
IMPROVING THE RESPONSE TO Victims of Child Pornography

Section 2: Practitioner Online Survey



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Survey Method

Purpose

The purpose of the Practitioner Online Survey was to identify evidence-supported services and promising practices among practitioners from various fields (e.g., mental health practitioners, law enforcement investigators, prosecutors, forensic interviewers, medical professionals, and advocates) who have worked with victims depicted in child pornography. The survey aimed to gather information about: a) characteristics of practitioners' most recent case, b) issues and observations about cases involving child pornography production, and c) barriers to serving victims depicted in child pornography.

Method

We conducted an online survey to gather information from practitioners who had experience working with victims depicted in child pornography. We recruited a convenience sample of participants by sending emails to practitioners associated with organizations that served child victims. The emails included a brief explanation of the survey that stated the topic was improving responses to victims depicted in child pornography and provided consent language (e.g., confidentiality, voluntariness), a toll free number to contact the researchers, and a link to the survey. The survey was accessible through a secure web-based data collection system, Vovici Online Survey Software. It took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The University of New Hampshire Institutional Review Board approved all procedures. The survey was conducted between May 17, 2012, and November 30, 2012.

Sample

The convenience sample was generated by 1) lists of email addresses of more than 4,000 practitioners who might have handled cases involving victims depicted in child pornography and 2) emails to more than 1,000 victim-serving organizations. In the first instance, the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) compiled lists of email addresses of professionals affiliated with groups that serve victims of child sexual abuse. These practitioners included mental health practitioners, attorneys and advocates for victim rights, and professionals involved in the criminal justice system. The NCVC forwarded these lists to researchers at the Crimes against Children Research Center (CCRC), who uploaded them into the online survey software, which generated invitations to participate and links to the survey, and sent email requests to the individuals on the lists. The list included: a) civil attorneys (n=91), b) practitioners known to NCVC (n=79), c) people who had attended a relevant training by the National District Attorney's Association (n=384), d) law enforcement associated with Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces (n=3,764), and e) employees of one federal agency that we received permission to recruit (n=34). When we received the lists, we removed duplicated names (n=12) and the names of some

federal employees we did not have permission to recruit for the survey (n=236). When we launched the survey, about 20% of the email addresses were returned as undeliverable.

In addition, members of the study Advisory Board sent invitations to participate with links to the survey to additional victim-serving organizations that might employ practitioners with experience working with victims depicted in child pornography. An Advisory Board member at the National Children's Alliance sent the invitation to 747 Child Advocacy Center directors, who were asked to forward the email invitations to members of multi-disciplinary teams. An Advisory Board member at the National Center for Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) sent the email to over 130 affiliate centers as well as to the NCTSN listserv (n=430). Persons who received invitations to participate were encouraged to forward information about the survey and the survey link to other practitioners with relevant experience.

Finally, during the last month that the survey was online, we attempted to increase the number of mental health practitioner respondents by sending additional emails to Child advocacy centers and offering participants the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

Because no complete list of individuals who received email invitations exists, it is not possible to calculate a response rate for the survey.

Data Collection

We piloted the survey with 5 volunteers recruited through the study Advisory Board, and then launched the full online survey on May 17, 2012. Recipients who were contacted through email lists received the initial email and two reminder emails, which were generated by the online survey software. The emails included a brief explanation of the survey that stated the topic was improving responses to victims depicted in child pornography and provided consent language, a toll-free number to contact the researchers, and a link to the survey. Participants who were notified about the survey via emails from organizations received similar information and a link to the survey; however, the survey software did not generate email reminders for this group.

Eligibility

Participants were eligible to participate if they had worked with victims depicted in child pornography in a professional capacity during the past five years. To determine eligibility, the survey asked all participants the following question, "In the past five years, have you had any clients or cases that involved a minor or adult survivor who was depicted in child pornography? (Child pornography means an image of a victim age 17 or younger that depicts explicit sexual acts, focuses on genitals or shows nudity in a sexual context.)" Participants who answered no to this question were screened out of the survey.

Instrument Design

The first page provided detailed information about the overall study, including the purpose of the study, the nature of the questions, and consent information. This consent information outlined how the survey was voluntary (respondents could skip any questions or end the survey at any time) and responses would be anonymous and confidential, combined with the answers of other participants, and used for statistical purposes only, such as in publications or presentations. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.

The survey was divided into the following sections:

- **General Information** First, we gathered information about the profession of each respondent (e.g., mental health practitioner, law enforcement investigator, medical practitioner, civil attorney) and their experience (e.g., number of years doing this type of work, how many clients or cases involving a minor or adult survivor who was depicted in child pornography).
- **Most recent case.** We asked eligible respondents about their most recent case of a victim depicted in child pornography (e.g., age and sex of victim, brief description of the crime and how it was disclosed, whether images were distributed online, whether victim notification laws applied, reactions of victim).
- **Profession-specific questions.** Each respondent was asked some questions specific to their profession. For example, mental health practitioners answered questions about trauma symptomatology and treatment approaches. Prosecutors answered questions about their experiences with restitution and victim notification laws. Medical practitioners, law enforcement investigators and civil attorneys also answered questions cases that related specifically to their professions.
- **Reactions of victims and others.** We also asked most professionals about victim reactions to and willingness to discuss images, parent and practitioner reactions to cases, and any cases that involved victim notification laws or victims who considered suing for restitution. (See survey for specific questions)

Data Cleaning and Coding

Data were transferred directly from the online survey software (Vovici) to a SPSS data set. CCRC researchers cleaned the data and coded open-ended responses.

Participants

Of the 826 practitioners who began the survey, 493 (60%) who had experience working with victims depicted in child pornography in the past five years completed the survey. The types of professionals who completed the survey are described in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Types of Eligible Professionals Who Completed the Survey

Profession	n=493 % (n)
Mental health practitioner	9 (45)
Forensic interviewer	5 (23)
Law enforcement investigator or computer forensic examiner	62 (308)
Prosecutor	12 (58)
Doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, other medical	2 (10)
Social service or child protective service practitioner	1 (4)
Civil attorney	1 (5)
Advocate	8 (37)
Other	1 (3)

Findings from Law Enforcement Online Survey

Executive Summary of Findings

- Law enforcement (LE) respondents were primarily members of Internet Crimes against Children Task Forces and most worked with Child advocacy centers or multidisciplinary teams. Almost all respondents had specialized training in investigating child pornography cases and about 40% had training in working with victims of CP production. Over one-third had handled six or more of these cases in the past five years, but about 1 in 4 respondents had only handled one or two such cases.
- LE respondents described a diverse range of most-recent cases involving CP production and a wide range of victim and family responses to these incidents.
- When we asked LE respondents about online distribution in their most-recent case, about 40% did not know if online distribution had occurred.
- LE respondents saw a number of cases where families did not believe or support victims.
- LE respondents described several aspects of CP production cases that were particularly difficult. These included having to question non-disclosing victims about images, working with uncooperative adolescent victims in cases of youth-produced sexual images, and explaining the impact of online distribution of images to victims and their families.
- About one in five investigators stated victim notification laws applied to their most recent case and about half of those victims had opted to be notified if their images were discovered as part of a child pornography possession or distribution case.
- Law enforcement respondents wanted more training in how to respond to victims of CP production and their families, as well as training in the technical aspects of crimes involving CP and continuous training to keep up with advances in technology.
- Law enforcement recommendations to help victims included funding for well-trained victim advocates, better information about resources for victims and families, accessible and affordable long-term counseling and support for victims of CP production, more privacy protections for victims, training for judges and prosecutors about CP production, and efforts to counteract the permanence of images.

Overview

We conducted an online survey to gather information from law enforcement investigators who had experience working with victims depicted in child pornography. We recruited a convenience sample of participants by sending emails to law enforcement investigators associated with organizations that

served child victims, primarily law enforcement agencies associated with Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces. The sample included 245 law enforcement investigators. Because the survey reached only a select group of law enforcement investigators, their responses do not represent the experiences of all law enforcement investigators with experience working with victims depicted in child pornography but only the experiences of this group of respondents.

Sample Characteristics

Two hundred forty-five law enforcement investigators who had handled cases involving victims pictured in child pornography (CP) completed the Law Enforcement Section of the Practitioner Online Survey (see Table 2-2). Of these,

- Over 70% had been law enforcement investigators for more than five years,
- Almost 60% had been in their current position for more than five years.

Most had five or fewer cases involving CP production in the past five years, with about one-quarter having only one or two such cases. Almost one-quarter had ten or more cases. Most investigators who responded were part of an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force and most worked with a Child Advocacy Center or multi-disciplinary team.

Table 2-2. Investigator Characteristics

	n = 245 % (n)
<u>Number of years in profession</u>	
1 year or less	2 (4)
More than 1 to 3 years	9 (22)
More than 3 to 5 years	17 (42)
More than 5 to 10 years	26 (63)
More than 10 years	46 (112)
Missing	1 (8)
<u>Number of years in current position</u>	
1 year or less	4 (10)
More than 1 to 3 years	15 (36)
More than 3 to 5 years	22 (55)
More than 5 to 10 years	29 (71)
More than 10 years	30 (73)
<u>Number of cases in past 5 years</u>	
One	11 (28)
Two	13 (33)
Three to five	37 (90)
Six to ten	15 (38)
More than ten	23 (56)

Part of an Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force	87 (212)
Works with a Child Advocacy Center or multidisciplinary team	70 (171)

Most Recent Case

We asked respondents specific questions about their most recent case (see Table 2-3). The cases they described were diverse in terms of ages, sexes and numbers of victims, offender-victim relationships (familial, acquaintance, online) and nature of images produced. Multiple victims were identified in 40% of the cases; in these cases, we asked respondents to select the most seriously victimized child for the remaining questions.

- In about 4 out of 5 cases, victims were female.
- Victims ranged widely in age. (Some victims were photographed over extended periods, in which case we asked respondents to report all ages that applied). In over one-third of cases, the oldest age at which the victim was photographed was 11 or younger; in almost half of cases victims were ages 12 to 15, and in about 1 in 7 cases the victim was photographed at age 16 or 17.
- The victim-perpetrator relationships also varied. In some cases, multiple people may have produced the images, so we asked respondents to select all categories that applied. In one-third of cases, the images were created by family or household members; in another one-third of cases, the images were created by acquaintances. In about 1 in 8 cases (13%), victims created images of themselves and in a similar percentage of cases (12%) the victims met the image producers online. For the remaining cases, the respondents did not know who created the images; in some cases, the investigators had not yet identified the victims and/or perpetrators who produced the images.
- Almost two-thirds of the cases involved victims who were photographed on multiple occasions.
- In over 40% of cases, pictures showed sexual penetration or masturbation. Two percent of cases included depictions of torture, bondage, sadism or other sexual violence. The remaining cases involved pictures that showed nudity or focused on genitals, but did not show sexual activity.

We asked investigators to “Please give us a brief description of the crime that was committed against this victim and how the offender created the child pornography that depicted the victim. (For example, did the offender persuade or coerce the victim into posing, secretly film the victim, or get the images some other way?)” Their responses show the wide variety of circumstances of child pornography production cases that come to the attention of law enforcement.

- “The offender installed a camera secretly in the bathroom used by his daughter and her friends.”¹³
- “Mutual [sex acts] via webcam by adult male and teenage male child; adult male made screen recordings of webcam sessions.”
- “15 year old involved in prostitution. Her nude photograph was in an ad on Craig’s List.”
- “A grandfather/grandmother were producing CP with their four-year-old granddaughter.”
- “School principal placed a video camera in the boys’ bathroom and filmed them urinating...”
- “Adult targeted vulnerable young teen girls by dating and courting them, eventually providing them with alcohol and photographing and videotaping them in sex acts.”
- “Father was sexually abusing daughter while having visits with her. He would photograph abuse with cell phone camera.”
- “Photo evidence was discovered of the grandfather sexually abusing his granddaughter. The photos were discovered many years after the crime took place.”

Next, we asked investigators, “How did the victim react to being depicted in child pornography, as far as you know? For example, was the victim aware of the images? Did s/he deny or refuse to talk about them? Did the victim worry about being viewed as a criminal, feel shame, have some other reaction?” Investigators described diverse victim reactions. In many cases they said that victims were ashamed, humiliated, shocked and embarrassed. However not all victims reacted this way during their interactions with police. For example, some victims who created images of themselves (i.e., youth-produced sexual images) did not view the images as harmful and did not realize they had violated criminal laws. Other victims were not ashamed or embarrassed during police questioning because they had been groomed to view posing for sexual images as normal or they were loyal to offenders who were father-figures or viewed as romantic partners. Some victims were very young or suffered developmental or mental disabilities so they did not comprehend what had happened. Others were angry at offenders but not ashamed or embarrassed because they did not participate willingly; for example they were drugged or sleeping when photographed.

Victims also varied in their reactions to being questioned by law enforcement and their willingness to talk to investigators about images.

- “The victim was asked about any photos or videos and told. She was upset after we found them and she had to identify herself.”
- “Victim, nine-year-old female, lied extremely well and convincingly during first two forensic interviews, even though we already had a suspect in custody and had discovered CP images.”

¹³ Throughout, some quotations are slightly paraphrased to correct grammar and remove possibly identifying information.

- “Parents have not permitted victim to participate in the investigation.”
- “Victim was emotionally distressed and obviously traumatized but provided key and necessary information.”
- “Victim spoke about taking part, but did not feel any shame or act like she had to hide it.”
- “Victim... initially denied that the abuse photos were taken and literally had to be confronted with the photos before acknowledging what had occurred.”
- “She was very upset... She was open to talking about [the images] but did feel some shame and anger that they had been posted without her permission.”
- “The victim was vomiting and felt extremely bad and guilty about the entire incident. He said he would have never allowed that to happen if he had not been drinking alcohol. This case involves many male victims; most will not provide a statement as they are embarrassed and ashamed.”
- “During second interview he acknowledged that he knew pictures had been taken and was mostly worried about his mother being mad at him.”
- “Victim was ashamed and embarrassed but reluctantly willing to talk about images and acts.”
- “She was victimized as a child and found the pictures as an adult. She was angry and motivated to assist in the investigation.”

Almost 30% of investigators reported their most recent case involved a victim whose images were distributed online. In a similar percentage of cases (almost 30%), investigators stated there was no online distribution. However, over 40% answered this question “Don’t know.” According to investigators, when images were distributed, victims had different reactions. For example,

- “She is only nine years old and is unaware of how they were shared on the internet. Her mother is aware and is in denial.”
- “Victims too young to comprehend the distribution component.”
- “I don’t think the mother ever told the victim that the images were distributed.”
- “Victim is aware and afraid others will find the images online. She feared damage to her character/reputation.”
- “She was upset, but said it was okay because she was almost 18 anyway.”
- “Not sure if the picture was distributed further than the social networking site, which was shut down quickly after being contacted by law enforcement. There was concern.”

We also asked, “How did family members of the victim react to finding out the victim was depicted in child pornography, as far as you know?” In many of the most-recent cases, respondents described the victim’s family as being upset, angry, shocked or devastated; worried about the well-being of the victim

and supportive of the victim. However, investigators also saw a number of child pornography production cases where families did not believe or support victims or cooperate with police. For example,

- “The victim’s parents refused to believe that their daughter had been sexually abused until cropped photographs were presented to them. They were reluctant to fully cooperate with the investigation and refused to have their daughter interviewed. The parents felt it was in the best interest of their daughter to not alert her that she had been a victim of sexual abuse.”
- “[Family] seemed not to care.”
- “No real family in victim’s life.”
- “Mom and step-dad [who produced the CP] fled the country.”
- “Mother... was more concerned with any consequences that would impact the mother’s life than any harm the child may suffer.”
- “They did not want to cooperate, wanted it to go away.”

We asked investigators whether victims were concerned about who would see images during the investigation or how images would be handled by the criminal justice system. Almost 30% answered yes to this question, but more (almost 40%) answered no or said they did not know (over 30%).

Respondents stated that the victims and families who were anxious about how images would be handled during prosecution expressed the following concerns.

- “One of the victims was a popular athlete at his local high school and he was afraid the videos would be shown at a trial or other court proceeding.”
- “[Victim] was concerned about the images being made discoverable during the trial and shown to the jury.”
- “[Victim] wanted to know how many people would see the videos during the investigation and prosecution stage.”
- “Victim wanted the images destroyed at the conclusion of the case.”

Media had reported on about one-third of the cases. In most, investigators believed media coverage did not impact victims for a variety of reasons, for example the victim lived in another jurisdiction; the offender was arrested elsewhere so publicity was not local; local news outlets used pseudonyms, did not name the offender or took other steps to protect the identity of victims; or media attention was brief and minimal. However, in a small number of cases victims were subjected to stressful media attention.

- “The victim wasn’t identified in news reports, but the suspect was a well-known individual and the charges made it clear that a family member was a victim. This created stress on the victim who was then an adult in the community.”

- “The news media showed up at the victim’s house after the district clerk’s office released the information. The family was hurt and mad that the media was at their house. We attempted to keep the media away but they kept hounding the family for several days.”

About one in five investigators stated that victim notification laws applied to their most recent case and almost 1 in 10 said victims or families had opted to be notified. However, it was difficult to distinguish whether respondents were referring to notifications involving the suspect who produced the child pornography or those referring to cases of a child pornography possessor arrested with a child’s image. A few investigators had comments about the victim notification process. For example,

- “Right now law enforcement and the military prosecutor's office both make the victim notification. Better communication would allow the notifications to be made once.”
- “As a case agent, I have a poor understanding of what will happen if this victim's images are encountered in future cases by other investigators... What are my duties/obligations with respect to the victim when notified?”

As far as respondents knew, none of the most-recent cases in which images had been distributed online involved victims or families that had sued or considered suing for restitution.

Table 2-3. Characteristics of Most Recent Case

	n = 245 % (n)
<u>Victim sex</u>	
Male	18 (43)
Female	82 (201)
No response	<1 (1)
<u>Case involved multiple victims</u>	
No	55 (134)
Yes	40 (98)
Don’t know	5 (13)
<u>Oldest age of victim when images created</u>	
11 or younger	36 (89)
12 to 15	47 (115)
16 or 17	14 (35)
Don’t know	2 (6)
Missing	1 (2)
<u>Who created CP images (select all that apply)</u>	
Family or household member	33 (82)
Acquaintance	34 (84)
Victim took picture of self	13 (31)
Someone V met online	12 (29)

Other	<1 (1)
Don't Know	12 (29)
<u>Victim photographed on multiple occasions</u>	
No	20 (48)
Yes	64 (157)
Don't know	16 (40)
<u>Picture showed penetration or masturbation</u>	
No	43 (106)
Yes	55 (134)
Don't know	2 (5)
Images depicted torture, bondage, sadism or other violence	2 (4)
<u>Images distributed on internet</u>	
No	29 (72)
Yes	28 (68)
Don't Know	43 (105)
<u>Victim was concerned about who would see/how justice system would handle the images</u>	
No	38 (94)
Yes	29 (72)
Don't Know	31 (75)
No response	2 (4)
<u>Crime was reported in media</u>	
No	54 (132)
Yes	35 (87)
Don't Know	10 (25)
No response	<1 (1)
<u>Victim notification laws applied to this case</u>	
No	34 (84)
Yes	22 (54)
Don't Know	43 (106)
No Response	<1 (1)
<u>Victim/family opted for notification</u>	
No	3 (8)
Yes	9 (21)
Don't Know	10 (25)
Not applicable (Notification laws did not apply or respondent did not know if laws applied)	78 (191)
<u>Victim sued/considered suing offender for restitution</u>	
No	15 (38)
Yes	0 (0)
Don't Know	12 (30)
Not applicable (Images were not distributed online)	72 (177)

Note: Some investigators answered "Don't Know" because victims in images had not been identified.

Difficult Issues in Child Pornography Production Cases

We asked investigators, “What is the most difficult situation you have faced when working with a victim depicted in child pornography and how did you respond to it?” Several respondents described having to notify non-disclosing victims or their families in cases where images were discovered. For example,

- “Confronting the victim with images is difficult. Within my jurisdiction there is a very effective agency support system comprised of the prosecutor’s victim/witness unit, mental health agency, CAC and a Domestic Assault Response Group.”
- “Very uncomfortable making these notifications especially when child was willing participant in creation of the photos.”
- “Notification of adult victims of years prior pornography victimization.”
- “Speaking with parent of victim identified in CP [production] case and having to describe the images of the child to the parent.”
- “Telling the parents their children were victimized and those photographs may have been distributed.”
- “No question, when we have a victim that absolutely will not admit that he/she is the child depicted in the images or assist in the identification of the suspect.”

Some investigators found it frustrating when youth appeared to be indifferent to the production of sexual images, leading them to question the moral character of these youth.

- “The teen didn’t find it a problem that she did this and would do it again for another boyfriend...They have lost their inner morals and don’t feel that it’s wrong because all of their friends do the same thing, like a passage to high school. This detective told them “wrong passage” yet they feel we’re too old to understand!!”
- “The indifference that the victim showed toward the situation - it seems to be fostered by our culture and the lack of concern for teenage sex and ‘regular’ pornography.”

Investigators mentioned other difficulties, also, including

- “Explaining that the images are out there forever.”
- “The inability [of] retrieving images from the internet.”
- “Showing the pictures during trials and the embarrassment it causes victims.”
- “Identifying the victims if unknown.”
- “Some of the images I’ve seen are of children that are similar in age to my own children. When you see a graphic image of a child it’s hard to get it out of your mind for several days after.”

- “Realization by the victim of the seriousness of self-initiated images.”
- “The [long] time frame for forensic evidence recovery.”

Training Needs

Almost 90% of respondents had received specialized training in investigating cases of child pornography, but only half as many (42%) had received training that specifically focused on working with the victims pictured in CP (see Table 2-4). Of those who had received any CP-related training, many said they had attended specialized trainings in child sexual exploitation crimes and internet-related crimes provided through ICAC Task Forces. Others mentioned training provided by the FBI, state investigative agencies, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and law enforcement conferences. Some investigators had extensive training in topics related to child pornography production, including child sexual abuse investigations, forensic interviewing of children and computer crimes. Others said their training was limited to attendance at conference sessions.

Most respondents (over 60%) wanted more training. Investigators cited several broad topics for needed training. One prominent topic was more knowledge about responding to victims and families.

- “Victim-centered investigations; how to interact with child victims with greater sensitivity to their circumstances. As investigators we get plenty of training in how to interact with offenders but precious little training on how to interact with victims--especially child victims.”
- “How to handle the initial contact with the child victim”
- “Having nation-wide protocol on sexting cases”
- “More training on how to tell the victim and the guardians about the victimization that doesn't do more damage emotionally and/or mentally to the victim and their families.”
- “Training for [responding to] children with disabilities who cannot speak for themselves or cannot understand due to various limitations of mental capacity; specialized interviewers needed for impairments. The flip side is the parents who have disabilities who cannot help their children and make the wrong choices or don't understand the concerns of law enforcement. The need for a class about family-on-family sexual assault...”
- “Training for the investigators who deal with these families. It is like delivering a death notification, but worse. And it just isn't the notification. These families call me all during the case and many times they call me years later when the victim or victim's sibling is acting out due to the trauma it has caused.”

Investigators mentioned other training needs also. They wanted training in the more technical aspects of crimes involving child pornography, including locating child pornography traffickers on peer-to-peer networks, handling evidence found on cell phones, forensic analysis of computers and training for first

responders to crimes involving computers and other electronic devices. Many noted they needed continuous training to keep up with constant changes in computer technology. Several talked about overcoming impediments to training. For example, they needed training that was more local because their agencies could not pay for travel, or shorter training because their agencies were too small to handle staff being gone for week long courses. They also wanted refresher courses and training that was available more frequently to help them cope with staff turnover. Finally, several wanted training in how to identify victims portrayed in child pornography.

Table 2-4. Training Experiences and Needs

	n = 245 % (n)
Had specialized training about investigating CP cases	87 (213)
Had training in working with victims of CP production	42 (104)
Would like more training regarding CP investigations	62 (152)

Recommendations from Investigators

Finally, we asked investigators for their recommendations about how “to better support victims depicted in child pornography and their caregivers.” Some respondents came from jurisdictions with well-developed victim services, but others were from agencies where resources were scarce, and they saw significant needs among victims and their families. Respondents had several categories of suggestions:

- Improvements in forensic interviewing and victim advocacy programs, including:
 - “Training for first responders so they know what to do and where to send victims for help.”
 - “Need more victim/witness [advocates and counselors]... I am trained to investigate crime not counsel someone. There are times I feel as helpless as the victims.”
 - “Immediate response of victim’s advocate.”
 - “Make sure the interviewers are gender based (female to female, etc). I don’t think males should interview female victims.”
 - “It would be beneficial if crisis counseling were immediately available.”
 - “Using victim advocates or liaisons that are specially trained and primarily assigned to child victims.”
 - “Be sure [victims] understand what is going on, what to expect with court proceeding, especially if they are going to testify.”
- Better information about resources for victims and families, including:
 - “A caseworker to explain all of the services and other aspects available that the police investigator may have no idea about.”
 - “A more cohesive approach where the information for services offered would be more readily available. We have a victim’s advocate at our department but I am not sure how

- to go about getting her the most up to date information she needs to help her in her role as advocate.”
- “Create a standard and readily available network of psychological and counseling resources for victims of such crimes. This would allow more consistent therapeutic response.”
 - “Make resources for helping the victims and families more easily accessible. In addition a listing of what they are entitled to in terms of help would be beneficial.”
- Long term counseling and support for victims
 - “These cases leave lasting marks on the children who are victimized. Ensuring they don't fall through the cracks should be the #1 priority once the offender has been identified and dealt with.”
 - “Seeing [victims] get the counseling and support they need to get through a trial and beyond.”
 - “Lack of insurance is a barrier to counseling in some cases.”
 - “Financial resources to help with support - especially when the suspects are the parents.”
 - “1st - better psychological counseling. 2nd- more foster homes. 3rd- more victim on-going services.”
 - “I see more and more suspects who admit to having been victims of sexual abuse as children who become distributors of child pornography. We need to work with the victims throughout their entire life at least until adulthood.”
 - “Possibly provide some minor financial support to [help family] cut ties from the suspect.”
 - Efforts to counteract the permanence of images
 - “The question most asked is how to remove images once posted or sent online.”
 - “Financial support and verbal support that there are people who will continue to work with them to try to destroy all the images/video taken of them.”
 - “An ability to remove images from the internet.”
 - More privacy protections for victims
 - “During trials, having the courtrooms closed to the public”
 - “Better shield laws would help in child exploitation cases when the information is provided to a court for charges. I feel if there is a minor involved in a child exploitation cases their information should NOT be available under open records.”
 - Changes in the criminal justice system
 - “Make the judicial system and the legislatures understand it's not just a picture.”
 - “Standardize the state's actions from district to district.”
 - “Keep the charges in one venue. DO NOT allow the Fed's to prosecute the child pornography and the state [to] prosecute the molestation. This requires the child to go through several different preliminary hearings and trials. NOT GOOD.”
 - “Put pressure on local prosecutors to prosecute cases to the full extent of the law.”
 - “Put the blame where it belongs, on the offender.”
 - “Legislation for more severe penalties for offenders.”

- “Child victims seem to be treated as second class citizens at the local level by the judicial system.”
- Reducing the amount of time victims and families are deprived of property seized during searches (e.g., computers, cell phones)

Limitations

The findings of the Law Enforcement Online Survey are limited for several reasons. First, we surveyed a convenience sample of law enforcement officers. Participants received a link to the survey because they were associated with organizations that served child victims, primarily law enforcement associated with Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces or child advocacy centers. Because the survey reached a group of individuals for whom we had email addresses, their responses do not represent the experiences of all law enforcement officers who investigate child pornography production. Second, the study was primarily exploratory in nature. The goal was to learn about law enforcement’ experiences and are based on respondents’ *impressions* of these victims; it is possible that findings would be different if other procedures were used, such as reviewing case files, and results should not be considered representative of all relevant issues presented in these cases. Third, although the survey asked about their most recent case, responses were based on respondents’ memories of these cases rather than specific case files, so respondents may have forgotten or confused certain details.

Findings from Mental Health Practitioner Online Survey

Executive Summary of Findings

- Many of the mental health practitioners had limited experience with cases of child pornography production. The majority had no training in such cases and had handled five or fewer such cases in the last five years.
- The most-recent cases reported by mental health practitioner were diverse in terms of ages, sexes and numbers of victims, offender-victim relationships (familial, acquaintance, online) and nature of images produced. Victims were heterogeneous but a common thread was anxiety about people seeing their images and shame and embarrassment.
- A sizable minority of practitioners, about one-third, reported a situation in which a victim was unwilling or reluctant to disclose images or abuse shown in images; reasons for reluctance to disclose varied.
- Victims feared that parents, family members and others would see their images during criminal and social service investigations and court proceedings.
- Compared to cases without child pornography production, most mental health practitioners felt parents in these cases were angrier toward perpetrators and felt more emotional distress. However, most respondents did not believe that parents had more difficulty supporting their children or following up on treatment and many felt that parents were quicker to believe that the abuse happened when images existed. Almost two-thirds of respondents had encountered child and family strengths that helped to improve victim outcomes.
- About one-third of mental health practitioners had worked with victims whose images were distributed online.
- Most mental health practitioners had not seen cases involving notification or restitution. The few that had described the notification process as traumatic for victims.
- Most mental health practitioners were comfortable talking to victims about images, but most wanted more training, especially about technical aspects of the internet.
- A minority of mental health practitioners, about one-third, had noticed differences in trauma symptomatology in victims depicted in child pornography compared to victims of other types of child sexual abuse.
- Similarly, one-third of mental health practitioners considered working with victims depicted in child pornography more difficult or emotionally challenging than working with other victims of child sexual abuse. However about half of respondents agreed that the existence of images changes how victims process the abuse and 20% agreed that the existence of images changes the victim-practitioner relationship.

Overview

We conducted an online survey to gather information from mental health practitioners who had experience working with victims depicted in child pornography. We recruited a convenience sample of participants by sending emails to mental health practitioners associated with organizations that served child victims, such as Child advocacy centers. The sample included 42 mental health practitioners. Because the survey reached mostly mental health practitioners who worked on multidisciplinary teams responding to crimes against children, their responses do not represent the experiences of all mental health practitioners who work with victims depicted in child pornography. Our findings are not generalizable to the larger group of all mental health practitioners who work with victims of child pornography production, but portray the experiences of this specific group.

Sample Characteristics

Forty-two mental health practitioners who had handled cases involving victims pictured in child pornography (CP) completed the Practitioner Online Survey (see Table 2-5). Of these,

- Almost 70% had been mental health practitioners for more than five years
- Over 40% had been in their current position for more than five years

Table 2-5. Mental Health Practitioner Characteristics

	n = 42 % (n)
<u>Number of years in profession</u>	
1 year or less	0 (0)
More than 1 to 3 years	12 (5)
More than 3 to 5 years	14 (6)
More than 5 to 10 years	24 (10)
More than 10 years	45 (19)
Missing	5 (2)
<u>Number of years in current position</u>	
1 year or less	5 (2)
More than 1 to 3 years	33 (14)
More than 3 to 5 years	19 (8)
More than 5 to 10 years	33 (14)
More than 10 years	9 (4)
<u>Number of cases in past 5 years</u>	
One	19 (8)
Two	21 (9)
Three to five	41 (17)
Six to ten	17 (7)
More than ten	2 (1)

Part of multidisciplinary team	88 (37)
Had training on working with CP victims	29 (12)
How often do you assess for CP in cases of known child sexual abuse?	
Never or rarely	31 (13)
Sometimes	17 (7)
Most of the time	21 (9)
Always	31 (13)

Most practitioners who responded to the survey were members of a multi-disciplinary team (almost 90%). Most had five or fewer cases of this type in the past five years (over 80%), with 40% having only one or two such cases. Almost 20% had six or more cases.

Almost 30% of respondents had received training about working with victims pictured in child pornography. Among these, some received training from law enforcement agencies (e.g., Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces, FBI, state investigative agencies or attorneys general); others received clinical and in-service training, workshops at conferences, and webinars.

Almost one-third of the respondents stated that they never or only rarely assessed whether a victim of contact child sexual abuse was photographed or videoed for child pornography. About half said they assessed for CP in such cases most of the time or always. In some cases, forensic interviewers conducted assessments and told practitioners the results. Other examples of assessments for CP production included the following.

- “During the initial intake process [clients] are asked this question and during treatment when defining sexual abuse.”¹⁴
- “I ask if anyone has recorded, taken pictures of, or taped anything involving their body.”
- “After developing a trusting relationship with the child and we are talking more openly about the sexual abuse, I ask the child straight out and we talk about it ...I let the child know that it is often common [that] offenders take pictures or videos that are not nice, trying to "normalize" (for lack of a better phrase) the behavior and to assure child it is understandable that sometimes not nice pictures/videos are taken and it is okay to talk about it.”

Most Recent Case

We asked respondents questions about their most recent case (see Table 2-6). The ‘most recent cases’ they described were diverse in terms of ages, sexes and numbers of victims, offender-victim relationship (familial, acquaintance, online) and nature of images produced. Multiple victims were identified in 36%

¹⁴ Throughout, some quotations are slightly paraphrased to correct grammar and remove possibly identifying information.

of the cases; in these cases, we asked respondents to select the most seriously victimized child for the remaining questions.

- In about 4 out of 5 cases, victims were female.
- Victims ranged widely in age at which images were created: 45% were age 11 or younger; almost 40% were ages 12 to 15 and over 10% were 16 or 17.
- In half of cases, the CP was created by family or household members; in almost 40% of cases CP was created by acquaintances. In about 1 in 10 cases, victims met CP producers online. In one case (2%), the victim created the images.
- More than half of victims (almost 60%) were photographed on multiple occasions.
- In over 40% of cases, pictures showed sexual penetration or masturbation. In other cases, pictures showed nudity or focused on genitals, but did not show sexual activity, as far as respondents knew.

When practitioners described victim reactions to being depicted in CP, those reactions were also diverse. About 1 in 5 cases involved victims who were unaware they had been photographed when the pictures were created. Some of these victims were quite young, others were photographed secretly and some were impaired by alcohol or drugs when the picture-taking occurred. In over 10% of most-recent cases, respondents stated that victims were unwilling or reluctant to talk about their reactions to being photographed. In over 40% of cases, respondents stated that victims felt shame, embarrassment or humiliation in reaction to being pictured in CP. Nonetheless, these common reactions appeared to surface in a variety of forms, as illustrated by the following quotes:

- In a case in which a victim was abused by a family member, the respondent stated: “[The] victim was upset about other people seeing [the] video, but was relieved we found videos because she believed they showed us she was telling the truth.”
- A young victim who felt “angry and embarrassed” also “...wanted her father to be punished for breaking the rules.”
- One victim who felt embarrassment and shame was “developmentally delayed and didn’t seem to fully comprehend what had occurred until after she processed with the prosecutor, counselor, mother, etc.”
- A teen victim who created sexual images of herself (“youth-produced sexual images) “was aware after the fact that it was a stupid thing to have done, but faced the humiliation head on.”

About one-quarter of practitioners reported their most recent case involved a victim whose images were distributed online, but more than half answered the question about online distribution “don’t know.” Two respondents stated it was traumatic for their clients to find out their images were online.

However, in other cases of online distribution, respondents stated victims were not aware their images were online or respondents did not know victims' reactions.

Only three respondents stated that victim notification laws applied to their most recent case (the vast majority – almost 80% - did not know if such laws applied). Only one respondent had treated someone who opted to be notified. As far as respondents knew, none of the most-recent cases in which images had been distributed online involved victims or families that had sued or considered suing for restitution.

We asked respondents whether victims were concerned about who would see images during the investigation of the crime and/or how images would be handled by the criminal justice system. About half answered “yes” to this question, about one-quarter answered “no” and the remaining respondents said they did not know.

Media had reported on about one-quarter of the cases. Respondents described a range of reactions by victims and families to media coverage: fear identities would become known, openness to media coverage because family wanted to raise awareness, moving to another area as a result of public reactions.

We also asked respondents to describe the reactions of the victims' families in these cases. In about half of the most-recent cases, respondents described the victim's family as being very upset, angry, shocked or devastated (coded open-ended question, not in table). Some parents were angry at perpetrators and some were upset with children, who they blamed to some extent for the crime. One mother was very angry at the police for telling her child about the images. Some parents were devastated to find that a partner or trusted friend had abused their child. Some were upset because of what their children had endured.

- According to respondents, some parents were unsupportive in varying degrees: they were ‘unconcerned’ with the crime, showed a lack of trust in the child, or were mad at the child for making bad choices. One respondent said the victim's mother might not have been supportive if the documentation hadn't existed.
- Most parents were described as angry at perpetrators but not at the child. They also worried the child would be seen as different because of what happened, they were concerned about distribution of images, and they felt guilty for not knowing what was happening.
- Some parents were described as seeking advice from therapist because they were not sure how to react or were, themselves, experiencing trauma.

Table 2-6. Characteristics of Most Recent Case

	n = 42 % (n)
<u>Victim sex</u>	
Male	21 (9)
Female	79 (33)
<u>Case involved multiple victims</u>	
No	38 (16)
Yes	36 (15)
Don't know	26 (11)
<u>Oldest age of victim when images created</u>	
11 or younger	45 (19)
12 to 15	38 (16)
16 or 17	12 (5)
Don't know	5 (2)
<u>Who created CP images (select all that apply)</u>	
Family or household member	50 (21)
Acquaintance	38 (16)
Someone victim met online	12 (5)
Victim took picture of self	2 (1)
Don't Know	5 (2)
<u>Victim photographed on multiple occasions</u>	
No	14 (6)
Yes	59 (25)
Don't know	26 (11)
<u>Picture showed penetration or masturbation</u>	
No	41 (17)
Yes	41 (17)
Don't know	19 (8)
<i>Coded open-ended answers to this question: How did the victim react to being depicted in CP, as far as you know? For example, was the victim aware of the images? Did s/he deny or refused to talk about them? Did the victim worry about being viewed as a criminal, feel shame, have some other reaction?</i>	
<u>Victim</u>	
Was unaware when images were created	19 (8)
Refused or was reluctant to talk about images	12 (5)
Felt shame, embarrassment or humiliation	41 (17)
<u>Images distributed on internet</u>	
No	14 (6)
Yes	26 (11)
Don't Know	57 (24)
No response	2 (1)
<u>Victim sued or considered suing offender for restitution</u>	
No	9 (4)
Yes	0
Don't Know	17 (7)

Not Applicable (Images were not distributed on internet)	74 (31)
<u>Victim notification laws applied to this case</u>	
No	14 (6)
Yes	7 (3)
Don't Know	79 (33)
<u>Victim/family opted for notification</u>	
No	2 (1)
Yes	2 (1)
Don't Know	2 (1)
Missing (Respondents did not know if notification laws applied)	93 (39)
<u>Victim was concerned about who would see /how justice system would handle the images</u>	
No	26 (11)
Yes	48 (20)
Don't Know	26 (11)
<u>Crime was reported in media</u>	
No	50 (21)
Yes	24 (10)
Don't Know	26 (11)

Cases in Past Five Years

We asked respondents a series of questions about all of the cases they had handled in the past five years involving CP production (see Table 2-7). Most victims were female. Ages ranged from younger than five into adulthood, since some respondents had treated adults who were photographed as children. We asked respondents if they had worked with any victims in the following situations:

- Victims who were abused and photographed for more than one year – Over 40%
- Victims solicited online by adults to create CP – Over 40%
- Victims of sex trafficking depicted in CP – Almost 20%
- Victims depicted in CP that showed violence – 5%

Table 2-7. Characteristics of All Cases Involving CP Production in the Past 5 Years

	n = 42 % (n)
<u>Percentage of female victims</u>	
Less than 50%	14 (6)
50 to 99%	33 (14)
100%	41 (17)
No response	12 (5)
<u>Ages of any victims worked with in past 5 years</u>	
5 or younger	19 (8)
6 to 8	48 (20)

9 to 11	45 (19)
12 or 13	43 (18)
14 or 15	41 (17)
16 or 17	21 (9)
18 or older (adult survivors)	7 (3)
Don't know	2 (1)
<u>Respondent has worked with...</u>	
Victims of sex trafficking depicted in CP	17 (7)
Victims solicited online by adults to create CP	41 (17)
Victims depicted in CP showing violence	5 (2)
Victims abused and photographed for over 1 year	41 (17)
None of the above	31 (13)
<u>Worked with victims who denied abuse or CP despite evidence</u>	
No	64 (27)
Yes, once	24 (10)
Yes, more than once	12 (5)
<u>Worked with victims who had never seen the images and wanted to</u>	
No	88 (37)
Yes, once	7 (3)
Yes, more than once	5 (2)
<u>Worked with victim whose images were distributed online</u>	
No	62 (26)
Yes, once	17 (7)
Yes, more than once	21 (9)
<u>Worked with victims/families who had to decide whether or not to be notified of cases involving CP of victim</u>	
No	21 (9)
Yes, once	7 (3)
Yes, more than once	7 (3)
No response	2 (1)
Not applicable (Had not worked with victims whose images were distributed online)	62 (26)
<u>Worked with victims who participated in prosecutions of suspects who possessed or distributed images by testifying or submitting victim impact statements</u>	
No	14 (6)
Yes, once	5 (2)
Yes, more than once	17 (7)
No response	2 (1)
Not applicable (Had not worked with victims whose images were distributed online)	62 (26)
<u>Worked with victims who sued/ considered suing for restitution</u>	
No	36 (15)
Yes	0
No Response	2 (1)
Not applicable (Had not worked with victims whose images were distributed online)	62 (26)
<u>When victims understand the permanence of images that are distributed online...^a</u>	
They feel powerless and helpless	<u>n = 16</u>
Agree strongly	50 (8)

Agree somewhat	50 (8)
Disagree somewhat	0 (0)
Disagree strongly	0 (0)
Don't know or no response	0 (0)
They fear people they know will see them	
Agree strongly	81 (13)
Agree somewhat	19 (3)
Disagree somewhat	0 (0)
Disagree strongly	0 (0)
Don't know or no response	0 (0)
They worry they will be seen as voluntarily participating	
Agree strongly	44 (7)
Agree somewhat	37 (6)
Disagree somewhat	13 (2)
Disagree strongly	6 (1)
Don't know or no response	0 (0)
They cannot find closure because the images will always be there	
Agree strongly	25 (4)
Agree somewhat	56 (9)
Disagree somewhat	0 (0)
Disagree strongly	6 (1)
Don't know or no response	13 (2)

^a Only asked if respondent had worked on cases where images were distributed online.

Over one-third of respondents answered yes when asked, "Have you had a situation where a victim denied being depicted in images that you knew existed or denied being sexually abused when images showed they had been abused?" About 1 in 10 had this situation more than once. . The contexts of cases involving denial varied.

- "Because my client was intoxicated it was hard [for her] to believe abuse occurred. She had to slowly process the events of the evening as well as when she woke up the next day."
- "The victim still had feelings for the offender and did not want to deal with the abuse. Unfortunately her mother was not supportive and this allowed the victim to continue to deny and not deal with the abuse."
- "Almost every case I have had where there are photos ... the child ... always denied history of sexual abuse until the images are shown. ... Although some children get upset, at the end there is a huge sense of relief."
- "Youth appear embarrassed around this issue and definitely do not want this information to be disclosed in reporting issues that arise. The entire ordeal feels uncomfortable to me as a therapist as well, due to losing some rapport with clients when you are forced to make police or DSS reports."

Most respondents (almost 90%) had not faced a situation “where a victim had never seen the images and wanted to see them.” Two of the practitioners mentioned that they sometimes must show images to victims because law enforcement or prosecutors need to confirm the victim’s identity in a photograph. One described the process in detail:

“I will describe the image (I would like to show you a picture of what appears to be a girl who is a child; she does not have clothes on and there is what appears to be an adult male standing beside her ...). [Then I typically cover up] the picture with paper so that the child can just see the image of the girl for identification. In most cases I have seen the victim uncover the picture and look at it. This has seemed to be helpful to most of the victims who knew about the photographing prior to our interview.”

Most respondents (almost two-thirds) had not worked with victims whose images were distributed online; almost 40% had done so at least once and about 1 in 5 had done so more than once. Only about 1 in 7 respondents had cases in which victims or their families had to decide whether to be notified about suspects prosecuted for possessing or distributing images, based on federal or state victim notification laws. Four respondents had advice for other practitioners in cases involving victim notification:

- “Family therapy, individual therapy, support from victim advocate office, support from prosecutor's office to help the victims if they have to testify in court.”
- “Advocate and educate parents of victims. Let them feel validated and heard. A lot of raw emotions come from this trauma.”
- “Validating family's emotions and providing resources appear to be the most important factors as the family initially learns of the offense.”
- “Issues that arise include a reappearance of symptoms that appeared to have ceased and issues of doubt and recanting the victim's story despite evidence. Review interventions that assisted the client in the past and patience, patience.”

About 1 in 5 respondents had worked with victims who had testified or submitted victim impact statements in prosecutions of suspects who possessed or distributed images of them. No respondents had worked with victims who sued or considered suing for restitution from offenders who distributed or possessed their images.

We asked the subgroup of respondents who had worked with victims whose images were distributed online (n=16) several questions about victim reactions when victims “understand the permanence of images that are distributed online.” Almost all of these respondents agreed either strongly or somewhat that such victims:

- Feel powerless and helpless (half agreed strongly, half agreed somewhat)
- Fear that people they know will see the images (over 80% agreed strongly, almost 20% agreed somewhat)
- Worry they will be seen as voluntarily participating in the abuse (44% agreed strongly, 37% agreed somewhat, 15% disagreed somewhat, 6% disagreed strongly)
- Cannot find closure because the images will always be there (one-quarter agreed strongly, over half somewhat, one respondent disagreed strongly and two answered “don’t know”)

Practitioner Reactions to Working with Victims Depicted in Child Pornography

One-third of respondents considered working with victims depicted in CP more difficult or emotionally challenging than responding to other victims of child sexual abuse (See Table 2-8). We asked all respondents how much they “agree or disagree with the following statements about your own reactions and needs, based on your experiences working with victims depicted in child pornography and their families” (see Table 2-8).

- “I’m not comfortable talking with victims about their images.” Few practitioners felt uncomfortable; most disagreed strongly or somewhat.
- “I have struggled with feelings of helplessness or powerlessness when working with victims depicted in child pornography.” Most did not struggle with such feelings, although the answers to this question were more varied. Two-thirds disagreed either strongly or somewhat and the remaining one-third agreed either strongly or somewhat.
- “I’m concerned about causing distress to victims if I bring up the images.” Most practitioners disagreed strongly or somewhat.
- “I don’t feel I should confront victims about images or tell them about images if they don’t know about them.” Two-third disagreed strongly or somewhat, but the remaining one-third agreed either strongly or somewhat.
- “To effectively help victims, I need more information about technical aspects of the internet.” Most respondents felt that they needed more of this type of information; almost two-thirds agreed strongly or somewhat, but almost 40% disagreed, indicating they did not feel a strong need for this information in order to treat these clients.

Table 2-8. Practitioner Reactions to Working with Victims Depicted in CP

	n = 42 % (n)
Working with CP victims is more challenging than other CSA victims	
No	67 (28)
Yes	33 (14)

<u>Not comfortable talking with victims about their images</u>	
Agree strongly	3 (7)
Agree somewhat	3 (7)
Disagree somewhat	14 (6)
Disagree strongly	69 (29)
Don't know or no response	2 (1)
<u>Struggled with feelings of helplessness when working with victims depicted in CP</u>	
Agree strongly	2 (1)
Agree somewhat	29 (12)
Disagree somewhat	33 (14)
Disagree strongly	33 (14)
Don't know or no response	2 (1)
<u>Concerned about causing distress to victims if they bring up the images</u>	
Agree strongly	0
Agree somewhat	17 (7)
Disagree somewhat	31 (13)
Disagree strongly	50 (21)
Don't know or no response	2 (1)
<u>Don't feel they should confront victims about images or tell them about images if they don't know about them</u>	
Agree strongly	2 (1)
Agree somewhat	24 (10)
Disagree somewhat	33 (14)
Disagree strongly	29 (12)
Don't know or no response	12 (5)
<u>To effectively help victims, need more information about technical aspects of the internet</u>	
Agree strongly	29 (12)
Agree somewhat	31 (13)
Disagree somewhat	14 (6)
Disagree strongly	24 (10)
Don't know or no response	2 (1)

Working with Parents or Caregivers of Victims Depicted in Child Pornography

Most respondents (71%, n=30) had worked with parents or caregivers while providing treatment to victims depicted in CP in the past five years. We asked respondents who had worked with parents several questions about how these cases compared to other child sexual abuse cases (see Table 2-9).

Most agreed these cases were harder on parents in that parents were angrier and felt more emotional distress compared to other child sexual abuse cases. However, most respondents also felt that parents of children depicted in CP were quicker to believe the abuse happened, and most practitioners disagreed that parents found it harder to be emotionally supportive or did not follow through on treatment.

Table 2-9. Experiences with Parents of Victims Depicted in CP in the Past 5 Years

<u>Compared to other child sexual abuse cases, when there were images parents and caretakers...</u>	n = 30 % (n)
Were quicker to believe their children had been abused	
Agree strongly	33 (10)
Agree somewhat	33 (10)
Disagree somewhat	17 (5)
Disagree strongly	0
Don't know or no response	17 (5)
Were angrier and perpetrators and pressed harder for prosecution	
Agree strongly	23 (7)
Agree somewhat	47 (14)
Disagree somewhat	10 (3)
Disagree strongly	7 (2)
Don't know or no response	13 (4)
Felt more emotional distress	
Agree strongly	37 (11)
Agree somewhat	43 (13)
Disagree somewhat	10 (3)
Disagree strongly	3 (1)
Don't know or no response	7 (2)
Found it harder to provide emotional support to victims	
Agree strongly	10 (3)
Agree somewhat	23 (7)
Disagree somewhat	33 (10)
Disagree strongly	23 (7)
Don't know or no response	10 (3)
Usually had significant financial problems related to the crime	
Agree strongly	7 (2)
Agree somewhat	17 (5)
Disagree somewhat	23 (7)
Disagree strongly	17 (5)
Don't know or no response	37 (11)
Usually did not follow through on referrals to treatment providers or continue treatment	
Agree strongly	7 (2)
Agree somewhat	13 (4)
Disagree somewhat	37 (11)
Disagree strongly	27 (8)
Don't know or no response	17 (5)

Treatment

Most respondents (almost two-thirds) had not noticed differences in trauma symptomatology in victims depicted in CP compared to other victims of child sexual abuse. Most (over 80%) had used Trauma-

Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), a few used Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) or Cognitive Processing. However, only one-third believed they had found a specific intervention to be particularly helpful in treatment with CP victims (see Table 2-10).

About half of respondents disagreed and half agreed on the following items: victims usually don't acknowledge that images were taken, usually refuse to talk about images, often deny being abused despite images or are more complex to work with than other victims.

About half of respondents agreed that the existence of images changes how victims process abuse; only about 20% agreed that the existence of images changes the victim-practitioner relationship. A few respondents thought the existence of images introduced awkwardness or embarrassment into the victim-practitioner relationship because the client knew that the therapist had seen them naked, with one respondent specifically saying this was a very unhealthy dynamic. Another respondent mentioned that some clients have been concerned that she would try to find the images online or would think poorly of them. One respondent said she would probably not videotape a session involving a victim depicted in child pornography.

Table 2-10. Treatment of CP Victims

	n = 42 % (n)
Noticed differences in trauma symptomatology when cases involve CP	
No	64 (27)
Yes	36 (15)
<u>Treatments Used with Victims:</u>	
• Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)	81 (34)
• Cognitive Processing Therapy	17 (7)
• Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT)	5 (2)
• Other treatment approaches	26 (11)
Has found a specific intervention particularly helpful in treatment with CP victims	
No	64 (27)
Yes	33 (14)
No response	2 (1)
<u>Worked with victims whose reactions to images changed over time:</u>	
No	79 (33)
Yes, once	9 (4)
Yes, more than once	9 (4)
No response	2 (1)
<u>Worked with victims who lived with non-victimized siblings:</u>	
No	29 (12)
Yes, once	41 (17)
Yes, more than once	29 (12)

No response	2 (1)
<u>Encountered child and family strengths that improve victim outcomes:</u>	
No	36 (15)
Yes, once	62 (26)
Yes, more than once	0 (0)
No response	2 (1)
<i>Victims depicted in child pornography...</i>	
<u>Usually do not acknowledge that images were taken</u>	
Agree Strongly	7 (3)
Agree Somewhat	33 (14)
Disagree Somewhat	43 (18)
Disagree Strongly	9 (4)
Don't know/No response	7 (3)
<u>Usually refuse to talk about the images</u>	
Agree Strongly	5 (2)
Agree Somewhat	38 (16)
Disagree Somewhat	48 (40)
Disagree Strongly	5 (2)
Don't know/No response	5 (2)
<u>Often deny being abused, even when images show what happened</u>	
Agree Strongly	7 (3)
Agree Somewhat	36 (15)
Disagree Somewhat	36 (15)
Disagree Strongly	12 (5)
Don't know/No response	9 (4)
<u>Are often neglected or physically abused, in addition to being sexually abused</u>	
Agree Strongly	14 (6)
Agree Somewhat	26 (11)
Disagree Somewhat	29 (12)
Disagree Strongly	14 (6)
Don't know/No response	17 (7)
<u>Are more complex to work with than other sexually abused children</u>	
Agree Strongly	12 (5)
Agree Somewhat	33 (14)
Disagree Somewhat	38 (16)
Disagree Strongly	9 (4)
Don't know/No response	7 (3)
<u>Existence of images changes how victims process abuse:</u>	
No	41 (17)
Yes	55 (23)
No Response	5 (2)
<u>Existence of images changes victim-practitioner relationship:</u>	
No	74 (31)
Yes	21 (9)
No Response	5 (2)

Limitations

The findings of the Mental Health Practitioner Online Survey are limited for several reasons. First, we surveyed a convenience sample of mental health practitioners. Participants received links to the online survey because they were affiliated with certain victim advocacy or support groups, or they received a link from another participant. Because the survey reached a group of individuals for whom we had email addresses, their responses do not represent the experiences of all mental health practitioners who work with child pornography production victims. The sample size also is quite small. Second, the study was primarily exploratory in nature. The goal was to learn about mental health practitioners' experiences and is based on respondents' *impressions* of these victims; it is possible that findings would be different if other procedures were used, such as reviewing case files, and results should not be considered representative of all relevant issues presented in these cases. Third, although the survey asked about their most recent case, responses were based on respondents' memories of these cases rather than specific case files, so respondents may have forgotten or confused certain details.