time, and had spent 32 years behind bars."

SOCC Treatment Modes' Relative Effectiveness Evaluated — Guess Where CBT Treatment Rates?

Thanh Ly, J. Paujl Federoff, & Peer Briken, "A Narrative of Research on Clinical Responses to the Problem of Sexual Offenses in the Last Decade," 38(2) *Behav. Sci. & Law* 117-134 (March-April 2020).

Text Excerpts: [p. 118:] "[Some] researchers have also voiced concerns about treatment efficacy studies with poor study design, pointing out that analyses that include randomized control trials ["RCTs"] show no significant effect of treatment on sexual or general recidivism (Beech et al., 2015; Levenson & Prescott, 2014; Marques, Day, Nelson, & West, 1994).

...[T]his article will not delve onto research on risk-needs-responsivity models ...and good lives models....

[pp. 122-23:] 3.2 Cognitive-behavioral therapy

Cognitive-behavioral therapy is often described as an 'evidence-based treatment modality' (Jennings & Deming, 2013; Miller, 2018; Mpofu, Athanasou, Rafe, & Belshaw, 2018). However, results from one longitudinal study did not find strong support for the effectiveness of CBT on reducing sexual recidivism when compared with a volunteer control group who did not receive treatment and a control group who refused treatment (Marques, Day, Nelson, & West, 1994). Another study that evaluated the effectiveness of a CBT program across prisons in the United Kingdom also found no significant differences between treated and untreated sex offenders (Mews, Di Bella, & Purver, 2017).

...When Marques and colleagues attempted to address these issues, CBT was found to be largely ineffective in the treatment of incarcerated sex offenders.

Similarly, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP) in the United Kingdom, which utilizes the CBT approach, found no significant differences between the sexual recidivism of 2,562 treated and 13,219 untreated sex offenders. In fact, results from the evaluation showed that treated sex offenders (using CBT) were more likely to commit a new sexual offense than were untreated sex offenders (Mews et al. 2017).

4.1 Denial after conviction of a sexual offense

...[C]urrent studies show that denial does not influence whether an offender sexually reoffense and does not increase the risk of sexual recidivism (Endres & Breuer, 2014; Harkins, Howard, Barnett, Wakeling, & Miles, 2015)."

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The Finished Product?

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Sex Crime Sites Make Residence Restrictions Useless to Prevent Recidivism

Amanda Y. Agan & J.J. Prescott, "Sex Offender Law and Geography of Victimization," 11(4) *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 786-828 (Dec. 2014).

Text Excerpts: [p. 787:] "Sex offender registration and notification laws rely critically on the idea that the police and public can employ information about where RSOs reside – supposedly, the danger zones – to prevent future crimes. For decades, policymakers have contended that providing RSO residence information to the police, or publicizing the information via the Internet, will reduce overall levels of RSO recidivism. The literature on the consequences of these laws, however, suggests fairly consistently that making RSO information public fails to reduce recidivism – and may

(Continued on page 6)

in fact increase it (e.g., Agan 2011; Prescott & Rockoff 2011). One possible explanation for this pattern is that while publicly identifying sex offenders seems likely to exacerbate recidivism risk factors (e.g., unemployment, poor housing, and a paucity of stable relationships), the residence information provided to the public is not very useful to potential victims because, for a variety of reasons, sex offenders rarely offend near their own homes.

[p. 794:] Warren et al. (1998:55), for instance, identify an 'area around the important anchor point of the offender's home that contains a lower probability of rape behavior.' In their data, offenders traveled 3.14 miles to commit a crime on average; offenders with more extensive criminal histories (i.e., convicted offenders), however, tended to travel farther, perhaps because they were more wary of detection. The buffer zone, the 'space over which offending becomes more probable as distance from home increases,' was also over three miles, a range outside what most people appear to consider the typical at-risk zone, at least according to hedonic evidence from housing markets (see, e.g., Linden & Rockoff 2006:1121). Even more telling is the fact that four of the five searchable distances available on Maryland's current Internet registry would fall within (one-quarter, one-half, one, three, and five miles) this buffer zone.

...Duwe et al., citing some of this same evidence and presenting their own, contend that 'for violent offenders (including sex offenders), [the distance decay] pattern typically does not hold. Confrontational offenders – who actually encounter their victims personally – seek offending locations where they are unlikely to be recognized (and therefore apprehended)' (2008:487). In the context of their recidivist sex offender data from Minnesota, they report that:

Even when offenders established direct contact with victims, they were unlikely to do so close to where they lived ...largely because of the fact that offenders are more likely to be recognized within their own neighborhoods [citing Levenson & Cotter 2005]. [W]hen direct-contact offenders look for a victim, they may be more likely to go to an area relatively close to home (i.e., less than 20 miles) but still far enough away (i.e., greater than 1 mile) to decrease the chances of being recognized. These findings fit with previous research showing that repeat sex offenders typically offend outside their immediate neighborhoods (Duwe, 2008:500)."

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Current Conditions in SC SOCC

Todd Maschino, Letter, April 21, 2025

Text excerpts and summaries: "Let me start with our population and releases. As of 4-1-25 we have 119 residents recommended [for release] out of 238. This number is since the middle of 2022 and we have only had four released since. The delay relates to the Dept. of Mental Health (DMH) conducting their Discharge Board, which has been sporadic at best and when they do conduct them they only see three residents. The next problem is getting a court date, which our Attorney General has been manipulating like everything else. The impetus to the number of recommendations [for release] comes from the assessment calculation [of re-offense risk standard] change (i.e., [now] 51% likelihood to reoffend [to commit or retain], which [LPL] reported on in January 2024.

We have had the A.G.'s office challenge a handful of the [release] recommendations and as expected his evaluators opine opposite of DMH. So far, those who have seen the Discharge Board and get out have had paid attorneys; those with contract attorneys [supplied by the state], which is 99%, ...languish waiting for the steel ball to roll up the magnetic hill. Ever hear the story of Sisyphus? This will be an ongoing issue.

Next, Recovery Solutions (formerly Wellpath Recovery Solutions – until it went bankrupt) and its employees, or lack thereof: [First, Mr. Maschino cites that most medical providers and others now decline to contract with Recovery Solutions, since, despite the bankruptcy, is still run by the same administrators who ran Wellpath, and who have a bad reputation for "not paying their bills."]

As of this writing, we are on a skeleton crew; it has gotten so bad that in March we got put on Unit Restriction over 'Covid'. No unit had group and two of our seven units were locked behind their doors – this after our only Medical Director left (his contract ended), leaving us with an 'I ain't doing anything so I don't lose my license' Nurse Practitioner. This Covid claim came on the back of a very bad bout with pollen. I suffered miserably with it all last month (March). The real reason [for the unit restriction] was to cover up how short-staffed they were.

[Mr. Maschino reports that one incident contributing to loss of staff was a staff assault on a resident in summer 2023, resulting in criminal charges, and the loss of the

facility's security Major and Captain at about the same time. He also complains that remaining personnel and the restriction unit ("SMU") are "straight prison." He cites an example of a security guard who previously held an analogous position at the notorious Ryker's Island jail in New York. Six more staff were fired after holding a policy-violating party elsewhere for a former resident who had been released.]

Additionally, a couple of residents have had sexual relationships with staff over the last several months.

[Maschino also cites facility administrators who refuse to deal with residents about anything, insisting, "that's what staff is for", and telling complaining residents to "use your coping skills." He asserts that incompetence is the main attribute of staff, adding that all he has seen running the facility are "parrots and paranoia," constantly resorting to trite, incorrect mantras of unwarranted suspicion about resident motivations.

He also complains of inadequate medical attention to medical problems and injuries, citing the lack of an orthopedic specialist to attend to those with bone fractures. Medical attention has also been uneven from one resident to the next, with some receiving far more attention than others, who get nearly none or have to wait a very long time to be seen by nurses. He cites an example of a resident already blind in one eye who has a rapidly growing cataract in the other eye over the last two years, but who is effectively being ignored, while being told "we are working on it." Necessary off-site transports are an embarrassing experience, which a uniformed and visibly armed police officer escorts, and the resident is handcuffed and shackled and is forced to wear a bright yellow uniforms identifying having come from the confinement facility in three inch-high, black lettering on the back, with repeat identification down the side of the pant legs.]

Community Notification Meetings – Anti-therapeutic Impact on Community Members

Nili Gesser, "What You Expect Is Not What You Get: The Antitherapeutic Impact of Sex Offender Community Notification Meeting on Community Members," 27 *Psychol., Pub. Pol'y & L.* 432 (August 2021).

Abstract Excerpt: "...[R]esults indicated that people who came into the meeting with empowerment expectations ended up being concerned, regardless of meeting content and organization and amount of information they received. In other words, rather than being empowered by information control, residents experienced frustration that led to antitherapeutic outcomes from the meeting. In conclusion, this project sheds new light on the antitherapeutic consequences of notification meetings for the community and calls for reconceptualizing their purpose and

content, and/or adopting other mechanisms to handle sex offenders in the community.

Text Excerpts: [pp. 432-33:] "Although the Internet has become the most common mechanism of informing the public about sex offenders (Levenson et al., 2007), other, more resource-intensive means are still in place such as door-to-door notification and community meetings. About 20% of all states, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, New Jersey, and California, to name a few, have developed community notification meetings to alert and empower the communities when faced with a released sex offender and inform them how to prevent sexual victimization (Winick, 1998). These meetings are gatherings of residents organized by law enforcement agencies where information about the incoming sex offender and his modus operandi is disseminated to the public. Residents can ask questions at the end of the meeting, but they do not get a chance to change the basic decision about the sex offender placement in their community. Despite their intention to empower residents, the impact of these meetings on attendees, as opposed to the offender, has been little studied by therapeutic jurisprudence scholars.

[p. 433:] One area analyzed through a TJ lens quite extensively has been sex offender laws focusing mainly on the impact of these laws on the sex offender (Birgden, 2004; Cucolo & Perlin, 2012; Perlin & Cucolo, 2017; Winick, 1998, 2003). Registration and notification laws in particular have been criticized as antitherapeutic for sex offenders (Perlin & Cucolo, 2017), for clinicians who treat sex offenders and for nonsexual offenders suffering from mental illness (Winick, 1998, 2003). In fact, in discussing the impact of these laws on sex offenders' lives, Perlin and Cucolo (2017) argue that these 'policies are not simply ineffective but counterproductive, failing to add to public safety while ruining lives.' (p. 5).

[p. 434:] Notification mechanisms vary across states and sometimes even across jurisdictions. Common mechanisms include flyers, press releases, phone calls, door-to-door notification, community notification meetings, and a publicly-accessible website (Beck et al., 2004; Sample & Evans, 2009). All but four states use a three-tier system of high, medium, and low risk, in which different risk classifications of offenders determine the level and means of notification: The higher the risk, the more extensive the notification (Anderson & Sample, 2008; Blair, 2004; Harris et al., 2014; Logan, 2018; Williams, 2018). Community notification meetings are usually reserved for high-risk offenders and are practiced in about 20% of all states (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). It should be noted that in most states, as well as in federal laws, the tier system is based on the severity of the conviction rather than on a dynamic risk assessment at the time of release (Logan, 2018).

Community Notification Meetings

Sex offender community notification meetings are likely the most resource heavy notification mechanism required by law

(Continued on page 7)

intended to inform community members about the release of an incarcerated sex offender (Logan, 2009). These meetings are generally run by law enforcement agents, such as police, probation and parole, and occasionally multiple other agencies together. The meetings usually take place in the evenings at a public location such as a school or a town hall and last up to two hours. Victim advocates and often the media may be present as well. The number of attendees at each meeting can vary from a handful to two hundred people, but the offender is not usually among them (Logan, 2009; Thomas, 2003; Zevitz and Farkas, 2000c). Comparing reports from different states reveals that while assessing offender's risk level, varies across states, notification meetings tend to follow a similar structure in different states – for example in Wisconsin (Zevitz & Farkas, 2000c), Washington (Association of Sheriffs & Chiefs, WA; Matson & Lieb, 1996), California (Williams, 2018), and Minnesota (Thomas, 2003).

[pp. 434-35:] The participants at the meeting often receive handouts with specific information about the sex offender in question (name, picture, prior record, sometimes address and the specific offending strategy) as well as some general information about sex offenses and how to prevent victimization. The information disseminated might include the already common presence of sex offenders in all jurisdictions, the low recidivism rate of sex offenders, the need for precaution owing to the absence of a 'sex offender profile,' personal safety rules for children and red flag indicators of pedophiles (Zevitz & Farkas, 2000c). This information is intended to empower the community in dealing with potential sexual victimization (Beck et al., 2004; Logan, 2009; Winick, 1998). The community is also informed about its rights and obligations with respect to the offender and at the end the floor opens to questions from the audience (Thomas, 2003).

Notification Meetings Compared With Other Notification Modes

Community notification meetings are arguably the most proactive mechanism of informing the community about a particular sex offender, because meeting attendees are directly exposed to the information (Logan, 2009); thus they may have the strongest impact on the community. By comparison, a sex offender registry is a passive notification mechanism, since community members may choose whether to access the registry website to procure information (Anderson & Sample, 2008; Craun, 2010; Whitting et al., 2014). In fact, Cain et al. (2017) have found that the majority of citizens do not even access the registry. Beck and Travis (2006) found that information on sex offenders disseminated through active notification was more effective than passive notification. In addition, the meetings provide a venue for communities to make their voices heard, both at the individual and at the group level. The questions from the audience may reflect individual as well as community concerns such as

real estate devaluation of properties in the community.

Nevertheless, these apparent benefits of proactive communication may come at a cost of elevating participants' concern about sex offenders. Instead of empowering residents to manage potential risks in their community, the meeting might increase concern and compromise the goals of notification. Phillips (1998) found that eight of ten female respondents in a survey expressed heightened fear and anger as a result of being notified about a sex offender's information and address in the community via press releases or the registry. In contrast, Southwick and Rubin (2004) found that the quality of information about a sex offender disseminated on a flyer did not significantly affect the anxiety level of people who received the information. Would knowledge conveyed in person be more or less troubling than that conveyed in a flyer or a press release? Unfortunately, in 2003 Levenson noted that the abundant literature on sex offender laws has devoted little attention to the particular strategies of notifying communities about sex offenders, and this has not changed since then. Despite the intention of notification laws to empower the community, their varying impact on the community, as opposed to the offender, has been little studied (Hughes & Kadleck, 2008; but see Williams, 2016, as a unique exception).

[pp. 435-36:] Part of the information residents may be bringing with them into the meeting includes their attitudes and assumptions about sex offenders in general and those might cause them additional concern. Sex offending is a highly contentious area: People's dispositions about sex offenders tend to be fervent and are uneasily swayed (Campbell & Newheiser, 2019). When attending a community notification meeting, people's predispositions may affect the way they come out of the meeting. This would comport with the general finding in the literature that people's beliefs shape their perceptions about crime and justice (Applegate et al., 2002; Payne et al., 2010). For example, if people believe that sex offenders are extremely dangerous and should not live within normative communities, then a discussion about a sex offender in the neighborhood at a notification meeting could only elevate anxiety and helplessness.

All these factors of concern, namely information control, meeting organizational elements, participants' expectations and their predispositions, have hardly been researched in the context of community notification meetings. The current study addresses these unexamined gaps in the literature.

Previous Analyses of Community Meetings

...More recently, Williams (2016, 2018) qualitatively studied residents' reactions to the placement of sexually violent predators (SVP) in three communities in California through observations of community notification meetings and interviews with community members and key stakeholders. Williams (2018) notes that although officials chose to hold community meetings to notify

residents about released sex offenders, these notification channels were held in hope of appeasing residents rather than as a venue of true participation for residents to provide input about the sex offender placement. Indeed, community members Williams interviewed expressed powerlessness and dissatisfaction with authorities. Williams findings seem to indicate that notification meetings may be antitherapeutic for participants, at least for the meetings she attended.

[p. 439:] Focusing on the contrast between people feeling more concerned versus the same, only pre-meeting expectations related to community empowerment significantly increased attendees' odds of feeling more concerned at the end of the meeting, controlling for all other factors. Two of these were people's expectations to restrict or remove the offender altogether from the community. People who came into the meeting expecting to restrict the sex offender's whereabouts were approximately 240% more likely to feel more concerned versus unchanged upon exiting the meeting. People who came to the meeting expecting to remove the offender from the community were 160% more likely to be more concerned versus neutral upon exiting the meeting, controlling for all other factors. Other types of pre-meeting expectations such as the expectation to acquire safety information or the expectation to blame the authorities for placing the sex offender in the neighborhood, did not lead to a significant shift in post-meeting concern, accounting for all other indicators. Additionally, people who thought the purpose of the meeting was to inform the community about its rights and responsibilities with respect to the offender were about 90% more likely to be more concerned versus neutral at the end of the meeting.10

[p. 440:] The predictors which significantly impacted people's postmeeting concern level were only those related to community empowerment expectations. All predictors related to the notification meeting itself – the perceived level of organization of the meeting and how it was conducted, the amount and type of information given at the meeting, and the clarity of its purpose – had no significant impact on people's concern shift. This is also in sharp contrast with the hypothesis based on Zevitz and Farkas's (2000b, 2000c) findings that the very elements which accounted for successful meetings were the ones which lowered attendee's concern. The results indicate that the dissemination of information at these community notification meetings did not impact attendees' sense of information control, at least as it was reflected in their concern level following the meeting. Rather, people's expectations of community power with respect to the sex offender hold a strong potential to influence the notification meeting outcome.

Discussion

This study revisited the original study of Zevitz and Farkas (2000b, 2000c) to examine the therapeutic or antitherapeutic impact of community notification meetings on attendees' concern about sex offenders in

their neighborhoods. The results indicate that people's pre-meeting empowerment expectations related to their ability to influence the outcome in their community were the most significant predictors of their post-meeting concern level. Some people attended the meetings with certain expectations that their community had more control over the sex offender's placement. These expectations may not have been in congruence with meeting reality, such as the expectation to restrict the sex offender's comings and goings or even residing in the community. Whether realistic or not, these unrealized expected outcomes likely frustrated people and shifted their concern upward at the end of the meeting.

Additionally, people who thought the purpose of the meeting was to inform the community members about their rights and responsibilities were also more likely to leave the meeting more concerned than neutral, controlling for all other factors. If residents learned at the meeting that their rights were very limited and their responsibilities required them to avoid vigilantism (Williams, 2018), the lack of recourse could have contributed to their sense of frustration and disempowerment. In essence, the significant predictors of people's elevated concern at the end of the meeting were related to their expectation of community empowerment, thinking that they would be told about their rights and could control the sex offender's whereabouts. When these expectations were not met, attendees felt less in control and more in fear. These predictors do not replicate the results of the original study.

[p. 442:] The Antitherapeutic Impact of Notification Meetings

The findings with respect to information control echo Williams's (2016, 2018) case studies of SVP placement in California, where the results of community notification meetings were more harmful than empowering for attendees once they realized they could not impact the offender's placement in their community. Williams (2016) argued that residents' frustration stemmed from a sense of procedural injustice of placing the offender in marginalized communities by the authorities without giving residents a true voice in the matter. Indeed, officials in charge of these sex offender notification meetings were aware that attendees could do little more than voice their concerns at these meetings. Some officials acknowledged that despite their perceived necessity, the meetings mostly raised residents' concern and questioned their value for residents (Williams, 2018, p. 43). Thus, per Williams (2016), community notification meetings may provide a venue for a public outcry but not for true public involvement that can empower the community.

One of the overarching goals of notification is to empower the community by providing residents with information and tools to handle a thorny situation (Winick, 1998). This goal is compromised if meeting attendees leave more concerned about the sex offender than before the meeting despite obtaining information control, as the

current study suggests. Either the anxiety is a side effect of a heightened awareness, or information dissemination alone is insufficient to allay residents' fears, as Edelstein (2004) has claimed. Southwick and Rubin (2004) hypothesized that the 'ceiling effect' may be at play for some meeting participants. People who are already so concerned about sex offenders cannot be easily calmed by the mere distribution of information. Another explanation may be that information dissemination cannot compensate for a lack of voice in the decision of the authorities and a sense of procedural injustice, as Williams (2016) notes. Regardless of the explanation, if people emerge from notification meetings feeling less in control and more concerned than before, then these meetings are not therapeutic for them. Other alternatives may serve better to empower community members.

[p. 443:] Yet another possibility, as Wilson et al. (1989) suggest, is addressing people's prior expectations before the meeting rather than manipulating their experiences at the meeting."

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Who Creates Trauma and Taboo?

Robert Stern, MD [retired psychiatrist], "Trauma and Taboo," 42(3) *Skeptical Inquirer* 43 (May/June 2020) – "Traumatic Memories Are Alive and Well and Eating Your Innards Out"

"The name may have changed, but recovered memories haven't gone away.

They're claimed to be destroying our minds and bodies. The reason has more to do with taboo than trauma."

Text excerpts:

Trauma

"There's a subset of psychotherapy called 'Trauma Therapy.' It argues that childhood abuse is the human equivalent of Corticeps [a fatal fungal infection]. Worse, in fact. Trauma Therapy argues that childhood abuse not only eats out the brains of its victims [as does Corticeps], changing their behaviors, but their bodies as well. Like zombie films, the research is mostly silly. Unlike the films, the therapy is potentially dangerous.

Trauma Therapy is the phoenix reborn from the ashes of Freud's Child Seduction Theory, which presumed that childhood sexual abuse, buried away in the unconscious, was responsible for subsequent mental illnesses. The mechanism for the seduction theory's amnesia was repression – the belief that those unacceptable memories of childhood sexual molestation could be buried in young minds, eating away at mind and body, and emerging as mental illnesses in adulthood. Even Freud didn't believe it and abandoned the theory (Freud, 1897).

But belief in a connection between childhood sexual abuse and repression wouldn't die. In America, therapists trained in Freudian, semi-Freudian, or quasi-Freudian techniques kept the discarded theory alive. During the 1980s and 1990s, repressed memories of childhood abuse became the etiological foundation of Multiple Personality Disorder, a disorder said to be obvious in its

'hiddenness.' Therapists, whether professional, lay, or religious, all set out to find their clients' different personalities and uncover the repressed memories of childhood abuse – usually in numbers inversely proportional to the therapist's level of education.

After numerous lawsuits and professional licenses were lost during the Memory Wars of the 1980s and 1990s, the terms *repressions* and *Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD)* were finally put to rest by the American Psychiatric Association. But, unfortunately, the underlying beliefs remain.

Below is the pre-war definition of MPD in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Third Edition – Revised (DSM-III-R)*, the 'bible of psychiatry' (1987):

The essential feature of this disorder [MPD] is the existence within the person of two or more distinct personalities or personality states. Personality is here defined as a relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and one's self that is exhibited in a wide range of important social and personal contexts ...At least two of the personalities, at some time and currently, take full control of the person's behavior.

You'd be forgiven for failing to understand the difference between *MPD* and *Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)*, whose definition in the next edition, the *DSM-IV* (1990) was:

The presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states (each with its own relatively pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and self). ...At least two of these identities or personality states recurrently take control of the person's behavior.

The etiology of both was trauma, almost always childhood sexual abuse. While Freudians would have claimed the memories were repressed, today's therapists claim that the memories have been *disassociated*. The difference? Repression is an *isolation* of traumatic memory from consciousness, but dissociation is a *separation* of traumatic memory from consciousness. It's a subtle distinction. Oddly, no one's ever been able to adequately explain why *Multiple Personality Disorder* was never classified as a personality disorder.

Repressed Memories, Still Munchin' Away



Trauma

(Continued on page 9)

MPD/DID's status has waned in psychiatric literature, and when (if rarely) the topic is discussed at conferences, it tends to be met by attendees looking around the room, checking the dirt under their fingernails, or dusting the dandruff off their jackets.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), however, still maintains diagnostic respectability. And it has trauma in its name. Previously classified as an anxiety disorder – assessing the patient's heightened responses to a perceived and past stressor – PTSD is now in a new category, *Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders*, which emphasized the stressor over the patient. Adding to the confusion, PTSD now comes both with and without dissociative symptoms. This hybrid PTSD merges PTSD with the *Dissociative Disorders*.

But joining disassociation and PTSD through trauma presents a problem in logic and consistency. PTSD is said to be caused by exposure to traumatic events: war, violence, assault, etc. Its symptoms include intrusive memories, re-experiencing the event(s), avoidance of similar situations, and increased startle response.

Dissociative disorders such as MPD/DID also claim to be the result of traumatic events – mostly child sexual and physical abuse, which has somehow been hidden from consciousness. The problem? PTSD is a disease whose etiology is a trauma so severe it cannot be forgotten, but dissociation is a disease whose etiology is a trauma so severe it cannot be remembered!

Mind-Munching Memories

Hundreds of papers have been published on the effects of childhood abuse on adults. Early research began with the hippocampus, a part of the brain that consolidates senses, thoughts, and emotions into memories. Trauma researchers measured hippocampal volumes of victims and controls. Finding differences, they proclaimed that those differences were the result of trauma – not bothering to examine anything else. Sometimes the right hippocampus was affected, sometimes the left, and sometimes both. In fact, hippocampal size is now known to change over time and is dependent on genetics, blood flow, medication, age, mood, and alcohol and drug use (Jelicic and Merckelbach 2004). Even exercise can affect hippocampal size, and thus it's hardly specific to trauma.

With their main hope of causally relating trauma to the hippocampus found wanting, traumatologists set out to discover brain damage from child trauma in other areas of the brain. Scampering all around and through gray and white matter, they found volumetric differences between victims and controls. Purported results of trauma have included decreased sizes of the amygdala, the lateral prefrontal cortex, the medial prefrontal cortex, the motor cortex, the visual cortex, the cingulate gyrus, the hypothalamus, gray matter thickness, the singular gyrus, the corpus callosum, the pituitary, etc. Differences in neurotransmitter measurements of serotonin, dopamine, monoamine oxidase, vasopressin, and others have also been tallied and published.

The sum of all these papers might lead the

reader to accept that a causal connection had been found between childhood trauma and adult brain pathology. However, the problem with most of these papers mirrors those of the hippocampal studies; i.e., brains are dynamic – they change over time, depending on circumstances. There are a host of other problems, beginning with whether the purported traumas were verified or merely accepted at face value. Mostly the latter. Or whether the subjects were male or female. Mostly the latter.

Body Munching Memories

A second group of articles, published in psychology or therapy journals rather than medical journals, implies that childhood trauma is a factor in adult medical disorders. The diseases include osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, psoriasis, alopecia, COPD, cancer, asthma, congestive heart failure, hypertension, heart attacks, arterial thickening, hypothyroidism, diabetes, obesity, dyslipidemia, breast cancer, irritable bowel disease, and at least a dozen others. The causal mechanism(s) through which childhood trauma causes, or at least exacerbates, the severity of any of these disparate adult diseases remains unexplained, although epigenetics and DNA methylation are the current popular targets (Guggisberg 2017). Physicians who specialize in treating those disorders would probably be surprised to learn their work has mostly been in vain and that what their patients really need is a hefty dose of trauma therapy.

Societal Munching Memories

A third group of articles links childhood abuse and trauma to current social malfunctioning: decreased social status, antisocial behavior, increased incarceration, parental fatigue, smoking, drug and alcohol use, even subsequent rape (both victim and perpetrator) are some of the reports. Some papers even note a correlation between childhood abuse and alien abduction (Powers 1994).

Psychiatric Munching Memories

The fourth and largest group of publications correlates childhood trauma with current or past psychiatric disorders. The list includes just about every one of the 600 plus diagnoses in the DSM from anxiety to schizophrenia, although DID is still the most popular.

Like the other categories, these correlation papers set out to prove the connection between child abuse and mental illness – allowing for nothing else. However, despite all the published correlations, the world consists of more than abuse and trauma. People have genes and environments and histories and behaviors and misbehaviors and friends who misbehave and accidents and love affairs gone sour, as well as environmental pathogens and bacteria and fungi. Try hard enough and you can find a correlation between two of just about anything, even Corticeps and zombies. (Doan et al. 2017). But unless all variables can be studied and causal mechanisms can be shown, the myriad correlations amount to little more than speculation. Or wishful thinking. Mostly the latter.

Taboo

Why do so many therapists insist on pointing to childhood (sexual) abuse as the root cause of so many diseases and dysfunctions? And why is lax research methodology so typical of abuse literature? The answer lies not in studies of research or medicine or psychology or even therapy but rather in those of morality.

It's always helpful to get an overview of childhood abuse in America, which has been provided by the Childhood Protective Services (CPS) statistics for many years. Below in Table 1 are the statistics from 1997 and 2015 from CPS (Childhood Protective Services 2016). These are strictly founded cases (absolute numbers in parentheses)....

But compare the CPS stats to the abuse research literature (Google, PubMed, and Google Scholar) (Table 2) and you get an entirely different picture.

Table 1: Incidence of different types of child abuse reported to Child Protective Services, 1997 and 2015

CPS Category	1997	2015
	(716,000)	(683,000)
Childhood Neglect	60 %	75.3 % (Up trend)
Childhood Physical Abuse	4 %	17.2 % (Up trend)
Childhood Sexual Abuse	12 %	8.4 % (Down trend)

Table 2: Incidence of child abuse by literature sources

Category	Google Scholar	Pub Med	Google
Childhood Neglect	7,670 (6.4 %)	532 (16.2 %)	458 K (5.3 %)
Childhood Physical Abuse	11,000 (10.2 %)	349 (10.6 %)	237 K (2.8 %)
Childhood Sexual Abuse	102,000 (83 %)	2,401 (73.2 %)	7,900 K (91.9 %)

Why do traumatologists obsess over childhood sexual abuse? It's not just because pain was inflicted on someone, but because the person inflicting the pain achieved pleasure through that someone's pain. As British historian Thomas Babington MacCaulay wisely recognized, 'The Puritan hated bear-baiting not because it gave harm to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectator.' If you think MacCaulay was just being witty and sarcastic, compare his 1849 epigram to the Veterans Administration's current unwitty and unarsenic definition of child sexual abuse, or CSA (Whelan and Bartlett 2016):

Child sexual abuse includes a wide range of sexual behaviors that take place between a child and an older child or adult. These sexual behaviors are intended to erotically arouse the older person, generally without consideration for the reactions or choices of the child and without consideration for the effects of the

behavior upon the child.

The association of CSA with long-term medical, psychiatric, and social pathologies is based on retrospective, *post hoc* rationalizations and low p-values. Important variables are excluded. In nearly every paper, the conclusion was that CSA was the major, if not the only, factor examined in long-term physical, mental, or emotional harm to the subjects – even when no evidence of harm could be shown.

For example, the majority of studies on smoking state that most people take up smoking because their close family or friends smoke. This result holds true across the world in epidemiologic studies (Islam & Johnson 2005; Garcia-Rodriguez et al. 2010; Wiecha et al. 1998). But if you browse the abuse literature, the only variable studied is – you guessed it – abuse.

This predetermined belief reveals a taboo – a powerful social or religious custom placing a prohibition on certain behaviors. Break a taboo and society reacts with moral outrage. Researchers Gutierrez, Giner-Sorolla, and Russell ran a series of elegant studies on taboo-breaking behaviors at the University of Kent (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2011; Gutierrez & Giber-Sorolla 2007). Their studies demonstrated that the initial emotions elicited from broken taboos are anger and disgust. A taboo that has been violated provokes society to presume that harm has been caused, even if no harm can be objectively demonstrated. The damage is moral – not just to the abused but to the society itself.

The hundreds of CSA studies reviewed in PubMed exemplify the results of a broken taboo – anger and moral outrage. Whether or not CSA can be associated with long-term physical or psychological damage to the victim still remains unanswered; the research is overwhelmingly poor. But what is undoubtedly clear is that anger and moral outrage fuel the published research. If there is still any doubt that this is the result of a powerful taboo, recall the fate of Bruce Rind, Phillip Bauserman, and Robert Tromovitch.

In July 1998, Rind, Tromovitch, and Bauserman published the results of their research in *Psychological Bulletin* (Rind et al. 1998), a meta-analysis of over 35,000 college students – women and men – who reported CSA. They could find no evidence of long-term psychological harm, with the exception of some mild depressive symptoms. And when family dysfunctions were factored out, the students appeared to be psychologically normal and healthy. This should have been considered good news – great news, in fact. If the findings were correct, victims of CSA would recover and get on with their lives as normal women and men. It would be like learning that your child didn't contract polio; you ought to be overjoyed.

Instead, the response from the therapeutic community was outrage. The meta-analysis was furiously denounced –not only by therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, but also by both APAs (American Psychological and Psychiatric Associations), who published position papers opposing the find-

ings. Reports of the conclusions made national headlines, and on July 12, 1999, by a vote of 355 to 0, with thirteen abstentions, the research was condemned by the House of Representatives. The Senate unanimously condemned it on July 30 (Lilienfeld 2002).

Rind, Bauserman, and Tromovitch's meta-analysis is the only scientific research in U.S., history to have ever earned the dubious honor of congressional condemnation. It was subsequently learned that almost none of the congressman had even bothered to read the article. **But, despite the uproar from therapists and the public, and the condemnation from the Congress, their findings have held. The paper was reviewed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the entire meta-analysis was even rerun at the University of Montana (Ulrich et al. 2005) with similar results.** (For more on the Rind et al. study, see 'Damaged Goods,' by Margaret A. Hagen in the January/February 2001 issue of *Skeptical Inquirer* and 'When Scientific Evidence is the Enemy' by Elizabeth Loftus in the November/December 2001 issue of *Skeptical Inquirer*).

What was clear was that most people in the therapy professions wanted, perhaps even *needed*, the abused women and men to become damaged and to remain damaged. Therapists reacted with moral outrage when no long-term harm could be shown. Why? Because long-term damage would justify the moral outrage and anger, and thus maintain the taboo. Without damage, the justification for the taboo is weakened along with the need for treatment.

Traumatologists have endeavored to keep the taboo strong by publishing papers that seek out associations between child abuse and any number of disorders. Some have even manipulated data to justify the predetermined moral conclusion: childhood abuse results in long-term damage to the victim. That's strong evidence of a powerful social taboo.

Not All Abuse Is Created Equal

It's a truism that childhood sexual abuse—or any abuse for that matter—ought to be prevented. But there's abuse, and then there's abuse. Abuse is a catch-all word that differs in type and severity and, like paint, it covers a multitude of sins. Being insulted is not the same as being knifed or shot. Hearing a distasteful joke about race or sex is not the same as being lynched or raped. Yet all of them are labeled abuse. The responses of the afflicted, ranging from disappointment to death, are all labeled trauma. Just as the word that means everything means nothing, so abuse and trauma have lost any definition and now mean essentially nothing.

Therapy, if necessary (and that's a big *if*), ought to be tailored accordingly. Certainly different types of abuse can be harmful and persist for years. Some can even be lethal. But in most cases people can and will recover *if allowed to do so*. That should be the goal of trauma therapy: to help people recover from their problems and get on with



One Taboo Destination....

their lives. They don't need to be continuously reminded of their traumas. They don't need therapists to ascribe their adult illnesses—physical, mental, or emotional—to their abuse in childhood. And they certainly don't need long-term therapy to reinforce that myth. It would be tantamount to turning them into zombies—eaten away from the inside out.

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PJP Invites the Confined to "Write for Us."

(editors) *Prison Journalism Project*, "Write for Us," <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/write-for-us/> (2024).

Text: "Today most stories about prison are written with an outside perspective. Prison Journalism Project publishes stories by incarcerated writers and others who know the system from the inside and want to take the power of journalism into their own hands, learn the craft of journalistic storytelling and share their stories of life behind bars.

Our mission is to help you tell stories about your communities using the tools of journalism: gathering and testing facts and writing with nuance, texture and insight to reach a thoughtful audience.

We welcome submissions by anyone who is touched by the criminal legal system, whether you are first-time or experienced writers. We accept reported news and features as well as essays, memoirs and op-eds across all topics, including community, family and prison life and hard-hitting topics like COVID-19 and police brutality. We are especially eager for stories with accompanying art or standalone art depicting an aspect of prison life. We will also publish narrative poetry that tells true stories.

Every writer on our site has a portfolio page, where all of their stories for PJP are displayed. Stories are organized by category

PJP's Inset: We accept quality work that sheds light on the world of mass incarceration. We prioritize timely dispatches, articles, reported essays, illustrated journalism and narrative poetry. WE DO NOT ACCEPT FICTION. As a general rule, wait for your story to be published before sending another. **We cannot publish your entire output.**

PJP editors sort submissions based on priority. The pieces that are published the quickest are those that coincide with issues and topics that are relevant to people now (e.g., the spread of the omicron variant or a new criminal justice law). Or they might speak to a national holiday or an awareness month that is coming up. Then we look at stories about topics that PJP is specifically interested in (see PJP TOPICS in the Writing Prompts section) and stories with a powerful narrative. Stories with no time element are last.

and/or topic, and curated pages highlight exceptional or timely pieces of work. The Our Writers page lists all writers published on our site. We have ended our Contributing Writers and Artists program, and are in the midst of developing a new PJP career progression for our writers and artists.

How to Get Started

First, start with our Submission Guidelines and our FAQs.

This includes important information, such as our content policy and the requirements for word length.

Next, read our [Writing Prompts](#).

You are free to write about anything, but we've listed some topics – the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter, personal relationships, to name a few – and provided questions for you to consider writing about.

As you start writing, refer to our 'Writing Well From Inside Prison' article, our Style Guide and our Journalism Guide.

- [Writing Well From Inside Prison](#) is an article with tips from our advisor John F. Lennon, who is an award-winning Prison Journalist at Sullivan Correctional Facility in New York.
- The [Style Guide](#) addresses common journalism writing style issues, such as abbreviation, capitalization, spelling and numerals.
- The [Journalism Guide](#) covers the basic rules of journalism and principles for how to pull together an article.

Submit your story to the [Prison Journalism Project!](#)

Thank you! You will hear back from us in approximately 12 weeks (we ask for your patience as we are inundated with submissions).

Contact

For writers & Artists

For instructions on how to submit your story, refer to our [Submissions Guidelines](#) page.

To Submit Articles:

Prison messaging: We are on JPay, Secure, Corlinks, GTL Connect Network and GTL Getting Out. Our email is writerrrelations@prisonjournalismproject.org. We can also receive messages on GTL Getting Out, but we cannot receive submissions on it because of the severe limitations of the service.

Email: submissions@prisonjournalismproject.org

To Mail Articles, Photos, Artwork and Prison Publications:

Prison Journalism project
Attn: _____ Please be sure to note if your mail is for Art, Learning, or Publishing.
490 43rd St., Unit 360
Oakland, CA 94609

the Legal Pad

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