The Role of Culture in Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Disclosure Experiences from the Perspectives of Youth

Megan Simpson
School of Social Work
McGill University, Montreal
August 2019

A Revised Thesis Submitted to McGill University in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirement for the Doctorate Degree in Social Work

Table of Contents

Abstract English

There are three main gaps within the child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure literature that this thesis aims to address namely 1) the absence of diverse populations in children and adolescents' under study for CSA disclosure, 2) the lack of focus on how culture impacts help CSA disclosure processes and finally 3) the omission of the voices of youth broadly, in the CSA literature. Groundwork has been laid in regard to the influence of culture on CSA disclosure. However, culture has often been framed in reference to, and/or synonymous with, demographic categories including language, religion and ethnicity. These categorizations of culture in the CSA literature provide some insights into the experiences of specific groups. However, the insights gained are juxtaposed against the study of culture as a monolithic entity and fails to provide a rich analysis of culture as being an interactional component in people's lives. Therefore, the role of culture in CSA disclosure requires ongoing research; more specifically seminal authors in the field of culture and CSA Fontes and Plummer (2010) argued CSA research is needed that expands beyond categorizations which includes numerous facets of culture. The goal of this thesis is to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of culture in CSA disclosures among a culturally diverse population of youth.

Grounded from a framework of cultural psychology, this thesis answered the following research questions: (1) how culture has been studied thus far in relation to disclosure of CSA; (2) how culture shaped experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth and (3) what common cultural themes emerged as promoting or inhibiting CSA disclosure. The first manuscript is a systematic review of existing literature and concluded that: (1) "culture" has been largely been framed to date with categorical descriptors of ethnicity or religion and (2) some CSA disclosure barriers transcended the ethnic and racial categorizations and were grouped into nine themes: the code of silence, cultural shame, fear of the police or the justice system, family preservation, historical oppression and trauma, lack of resources, protection of the offender, fear of retribution and gender roles. Manuscripts two and three were both based on a qualitative study that involved nine sexually abused youth from diverse cultural backgrounds in Ottawa, Canada. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted to gather data from participants.

Descriptive psychological phenomenology was used as research methodology to gather, organize and analyze data to formulate conclusions. The second manuscript was informed by the research question, "how does culture shape experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives

of youth", and concluded (1) participants narratives of culture extend beyond categorizations, (2) culture determined how participants understood CSA and how they trusted others to disclose, (3) disclosure was a process and finally (4) cultural beliefs shifted as a result of CSA experiences. The conclusions of the third manuscript, were informed by the research question, "what common themes emerged as promoting or inhibiting disclosure, in relation to culture?" concluded: (1) common cultural barriers to disclosure included: lack of sexual education, lack of support, mistrust of authority and intrapersonal feelings around the abuse and (2) more unique barriers related to culture were identified as social economic status, facing discrimination through the lifespan, communal environments, religious beliefs and female oppression.

This thesis' findings highlight the importance for researchers, clinicians, and recipients of disclosure alike to build rapport that is inclusive of understanding victims' culture. Furthermore, people in positions of authority such as police and child protection workers need to be acutely aware of the role of power dynamics across different cultures. Further research is needed in this area to develop a more culturally inclusive model of interviewing potential victims about disclosure. These conclusions are more richly elaborated upon in the manuscripts and final chapter of the thesis.

Abstract French

Il y a trois lacunes principales dans la documentation portant sur la divulgation de l'abus sexuel pendant l'enfance (ASE) que cette thèse vise à aborder : l'absence de diversité culturelle dans les groupes à l'étude, le manque d'attention portée à la façon dont la culture influence la recherche, ainsi que l'inclusion de la vision des jeunes. Bien que le terrain ait été établi dans le domaine de l'ASE en ce qui a lien à la culture, celle-ci a souvent été catégorisée selon des références démographiques simples telles que la langue, la religion et l'ethnicité. Bien que cela puisse donner certains aperçus d'expériences de quelques groupes spécifiques, cette définition simplifiée de la culture sur la base de catégories empêche une analyse profonde des interactions entre les personnes et leurs environnements, ainsi que de l'évolution de la manière dont les personnes observent leurs pratiques culturelles. Le rôle de la culture dans le processus de divulgation est un domaine de recherche essentiel afin d'approfondir nos connaissances au-delà des catégorisations ethniques, en y faisant valoir plusieurs facettes additionnelles de la culture.

Le but de cette thèse est d'approfondir la compréhension du rôle de la culture dans le contexte des divulgations de l'ASE auprès d'une population culturellement diversifiée d'adolescents.

Une étude de recherche originale a été menée pour analyser l'effet de la culture sur le processus de divulgation de l'expérience des jeunes. Basée sur le cadre de la psychologie culturelle, cette étude a répondu aux questions de recherche suivantes : (1) De quelle façon le rôle de la culture dans le dévoilement de l'ASE a-t-il été étudié jusqu'à présent? (2) De quelle manière la culture influence-t-elle les expériences de la dévoilementde l'ASE du point de vue des jeunes et (3) Quels thèmes communs ont émergé promouvant, ou inhibant la divulgation? Le premier manuscrit est une revue de la littérature existante et conclut que : (1) les descripteurs catégoriques de la « culture » étudiés jusqu'à présent sont synonymes des termes ethnicité et religion et (2) que quelques barrières de dévoilement transcendent les catégorisations ethniques et raciales et s'articulant autour de neuf thèmes : le code du silence, la honte, la peur de la police ou du système judiciaire, la préservation de la famille, l'oppression historique et le traumatisme, le manque de ressources, la protection du contrevenant, la peur du châtiment et les rôles de genre. Le deuxième et le troisième manuscrit sont basés sur une étude qualitative menée auprès de neuf jeunes victimes d'ASE provenant de divers milieux culturels à Ottawa (Canada). La phénoménologie psychologique descriptive a été utilisée comme méthodologie de recherche pour recueillir, organiser et analyser des données pour formuler des conclusions. Des entrevues téléphoniques semi-structurées ont été menées. Le deuxième manuscrit est basé sur la question de recherche, « comment la culture influence-t-elle les expériences de divulgation de l'ASE du point de vue des jeunes », et a conclu que : (1) la divulgation de l'ASE est décrite comme un processus indépendamment de la culture des participants, (2) les définitions de la culture s'étendent au-delà des catégorisations raciales, ethniques et religieuses et (3) les croyances culturelles peuvent changer à la suite des expériences de l'ASE. Les conclusions du troisième manuscrit, basées sur la question de recherche « quels thèmes communs ont émergé comme promouvant ou inhibant la divulgation » ont indiqué que : (1) les barrières culturelles communes à la divulgation comprenaient : le manque d'éducation sexuelle, le manque de soutien, la méfiance à l'égard de l'autorité et des sentiments intrapersonnels autour de l'abus et (2) des barrières plus spécifiques liées à la culture ont été identifiées telles que le statut socio-économique, la discrimination, les milieux communautaires, les croyances religieuses et l'oppression envers les femmes.

Les résultats de cette thèse mettent en évidence l'importance pour les cliniciens, et les récipiendaires de divulgations, d'établir des rapports qui incluent la compréhension de la culture des victimes. Les personnes occupant des postes d'autorité tels que la police et les travailleurs de la protection de la jeunesse doivent être parfaitement conscients de l'impact de la dynamique du pouvoir dans différentes cultures. D'autres recherches sont requises dans ce domaine, pour élaborer un modèle plus inclusif culturellement, pour la conduite d'entrevue de victimes potentielles au sujet de la divulgation de l'ASE.

Acknowledgements

I would first and foremost like to acknowledge my doctoral thesis advisor Dr. Collin-Vezina without whom I would not have had the opportunity to complete this thesis. Dr. Collin-Vezina acted as my graduate supervisor during my Master of Social Work degree and I was then able to seek her counsel within her in her role as the academic advisor for the clinical intervention group for sexual abuse during my career as a youth protection delegate. Dr. Collin-Vezina's mentorship, expertise and accomplishments drove me to pursue my doctoral degree in hopes of following her path. Dr. Collin-Vezina has remained an unwavering academic and emotional support during this journey. Her knowledge base, skill sets, guidance and leadership have all inspired me and taught me to become an academic researcher in the field of child sexual abuse.

The second most important figure during this journey is Dr. Krane. Dr. Krane has been on this journey with me since the beginning of my comprehensive exams to the completion of this thesis. Her confidence in this thesis continued to inspire me when this project felt unattainable.

The support from my fellow students at the Centre for Research on Children and Families provided an inclusive support network among graduate students so this thesis never felt like a lone journey. The Centre for Research on Children and Families provided so many opportunities for growth as an academic with ongoing training, fellowships, and seminars to advance my knowledge base.

I am grateful to my family of origin, my mother Cindy Simpson (M. ED), my father Michael Simpson (CA-CPA) and my older sister Dr. Sara Simpson (MD) all of whom instilled the value and importance of education from a young age. They taught me anything was possible,

and no doors were closed to those willing to put forth the necessary effort to succeed in any respective career.

I dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Isabella, born shortly after my comprehensive exam who gave me the strength and perseverance to never give up. I wanted to model to my child, that which was modelled to me; with hard work you can achieve any dream you set your mind too.

Lastly, I would like to thank my spouse, Joseph Pereira. Joseph celebrated my milestones and lead me through setbacks during the overall process. He took on extra household and child rearing responsibilities during the final stages of my thesis, allowing me to maintain both a focus and life balance over the past three years.

Finally, I would like to thank my finding body Le Fonds De Recherche De Société et Culture, whose financial contribution made much of this thesis possible.

Contributions of Original Knowledge

All three manuscripts are contributing to advancing original knowledge in the field of culture and CSA disclosure. The first manuscript advanced the state of knowledge surrounding culture and CSA disclosure by means of a systemic review. The original data collected for the purpose of this thesis gave voices to nine survivors who expressed how culture impacted their experiences of CSA disclosure. These voices helped generate new and innovative findings for the study of culture and CSA including: (1) disclosure is a process, (2) cultural beliefs shift as a result of CSA experiences, (3) culture should be recognized as a universal barrier to CSA disclosure (4) some barriers were common across different cultures and (5) there are unique cultural barriers presented for the first time.

Contribution of Authors

Simpson, M. developed designed the research project, developed the theoretical framework, methodology and analyzed the data. Collin-Vézina, D. and Krane, J. contributed to the design and implantation of the research as well as the writing of the manuscripts.

Introduction

Child sexual abuse (CSA) and sexual violence against women are gaining increasing public awareness in North America. Social media campaigns, victims' statements and celebrity sexual assault experiences are becoming increasingly available to the general public highlighting the hidden epidemic of CSA and sexual violence. Campaigns such as "Take Back the Night", a worldwide protest against sexual violence and violence against women, is becoming increasingly popular (Take Back the Night, 2018). Sexual violence against women has come to the forefront of social media attention in part due to the "Me Too" campaign. Ohlheisher (2017) stated Tarana Burke created the "Me Too" movement in 2006 to highlight sexual assault and harassment among racialized women. This campaign became a strong media presence in 2017 and inspired millions of posts on Facebook and social media with women across the globe indicating they too had been victims of CSA and sexual assault by creating a social media post with "#MeToo". This "#Me Too" campaign is closely aligned with the "Black Lives Matter" campaign that protests against police brutality and racial profiling in the United States of America (Black Lives Matter, 2018). The focus of both campaigns address experiences of violation of racialized individuals. This thesis is timely given the heightened social consciousness around issues of both racialization and sexual violence. This thesis explores how culture impacts CSA disclosure experiences from the perspectives of youth.

Despite the growing public awareness of CSA and sexual violence, rates of CSA reported to authorities remain low. CSA is measured by incidence rates or prevalence rates reported to either authorities or retrospectively disclosed. The incidence rate of CSA refers to the total number of CSA incidents during any given time period, while the prevalence rates of CSA refer to the total number of people in the population who have endured CSA usually over the course of their lifetime.

Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser and Nakermans-Kranenburg (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of the prevalence of CSA around the world. The sample was comprised of Australia/New Zealand, North America, Europe, Africa, South America and Asia.
These authors concluded that the combined prevalence rates for females who experienced CSA under the age of 18 years old was 18%. While the combined prevalence rate for males who experienced CSA under the age of 18 years old was 7.6%. Lastly the combined prevalence rate for samples with mixed genders was who were under the age of 18 years old when they

experienced CSA was 8.7%. Furthermore, the highest combined prevalence rates were found in the Australian population. The lowest combined prevalence rates were found in Asia.

Barth and associates (2013) also conducted a systematic review of global prevalence rates of CSA. They sampled the following continents: Asia (16) studies, North American (14) studies. Europe (11) studies, Africa (9) studies and Central American (5) studies. They concluded that 15% of females and 8% of males had suffered CSA. These prevalence rates were somewhat lower than Stoltenburgh and associates (2011).

In the Canadian context, Canadian adult retrospective studies suggest that self-reported experiences of CSA indicated a much higher prevalence rates of at least one in five women and one in ten men experiencing CSA victimization (Hébert, Tourigny, Cyr, McDuff & Joly, 2009; MacMillan, Tanaka, Duku, Vaillancourt & Boyle, 2013).

However, the Canadian Incidence Study (CIS) indicated that only about two percent of all cases reported to youth protection authorities involved allegations of CSA as a form of maltreatment, which represents an incidence rate of 0.34 per 1000 children (Trocmé et al., 2010). Furthermore, a report by Statistics Canada (2014) indicated that in the year 2012, the incidence rate of CSA reported to authorities was 2.05 per 1000 children and youth under 18 across Canada (Cotter & Beaupré, 2014). Contrary to prevalence rates, these incidence rates in isolation have suggested that CSA among the Canadian population is not a common occurrence.

This overall discrepancy in reporting rates surrounding incidence and prevalence rates of CSA victimization and disclosure of CSA coincides with empirical research, which demonstrates a major lack of convergence between the low number of official reports of CSA to authorities, and the high rates of CSA that youth and adults self-report retrospectively. Indeed, international findings showed the rates of CSA to be 30 times greater in studies relying on self-reports than in official report inquiries, such as those based on data from child protection services and the police (Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser & Nakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). The low disclosure of CSA to authorities may be a key factor to explain this discrepancy.

The process of disclosure is impacted by several factors including: the victim's age, the victim's gender, the nature and severity of the abuse, the perpetrator, the victims understanding of sexual abuse, and the nature of the family (supportive or unsupportive) (Paine & Hanson, 2002). However, most studies examining CSA disclosure have focused primarily on Caucasian populations (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Elliot & Briere, 1994; Sorenson & Snow, 1991) or have not provided information

about the cultural, racial or ethnic background of participants (Alaggia, 2004; Collin-Vézina, De la Sablonnière-Griffin, Palmer & Milne, 2015; Denov, 2003; Faller & Nelson-Gardell, 2005; Gries, Goh & Cavanaugh, 1997; Hunter, 2011; McElvaney, Greene & Hogan, 2014). Given the multicultural nature of modern-day society and the risk of wrongfully generalizing findings from Caucasian populations to all groups, it seems imperative that more research on the intersection of culture and CSA to be conducted. In addition, most studies have relied on adult populations and a lack of voices of youth in the CSA disclosure literature has been noted by several authors (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Elliot & Briere, 1994; London, Bruck, Ceci & Shuman, 2005; Sorenson & Snow, 1991).

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore how culture impacts CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth. Some groundwork has been laid in the field of culture and CSA disclosure, with particular attention being drawn to the seminal work of Fontes and Plummer (2010) they argued CSA research is needed that expands beyond categorizations which includes numerous facets of culture. The goal of this thesis is to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of culture in CSA disclosures among a culturally diverse population of youth.

However, the CSA literature has often been framed on limited aspects of culture, e.g. language, religion and ethnicity. Examples of studies that examined CSA disclosure using a demographical or preconceived category of ethnicity include: Indigenous (McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995) African American (Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith & Marks, 2010; Wyatt, 1990; Wyatt, Loeb, Solis & Carmona, 1999) Arab (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A) Asian (Futa, Hsu & Henson, 2001; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006) and South American (Comas-Diaz, 1995; Lira, Koss, & Russo, 1999). While this literature does provide some insights into the experiences of specific ethnic groups, the authors presupposed some level of homogeneity among inter-group experiences. Moreover, culture is reduced down to a categorical framework and promotes dominant group experiences. This monolithic perspective of culture has also influenced how child sexual abuse is conceptualized and studied. There is no universally accepted definition of CSA or model of CSA disclosure. Borrowing from the conceptualizations of Stoltenburgh and associates (2011) in which CSA is considered socially constructed, it stands to reason that understandings and experiences of CSA vary according to culture, ethnicity and religion.

The North American landscape is both ethnically and religiously diverse. As such, the theoretical and empirical state of knowledge regarding CSA should be congruent with the diverse reality of the North American population. The Canadian census (2016) indicated that 41.1 % of the Canadian population identified more than one origin. In 2016, individuals reported that they retained up to six origins across different continents individually (Statistics Canada, 2016). Fifteen percent (15.1%) were foreign born, with the largest groups coming from Asia and Africa, and 6.2% identified as having Aboriginal origins (Statistics Canada, 2016). Furthermore, two thirds of the population identified with some religious affiliation, with the following groups listed representing the largest to smallest identified number of religious followers, Roman Catholic, Christian, Muslim, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Judaism (Statistics Canada, 2011). A similar pattern of ethnic diversity is seen in the USA with approximately 40% of Americans identifying as other than White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Approximately 61% of the population identified as White, 17% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino, 13% identified as Black or African American, 6% identified as Asian, 2% identified as having two or more races and 1% identified as American Indian. Finally, 13% of the US population were foreign-born.

Another important consideration when addressing the discrepancy in reporting rates of CSA is to garner knowledge from youth themselves. Youth can provide insights into their experiences without any potential distortions in memory as the experience has happened more recently then retrospective accounts provided by adults. The voices and perspectives of youth within CSA literature are indeed a rare commodity. The underrepresentation of youth voices has resulted in an overreliance on adult retrospective accounts of CSA to determine rates of incidence and prevalence (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Elliot & Briere, 1994; London, Bruck, Ceci & Shuman, 2005; Sorenson & Snow, 1991). In studies that have focused on child and youth populations, the conclusions are often drawn from file reviews (Bradley & Wood, 1996; Gries, Goh & Cavanaugh, 1997; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Faller, Cordisco-Steele & Nelson-Gardell, 2010). While these authors highlighted the importance of collecting data from youth as valuable insights were garnered, bias or misrepresentation or misinterpretation of files is possible. Therefore, youth are being selected as the population of interest for the sample of this thesis.

The structure of the dissertation is outlined below. The purpose of the first chapter is twofold: to explore the theoretical underpinnings of the term culture and how the term culture

has been operationalized in empirical scholarship across different disciplines. The thesis argues that culture should be studied using the lens of cultural psychology.

The purpose of the second chapter is to present the state of knowledge regarding CSA disclosure literature. This dissertation argues culture must be incorporated into the field of study of CSA disclosure. Building upon this argument will require demonstrating the present state of knowledge as well as the cultural inclusions within the present knowledge base. The chapter is divided into three sections: the history of CSA, conceptualizations of disclosure and empirically tested models of disclosure and finally barriers and facilitators of CSA.

The third chapter describes the methodological framework utilized for the doctoral research study. The methodology was informed by the research practice of one particular qualitative research method, namely, descriptive psychological phenomenology. In this chapter, the introduction of the central premises underpinning the methodological framework are discussed as well as how the research was conducted.

The fourth chapter is a manuscript; a systematic review of empirical literature which explores what is already known about the relationship between culture and CSA disclosure. The objective of this systemic review is to examine the research related to culture and CSA or sexual assault disclosure to discover what can be learned and what can be applied to future research endeavours. Two major findings emerged from the systemic review. The first finding was that, existing research on CSA disclosure used categorical descriptors of "culture" to describe participants on the basis of ethnicity and religion. The second major finding was that some disclosure barriers transcended the ethnic and racial categorizations and nine themes emerged: the code of silence, cultural shame, fear of the police or the justice system, family preservation, historical oppression and trauma, lack of resources, protection of the offender, fear of retribution and gender roles. The target journal for this manuscript is: Journal of Child Sexual Abuse.

The fifth chapter and second manuscript are derived from the qualitative research study that focuses on the role of culture, from the perspectives of youth in the CSA disclosure process. More specifically, this study seeks to answer the following core question; how does culture shape experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth? Descriptive psychological phenomenology was used as a research method to gather, organize and analyze data to formulate conclusions. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with nine self-identified sexually abused youth from diverse cultural backgrounds in Ottawa (Canada). The results of the

study in regard to the research question revealed regardless of culture, CSA disclosure is considered to be a process, definitions of culture extend beyond racial, ethnic and religious categorizations and finally cultural beliefs can shift as a result of CSA experiences. The target journal for this manuscript is: Child Abuse and Neglect.

The sixth chapter and third manuscript are derived from the one qualitative research study that focuses on the role of culture, from the perspectives of youth, in the CSA disclosure process that examines the following core research question; what cultural themes emerge that promote or inhibit disclosure? Descriptive psychological phenomenology was used as a research method, to gather, collect, organize and analyze data to formulate conclusions. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with nine sexual abused youth from diverse cultural backgrounds in Ottawa (Canada). The results of the study in regard to the core research question indicated that common cultural barriers to disclosure included: lack of sexual education, lack of support, mistrust of authority, and intrapersonal feelings around the abuse. More unique barriers related to culture were identified as social economic status, facing discrimination through the life span, communal environments, religious beliefs and female oppression. The target journal will be: Psychology of Violence.

The final chapter synthesizes the above-mentioned chapters. The goal of this dissertation was to contribute to a less widely explored body of research pertaining to the impact of culture on CSA disclosures among adolescent populations.

Chapter One: What is Culture: Theoretical and Empirical Knowledge

This chapter examines the central theoretical underpinning for the thesis. The position of social work was assessed. This assessment influenced the final choice for the theoretical position underpinning the dissertation. Ultimately, conceptualizations of culture in the field of social work aligned with a much broader theoretical framework that was the most suitable theory for the thesis, namely cultural psychology.

What is Culture: The Position of Theory

Social Work

Laird (1998) sought to theorize culture in the field of social work. Laird claimed that terms such as cultural diversity, multiculturalism, culturally sensitive practice and cultural competence had become overused phrases associated with social work and mental health in the 1990's. She argued that words such as, culture, gender, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation were used as though they had universally agreed upon definitions, and meanings. She maintained that Western society has organized itself around difference and binaries among groups. While Laird argued culture was an interdisciplinary topic with "floods" (p.100) of literature, her goal was to look at various ideas and metaphors about how culture was conceptualized and defined.

Laird (1998) argued, "we" (p.102) need to move beyond static definitions of culture and look at individual narratives to gain more understanding of the term culture. Studying individual narratives called for moving beyond how terms such as ethnicity were taught and conflated with constructs of culture. She argued, in using a more narrative approach, when definitions cannot be agreed upon, culture can be studied from a position of informed not knowing. When moving beyond the static definition of culture, culture should be regarded as performed, fluid and emergent, intersectional constitutive and political. As such, she claimed that culture is neither measurable nor generalizable. In order to study culture, she purported, the researcher must deconstruct cultural self-narratives. Laird (2000) did not define culture as a finite entity but rather as layers of identity that constitute a person. In summary, Laird is conveying the message that culture (whether we are talking about gender, age, race, or other cultural categories) is an individual and social construction, a constantly evolving and changing set of meanings that can be understood only in the context of a narrativized past, a co-interpreted present, and a wished

for future. It is always contextual, emergent, improvisational, transformational, and political; above all, a matter of linguistics or of language, of discourse. It is meaning defined and itself definitional and constitutive. This thesis takes a similar position as Laird regarding the study of culture, that is, this thesis will use participants' self-constructed narratives. However, a heavier theory laden approach will be incorporated with deconstructing individual cultural narratives.

Dean (2001) claimed that cross-cultural competence had become catchword in the field of social work. She claimed culture could be synonymous with membership in assigned cultural categories such as race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, sexual orientation or being able-bodied. Early definitions of culture, she stated, treated groups as though they were static or monolithic. However, more contemporary definitions of culture presented culture as individualistic and socially constructed. She proposed a modernist view of culture as one-dimensional. While a post-modernist view of culture has highlighted the changing and evolving nature of culture identities. She supported that the study of culture should come from a position of naiveté as opposed to a knowledge-based approach. This thesis will study culture from a position of not knowing in so far as participants will be able to define culture in their own personal manner.

More recently, Bogo (2018) created a concrete definition of culture for social workers. She defined culture broadly, referring to the values, beliefs, expectations and meanings people use to interpret their experiences within the world. She argued that culture would influence one's actions and behaviours that are deemed appropriate in different situations. She positioned culture as neither one-dimensional nor static. Culture was positioned as inclusive of ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability and the complex interplay across these dimensions shifting over time. Furthermore, she claimed the terms culture and ethnicity are often used interchangeably. Her underlying argument was not in favour of the interchangeable use of terms such as ethnicity, which refers to people who share a common ancestry, as they do not necessarily, share the same values, beliefs and expectations. Bogo's definition of culture is somewhat less abstract and more tangible. The notion of values, beliefs, expectations and meanings could be used to help deconstruct participants' definitions of culture.

The discipline of social work has positioned culture as a layered fluid dynamic entity. The discipline of social work has been very clear in its stance of culture being multi-layered and that it should not be conflated with static dimensions of identity such as ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. The field of social work has provided some valuable insights into how culture

will be studied within the context of this dissertation. What will be taken from the field of social work's position on culture includes deconstructing personal narratives of culture, coming from a position of not knowing and possibly looking at values, beliefs and meanings, to help guide the deconstruction of narratives. While these ideas for studying and interpreting culture are useful; they lack a more in-depth theoretical framework. While social work informed the conceptual approach to the term culture in this thesis, a theoretical framework was still needed to guide the overall thesis.

Cultural Psychology and Advancing the Field of CSA

Cultural psychology arose out of an increased intellectual awareness of the role of the culture in the modern world (Stigler, Shweder & Herdt, 1990). This theory surfaced in coordination with scientific interest emerging in the fields of: enthopsychological theories, interest in cultural artifacts, interest in tools of thought and interest among developmentalists and sociolinguists in the role of inter-subjective processes and constructions of the self. This theory also emerged in response to premises in general psychology that presupposed an intrinsic psychic unity among humans. Stigler, Shweder and Herdt (1990) argued that,

> *Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting in less psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, body and emotion (p.1).*

Cultural psychology is less concerned with unity of cultural experiences, but rather places more emphasis on different experiences. The aim of cultural psychology was to examine "the different kinds of things that continually happen in social interaction, and in social practice, as the intentionality of a person meets the intentionality of a world and they jointly facilitate, express, repress, stabilize, transform and defend each other" throughout the life of a person and world (Stigler, Shweder & Herdt, 1990, p.27). Thus, culture lives within each individual, transforms and evolves as humans continue to develop and interact within the world around them. This is not to state individuals have no similarity in their experiences but rather experiences are divergent.

Ratner (2010) took a broader approach to defining cultural psychology when he described it as,

> *Broad macro cultural factors, such as social institutions, (e.g., government, army, church, health care, media, corporations) and*

> *cultural artifacts (cars, highways, malls, factories, school buildings, books and clothing) and cultural concepts (about women, children, work, time, justice, honour, success, character, wealth, land, abortion) form the origin, locus, characteristics, operating mechanism and function of psychological phenomena (p.9).*

Interactions at different levels produce and regulate human feelings, values, meanings and behaviours (Ratner, 2010). Interactions exist across various levels; at the personal level in self-reflection, the micro level in interaction with others and at the macro level in interactions with broader social structures. Cultural psychology is concerned with studying the interactions between environmental systems and social structures, and how they regulate one another. Looking through the lens of cultural psychology, to understand culture and CSA disclosure, calls for understanding CSA in the context of self-reflection, interactions with others upon disclosure, and how society has influenced perceptions of CSA and disclosure more generally.

Shweder (1990) theorized that cultural psychology is premised on the notion of existential human uncertainty, a search for meaning, and the intentional conception of constituted worlds. No sociocultural environment can exist, or has identity, independent of the way meaning is seized from it. Further, every human being has their cognition altered from the process of seizing meaning and resources from their environment (Shweder, 1990). Meaning making and intentional worlds are mutually constituted. Markus and Hamedani (2006) echoed this view labeling this process as interdependence.

The author argued that the principle of meaning making was founded on the fact that human beings needed to and were motivated to create meaning and seek resources from their environment; an environment arranged to provide them with such, from the moment of birth (Shweder, 1990). D'Andrade (1990), Benson (2001A) Ratner (2010A) have both asserted much of meaning making was constructed through the product of language, more specifically; the way entities were categorized, packaged and represented in linguistic form. People acted in accordance with the meaning they attributed to entities, "There are intentional persons reacting to, and directing their behavior with respect to their own descriptions and mental representations of things" (Shweder, 1990, p.24). Markus and Hamedani (2006) argued that meanings created are represented as ideas, images, representations, attitudes, values, prototypes and stereotypes.

The concept of an intentional world is a sociocultural environment (Shweder, 1990). It is said to be an intentional world if, "its existence is real, factual and forceful, but only as long as there exists a community of persons whose beliefs, desires and emotions, purposes and other

mental representations are directed at it, and are therefore influenced by it" (p.2). Intentional worlds are human artifactual worlds as products of human's design populate them.

An intentional world can contain events, processes, practices, visible entities, and crafted objects (Shweder, 1990). Intentional things, such as those listed above, have no natural reality independent of human understanding and activities (Shweder, 1990). The principle that underlies intentional worlds is such that nothing is real, and realities are the product of the way things get represented, embedded, implemented and reacted to in various contexts (Shweder, 1990). Benson (2001) argued that one's world would shape the person while the person will have shaped their path within the world. People become deeply embedded in the worlds that they create and make decisions in accordance with their needs and what is available to them. From the standpoint of intentional worlds regarding studying different groups, "this should be conceived as the study of how different sociocultural environments become different by virtue of the ways they are differently constituted psychologically by different people so as to possess different response evocation potentials" (Shweder, 1990, p.6).

Meaning making and intentional worlds reinforce each other and are labeled as mutual constitution. Shweder (1990) and Ratner (2010A) have asserted that humans and sociocultural environments interpret and reinforce each other's identity, as these identities are interdependent upon one another. Markus and Hamedani (2006) call this a dynamic process where ideas, practices, and products are not fixed but subject to complex distributions of mental representation. People and worlds are mutually constituted as, "Every person is stimulus bound while every stimulus is person bound" (Shweder, 1990, p.24). Culture and individual psyche effectively create each other (Shweder, 1990). Nothing exists independent of our involvement with it (Shweder, 1990). Markus and Hamedani (2006) describe this interdependence as,

> *the psychological – typically defined as patterns of thought, feeling and action [the mind], the psyche, the self, agencies, mentalities, ways of being, or modes of operating is grounded in and also fosters the sociocultural [social world]" (p.3). Mutual constitution implies there is a continuum of feedback loops and non-linear relationships constantly undergoing transformation (Shweder, 1990, Markus and Hamedani, 2006).*

This mutually constituted relationship can be positive or negative, active or passive (Shweder, 1990). Relationships are positive when the world supports the view of the individual and negative when the world does not support the view of the individual (Shweder, 1990). A

relationship is active when a person participates in the creation or selection of the intentional world or passive when a person lives in an intentional world created by others (Shweder, 1990). Meaning making, intentional worlds and mutual constitution as represented through the lens of cultural psychology provide a unique perspective in the field of CSA. This framework can provide insight into the field that is not part of the child sexual abuse literature to date.

The first consideration when utilizing the lens of cultural psychology is the understanding of CSA. The lens of cultural psychology is consistent with how CSA is understood as a social problem because CSA is dynamically contrived in environmental contexts. For example, as per Matthews and Collin-Vezina (2019), a central problem in the worldwide community is the lack of a definition of CSA or clear universal understanding of CSA. CSA and meaning are deconstructed across different locations, contexts and structural levels.

Structural institutions, such as youth protection authorities and the legal and judiciary systems called upon to respond to CSA and deconstruct the meaning of CSA to impose consequences. However, Matthews and Collin Vezina (2019) have argued ambiguity surrounding the term of CSA and the absence of a concrete definition are indeed problematic for recognition and prevention of CSA. Canadian as a nation demonstrates the fluidity of the conceptualization of CSA. Canada has no universally agreed upon definition of CSA and as such the provinces have differing definitions of what constitutes CSA, which children should be declared victims, and what actions should be taken to resolve the contextual problem. For example, in the province of Quebec, sexual exploitation of minors under the age of 18 has just been recently included under the child protection law as a child sexual abuse offense.

At the micro level, the meaning of CSA to any given individual is constructed by structural intuitions. The laws implemented by different structures then trickle down to form social norms individuals follow in the daily lives. As per Matthews and Collin-Vezina (2019) it can be both difficult and problematic to understand the social norms surrounding CSA when they are represented so vaguely. This is problematic for individuals in their country of origin as well as those who migrate and are trying to adapt to diverging laws and social norms. A larger scale example is that in some countries CSA might have to involve contact touching to be considered an offense whereas in most provinces in Canada CSA does not require sexual touching (e.g. exhibitionism and voyeurism). Consequently, in one given country, a person who has an

experience of voyeurism would be considered a *victim* of CSA, while in another country this same experience would be framed differently.

Taken a step further, modern understandings of CSA have potential gaps. People who come to the attention of authorities are people who actively engage in an intentional world. This means that victims who come forward believe they have been sexually abused and accept the socially produced definition. Where researchers and clinicians can find themselves perplexed is in situations of people viewing CSA as a passive intentional construct being thwarted upon them. This refers to victims or perpetrators and victims of crimes who disagree with the socially constructed conceptualization of CSA and find themselves being labelled as a victim or perpetrator. For example, a teenager who is involved in prostitution may not perceived herself as a victim, and rather be interpreting this as a conscious choice she made to trade sex for money. Thus, labelling her as a victim she would find herself in a situation with the intentional construct of CSA victim being thwarted upon her. Research has failed to collect information about people who do not believe in the prevailing definition of child sexual abuse or have alternate meanings.

In the context of the research goals, and the context of cultural psychology, it is paramount that the meaning of CSA at macro and micro levels, as well as contributing belief systems, be examined thoroughly to completely understand the experience of abuse and disclosure, or lack thereof. More broadly, these specific premises examined through the lens of cultural psychology inform the field of CSA by addressing the meaning and construction of CSA. Further, this context reminds researchers and clinicians not to make the assumption that the construct of CSA is absolute.

Cultural Definition for Thesis

Cultural psychologists defined culture in a fluid manner incorporating different structural layers and elements of the human psyche. Cultural psychology is largely concerned with the interaction between the social environment and the human psyche and how they influence one another in constant reciprocity. Culture is not presented as a tangible fixed term. Rather, culture is positioned as a fluid dynamic system comprised of interactions. Regarding culture as a fluid dynamic is directly aligned to the objectives set forth in this thesis. This definition of culture allows for flexibility in how culture is described and experienced by participants. Furthermore, this operationalization definition of culture dispels myths of homogeneity among culture, which this thesis supports, when studying culture.

For the purposes of sampling within the study, culture will have no fixed definition and participants will define culture in accordance with their understanding of the term. By not imposing a definition of culture, participant's narratives and their personal understanding of 'culture' will be examined in relation to CSA disclosure. This would be somewhat congruent with Laird's (2000) position of studying culture from a stance of informed not knowing.

For the purpose of analysis, culture will be viewed through the lens of cultural psychology; culture is interaction, unique, and interactional. The study does not seek to reduce culture down to a finite entity or fixed definition. Therefore, in congruence with the theory of cultural psychology, culture will be analyzed within a framework where culture is viewed as a fluid interdependence between how individuals perceive their environment and how their environment in turn influences them (Ratner, 2010). This lens is consistent with teachings throughout my social work education a personal philosophy that supports people cannot be understood in isolation from their environment.

Chapter Two: The Theoretical and Empirical Knowledge Base of CSA and CSA Disclosure

Recognition of CSA in Canada and the Canadian Population

The conceptualization of CSA as a social construct emerged with the rise of the feminist and children's rights movement approximately forty years ago [1980's] (Grondin, 2011). Prior to that time, children had little protection from sexual predators because children were viewed as blameworthy seducers or willing participants of sexual acts. The shift in thinking about children as victims came about as a result of women's rights activism and medical experts' efforts to dispel these myths. This activism fuelled a movement for the adoption of legislation to recognize children as victims of CSA (Grondin, 2011).

Recognizing children as victims of CSA is part of the larger state sanctioned duty to protect children from harm, including CSA. Bala, Hornick & Vogl (1991) stated that it has not always been publicly accepted that the state has a duty to protect children. Ontario's first official child protection act was introduced in 1985 entitled, "The Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)". Regarding CSA, according to Bala and associates (1991), researchers began to uncover that children were too afraid to report sexual abuse. While parents, and professionals alike, often dismissed children's complaints of CSA. Under section 37.2 (c) of the CFSA act (1985), CSA was described as, "the child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child" (n.p.). Later in 2008, the Lieutenant Governor repealed and amended this section of the act and amended clause 37.2 (c) to be defined as, "the child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited, including by child pornography, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child" and added 37.2 (d), "there is a risk that the child is likely to be sexually molested or sexually exploited as described in clause (c)" (n.p.) . This revised legislation enabled children to be protected from CSA in a preventative rather than reactive fashion.

The youth protection legislation in Ontario was amended for a third time in 2017 regarding CSA in the form of Bill 89 entitled "The Children, Youth and Families Act, 2017". Under Article 74.2 (c) CSA is presently defined as, "the child has been sexually abused or sexually exploited, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the

person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child; or (d) there is a risk that the child is likely to be sexually abused or sexually exploited as described in clause (c)" (n.p.). Over the progression of forty years, the scope and definitions of CSA within the Ontario legislation were broadened to identify different types of CSA.

For the purposes of this thesis, "CSA" refers to those acts that are consistent within the framework that governs child protection across Ontario. As research was conducted in the province of Ontario (Canada), the conceptual definition of CSA is that which is stated in the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (2017). Namely, a child (person aged 0-18) having been sexually abused if, **"**the child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited, including by child pornography, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child" (Ontario Child and Family Services Act, 2017, n.p.).

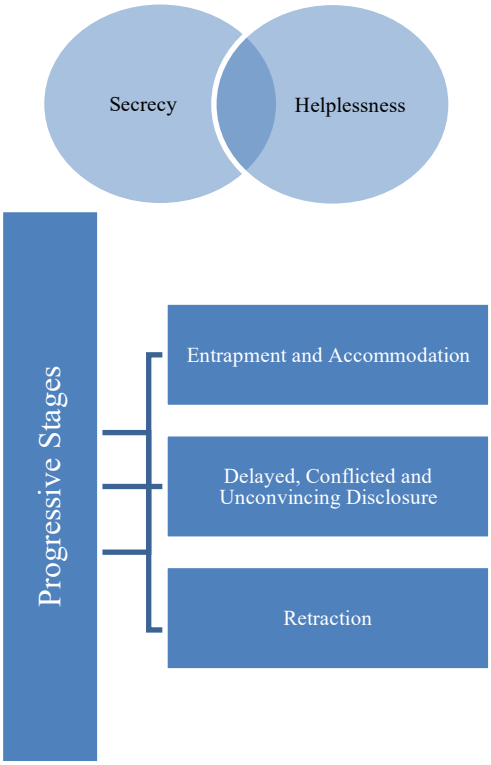
Along with identifying the problem of CSA, youth protection legislation tasks youth protection delegates, professionals who work with children, and members of the public alike, to report and respond to CSA disclosures. In order for youth protection workers, professionals and members of society alike to understand CSA disclosures, it is helpful to understand how disclosure takes place among children and adolescents.

Conceptualizations of Disclosure Theories and Models

A scholarly review of CSA and disclosure uncovered the ongoing debate of whether CSA disclosure is an event, or a process, has gained a lot of attention among scholars. Some conceptual models created by scholars have claimed disclosure is a process with concrete stages while others have argued it is a singular event. Models that have conceptualized disclosure as a process include Summit (1983), Sorenson and Snow (1991), Leonard (1996), Alaggia (2004), Chaudoir and Fisher (2010), Hunter (2011), and McElvaney, Greene and Hogan (2014). In sharp contrast, Bradley and Wood (1996), Gries, Goh and Cavanaugh (1997), London Bruck, Ceci and Shuman (2005) argued it is a singular event. These conceptual models, as well as findings from empirical studies and systemic reviews, will be further described in order to gain insight into this ongoing debate.

In the early 1980's, Roland Summit published a ground-breaking model of CSA disclosure, entitled "The CSA accommodation syndrome"; he proposed a five-stage model of disclosure presented in Figure 1. Summit (1983) developed this model based on clinical observations. This model applied to adolescent female populations of unknown origins. He did not empirically test his model. The stages included in his model were secrecy, helplessness, entrapment and accommodation, delayed and unconvincing disclosure, and retraction. The first two stages were preconditions to the occurrence of CSA while the last three stages occurred sequentially following the CSA. Secrecy surrounding abuse conveyed a message to the child that the abuse was something bad. Maintaining the secret therefore became both a source of fear and promise of safety for the victim. The victim found herself helpless in the situation of an authoritarian relationship. Entrapment and accommodation occurred when the adolescent learned she had no option but to accept the situation for her survival. When the adolescent did make a disclosure, it was classified as delayed, conflicted, and unconvincing. Finally, the adolescent was likely to retract any statements about the abuse she had made. Summit`s model gained such widespread attention that he commented on his model in response to its misuse by professionals, specifically within the legal system (Summit, 1993). Summit argued his model was being used as an instrument or opinion to diagnose or substantiate cases of sexual abuse while his model was a clinical opinion and not a scientific instrument. He clarified the purpose of his model was, "not to prove a child was molested but to rebut the myths which prejudge endorsement of delayed or inconsistent disclosure" (Summit, 1993, p.160). This model, he argued, should be used as a guide as opposed to a standardized instrument.

Figure 1
Summit's (1983) model of disclosure



This model was ground-breaking because it was the first model produced that explained CSA disclosure as a process.

Leonard (1996) integrated components of Summit's model and created a social exchange theory of CSA disclosure. Leonard (1996) components were drawn from perspectives within the social exchange framework to explain the behavioural pattern in the CSA Accommodation Syndrome. Social exchange theory conceptualized social order, social structure and social interaction as effecting social exchanges. Social behaviours were analyzed as processes of exchange. Secrecy according to a model of social exchange stipulated the child was faced with two choices: the child may disclose with frightening consequences or choose to maintain the secret that guaranteed personal violation but might be accompanied by some degree of social approval as well. Social exchange theory suggested that, "from the child's point of view, the price of keeping the secret and enduring further abuse is less costly than revealing the offense and feeling responsible for all the aftermath" (Leonard, 1996, p.111). According to social exchange theory, offenders were motivated by children's helplessness and the reward outweighed the risk of the child disclosing. Victims of continual CSA restored equity only by convincing themselves they deserved the experience. Delayed and unconvincing disclosure

reverted back to the same issues raised in secrecy, namely, the cost-benefit to the child and to the family for the child to disclose. Finally, the retraction phase is described as a response to pressure placed on the child to restore the family and status quo.

Looking beyond disclosure as a process and integrating cultural inclusion, while not explicitly expressed in this model, it is plausible that aspects of a victim's cultural identity might be taken into account. Leonard (1996) claimed that the choice to make a CSA disclosure is associated with negative connotations, which could be reframed using cultural lenses. In Leonard's (1996) model there is a large emphasis on social exchange. The victim will not disclose CSA if the disclosure does not benefit the victim in some form of social exchange. Conversely, the victim could disclose the CSA experience if the disclosure benefits social exchange to the victim in some manner. Regardless of the positive or negative connotation attached to the disclosure, the perception of personal exchange in the context of social order, social structure or social exchange would largely be aligned with personal belief systems associated with culture.

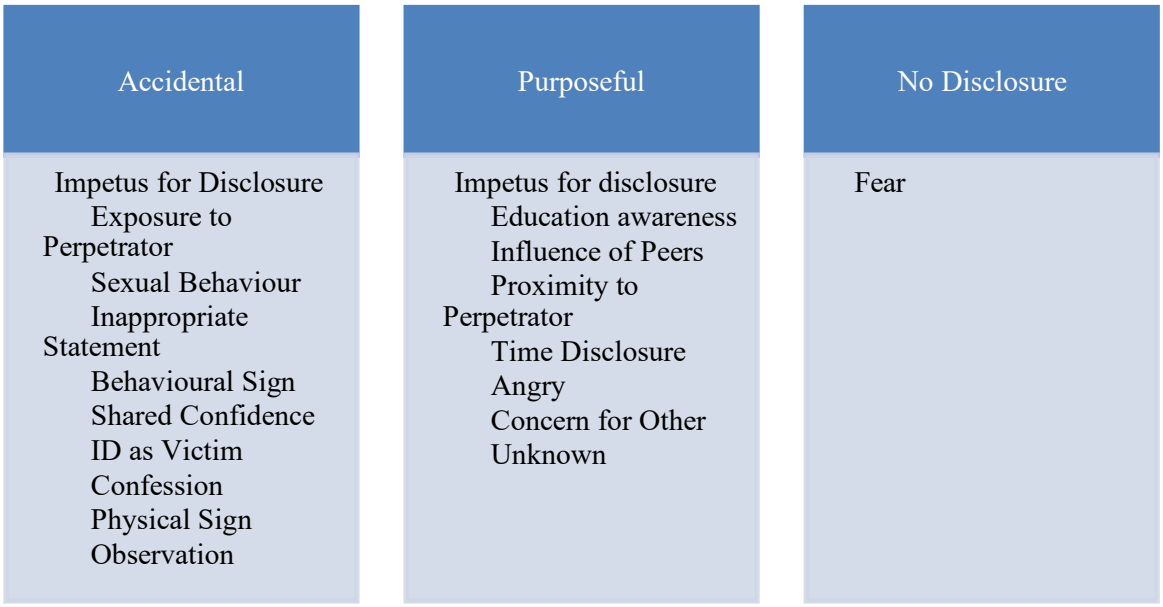
Sorenson and Snow (1991) empirically examined disclosures based on Summit's (1983) model. They provided an expanded understanding of disclosure and included children in their sample. They argued, contrary to the model of Summit (1983), that victims often recanted their abuse but later reaffirmed their victimization. Their study took place in Utah. The participants were 116 children with confirmed histories of sexual abuse who had come to the attention of Sorenson and Snow for either therapeutic or evaluation purposes. These cases were later retrospectively analyzed. The children involved in the case studies ranged from three to seventeen years old. Amongst the sample, 95% were Caucasian, and 5% were combined minority groups. The authors argued that disclosure was defined as a process with concrete phases and characteristics and that CSA disclosures could rarely be characterized as a single event, "disclosure of CSA is best described by this research as a process, not an event" (Sorenson & Snow, 1991, p.11). Sorenson and Snow proposed a model of stage-based disclosure, as seen in Figure 2, with different types of disclosure. The stage-based disclosure process had four progressive stages, denial, disclosure (active or tentative), recantation and reaffirmation, while the typologies of disclosure include, accidental, purposeful and non-disclosure. While Sorenson and Snow's (1991) theoretical model of disclosure provided no concrete cultural insights, this model was one of the founding contributions to understanding disclosure and recognizing that

disclosure is a process with concrete stages. This model set the foundation for other scholars to build upon in order to understand more about CSA disclosure as a process.

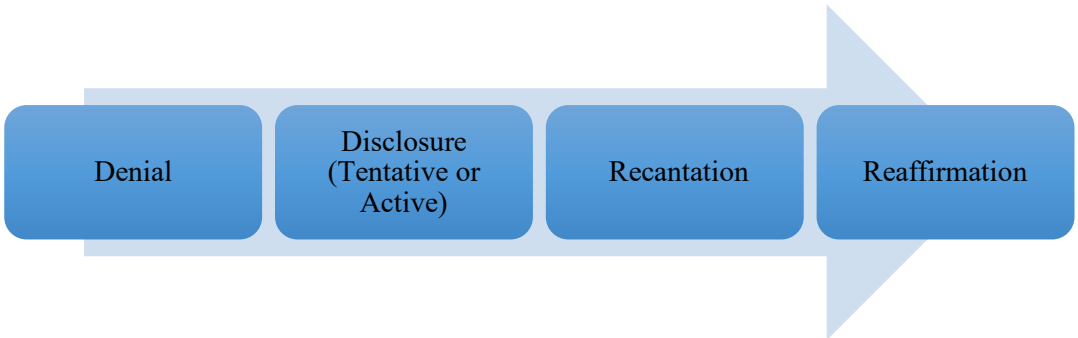
Figure 2

Sorenson and Snow's (1991) model of disclosure

Types of Disclosure



Stages of Disclosure

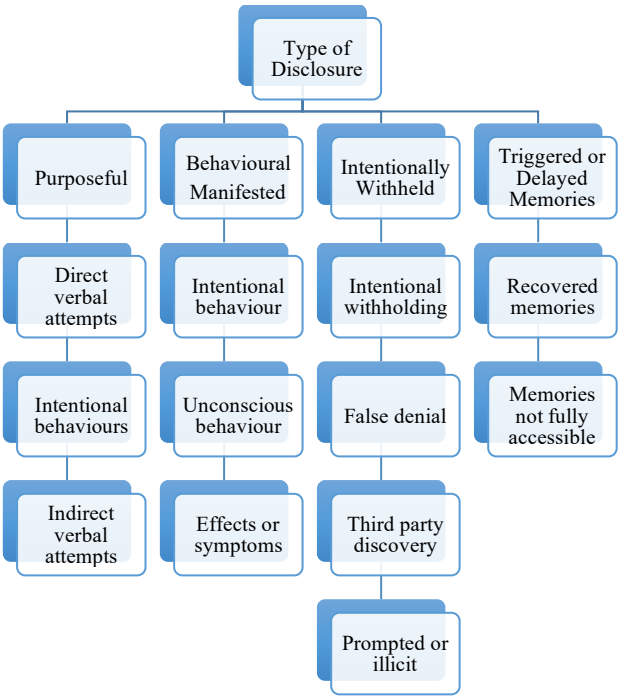


Alaggia (2004) built upon the previous models of stage-based disclosure. She conducted qualitative interviews with 24 adult women and men who survived CSA. There was no information reported of ethnic, cultural or religious demographics of the sample. Some participants had disclosed at the time of abuse, while others withheld disclosure until the time of the research. She uncovered new facets that were involved in the disclosure process. Her study

found that 42% of victims had disclosures consistent with the previous themes in literature, accidental and/or prompted and purposeful disclosure. However, she found new patterns not previously established in other models of disclosure, namely, behavioural, purposefully withheld, and triggered types of disclosures. Alaggia described behavioural disclosure as intentional attempts to disclose through behavioural patterns. Purposefully withheld disclosure referred to victims choosing not to tell despite opportunity or intervention including false denials of the abuse. Triggered disclosure was described as disclosure emerging from repressed memories. She concluded that disclosure was a process with different typologies of disclosure including purposeful, behavioural, intentional withholding and triggered or delayed memories.

Figure 3

Alaggia's (2004) typologies of disclosure



Along the similar lines of Sorenson and Snow (1991), Alaggia (2004) did not specifically explore culture in her model of disclosure.

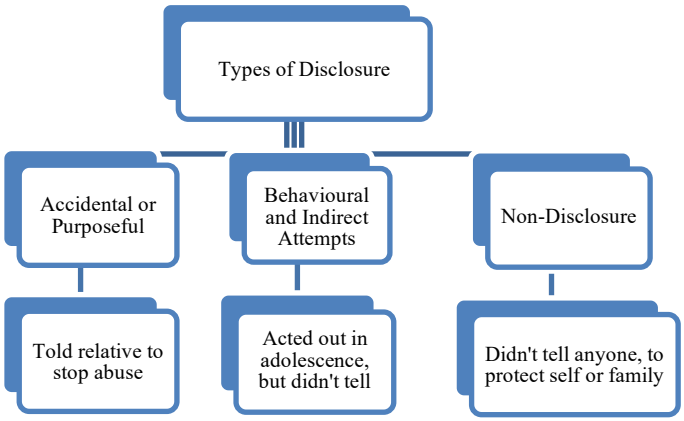
Hunter (2011) expanded upon the model proposed by Alaggia with a sample of adult survivors of CSA in Australia to include typologies of children and adults, and maintained disclosure is a lifelong process. She conceptualized disclosure as a lifelong process after conducting a qualitative study with 22 adult participants and examined patterns of disclosure.

No information was provided in regard to religious, ethnic or cultural background. Seven participants disclosed during childhood. Women and men reported fear, shame and self-blame as reasons for non-disclosure with fear being more prominent among females and shame being more prominent among males. Hunter's model of disclosure expanded the literature by including a model of disclosure among adults, with disclosure categories of purposeful, selective and triggered by memories and non-disclosure.

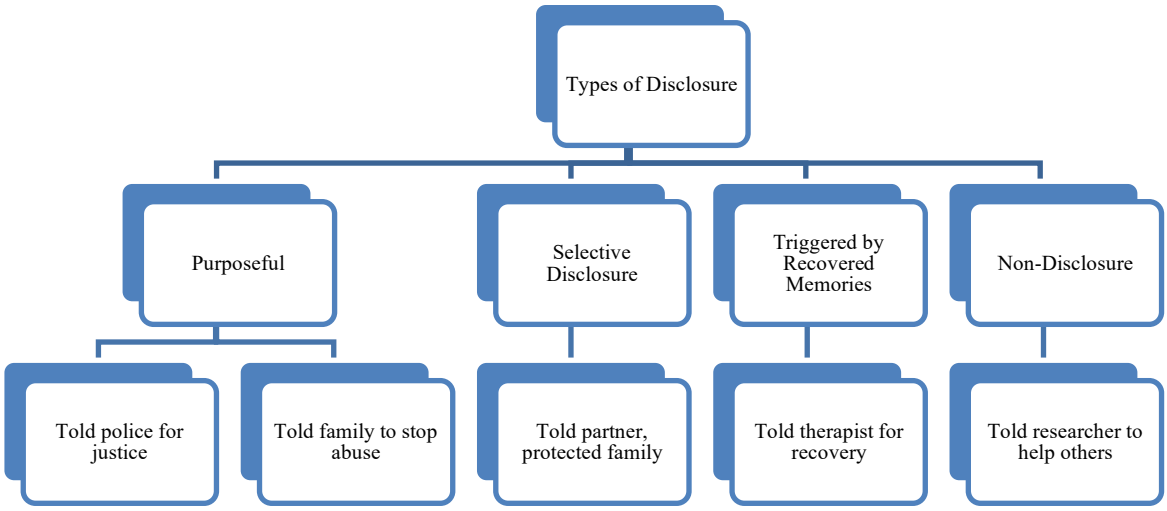
Figure 4

Hunter's (2011) model of disclosure

Childhood Disclosure



Adult Disclosure



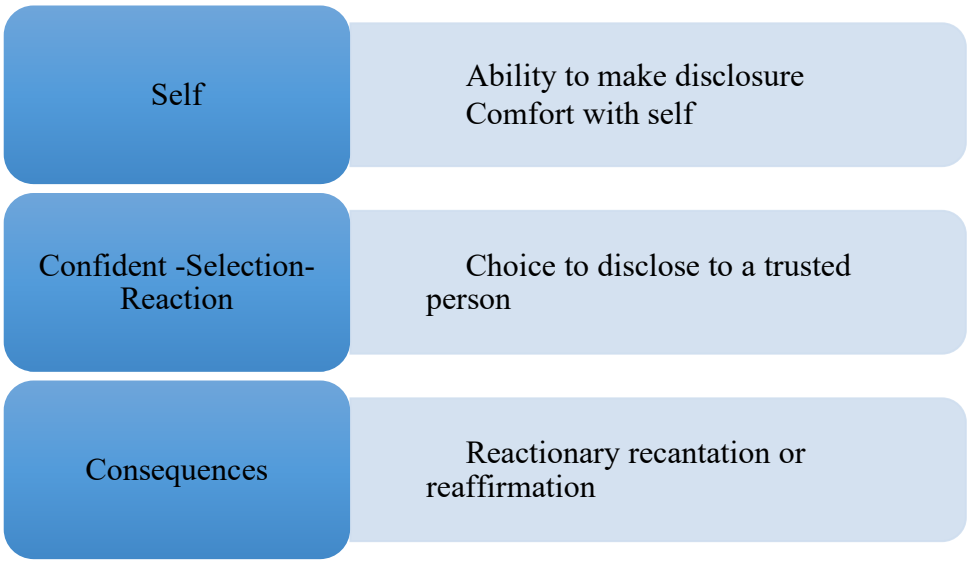
Hunter's (2011) model was based on a purposive sample of 22 adults in Australia; her findings are similar to those produced by Alaggia (2004) in Canada. Neither researcher attended to

culture specifically. How culture factors into disclosure warrants further investigation through the inclusion of culture in CSA disclosure research.

Staller and Nelson-Gardell (2005) proposed a stage-based model of disclosure with three distinct stages: the self-phase, the confident-selection phase and the consequence stage. They conducted a secondary data analysis from four focus groups with 34 preadolescent and adolescent female participants. The study did not mention any ethnic, religious or cultural variables identified within the sample. They identified three phases of disclosure that did not coincide with other stage-based models of disclosure. Their study argued that the disclosure process must account for a child's position relative to the adult world, further, that during the process, children acquire information from adults, which will inform their future decisions, as they proceed along the continuum of disclosure. In addition, their model included pre/post disclosure. The three phases they identified were the self, confidant-selection-reaction and consequences. The phase of the self refers to the victim's ability to gain comfort within him/herself to make a public disclosure. The phase of confident-selection-reaction refers to the decision to make a choice to tell a trusted individual of the abuse. The consequences phase is reactionary to the disclosure whereby a victim might reaffirm or recant their previous statements.

Figure 5

Staller and Nelson-Gardell's (2005) model of disclosure



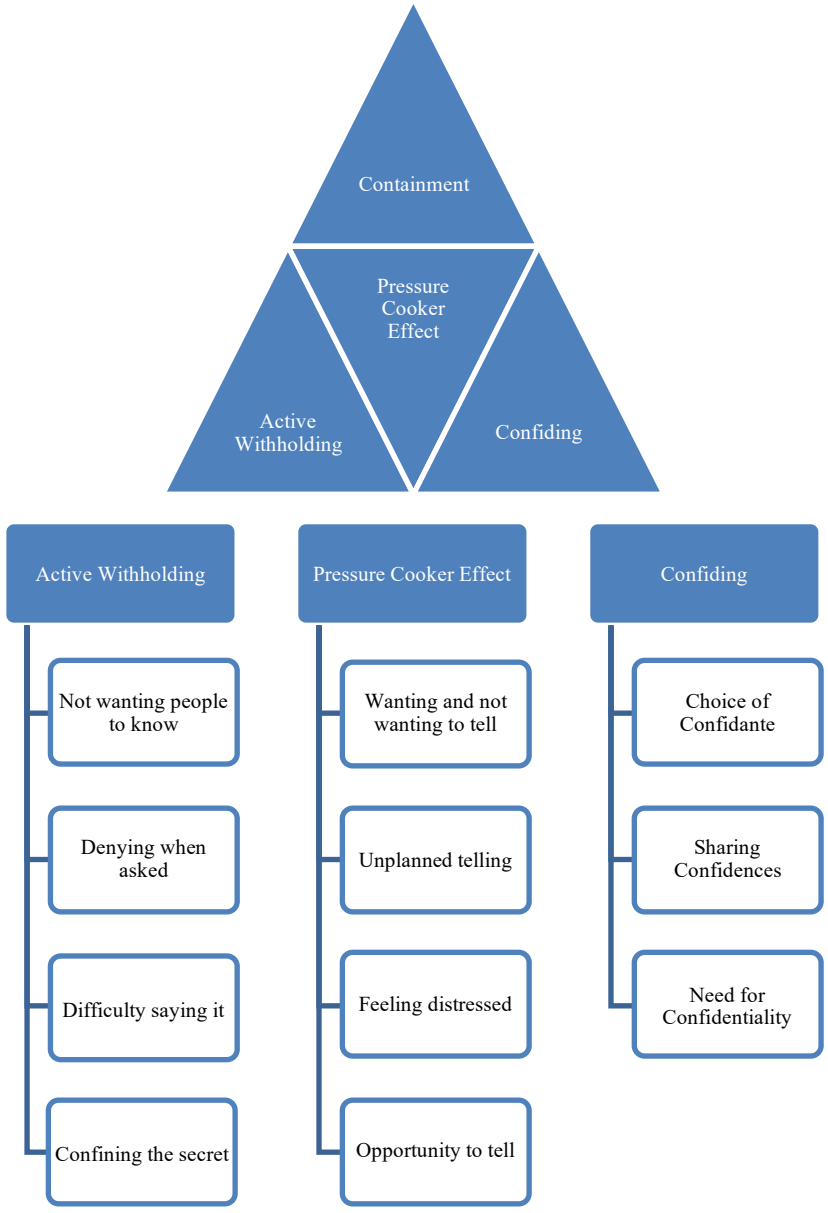
Again, this model has no explicit cultural representation but rather advances the state of knowledge by presenting another model of the disclosure process not previously considered.

Once again, it remains to be seen if cultural inclusion would have an impact on this model and warrants further study.

Finally, McElvaney, Greene and Hogan (2014) conducted a qualitative study with 22 youth aged 8-18 years old, in Ireland and explored disclosure experiences. The sample was comprised of Irish adolescents with no further details on culture. This model is fully expanded in Figure 6. They conducted semi-structured interviews with the youth. Eleven categories emerged during the coding process with three key stages of disclosure being identified, namely, active withholding, the pressure cooker effect and confiding the secret. The first dynamic, active withholding, was categorized as young people not wanting people to know about their experience, denying when asked and having difficulty expressing the secret, at times, confining the secret to a trusted few people. The second dynamic was the pressure cooker effect characterized as feeling distressed, wanting and not wanting to tell about the experience and having an opportunity to tell. The third dynamic identified was confiding characterized by the appropriate choice of confidant and sharing confidences. This study was conducted in Ireland and produced an entirely different model of disclosure than that which has been previously conceptualized in North America and Australia. The authors have made no concrete distinctions between the model created in Ireland and those created in North America and Australia.

Figure 6

McElvaney, Greene and Hogan's (2014) model of disclosure



There have been several ground-breaking theoretical models which have positioned CSA disclosure as a process, namely, Sorenson and Snow (1991), Alaggia (2004), Hunter (2011) and McElvaney (2014) and Staller and Nelson Gardell (2005). However, among these theoretical models no direct statements or inclusions about culture have been made. The only theory, which demonstrates some cultural inclusion, is Leonard's model. Therefore, it is maintained in order to determine the extent to which CSA disclosure is a homogenous experience, more attention

should be paid to the study of culture within the CSA disclosure literature. Given the diverse climate of the North American population and that the self-reported accounts of CSA are much higher than those reported to authorities, a strong argument holds that the underreporting CSA may be associated with culture.

Empirically Tested Models of Disclosure

Over the years, a number of empirical studies have been conducted with the broad goal of better documenting and understanding disclosures of CSA. In this section, nine empirical studies that all center on disclosure as a process or event will be reviewed. This will be followed by a discussion surrounding how culture was presented among these nine empirical studies.

Elliot and Briere (1994) evaluated 399 cases of CSA of children aged eight to fifteen years old. They examined variables associated with outcomes of forensic interviews. The sample was comprised of children who were seen in an American sexual abuse crisis center. They conducted forensic evaluations of CSA comprised of an interview with the child, a medical examination, an interview with non-offending caregiver if possible and an assessment of the child's distress. They compared variables associated with disclosures in confirmed and unconfirmed cases of CSA. Among the sample, 45% were White, 33% were Hispanic, 21% were Black and 1% was classified as other. Children were classified into six groups, four abused groups, one non-abused group and one unclear group. They found females and Hispanic children were more likely to have confirmed situations of abuse. When comparing disclosures of abused children, no significant differences were found. However, disclosure was more likely when psychological distress was present. Their study concluded that consistent with the data presented by Sorenson and Snow that, "disclosing sexual abuse is more an ongoing process than a single event. Children who made less than completely credible statements were frequently those who initially disclosed fondling but for whom there was evidence of more serious abuse" (Elliot & Briere, 1994, p. 274). The authors did not propose a model for disclosure but rather supported the position of disclosure as a process. This finding was suggested because despite evidence of severe abuse, children did not make disclosures consistent with physical evidence, suggestive that disclosure occurs gradually.

DeVoe and Faller (1999) explored disclosure among a sample of 76 children aged five to ten years old, 87% were White, 10% were African American, 2% were Middle Eastern and 1% was Latino. Two formal types of interviews were utilized, a standardized interview with an

evaluator and a computer assisted interview. Children were given multiple interviews to a maximum of four interviews. Among the sample, 56 children had previously disclosed with only 44 children repeating their disclosure during the first interview, however previous disclosure was predictive of disclosure during the assessment process. They argued, “With one exception, children in this study did not disclose spontaneously about alleged sexual abuse nor did they provide detailed descriptions of possible abuse in narrative form. These findings suggest that children require assistance with disclosure” (DeVoe & Faller, 1999, p.224). Overall, they found that children often require multiple interviews to disclose, assistance is required, and disclosure can be categorized as an uneven process.

Faller, Cordisco-Stelle and Nelson-Gardell (2010) reviewed the conception of disclosure as a process. No racial or ethnic or cultural information was provided about the sample. They examined disclosure patterns among children randomly assigned to two groups of either four or eight forensic sexual abuse interviews. They found that amongst 137 children randomly assigned to four or eight session evaluations, the disclosure rate was 56% during eight sessions and only 30% among four sessions with 95% of additional information being disclosed by the sixth session. They thus advocated for the use of extended assessments to evaluate CSA. These findings lend support to disclosure as a process given that it took numerous interviews to elicit disclosures.

Schonburcher, Maier, Mohler-Kuo, Schnyder and Landolt (2012) studied the process of CSA disclosure among adolescents in Switzerland. The sample was comprised of 23 females and three males aged fifteen to eighteen years old. Twenty percent of the subjects were Swiss nationals while four were of foreign nationality. Among the sample, 65.4% delayed their disclosure; these delays ranged from days to years. Motives described by participants for delayed disclosure included: denial, lack of trust, not to burden others, shame and stigmatization, lack of understanding CSA had occurred, fear of disbelief, fear of the perpetrator, fear of parental sanctions, not disrupting the family and intimacy.

Foster and Hagedorn (2014) used a narrative analysis to capture the childhood sexual abuse experience among 21 participants. The sample was evenly distributed among participants aged six to seventeen years old, with seven subjects from each age group: young child, preadolescent and adolescent. The sample was racially diverse, with 33% African Americans, 33% Hispanic, 24% Caucasian and 10% other or combined races. Among three major themes,

one centered surrounding disclosure and the subsequent events that followed. Participants' narratives indicated disclosure did not represent the end of the cycle of abuse, but rather, they communicated experiencing complexities, challenges and embarrassment post disclosure. Many participants failed to disclose immediately due to guilt and shame, embarrassment and disbelief, concerns for the self and the perpetrator. This is consistent with disclosure being described as a process.

Gagnier and Collin-Vézina (2016) explored the process of disclosure among male survivors of CSA. The sample was comprised of 17 males aged nineteen to sixty years old. No racial or ethnic demographic information was provided about the sample. A major theme that emerged was disclosure as a trajectory or process for the men. This included disclosing for the first time, waiting to tell, delayed disclosure and wanting to forget about the abuse.

Bradley and Wood (1996) explored disclosure as a process as had been conceptualized in literature to date. More specifically, they examined the disclosure models presented by Sorenson and Snow as well as Summit. Their study was comprised of a sample of 234 cases of validated CSA by youth protection services, among a total sample of 249 with some cases being excluded. The sample was comprised of children aged one to eighteen years, 75% of victims were Hispanic, 15% were White and 9% were African American or another ethnic group, referred by a youth protection agency. Among their sample, 76% of victims had made disclosures prior to intervention. Their study examined the interviews conducted by either the police or the youth protection agency. They found that denial, reluctance and recantation occurred rarely as 96% of children in their sample made a full or partial disclosure. Their findings support disclosure as an event, and not as a process with stages to be resolved, as most children made an active disclosure within the first interview and did not progress through any further stages. However, the authors did not discredit other findings, but rather postulated their findings might be specific to youth protection populations, who may comprise a different subset of victim populations. Thus, the authors supported an argument that among youth protection clients, disclosures occur as an event. Further, the authors noted, apart from other studies their sample was markedly different in regard to ethnic composition of the sample. They concluded disclosure is an event could be a result of divergent cultural and religious affiliations.

Gries, Goh and Cavanaugh (1997) explored disclosure rates during formal investigations among 96 children who reside in foster care or residential settings. No demographic information

was provided in reference to ethnicity, religion or culture. Among their sample of children, 63% had made a previous disclosure and 93% maintained their disclosure during assessment. However, 40% of children, who had not previously disclosed, did so during one of three sessions. Their findings suggest disclosures can be obtained when appropriate interview protocols are implemented. In addition, recantation was found to occur rarely and most commonly among young children.

Among the nine studies reviewed, seven groups of authors claimed that disclosure was a process while only two groups of authors argued disclosure occurred as an event. This brings further support to the argument that disclosure occurs as process. However, what remains to be seen is whether findings are homogenous among CSA victims, as few study samples mentioned any cultural characteristics of the participants. While DeVoe and Faller (1999) had a sample comprised of 13% of participants as non-Caucasian, they maintained disclosure was a process. Schonburcher and associates (2012) conducted their study with a sample of Swiss nationals and concluded that disclosure was a process. Furthermore, Foster and Hagedorn (2014) had a sample of only 33% Caucasians and concluded disclosure was a process. What I find particularly interesting is that the study conducted by Bradley and Wood (1996) concluded disclosure was an event and their study was comprised of 75% Hispanic persons. This raises the question, is disclosure as a process from a Eurocentric and North American perspective? One aim of this thesis is to explore whether participants of different cultures disclose along a similar or different trajectory.

In summary, reviewing the theoretical models of disclosure as event or process, an important caveat was observed, namely the little or lack of ethnic, cultural and religious facets associated with conceptualizations of disclosure. Therefore, how culture impacts the notion of disclosure as a process remains to be examined. Apart from a few studies, namely those of McElvaney and associates (2014), DeVoe and Faller (1999) and Bradley and Wood (1996), sample populations examined, were either mainly comprised of Caucasians or had little to no reference made to ethnic, cultural or religious information about participants. Inferences can be made that the researchers' findings could be a product of the characteristics of available participants, authors could have presupposed a transcending commonality among victimization experiences and disclosure patterns (homogenous victimization) or perhaps researchers were not interested in this specific aspect associated with disclosure. As most studies either sampled only

Caucasians or gave little or no information about the diversity of their sample findings should not be generalized to all groups of CSA victims.

The next section will go to review the empirical scholarship on the barriers to disclosure, with particular attention to the emphasis given, or lack thereof, to cultural factors and their impact on the victims' experiences of telling. It is important to ascertain if the trend described above of homogenous victimization experiences is also congruent with the literature surrounding barriers to CSA disclosure.

Barriers and CSA Disclosure

The CSA literature has identified several barriers to the disclosure process that can be grouped into different categories including, characteristics of the child (age and gender), the nature of abuse (severity and duration), the relationship with the perpetrator, perceived barriers at the individual and familial levels and systemic barriers. Next, I provide a comprehensive overview of barriers as well as any cultural distinctions cited in the academic literature on CSA. All barriers will be presented individually, in chronological order from past to present, to demonstrate the evolution of the findings over time followed by a discussion regarding culture at the end of each individual barrier.

Disclosure and age

Mian, Klajner-Diamond, LeBaron and Winder (1986) conducted a review of medical charts based out of Toronto Ontario, of 125 children under the age of six years, who had been seen by the hospital's sexual abuse team. They claimed children as young as age six could make purposeful disclosures while children aged five and under were most likely to make an accidental disclosure. Along similar lines, Campis, Hebden-Curtis, and Demaso (1993) examined the role of developmental differences in the detection and disclosure of CSA. The study found that preschool age children were statistically significantly more likely to present with behavioural and or physical symptoms than school age children. Preschool age children were more likely to make accidental disclosures and school age children were more likely to make purposeful disclosures. Nagel, Putnam, Noll and Tickett (1997) examined disclosure in a longitudinal study amongst a sample of 68 girls aged six to sixteen years. Their study revealed that consistent with previous research, younger children were more likely to disclose accidentally. Therefore, younger children were found least likely to initiate any form of disclosure process.

Conversely, Sorenson and Snow (1991) who retrospectively analyzed 116 cases of CSA found that, “disclosure by age grouping revealed school age children showed no real propensity to disclose in either a purposeful or accidental manner” (Sorenson & Snow, 1991, p.7). There was a significant correlation that demonstrated that preschool children were more likely to disclose accidentally, and adolescents were more likely to disclose purposefully. Keary and Fitzpatrick (1994) supported these conclusions in their findings that suggested adolescents were more likely to make clear coherent disclosures than children under the age of five.

Hewitt (1994) conducted a case study with two female victims who were preverbal at the age of their disclosure, consistent with previous research, their disclosures occurred in an accidental or elicited manner. The two children upon receiving sexual education and being questioned made disclosures between two and four years respectively after the abuse occurred. This case study suggests younger children have the capacity to retain memories of sexual abuse and disclose with the appropriate impetus.

Goodman-Brown and associates (2003) found that age was significantly associated with time of disclosure; older children take longer to disclose than younger children. These findings echoed the study by Hershkowitz and colleagues (2007). Their sample was comprised of 30 Israeli children aged seven to twelve years. Significant correlation was found between age and delay of disclosure with 73% of children aged ten to twelve years taking longer to disclose than children aged seven to nine years. London and associates (2008) found in their empirical literature review that a delay in disclosure increases with age.

Priebe and Svedin (2008) and Schonburcher and associates (2012) as well as Ungar and associates (2009A & 2009B) found adolescents are most likely to disclose to peers. Malloy and associates (2013) found that younger children were more likely to disclose to parents or family while older children were more likely to disclose to peers or teachers. In addition, as age increased so did the number of disclosure recipients.

Empirical studies have examined the position of age relative to disclosure. There is a consistent assertion across the literature; developmental factors are associated with children’s ability to make disclosures. Among preschool aged children and adolescents, the literature seems largely in agreement about victim’s nature and capacity to disclose. Consistently, preschool age children present with behaviours or symptoms and tend to disclose in an accidental manner.

Adolescents, with greater cognitive capacity, present with a larger number of purposeful disclosures. Further it remains uncontested adolescents are more likely to disclose to peers.

What remains unclear is the type and nature of disclosure school age children have the developmental capacity to make. This calls for a larger discussion on the developmental capacities of school age children to make disclosures. This further calls into question children's level of understanding of sexual abuse and emotional processes. However, there is contention regarding the capacity of school age children to make disclosures. The most relevant conclusion for my thesis is that is remains uncontested that adolescents make purposeful disclosures, as this is my target population.

Apart from Hershkowitz and colleagues' study that was conducted in Israel (2007) all samples were from Western countries. While the findings regarding age and disclosure may remain true among a population that shares similar developmental values, this calls into question cultural beliefs and populations who didn't fit the normative Western schema of development. Therefore, this could be a consideration for future studies.

Disclosure and gender

DeVoe and Faller (1999) found that during initial interviews, females were more likely to make disclosures than males. However, over the course of several interviews, males did make disclosures and few differences were noted.

Alaggia (2005) examined the impact of disclosure through the lens of gender. She had a sample of 30 participants who were interviewed. Common themes for men and women were delayed disclosure, with 58% of the sample not disclosing until adulthood. Men and women who did not disclose in childhood both engaged in indirect verbal attempts to disclose and among those who did, their disclosure was eventually precipitated by an event. Specific themes related to gender and disclosures were observed. Males experienced fears of being viewed as a homosexual and felt stigma for being a non-female abuse victim. Also, men feared becoming abusers themselves. Barriers to disclosure specific to females included, feelings of responsibility for the abuse and fear of blame and disbelief.

O'Leary and Barber (2008) compared retrospective accounts of disclosure amongst male and female sexual abuse victims in a sample of 296 participants. Males were significantly less likely to disclose at the time of abuse and often took twenty or more years to make disclosures.

Given the reported difference in delay between male and female victims, it was hypothesized males are more likely to feel silenced following childhood sexual abuse than females.

Alaggia (2008) explored some sexual abuse characteristics as described by male populations. During childhood, denial of the abuse was common and often repressed. Many participants described becoming sexually active at a young age. There was confusion around the sexual abuse; participants had a hard time accepting the physical pleasure associated with the abuse given the cognitive awareness the abuse was wrong. However, the abuses often made them feel special causing contrasting feelings. As adults' anger and rage surfaced, men had difficulty in their sexual relationships or experienced a sexual disturbance and confusion around their sexual orientation.

Sorsoli, Kia-Keating and Grossman (2008) examined barriers specific to male populations and disclosure. They retrospectively analyzed 16 experiences described by men. Only one participant in the sample disclosed during childhood. Five of the participants only disclosed their abuse during the study. Three themes emerged as barriers to disclosure, personal, relational and sociocultural. Personal barriers to disclosure included a lack of cognitive awareness, internal avoidance or trouble approaching the topic, emotional readiness, safety and shame. Relational barriers to disclosure included, fears of specific negative consequences, fears of relationship difficulties, isolation and beliefs about relationships. Sociocultural barriers included, difficulty accepting being victims as males and as a male being unable to discuss victimization.

Hunter (2009) who examined narratives of early childhood sexual experiences, also found some gender differences between the narratives described by men and women in a sample of 16 adults. These differences were attributed to gender socialization. Many female participants believed the so-called dominant cultural narrative that their abuse had dirtied and damaged them. By contrast, men were taught not to express their emotions or demonstrate weakness or fear; this prevented them from speaking about their experiences. Males feared they would be labelled as homosexual if they spoke out.

Stoltenborgh and associates (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 217 global studies of the prevalence of CSA. Girls were found to have a substantially higher rate of reporting than boys globally. In addition, boys were found to disclose with larger delays. It was hypothesized this could be a reflection of actual rates of abuse or alternately that boys have more reluctance to

disclose. Boys are faced with more societal pressure not to show weakness and fear they might be regarded as instigators of the abuse.

Hunter (2011) examined specific barriers faced by males and females in reference to disclosure. For females, fear was the main barrier. Females experienced fears of being punished, fear of consequences to the family and fear of not being believed. While for males, shame was the main impediment to disclosure. Males experienced shame about hidden homosexuality or being homosexual as well as the stigma of being homosexual. Barriers common to genders were described as shame, feeling responsible and self-blame.

Dorahy and Clearwater (2012) conducted a qualitative focus group with seven male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Their focus group found four predominant themes as experienced by male CSA survivors. The first was described as self-shame. Victims viewed themselves as shameful beings and believed others viewed them this way as well. The foundation of the shame was thought to be the abuse itself as well as the ongoing problems it created for survivors' psychological functioning. This was further impacted upon by negative experiences of disclosure. Males feared being exposed. There was also an internal battle between isolation and connection, whereas survivors wanted to be connected with others but felt safety within the isolation of secrecy. The second major theme was pervasiveness and the power of doubt and denial. Some participants had trouble accepting that the abuse took place, while others began to doubt themselves after having received invalidation after disclosing. The third major theme was uncontrollability, whereas participants had problems following their disclosures including rage, and intrusions of emotional pain. The final theme was that of disassociation. Participants had difficulty focusing, they could engage in activities superficially, but their cognition was elsewhere.

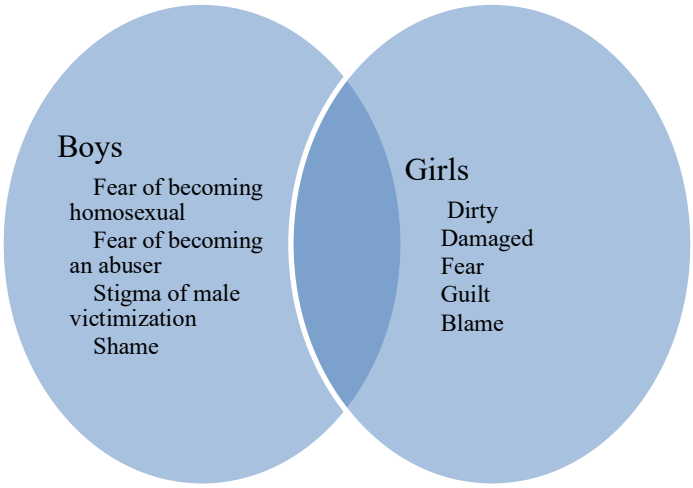
Easton, Saltzman and Willis (2014) conducted a secondary analysis of written survey responses of 487 men who were victims of sexual abuse. Three domains were identified as barriers, namely, the socio-political, personal and interpersonal. The socio-political domain was referred to as broad social values. Men had difficulty disclosing as they attempted to live up to masculine values where as being a victim of abuse would render them weak. Disclosure was also linked to strong emotional responses which men also perceived to be outside the realm of masculinity. Most men also had difficulty finding resources for their situation. In regard to the interpersonal domain, men were reluctant to disclose as they mistrusted others. Men feared they

would be labelled as homosexual or gay. The abuse characteristics and power differentials also made disclosure difficult. Safety and protection emerged as themes, as men feared disclosure could affect their basic security in terms of housing, employment and physical well-being. Past negative responses also reinforced the notion of secrecy. Finally, in regard to the personal domain, men chose not to disclose because of internal emotions, such as difficulty labelling the abuse, and concerns about their sexual orientation.

Males and females appear to face some common and some different barriers to disclosure; differences are demonstrated in Figure 7. Both genders report feelings of shame, responsibility and disbelief. However, some distinct differences in their experiences are described in empirical studies. CSA is largely reported as a problem for female populations as reflected in the reporting rates, in combination with females disclosing more readily and men having larger reported delays in making disclosures. This calls into question the role of culture and gender because some traits of cultural masculinity and femininity have been identified as reasons of non-disclosure. While studies have compared male and female CSA, they have not yet fully examined culturally influenced dimensions of masculinity and femininity as these traits could influence disclosure.

Figure 7

Genders and Disclosure



Disclosure and nature of abuse

Sauzier (1989) found, "the child's ability to tell of the abuse seemed to be influenced by a number of characteristics of the abuse" (Sauzier, 1989, p.458). Children were found to disclose

immediately for more minor acts of abuse like exhibitionism and fondling while intercourse and penetration were disclosed in a delayed fashion or not at all. Further, children who were abused by a natural parent were more likely to keep the secret and be seen for accidental disclosures. This argument was echoed by Nagel and associates (1997) who found that purposeful disclosure was observed when abuse was more severe in nature and the duration of abuse was short in nature. Children who experienced sexual abuse on only one occasion were more likely to disclose in a purposeful manner. Arata (1998) found this to be more likely to occur when the following characteristics were present, the abuse was shorter in duration, the perpetrator was a stranger and the abuse was less severe. Priebe and Svedin (2008) found that amongst a sample of high school victims, girls were less likely to disclose sexual abuse involving physical contact, less frequent abuse, and abuse by a family member, relative or friend. A family member often abused non-disclosing boys. Both non-disclosing boys and girls perceived their parents as less caring than disclosers.

DeVoe and Faller (1999) found different results in their sample with children. In their study, children were found more likely to disclose when they experienced severe contact abuse. Also, children who were exposed to pornography were less likely to make disclosures.
There is a debate regarding the severity of abuse and the disclosure process. Some scholars contend that more severe abuse will lead to disclosure whereas others contend more mild forms of sexual abuse result in disclosure. More research in this area might lend more insights in this domain. While the omission of cultural aspects is present in the above-mentioned studies, this calls into question if gendered or cultural beliefs regarding the nature and severity of abuse play a role in the process of disclosure. For example, in a culture where virginity is highly valued it would seem less probable disclosure would take place. In contrast in a culturally collective society minor acts of sexual abuse might go unreported to protect the collectivism of the family.

Relationship to perpetrator

Mian and associates (1986) reviewed disclosure patterns of children aged six and under and found that children under the age of five years, who were abused by a family member were more likely to make an accidental disclosure. While children aged five and six years were more likely to make a purposeful disclosure when the perpetrator was an extrafamilial family member. Goodman-Brown and associates (2003) found that children took longer to report intrafamilial abuse than extrafamilial abuse. Jensen and colleagues (2005) echoed these findings in their study

in which no children made immediate disclosures and all children in the study had close personal ties with the offender.

Hershkowitz and associates (2007) found that familiarity with perpetrators was an influential factor associated to disclosure. Someone outside the family abused all of the children within the sample. However, of statistical significance, 78% of children who were familiar with the perpetrator delayed disclosure in comparison with only 17% who were sexually abused by strangers. In addition, 92% of victims delayed disclosure of severe and repeated abuse whereas delay in disclosure was much less common when the abuse was less serious and shorter in duration.

Ullman (2008) examined characteristics of sexual abuse and disclosure in an undergraduate student population. Amongst a sample of 733 students, 22% reported childhood victimization. Those who experienced abuse often delayed disclosure, with 55% of the sample disclosing in adulthood. A between groups comparison demonstrated that disclosures made were not related to the type of perpetrator. However, disclosure was likely to occur at a later age when the offender was a relative or acquaintance when compared against strangers. In addition, disclosure was most likely to occur without delay when the offender was a stranger, followed by acquaintance and most delayed when it was a relative. Furthermore, sexual abuse by a relative was described as more severe, longer in duration and began at a younger age.

London, Bruck, Wright and Ceci (2008) found that consistent with previous research, disclosure is often delayed when the abuse is interfamilial. However, consistent with the research presented above there are two clear arguments surrounding disclosure and severity of abuse. While some scholars argue severity increases disclosure rates others argue the opposite. Agreement emerges in the literature that delayed disclosure is directly tied to the victim's relationship with the perpetrator. Disclosure is likely to occur sequentially with the least likely being when the abuser is a family member, followed by an acquaintance and most likely when a stranger commits the abuse. Again, culture has a role to play in this debate; the nature of the society and the family system (individualistic or collective), the importance of family preservation, the hierarchical structure of the family (patriarchal or matriarchal) and the role of children (silenced or expressive) can all contribute to reasons for delayed or non-disclosure.

Intrapersonal barriers

Denov (2003) explored disclosure in relation to being abused by a female perpetrator and professional responses. She conducted qualitative interviews with 14 participants who had been

sexually abused by a female during childhood. The demographics of the participants were not described. Many participants delayed disclosure until adulthood feeling fear and shame about having been abused by a female. Although this study largely examined professional responses, participants still identified reasons for non-disclosure during childhood.

Crisma, Bascelli, Paci and Romito (2004) explored barriers to disclosure and disclosure experiences in Italy amongst a sample of 36 adolescents. Through the use of qualitative interviewing many emotional barriers served as reasons for non-disclosure. Although some victims understood they were being sexually abused, other victims did not as there was an absence of physical violence or subtle strategies were used to gain compliance. This largely caused feelings of guilt and blame amongst victims and lead them to want to keep the secret of being abused.

Alaggia (2004) found that amongst her sample of 24 adults reflecting on reasons for withholding disclosure that several themes emerged. The identified reasons for not telling anyone about the abuse included: feelings that they would not be believed, self-blame, shame, fear and not wanting to hurt people's feelings.

Hunter (2009) explored narratives of early childhood sexual experiences rather than labelling the phenomena as CSA. She conducted in depth interviews with 22 adults. Only one adult had disclosed the experience as a child. The main barriers to disclosure were identified as feelings of fear, shame and self-blame. Four prominent narratives were identified, that of silence, ongoing suffering, transcendence and transformation. Silence referred to feelings of either guilt or not initially feeling any effects of the abuse. Ongoing suffering was identified when participants struggled to manage their daily lives and overcome the abuse. Transcendence and transformation occurred when participants sought help or were able to make meaning from their experiences.

Schaeffer, Leventhal and Gottsegen Asnes (2011) examined 191 interviews and looked at emotional facilitators and barriers to disclosure. Barriers to disclosure included threats, fear, and a lack of opportunity, lack of understanding, and the relationship to the perpetrator.

Schonburcher, Maier, Mohler-Kuo, Schnyder and Landolt (2012) examined barriers and facilitators to disclose amongst a sample of 26 adolescents aged fifteen to eighteen years. Amongst their sample 30% made an immediate disclosure within 24 hours. The motives for non-disclosure and delayed disclosure included: denial of the abuse by repressing memories or

wanting to forget, not wanting to burden others, lack of trust in parents, feelings of shame, fear of stigmatization, fear of disbelief and personal sanctions (Schonburcher et al., 2012). Based on the review of the literature presented, intrapersonal barriers to abuse appear to be common. The individual thematic barriers are represented in Figure 8. Victims commonly minimize their experience, do not fully understand it, repress the memory and express feelings of guilt, general fear, shame, fear of disbelief and self-blame.

However, these feelings aren't necessarily without justification as victims may be receiving cultural or societal messages consistent with their internal beliefs. For example, Back and Lips (1998) investigated perceptions of responsibility attributed to parents and child victims of sexual abuse. Their sample was comprised of undergraduate college students. Participants assigned perceived responsibility for acts of sexual abuse. In their study, older children were ascribed more responsibility for the abuse than younger children. Parents were ascribed more responsibility when the child was younger. Male participants attributed more responsibility and casualty to victims than females. Female victims were not assigned more blame than male victims.

Walsh, Cross and Jones (2012) also obtained similar conclusions. They explored the level of parental blame and doubt associated with victimization perpetrated by adolescents versus adults. Amongst a sample of 161 sexually abused children they found the following: parents were significantly more likely to blame their child when abused by an adolescent in comparison to an adult. In addition, parents had significantly higher levels of blame as the victims' age increased or when children were Black; non-Hispanic children were less supported than younger children regardless of the age of the perpetrator.

Figure 8

Intrapersonal Barriers to Disclosure

While a substantial amount of literature has been devoted to uncovering intrapersonal barriers victims' face, once victims have sorted through internal conflicts another barrier remains concerns for their person, family and other individuals. Intrapersonal barriers as they link to the environment and belief systems could very well be connected to individual culture although this remains to be seen.

Concerns for self the family and the perpetrator

Sauzier (1989) studied victims of sexual abuse from infancy to age eighteen in the greater Boston area. The longitudinal study collected data upon entry to a family crisis program and again at an 18-month follow-up with a total sample of 131 children. He found that 45% of victims in the sample made no disclosure. Children who failed to reveal more serious sexual abuse described fear of losing affection and goodwill from the offender. They feared the consequences of telling, they feared being physically harmed or having retaliation of some nature against themselves or a family member. "The great majority of children and adolescents want the abuse to stop, but not all are capable of deciding to take on the burden of upsetting the family homeostasis" (Sauzier, 1989, p.461).

Paine and Hansen (2002) conducted a review of literature surrounding CSA. In their view, three major themes emerged which acted as deterrents to disclosure. These three major emotional impediments to the disclosure process included concerns for the victim, concerns for family and loved ones and finally concerns for the perpetrator. In regard to concerns for the

victim, they often find themselves feeling responsible for the abuse or having actively participated. These feelings might stem from the dynamics of the relationship between the child and abuser and the process of grooming. Concerns pertaining to family members were identified as victims' insecurity that they or their family members would be emotionally or physically harmed as result of speaking about the abuse. This can arise when perpetrators displace responsibility onto the child for the well-being of the victim, the perpetrator and the child's family. Finally, concerns for the perpetrator refer to fear of negative outcomes for the perpetrator such as jail or suicide, given the distorted and close relationship the victim and abuser share.

Goodman-Brown, Edelstein, Goodman, Jones and Gordon (2003) reviewed case files obtained from children who had been sexually abused. Their sample was comprised of 218 case reviews, among which 132 children had expressed fear surrounding making a disclosure. Children reported having fears for themselves, their family as well as the defendant who abused them. Children who believed that their fear would actualize took longer to disclose than those who did not.

Crisma and associates (2004) also identified fear for the family as reasons for non-disclosure. Participants identified wanting to protect their family from the hardship that would be caused by disclosing their abuse.

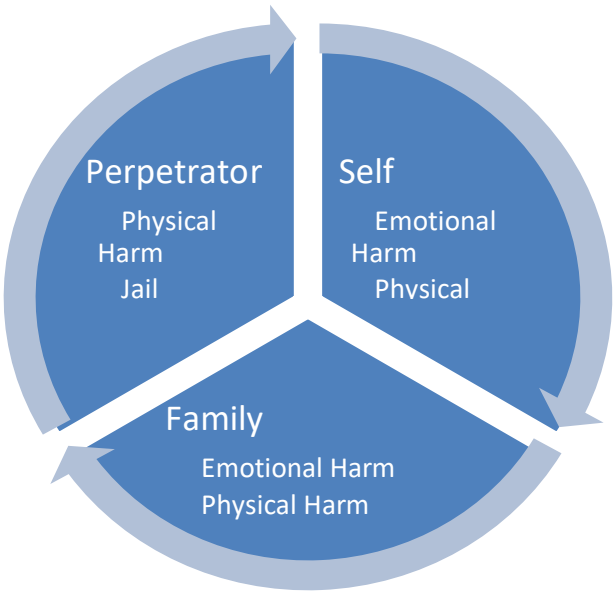
Jensen, Gulbrandson, Mossige, Reichelt and Tjersland (2005) conducted a qualitative analysis with 22 children regarding their experience of disclosure. None of the children immediately disclosed. Reasons that were given for non-disclosure included lack of opportunity or bad timing, concerns pertaining to the self or mother, concerns for consequences for the family or offender and finally fear they would not be believed or supported.

Malloy, Brubacher and Lamb (2011) reviewed 204 children's disclosures in England and Britain through analysis of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) protocol. Almost half, 45% of the children expected a consequence related to disclosure. Children who mentioned consequences tended to be older and have more incidents of victimization. Amongst the consequences, 32% feared for the offender (jail), 82% feared for themselves (physical harm or death), and 14% feared for others. Immediate disclosure was associated with less fear of consequences while delayed disclosure was associated with fears of negative consequences only pertaining to the child.

The thematic overview in relation to concerns for the self, others and perpetrator are highlighted in Figure 9. Most commonly, victims identify fear of emotional and/or physical harm for themselves, their family or the person who abused them. As proposed by Paine and Hansen (2002), this could be a product of the power dynamics that accompany sexual abuse, which became evident in victims reporting fear for their physical safety and the safety of their family members. The distorted relationship between the offender and victim is demonstrated in situations where the victim expresses concern for the offender. The concern expressed for family members would appear to be rooted in the victim's perception of the abusive events; most likely a product of the negative emotional experiences they encounter after the abuse and prior to disclosure, such as the interpersonal barriers discussed. Intrapersonal and concerns for others as barriers have been examined however, this does not discount the role of the barriers provided in the larger societal context that will be reviewed next.

Figure 9

Overview of Concerns for the Self, Family and Perpetrator



Systemic barriers

Systemic barriers faced by victims appear to be a relatively new field of inquiry in the disclosure literature and CSA literature. Although individual and family factors have been documented for over two decades, they first appear to have been documented in connection with broader societal values by Alaggia. Alaggia and Kirshenbaum (2005) found that family dynamics contribute to the ability to make disclosures. Leclerc and Wortley (2015) echoed this

sentiment and found family dysfunction inhibits disclosure. Alaggia and Kirshenbaum (2005) found that the family system plays a role in the ability to make disclosures. Familial themes that contribute to delayed disclosure included rigidly fixed gender roles, dominating fathers, chaos and aggression, the presence of other forms of child abuse, domestic violence, dysfunctional communication and social isolation. Children had difficulty disclosing in homes where the mother had a disempowered role, children were to be seen and not heard and father was head of the household. There was difficulty disclosing when there was a climate of violence in the house. When families did not speak openly with one another it was hard to discuss the abuse. These circumstances made victims feel unsafe to tell about the abuse.

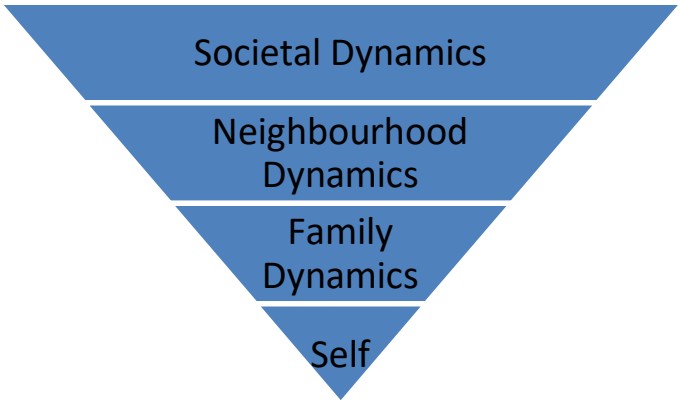
Five years later, Alaggia (2010) examined ecological factors associated with disclosure from a sample of 40 adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The micro level or family level was presented in her arguments in 2005. The exo-system level (neighbourhood and community level), served as a barrier when victims identified feeling a lack of empathy from neighbours or a fear of being an outcast from their community. At a macro level, barriers included confusion surrounding the sexualization of young girls in the media, and males being sent messages about masculinity that prevented disclosure. In essence, at the cultural level, socialized gender roles, sexism and patriarchy played a large role.

Collin-Vézina, De La Sablonnière-Griffin, Palmer and Milne (2015) also reviewed micro level to broad societal factors that affected victims' ability to disclose. Barriers in relation to others were similar to those found by Alaggia (2010). Collin-Vézina and associates (2015) identified three broad categories of CSA disclosure barriers: barriers from within, barriers in relation to others and barriers in relation to social world. These barriers were multi-layered and were all inter-related. Barriers from within included: internal victim blaming, protecting the self and immature development during the abuse. Barriers in relation to others included: violence and dysfunction within families, power dynamics in the family and community, awareness of how CSA disclosure might affect others and having a weak social network. Finally, barriers in relation to the social world included: labelling or stigma, taboos surrounding sexuality, lack of available services, culture and time period of abuse. The role of the family system in the disclosure process points to arguments that victims became embroiled in larger situational contexts causing their victimization to be of lesser importance than other stressors. These further

point to the role multiple traumas, family, communities and society can play in hindering disclosure. Systemic barriers can be seen in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Systemic Barriers



Facilitating circumstances

Lawson and Chaffin (1992) and Ungar (2009A) found that disclosure was significantly correlated with the response of the caregiver. Lawson and Chaffin (1992) argued that amongst the children who disclosed, 63% had a supportive caregiver while only 17% who disclosed had an unsupportive caregiver. Elliot and Briere (1994) found similar conclusions to those of Lawson and Chaffin (1992). Elliot and Briere (1994) found a statistically significant correlation arguing that maternal support was positively associated with disclosure. Malloy and Lyon (2006) reviewed 257 cases of substantiated CSA that lead to court proceedings. Non-offending caregiver support emerged as a significant predictor of not recanting during investigation.

Further, when the non-offending caregiver was not supportive, no intervention or ability to repeat disclosure was observed. Hershkowitz, Lanes and Lamb (2007) found that disclosure was significantly correlated with the parental reaction, “None of the children whose parents reported that they reacted calmly to stress delayed their disclosure, whereas, most children whose parents reported being under stress did” (Hershkowitz et al., 2007, p.118).

Jensen and associates (2005) found that factors that facilitated disclosure included having a dialogue surrounding sexual abuse or anticipated contact with the offender. A model was proposed which described facilitation for disclosure, namely, opportunity, purpose and

connection. Children disclosed when there was an opportunity to talk, a purpose for their statement and a connection to the subject matter.

Schonburcher and associates (2012) found four main facilitators to disclosure of CSA. The first was when abuse took place outside the family. The second was when there was only one incident of abuse. The third was that the child was older than the age of 12 at onset of the abuse. Finally, the fourth facilitator was the parents were living together. Studies have presented different findings regarding what can help facilitate disclosure. A consistent finding is that non-offending parental support, mainly labelled as maternal support, was a large predictor of disclosure. This speaks to the need for feelings of safety, security and support in order for a child to make a disclosure. This research indicates the need to intervene not only with victims themselves but the importance of providing support and aid to non-offending caregivers who possess such a strong role in victim disclosure and potential recovery.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the argument that CSA disclosure is positioned as a process and not a singular event is supported by numerous studies. This process is complicated and hindered by: the age and gender of the CSA victim, the nature of the CSA abuse experienced, the relationship between the CSA victim and perpetrator, the CSA victims' concerns for their self, family, and the perpetrator and systemic barriers, while a facilitating factor in the CSA process is the role of a supportive caregiver.

Overall, it appears culture has scarcely been studied thus far. In this chapter the state of knowledge to date is outlined however, the omission of culture is evident among the above listed studies. When reviewing the theoretical models that positioned disclosure as an event or process, as well the barriers to CSA disclosure studies an important caveat was observed; namely the little attention paid to the role of culture in the CSA disclosure literature.

Homogeneity was observed and associated with the argument of a CSA disclosure as a process, while common barriers to disclosure were noted across studies. However, it remains to be seen if studying culture in relation to CSA disclosure will dispel some of the perceived homogeneity found among the scholarly work to date on the disclosure process and CSA barriers to disclosure. This review provides further support to this thesis' project that aims to explore how culture impacts disclosure experiences.

Chapter Three: Methodology: Descriptive Psychological Phenomenology

Qualitative Research Methods

This thesis will use a descriptive psychological phenomenological methodology and this chapter will help to explore how it was used. This doctoral research thesis asks the following research questions: *(1) how does culture shape the experiences of child sexual abuse disclosures from the perspectives of youth and (2) what common themes emerge as promoting or inhibiting disclosure?* Given that little is known about culture and CSA from youths' perspectives, it was determined that an approach based on qualitative methods, with descriptive answers from participants was best suited to answer the research questions.

Phenomenology

Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to uncover thick and rich data to generate description about layers of meaning (Giorgi, 2009). Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to remain true to the voices of participants to describe their experience and to maintain the integrity of the participants' voices. The role as the researcher is not to generate theory but rather to pull together the voices and experiences to synthesize a general structure. There is no co-construction of meaning, as the researcher holds a position of neutrality and tries to represent experiences to the audience. This methodology was directly aligned to my research question. I wanted to both uncover how culture may play a role in the disclosure process and uncover what barriers are presented while remaining true to voices of my participants, youth, whose voices are so often absent from research. Thus, descriptive psychological phenomenology was best suited to conduct this study.

Another factor considered was the number of interviews conducted and member checking to confirm the reliability of findings. The notion of multiple interviews and/or secondary interviews to verify the accuracy of information with the participants is not congruent with this type of phenomenology or this research study (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). McConnell and associates (2011) argued that multiple interviews or member checking was not considered rigorous research as every time an experience is recalled the meaning might be altered, furthermore, if a researcher points out certain parts of the interview the participant might try to reposition answers they feel to be the correct one. The authors further argued, there are many pragmatic reasons for the use of the singular interview in phenomenological research: time, in that more data does not equate to richer data, the potential for changing the initial data

and the potential for exploitation, particularly with sensitive subject matter. For the purposes of this research, namely, culture and CSA disclosures, one interview was used to avoid causing unnecessary trauma from having participants repeat their experiences.

Qualitative researchers have tried to demonstrate a position of validity against the rigorous scientific methodology of quantitative studies, such as creating the criterion of saturation (Giorgi, 2009; Englander, 2012). While some methodologies in qualitative methodology argue in favour of validity criteria such as saturation, this particular method chooses not to do so as it does not influence the final analysis in any meaningful way (Giorgi, 2002; 2009). Giorgi (2009) argued that attempting to measure or quantify a lived experience is not the best way to access a lived experience. Rather validity is based upon the rigorous use of the method in combination with how the researcher adheres to the meaning of the subjects' description of a phenomenon (Giorgi, 2002).

Descriptive psychological phenomenology is not a research method without limitations. One limitation is that the method calls for participants who have experienced the same phenomena. Finding a suitable number of subjects who have experienced any given phenomena can be a difficult task. Furthermore, the notion of the correct number of subjects can be problematic. As opposed to other qualitative theories mentioned above there is no proposed number of subjects in order to render the research regarding the phenomena under investigation complete. As such, one of the major limitations of this approach is the notion of validity. This type of phenomenology is more concerned with meaning than measurement. Hence, terms such as saturation used to validate other approaches are not part of this approach. The only validity within the approach is the reliance that the researcher has accurately adhered to the rigorous method. A description of how the researcher adhered to the rigorous method follows.

The Premises of Descriptive Phenomenological Psychology

Giorgi (2009) based his theoretical methodology upon the writings of Husserl's descriptive phenomenological philosophy and modified and clarified Husserl's teachings to develop a qualitative methodology. For Husserl (1965) the foundation of all knowledge begins with consciousness, as knowledge cannot be acquired without consciousness. A phenomenon, therefore, is regarded as anything that presents itself to consciousness. There is no presupposition that the consciousness presents accuracy, only that is exerts a presence. Knowledge acquisition then, from the lens of descriptive phenomenological psychology is based upon conscious

thoughts that an individual does experience. Therefore, descriptive phenomenological psychology is the study of a phenomena's conscious representation to the participants in the study. In this research study, the phenomenon under investigation is how culture impacts the CSA disclosure experience from the perspectives of youth. The thesis studied what participants could recall about their culture and CSA disclosure experiences without presupposing the accuracy of their statements; rather describing participants' recollection of their lived experience.

According to Giorgi (1997) a primary consideration is that phenomenology uncovers the phenomenon of consciousness and this refers to the totality of a lived experience that belongs to one person, while studying phenomena is looking at a portion of a lived experience as it presents itself to one's consciousness. A phenomenon cannot be separated in sub-units by the researcher without taking into consideration the person's lived experience in totality. Thus, to uncover the rich accounts of a phenomenon being studied I must look at the consciousness surrounding the description within the context of the person describing the phenomenon.

A person is considered consciousness embodied in physicality (Husserl, 1977; Merleau-Ponty, 1996) and as such a person is a historical being and conscious experiences are part of his/her constitution. Consciousness can be delineated into "real" (p.10) and "irreal" (p.10) constitutions. Giorgi stated "real" (p.10) conscious constitutions are considered to be objects directed by time, space and causality. "Irreal" (p.10) conscious constitutions are considered to objects directed by imagination, memory, and anticipation, and as such, they do not exist in physical form. Furthermore, he maintained "intentionality", which occurs automatically, is the act of absorbing "real" and "irreal" conscious constituents, which govern consciousness. Therefore, phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon as it is represented within the consciousness of a participant. Consciousness in entirety is guided by the principle of intentionality (Giorgi, 2009). Intentionality is a process that occurs without awareness, it occurs automatically. Intentionality is the act of absorbing constituents, which, in turn govern consciousness in a cyclical manner. Phenomena as being recalled by one person would thus be a combination of real and irreal constitutions of consciousness.

The thesis aimed to uncover what Giorgi would call real and irreal constitutions of my participants' lived experience of how culture and CSA disclosure were represented consciously. The participants' real constitutions of consciousness were comprised of their recollections of CSA, such as events, which include people, places and physical acts that were concrete

occurrences bounded by space and time. Descriptions of participants' culture, and disclosure itself would be considered irreal constitutions because culture is largely described by imagination and belief systems while disclosure would largely be described by memory and feelings.

The Research Process

The research process within descriptive phenomenological psychology begins with a research interest that can be created into a researchable question (Giorgi, 2009). This research study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) how does culture shape experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth and (2) what similar elements amongst subjects' accounts emerge that promote or inhibit disclosure? As the researcher I must take into consideration the context in which the phenomenon exists while designing a research process that allows the researcher to ascertain some level of control. While acknowledging the phenomenon to be researched can never be an exact replica of one's experiences, I as the researcher aim to investigate the phenomenon in question, in the most suitable environment. Data can never fully manifest the world of a subject completely; it can only be partially exact as it is a recollection of an experience.

Researching the phenomenon of CSA is a highly sensitive topic and thus my inquiry on the cultural CSA disclosure experience must occur in the most comfortable setting for the subject in question. I must accommodate the participants' level of comfort; therefore, they were given the option to participate voluntarily for an open-ended interview in person or by phone.

Data Collection

Raw data collection calls for obtaining concrete descriptions of subjects who have lived through the experience being studied (Giorgi, 2009). Optimally, interviews are recorded and then transcribed. The situation the subject described is what the subject regards as the truth of the event that they have lived. Therefore, a primary consideration through the lens of phenomenology is the selection of subjects. Subjects in this research study were individuals who were able to describe culture, had experienced and disclosed CSA and were able to act as informants. They had to have had the capacity to provide full descriptions of an experience being researched (Polkinghorne, 1989). Therefore, sampling was purposeful, in that the study sought out individuals who could describe both culture and the CSA disclosure experience. According to Polkinghorne (1989) the subjects must be able to act as informants. In this thesis subjects must describe experience of disclosure and how they would define culture. Participants

could only provide descriptions under specific questions that the researcher had formulated (Giorgi, 2009). It was imperative that the research questions did not lead subjects but rather created a space for them to express their experience. In the event that the interview drifted from the primary focus, the interviewer redirected the conversation without leading the subject. For example, you previously mentioned (x) could you please tell me more about that? I ensured the participants had the time needed to express a full detailed account of their conscious experience. Interviews were terminated when data became repetitive and no new details were added or given the highly sensitive subject matter, when participants exhibited signs of stress or fatigue. I was also mindful of the possible limitations of the participant, specifically, having to recall an experience whereby accounts can be partially forgotten or distorted due to the temporal dimension of consciousness.

Ethical Considerations

I had to accommodate participants' level of comfort given the sensitive phenomenon being studied. I thus gave participants the option to participate in either an open-ended interview in person or by telephone. Participants were also notified they were able to withdraw from the research process at any given time. Interviews ranged from forty minutes to one hour. All participants opted for a phone interview.

Interviews ended in one of two circumstances; the first being no new information was being produced the second circumstance was participant fatigue. Participant fatigue was evident when subjects had a hard time keeping their train of thought, holding back tears in their speech or breathing and sighing heavily into the phone. Additionally, participants were interviewed in the presence of their therapist. In some cases, the therapist suggested the interview should come to a close.

Assuming the Phenomenological Attitude

The first step of the research process called for me to embrace the phenomenological attitude, which required breaking free from the natural attitude (Giorgi, 2009). The two main components associated with assuming the phenomenological attitude are the "epoche" (p.91) and the "reduction" (p.92) The "epoche" (p.91) referred to bracketing all other knowledge I have regarding culture, CSA and disclosure. The "epoche" is bracketing all knowledge coming from sources other than what is given in the act of consciousness itself that is being studied. While the "reduction" (p.92) refers to withholding one's position of the phenomenon as it exists in

consciousness. The reduction called for withholding the positing of the object that the act presents. This means I did not affirm or discount that the phenomenon exists but rather the subject was presenting it to my consciousness.

As previously stated, a person is embodied consciousness comprised of historical components, therefore, one must be aware of the past while attempting not to allow it to interfere with one's ongoing experience. This phenomenological attitude calls for being present during the data collection phase, yet to be passive in a conscious state of neither belief nor disbelief; in other words, to not question or judge the validity of the experience being described by the subject. Researchers must be aware of the limitation that it is not always entirely possible to achieve a complete "epoche" (p.91) and "reduction" (p.92), but rather one can continually critically reflect and improve the approach to the phenomenological attitude. An "epoche" may never be fully achieved however a "reduction" can be fully achieved.

Achieving the phenomenological attitude to conduct my research in regard to the "epoche" (p.91) and "reduction" (p.92) called for actively engaging in bracketing my prior knowledge base regarding culture, CSA and CSA disclosure experiences. This proved to be a far more difficult task than I had initially suspected. I worked as clinician for youth protection services for a period of nine years. As a youth protection delegate my task was to conduct front line interviews in suspected cases of child maltreatment. The majority of my caseload was comprised of cases with suspected sexual abuse. The youth protection setting calls for the opposite of phenomenological attitude. When conducting interviews with children and families the goal was to remember all knowledge about symptomology and disclosure patterns when conducting interviews in order to provide evidence or lack thereof in regard to allegations of CSA. I was trained in this method of questioning and did not readily understand how challenging it would be to step away from this style of interviewing. Additionally, in assuming this attitude I was unable to intervene to validate subjects' experiences or provide them with encouragement. This proved to be a difficult task, leaving me with the feeling I wasn't "helping" the subjects as one would practice in a clinical setting.

Therefore, in an attempt to bracket my prior knowledge regarding how culture shapes CSA disclosure experiences, I had to complete three critical steps. The first step was to meet with my doctoral supervisor to discuss any preconceived ideas I had regarding: definitions of culture, definitions of CSA, definitions of disclosure and theoretical frameworks surrounding

how disclosure "should or could" take place. These discussions made me acutely aware of my level of bias as a result of both clinical practice as well as conducting research on CSA disclosure experiences.

Once I was aware of my biases, I decided to create a reflective journal to be made available to my doctoral supervisor. The journal began with lengthy descriptions of my biases and suspected difficulties in maintaining the neutrality associated with this research method. Before my interviews I would read my initial entry to remind myself to "let go" of these notions and engage in mindfulness, or simply being present in the moment of the interviews. Upon completion of each interview, I added journal entries in an attempt to monitor how I engaged in the act of being present, how biases might have crept into the interview and how to make adjustments for subsequent interviews.

Interviews and questions were adjusted accordingly throughout the data collection process. I cannot make any such claims that I achieved the phenomenological attitude in its entirety. This became a frustration throughout my interviews striving for perfection in order to create the perfect descriptive structure. However, I reminded myself of the theoretical premises behind the model, that I too am a historical being, comprised of experiences that make up my consciousness. While I accepted that at times biases might have been present in my interviews, overall, I believe that I accomplished the task of neutrality by remaining present in the interview, not creating an overly structured agenda and giving participants free space to tell their stories.

Read the Entire Written Account for a Sense of the Whole

Once the data was collected and transcribed, with a desire of maintaining the phenomenological attitude, the transcripts were read in the first-person account in order to obtain the holistic experience of the described phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009). Every interview was regarded as a distinct piece of raw data. The researcher read the transcripts, as they were independently completed without any critical analysis, judgment, or predetermined validity or disbelief to the subjects' conscious experience. The objective of this step was to fully understand the entire description provided by the subject. The objective, for clarification was not to read all accounts for holistic meaning, but rather to treat each individual interview as a distinct holistic entity. This stage of the process does not aim to holistically create a general structural experience.

Once interviews were completed, a research assistant or I transcribed them. Note I reviewed the transcriptions once typed on three separate occasions for accuracy. Once they were transcribed, they were read, while maintaining the phenomenological attitude. Upon completion of each interview, I created a journal entry, transcribed the interview then listened with the transcription in hand to ensure the transcriptions contained no errors. This process was quite lengthy and proved emotionally overwhelming given the nature of the content. I completed a journal entry following each interview. To ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions of the interviews, I repeated the process of listening to the interviews with the written transcript in hand several weeks after the initial transcription.

Once one full transcription was complete, I then read each one individually in its entirety. While reading the transcripts I did not attempt to look for themes, sequential order, substantiate or disbelieve the participants' accounts. I simply read each described experience independently. I tried to look at each person's account and simply read the transcript as a life experience of the person describing it.

When I found myself eagerly noting something that had resonated with my previous knowledge base, I stopped reading the transcript. I would then set aside the transcript for several days and begin the process over again. This stage took several readings of each transcript in order to suspend my bias and maintain an attitude of objectivity and neutrality. I was so eager to come to conclusions I often had to remind myself of the process.

Delineate Meaning Units

Giorgi (2009) claimed this is the stage, when one begins to assign meaning to described phenomenon. Delineation of meaning units, which, are contained within the description of the phenomenon, should be as accurate as possible, maintaining a first-person account of the described experience. The researcher uncovers meaning units when a shift of consciousness in a description has taken place. The separation of said units can be attained visually by marking shifts in consciousness by placing "/" around the shift in meaning. The demarcation of the meaning units allows for the researcher to grasp the raw data in a more manageable form.

Delineating meaning units by the researcher is a self-correcting process. The researcher may discover units are too long or too short and thus alter or combine them. By creating concrete meaning units, the researcher is lead to the inner consciousness of the experience described by the subject. While the facts associated with descriptions become transformed into generalized

meanings, this allows for the revelation of experience of the subject to the researcher and from this position important descriptions can then be made.

Once a transcript had been read in its entirety, as per the previous step, I then began to look for first-person accounts of meaning units. A symbol was used to delineate units, "/" to separate the beginning and end of shift in a conscious idea. Again, at this time the phenomenological attitude was maintained, no judgment was made regarding the accuracy of the raw data but rather to look for landmarks in subjects' conscious description of their experience. An example of this could include "/how subject x attributes meaning to their experience of CSA/" followed by "/how subject x made a disclosure".

I was quite eager to embark into this stage of the research process. This was the first stage where I was able to engage with my participants' accounts of the CSA disclosure. Upon reading the steps of the process this seemed like it would be a simple endeavour. I would read each transcript line by line and look for shifts in thoughts. The shifts in thoughts would be delineated by "/" symbols at the end of each sentence. I quickly realized this was by no means a simple task. I found myself asking repeatedly 'when does a thought start and end'? I had assumed, as though I was working with a mathematical formula, that thoughts would just present themselves in a clear and concise sequential manner. However, the art of conversation or asking questions does not occur in this manner. Some thoughts would start, turn into a different direction and then return to the original subject matter. Some thoughts were concise, other thoughts were incomplete and some seemingly did not initially match the conversation context or make sense. During this stage of working with the data, neutrality and objectivity remained paramount. I, therefore, read a few pages at a time, attempted to discern conscious thought patterns and return later to complete the rest of the transcription. Upon completion of each transcription I would often go back and adjust things I had missed, or thoughts that seemingly flowed together that I had initially separated.

I found myself questioning almost every decision I made during this stage. I called into question my ability to discern different conscious thoughts and how this would affect the outcome of the validity of the participant's experiences. I continued to remind myself the reason I chose this very method was to remain true to voices of the participants and their experiences. After several readings of each transcript and making adjustments to each individual's account, I believe I was able to capture the different units of meaning they expressed.

Transform Meaning Units into Psychologically Sensitive Statements of Their Lived Meanings

Giorgi (2009) described this as the most labour-intensive step in the methodological process. This is the stage where the researcher experiences the consciousness of the subject by transforming meaning units into third person accounts of the consciousness of the subject. However, in completing this stage, the researcher must remain true to the description provided by the subject and cannot supplement aesthetic or theoretical components. Once the researcher has delineated meaning units, he/she will later then be able to organize the data into a higher-level structural description.

The transformation of the meaning units occurs at an individual psychological level rather than a transcendental philosophical level (Giorgi, 2009). Qualitative researchers often attempt to break down data into components and then restructure them, yet this implies an underlying presumption that entities can act apart from one another while in fact they exist interdependently. Experiences of consciousness cannot be finite entities, as they are fluid rather than static. The researcher described how a structure can be integrated or how it cannot be integrated but does not posit why the structure can or cannot be unified. The results of this transformation create strong knowledge claims as they are based in factual descriptions rather than theories or hypothesis, which would require the researcher to depart from the phenomenological attitude. While the factual descriptions among participants may vary, this does not imply the psychological meanings are not the same. Furthermore, context cannot be dismissed as an unimportant facet of the lived experience.

This stage of my research was quite time consuming. Keeping in mind I had read each transcript several times when I reached this stage, I suddenly became confused and perplexed when it was time to transform the data into more than just outlined streams of consciousness. This was the stage when I had to look at each individual unit of meaning and ask myself; “What does this mean” “Is this similar to other participants” and “What language is used”? This is the stage, whereby; I had to determine which meaning units leant significance to the description of the culture and CSA disclosure experience or whether the meaning units were irrelevant pieces of information. The difficulty in this stage is that much of the data that initially appeared insignificant actually lent itself to a meaning of the experience. Therefore, many readings of the

transcript were completed to decipher if something initially deemed trivial was actually of great importance to the research question.

Synthesize a General Psychological Structure of the Experience

This is where the researcher unifies and expresses the structure or lack thereof of the experiences of the subject (Giorgi, 2009). This is time when the researcher discovers if the meaning units of participants can be integrated into structures/patterns or constituents. However, if the subjects' accounts demonstrate no congruence than a different structure could be provided for each subject. The researcher will either be able to create a succinct structure(s) surrounding the phenomenon in question or alternately no structure at all. However, if the data does not lead the researcher to any form of concise structure, the findings would illicit interest in the absence of an integrated structure itself. The purpose of this procedure is synthesizing the psychological constituents of the subjects' experiences. This procedure is grounded by the phenomenological constructs of parts and wholes. The value of the whole of the experience is regarded as greater than the sum of its parts. Parts are further delineated into pieces and moments. Pieces can exist separately and detach from the whole, while moments are dependent on the greater sum of the whole experience. However, moments and psychological elements, as described about the experience can be shared to form a descriptive structure of the experience. Giorgi (2017) recommended by correspondence, given this is a social work study, the analysis should occur in the context of social work terminology rather than a psychological one. The analysis should be adjusted to the discipline of the study. This researcher concurred with this recommendation and can provide an analysis through the lens of social work with appropriate social work terminology such as themes or patterns in the final analysis.

This final stage was where the results of my labour came together to create an academic accomplishment. Giorgi (2009) described this stage to be creating a structure, whereby the researcher can find similar elements among experiences or alternatively find none. Additionally, this is the stage whereby academic context becomes relevant. Remaining a purist to Giorgi's (2009) research method would call for integrating the meaning units into some form of structure, while the term structure is not readily used in social work. I, therefore, presented my findings in structured themes, a more traditional manner to present social work findings. Luckily during my data collection process, I was able to contact Dr. Giorgi personally, both by email and telephone. He was often able to provide clarity when I misunderstood or needed guidance regarding the

stages. A key element he noted was that the final product must be reflective of the discipline and lens through which one conducts their research. While the term structure is often used in a psychology framework, he reminded me the findings should be reflective of terminology within my discipline of social work. Thus, while attempting to remain a purist to the descriptive psychological phenomenological research model, a notable change I made was to synthesize my general findings into “themes” rather than a “structure”.

Conclusion

While large bodies of social work theses opt for the use of qualitative research, much of the work from the beginning to ending stages of the research can remain elusive. This chapter has tried to clarify one account of how a phenomenological research model was used during the research process. The goal of this chapter was to demonstrate some insight into how qualitative research was used and demonstrate its merits. The merits that coincide with the methodology was the rigour and labour-intensive process that remained unseen and allowed me to create a final outcome in the form of findings. The final merit was that the methodology used, descriptive psychological phenomenology, aligned with my desire to maintain the integrity of the voice of youth victims of CSA.

Chapter Four Manuscript 1: The Role of Culture in Child Sexual Abuse Disclosures (CSA): A Systematic Review

Abstract

This systematic review of literature explores what is empirically known about the relationship between culture and child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure. The objective of this systemic review is to examine the research related to culture and CSA or sexual assault disclosure to discover how culture is conceptualized and what can be learned and what can be applied to future research endeavors. Concepts and the use of theoretical models will be defined and contextualized according to the ideologies/theories/principles that the original researchers have used. Two major findings emerged from the systemic review. The first finding was past research has used categorical descriptors of "culture" to describe participants on the basis of ethnicity and religion. The second major finding was that some disclosure barriers transcended the ethnic and racial categorizations and nine themes emerged: the code of silence, cultural shame, fear of the police or the justice system, family preservation, historical oppression and trauma, lack of resources, protection of the offender, fear of retribution and gender roles.

Background

There is growing public awareness of CSA, especially since the social media campaign "Me Too" (Ohleisher, 2017) was created as a vehicle for women to publicly disclose past sexual assaults, yet rates of CSA reported to authorities remain low. There is, without a doubt, a discrepancy between experiences of CSA as revealed by adults in self-report surveys and CSA disclosure to youth protection and authorities. The incidence rate of CSA refers to the total number of CSA incidents, a victim has endured CSA during any given time period. While the prevalence rates of CSA refer to the total number of people in the population who have endured CSA, over their lifetime.

Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser and Nakermans-Kranenburg (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of the prevalence of CSA around the world. The sample was comprised of Australia/New Zealand, North America, Europe, Africa, South America and Asia.
These authors concluded that the combined prevalence rates for females who experienced CSA under the age of 18 years old was 18%. While the combined prevalence rate for males who experienced CSA under the age of 18 years old was 7.6%. Lastly the combined prevalence rate for samples with mixed genders who were under the age of 18 years old was 8.7% when they

experienced CSA. The highest combined prevalence rates were found in the Australian population. The lowest combined prevalence rates were found in Asia.

Barth and associates (2013) also conducted a systematic review of global prevalence rates of CSA. They sampled the following continents: Asia (16) studies, North American (14) studies. Europe (11) studies, Africa (9) studies and Central American (5) studies. They concluded that the prevalence rates were 15% of females and 8% of males respectively.

However, the Canadian Incidence Study (CIS) indicated that only about two percent of all cases reported to youth protection authorities involved allegations of CSA as a form of maltreatment, which represents an incidence rate of 0.34 per 1000 children (Trocmé et al., 2010). Furthermore, a report by Statistics Canada (2014) indicated that in the year 2012, the incidence rate of CSA reported to authorities was 2.05 per 1000 children and youth under 18 across Canada (Cotter & Beaupré, 2014). Contrary to prevalence rates, these incidence rates in isolation have suggested that CSA among the Canadian population is not a common occurrence.

This overall discrepancy in reporting rates surrounding incidence and prevalence rates of CSA victimization and disclosure of CSA coincides with empirical research, which demonstrates a major lack of convergence between the low number of official reports of CSA to authorities, and the high rates of CSA that youth and adults self-report retrospectively. Indeed, international findings showed the rates of CSA to be 30 times greater in studies relying on self-reports than in official report inquiries, such as those based on data from child protection services and the police (Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser & Nakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). The low disclosure of CSA to authorities may be a key factor to explain this discrepancy.

A significant amount research has examined universal barriers that prevent victims from coming forward to disclose. These can be classified as: intrapersonal barriers, concerns for others, systemic barriers, the age of the victim, the gender of the victim, the nature and severity of the abuse, and the victim's relationship to the offender. Children also face numerous emotional barriers that prevent or delay the disclosure of CSA. A primary emotional barrier that is mentioned in the scholarship is feelings of shame (Alaggia, 2004; Crisma, Bascelli, Paci & Romito, 2004; Denov, 2003; Paine & Hansen, 2002; Sauzier, 1989; Schonburcher, Maier, Mohler-Huo, Schnyder & Landolt, 2012). A second barrier that is mentioned frequently in the literature is fear (Alaggia, 2004; Denov, 2003; Paine & Hansen, 2002; Schaeffer, Leventhal & Gottsegen Asnes, 2012; Schonburcher, Maier, Mohler-Huo, Schnyder & Landolt, 2012). Another

roadblock to disclosure is self-blame by the victim (Alaggia, 2004; Crisma, et al., 2004; Paine & Hansen, 2002). Finally, victims often lack understanding that sexual abuse had occurred (Alaggia, 2004; Crisma et al., 2004; Paine & Hansen, 2002; Schaeffer, Leventhal & Gottsegen Asnes, 2012).

Victims of CSA have difficulty disclosing when they experience fear for their personal or physical safety or the safety of their family or their abuser. Sauzier's (1989) longitudinal study claimed children who experienced more severe sexual abuse feared losing affection and goodwill from the offender, feared the consequences of telling, feared being physically harmed, or being retaliated against in some manner towards themselves or their family. Paine and Hansen (2002) conducted a systemic literature review and found three major themes emerged which acted as deterrents to disclosure: personal and safety concerns for themselves, personal and safety concerns for their family and loved ones and finally personal and safety concerns for the perpetrator. Goodman-Brown, Edelstein, Goodman, Jones and Gordon (2003) reviewed case files and found that children reported having fears for themselves, their family as well as the defendant who abused them. Furthermore, the children who believed that their fear would actualize took longer to disclose than those who did not. Crisma and associates (2004) also identified fear for the family as reasons for non-disclosure. Jensen, Gulbrandson, Mossige, Reichelt and Tjersland (2005) conducted a qualitative analysis and determined reasons that were given for non-disclosure included lack of opportunity or bad timing, concerns pertaining to the self or mother, concerns for consequences for the family or offender and finally fear they would not be believed or supported.

Systemic barriers faced by victims appear to be a relatively new field of inquiry in the CSA disclosure literature. Alaggia and Kirshenbaum (2005) found that family dynamics contribute to the ability to make disclosures. Leclerc and Wortley (2015) echoed this argument and found family dysfunction inhibits disclosure. Alaggia and Kirshenbaum (2005) found that the family system plays a role in the ability to make disclosures. Familial themes that contribute to delayed disclosure included rigidly fixed gender roles, dominating fathers, chaos and aggression, the presence of other forms of child abuse, domestic violence, dysfunctional communication and social isolation. Alaggia (2010) then examined ecological factors associated with disclosure. The exo-system level (neighbourhood and community level) served as a barrier when victims identified feeling a lack of empathy from neighbours or a fear of being an outcast

from their community. At a macro level (societal level) barriers included confusion surrounding the sexualization of young girls in the media, and males being sent messages about masculinity that prevented disclosure. In essence, at the cultural level, socialized gender roles, sexism and patriarchy played a large role. Collin-Vézina and associates (2015) also reviewed broad societal factors that affected victims' ability to disclose. Barriers in relation to others were similar to those found by Alaggia (2010). However, barriers in relation to the social world were identified as labelling or stigma, taboos surrounding sexuality, lack of available services and culture and time period of abuse. These findings indicate a need to look beyond universal barriers to understand the complexity of the role of culture in CSA disclosure especially given the reality of diverse North American populations (Brazelton, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Tisheman & Fontes, 2017; Swarikar & Katz, 2018).

Indeed, while empirical scholarship thus far has made strides in understanding the factors that promote or prevent CSA disclosure, many studies that have captured the experience of disclosure have either used solely Caucasian populations (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Elliot & Briere, 1994; Sorenson & Snow, 1991) or have not provided information on the culture or background of participants (Alaggia, 2004; Collin-Vézina, De La Sablonnière-Griffin, Palmer & Milne, 2015; Denov, 2003; Faller, Cordisco-Steele & Nelson-Gardell, 2010; Gries, Goh & Cavanaugh, 1997; Hunter, 2011; McElvaney, Greene & Hogan, 2014). This leaves much knowledge to be garnered surrounding how culture plays a role in CSA disclosure.

This is particularly relevant due to diversity in Western contexts due to the high level of migration to Western countries. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), The UN Migration Agency (2018) they reported steadily increasing numbers of migration since 1970. The IOM defines migration as someone living in a country other than that in which they were born. In 1970, 2.3% of the world's population were considered migrants (84,460,125 people). This number steadily increased to 3.3% of the global population in 2018 (244, 700, 236 people).

According to Eurostat (2017) there were a significant number of immigrants (non-national civilians residing in the European Union (EU). In the year 2017 alone, 2.4 million immigrants entered the EU from non-EU countries. As of January 2018. 22.3 million or 4.4% of the total 512.4 million EU citizens were non-EU citizens. Germany was reported the have the largest number of immigrants.

The Canadian census (2016) indicated that 41.1 % of the Canadian population identified more than one ethnic origin. In 2016, individuals reported that they retained up to six ethnic origins individually, while 15.1% reported themselves as foreign born. The most common foreign-born first-generation Canadians in 2016, from largest to smallest population size include: Asian origins, African origins, Latin, Central or South American Origins, Caribbean origins and Oceania origins (Statistics Canada, 2016). Among the Canadian population 6.2% identified with Indigenous origins (Statistics Canada, 2016). Furthermore, two thirds of the population identified with some religious affiliation, with the following groups listed representing the largest to smallest identified number of religious followers, Roman Catholic, Christian, Muslim, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Judaism (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The United States Census Bureau demonstrated a similar pattern of ethnic diversity with approximately 40% of Americans identifying as other than "White" (n.p.). Approximately 61% of the population identified as White, 17% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino, 13% identified as Black or African American, 6% identified as Asian, 2% identified as having two or more and 1% identified as American Indian (United States Census Bureau, 2017). Among this population 13% have identified as being foreign-born (United States Census Bureau, 2017). Therefore, across North America almost half of the population identifies as a racial group other than Caucasian/White.

The Western landscape is both ethnically and religiously diverse. This further demonstrates for the need to include and understand culture in CSA disclosure literature. The current political climate also lends credence to the urgency of understanding the relationships of culture to CSA disclosure. There are structural inequalities that place non-Caucasian groups at a disadvantage, which could greatly impact formal CSA disclosures. Police brutality has been identified in black and brown communities (Embrick, 2015). Embrick (2015) claimed the North American reality is land of two nations: Blacks and Whites the two groups being separate and unequal. This reality is echoed in the "Black Lives Matter Campaign" that protests against police brutality and racial profiling in the United States of America (Blacks Lives Matter, 2018). Another cultural reality is Islamophia: anti-Muslim sentiments are increasing (Samari, 2016). Finally, the president of the United States, Donald Trump, has called Mexican immigrants' murderers and rapists (CNN, 2016). The current political climate has potential to non-Causation or non-dominant in a position of fear of authorities. Therefore, it is

important to understand culture, to dispel myths and understand the potential impact of culture on CSA discloses.

Objective

This systematic review aims to describe; 1) the state of research pertaining to the role of culture on CSA disclosure and 2) to provide a synthesis of the empirical knowledge based on the available research regarding the role of culture on disclosure process and barriers to CSA disclosure.

Methodology

Criteria for considering studies for this review

The methodology for this systematic review has been developed according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (PRISMA, 2009). The analysis was based on the scientific rigor criteria suggested by Popay, Rogers and Williams (1998) due to the large number of qualitative studies reviewed. In order to meet the research objectives, this systemic review centered on the following question: "*What is the state of knowledge regarding culture and CSA disclosure and what can be learned and applied to future research?"*

Search Methods

Electronic Searches

Studies were identified through searching databases from various fields of study in order to obtain a large number of potentially relevant records. Comprehensive and systematic electronic searches were conducted in the following databases: JSTOR (Social Work), OVID (Social Work Abstracts), ProQuest (Central) comprised of nineteen subsequent sub data bases. Key word searches for each database included "culture and CSA and disclosure", "ethnicity and CSA and disclosure", "religion and CSA and disclosure" and finally "identity and CSA and disclosure". The search was performed in August 2015 and then replicated in October 2018. The above listed databases were searched, from the time period of 1980-2018, with English language restrictions. This time period was selected because this is when CSA began to garner academic and legislative attention (Grondin, 2011).

Manual Searches

The Journal of Child Sexual Abuse and the International Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect were searched manually from the calendar year of 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 as searches were updated across this time-frame not to omit any studies.

Inclusion Criteria

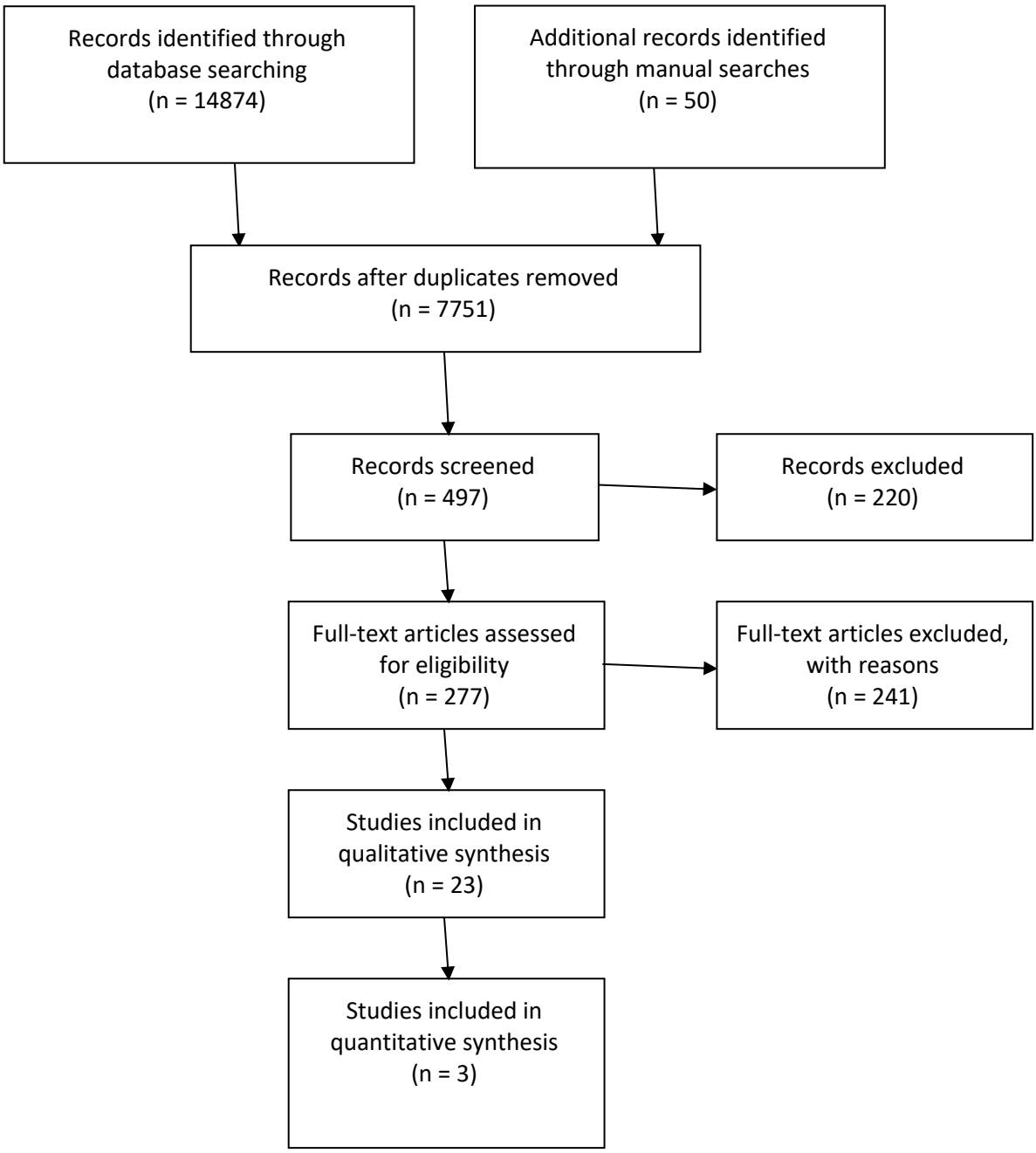
The initial inclusion criteria for this systemic review were that studies had to examine CSA or sexual assault disclosure and culture. Adults were only included in the selection criteria due to the small number of studies that examine CSA from the perspectives of children as well as culture. Stated with certainty, only one study used the word culture in the title excluding any demographic labels. Initial search results associated with the word culture produced results with ethnic or religious groups in the title, therefore, the search had to be expanded. Searching the term "culture" only rendered labels. Therefore, the lens of cultural psychology was introduced to identify broader structures, environmental factors, family dynamics, beliefs and rituals that impacted how victims disclosed CSA as described through qualitative studies. The studies had to have a clear research question with conclusions consistent with the intended research question(s) and a clear methodological approach. Finally, the included studies had English language restrictions.

Exclusion Criteria

Initial search results yielded 14874 studies; 7751 were removed because they were replicated across databases or key word searches. The remaining 7123 articles were screened by title, there were 6626 studies screened out due the selection criteria. Studies were excluded from this review based on the following criteria: if culture was delineated categorically with no further information about the category (for example, mentioning Arab CSA disclosures with no further information provided than the word "Arab"), if the study focused on post disclosure outcomes, if the study focused on treatment or if the study focused on mental health, substance abuse, intergenerational transmission, historical or complex trauma. A total of 491 were then screened by title and abstract and an additional 220 were excluded, as they did not meet the criteria for the systemic review. A total of 277 studies were read in full, however, among them, 220 did not fully capture culture beyond category, had no clear research or methodological approach or did not focus on CSA disclosure. Twenty-six articles were included in the final selection. The PRISMA (2009) flow diagram for the screening and selection of studies is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

PRISMA (2009) Search Strategy



Findings

Table 1 summarizes the studies used in the systemic review. In the table, the purpose of each study is described, the design, the sample, the findings and a general summary. Table 1 also illustrates how populations were categorized within each study.

The studies reviewed took place in a variety of different countries across the globe. More specifically the countries of origin included: Palestine (4), Israel (4) Canada (3) United States of America (13) China (1) England (1) and Australia (1). While admittedly the countries of origin are not globally distributed, with a main focus on North American studies, this was not intentional in the literature review design. Rather it is by-product of the studies that met the inclusion criteria.

The participants were defined according to following groups/categorizations: Arab Palestinian, Arab, Religious, Indigenous, African American, Chinese, Catholic, Aboriginal, Asian, Israeli, South Asian, European American, White, Mexican, Latina, Native, Jewish, Ethnic minorities, women of color, Hispanic, Black, Pacific Island Asian, Muslim and Christian. There were no overt trends in how groups were labelled across time. There is a large number of categorized groups that were represented in the literature review.

All studies were comprised of four main designs, namely, interviews with victims and/or their families, focus groups, file/case reviews and systematic reviews. The participants among the studies ranged in age from 4 years old to 60 years old. The scope of literature reviewed within the studies ranged from 1990-2018. Finally, definitions of CSA ranged from non-contact and exposure to full anal or vaginal intercourse.

Two major findings emerged from the systemic review. The first finding was that past research used categorical descriptors of culture among participants on the basis of ethnicity and religion. The second major finding was that some disclosure barriers transcended the ethnic and racial categorization and nine themes emerged: the code of silence, cultural shame, fear of the police or the justice system, family preservation, historical oppression and trauma, lack of resources, protection of the offender, fear of retribution and gender roles.

Table 1

Summation of Articles

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Abu-Baker (2013) Arab-Palestinian Israelis	This study examined parents' reactions to intrafamilial CSA among an Arab population.	The authors analyzed clinical records of files of CSA victims.	The study analyzed the clinical records of therapy sessions of 35 cases of CSA victims among Arab-Palestinian clients. The participants were male and female, Muslim and Christian and their ages ranged from 4 years old to 12 years old.	Families were initially categorized as functional or dysfunctional in nature based on their reaction to CSA. In functional families, reactions to CSA disclosure included: acknowledging the victim's emotional state, acknowledging misconduct on the part of the perpetrator and seeking out therapy for the victim, perpetrator or both. In dysfunctional families, reactions to CSA disclosure included: silencing the victim, a forced marriage, a false medical declaration of hymen damage or violently attacking the perpetrator.	Functional families acknowledge the mental state of the victims whereas dysfunctional families tried to hide CSA or avenge family honour.
Abu-Baker and Dwairy (2003) Arab	This article examined problematic interventions for CSA victims in collective societies. The article then proposed a culturally sensitive model intervention for CSA victims.	The article was based on cross-cultural literature and clinical case files within the Palestinian communities in Israel.	The authors reviewed literature and clinical case files.	In collective Palestinian communities, women are viewed as property and as such often controlled by their husbands and families. The role of the family is to preserve social order. CSA is silenced to preserve the collective reputation of the family. However, victims are punished if there are physical signs associated with CSA.	Western individualistic societies heavily rely on the state to protect individuals in cases of CSA. While collective Palestinian societies rely on the family to address CSA. A culturally sensitive model of intervention proposes the following steps: verification of information, mapping the family, bonding with progressive forces, a condemning, apologizing and punishing ceremony, treatment and follow-up.
Alaggia (2002) Religious	This study explored cultural and religious influences in maternal responses to CSA.	This study employed the use of qualitative research. The author used grounded theory as her research methodology.	There were ten mothers who participated in the study. The participants' ranged in age from 25 years old to 43 years old.	The study concluded that maternal religious beliefs influenced responses to CSA. There were many religious beliefs associated with preserving the family unit and value conflicts between the mothers and service providers.	Cultural and religious value systems have considerable impact on maternal responses to CSA and warrant further investigation. Mothers influenced by cultural and religious beliefs are more likely to be perceived as non-supportive to the victim.
Barsalou-Verge, Seguin and Dagenais (2015) Indigenous	This study assessed the current state of knowledge of CSA in Indigenous populations across Canada and the United States	This study conducted a literature review.	The literature review was conducted between 1990 and 2013.	The study found that barriers to CSA disclosure in Indigenous communities included: lack of available resources, practitioners with trauma histories, intergenerational resentment toward authority, fear of the legal system, difficulty with confidentiality, communal silence and protection for the offender.	The indigenous communities have unique barriers for CSA disclosure. While the consequences associated with CSA victimization often result in addiction and problems in the following domains: psychological behavioural, sexual behaviour relational.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Brazelton (2015) African American	This study explored how African American women made meaning from their CSA experiences.	The project used a hybrid qualitative design. The study used a life course perspective through a theoretical lens.	There were 17 African American women who were over the age of 40 that participated.	The key findings indicated that CSA disclosure was a silencing process. The participants indicated sexuality in their families and communities was not discussed but rather silenced. The climate of silence surrounding sexuality and CSA created fears of retribution from family members. When participants disclosed many were told by family members to hide their victimization.	The narratives of African American women who experienced CSA included, silencing throughout their lifespan. Practitioners working with this population need to be acutely aware of the climate of silence surrounding this population.
Chen, Dunne and Han (2004) Chinese	This study examined CSA experiences and CSA associations among senior high school students in four provinces in central and northern China.	The study utilized quantitative methodology using cross-sectional questionnaires.	Students in four schools participated in an anonymous survey. The mean age of participants was 17 years old.	Some participants reported unwanted sexual experiences before the age of 16; these experiences mostly consisted of exposure to another person's genitals. Females had higher rates of CSA experiences than males. While similar to Western patterns, children and adolescents who have experienced CSA have higher rates of depression and are more likely to engage in risky behaviours.	Beliefs in China suggest that children and adolescents should not have any sexual experiences; therefore, consensual sexual activity is extremely rare when compared to Western standards. When compared to Western CSA experiences, in China CSA experiences have less contact and less penetration.
Collins, O'Neil-Arana, Fontes and Ossege (2014) Catholic	This study explored how women healed from CSA who practiced Catholicism.	This was a qualitative study. Phenomenological and narrative theoretical approaches were used to guide the research design and analysis.	The sample was comprised of nine adult women that had been sexually abused as children. The women ranged in age from 30 years old to 69 years old. The sample was ethnically diverse.	All participants described God watching them in some fashion, either protectively or to shame them. Catholic patriarchy left women who had been abused feeling helpless against such a powerful structure. Victims also described Catholic guilt as they felt guilty surrounding the abuse. The victims had to process how their Catholic identity factored into their recovery process.	Further research in the area of belief systems in Catholicism and CSA and culturally competent practice are recommended.
Collin-Vézina, Dion and Trocmé (2009) Aboriginals	The authors evaluated the scope of CSA in Aboriginal communities.	The authors conducted a literature review of 20 Canadian studies of CSA rates in Aboriginal communities between 1989-2007.	The authors reviewed 20 studies that examined rates of CSA in Canadian Aboriginal communities.	The overall rates of CSA victims ranged from 16%-100%. Overall, the authors believed it was reasonable to assume about 25-50% of Aboriginal adults were sexually abused before the age of majority.	Some studies had predetermined definitions of CSA, the studies often didn't differentiate among Aboriginal communities and this limited to generalizability of the results for the Canadian Aboriginal population.
Fontes and Plummer (2010) Culture	The study explored overarching cultural barriers in CSA disclosure.	The authors conducted a literature review.	The nature of the literature review was not specified.	The authors identified numerous cultural barriers that impacted CSA disclosure, namely: shame, taboos and modesty, sexual scripts, virginity, women's status, obligatory violence, honour, respect, patriarchy and religious beliefs from disclosing.	Research about CSA and cultural influences is a new and emerging field This research led the authors to conclude culture is applicable in all cases of CSA, not just those from minority populations. They argued CSA interviews must remain flexible.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Foynes et al., (2014) Asian	They examined the impact of adherence to Asian values for child maltreatment disclosure.	A quantitative methodological stepwise logistical regression was used for research measurement. Specific measures used included: the Asian Value Scale and the Betrayal Trauma Inventory.	An online study was conducted with Asian Americans (58%) and European Americans (42%). The sample was comprised of 266 people that were aged 18 years old to 68 years old.	Asian values were associated with lower odds of disclosure of sexual abuse. Ethnicity was not associated with disclosure while females demonstrated higher odds of disclosure. Asian values which impacted disclosure included: the level of betrayal by the abuser, the loss of an attachment relationship with the perpetrator, the nature of the bond with the perpetrator, disruption of collective values.	They concluded that most research to date has focused solely on the impact of ethnic groups and disclosure and have not assessed the impact of cultural values on disclosure. They argued that efforts must be made to identify cultural values in cases of suspected abuse and for both disclosure and subsequent treatment.
Gilligan and Akthar (2006) Asian	Their aim was to contribute to understanding issues relating to Asian culture and CSA.	The research method was the use of qualitative focus groups.	Five focus groups took place during the winter and spring of 2003-2004. The women who participated were 20 years old to 60 years old.	The authors found that barriers to disclosure were the lack of basic knowledge about CSA, lack of knowledge about CSA services, fear of public exposure of CSA and fear of culturally insensitive responses. Cultural factors, which impeded disclosure, included: family honour and respect, female modesty and shame and embarrassment.	The major arguments by the authors included: protection of children and appropriate service provision are necessary, individuals of all cultures have different needs, the Asian culture has a very fluid dynamic and that increased understanding of other cultures does not remove a clinician's obligation to understand his/her culture.
Haboush and Alyan (2013) Arab	The authors aimed to provide an overview of Arab culture that included factors that influenced CSA interventions with children.	The authors conducted a literature review.	The authors utilized available literature on the Arab American population by unknown means.	Arab culture was characterized as collective in nature with high value placed upon maintaining the family unit. Religion is another central feature of Arab culture with most of population identifying as Muslim or Christian. The culture is patriarchal in nature, with men leading the household and public image and women being in charge of the domestic sphere. Family honour is upheld by female modesty. Arab culture discourages opposite sex socialization, sexual discourse and sexual education. A failure to uphold modesty can result in honour killings. Disclosure can be hindered as it is viewed as bringing shame upon the family unit.	They argued that it is important for clinicians to be mindful of their views of the Arab American population as well as the level of acculturation of the potential CSA victim as this can influence their ability to disclose.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Harper and Perkins (2018) Religious	The authors outlined research that reviewed CSA reporting variables and to help explain CSA disclosure from the lens of system justification theory and moral foundations theory.	The authors sought to generate theory.	Unspecified	Systems justification theory argued that CSA disclosure is not conducive in religious settings as members of different religious communities can feel threatened about the legitimacy and morality of their institutions. This could increase the likelihood that religious participants could minimize CSA abuse by derogating the victim and supporting the offender.	The authors concluded that systems justification theory in religious settings would prevent disclosure of CSA.
Herkowitz, Lanes and Lamb (2007) Israeli	They examined disclosure of extrafamilial CSA.	A qualitative analysis was used, and 30 interviews were conducted and analyzed.	Thirty alleged victims of CSA and their parents were interviewed using the NICHD protocol.	They found disclosure was often delayed, this was influenced negatively by closeness to the abuser and children often reported distress during the disclosure experience.	They concluded CSA disclosure was less likely when perceived parental reactions were negative and the abuse was severe.
Kankukullo and Mahalinga, (2011) South Asian American	The authors aimed to propose a new theoretical framework for working with South Asian American victims of CSA.	The authors generated new theory.	Unspecified	They argued the dual identity and levels of acculturation and perceptions of CSA influence South Asian Americans. Barriers to CSA disclosure included: negotiating dual worldviews, marginalized social locations and straddling two cultures, South Asian and American. Further, factors that influenced the way CSA is defined and perceived within Asian culture included: gender, the internalization of traditional gender roles and acculturation.	The authors concluded that the more individuals have internalized Western identities the greater the likelihood of CSA disclosure. While less acculturated individuals faced barriers, which included: cultural prohibitions against self-disclosure to maintain family status and fear of shame and stigmatization to the family.
Lebowitz and Roth, (1994) White	They examined how cultural beliefs about women influenced how survivors of rape understand their experience.	This was a qualitative study using thematic analysis.	The subjects were 15 adult or adolescent survivors of completed acts of rape; the sample was White and heterogeneous for socioeconomic class, aged 19-52 years.	The survivors found that they became more aware of the sexual status of women as demonstrated by jokes and compliments commoditised women as objects. Survivors claimed rape experiences were viewed lightly; they were viewed as sexual acts instead of violent acts. White culture for participants supported the construct of females as sexual objects. Women felt after their rape, that much of their personal value was tied to their sexuality and thus they had lost value as humans. Women identified within White culture female oppression is a socialized norm.	The findings presented in this article demonstrated how women experienced rape in reference to White culture. White cultural is centered on gender relations and sexuality. The classification of "White" might serve as a dominant racial/ethnic label in North America but still has cultural value constructions.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Lira, Ross and Kusso (1999) Mexican	They explored culture and definitions of rape and sexual abuse among Mexican women.	They used qualitative methodology and conducted four focus groups.	Seventeen woman who self-identified as Mexican American were placed into four focus groups and asked how their community understands rape or sexual abuse.	The women blamed rape victims for being raised poorly. The subjects were more empathic to younger victims of sexual abuse or violation than their older victims. The women felt the root of rape was mental illness on the part of perpetrators. However, women shared blame when they were dressed inappropriately, or went out alone to a dangerous place.	Mexican American women can be blamed for their victimization due to their behaviour. Young children tend to escape the negative connotations associated with sexual abuse.
Liegero et al. (2009) Latina	They reviewed cultural values associated with CSA and coping among Latina females.	They used qualitative methodology conducting face-to-face interviews using a grounded theory.	The authors interviewed nine woman who self-identified as Latina and experienced sexual abuse prior to the age of 15 years old.	Some values discussed in reference to Latin culture include *familismo* (respect), and *machismo* (the demarcation of gender roles) whereby males have physical strength, power over women and sexual prowess. Women are expected to remain sexually inactive until such a time they are ready for procreation. Culturally various themes emerged: patriarchy, silencing of sex and sexuality, wanting to hear about their experiences and CSA is considered deviant behaviour by the victim.	Overarching cultural constructs which influenced cultural beliefs regarding disclosure and coping mechanisms included: cultural norms and beliefs about women and men, cultural norms and beliefs about sexuality, cultural norms and beliefs about survivors of abuse and cultural norms and beliefs about the family. A systemic approach is needed to understand CSA victimization and disclosure.
McEvoy and Daniluk (1995) Native	They examined the lived experiences of CSA of native women.	This was a qualitative study, which employed a phenomenological methodology.	The sample was comprised of six Aboriginal women.	They found six major themes emerged among victims of CSA: a sense of shame and guilt, a sense of acute vulnerability, a sense of internal fragmentation, a sense of invalidation and cultural shame, a need to make sense of the abuse and the experience of reintegration after CSA.	The authors argued Native populations often experienced multiple sites of oppression, which was compounded by CSA. Therapists working with this population need to work across multiple layers of oppression and trauma.
Resincoff (2012) Jewish	They discussed the Jewish law and CSA and the implications for disclosure.	They interpreted Jewish Law	They examined and explored Jewish doctrine and its influence on CSA disclosure.	The article focused on the problem of CSA within Hareidi Jewish communities. He argued there are four principals Jewish law doctrines that present as barriers to dealing with CSA in the same manner as secular law, namely: the rule against suing someone in secular court, the rule against uttering unfavourable things against another person, the rule against causing another physical or financial harm and finally the rule against informing on a Jew to a non-Jew or secular authorities. In addition, these communities are often isolated from secular resources.	The norm for the Hareidi community is not acceptable or conducive to helping CSA victims.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Shalhoub-Kevorkian (1999) Arab	She examined the predominant attitudes towards rape in Palestinian society.	The study was based upon the clinical experience of the author working with Palestinian rape victims living in the Israeli territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.	This was a qualitative study that conducted 22 in depth analysis of working with victims aged 10 and older of rape.	She argued, in the Arab culture, sexuality is considered private and silenced. Females must remain asexual until marriage. A women's sexuality (if used) poses a threat to her family reputation and honour. Women are subordinate to men in Arabic society. One 10-year-old victim was beaten to preserve family honour. To preserve family, honour a societal norm is to kill victims or have them undergo hymen reparation surgery so the family reputation can be maintained. Among 20 of 22 cases both the victim and her family stressed the social and legal burdens for the family.	There is a need for clinicians to examine gender variables, the societal status of victim and social reactions when attempting to work with rape victims. There is an acute need to take sociocultural context in account when working with Arab populations.
Shalhoub-Kevorkian (1999) A Arab	The author attempted to understand the the socio-cultural and political context that shapes barriers or facilitators of CSA disclosure in the Gaza Bank in Israel.	The author used a qualitative method by reviewing case files combined with interviewing.	The author collected data from 38 records from sexually abused Palestinian girls as well as interviews with victims and parents when possible. The victims ranged in age from 2 years old to 21 years old.	Among the sample, in 28 cases, the offender was a blood relative, 24 offenders were fathers or brothers. One facilitator of disclosure was pregnancy; 11 victims were forced to terminate pregnancies. Four of the pregnant women lost their lives, three were killed by a brother and one died during an unsanitary abortion procedure. A second impetus to disclosure was the loss of virginity, which threatened the victims' and families' reputation and social status. Twelve victims had their hymens broken, five were placed under house arrest and seven were banished or sent away from their family home. While 15 victims disclosed to ascertain if their hymens remained intact. Abuse was silenced when a hymen remained intact.	The politics of disclosure in the Gaza Bank are rooted in perceptions of female sexuality. Two main conclusions were: there needs to be a challenge to Palestinian social order and there is demand for universal attention to male sexual crimes.
Sawrikar and Katz (2017) Ethnic Minorities	The authors reviewed CSA research in Australian communities.	The authors conducted a systemic literature review.	The literature review was compiled from relevant databases using the search terms "CSA" and ethnic minorities". The search was limited from 2000-2016 to ensure recent literature was included.	Barriers for ethnic minority groups to disclose CSA included: preserving the family name, lower social status and power of children, social norms around emotional suppression, fatalistic religious beliefs, fear of reprisal and fear of stigma for community and fear of non-support from mothers. While universal barriers for non-ethnic minority groups included: embarrassment, guilt, and fear of not being believed.	A wide range of barriers to disclosure was identified. Notably ethnic minorities faced a larger host of barriers to CSA disclosure. Professionals should receive training in the following domains: the importance of family reputation for collectivist groups, the importance of responding, cross-cultural complexities, educating non-offending mothers and exploring acculturation as a possible predictor of disclosure.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith and Marks (2010) African American	They examined and critiqued barriers to CSA disclosure for African Americans.	They conducted a literature review.	The authors searched the PsycINFO database to obtain relevant literature. Key word searches included the following words alone or combined: African American, women, sexual assault, disclosure, help seeking, reporting and service utilization.	Culture specific barriers to African American women included the following: racist and stereotypical images of African American women's sexuality, cultural mandates to protect the male offenders and negative interactions with legal, medical and social services.	The knowledge pertaining to disclosure and barriers faced by African American women who have experienced CSA is a new domain with much to be explored and researched.
Tishelman and Fontes (2017) Religious	They examined religious influences of CSA for victims and their families.	They used a qualitative study using a phenomenological design.	There were 39 participants. The majority of participants were female.	There were 20 different religions identified by participants. Participants described the ways in which religious institutions made them vulnerable to CSA: pervasive abusing within religious communities, religious grooming, justification and disclosure suppression, male dominance and not speaking with members of other religions. Religious beliefs served to either promote or impede disclosure. Some disclosed as truth telling was important part of their faith. While in other situations religion complicated the disclosure for example, insular or isolated communities, patriarchy, fear of being a sinner, guilt, self-blame and virginity.	Recommendations included the development of best practice guidelines that: (1) foster respect and understanding with local religious communities (2) provide education to local religious communities (3) train staff in relevant religious issues (4) hold open discussion regarding religious factors (5) increase religious diversity of forensic interviewers and (6) establish relationships with local clergy.
Tyagi (2002) Women of Colour	She explored disclosure among women of colour who were victims of incest.	The study employed a qualitative method with the use of semi-structured interviews.	There were 12 participants in the study who self-identified as women of colour and were victims of childhood incest.	Many themes were noted in regard to social and cultural barriers that prevented disclosure which included: protection of the family, maintaining a 'good face' amongst the community, family loyalty, respect for elders and the value of virginity. Consequences associated with disclosure included: a "bad name" for the survivor, becoming a social outcast, shame, lack of social support and difficulty living as a non-traditional woman in a traditional society.	Many of the cultural and social issues experienced by the women of colour were similar to values reported by women of different ethnic groups.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Ullman and Filipas (2005) White, Asian, Hispanic, Black	They examined the issue of race/ethnicity in relation to CSA experiences.	A quantitative method was employed by using a cross-sectional survey among a sample of college students.	The participants were 461 American college students. Among the women who experienced CSA (33%) were White, (21.1%) were Asian, (22.0%) were Hispanic and (23.6%) were Black	Among the overall sample, prevalence rates were highest for Black women, followed by Hispanic and then White and Asian women. Black and Hispanic survivors reported more attempted or completed penetration than White and Asian women. Ethnic minorities were more likely to be abused by relatives whereas White victims were more likely to be abused by people outside the family. Asian victims were more likely to be blamed for the abuse if they were 14 years or older after the abuse took place.	Overall Black women reported more CSA experiences and more severe CSA experiences. Disclosure characteristics did not vary among groups. This study argued that further research is needed in this domain.
Willis (2011) Indigenous	He reviewed the non-disclosure of violence in Australian Indigenous communities.	This was a publication by the Australian Report prepared for the Australian Government and Australian Institute for Criminology.	Australian Publications	There are unique barriers to Indigenous populations reporting sexual assault. Personal barriers included: sexual assault was too trivial, not a real crime, clear harm was not intended, it was a matter to be dealt with personally, shame and embarrassment, did not want family or others to know, fear of reprisal, self-blame and a desire to protect offender. Justice system barriers included: police would not or could not do anything, police would not think it was serious enough, fear of disbelief by the police, fear of hostile treatment by police or justice system, fear/dislike of police or legal process, lack of proof of the incident and did not know how to report.	In order to encourage disclosure with Indigenous populations there needs to be specialized training and education, community awareness education and community responses to changing the present situation.
Wyatt (1990) African American	She examined aftermath of CSA disclosure and reactions.	Qualitative interviews were used. A female interviewer of the same ethnicity interviewed subjects. Interviews ranged from three to eight hours in length.	The sample was comprised of 126 African American and 122 White women aged 18-36 years old.	Differences among groups included, White woman were more likely to report contact abuse to their nuclear families than African American woman. Barriers to disclosure included: African American woman expressed more fear of consequences. White women reported more blame. African American woman were more acutely aware of financial hardships disclosure could bring to the family when the perpetrator was a stepfather or boyfriend of their mother. African American women were more likely to avoid men who resembled their perpetrator.	There were few ethnic differences related to the initial response of CSA and short-term outcomes.

Study / Categorization	Purpose	Design	Sample	Findings	Summary
Xioa and Smith Price (2015) Pacific Island Asian	This study looked into three discourses pertaining to disclosure.	This qualitative study used semi structured interviews to uncover narratives.	Purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants; they targeted adult women of Pacific Island heritage who experienced CSA before the age of 18.	Reasons for disclosure included, some form of distress with one participant explicitly stating the American worker who took her disclosure would not understand the cultural implications. Reasons for non-disclosure included: they wanted to protect their family from the shame and hurt, pressures to maintain a harmonious family, sexual abuse as taboo and silencing in the greater community context.	Five themes influenced disclosure: protecting the family, silence about unpleasant issues, self-blame, belief things are temporary, and the belief worse things could happen. The authors hoped this study can be used to inform future studies with larger samples.

Code of Silence

A code of silence was a cultural barrier to CSA disclosure noted in several studies reviewed (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Abu-Baker, 2013; Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Brazelton, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Liegero, Koss & Russo, 2009; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017; Xiao & Smith Price, 2015). However, the notion of a code of silence had varied meanings across different studies. For example, some victims maintained a code of silence to protect their lives, as disclosure could result in harsh penalties including death (Abu-Baker, 2003; Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2013; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A). While in some cases victims remained silent to protect their family or the perpetrator (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Abu-Baker, 2013; Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Brazelton, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Liegero et al., 2009; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017; Xiao & Smith Price, 2015). Other victims remained silent because they had no knowledge surrounding sexual abuse discourse (Barsalou-Verge, 2015; Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Brazelton, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Liegero et al., 2009). Silence can also be problematic when a CSA victim does disclose. According to Brazelton (2015) some victims were silenced after their initial disclosure being told not to repeat their disclosure. Therefore, this notion of code of silence ranged in meaning from victims not having any discourse around sexuality with no knowledge of sexual abuse, to protection for the family and perpetrator or being told post disclosure not to repeat the disclosure and hide the sexual abuse. The code of silence is damaging to victims because their experiences of CSA are hidden, invalidated and the victims are then not able to seek out support services.

Cultural Shame

Cultural shame was associated with CSA disclosure. This referred to the act of CSA disclosure creating negative connotations associated with one's group (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Abu-Baker, 2013; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Foynes, Platt, Hall, & Freyd, 2014; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Harper & Perkins, 2018; Liegero et al., 2009; Kankullo & Mahalingam, 2011; McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995; Resincoff, 2012; Tillman et al., 2010; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Tyagi, 2002). Protection of one's ethnic, cultural or religious community played a role in inhibiting CSA disclosure. Reasons for

non-disclosure include the perpetrator holding a respected role in the community, and a stigma disrespecting a community member and defying communal solidarity. Both are prominent themes in all the above-mentioned studies. Cultural shame includes groups not wanting to further stigmatize their "group".

Fear of Police or Justice System

Participants often cited fear of the justice system as a barrier to disclosure (Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Tillman et al., 2010; Wills, 2010). Participants' fear of the justice system included fear of disbelief and fear of negative treatment by the police or judicial system. This raised questions as to how the justice system treats victims and further how to dispel myths regarding treatment of victims. There needs to be some knowledge production geared towards victims that the justice system is not to be feared and that all individuals should receive equitable services. In practice it remains to be seen how this could be accomplished, however, this barrier is of great importance as it hinders disclosure that could lead to consequences for the perpetrator and prevent the victimization of other children.

Family Preservation

The role of the family within the community can act as a barrier to disclosure (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Abu-Baker, 2013; Alaggia, 2002; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Foynes et al., 2014; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Kankullo & Mahalingham, 2011; Liegero et al., 2009; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Sawrikar & Katz, 2017; Tyagi, 2002; Xiao & Smith Price, 2015; Willis, 2010; Wyatt, 1990). There are families with individualistic or collective belief systems. While individualistic belief systems led a victim to feel alone with nowhere to turn, a collective belief system endorsed silence for the greater good of the family unit (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Abu-Baker, 2013; Alaggia, 2002; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Foynes et al., 2014; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Kankullo & Mahalingam, 2011; Liegero et al., 2009; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Sawrikar & Katz, 2017; Tyagi, 2002; Xiao & Smith Price, 2015; Willis, 2010; Wyatt, 1990). Issues such as protecting the family name, the family reputation and being loyal to one's family can prevent discussion of CSA occurring outside the familial environment. Individual roles within the family, family structure and the emphasis of the well-being of the family unit of

the individual also prevent disclosure. Significant value can be placed upon the family unit, whereby individual hardship matters less than the greater good of the family as a whole. In these cases, the individual is expected to suffer the burden of their experience in order to not create disruption of the unit as a whole. In Western society, an individualistic mindset is dominant; this creates barriers to understanding why a victim might not disclose to protect their family.

Historical Oppression and Trauma

Individuals with non-dominant, ethnic and religious beliefs have identified two key barriers related to CSA disclosure, namely historical oppression and historical victimization (Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Tillman, et al., 2010). When a group has experienced historical or ongoing oppression and discrimination by means of slavery, segregation, the media and an air of cultural superiority of the dominant group. A climate of distrust of the dominant group is created, which would not support disclosure.

Lack of Resources

Some participants noted there was a lack of available resources based on their beliefs and identity (Alaggia, 2002; Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006; Haboush & Alyan, 2013). Some victims were unable to find services that matched their belief systems or find clinicians who were similar to them. Many victims expressed wanting someone with similar beliefs or ethnicity or religion to disclose their CSA. Other times, clinicians lacked cultural sensitivity to address victims' belief systems. This calls into question the type of services available and provided to victims of CSA. This further speaks to the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Protection of Offender

In some studies, participants mentioned that the protection of the offender was more important than the protection of the victim (Abu-Baker, 2013; Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Foynes et al., 2014; Reincoff, 2012; Tillman et al., 2010). In some circumstances, victims were more inclined to protect their abuser than to seek help. The notion of protection of the offender does not exist in isolation but is intertwined with notions of silencing, cultural shame and family preservation. Offenders were most often

protected when: they held respected positions, the CSA would bring shame to the family, the CSA was intrafamilial or when collective beliefs prevented the victim from coming forward.

Fear of Retribution

The fear of retribution was an impediment to disclosure (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Brazelton, 2015; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Resincoff, 2012; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017). Victims level of fear could range to fear for their personal physical safety, the physical safety of their family, the perception of themselves or their family in the greater community or financial hardships caused by disclosure. While fear of retribution is not necessarily uncommon, the specific types of fear cited by different participants move beyond the level of fear attributed to universal barriers of fear.

Gender Roles

Gender roles served as a cultural barrier (Abu-Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Abu-Baker, 2013; Collins et al., 2013; Foynes et al, 2014; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Harper & Perkins, 2018; Kankullo & Mahalinga, 2011; Liegero et al., 2009; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999A; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017; Tyagi, 2002). Women or children in subjugated roles within the family and/or within societally prescribed gender roles were less likely to disclose. Situations where women are viewed as the subordinate or lesser gender and male dominance is normalcy makes disclosure a difficult task for fear of disrupting societal harmony. Additional burdens arise when these prescribed gender roles call for females to be chaste, modest, where a woman's value is highly reliant upon her virginity and sexual purity. Repression of female sexuality can result in women not understanding that they have been abused or not knowing where to seek help.

Discussion

Through the examination of 26 studies that investigated disclosure processes and barriers, it became evident that culture was often defined as a static monolithic entity comprised of membership in a group/categorization. This presupposes that all members of a same group/categorization are homogenous in nature. This can lead to stereotypes and problematic cultural assumptions. Furthermore, this presumption of homogeneity can impact new migrants who may be affected by the political climate of their new country.

Surprisingly there were some barriers that transcended the cultural groupings of individuals. These exist across three major systemic domains the societal, familial and personal levels. Barriers across these domains confirmed previous research findings conducted by Alaggia (2010), Alaggia and Kirshenbaum (2005) as well as Collin-Vezina and associates (2015). These findings were further advanced through the inclusion of culture within this study to discover the barriers transcended cultural labels.

Societal level barriers included: cultural shame, fear of the police or of the justice system, the lack of resources, a history of trauma and oppression and the role of gender roles. Cultural shame indicated that disclosing might bring negative connotations to one's cultural group. This is an especially pertinent and realistic fear when groups are labelled in such a homogenous fashion. Fear of the police and justice system is not a new a unique fear, however, the context in which it is presented culturally is different. Due to categorizations of groups and/or ethnic minorities, the fear from the police and justice system is both disbelief of CSA coupled with negative treatment. Historical trauma and oppression based on ethic and gender identities have created a climate of fear among individuals who have been exposed.

Familial level barriers included: family preservation and protection of the offender. Family preservation is important to many individuals; however, this barrier is more prominent in groups with collective belief systems. Disclosure is facilitated when a victim has a non-offending caregiver or a supportive family member to reveal the experience to. Furthermore, if the family aims to protect the offender this would demonstrate dysfunction and a reason for non-disclosure. The role of girls and women in the family could also play a role if they deemed subordinate in nature.

Implications for Research and Practice

There are numerous implications for CSA research, policy and practice. Implications for CSA research include the need for more exploration into how culture impacts CSA disclosure experiences. Culture needs to be studied in a more robust and less restrictive manner. Culture needs to be studied as self-identified without monolithic and static connotations which place entire groups at risk of bias and stereotypes by other individuals. While some homogeneous barriers transcend groups/categorizations have been identified, they too can be further explored.

More practically speaking social work practice and policy can also play a role. To break the code of the silence we need to raise awareness of its existence first and foremost. From there, we need to promote campaigns that do not shame or blame victims in any capacity. These campaigns can also outline how CSA is not universally defined with various examples to help those confused about victimization.

In order to denounce cultural shame, we need to promote solidarity among all members of society but also among all victims of CSA. Furthermore, this aligns itself with protection of offenders. Clinicians and policies must be aware of the implication culture plays in the protection of offenders and how victims are groomed, to understand why coming forward with a CSA disclosure is difficult.

When fear of the police and judicial system are present, community outreach should take place to help understand the role of police officers. Positive media exposure that does not instill further fear into individuals could help facilitate trust. Note, this is not to hide wrong-doings but to promote positive policing and judicial outcomes for victims of CSA. While retribution remains a fear for many victims, policies and practices should reflect safety measures, post disclosure, for victims as well as their families also pointing to the increased need for more resources.

Family preservation is an important barrier of which to be aware. Further the nature of the family functioning is of importance. Clinicians need to gage whether individuals value collectivism or individualism and the implications of this value. Furthermore, subordination regarding gender roles calls simply for awareness of the circumstances of any individual victim. From there, interviews and policies surrounding interviews should be adjusted to individual need.

Limitations

A rigorous systematic review was conducted; a potential limitation in the review is that the body of literature specific to criteria was small. Further, although this study has tried to step away from making generalizations about specific groups some homogenous trends appear across different groups, nonetheless. Lastly, these studies focus on culture predominantly through a North American lens; this is an inherently bias manner to discuss cultural needs.

Conclusion

CSA remains a widespread and international problem. While universal barriers to CSA have been identified, there is still a large volume of work to be explored in the domain of culture and CSA disclosure. A lack of full understanding of the cultural implications surrounding CSA disclosure will continue to hinder the process of disclosure, meaning victims remain silent and will not receive the help necessitated to alleviate negative trajectories (Collin-Vézina, Daigneault & Hébert, 2015).

This study has identified two particular themes of interest. The first was how the term culture has been used and studied in CSA disclosure literature. Searching for articles about culture rendered results conflating the use of the term culture with ethno-racial status or religious belief systems. This was problematic when attempting to unpack the meanings of culture without a monolithic static view point. Culture needs to be studied more robustly, looking at culture as fluid and changing and not reflective of a homogenous group experience. The second major theme of interest was that some barriers transcend cultural labels. This confirms previous research. However, the meaning or way the barriers are interpreted culturally can be different at times. A variety of implications argued for clarity around the term culture, the term CSA and how to manage barriers from a policy oriented, and social work practice standpoint.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Abu-Baker, K. (2013). Arab parents reactions to: A review of clinical records. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22*, 52-71.

Abu-Baker, K. & Dwairy, M. (2003). Cultural norms versus state law in treating incest: A suggested model for Arab families. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27*, 109-123.

Alaggia, R. (2002). Cultural and religious influences in maternal response to intrafamilial child sexual abuse: Charting new territory for research and treatment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *10*(2), 41-60.

Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1213–1227.

Alaggia, R. & Kirshenbaum, S. (2005). Speaking the unspeakable: Exploring the impact of family dynamics on child sexual abuse disclosures. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 86,* 227-234.

Alaggia, R. (2010). An ecological analysis of child sexual abuse disclosure: Considerations for child and adolescent mental health. *Journal of Canadian Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, 19,* 32-39.

Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & Lateef, R. (2017). Facilitators and barriers to child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures: A research update (2000–2016). *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 1524838017697312.

Barsalou-Verge, X., Gagnon, M., Séguin, R., & Dagenais, C. (*2015*). Current knowledge on child sexual abuse in Indigenous populations of Canada and the United States: A literature review. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, (39*), 65-82.

Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of public health*, *58*(3), 469-483

Black Lives Matter (2018). Retrieved from: https://blacklivesmatter.com

Brazelton, J.F. (2015). The secret storm: Exploring the disclosure process of African American women survivors of CSA across the life course. *Traumatology*, *21*(3), 181.

Chen, J.Q., Dunne, M.P., & Han, P. (2004). Child sexual abuse in China: A study of adolescents in four provinces. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1171-1186.

Collins, C., O'Neil-Arana, M., Fontes, L., & Ossege, J. (2014). Catholicism and childhood sexual abuse: Women's coping and psychotherapy. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse.*

Collin-Vézina, D., De La Sablonnière-Griffin, M., Palmer, A.M., & Milne, L. (2015). preliminary mapping of individual, relational, and social factors that impede disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 123-134.

Collin-Vézina, D., Daigneault, I., & Hébert, M. (2015). Lessons Learned from Child Sexual Abuse Research: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Preventive Strategies (continued). In *The Societal Burden of Child Abuse: Long-Term Mental Health and Behavioral Consequences* (pp. 315-320). Apple Academic Press.

Collin-Vézina, D., Dion, J., & Trocmé, N. (2009). Sexual abuse in Canadian Aboriginal communities: A broad review of conflicting evidence. *Pimatisiwin: A journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous community health*, *7*(1), 27-47.

Cotter, A. & Beaupré, P. (2014). Sexual offences against children and youth in Canada. Statistics Canada: 85-002-X ISSN 1209-6393.

CNN, (2016). What Donald Trump has said about Mexico and vice versa. Retrieved from: https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/31/politics/donald-trump-mexico-statements/index.html

Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., & Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: Fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1035-1048.

Denov, M. (2003). To a safer place? Victims of sexual abuse by females and their disclosures to professionals. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27,* 47-61.

DeVoe, E. & Faller, K. (1999). The characteristics of disclosure among children who may have been sexually abused. *Child Maltreatment, 4,* 217-227.

Elliot, D. & Briere, J. (1994). Forensic sexual abuse evaluations of older children: Disclosures and symptomology. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law, 12,* 261-277.

Embrick, D. (2015). Two nations revisted: The Lynching of Black and Brown bodies, police brutality and racial control in 'post racial' Amerikka. *Critical Sociology, 41,* 835-843.

ESS (2018). Migrant and migrant studies. ISSN: 2443-8219
Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_22.3_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU_on_1_January_2018

Faller, K., Cordisco-Steele, D., & Nelson-Gardell, N. (2010). Allegations of sexual abuse of a child: What to do when a single forensic interview isn't enough. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19,* 572-589.

Foynes, M., Platt, M., Hall, G., & Freyd, J. (2014). The impact of Asian values and victim-perpetrator closeness on the disclosure of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy, 6,* 114-141.

Fontes, L. & Plummer, C. (2010). Culture and disclosure issues: Cultural issues in disclosures of Child Sexual Abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*, 491-518.

Gilligan, P. & Akhtar, S. (2006). Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*, 1361-1377.

Goodman-Brown, T.B., Edelstein, R.S., Goodman, G.S., Jones, D.P., & Gordon, D.S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27(5),* 525–540.

Gries, L.T., Goh, D.S., & Cavanaugh, J. (1997). Factors associated with disclosure during child sexual abuse assessment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *5*(3), 1-19.

Grondin, A. (2011). Thinking outside specious boxes: constructionist and post-structuralists readings of child sexual abuse. *Sex Education*, 11, 234-254.

Haboush, K. & Alyan, H. (2013). Who can you tell? Features of Arab culture that influence conceptualization and treatment of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22,* 499-518.

Harper, C.A. & Perkins, C. (2018). Reporting child sexual abuse within religious settings: Challenges and future directions. *Child Abuse Review*, *27*(1), 30-41.

Hébert, M., Tourigny, M., Cyr, M., McDuff, P., & Joly, J. (2009). Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and timing of disclosure in a representative sample of adults from Quebec. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry/La Revue canadienne de psychiatrie*, 54,631-636.

Hershkowitz, I., Lanes, O., & Lamb, M.E. (2007). Exploring the disclosure of child sexual abuse with alleged victims and their parents. *Child Abuse and Neglect*,*31*(2), 111-123.

Hunter, S.V. (2011). Disclosure of CSA as a life-long process: Implications for health professionals. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 32,* 159–172.

Jensen, T., Gulbrandson, W., Mossige, S., Reichelt, S., & Tjersland, O. (2005). Reporting possible child abuse: A qualitative study on children's perspectives and the context for disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 29,* 1395-1413.

Kanukollu, S. & Mahalingam, R. (2011). The idealized cultural identities model on help seeking and CSA: A conceptual model for contextualizing perceptions and experiences of South Asian Americans. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 20*, 218-243.

Lebowitz, L. & Roth, S. (1994). "I felt like a slut": The cultural context and women's response to being raped. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 7*, 363-390.

Leclerc, B. & Wortley, R. (2015). Predictors of victim disclosure in child sexual abuse: Additional evidence from a sample of incarcerated adult sex offenders. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 104-111.

Leonard, E. (1996). A social exchange explanation for the child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*, 107-117.

Lira, L., Koss, M., & Russo, N. (1999). Mexican American women's definition of rape and sexual abuse. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 21*, 236-265.

Ligero, D., Fassinger, F., McCauley, M., & Moore, J. (2009). Childhood sexual abuse, culture and coping: A qualitative study of Latina's. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 33*, 67-80.

MacMillan, H.L., Tanaka, M., Duku, E., Vaillancourt, T., & Boyle, M.H. (2013). Child physical and sexual abuse in a community sample of young adults: Results from the Ontario Child Health Study. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *37*(1), 14-21.

Mathews, B. & Collin-Vézina, D. (2017). Child sexual abuse: Toward a conceptual model and definition. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. Advance online publication, 1-18. doi: 10.1177/1524838017738726.

McElvaney, R, Greene S., & Hogan, D. (2014). Containing the secret of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27,* 1155-1175.

McEvoy, M. & Daniluk, J. (1995). Wounds to the soul: The experiences of aboriginal women

survivors of sexual abuse. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, *36*(3), 221.

Ohlheiser, Abby (October 19th 2017). The women behind "Me Too": Knew the power of the phrase when she created it – 10 years ago. *The Washington Post.* Paine, M.L. & Hansen, D.J. (2002). Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse. *Clinical Psychology Review, 2,* 271–295.

Popay, J., Rogers, A., & Williams, G. (1998). Rationale and standards for the systematic review of qualitative literature in health services research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 8(3), 341-351.

Prisma, (2009). Prisma transparent reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analysis. Retrieved from: http://www.prisma-statement.org

Resnicoff, S. (2012). Jewish law and the tragedy of sexual abuse of children – The dilemma within the orthodox Jewish Community. *Rutgers Journal of Law and Religion, 13,* 282-362.

Samari, G. (2016). Islamophia and public health in the United States. *Perspectives from the social sciences, 106,* 1920-1925.

Sawrikar, P. & Katz, I. (2017). The treatment needs of victims/survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) from ethnic minority communities: A literature review and suggestions for practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*, 166-179.

Sauzier, M. (1989). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: For better or for worse. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America 12,* 455-469.

Schaeffer, P., Leventhal, J., & Gottsegen Asnes, A. (2011). Children's disclosures of child sexual abuse: Learning from direct inquiry. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 25,* 343-352.

Schonburcher, V., Maier, T., Mohler-Kuo, M., Schnyder, U., & Landolt, M. (2012). Disclosure of child sexual abuse by adolescents a qualitative in-depth study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*, 3486-3513.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999). Towards a cultural definition of rape: Dilemmas in dealing with rape victims in Palestinian society. *Women Studies International Forum, 22*, 157-173.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999A). The politics of disclosing female sexual abuse: A case study of Palestinian society. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 23*, 1275-1293.

Sorenson, T. & Snow, B. (1991). How children tell: The process of disclosure in child sexual abuse. *Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program, 70,* 3-15.

Staller, K.M. & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2005). "A burden in your heart": Lessons of disclosure from female preadolescent and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *29* (12), 1415-1432.

Stoltenborgh, M., Van Ijzendoorn, M., Euser, E., & Nakermans-Kranenburg, M. (2011). A global perspective on CSA: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment, 16,* 79-101.

Statistics Canada (2011). Immigration and ethnocultural diversity in Canada. (Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-)

Statistics Canada (2016). Ethnic and cultural origins of Canadians: A portrait of a rich heritage. Retirved from: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016016/98-200-x2016016-eng.cfm

Summit, R. (1983). The child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 7,* 177-193.

Tillman, S., Bryant-Davis, T., Smith, K., & Marks, A. (2010). Shattering silence: Barriers to disclosure African American sexual assault survivors. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse, 11,* 59-70.

Tishelman, A.C. & Fontes, L.A. (2017). Religion in CSA forensic interviews. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *63*, 120-130.

Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Sinha, V., Black, T., Fast, E., & Weightman, P. (2010). *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect, 2008.* Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada.

Tyagi, S.V. (2002). Incest and women of color: A study of experiences and disclosure. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *10*(2), 17-39.

Ullman, S.E. & Filipas, H.H. (2005). Ethnicity and CSA experiences of female college students. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *14*(3), 67-89.

United States Census Bureau. (2017). Population Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217#viewtop.

Willis, M. (2011). Non-disclosure of violence in Australian Indigenous communities. *Trends and*

Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, (405).

Wyatt, G. (1990). The aftermath of child sexual abuse of African American and White American women: Victims experience. *Journal of Family Violence, 5*, 61-81.

Xiao, H. & Smith-Price, J. (2015). Disclosure of child abuse: The Case of Pacific Islanders. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse,* 24, 4.

Chapter Five Manuscript 2: The influence of culture in the experience of child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures from the perspectives of youth

Abstract

This study is informed by a qualitative research study that focused on the role of culture, from the perspectives of youth in the CSA disclosure process. More specifically, this study explored how culture shaped experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth, with attention given to the process and timing of disclosure. Descriptive psychological phenomenology was used as a research method to gather, organize and analyze data to formulate conclusions. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with nine sexually abused youth from diverse cultural backgrounds in Ottawa (Canada). The results of the study in regard to the research question revealed that: (1) participants narratives of culture extend beyond categorizations, (2) culture determined how participants understood CSA and how they disclosed, (3) disclosure was a process and finally (4) cultural beliefs shifted as a result of CSA experiences.

Background

Reporting of Disclosure

There is growing public awareness of CSA as result of social media campaigns and increasingly popularity of social media. One might suspect since the "Me Too" movement initiated to halt sexual victimization, especially towards women of color, by collectively disclosing victimization experiences. However, the rates of CSA reported to youth protection, legal authorities and CSA researchers remain low. CSA is measured by incidence and prevalence rates. Incidence rates refer to the total number incidents that occur during a given period. Prevalence rates refer to the total number of people victimized over the life span.

Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser and Nakermans-Kranenburg (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of the prevalence of CSA around the world. These authors concluded that the combined prevalence rates for females who experienced CSA under the age of 18 years old was 18%. While the combined prevalence rate for males who experienced CSA under the age of 18 years old was 7.6%. Lastly the combined prevalence rate for samples with mixed genders was 8.7% who were under the age of 18 years old when they experienced CSA. The highest combined prevalence rates were found in the Australian population. The lowest combined

prevalence rates were found in Asia. While Barth and associates (2013) came across a slightly lower prevalence rate. They concluded that 15% of females and 8% of males had suffered CSA.

However, Canadian adult retrospective studies that examined past experiences of CSA indicated a much higher prevalence rate as it is estimated that at least one in five women and one in ten men experience CSA victimization (Hébert, Tourigny, Cyr, McDuff & Joly, 2009; MacMillan, Tanaka, Duku, Vaillancourt & Boyle, 2013) While, rates of CSA are 30 times greater in studies relying on self-reports than in official-report inquiries, such as those based on data from child protection services and the police (Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser & Nakermans-Kranenburg, 2011).

Turning to the Western context, as this study took place in Canada,the Canadian Incidence Study (CIS) indicated that approximately two percent of all cases reported to youth protection authorities, involved allegations of CSA as a form of maltreatment, which represents an incidence rate of 0.34 per 1000 children (Trocmé et al., 2010). A report by Statistics Canada (2014) indicated that in the year 2012, there was an incidence rate of CSA of 2.05 per 1000 children and youth under 18 years old reported to authorities across Canada (Cotter & Beaupré, 2014). These incidence rates in isolation suggest that CSA among the Canadian population is not a common occurrence.

This overall discrepancy in reporting rates surrounding incidence and prevalence rates of CSA victimization and disclosure of CSA coincides with empirical research, which demonstrates a major lack of convergence between the low number of official reports of CSA to authorities, and the high rates of CSA that youth and adults self-report retrospectively. Indeed, international findings showed the rates of CSA to be 30 times greater in studies relying on self-reports than in official report inquiries, such as those based on data from child protection services and the police (Stolenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser & Nakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). The low disclosure of CSA to authorities may be a key factor to explain this discrepancy.

There are three key questions that have been studied: 1) whether disclosure is a process or event; 2) what causes the delay of disclosure and 3) what factors influence disclosure? The question of whether CSA disclosure is an event, or a process has caused much debate among scholars in the domain of CSA disclosure. While some empirical scholars have claimed disclosure is a process with concrete stages, others have argued it is a singular event.

Delays in CSA disclosure have been noted in past research as a common experience for victims, and barriers associated with CSA, have been widely documented and positioned as outweighing facilitators. The current state of knowledge regarding CSA disclosure will be presented, followed by the gaps this study aims to address.

Disclosure as an Event or as a Process

The question of whether CSA disclosure is an event, or a process has caused much debate among scholars in the domain of CSA disclosure. While some empirical studies have claimed disclosure is a process with concrete stages, others have argued it is a singular event.

On the one hand, Bradley and Wood (1996) argued that disclosure should be conceptualized as an event and not a stage-based model. Gries, Goh and Cavanaugh (1997) argued disclosure could be obtained in the absence of a stage-based process when appropriate interview protocols were implemented. London, Bruck Wright and Ceci (2008) conducted a literature review. Their review concluded that most children do not progress through stages of disclosure but rather disclose when questioned, thereby characterizing disclosure as an event.

Disclosure was then positioned as a process often with concrete stages. On the other hand, Summit (1983) argued disclosure was a process and proposed a model with five stages surrounding the disclosure, namely: secrecy, helplessness, entrapment and accommodation, delayed conflicted and unconvincing disclosure followed by recantation. Leonard (1996) elaborated upon Summit's model also, concluding disclosure is a process. Sorenson and Snow (1991) theorized and empirically tested a stage-based process of disclosure with the following phases: denial, disclosure, recantation and affirmation including different typologies of disclosure: purposeful, accidental and non-disclosure. Sorenson and Snow (1991) contended that that disclosure was defined as a process with concrete phases and characteristics and that CSA disclosures could rarely be characterized as a single event. Alaggia (2004) argued disclosure to be a process with different typologies of disclosure including purposeful, behavioural, intentional withholding and triggered or delayed memories. Hunter (2011) claimed that disclosure is a lifelong process and she expanded typologies to include children and adults. Staller and Nelson Gardell (2005) proposed a stage-based model of disclosure with three distinct stages: the self-phase, the confident-selection phase and the consequence stage. McElvaney and Associates

(2014) built another disclosure process model geared towards adolescents based on a sample in Ireland. Overall, most published scholarship to date supports the argument that disclosure is a process, which implies that victims go through either different phases or experience disclosure as a life-long process.

Delay of Disclosure and Factors Influencing Disclosure

Many authors have argued that disclosure is delayed. The delay can be a result of the process and progressing through concrete stages, or a result of factors that inhibit individuals from making disclosures. Summit (1983) Sorenson and Snow (1991) Alaggia (2004) Chaudoir and Fisher (2010) Hunter (2011) and finally McElvaney Green and Hogan (2014). All describe stages of disclosure, whereby individuals pass through various stages or attempts to disclose prior to or during disclosure causing a delay in the process.

However, other barriers come into effect beyond models of disclosure processes (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Priebe & Svedin, 2008; Sorenson & Snow, 1991). A child's age or developmental status can impact disclosure. Trends have been identified with preschool age children disclosing accidentally, school age disclosing purposely or accidentally and finally adolescents disclosing purposely.

The role of gender comes into effect as females are more likely to disclose than males (DeVeo & Faller, 1999; Stoltenborgh, 2011). The nature and severity of abuse may impact disclosure, but this remains to be agreed upon in the literature (Mian et al., 1986; London et al., 2008).

Despite knowledge of process and barriers, the voices and perspectives of youth within CSA literature are a rare commodity. Indeed, the perspectives of youth are often omitted among CSA literature, which relies heavily on adult retrospective accounts (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Elliot and Briere, 1994; London, Bruck, Ceci & Shuman, 2005; Sorenson & Snow, 1991). Further, where researchers have paid specific attention to CSA in children and youth populations, the conclusions are often based upon file reviews (Bradley & Wood, 1996; Gries, Gog & Cavanaugh, 1997; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Faller & Nelson Gardell, 2010). These studies highlight the importance of collecting data from youth files as valuable insights are garnered; however, limitations of these approaches are that the actual voices verbatim, opinions

and experiences of youth's accounts are absent and there is potential for misinterpretation in clinical files.

Impact of Culture in Understanding CSA Disclosure

Upon examination of the empirical scholarship that positions disclosure as event or process and that examines factors that impede disclosure, an important caveat was noted, namely a dearth of attention to ethnic, cultural, and religious facets associated with conceptualizations of children and the disclosure process. There is a need to study how culture affects the disclosure experience from the perspective of youth given the absence of diverse samples in the CSA disclosure literature. Many studies that have captured the experience of disclosure either have used solely Caucasian populations (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Elliot & Briere, 1994; Sorenson & Snow, 1991) or have not provided information on the background of participants (Alaggia, 2004; Collin-Vézina, De La Sablonierre, Milne & Palmer, 2015; Denov, 2003; Faller & Nelson Gardell, 2005; Gries, Goh & Cavanaugh, 1997; Hunter, 2011; McElvaney, Greene & Hogan, 2014). Groundwork has been laid in the domain of culture and CSA disclsoure with particular attention being drawn to the work of Fontes and Plummer (2010) for their seminal papers in this field. Fontes and Plummer (2010) argued CSA research is needed that expands beyond categorizations which includes numerous facets of culture. The goal of this thesis is to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of culture in CSA disclosures among a diverse population of youth.

Culture has often been framed in reference to demographic categories for example, language, religion and ethnicity. Studies that have examined the role of culture have used a demographical or preconceived category of ethnicity for example, Aboriginal (Barsalou-Verge, Gagnon, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995), African American (Brazelton, 2015; Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith & Marks, 2010; Wyatt, 1990), Arab (Abu Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999), Asian (Foynes, Platt, Hall & Freyd, 2015; Futa, Hsu & Hansen, 2001; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006) South American (Comas-Diaz, 1995; Lira, Koss & Russo, 1999). Alternately, research groups categories by ethnic minorities (Sawrikar & Katz, 2017) or religious groups broadly defined (Harper & Perkins, 2018; Katzenstein & Fontes, 2017; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017). Although this provides some insight

into the experiences of specific ethnic groups, this is a limitation because the definition of culture is reduced into a categorical framework, which does not provide a rich analysis of the potential fluid nature of culture.

Cultural psychologists propose a different manner to measure culture apart from categorizations. Cultural psychologists have defined culture in the most fluid manner incorporating different structural layers and elements of the human psyche. Cultural psychology as a field of study is largely concerned with the interaction between the social environment and the human psyche and how they influence one another in constant reciprocity (Ratner, 2010). Culture then is not a fixed term; rather, culture is positioned as a fluid dynamic system, comprised of interactions. Looking at culture as a fluid dynamic is directly aligned to the objectives set forth in this study. This lens of culture allows for flexibility in how culture is described and experienced.

This is particularly relevant due to diversity in Western contexts due to the high level of migration to Western countries. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), The UN Migration Agency (2018) they reported steadily increasing numbers of migration since 1970. The IOM defines migration as someone living in a country other than in which they were born. In 1970, 2.3% of the world's population were considered migrants (84,460,125 people). This number steadily increased to 3.3% of the global population in 2018 (244, 700 236 people). The total difference of migrants between 1970 and 2018 is 160,240,111 people.

The Canadian census (2016) indicated that 41.1 % of the Canadian population identified more than one origin. In 2016, individuals reported that they retained up to six origins individually. While 15.1% reported themselves as foreign born. The most common foreign-born first-generation Canadians in 2016, from largest to smallest population size include: Asian origins, African origins, Latin, Central or South American Origins, Caribbean origins and Oceania origins (Statistics Canada, 2016). Among the Canadian population 6.2% identified with Aboriginal origins (Statistics Canada, 2016). Furthermore, two thirds of the population identified with some religious affiliation, with the following groups listed representing the largest to smallest identified number of religious followers, Roman Catholic, Christian, Muslim, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Judaism (Statistics Canada, 2011).The Canadian census (2016) supports the notion of Canada as a cultural mosaic. This needs careful consideration in the CSA scholarly

research. The way culture impacts the argument that CSA disclosure is a process is an empirical question that remains to be examined.

Objective

This study aims to explore how culture shapes experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of Canadian youth, with attention given to the process and timing of disclosure. Empirical scholarship to date has provided rich insights recognizing CSA disclosure as a phenomenon as well as obstacles to disclosure; yet there are three main gaps in CSA disclosure research namely, the absence of diverse samples upon which research findings on disclosure have been based, how culture affects disclosure and the omission of the voices of youth, which this study aimed to address.

Methodology

This study employed the use of a qualitative methodology. The qualitative method that informed this study is descriptive phenomenology psychology (Giorgi, 2009). The most common types of qualitative research used in social work include: narrative research, case study research, ethnographic research, grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology or interpretive phenomenology (Creswell, 2013). These research methods were not the best suited to answer the core research questions. Narrative and case study research include small samples of no more than two to four subjects (Creswell, 2013). Ethnographic research studies a predetermined cultural group, which this study aimed to move away from (Creswell, 2013). Finally, grounded theory was not appropriate given that this study does not seek to generate theory (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to uncover thick and rich data to generate description about layers of meaning. Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to remain true to the voices of participants to describe their experience and to maintain the integrity of the participants' voices. There is no co-construction of meaning, as the researcher holds a position of neutrality and tries to represent experiences to the audience. This methodology was directly aligned to my research question: to uncover how culture may play a role in the disclosure process.

The first consideration through the lens of descriptive phenomenology is the selection of subjects. Therefore, sampling was purposeful in that the study sought out individuals who have experienced a CSA disclosure. In order to meet the aims of the study in relation to culture, as

culture was not defined as a tangible term, any participants who self-identified as CSA survivors were included. There were no exclusion criteria, which predetermined if a participant qualified as part of a culture. Every individual was treated as a representative of cultural experience. Researchers did not aim to meet specific goals among participants in regard to racial, ethnic or religious diversity.

Further, descriptive phenomenology informed the approach to data collection, namely, the tool selected to collect data, which was semi-structured interviewing. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for researchers to keep the interviews focused on the phenomena of CSA disclosure experiences and culture while allowing the participants an opportunity to fully narrate the depth nature of their experience. Participants were given the choice of a telephone or in person interview. All nine subjects opted for a telephone interview. Interviews ended in one of two circumstances, when the participants became repetitive in nature, or experienced fatigue where no new information was given. Given the intrusive and sensitive subject matter only one interview was conducted with each participant.

The participants were recruited through key organizations in one metropolitan city, namely Ottawa. Participants eligible to participate in the study were those aged sixteen to twenty-four years old. A total of six recruitment sites were used, notably all the recruitment sites serve a variety of clientele; this clientele was comprised of individuals with different levels of education, different ethnicities, different religions and different socioeconomic backgrounds. However, it has to be noted to all participants recruited were young mothers receiving services due to vulnerable social and emotional contexts and experiences. The characteristics of the participant's experience of abuse are presented in Table 1. Participants varied greatly regarding their experience of CSA, the severity of the abuse, the age at which they were abused and the perpetrator of their abuse as well.

The data was analyzed using the five-stage method of descriptive psychological phenomenology: assuming the phenomenological attitude, reading transcripts for a sense of the whole narrative, delineating meaning units, transforming meaning units into lived experiences and synthesizing the psychological experience (Giorgi, 2009). A base level understanding of culture used for analysis and understanding culture through the lens of cultural psychology

(Ratner, 2011). Cultural psychology views culture as fluid and dynamic process effected by multiple layers and structures in an individual's life (Ratner, 2011).

Table 1

Participants Experiences of CSA

Participant	Age	Type of Abuse	Perpetrator
P1	11-14	Unwanted touching in private area	Step-Father
P2	12 (2-3 weeks)	Rape	20 plus men
P3	3 – uncertain	Rubbing jalapenos on vagina	Mother
P4	13	Touched breast	Elder peer
P5	14	Digital Penetration	Step father
P6	5-11	Exposure to Sex	Mother
			Asked for sex by mother's friend
P7	16-17	Rape	Partner
P8	13	Rape	3-4 men who paid a peer
P9	11	Genital Fondling	Step-father
	17	Rape	Boyfriend

Findings

This study asked the following research question: does culture shape CSA definitions from the perspectives of youth, with attention, given to the process and timing of disclosure. The following findings are discussed: how individuals define culture, how individual cultural definitions impacted disclosures, the timing of disclosure and the extent to which disclosure was experienced as a process and how cultural belief systems changed as a direct result of experiencing CSA.

Definitions of Culture by Participants

Participants held unique definitions of culture with some overarching characteristics associated with the definition. Participants direct statements are presented in Table 2. Participant one described culture in two ways, as ethnicity as well as belief systems that dictate how one behaves. Participant two described culture using ethnicity, religion and external environmental factors that influence one's behaviour as well as behavioural practices. Participant three described her racial identity as well as behavioural practices and belief systems as part of culture.

Participant four described culture simply as everyone and identified European heritage, however, she herself could not identify any personal culture. Participant five could not really identify culture, she identified with the dominant group and had trouble describing anything beyond that. Participant six also described herself as part of the dominant group and attributed culture to others as their language and religion, however, she described herself as a spiritual being and described behaviours as associated with culture. Participant seven defined culture as ethnicity, religion and identity. Participant eight defined culture as ethnicity and religion as well as one's background and family. Finally, participant nine defined culture as family and belief systems as well as her nationality.

Most participants directly associated an operational definition of culture with ethnicity or religion. While participants who identified as part of the dominant Canadian culture in regard to ethnicity, they attributed culture as something belonging to others. However, participants went further in depth and defined culture as belief systems, family practices, one's environment and one's actions. All participants through the course of the interviews were able to describe behaviour associated with culture. Culture, therefore, was not described as a static or rigid entity. A common element outside categorical descriptors of culture among the definitions, was belief systems and identity as guiding principles. This narrative of culture presented by participants is consistent with notion that culture evolves in response to one's interactions with their external environment. Therefore, when studying culture, understanding the narratives of what culture represents to an individual is more important than studying an individual from a lens of homogenous preconceived group. Participants may have described similar facets of representations of culture such as behaviour patterns or familial relations however these representations remain unique to the individual experiencing them.

Participants' Understanding CSA and Disclosing CSA as per Culture

The second major finding was that participants' understood CSA and how their disclosure was associated with their personal cultural narratives. Each participant's trajectory of disclosure and association with their cultural belief system is presented.

Participant One

Her stepfather sexually abused her from the age of eleven to until she was approximately fourteen years old. Her first disclosure occurred approximately three years from the onset of the

abuse, at age fourteen, while it was still ongoing. The catalyst to her disclosure was described as "feelings of anger" and "feeling isolated". She described being "open" as part of her cultural beliefs and described that this "openness" helped her to be able to make her disclosure. She first told a friend; from there they went to principal's office where she disclosed, then the police to whom she disclosed, followed by her mother, then child protective services, two counsellors and two friends and this researcher. Her disclosure remains ongoing as she is seeking services for her CSA experience. After the three-year delay to disclosure, she has repeated her disclosure ten times. She cannot recall anyone's immediate reaction but her own describing a state of fear. She recalls her mother asked her to lie to the police however, she did not lie to the police. The police did not follow through with her disclosure. As she did not feel supported, she did not seek out any help immediately, but later she entered counselling where she was able to discuss her CSA experience in a supportive environment.

Participant one described her culture as both Jamaican as well as "open" [honest] in nature. The participant's belief that a part of her culture was openness[honesty] facilitated her disclosure. Note the participant in this situation remained true to her cultural beliefs even when challenged by her own mother and she was asked to lie.

Participant Two

While isolated in a basement, over twenty men ganged raped her over a two to three-week period. Upon escape, she called an acquaintance that she labelled as a drug dealer and called him so she could take drugs "to forget" what she had just endured. After a two-year delay she first disclosed to her sister who blamed her for the experience. She then remained silent until she experienced sentencing from criminal activity she engaged in as a minor and disclosed to a court appointed counsellor. She then told people at her local Aboriginal Centre and finally revealed the experience to her mom and her counsellor from whom she receives ongoing services and this researcher.

This participant described culture as three particular facets; "[the] environment one grows up in" and described her person as "Aboriginal" and "Catholic". She was raised in low-income neighbourhood infiltrated with gangs and an embedded rule within her community was not to tell authorities about crimes for fear of being perceived as a "snitch". This caused a delay in disclosure and prevented her from seeking out help from formal authorities such as the police.

Consistent with the moral code of her environment she delayed her initial disclosure as she did not want to be perceived as a "snitch" in her community.

Another facet of culture the participant described was "being Catholic". She was raised in the Catholic faith; she was taught God is always watching you and what happens to you is a result of God's will. The religious facet of her culture led her to believe that the sexual abuse she experienced was a lesson from God. While she sustained this belief, she found herself in a state of uncertainty trying to determine why God was teaching her a lesson. Another religious belief she held, as taught to her by her mother was that premarital sex was taboo. If one were to engage in premarital sex they would become either pregnant or diseased. These combined cultural beliefs that her CSA experience was a result of God's will and she could be pregnant or diseased created a climate of fear and caused a delay to disclosure.

Once she disclosed, she began to see demons. She then went on to seek counsel from her local Aboriginal centre. Other Aboriginals told her seeing demons was consistent with her Aboriginal heritage and not to tell anyone about the "demons" but rather to "fight them". An Aboriginal practice to rid demons was "smudging". In accordance with the advice given, she would engage in "smudging" when demons would appear. "Smudging" was a practice used to cleanse oneself and after the interview and speaking about the demons, she feared they might return and subsequently smudged at the interview location after her interview.

Participant Three

This participant described culture as something you live with, something you make, being Somalian and the repression of female sexuality. The third participant had jalapenos rubbed against her vulva from the ages of three to approximately five years old. She believes her mother engaged in this practice to inflict pain. Her mother had her clitoris cut off as a teenager a means to supress her mother's sexuality. She believed her mother's actions were to supress her sexual pleasure from a young age. She further believes her mother engaged in this practice as part of her mother's Islamic and Somalian faith, whereby women are unequal to men, people act like sheep and follow others and finally women's sexual organs are used as a site to oppress women. She abandoned this faith after witnessing sexual violence and harm to genitals being practiced without remand.

She initially disclosed to a counsellor at the age of sixteen, with a delay of thirteen years. She then confronted her mother and sister who denied the situation and continues to work with a therapist as a result of her experience. She then disclosed to a second counsellor followed by this researcher. Her impetus to disclosure was when she began to believe in spirituality and "chakras". She "opened her heart chakra" consistent with spiritual belief system. She believed her "heart chakra" had to open for disclosure to take place, as she was only then willing to receive and accept help.

Participant Four

This participant disclosed promptly after the CSA incident and she was no longer in the presence of the perpetrator. She had her breast touched by a peer at a school dance. Following the incident, she first disclosed to her friend and her sister, her sister subsequently told her friends, the situation was then reported to the principal and her mother, followed by the police and youth protection services, the court proceedings, a counsellor and finally this interviewer. This disclosure trajectory took place over a five-year period. This participant described culture as everyone in society and as well as one's background and how they portray themselves. This participant was raised in a home where she was taught about CSA and this knowledge made her feel her experience was not "severe enough", she didn't want to seem like a "tattle-tail", and she had a negative response during her police interview which contributed to these feelings. In this case, her knowledge of sexual abuse and climate of perceived support from her mother created an impetus to disclosure while conversely her knowledge of CSA also created reticence to disclose, understanding the abuse and support but not believing it was severe enough to be a punitive act.

This participant explained culture as everyone in society and how they portray themselves. This tied in to her view of CSA in her description of her abuse not being severe enough. She portrayed victims as those who had more severe experiences of CSA. None the less, given she understood of what CSA she was felt comfortable enough to have a discussion with peer which was the onset of her disclosure process.

Participant Five

Participant five described culture as beliefs and religion. She experienced CSA in the form of digital penetration by her former stepfather. However, in this situation, before any

sexual touching took place, there had been years of progression of inappropriate sexual behaviour. Her stepfather made increasing sexual remarks and gestures as she entered puberty. Promptly, after the episode of digital penetration and she was no longer in the presence of the perpetrator she made a disclosure to her best friend, they subsequently made a disclosure to her best friend's mother, then her mother, followed by the police, the court proceedings, a counselor and then this researcher. She continues to receive services for her CSA to this point. This participant had difficulty linking her culture to her experience. She did not identify distinct belief systems but rather grew up with a supportive relationship with her family and her best friend's family and had been educated about sexual abuse.

Participant Six

Participant six described culture as "language and religion" and beliefs. This participant described growing up in a sexually charged and abusive environment. This participant could not directly link culture to her experience of disclosure but rather described facets that inhibited her CSA disclosure, such as her mom being "an alcoholic" and begging child protective services to remove her from her home to no avail. After a seven-year delay, she first confronted her mother who was not supportive, followed then by her counsellor and this interviewer. She has disclosed to three people over a two-year period and receives ongoing support for her CSA experience. This participant discovered Wiccan spirituality, which helped facilitate her disclosure; she found that bringing herself closer to nature, meditation and positivity fostered her ability to discuss her CSA experience.

Participant Seven

Participant seven described culture as religion and how one identified. Her partner from ages sixteen to seventeen continually raped her. She disclosed to her mother and police after her mother overheard a phone call with the perpetrator disclosing his behaviour. She disclosed to her mother, followed by five police officers, the hospital, her gynecologist, the judicial system, her counselor, a few friends and this interviewer. There was a one-day delay to disclosure, and she has since disclosed to nine people over a period of three years and she continues to receive services for her CSA experience. Participant seven was raised as a Catholic with Aboriginal heritage. While her disclosure was accidental, she feared the consequences that disclosure would bring to the perpetrator. To date her father and relatives are unaware of her

experience as they are very “Christian” and would blame her “leading it on”. When she received support after her primary disclosure, she was able to continue her disclosure experience. This participant described a facet of her culture as religion. Her religious belief systems at the time of CSA were not conducive to disclosing because she would be viewed negatively.

Participant Eight

This participant was trafficked by peers; she was locked in a room and sold to three or four men who raped her. Participant eight described her culture as Jamaican, background and family. She initially waited two years to describe her CSA experience. The participant felt to blame that she had trusted her peers. She faced discrimination throughout her life based on the colour of her skin and she feared if she reported to the authorities, she would not be believed. In her Jamaican upbringing, she was taught to fend for herself and she felt to blame for her circumstances. Additionally, she described how the loss of virginity would be ill received by other Catholics. She initially told her mother, who was not supportive, and this caused her to stop talking about her CSA experience. Her mother taught her sexual intercourse would result in either pregnancy or disease. When she felt comfortable, she then disclosed to a counsellor followed by this researcher. She has disclosed over a period of three years.

This participant’s view of culture included a large view of self-reliance and control for one’s own personal situation. This led the participant to feel shamed for her CSA experience.

Participant Nine

Participant nine experienced genital fondling by her step-father. Participant nine described culture as family and beliefs. Participant nine disclosed after a six-year delay. She disclosed to her mother and father, the police, the judicial system, a first then second counsellor and this interviewer over a period of five years. Participant nine waited to disclose, as her family believed things that happen within the confines of the family should not be discussed openly. Overall, she was anxious and did not want extra attention she associated with disclosure. The issue of sexual abuse was not discussed within her community and this lack of awareness contributed to the delay.

Table 2

Participants' definitions of culture

Participant	Definitions of Culture
P1	"Um culture is, a belief, and what you believe in and sticking by it and that's your culture…acts that you do, like it's traditional to you…My culture, like, I'm Jamaican, that's my culture, [it's] very flowing and easy going, open and um, upbeat."
P2	"Like how the environment that you're raised in I guess, like the things your family does, like regularly or um, like for me I'm Aboriginal, so like I guess that would be my culture…well definitely by being indigenous or native um, I don't know, it's just me, it's my ethnicity, it doesn't mean anything bad or good. It's just a race…[I used to smudge] but I stopped doing that. I used to go to [organization] it's a woman empowering, um, so it's just for women, and it's all about like connection to our native heritage. For me I am very like, I don't about religious per say but I definitely have strong faith in God, I'm baptized catholic but I'm a born-again Christian. Um I don't really follow the Catholic thing. [The] Catholic church says is like when bad things happen to us, it's because God is trying to teach us a lesson, but [born-again Christian churches] um more so believe that when bad things happen it's the devil trying to get you down. Trying to get you to succumb to the negativity and therefore going against God."
P3	"Culture is like something you grow up with. Culture is either something that you make, or it's something you're born with through family that you grew up with or the community you grew up in. Uh, an example when it comes to me, like my background, my culture is ah Somalian culture [poetry, food]...There's an impact with me being Somalian and the society I live in today because um a lot of individuals don't like to see with like their mind. They just like to see with their eyes, let their eyes find everything you know? So they think when they look at somebody that's how they are going to judge that person, because of how they look, you know? I have been judged for my culture so many times…Somalian women, they like to throw things under the rug, they don't like to talk about things…A lot of women get their clits cut off [to oppress women]… We used to be equal to men but not anymore…Islam, my mom instilled fear in me."
P4	"Everyone included in society I guess. Like where everyone comes from. Everyone has their own culture. Who they are, where they come from, you know. Um, their background, where they're from. How they choose to, um, how they choose to, I guess portray themselves depending on their religion or nationality. I was raised having Dutch grandparents. Um, I'm Irish and pretty much that's it…[Personal] not really much of one [culture]."
P5	"Um, I don't know, like your beliefs and religion. Umm being nice and being honest and I don't know, just being nice. I am White Canadian." [

Participant	Definitions of Culture
P6	"Culture means different um, different people so, um African American, American, Canadian, um like Caucasian and all those and different cultures like languages, religion and like that. My culture is non-religious…I do celebrate holidays…[I'm] White Caucasian…I'm interested in earth and earth spirituality."
P7	"All I know about culture is religion and how you identify. I [identified] as Catholic…My mother was Caucasian and my father is half native…I was taught [about Catholicism] you don't have premarital sex and um, that's basically it…My grandmother used to pray…There was also being gay is a sin. Um, I know about the ten commandments, um, something about anger, the one with lust and something about neighbours."
P8	"Culture means to me your background, family, uh what's it called, celebrations of different like cultures and stuff. I don't know like, yeah. Well, I feel like, well, ok, I was born in Ottawa, Ontario, but when people usually ask me I say that I am Jamaican and I was grown into Jamaican culture. Um, my father is Nigerian but I haven't met him so like, I don't really know anything about that side of my culture, but my mother was, is full, Jamaican. I was born and uh-baptized Christian, Catholic…but now I am a Jehovah's witness but the rest of my family is Christian...[I felt discriminated against growing up] um, there were times when people would be straight forward with me and call me like a nigger, and like be rude and there were other times let's say I'd be the only black person in the room, like I was called out on that."
P9	"Culture is something you grow up with, uh by your family, or what you believe in. So me, when I grew up, I didn't really have a culture let's say, like I had a typical, I don't know what you call it. Like my family didn't go to church, didn't do anything, but I grew up very spiritual on my own terms. Maybe I'm just non-religious Canadian."

Participants' Timing of Disclosure and Process

As can be seen from the above accounts, all participants experienced disclosure as a process with different cultural reasons for delayed disclosure or lack thereof. The complete profile of all participants' disclosure can be seen in Table 3. The time delay of disclosure among participants ranged from 24 hours to 13 years. All participants told multiple people, ranging from three to ten people. Disclosure from all participants considered a process, as it was not a one-time event, the time spanned across multiple years and involved numerous disclosure recipients. Please note this researcher was counted among the participants' estimated number of disclosure recipients. The process of disclosure entails not only delaying the initial disclosure of CSA, but also telling multiple people over a period of multiple years. Given that the participants disclosed

for the research study, it remains to be seen for each participant when, if ever, the process will come to an end.

The first participant waited three years to disclose and told approximately ten people over a period of 7 years. The second participant disclosed two years after the abuse occurred, she subsequently disclosed to five people, over a period of six years, which was ongoing at the time of the study. The third participant waited thirteen years to disclose and told approximately 5 people over a period of two years. The fourth and fifth participants disclosed within 24 hours of their CSA experience, they both told between seven and nine people and both disclosed over a period of 5 years. The sixth participant disclosed after seven years, to three people over a period of three years. The seventh participant disclosed with twenty-four hours to nine people over a period of three years. The eighth participant waited two years to disclose and then told four people over a period of three years. Finally, the ninth participant disclosed after six years, told six people over a period of five years. Most studies to date capture the initial disclosure and then discuss disclosure as an event or process However, the multiple disclosures that take place over time cannot be viewed in isolation from the experience of telling about CSA experiences.

Table 3

Disclosure Process

Participant / Age	Time to Disclosure from CSA	Number of People Told	Length of Ongoing Disclosure
P1 - 24	3 years	10	7 years
P2 - 20	2 years	6	6 years
P3 - 24	13 years	5	2 years
P4 - 18	Within 24 hours	9	5 years
P5 - 19	Within 24 hours	7	5 years
P6 -19	7 years	3	2 years
P7 - 19	Within 24 hours	9	3 years
P8 - 18	2 years	4	3 years
P9 - 22	6 years	6	5 years

Participants' Changing Cultural Beliefs as a Result of CSA

An unexpected finding was that many participants changed their cultural beliefs as a direct result of experiencing CSA as described in Table 4. Five participants' belief systems changed because of their experiences of CSA. Notably, it is to be expected that belief systems change over the course of the life span, of interest, however, is that these

participants directly associated the change with their CSA experience.

Participant two was raised in the Catholic faith and left the Catholic Church as a result of hardships in her life including her experience with CSA. She abandoned her belief systems around the age of ten years old and describes being atheist in her adolescent years. However, she returned to God, although a different religious sect, within the past few years. An influential factor in her decision-making process was how the two distinct religious bodies viewed CSA. While she argued the Catholic Church, believed her CSA experience was considered "God teaching her a lesson"; she described her new found faith the Born-Again Christian as more upbeat, accepting and viewed CSA experiences as having "had been lured by the devil". Her belief system shifted in accordance with her understanding of her CSA experience. She viewed Catholicism as more punitive, but her newfound faith displaced the blame of CSA to the devil.

Participant three maintains her beliefs associated with her ethnic heritage (Somalian) however, she abandoned her religious belief systems of Islamic faith. She wanted to run away from her mother's culture. She described the Islamic faith followers as "sheep" who did not think for themselves and swept problems of CSA under the rug. Furthermore, she disagreed with the role of women and men, whereby men were viewed as superior to women. She also disagreed with practice of cutting clitorises to suppress female "feeling" during sexual relations. She believed part of her CSA experience was tied to the views of the Islamic faith. As such, she no longer practices anything regarding the Islamic faith. In order to disclose her CSA, she changed her spiritual beliefs to look at "chakras". She felt the alignment of her "chakras" helped her disclose her CSA experience.

Participant six did not have any religious belief systems growing up, however, she became Wiccan within the past few years. She described the Wiccan belief system as, bringing her closer to earth, Mother Nature, the spirit world and that this belief system holds healing properties apart from Western medicine. She adopted this belief system in order to her heal from both CSA experience and mental health issues.

Participant seven left the Catholic church for fear of judgment. To date, she not disclosed to some of her relatives for fear of how they will react in accordance with their Catholic belief

systems. She became an Atheist choosing not to adhere to any belief systems that have explanations for CSA experiences.

Participant eight left the Christian faith. She believed after she experienced CSA she was being judged by her church. She believed the people who practiced the faith in her church were more concerned with gossip and judgment then the principles of the faith. She then abandoned this faith to become a Jehovah's witness. She claimed this new church was much more welcoming of her and did not judge her for her CSA experiences.

Table 4

Changing Cultural Beliefs

Identification Number	Participant Age	Self-Identified Culture Prior to Sexual Abuse	Self-Identified Culture Post Sexual Abuse	Reason for Cultural Belief Change
P1	24	Jamaican Belief Systems Behaviour	No change	
P2	20	Aboriginal Catholic Environment Behaviour	Abandoned Catholicism Born-Again Christian	CSA
P3	24	Islamic Somalian Belief Systems Behaviour	Abandoned Islam Spiritual	CSA
P4	18	Caucasian European Everyone	No Change	
P5	19	White Canadian Religion and Beliefs	Adopted Christianity	
P6	19	Caucasian Atheist Behaviours Ethnicity Language Behaviours	Abandoned Atheism Wiccan	CSA
P7	19	Catholic Aboriginal Identity	Abandoned Catholicism Atheist	CSA

Identification Number	Participant Age	Self-Identified Culture Prior to Sexual Abuse	Self-Identified Culture Post Sexual Abuse	Reason for Cultural Belief Change
P8	18	Jamaican Christian Background Family	Abandoned Christianity Jamaican Jehovah's Witness	CSA
P9	22	Christian Family Beliefs	Abandoned Christianity Spiritual Buddhism	

Discussion

The core objective of this study was to examine how culture shaped experiences of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth, with attention given to the process and timing of disclosure. In the past, the perspectives of youth were omitted from literature and as such, this study provided unique insights from participants who were youth. The aim was to capture rich and descriptive CSA disclosure experiences while the youth were not too far removed in time from their CSA experience. The findings confirmed previous research which concluded disclosure is a process, the findings also confirmed disclosure is often associated with a delay between the CSA and the disclosure experience. Finally, a new and innovative finding was that participants changed or shifted their beliefs in accordance with having experienced CSA.

This study set itself apart from previous studies that have examined CSA and disclosure as there was no fixed definition of culture. Each individual acted as a representative of a culture. This study opted not to make generalizations or group individuals into homogenous categories as this study attempted to study culture in a more robust way through the lens of cultural psychology. The participants in this study ranged in cultural background and CSA experiences. The youth were able to articulate their view of culture, which included religion, ethnicity, belief systems, traditions, and the way one is raised. As such, the study has demonstrated that participants defined culture across a diversity of facets: ethnicity, religion, belief systems and one's environment. This demonstrated that youth do not view culture as a monolithic entity, rather it is fluid in nature and influenced by a multitude of factors, this is consistent with the lens

of cultural psychology. However, narratives of culture from Caucasian participants were not as elaborated as those from non-Caucasians youth in the study. This may be due to their affiliation to the dominant ethnicity in Canadian society; their own facets of identity may have been internalized as normative and, consequently, difficult to articulate. This study suggests that considering culture beyond categorical labels is essential to capture the entirety of a person's cultural being.

Culture in turn, as described by participants, influenced the way they internalized and understood CSA experiences as well as when they disclosed. Participants discussed how or if they understand CSA. How their families, communities, and faith played a role in delayed disclosure of lack thereof. Each individual provided a unique account inclusive of their own definition of culture.

This study confirmed disclosure is considered a process. The findings largely support the emerging scholarship, which positions disclosure as a process (Alaggia 2004; Hunter 2011; Leonard, 1996; McElvaney Greene & Hogan, 2014; Sorenson & Snow, 1991; Summit 1983). This study found that participants' time delay in relation to disclosure ranged from within 24 hours to thirteen years. This confirms research that found disclosure is delayed (DeVeo & Faller, 1999; Priebe & Svedin, 2008; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). Those who disclosed without delay still disclosed as a process as each participant disclosed over a number of years to a number of different people. Participants each told a minimum of four people and a maximum of ten people about their childhood sexual abuse experience. Furthermore, the process of ongoing telling ranged from two years to seven years.

This study also came across findings not previously discussed in the literature. The study found that participants shifted their cultural beliefs from their childhood to the present as a direct result of their CSA experience. While some participants could not directly identify why they changed their belief systems others were quite vocal that is was a result of CSA. What is of particular interest in the findings from this study is that many participants abandoned or adopted new a culture after having been sexually abused. This could be a result of the cultural implications associated with having been victimized or in some instances no longer engaging in belief systems, which perpetuated their victimization. This warrants further investigation as this was not part of the primary objective of the study but rather spoke to the healing experience of

victims. This unexpected yet salient finding could be attributed to the methodology whereby participants were allowed to freely express their culture and how it shifted over time.

Implications

This study sought to understand how culture impacts the experience of CSA disclosure from the perspectives of youth. The main findings were that: 1) culture is personal and fluid in nature and regardless of culture, 2) CSA disclosure remains a process and disclosure are often delayed with this disclosure process affected by cultural beliefs and 4) the experience of CSA can alter one's cultural views. There are many implications from the study for social work and future research.

For social work clinicians, there needs to be a reminder that present-day protocols and the legal system expectations that CSA victims will come forward and disclose immediately are not reflective of the literature on CSA. Social work clinicians and researchers alike need to lobby policy makers to understand the reality of CSA disclosure. We need to help those in higher positions of authority, politically, and legally to understand disclosure is indeed a delayed process.

In the absence of changes to the existing paradigm and practice of how victims should disclose, social workers need be acutely aware of the position of power they hold when working with victims of suspected CSA. Furthermore, for social workers in positions of authority using the National Institute for Child and Human Development (NICHD) protocol, the rapport building phase needs to be more inclusive of exploring belief systems and understanding the suspected victim's understanding of CSA.

Social workers should greet their clients from a position of naiveté to learn about individuals and families who have been impacted by CSA from the families and individuals themselves. While it is not harmful to look at cultural research, there is a potential to stereotype clients if this is the only knowledge garnered and presupposed about a family's cultural belief systems. Only by understanding the individual can social workers become aware of religious, familial and communal factors that could act as inhibitors to the disclosure process.

Social work clinicians and researchers alike must understand CSA cannot be understood in isolation of culture. Culture needs to be understood as an element of each individual's constitution and it is not static in nature or belonging only to those who are visible minorities.

Furthermore, culture is not homogenous, each individual will have their own interpretation and coming from a stance of not knowing allows individuals to be heard and understood in full. Finally, belief systems change over time and as a result of victimization, so exploring past and present belief systems is pertinent when trying to illicit a CSA disclosure.

For CSA disclosure research, researchers embarking on the study of culture need to take a broader view of culture in order to capture the richness and entirety of a person's culture. They need to be aware that the meaning individuals attribute to CSA, according to their beliefs, will have a direct impact on their disclosure or lack thereof. Therefore, CSA needs to be studied alongside individual culture.

Lastly, CSA should continue to be studied as a process. Studying disclosure as a process must move beyond examining the initial disclosure as point of reference to understand if disclosure was an event or process. Disclosures do not appear to be one event but rather a trajectory, more research is needed in this area.

Limitations

There are limitations associated with this study. The sample size was very small and therefore, these findings cannot be generalized. The sample size represents a unique perspective of youth, as the population was comprised of young mothers. However, given that the sample was small not all perspectives could be accounted for. This sample is thus largely unique rendering the findings unable to be generalized to any population nor for theory creation. These findings support the proposition that culture is an important facet of CSA disclosure but much more research is needed to further substantiate this claim. Another limitation is that participants were only interviewed once given the sensitive nature of the research.

Conclusion

This study sets itself apart from previous studies that have examined CSA and disclosure as there was no fixed definition of culture. Narratives of culture were inclusive of ethnicity, religion, family belief systems, one's communal environment and the rules and manners in which one was raised, consistent with a lens of cultural psychology. This highlights the importance of studying culture with a more open mindsight transcending labels and categorizations.

The findings of this study supported previous research which concluded disclosure is a process, the findings also lent support to the notion disclosure is often associated with a delay between the CSA and the disclosure experience. Finally, a new and innovative finding was that participants changed or shifted their beliefs in accordance with having experienced CSA. More research is needed to confirm these findings so they can be generalized to a larger population.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Abu-Baker, K. & Dwairy, M. (2003). Cultural norms versus state law in treating incest: A suggested model for Arab families. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27*, 109-123.

Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1213–1227.

Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & Lateef, R. (2017). Facilitators and barriers to child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures: A research update (2000–2016). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 1524838017697312.

Barsalou-Verge, X., Gagnon, M., Séguin, R., & Dagenais, C. (*2015*) Current knowledge on child sexual abuse in Indigenous populations of Canada and the United States: A literature review. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, (39*) 65-82.

Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of public health*, *58*(3), 469-483.

Bradley, A.R. & Wood, J.M. (1996). How do children tell? The disclosure process in child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 20,* 881–891.

Brazelton, J.F. (2015). The secret storm: Exploring the disclosure process of African American women survivors of CSA across the life course. *Traumatology*, *21*(3), 181.

Collin-Vézina, D., De La Sablonnière-Griffin, M., Palmer, A.M., & Milne, L. (2015). A preliminary mapping of individual, relational, and social factors that impede disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 123-134.

Comas-Diaz, L. (1995). Puerto-Ricans and sexual child abuse. In L. Fontes (Ed.), *Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures* (pp. 31-67). California: Sage.

Cotter, A. & Beaupré, P. (2014). Sexual offences against children and youth in Canada. Statistics Canada 85-002-X ISSN 1209-6393

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. New York: Sage publications.

Daigneault, I., Collin-Vézina, D., & Hébert, M. (2012). Prevalence and prevention of child and adolescent sexual assault*. Integrating Science and Practice, 2,* 20-23.

Denov, M. (2003). To a safer place? Victims of sexual abuse by females and their disclosures to professionals. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27,* 47-61.

DeVoe, E. & Faller, K. (1999). The characteristics of disclosure among children who may have been sexually abused. *Child Maltreatment, 4,* 217-227.

Elliot, D. & Briere, J. (1994). Forensic sexual abuse evaluations of older children: Disclosures and symptomology. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law, 12,* 261-277.

ESS (2018). Migrant and migrant studies. ISSN: 2443-8219
Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_22.3_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU_on_1_January_2018

Faller, K. & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2005). Extended evaluation in cases of child sexual abuse: How many sessions are sufficient? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19,* 648-669.

Fontes, L. & Plummer, C. (2010). Culture and disclosure issues: Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*, 491-518.

Foynes, M., Platt, M., Hall, G., & Freyd, J. (2014). The impact of Asian values and victim-perpetrator closeness on the disclosure of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy, 6,* 114-141.

Futa, K., Hsu, E., & Hansen, D. (2001). Child sexual abuse in Asian American families: An examination of cultural factors that influence prevalence identification and treatment. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 8, 189-207.

Gilligan, P. & Akhtar, S. (2006). Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*, 1361-1377.

Gries, L., Goh, D., & Cavanaugh, J. (1997). Factors associated with disclosure during child sexual abuse assessment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 5,* 1-19.

Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Duquesne University Press.

Goodman-Brown, T.B., Edelstein, R.S., Goodman, G.S., Jones, D.P., & Gordon, D.S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27(5),* 525–540.

Haboush, K. & Alyan, H. (2013). Who can you tell? Features of Arab culture that influence conceptualization and treatment of child sexual abuse. *Journal of child sexual abuse, 22,* 499-518.

Harper, C.A. & Perkins, C. (2018). Reporting CSA within religious settings: challenges and future directions. *Child abuse review*, *27*(1), 30-41.

Hébert, M., Tourigny, M., Cyr, M., McDuff, P., & Joly, J. (2009). Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and timing of disclosure in a representative sample of adults from Quebec. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry/La Revue canadienne de psychiatrie*, 54,631-636.

Hunter, S.V. (2011). Disclosure of child sexual abuse as a life-long process: Implications for health professionals. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 32,* 159–172.

International Organization for Migration (IOM): The UN Migration Agency (2018). *World Migration Report* IOM: Switzerland. ISSN: 1561-5502.

Keary, K. & Fitzpatrick, C. (1994). Children's disclosure of sexual abuse during formal investigation. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 7, 543-548.*

Katzenstein, D. & Fontes, P. (2017). Two silenced: The underreporting of child sexual abuse in orthodox Jewish communities. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse,* 26, 6.

Lira, L., Koss, M., & Russo, N. (1999). Mexican American women's definition of rape and sexual abuse. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 21*, 236-265.

Leonard, E. (1996). A social exchange explanation for the child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*, 107-117.

London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S.J., & Shuman, D.W. (2005). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *11*(1), 194.

London, K., Bruck, M., Wright, D., & Ceci, S. (2008). Review of contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues and implications for forensic interviews. *Memory, 16,* 29-47.

McEvoy, M. & Daniluk, J. (1995). Wounds to the soul: The experiences of aboriginal women survivors of sexual abuse. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, *36*(3), 221.

McElvaney, R., Greene S., & Hogan, D. (2014). Containing the secret of child sexual abuse.

Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27, 1155-1175.

Priebe, G. & Svedin, S. (2008). Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society: An epidemiological study of adolescent disclosures. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 32,* 1095-1108.

Ratner, C. (2010). General principles in cultural psychology. In Ratner, C. (Ed). *Macro Cultural Psychology: A philosophy of Mind* (pp.89-139). New York: Oxford.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999). Towards a cultural definition of rape: Dilemmas in dealing with rape victims in Palestinian society. *Women Studies International Forum, 22*, 157-173.

Sorenson, T. & Snow, B. (1991). How children tell: The process of disclosure in child sexual abuse. *Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program, 70,* 3-15.

Sawrikar, P. & Katz, I. (2017). The treatment needs of victims/survivors of CSA (CSA) from ethnic minority communities: A literature review and suggestions for practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*, 166-179.

Statistics Canada (2011). Immigration and ethnocultural diversity in Canada. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm.

Statistics Canada (2016). Ethnic and cultural origins of Canadians: A portrait of a rich heritage. Retirved from: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016016/98-200-x2016016-eng.cfm

Sorenson, T. & Snow, B. (1991). How children tell: The process of disclosure in child sexual abuse. *Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program, 70,* 3-15

Staller, K.M. & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2005). "A burden in your heart": Lessons of disclosure from female preadolescent and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *29* (12), 1415-1432.

Stoltenborgh, M., Van Ijzendoorn, M., Euser, E., & Nakermans-Kranenburg, M. (2011). A global perspective on child sexual abuse: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment, 16,* 79-101.

Summit, R.C. (1993). Abuse of the child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *1*(4), 153-164.

Tillman, S., Bryant-Davis, T., Smith, K., & Marks, A. (2010). Shattering silence: Barriers to disclosure African American sexual assault survivors. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse, 11,* 59-70.

Tishelman, A.C. & Fontes, L.A. (2017). Religion in CSA forensic interviews. *Child abuse & neglect*, *63*, 120-130.

Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Sinha, V., Black, T., Fast, E., & Weightman, P. (2010). *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect, 2008.* Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada.

Wyatt, G. (1990). The aftermath of child sexual abuse of African American and White American women: Victims experience. *Journal of Family Violence, 5*, 61-81.

Chapter Six Manuscript 3: The influence of culture in the experience of child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures from the perspectives of youth: Barriers and facilitators

Abstract

This qualitative study is aimed to answer the following research questions: what common cultural elements emerge that promote or inhibit disclosure? The objective was to explore and describe what facets of culture impact CSA disclosure experiences from the perspectives of youth and to identify and describe cultural themes that promote or inhibit CSA disclosures. Descriptive psychological phenomenology was used as a research method, to gather, collect, organize and analyze data to formulate conclusions. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with nine sexual abused youth from diverse cultural backgrounds in Ottawa (Canada). Cultural themes that transcended across groups as barriers to disclosure included: individual beliefs about CSA, the level of knowledge one had about CSA prior to their victimization, individual perceptions about the police and judicial system and notions of support from individuals' families as well as the community at large. Other cultural barriers that were more unique in nature included: socioeconomic status, violent neighbourhoods, keeping family secrecy, racial profiling, the devaluation of women, sexual education, not receiving support from youth protection services, transiency, fear of homicide, beliefs in taking care of oneself, discrimination, history of child abuse, loss of face and fear of attention from disclosure.

Background

Empirical scholarship thus far has made strides in understanding the factors that facilitate or prevent CSA disclosure. The CSA literature has identified several barriers to the disclosure process that can be grouped into different categories including characteristics of the child (age and gender), the nature of abuse (severity and duration), the relationship with the perpetrator, perceived barriers, systemic barriers and cultural barriers which will be discussed in detail below.

Empirical studies have examined the position of age relative to disclosure. There is a consistent assertion across the literature; developmental factors are associated with children's ability to make disclosures (Campis, Hebden-Curtis, & Demaso, 1993; Hewitt, 1994; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Mian, Werhspann, Klajner-Diamond, LeBaron & Winder, 1986; London, Bruck & Shuman, 2008; Nagel, Putnam, Noll & Tickett, 1997; Preibe and Svedin, 2008;

Sorenson & Snow, 1991). Among preschool aged children and adolescents, the literature seems largely in agreement about victim's nature and capacity to disclose (Campis, Hebden-Curtis, & Demaso, 1993; Hewit, 1994; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Mian, Wehrspann, Klajner-Diamond, LeBaron & Winder, 1986; London, Bruck, Write & Ceci, 2008; Nagel, Putnam, Noll & Tickett, 1997; Preibe and Svedin, 2008; Sorenson & Snow, 1991). Consistently, preschool age children present with behaviours or symptoms and tend to disclose in an accidental manner (Hewitt, 1994; Nagel et al., 1997). According to Goodman-Brown and associates (2003) and Schonburcher and associates (2012) adolescents, with greater cognitive capacity, present with a larger number of purposeful disclosures. Further it remains uncontested adolescents are more likely to disclose to peers.

Further, females are consistently more likely to make disclosures than males (O'Leary & Barber, 2008 & Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). Hunter (2011) examined specific barriers faced by males and females in reference to disclosure. For females, fear was the main barrier. Females experienced fears of being punished, fear of consequences to the family and fear of not being believed. While for males, shame was the main impediment to disclosure. Males experienced shame about hidden homosexuality or being homosexual as well as the stigma of being homosexual. Barriers common to genders were described as shame, feeling responsible and self-blame.

There is a debate regarding the severity of abuse and the disclosure process. Some scholars contend that more severe abuse will lead to disclosure (DeVoe & Faller, 1999; Nagel et al., 1997) whereas others contend more mild forms of sexual abuse result in disclosure (Arata, 1998; Priebe & Svedin, 2008; Sauzier, 1989). Agreement emerges in the literature that delayed disclosure is directly tied to the victim's relationship with the perpetrator. Disclosure is likely to occur sequentially with the least likely being when the abuser is a family member, followed by an acquaintance and most likely when a stranger commits the abuse (Mian et al., 1986; Hershkowitz, Lanes & Lamb, 2007; London et al., 2008; Ullman, 2008).

Many scholars have agreed and documented that intrapersonal barriers play a role in delayed disclosure or a failure to disclose including, shame, self-blame, fear of disbelief, guilt, fear, protecting perpetrators, lack of understanding that CSA occurred and fear of negative consequences (Alaggia, 2004; Collin-Vézina, De La Sablonnière-Griffin, Palmer & Milne, 2015;

Crisma, Bascelli, Paci & Romito, 2004; Denov, 2003; Hunter, 2009; Paine & Hansen, 2002; Schaeffer, Leventhal & Gottsegen Asnes, 2011; Schonburcher, Maier, Mohler-Kuo, Schnyder & Landolt, 2012). Support from a non-offending caregiver can facilitate disclosure according to Ungar (2009) and Jenson and associates (2005).

Systemic barriers faced by victims appear to be a relatively new field of inquiry in the disclosure literature and CSA literature. Although individual and family factors have been documented for over two decades, they first appear to have been documented in connection with broader societal values by Alaggia. Alaggia (2005) found that family dynamics contribute to the ability to make disclosures. Leclerc and Wortley (2015) echoed this sentiment and found family dysfunction inhibits disclosure. Alaggia (2005) found that the family system plays a role in the ability to make disclosures. Familial themes that contribute to delayed disclosure included rigidly fixed gender roles, dominating fathers, chaos and aggression, the presence of other forms of child abuse, domestic violence, dysfunctional communication and social isolation. Alaggia (2010) examined ecological factors associated with disclosure from a sample of 40 adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The micro level or family level was presented in her arguments in 2005. The exo-system level (neighbourhood and community level), served as a barrier when victims identified feeling a lack of empathy from neighbours or a fear of being an outcast from their community. At a macro level (the cultural level) barriers included confusion surrounding the sexualization of young girls in the media, and males being sent messages about masculinity that prevented disclosure. In essence, at the cultural level, socialized gender roles, sexism and patriarchy played a large role. Collin-Vézina and associates (2015) identified three broad categories of CSA disclosure barriers: barriers from within, barriers in relation to others and barriers in relation to the social world. These barriers were multi-layered and were all inter-related. Barriers from within included: internal victim blaming, protecting the self and immature development during the abuse. Barriers in relation to others included: violence and dysfunction within families, power dynamics in the family and community, awareness of how CSA disclosure might affect others and having a weak social network. Finally, barriers in relation to the social world included: labelling or stigma, taboos surrounding sexuality, lack of available services, culture and time period of abuse. The role of the family system in the disclosure process points to arguments that victims became embroiled in larger situational contexts causing their

victimization to be of lesser importance than other stressors. These further points the role multiple traumas, family, communities and society can play in hindering disclosure.

Although groundwork has been laid in the domain of culture and CSA disclosure, with particular attention being drawn to the work of Fontes and Plummer (2010) for their seminal papers in this field; culture has often been framed in reference to demographic categories for example, religion and ethnicity. Studies that have examined the role of culture have examined disclosure using a demographical or preconceived category of ethnicity for example, Aboriginal (Barsalou-Verge, Gagnon, Séguin & Dagenais, 2015; McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995), African American (Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith & Marks, 2010; Wyatt, 1990), Arab (Abu Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999), Asian (Foynes, Platt, Hall & Freyd, 2014; Futa, Hsu & Hansen, 2001; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006) South American (Comas-Diaz, 1995; Lira, Koss and Russo, 1999). Alternatively, research has grouped categories by ethnic minorities (Sawrikar & Katz, 2017) or religious groups (Harper & Perkins, 2018; Katzenstein & Fontes, 2017; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017). Thus, the role of culture and barriers in the CSA disclosure literature is considered a new and emerging field.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative methodology. The qualitative method that informed this study is descriptive phenomenology psychology (Giorgi, 2009). The first consideration through the lens of descriptive phenomenology was the selection of subjects. Therefore, sampling was purposeful in that the study sought out individuals who have experienced a CSA disclosure. In order to meet the aims of my study in relation to culture, as culture was not be defined as static tangible term, any participants who self-identified as CSA survivors were included. There were no exclusion criteria, which pre-determines if a participant qualifies as part of culture. Every individual was treated as a representative of cultural experience. As researcher I did not aim to meet specific goals among participants in regard to racial, ethnic or religious diversity.

Further, descriptive phenomenology informed my approach to data collection, namely, the tool I selected to collect data, which was semi-structured interviewing. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed researchers to keep the interviews focused on the phenomena of CSA disclosure experiences and culture while allowing the participants an opportunity to fully

narrate the depth and nature of their experience. Participants were given the choice of a telephone or in person interview. All nine subjects opted for a telephone interview. Interviews ended in one of two circumstances, when the participants became repetitive in nature, or experienced fatigue where no new information was given. Given the intrusive and sensitive subject matter, only one interview was conducted with each participant.

Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to uncover thick and rich data to generate description about layers of meaning (Giorgi, 2009). Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to remain true to the voices of participants to describe their experience and to maintain the integrity of the participants' voices. There is no co-construction of meaning, as the researcher holds a position of neutrality and tries to represent experiences to the audience. This methodology was directly aligned to my research question: to discover how culture acts as a barrier or facilitator to CSA disclosure.

The participants were recruited through key organizations in one metropolitan city, namely Ottawa. Participants eligible to participate in the study were those aged sixteen to twenty-four years old. A total of six recruitment sites were used, notably all the recruitment sites serve a variety of clientele; this clientele was comprised of individuals with different levels of education, different ethnicities, different religions and different socioeconomic backgrounds. The participants were all young mothers.

The characteristics of the participant's experience of abuse are presented in Table 1. The participants' descriptions of culture are presented in Table 2. Participants varied greatly regarding their experience of CSA, the severity of the abuse, the age at which they were abused and the perpetrator of the abuse as well. The participants were all part of a vulnerable group of single mothers. Participants' CSA experiences ranged in nature from exposure to forced intercourse.

Table 1

Participants Experiences of CSA

Participant	Age	Type of Abuse	Perpetrator
P1	11-14	Unwanted touching in private area	Step-Father
P2	12 (2-3 weeks)	Rape	20 plus men
P3	3 - uncertain	Rubbing jalapenos on vagina	Mother
P4	13	Touched breast	Elder peer
P5	14	Digital Penetration	Step father
P6	5-11	Exposure to Sex	Mother Asked for sex by mother's friend
P7	16-17	Rape	Partner
P8	13	Rape	3-4 men who paid a peer
P9	11	Genital Fondling	Step-father
	17	Rape	Boyfriend

Table 2

Participants Definitions of Culture

Identification Number	Participant Age	Self-Identified Culture Prior to Sexual Abuse
P1	24	Jamaican Catholic Belief Systems & Behaviour
P2	20	Aboriginal Catholic Environment & Behaviour
P3	24	Islamic Somalian Belief Systems & Behaviour
P4	18	Caucasian European Everyone
P5	19	White Canadian Ethnicity & Language
P6	19	Caucasian Atheist Spirituality Behaviours

Identification Number	Participant Age	Self-Identified Culture Prior to Sexual Abuse
P7	19	Catholic Aboriginal Identity
P8	18	Jamaican Catholic Background Family
P9	22	None

Findings

There were two major findings regarding cultural barriers to disclosure: there were common and unique cultural barriers among participants. First common cultural barriers presented by participants will be reviewed, namely, intrapersonal barriers lack of sexual education, lack of support and negative interactions with authority. This will be followed by a discussion on unique barriers faced by participants.

Common Cultural Barriers

The common cultural barriers can be classified across two distinct levels. Namely, the personal level: including intrapersonal feelings surrounding CSA and the micro level: lack of sexual education, lack of support, and negative interactions with authority figures. It will be argued that these personal level barriers and micro level barriers are a by-product of culture and continually reinforce each other to hinder CSA disclosure.

Intrapersonal Feelings

Participants' feelings surrounding the CSA they endured often hindered their ability to make an initial disclosure. What is of interest is that regardless of individual culture many of the internalized feelings are not new to the CSA literature but rather reinforce the consequences and internal dialogues victims encounter after they have been sexually abused. This speaks to a larger culture of society that reinforces the notion that victims are to blame for their CSA. Victims then continue to blame themselves which perpetuates the societal message about CSA victimization. The excerpts below demonstrate the feelings participants felt after the abuse and the lingering ongoing effects of their abuse still felt at present. These feelings ranged from scared, terrified, feeling alone, embarrassment, fear, disgust, shame and disbelief.

Table 3

Barrier: Intrapersonal Feelings and CSA

Participant	Feelings
P1	"I don't remember anyone's reaction but mine and I was just terrified…I didn't know how to feel. Umm, this was when I was 14 years old or 13 and a half. So I didn't know how to feel so I was scared and terrified the whole world was coming down…Scared. And alone. And yeah, like really alone, there's no other feeling."
P2	"Yeah to be honest, I never really wanted to tell anybody at all…Like that whole time I thought it was literally my fault and you know. Like I didn't want to tell anybody because I thought people would be like, oh you're a whore or you know I didn't want people to say that kind of thing. I didn't, I felt like I was disgusting, I just didn't want to talk about it. I was really ashamed."
P3	"They like to instil fear, it is something that they have been doing for, since it's the only way they can control their children, by instilling fear…It made it so much more difficult to talk about my experience because nobody understood what was going on, you know what I'm saying? And everybody thought I was just a trouble maker and I'm getting bullied at school, at home, so I'm acting like a psychopath at school but you guys don't get the signals cause you're not meant to get the signals."
P4	"I felt terrible like [the police] didn't believe me. I kind of felt I was to blame…um I don't know if this is because of what happened or really, but I'm very timid to be alone with a guy regardless of who he is. I kind of get weirded out when I'm in a room alone with my dad by myself even though I know he would never do anything, but I just, as soon as I am alone with a guy, whether it be an uncle or my father or a bus driver or a teacher I feel very awkward being like side by side alone with a guy I get a weird feeling."
P5	"Yeah [to blame], well I just like feel like umm, I should have could have nut dint kind of thing about everything…like it still impacts me in different ways now. Um but yeah, just like having sex with people is different, like yeah, afterwards, I feel really grossed out and stuff…Any person, like any man I see I automatically don't trust them. Um, sounds really bad but I just think that they're like um, like horrid people like that, like automatically."

Participant	Feelings
P6	"So we were scared, like we didn't know what to do in that situation it was umm, we were very confused as children…I was scared like that my mom would get mad at me, I was scared my family would get mad at me, I was scared of uh, you know disowned in a way, I don't know because I don't think she would have believed me."
P7	"Well, along with the sexual assault there was also six other charges that ended up happening, so I was kind of scared he was going to kill me. That's the main base of it…That he was going to kill my parents, that my brother, that he was going to skin my mother alive, um, that he was going to beat the baby out of me, that he was going to stab me…My self-esteem didn't use to be that bad, then after everything happened um, I didn't want to be around men. I had trouble in relationships since and I always think that I am ugly, they are only with me for sex and don't actually like me."
P8	"Well it hurts and it's been a long, like a lot of my life has been like able to trust people and like sides of my mom where you try to trust someone and they constantly hurt you? You know? And you don't really know what's right from wrong anymore or what you deserve or what you're worth because you start feeling, what's it called, if all these bad things are happening to you, what's the point of waiting for a good thing to happen?...Not being believed, feeling like it was my fault, embarrassment, being scared. Uh, like just feeling like you can't really go to anyone because you feel it's your fault, or like you're stupid, or you would have done this, you could have avoided it, so either way it's on you."
P9	I learned its very traumatizing, and it still affects me until this day cause I remember thinking about situation with my step-father and how much it bugged me, there's night where I couldn't sleep because I was just thinking about it. And I would have really bad anxiety attacks where I would need to tell somebody and I eventually told my best friend about it. I still feel bothered by certain things but to be able to talk about it I've learned really helps."

Lack of Child Sexual Abuse Education and Awareness and Disclosure

Eight of the participants described a lack of CSA education and/or awareness of CSA prior to their experience of CSA or were taught information that would inhibit them from either disclosing or trying to stop CSA from taking place. Participants' inability to recognize CSA or how to move forward inhibited the disclosure process. Participant one was never taught about CSA, she learned about CSA when she experienced it. While other participants were given vague and unclear information about CSA, for example, never fight back against CSA, vague details based on a mother's victimization, she was told never to let a man touch your genitals, and don't come home pregnant.

When victims lack the appropriate knowledge that they were sexually abused or how to

approach the experiencethis left them unable to know how to garner support or what to expect from those around them. As long as victims remain uneducated by either family members, school systems or among interactions with those in a place of guidance CSA will continue to be misconstrued and in turn CSA will not be disclosed.

Table 4

Barrier: Lack of Sexual Education

Participant	Sexual Education
P1	"I never learned about it. I learnt by going through it."
P2	"Like my mom always told me, like you know if someone is trying to do something to you know like, probably the worst thing you could do is fight back…My mom explained to me at ten years old that I possibly came from a rape and that my dad wasn't really my dad…."
P3	"I was taught about it the wrong way. I just got taught never let a man touch your privates, that's it."
P4	"Um, my mom told me about it because she was as a child. She was by her father and uncle and um, basically nothing really specific. But just kind of told me the gist of it and kind of why we never spoke to her father or why she had a terrible childhood or said that she would want that for us and stuff like that…I learned around 11-12."
P5	"I don't remember really. I mean from my best friend's mom, I mean, she is like very open about teaching that stuff."
P6	"No [I did not learn about sexual abuse growing up]. I learned by myself that it is not allowed and when you say no, it's your no and if someone were to take advantage of you, that's sexual abuse."
P7	"[Sexual abuse my mom said] um, well at the time [13] I had a boyfriend that was older than me and she told me that I couldn't be with him because it was considered statutory rape and anytime he touched me it was sexual abuse because I didn't know what I was doing and I didn't consent, so, yea [that's all she told]."
P8	"Um, well the most my mom would tell would really say was don't go out there and do anything because you'd come back pregnant or you're going to catch something or like all these. I never really got the straight up this could happen so don't do it."

Lack of Support and Disclosure

When participants disclosed, a lack of support was a prominent feature that prevented further disclosure or in some instances, participants simply lacked information about resources or where to turn for help. A lack of support will hinder ongoing disclosures. The way people seize

meaning from their experience of CSA can inhibit disclosure giving rise to the salience of CSA education.

Table 5

Barrier: Lack of Support during Disclosure

Participant	Lack of Support
P1	"She [mom] wasn't, she wasn't supportive, no not at all. Umm, she asked me to lie [to the police] and you know, hide the story and all of that kind of stuff…you don't know who to believe, you don't know where to turn, you don't know who to talk to. You have no, you have so much fear, um, on your relationship, on your own self, on stuff like that…"
P2	"My sister's pretty mean, she was like, whatever; you probably did it to yourself. You were probably hanging out with them and it's your fault."
P3	"When I go and tell her I know what you did to me, she tried to tell me like why you lying, why you make that up…and I keep telling her don't ever forget that cause I still remember my cry, and I still remember my sister's cry. I know what she did, don't think that I don't know what you did."
P5	"Umm I like lost my sister, um, my whole family like I think became really weird after too…Umm I don't know, they were just, it's like weird now I guess, now that I think of it. Cause my [step] sister she like doesn't speak to any of us, but more closer to the time it happened she was speaking to some of them."
P8	"No, well my mom was like, but she didn't believe it and when she did start to believe it, she called me stupid and pretty much said it was my fault so."
P9	"I just remember going up to my mom, like after it happened, cause I said like this is not OK, why are you doing that and he said I thought you were your mom and I'm like but wait and he said don't tell her and I said I am going to tell her. So I went and told her. And I don't even remember her reaction just because it was so long ago but I feel like I can't bring it up again because it is like such a sticky situation. And I don't think I can, I don't think I want to bring it up again, I just can't. I feel like she thought there was nothing she could do or she didn't believe me. I really don't know [Still together]."

Negativity with Authority and Disclosure

Many participants were taught to mistrust figures of authority or to fear "White" people. Examples of this mistrust are evident in excerpts from the five participants listed below. Participants' mistrust in authority ranged from directly being told not to disclose, fear of retaliation from authority figures or mistreatment from those in positions of power as described below. All of these factors serve as barriers to disclosure from a cultural perspective.

Table 6

Barrier: Feelings about Authority Figures

Participant	Negativity with Authority
P2	"I felt like I would, at the time, I felt like I would be embarrassed like I would be a snitch if I was to say anything."
P3	"My mom instilled so much fear in me and my sister. Cause every, every time, that I wanted to say something to somebody, she, and everything time that there's a chance somebody could potentially save us she would tell us we would get raped by all these men if we were to say anything…She would say you can't trust these White people they hate you. They are going to rape you up your ass and up your vagina and all these things."
P4	"[The Police] was like really really negative about it. He kind of just when I just like had the initial meeting with the officer, just as soon as I walked into report it, he was just kind of like writing down information, he kept asking questions like why were you wearing a bandeau, but like a bandeau and like uh, loose, like a long flowing white t-shirt, like a t-shirt but it had bandeau underneath it, over my bra. I don't think my shirt was see through. I don't remember but it didn't really matter anyways. But he asked me why I was wearing such a shirt to a dance and asking me questions like that, and like saying why didn't you take his hands off, or why didn't you brush his hands away before he had the chance to go up your shirt and stuff like that…But there's like just some assholes on the way. I guess you could say but, I remember hearing about police officers doing it all the time, and saying wonder why girls don't report it and then you like understand why."
P6	"So when Children's Aid Society came to the house, my mom had basically said tell them this, so she basically teached us what to say to them, she told them the reasons we weren't going to school and what was happening. And then me and my brother, were kind of giving hints as to otherwise what we were supposed to say but they weren't getting that. They were only listening to my mother…Her reasoning [for telling us what to say] was not take us away because she wanted us…."
P7	"[Police] Um, well it started off with two police officers coming, and then there ended up being five of them that came in and they were all asking me different questions and rephrasing the questions as if they were trying to catch me in a lie. And I understand it's their job not to cry or anything but there was zero sympathy, they didn't care and they were trying to rush it. There was one female officer and she was fine, she talked to me properly she had like a calm voice. The other ones, it was just question after question, I didn't have time to think about. They just rushed me."

Unique Barriers

Participants also identified some unique cultural barriers. Participant one grew up in a low-income neighbourhood, where there was gang activity and violence and there was a

communal preservation mechanism whereby no one could “snitch” on another member of the community. This communal environment was not conducive to disclosing her experience. Additionally, in accordance with her religious beliefs she was taught, “God was teaching [her] a lesson” because he was always watching. This religious belief system was a barrier to disclosing her CSA.

Participant two was taught not to repeat, “What’s going on inside the home”. This family climate served as a cultural barrier to her disclosure. The values in the home were collective in nature, whereby the participant could not repeat information that would be damaging to the family collective.

Participant three faced ongoing racial discrimination across her lifespan. She was targeted and bullied throughout her life because of the colour of her skin. Her skin colour acted as a deterrent to disclosure. In addition, she was instilled with fear and taught men were of greater value than women. This cultural belief also acted as an impediment to disclosure. For this participant the combination of her skin tone and the devaluation of women in the climate of her household and belief systems prevented her from disclosing her sexual abuse.

Participant four found her sexual education acted a barrier to her disclosure. She was taught about sexual abuse but did not find her situation was severe enough to warrant disclosure. She also did not want to be perceived as a “snitch” a negative connotation associated with talking about her CSA experience, a by-product of the code of conduct among her peers. She also minimized the abuser’s behaviour as he had been under the influence of alcohol at the time. She felt his substance use contributed to his actions, which prevented her from coming forward.

Participant five experienced a lot of self-blame for allowing the situation to escalate over time. She did not experience barriers but rather had a large support system, which acted as a facilitator for her CSA disclosure experience.

Participant six was taught if she ever disclosed authorities would remove her from her family home. She was taught to lie about what was happening inside the family home. She felt in continual fear about disclosing her experience that she would not be helped or supported by either formal authorities or her family. She felt extremely isolated and had nowhere to turn for support.

Participant seven was not able to disclose as her life was threatened and that of her family. She was given a graphic depiction of how she and her family members would be killed. When she did proceed to disclose her situation to the police, her disclosure was met with hostility, she was interrogated by five officers, she believed were trying to "catch her in a lie", they rephrased her sentences and did not garner any sympathy. This prevented her from continuing to discuss her experience. In addition, her family had strict religious beliefs that would place the victim at fault for her CSA, therefore after her experience with police where she was left feeling to blame and she did not disclose to her father or family members for fear of the same reaction. The police and her Christian belief systems all made her feel as though she had "led on" the abuser and she was thus to blame.

Participant eight was raised with Jamaican influences with the inclusion of belief systems that one has to "fend' for oneself. Throughout the trajectory of her life, she often found she was judged by the colour of her skin. She endured multiple types of abuse but believed all these abuses were for her to figure out for herself. She feared judgement from the Catholic Church for the loss of her virginity. Her mother had warned her that sexual interactions would end in pregnancy or disease. Her value system was not conducive to making a disclosure.

Participant nine found that her global community lacked awareness of CSA rendering it difficult to come forward and make a disclosure. She also feared other girls in her community would kill her. She did not want the police involved as she suspected it would make matters worse, and when the police became involved, they did not act as any source of comfort during the disclosure process. For her personally, she suffered a lot of anxiety and did not want the level of attention associated with making with a CSA disclosure.

Unique barriers as expressed by participants include, socioeconomic status, violent neighbourhoods, keeping family secrecy, racial profiling, the devaluation of women, sexual education, not receiving support from youth protection services, transiency, fear of homicide, beliefs in taking care of oneself, discrimination, history of child abuse, loss of face and fear of attention from disclosure.

Discussion

This study aimed to uncover what cultural barriers inhibit CSA disclosure. What has emerged from this study is some barriers to CSA disclosure supersede basic ethno-racial or

religious categorizations. Culture was described by participants as inclusive of ethnicity, religion, belief systems, familial circumstances, and communal environments, which, can prevent victims from disclosing. What could be labelled as common cultural barriers, which transcended different cultural belief systems that acted as barriers to disclosure included: individual beliefs about CSA, the level of knowledge one had about CSA prior to their victimization, individual perceptions about the police and judicial system, and notions of support from individuals' families as well the community at large. All of these barriers can continually reinforce each other in a fluid fashion as described above. Furthermore, many barriers have been previously discussed in CSA disclosure literature confirming previous findings.

Individual beliefs about CSA

Overall victims found themselves feeling scared, terrified, alone, embarrassed, fearful, disgusted, shamed and disbelieved, which hindered their ability to make a CSA disclosure. This is consistent with the findings of previous scholars who discuss intrapersonal barriers impeding disclosure. Scholars who have found the same conclusions include Alaggia, (2004), Collin-Vezina and associates (2015), Denov (2003), Hunter (2009), Paine and Hanson (2002); Schaeffer and associates (2011) and finally Schonburcher and associates (2012). The volume of studies and researchers who have concluded intrapersonal feelings as obstacles to disclosure suggest this well documented and known among and the CSA disclosure scholarship.

Knowledge of CSA prior to CSA experience

Collin-Vezina and associates (2015) argued from a societal level that sexuality is often taboo and therefore discussions around sexuality and CSA may not necessarily take place. In the current study, many victims were not given accurate, specific or any information to help them understand what CSA was and to help them understand their CSA experience. This led to confusion and ultimately act as a hindrance to disclosure.

Perceptions about the police and judicial system

Participants often cited fear of the justice system as a barrier to disclosure. This is consistent with other studies (Barsalou-Verge, Seguin & Dagenais, 2015; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Tillman et al., 2010; Wills, 2010). Participants' fear of the justice system included fear of disbelief and fear of negative treatment by the police or judicial system. There needs to be some knowledge production geared towards victims that the justice system is

not to be feared and that all individuals should receive equitable services. In practice it remains to be seen how this could be accomplished, however, this barrier is of great importance as it hinders disclosure that could lead to consequences for the perpetrator and prevent the victimization of other children and youth.

Support from individuals and families

Many participants cited a lack of support which acted as a barrier from disclosing. This confirms previous researchers who have argued that support from a non-offending caregiver can facilitate disclosure according to Ungar (2009) and Jenson and associates (2005).

Participants also experienced unique cultural barriers that prevented them from coming forward with a disclosure of CSA including: socioeconomic status of the family, violent or gang ridden neighborhoods with silent protocols not to speak to the police, maintaining family secrecy or the collective good of the family, racial discrimination across the lifespan, the perception that women were less important or have less status than men, fear of authorities and one's family combined, beliefs that one is responsible to take care of themselves after victimization, a history of maltreatment and finally fear of attention as a result of a CSA disclosure. These are considered new findings in a cultural context in relation to CSA disclosure. The barriers themselves are not unique whereas the interpretation from a cultural lens does differ. It is important to note very little information was provided regarding what facilitated disclosure. This is consistent with previous research that has consistently asserted that barriers outweigh facilitators among the discourse of CSA victims.

Low socioeconomic status, gangs, poverty, perceived discrimination, were not found to be common cultural barriers across the sample. However, the methodology of the study allowed for rich narratives that permitted a deeper dive into the barriers to CSA disclosure from the participants point for view based on their description of culture. Thus, the study offers a unique cultural perspective on barriers.

Implications

This study sought to examine how participants' conceptualizations of culture acted as a barrier or facilitator for CSA disclosure. Participants defined culture in a fluid fashion with numerous components, similar to the manner culture is viewed in cultural psychology. This reinforces the notion that homogenous labels are not conducive to further understanding the

barriers of CSA disclosure. The findings of the study either confirmed or supported new types of barriers to disclosure of CSA.

The implications for future CSA research indicate that culture cannot be studied as a static one-dimensional entity. Rather culture should be unpacked by the participant(s) in question by the researcher seeking to understand the role of culture.

Furthermore, more research in needed to understand the complexity of cultural barriers to CSA disclosure. While some barriers have been previously confirmed and could be considered universal in nature (e.g. shame), others remain unique at the individual level (e.g. codes of silence in families). It would be interesting to try to distinguish why some barriers are overarching and others appear to stand alone. In addition, more in-depth rich research is necessary to understand how culture acts as a stand-alone barrier in CSA disclosure.

The implications of the findings of this study for social work practice are varied. Social work practice and policy surrounding CSA victimization protocols should aim to gather information about an individual's life circumstances, belief systems, and potential sites of intersecting vulnerabilities. Clinicians need to spend more time building rapport than following protocols in order to obtain more disclosures as the study found various pieces of individual's personal histories acted as hindrances to CSA disclosure.

For social work policy it is imperative that culture be perceived as a standalone barrier. This needs to be embedded into protocols for CSA interviews. Policy for interviewing CSA victims should have clear questions asking them to describe their personal understanding of their cultural background. Therefore, protocols for CSA disclosure need to be evaluated to ensure they are culturally inclusive regarding the use of neutral language and without presupposition of knowledge of CSA.

Limitations

There are limitations associated with this study. The sample size represents a unique perspective of youth as; the population was comprised of young mothers. This sample is thus largely unique rendering the findings unable to be generalized to any population nor for theory creation. These findings support that culture is an important facet of CSA disclosure but much more research is needed to further substantiate this claim. Another limitation is that participants were only interviewed once given the sensitive nature of the research.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine how participants' conceptualizations of culture acted as a barrier or facilitator for CSA disclosure. Participants defined culture in a fluid fashion with numerous components similar to manner culture is viewed in cultural psychology. This reinforces the notion that homogenous labels are not conducive to further understanding the barriers of CSA disclosure.

While the findings of the study either confirmed or supported new types of barriers of disclosure to CSA. Cultural themes that confirmed previous research and transcended across groups as barriers to disclosure included: individual beliefs about CSA, the level of knowledge one had about CSA prior to their victimization, individual perceptions about the police and judicial system and notions of support from individuals' families as well the community at large. While other cultural barriers that were more unique in nature included: socioeconomic status, violent neighbourhoods, keeping family secrecy, racial profiling, the devaluation of women, sexual education, not receiving support from youth protection services, transiency, fear of homicide, beliefs in taking care of oneself, discrimination, history of child abuse, loss of face and fear of attention from disclosure.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Abu-Baker, K. & Dwairy, M. (2003). Cultural norms versus state law in treating incest: A suggested model for Arab families. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27*, 109-123.

Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1213–1227.

Alaggia, R. (2010). An ecological analysis of child sexual abuse disclosure: Considerations for child and adolescent mental health. *Journal of Canadian Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, 19,* 32-39.

Barsalou-Verge, X., Gagnon, M., Séguin, R., & Dagenais, C. (*2015*). Current knowledge on child sexual abuse in Indigenous populations of Canada and the United States: A literature review. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, (39*), 65-82.

Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of public health*, *58*(3), 469-483.

Campis, L., Hebden-Curtis, J., & Demaso, R. (1993). Developmental differences in detection and disclosure of sexual abuse. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 32,* 920-924.

Collin-Vézina, D., De La Sablonnière-Griffin, M., Palmer, A. M., & Milne, L. (2015). A preliminary mapping of individual, relational, and social factors that impede disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 123-134.

Comas-Diaz, L. (1995). Puerto-Ricans and sexual child abuse. In L. Fontes (Ed.), *Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures* (pp. 31-67). California: Sage.

Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., & Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: Fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1035-1048.

Denov, M. (2003). To a safer place? Victims of sexual abuse by females and their disclosures to professionals. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27,* 47-61.

DeVoe, E. & Faller, K. (1999). The characteristics of disclosure among children who may have been sexually abused. *Child Maltreatment, 4,* 217-227.

Elliot, D. & Briere, J. (1994). Forensic sexual abuse evaluations of older children: Disclosures and symptomology. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law, 12,* 261-277.

Fontes, L. & Plummer, C. (2010). Culture and disclosure issues: Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse , 19*, 491-518.

Foynes, M., Platt, M., Hall, G., & Freyd, J. (2014). The impact of Asian values and victim-perpetrator closeness on the disclosure of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy, 6,* 114-141.

Futa, K., Hsu, E., & Hansen, D. (2001). Child sexual abuse in Asian American families; An examination of cultural factors that influence prevalence identification and treatment. Clinical Pyschology: Science and Practice: 25(2), 221-241.

Goodman-Brown, T.B., Edelstein, R.S., Goodman, G.S., Jones, D.P., & Gordon, D.S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 27(5),* 525–540.

Gilligan, P. & Akhtar, S. (2006). Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*, 1361-1377.

Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Duquesne University Press.

Gries, L., Goh, D., & Cavanaugh, J. (1997). Factors associated with disclosure during child sexual abuse assessment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 5,* 1-19.

Haboush, K. & Alyan, H. (2013). Who can you tell? Features of Arab culture that influence conceptualization and treatment of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22,* 499-518.

Hewitt, S. (1994). Preverbal sexual abuse: What two children report in later years. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 18,* 821-826.

Hunter, S. (2009). Beyond surviving: Gender differences in response to early experiences with adults. *Journal of Family Issues, 30,* 391-412.

Hunter, S.V. (2011). Disclosure of child sexual abuse as a life-long process: Implications for health professionals. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 32,* 159–172.

International Organization for Migration (IOM): The UN Migration Agency (2018). *World Migration Report* IOM: Switzerland. ISSN: 1561-5502.

Jensen, T., Gulbrandson, W., Mossige, S., Reichelt, S., & Tjersland, O. (2005). Reporting possible child abuse: A qualitative study on children's perspectives and the context for disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 29,* 1395-1413.

Keary, K. & Fitzpatrick, C. (1994). Children's disclosure of sexual abuse during formal investigation. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 7, 543-548.*

Leclerc, B. & Wortley, R. (2015). Predictors of victim disclosure in child sexual abuse: Additional evidence from a sample of incarcerated adult sex offenders. *Child abuse & neglect*, *43*, 104-111.

Lira, L., Koss, M., & Russo, N. (1999). Mexican American women's definition of rape and sexual abuse. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 21*, 236-265.

London, K., Bruck, M., Wright, D., & Ceci, S. (2008). Review of contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues and implications for forensic interviews. *Memory, 16,* 29-47.

Mian, M., Werhspann, W., Klajner-Diamond, H., LeBaron, D., & Winder, C. (1986). Review of 125 children 6 years of age and under who were sexually abused. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 10,* 223-229.

McElvaney, R., Greene S., & Hogan, D. (2014). Containing the secret of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27,* 1155-1175.

McEvoy, M. & Daniluk, J. (1995). Wounds to the soul: The experiences of aboriginal women survivors of sexual abuse. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, *36*(3), 221.

Nagel, D., Putnam, F., Noll, J., & Tickett, P. (1997). Disclosure patterns of sexual abuse and psychological functioning at one-year follow-up. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 21,* 137-147.

O`Leary, P. & Barber, J. (2008). Gender differences in silencing following childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 17,* 133-143.

Paine, M.L. & Hansen, D.J. (2002). Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse *Clinical Psychology Review, 2,* 271–295.

Priebe, G. & Svedin, S. (2008). Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society: An

epidemiological study of adolescents' disclosures. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 32,* 1095-1108.

Sauzier, M. (1989). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: For better or for worse. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America 12,* 455-469.

Schaeffer, P., Leventhal, J., & Gottsegen Asnes, A. (2011). Children's disclosures of child sexual abuse: Learning from direct inquiry. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 25,* 343-352.

Schonburcher, V., Maier, T., Mohler-Kuo, M., Schnyder, U., & Landolt, M. (2012). Disclosure of child sexual abuse by adolescents a qualitative in-depth study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*, 3486-3513.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999). Towards a cultural definition of rape: Dilemmas in dealing with rape victims in Palestinian society. *Women Studies International Forum, 22*, 157-173.

Sorenson, T. & Snow, B. (1991). How children tell: The process of disclosure in child sexual abuse. *Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program, 70,* 3-15.

Stoltenborgh, M., Van Ijzendoorn, M., Euser, E., & Nakermans-Kranenburg, M. (2011). A global perspective on child sexual abuse: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment, 16,* 79-101.

Summit, R. (1983). The child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 7,* 177-193.

Sawrikar, P. & Katz, I. (2017). The treatment needs of victims/survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) from ethnic minority communities: A literature review and suggestions for practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*, 166-179.

Tillman, S., Bryant-Davis, T., Smith, K., & Marks, A. (2010). Shattering silence: Barriers to disclosure African American sexual assault survivors. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse, 11,* 59-70.

Tishelman, A.C. & Fontes, L.A. (2017). Religion in CSA forensic interviews. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *63*, 120-130.

Ullman, S. (2008). Relationship to perpetrator, disclosure, social reactions and PTSD symptoms in child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 16,* 19-36.

Ungar, M., Barter, K., McConnell, S.M., Tutty, L.M., & Fairholm, J. (2009A). Patterns of abuse disclosure among youth. *Qualitative Social Work*, *8*(3), 341-356.

Willis, M. (2011). Non-disclosure of violence in Australian Indigenous communities. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, (405).

Wyatt, G. (1990). The aftermath of child sexual abuse of African American and White American women: Victims experience. *Journal of Family Violence, 5*, 61-81.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

Thesis: Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of my thesis was to explore how culture shapes CSA disclosure experiences from the perspectives of youth. I was particularly interested in understanding how culture influenced the promotion or inhibition of CSA disclosures. The objectives of this thesis were: (1) to document how culture has been studied thus far in relation to disclosure of CSA, (2) to describe how culture impacts CSA disclosure experiences from the perspectives of youth and (3) to identify and describe common elements that promote or inhibit CSA disclosures. These three objectives were pursued in order to garner new knowledge to advance the field of CSA and disclosures with the inclusion of culture in academic and clinical domains. The main gaps within the literature that the current thesis addressed: (1) the lack of attention to culture and its influence on CSA disclosure, (2) the absence of diverse populations in CSA disclosure literature and (3) the omission of the voices of youth. The goal of this thesis was to contribute to a less widely explored body of research pertaining to the impact of culture on CSA disclosures among adolescent populations.

Culture as it has been studied this far, was framed in reference to demographic categories for example, religion and ethnicity. Studies that examined the role of culture have examined disclosure using a demographical or preconceived category of ethnicity for example, Aboriginal (Barsalou-Verge, Gagnon, Séguin & Dagenais, 2015; McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995), African American (Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith & Marks, 2010; Wyatt, 1990), Arab (Abu Baker & Dwairy, 2003; Haboush & Alyan, 2013; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999), Asian (Futa, Hsu & Hansen, 2001; Foynes, Platt, Hall & Freyd, 2014; Gilligan & Akthar, 2006) South American (Comas-Diaz, 1995; Lira, Koss & Russo, 1999). Alternatively, research has grouped categories by ethnic minorities (Sawrikar & Katz, 2017) or religious groups (Harper & Perkins, 2018; Katzenstein & Fontes, 2017; Tishelman & Fontes, 2017). Although this provided some insights into the experiences of specific ethnic groups, this was a limitation because the definition of culture was reduced into a categorical framework, which did not lend to providing a rich analysis of culture that was inclusive of interactions between people and their environments and the evolution of people within their practice of culture. Thus, the role of culture and barriers in the CSA disclosure literature is considered a new and emerging field.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural psychology, defined culture in a fluid manner incorporating different structural layers and elements of the human psyche. This fluid dynamic definition was most conducive to obtaining the objectives of my thesis (Ratner, 2010). Definitions of cultural psychology that spanned three decades were presented (Shweder, 1990; Ratner, 2010). The discipline of cultural psychology is largely concerned with the interaction between the social environment and the human psyche and how they influence one another in constant reciprocity. Culture was not presented as a tangible fixed term. Rather, culture was positioned as a fluid dynamic system comprised of interactions. Looking at culture as a fluid dynamic was directly aligned to the objectives set forth in my thesis. This definition of culture allowed for flexibility in how culture was described and experienced by participants.

Furthermore, this operationalization of culture dispelled myths of homogeneity among culture, which this thesis supported. For the purposes of sampling within the study, culture had no fixed definition and participants defined culture in accordance with their understanding of the term. By not imposing a definition of culture, participants' narratives and how their understanding of "culture" impacted the process of disclosure was studied. For the purpose of analysis, culture was positioned through the lens of cultural psychology. The study did not seek to reduce culture down to a finite entity or fixed definition; but rather defined culture in accordance with the field of cultural psychology. Therefore, in keeping with the theory of cultural psychology, culture was analyzed within a framework as fluid interdependence between how individuals perceive their environment and how their environment in turn influences them (Ratner, 2010).

This theory was best suited to achieve my research goals. The thesis attempted to break free from a 'one size fits all' or categorical homogenous static definition of culture. By adopting a theory with a fluid conceptualization of culture the interview grid was much more fluid in asking participants to describe themselves and their culture.

In turn participants were able to describe their culture as multi-faceted, dynamic and evolving. This reinforced the initial argument put forth in the dissertation that the way culture is studied needs to: disregard categorization and to be more inclusive of people's attitudes,

behaviours and evolution. This way of studying culture is neither stereotypical nor does it present any form of bias against participants.

Research Methodology

Descriptive psychological phenomenology was selected as the most suitable research methodology because it aimed to uncover thick rich data to generate descriptions about layers of meaning (Giorgi, 2009). Descriptive psychological phenomenology aims to remain true to the voices of participants to describe their experience and to maintain the integrity of the participants' voices (Giorgi, 2009). This methodology was directly aligned to the research questions as this thesis aimed to both uncover how culture may play a role in the disclosure process and uncover what barriers are presented while remaining true to voices of my participants, youth, whose voices are so often absent from research. Qualitative research has tried to posit a position of validity against the rigorous scientific methodology of quantitative studies, such as creating the criterion of saturation; it has been argued one cannot quantify a subjective human experience (Giorgi, 2009 & Englander, 2012). While some methodologies in qualitative methodology argue in favour of validity criteria such as saturation, this particular method chooses not to do so as it influences the final analysis in any meaningful way (Giorgi, 2009). Giorgi (2009) argued that attempting to measure or quantify a lived experience is not the best way to access a lived experience. Rather validity is based upon the rigorous use of the method in combination with the meaning of the evidence. This premise aligns with the aim of the inquiry which is to unpack the lived experience of how culture influences CSA disclosure.

Another factor considered in qualitative research is the number of interviews conducted and member checking to confirm the reliability of findings. The thesis used a singular interview method. There were many pragmatic reasons for the use of the singular interview in phenomenological research: time, as more data did not equate to richer data, the potential for changing the initial data and the potential for exploitation more particularly sensitive subject matter (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). For the purposes of my research, namely, culture and CSA disclosures, one interview was used to avoid causing potentially unnecessary trauma from having participants repeat their experiences.

This methodology was best suited to achieve the research goals of obtaining a rich and descriptive account of the influence of culture and CSA disclosure. Participants were able to

describe both their culture and CSA experience in their own words, with their own meaning attributed to it which was left unaltered by the researcher until they were grouped in themes. This methodology remained truest to the voice of the youth participants' who are so often absent from the CSA disclosure literature.

State of Knowledge CSA and Disclosure and Thesis Findings

Indeed, there have been several ground-breaking theoretical models, which have positioned CSA disclosure as a process, namely, Sorenson and Snow (1991), Alaggia (2004), Hunter (2011), McElvaney, Greene and Hogan (2014) and Staller and Nelson-Gardell (2005). However, among these theoretical models there were no direct statements or inclusions about culture. Therefore, in order to determine if CSA disclosure was a homogenous experience, the thesis author argued more attention should be paid to the study of culture within the CSA disclosure literature. Given the diverse North American population and that self-reported accounts of CSA are much higher than those reported to authorities, there was a strong argument made that underreporting CSA may be associated within culture in some capacity. This thesis confirmed the findings of the above-mentioned authors. Despite the role of culture, disclosure remained a process, with delay between the CSA experience.

The CSA disclosure literature identified several barriers to the disclosure process that can be grouped into different categories including characteristics of the child (age and gender) (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Mian et al., 1986; Nagel et al., 1999; Paine & Hanson, 2002; Priebe & Svedin, 2008; Sorenson & Snow, 1991), the nature of abuse (severity and duration) (Arata, 1998, DeVeo & Faller, 1999; Sauzier 1989) the relationship with the perpetrator and perceived barriers at the individual and familial levels and systemic barriers (Alaggia & Kirshenbaum, 2005; Alaggia, 2004; Collin-Vezina et al., 2015; Denov 2003).

Some of these research findings were neither confirmed nor denied by the thesis. For example, participants did not speak about the role of age in their CSA disclosure. Gender could not compare and be contrasted as all participants were female. The nature and the severity of abuse in reference to the disclosure process did not arise.

Some findings were supported by the thesis. Overarching systemic barriers do indeed exist as per Alaggia (2010) and Collin-Vezina and associates (2015). However, this thesis looked through a lens of culture rendering slightly different results. Looking at the systematic review,

the first finding was that search results yielded categorical descriptors of "culture" amongst participants on the basis of ethnicity and religion. Ethnic and racial categorizations associated with the culture examined included the categorical labels: Aboriginal, African American, Arabs/Palestinians intertwined with the Islamic faith, Asians, South Americans, and Caucasians. Some articles more broadly defined religious and ethnic groups. The second major finding was that disclosure barriers transcended the ethnic and racial categorization and nine themes emerged: the code of silence, cultural shame, fear of the police or the justice system, family preservation, historical oppression and trauma, lack of resources, protection of the offender, fear of retribution and gender roles.

Agreement emerged in the literature that delayed disclosure was directly tied to the victim's relationship with the perpetrator (London et al., 2008). While this thesis could not confirm that delay was tied to the person who victimized the participants, the thesis did confirm that disclosure is a delayed process. The findings largely support the emerging scholarship, which positions disclosure as a process. Participants' time delay in relation to disclosure ranged from within 24 hours to 13 years. The argument was put forth that those who disclosed without delay still disclosed as a process as each participant disclosed over a number of years to a number of different people. Participants each told a minimum of four people and a maximum of ten people about their childhood sexual abuse experience. Furthermore, the process of ongoing telling ranged from two years to seven years.

The individual thematic barriers were also reviewed. Victims commonly minimized their experience, did not fully understand it, repressed the memory and expressed feelings of guilt, general fear, shame, fear of disbelief and self-blame (Alaggia 2004; Crisma et al., 2004, Denov, 2003; Hunter 2009). These barriers were supported by the participants accounts of reasons for non-disclosure.

New and Innovative Findings

The thesis demonstrated that participants defined culture as ethnicity, religion, belief systems and one's environment. This dispelled myths of homogeneity among culture as it has been studied in CSA literature thus far. Many participants discussed the role of religious beliefs in the disclosure process, such as judgment, blame, and female oppression as contributing factors to their disclosure. Among Caucasian participants they had a harder time describing culture and

it was speculated this was because they were part of the dominant ethnic group in Canadian society. Some cultural facets served as facilitators to disclosure, including positive spiritual beliefs, a perceived support system and knowledge of CSA before the occurrence.

A notable but unexpected finding was that participants shifted their cultural beliefs from their childhood to the present as a direct result of CSA. What was of particular interest in the findings from this study is that many participants abandoned or adopted new culture after having been sexually abused. This could be a result of the cultural implications associated with having been victimized or in some instances no longer engaging in belief systems, which perpetuated their victimization. This warrants further investigation as this was not part of the primary objective of the study but rather could speak to the healing experience of victims. This unexpected yet salient finding could be attributed to the methodology, whereby participants were allowed to freely express their culture and how it shifted over time.

There were two major findings regarding cultural barriers to disclosure, some common cultural barriers and some unique barriers to specific participants. Common cultural barriers presented by participants consistent with the findings of the systemic review, included: lack of sexual education, lack of support, negative interactions with authority, and intrapersonal barriers. Unique barriers as expressed by participants included: socioeconomic status, violent neighbourhoods, keeping family secrecy, racial profiling, the devaluation of women, sexual education, not receiving support from youth protection services, transiency, fear of homicide, beliefs in the need for self-preservation, discrimination, history of child abuse, loss of face and fear of attention from disclosure.

What emerged from this study was that some barriers were homogenous across cultures; however, other barriers were unique in the manner through which an individual experienced their culture. This finding was consistent with the basic premises of how cultural psychology views culture as an interactive entity. This calls for more research in the domain of belief systems and CSA. This research demonstrated that culture surpasses categorical labelling and that belief systems play a pertinent role in CSA disclosure.

Future Directions

Academic progress has been made, by moving away from homogenous experiences of victimizations, to include the experiences of victims of various cultures. This departure, moving away from homogenous victimization experiences and disclosures allows for researchers and clinicians alike to be sensitive to understanding the complex cultural barriers victims of CSA encounter. It is imperative if possible, that research moves away from this direction of homogeneity among groups. People do not fit neatly into boxes based on their ethno-racial or religious status. Each individual who must disclose CSA must be given a voice to describe their understanding their culture and all facets that make up their identity.

The first manuscript identified two particular findings of interest. The first was how the term culture had been used and studied and conflated with other terms in the CSA disclosure literature. Searching for articles about culture rendered results conflating the use of the term culture with ethno-racial status of religious belief systems. This was problematic when attempting to unpack the meanings of culture without a monolithic static view point. Culture needs to be studied more robustly, looking at culture as fluid and changing and note reflective of a homogenous group experience.

The second major findings was that some barriers transcend cultural labels. This finding is innovative that the barriers are overarching but validated barriers cited in previous scholarly works. However, the meaning or way the barriers were interpreted culturally can be different at times. For example, the generic barrier fear of the family could range from disbelief to honor killing from a cultural standpoint. There needs to be a new way to study culture and the argument has also been forth that CSA must also be studied in a more standard fashion given differences among cultures.

The second manuscript concluded the study sets itself apart from previous studies that have examined CSA and disclosure as there was no fixed definition of culture. Narratives of culture were inclusive of ethnicity, religion, family belief systems, one's communal environment and the rules and manners in which one was raised, consistent with a lens of cultural psychology. This highlights the importance of studying culture with a more open mindsight transcending labels and categorizations.

The findings of this study confirmed previous research which concluded disclosure is a process, the findings also confirmed disclosure is often associated with a delay between the CSA and the disclosure experience. Research to date has demonstrated disclosure is a process and perhaps it's time to let go of the notion that disclosure occurs as an event. Disclosure is often delayed and takes place over numerous years.

Clinicians and researchers alike need to be mindful that the legal and judicial systems do not reflect disclosure as a process in their proceedings with victims of CSA. There needs to be continuous advocacy to argue for more up to date literature to be brought forth to update legislative policies and practices.

A new and innovative finding was that participants changed or shifted their beliefs in accordance with having experienced CSA. More research is needed to confirm these findings so they can be generalized to a larger population. However, this is an indicator that when interviewing potential victims of CSA, the present beliefs and mannerisms the client with whom one is working holds might have drastically shifted as a result of trauma.

The third manuscript examined how participants' conceptualizations of culture acted as a barrier or facilitator for CSA disclosure. Participants defined culture in a fluid fashion with numerous components similar to the manner culture is viewed in cultural psychology. This reinforces the notion that homogenous labels are not conducive to further understanding the barriers of CSA disclosure a key premise to this thesis.

The findings of the study either confirmed or supported new types of barriers of disclosure to CSA. Cultural themes that confirmed previous research and transcended across groups as barriers to disclosure included: individual beliefs about CSA, the level of knowledge one had about CSA prior to their victimization, individual perceptions about the police and judicial system and notions of support from individuals' families as well the community at large. While other cultural barriers that were more unique in nature included: socioeconomic status, violent neighbourhoods, keeping family secrecy, racial profiling, the devaluation of women, sexual education, not receiving support from youth protection services, transiency, fear of homicide, beliefs in taking care of oneself, discrimination, history of child abuse, loss of face and fear of attention from CSA disclosure.

In conclusion this thesis contends, that if scholarly work, policies, and social work practice are to move forward the 21st century, more research on the implication of culture on the CSA experience and CSA disclosure needs to be undertaken and with a more holistic approach to culture, understanding that culture extends beyond categorical labels and is inclusive of belief systems which are fluid. Furthermore, the voices of youth should continue to be studied as they lend a unique perspective often omitted from the CSA literature.

Thesis References

Abu-Baker, K. (2013). Arab parents reactions to child sexual abuse: A review of clinical records. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22*, 52-71.

Abu-Baker, K. & Dwairy, M. (2003). Cultural norms versus state law in treating incest: A suggested model for Arab families. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27*, 109-123.

Alaggia, R. (2002). Cultural and religious influences in maternal response to intrafamilial child sexual abuse: Charting new territory for research and treatment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *10*(2), 41-60.

Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1213–1227.

Alaggia, R. (2005). Disclosing the trauma of child sexual abuse: A gender analysis. *Journal of Loss and Trauma: International Perspectives on Stress and Coping, 10,* 453-470.

Alaggia, R. (2010). An ecological analysis of child sexual abuse disclosure: Considerations for child and adolescent mental health. *Journal of Canadian Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, 19,* 32-39.

Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & Lateef, R. (2017). Facilitators and Barriers to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Disclosures: A Research Update (2000–2016). *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 1524838017697312.

Alaggia, R. & Millington, G. (2008). Male child sexual abuse: A phenomenology of betrayal. *Clinical Social Work, 36,* 265-275.

Alaggia, R. & Kirshenbaum, S. (2005). Speaking the unspeakable: Exploring the impact of family dynamics on child sexual abuse disclosures. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 86,* 227-234.

Arata, C. (1998). To tell or not to tell: Current functioning of child sexual abuse survivors who disclosed their victimization. *Child Maltreatment, 3,* 63-71.

Back, S. & Lips, H. (1998). Child sexual abuse: Victim age, victim gender and observed gender as factors contributing to attributions of responsibility. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 22,* 1239-1252.

Bala, N.P., Hornick, J., & Vogl, R. (1991). *Canadian child welfare law: Children, families and the State*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Pub

Barsalou-Verge, X., Gagnon, M., Séguin, R., & Dagenais, C. (*2015*). Current knowledge on child sexual abuse in Indigenous populations of Canada and the United States: A literature review. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, (39*) 65-82.

Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of public health*, *58*(3), 469-483.

Benson, C. (2001). Introduction. In Benson, C. (Ed). *The Cultural Psychology of Self: Place Morality and Art in The Human Worlds* London: Routledge.

Black Lives Matter (2018). Retrieved from: https://blacklivesmatter.com

Bogo, M. (2018). *Social work practice: Integrating concepts, processes, and skills*. Columbia University Press.

Bradley, A.R. & Wood, J.M. (1996). How do children tell? The disclosure process in child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 20,* 881–891.

Brazelton, J.F. (2015). The secret storm: Exploring the disclosure process of African American women survivors of CSA across the life course. *Traumatology*, *21*(3), 181. .

Campis, L., Hebden-Curtis, J., & Demaso, R. (1993). Developmental differences in detection and disclosure of sexual abuse. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 32,* 920-924.

Chaudoir, S.R. & Fisher, J.D. (2010). The disclosure processes model: understanding disclosure decision making and post disclosure outcomes among people living with a concealable stigmatized identity. *Psychological bulletin*, *136*(2), 236.

Chen, J.Q., Dunne, M.P., & Han, P. (2004). CSA in China: A study of adolescents in four provinces. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1171-1186.

CNN, (2016). What Donald Trump has said about Mexico and vice versa. Retrieved from: https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/31/politics/donald-trump-mexico-statements/index.html

Collins, C., O'Neil-Arana, M., Fontes, L., & Ossege, J. (2014). Catholicism and childhood sexual abuse: Women's coping and psychotherapy. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse.*

Collin-Vézina, D., Daigneault, I., & Hébert, M. (2015). Lessons Learned from Child Sexual Abuse Research: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Preventive Strategies (continued). In *The Societal Burden of Child Abuse: Long-Term Mental Health and Behavioral Consequences* (pp. 315-320). Apple Academic Press.

Collin-Vézina, D., De La Sablonnière-Griffin, M., Palmer, A. M., & Milne, L. (2015). A preliminary mapping of individual, relational, and social factors that impede disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 123-134.

Collin-Vézina, D., Dion, J., & Trocmé, N. (2009). Sexual abuse in Canadian Aboriginal communities: A broad review of conflicting evidence. *Pimatisiwin: A journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous community health*, *7*(1), 27-47.

Comas-Diaz, L. (1995). Puerto-Ricans and sexual child abuse. In L. Fontes (Ed.), *Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures* (pp. 31-67). California: Sage.

Cotter, A. & Beaupré, P. (2014). Sexual offences against children and youth in Canada. Statistics Canada 85-002-X ISSN 1209-6393.

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. New York: Sage publications.

Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., & Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: Fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28,* 1035-1048.

Culture [Def. 1]. (n.d.). Merriam-Webster Online. In Merriam-Webster. Retrieved January 2, 2015, from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture.

Daigneault, I., Collin-Vézina, D., & Hébert, M. (2012). Prevalence and prevention of child and adolescent sexual assault. *Integrating Science and Practice, 2,* 20-23.

D'Andrade, R. (1990). Some propositions about the relations between culture and human cognition. In Stigler, J., Shweder, R., & Herdt, G. (Eds). Cultural Psychology Essays on Comparative Human Development (pp.65-130). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dean, R. (2001). The myth of cross-cultural competence. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, *82*(6), 623-630.

Denov, M. (2003). To a safer place? Victims of sexual abuse by females and their disclosures to professionals. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27,* 47-61.

DeVoe, E. & Faller, K. (1999). The characteristics of disclosure among children who may have been sexually abused. *Child Maltreatment, 4,* 217-227.

Dorahy, M. & Clearwater, K. (2012). Shame and guilt in men exposed to childhood sexual abuse: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 21,* 155-175.

Easton, S.D. (2013). Disclosure of child sexual abuse among adult male survivors. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *41*(4), 344-355.

Easton, S.D., Saltzman, L.Y., & Willis, D.G. (2014). Would you tell under circumstances like that? Barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse for men. *Men & Masculinity, Advance Online.*

Elliot, D. & Briere, J. (1994). Forensic sexual abuse evaluations of older children: Disclosures and symptomology. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law, 12,* 261-277.

Embrick, D. (2015). Two nations revisited: The Lynching of Black and Brown bodies, police brutality and racial control in 'post racial' Amerikka. *Critical Sociology, 41,* 835-843.

Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, *43*(1), 13-35.

ESS (2018). Migrant and migrant studies. ISSN: 2443-8219
Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-

Faller, K., Cordisco-Steele, D., & Nelson-Gardell, N. (2010). Allegations of sexual abuse of a child: What to do when a single forensic interview isn't enough. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19,* 572-589.

Faller, K. & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2005). Extended evaluation in cases of child sexual abuse: How many sessions are sufficient? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19,* 648-669.

Fontes, L. & Plummer, C. (2010). Culture and disclosure issues: Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*, 491-518.

Foster, J.M. & Hagedorn, W.B. (2014). Through the eyes of the wounded: A narrative analysis of children's sexual abuse experiences and recovery process. *Journal of child sexual Abuse*, *23*(5), 538-557.

Foynes, M., Platt, M., Hall, G., & Freyd, J. (2014). The impact of Asian values and victim-perpetrator closeness on the disclosure of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy, 6,* 114-141.

Futa, K., Hsu, E., & Hansen, D. (2001). Child sexual abuse in Asian American families: An examination of cultural facts that influence prevalence in identification and treatment. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 8, 189-207.

Gagnier, C. & Collin-Vézina, D. (2016). The disclosure experiences of male child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of child sexual abuse*, *25*(2), 221-241.

Gilligan, P. & Akhtar, S. (2006). Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*, 1361-1377.

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*, *28*(2), 235-260.

Giorgi, A. (2002). The question of validity in qualitative research. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*, *33*(1), 1-18.

Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A. (2014). An affirmation of the phenomenological psychological descriptive method: A response to Rennie (2012). *Psychological Methods, 19,* 542-551.

Giorgi, A. (2017) Personal Correspondence.

Goodman-Brown, T.B., Edelstein, R.S., Goodman, G.S., Jones, D.P., & Gordon, D.S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 27(5),* 525–540.

Green, K. (1996). Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities: An Aboriginal Perspective. Ottawa, ON: National Clearinghouse on Family Violence.

Gries, L., Goh, D., & Cavanaugh, J. (1997). Factors associated with disclosure during child sexual abuse assessment. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 5,* 1-19.

Grondin, A. (2011) Thinking outside specious boxes: constructionist and post-structuralists readings of child sexual abuse. *Sex Education*, 11, 234-254.

Haboush, K. & Alyan, H. (2013). Who can you tell? Features of Arab culture that influence conceptualization and treatment of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22,* 499-518.

Harper, C.A. & Perkins, C. (2018). Reporting CSA within religious settings: challenges and future directions. *Child abuse review*, *27*(1), 30-41.

Hébert, M., Tourigny, M., Cyr, M., McDuff, P., & Joly, J. (2009). Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and timing of disclosure in a representative sample of adults from Quebec. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry/La Revue canadienne de psychiatrie*, 54,631-636.

Hershkowitz, I., Lanes, O., & Lamb, M.E. (2007). Exploring the disclosure of child sexual abuse with alleged victims and their parents. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *31*(2), 111-123.

Hewitt, S. (1994). Preverbal sexual abuse: What two children report in later years. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 18,* 821-826.

Hunter, S. (2009). Beyond surviving: Gender differences in response to early experiences with adults. *Journal of Family Issues, 30,* 391-412.

Hunter, S.V. (2011). Disclosure of child sexual abuse as a life-long process: Implications for health professionals. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 32,* 159–172.

Husserl, E. (1965/1913). Ideas. *Introduction to pure phenomenology, book 1.* W.R.B. Gibson [Trans]. New York: Collier Books.

Husserl, E. (1977). *Phenomenological Psychology*. J Scanlon [Trans.]. New York: Springer.

International Organization for Migration (IOM): The UN Migration Agency (2018). *World Migration Report* IOM: Switzerland. ISSN: 1561-5502.

Jensen, T., Gulbrandson, W., Mossige, S., Reichelt, S., & Tjersland, O. (2005). Reporting possible child abuse: A qualitative study on children's perspectives and the context for disclosure. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 29,* 1395-1413.

Kanukollu,S. & Mahalingam, R. (2011). The idealized cultural identities model on help seeking and child sexual abuse: A conceptual model for contextualizing perceptions and experiences of South Asian Americans. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 20*, 218-243.

Katzenstein, D. & Fontes, P. (2017). Two silenced: The underreporting of child sexual abuse in orthodox Jewish communities. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse,* 26,6.

Keary, K. & Fitzpatrick, C. (1994). Children's disclosure of sexual abuse during formal investigation. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 7, 543-548.*

La Rooy, D., Brubacher, S.P., Aromäki-Stratos, A., Cyr, M., Hershkowitz, I., Korkman, J., & Stewart, H. (2015). The NICHD protocol: a review of an internationally-used evidence-based tool for training child forensic interviewers. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice, 1(2),* 76-89.

Laird, J. (2000). Theorizing culture: Narrative ideas and practice principles. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, *11*(4), 99-114.

Lawson, L. & Chaffin, M. (1992). False negatives in sexual abuse disclosure interviews: Incidence and influence of caretaker's belief in abuse in cases of accidental abuse discovery by diagnosis of STD. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *7*(4), 532-542.

Lebowitz, L. & Roth, S. (1994). "I felt like a slut": The cultural context and women's response to being raped. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 7*, 363-390.

Leclerc, B. & Wortley, R. (2015). Predictors of victim disclosure in child sexual abuse: Additional evidence from a sample of incarcerated adult sex offenders. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *43*, 104-111.

Leonard, E. (1996). A social exchange explanation for the child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*, 107-117.

Lira, L., Koss, M., & Russo, N. (1999). Mexican American women's definition of rape and sexual abuse. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 21*, 236-265.

Ligero, D., Fassinger, F., McCauley, M., & Moore, J. (2009). Childhood sexual abuse, culture and coping: A qualitative study of Latinas. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 33*, 67-80.

London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S.J., & Shuman, D.W. (2005). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *11*(1), 194.

London, K., Bruck, M., Wright, D., & Ceci, S. (2008). Review of contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues and implications for forensic interviews. *Memory, 16,* 29-47.

MacMillan, H.L., Tanaka, M., Duku, E., Vaillancourt, T., & Boyle, M.H. (2013). Child physical and sexual abuse in a community sample of young adults: Results from the Ontario Child Health Study. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *37*(1), 14-21.

Mathews, B., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2019). Child Sexual Abuse: Toward a Conceptual Model and Definition. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *20*(2), 131–148

McEvoy, M. & Daniluk, J. (1995). Wounds to the soul: The experiences of aboriginal women survivors of sexual abuse. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, *36*(3), 221.

McConnell-Henry, T., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2011). Member checking and Heideggerian phenomenology: a redundant component. *Nurse researcher*, *18*(2).

Malloy, L., Brubacher, S., & Lamb, M. (2011). Expected consequences of disclosure revealed in investigative interviews with suspected victims of child sexual abuse. *Applied Developmental Science, 15,* 8-19.

Malloy, M., Brubacher, S., & Lamb, M. (2013). Because she's the one who listens: Children discuss disclosure recipients in forensic interviews. *Child Maltreatment, 18,* 245-251.

Malloy, L.C. & Lyon, T.D. (2006). Caregiver support and child sexual abuse: Why does it matter? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *15*(4), 97-103.

Mathews, B. & Collin-Vézina, D. (2017). Child sexual abuse: Toward a conceptual model and definition. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. Advance online publication, 1-18. doi: 10.1177/1524838017738726.

Markus, H. and Hamedani, H. (2006). Sociocultural psychology: The dynamic interdependence among self systems and social systems. In Kitayam, S. & Cohen, D. (Eds). *The Handbook of Cultural Psychology* (pp.3-40). New York: Oxford

McElvaney, R., Greene S., & Hogan, D. (2014). Containing the secret of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27,* 1155-1175.

McEvoy, M. & Daniluk, J. (1995). Wounds to the soul: The experiences of aboriginal women survivors of sexual abuse. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, *36*(3), 221.

Merleau-Ponty (1996). *Phenomenology of Perception.* C. Smith [Trans]. New York: Springer.

Mian, M., Werhspann, W., Klajner-Diamond, H., LeBaron, D., & Winder, C. (1986). Review of 125 children 6 years of age and under who were sexually abused. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 10,* 223-229.

Nagel, D., Putnam, F., Noll, J., & Tickett, P. (1997). Disclosure patterns of sexual abuse and psychological functioning at one-year follow-up. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 21,* 137-147.

Ohlheiser, Abby (October 19th 2017). The women behind "Me Too: Knew the power of the phrase when she created it – 10 years ago. *The Washington Post.*

O`Leary, P. & Barber, J. (2008). Gender differences in silencing following childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 17,* 133-143.

Ontario Children and Family Services Act (1990). Retrieved from the government of Ontario website: https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c11

Ontario Child and Family Services Act. (2017). Retrieved from: https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c11.

Paine, M.L. & Hansen, D.J. (2002). Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse *Clinical Psychology Review, 2,* 271–295.

Polkinghorne, D.E. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology (pp. 41-60). Springer US.

Popay, J., Rogers, A., & Williams, G. (1998). Rationale and standards for the systematic review of qualitative literature in health services research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 8(3), 341-351.

Priebe, G. & Svedin, S. (2008). Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society: An epidemiological study of adolescent disclosures. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 32,* 1095-1108.

Prisma, (2009). Prisma transparent reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analysis. Retrieved from: http://www.prisma-statement.org.

Ratner, C. (2010). General principles in cultural psychology. In Ratner, C. (Ed). *Macro Cultural Psychology: A philosophy of Mind* (pp.89-139). New York: Oxford.

Resnicoff, S. (2012). Jewish law and the tragedy of sexual abuse of children – The dilemma within the orthodox Jewish Community. *Rutgers Journal of Law and Religion, 13,* 282-362.

Samari, G. (2016). Islamophia and public health in the United States. *Perspectives from the social sciences, 106,* 1920-1925.

Sawrikar, P. & Katz, I. (2017). The treatment needs of victims/survivors of CSA (CSA) from ethnic minority communities: A literature review and suggestions for practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*, 166-179.

Sauzier, M. (1989). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: For better or for worse. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America 12,* 455-469.

Schaeffer, P., Leventhal, J., & Gottsegen Asnes, A. (2011). Children's disclosures of child sexual abuse: Learning from direct inquiry. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 25,* 343-352.

Schonburcher, V., Maier, T., Mohler-Kuo, M., Schnyder, U., & Landolt, M. (2012). Disclosure of child sexual abuse by adolescents a qualitative in-depth study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*, 3486-3513.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999). Towards a cultural definition of rape: Dilemmas in dealing with rape victims in Palestinian society. *Women Studies International Forum, 22*, 157-173.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (1999A). The politics of disclosing female sexual abuse: A case study of Palestinian society. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 23*, 1275-1293.

Sorenson, T. & Snow, B. (1991). How children tell: The process of disclosure in child sexual abuse. *Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program, 70,* 3-15.

Sorsoli, L., Kia-Keating, M., & Grossman, F. (2008). I keep that hush-hush: Male survivors of sexual abuse and the challenges of disclosure. *Journal of Counselling Psychology. 55, 333-345.*

Staller, K.M. & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2005). "A burden in your heart": Lessons of disclosure from female preadolescent and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *29*(12), 1415-1432.

Statistics Canada (2011). Immigration and ethnocultural diversity in Canada. (Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm

Statistics Canada (2016). Ethnic and cultural origins of Canadians: A portrait of a rich heritage. Retirved from: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016016/98-200-x2016016-eng.cfm

Stigler, J.W., Shweder, R.A., & Herdt, G. (Eds.). (1990). Cultural psychology: Essays on

comparative human development. New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press.

Stoltenborgh, M., Van Ijzendoorn, M., Euser, E., & Nakermans-Kranenburg, M. (2011). A global perspective on child sexual abuse: Meta-analysis of prevalence around the world. *Child Maltreatment, 16,* 79-101.

Summit, R. (1983). The child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 7,* 177-193.

Summit, R.C. (1993). Abuse of the child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *1*(4), 153-164.

Sawrikar, P. & Katz, I. (2017). The treatment needs of victims/survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) from ethnic minority communities: A literature review and suggestions for practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *79*, 166-179.

Take Back the Night (2018). Retrieved from: https://takebackthenight.org.

Tishelman, A.C. & Fontes, L.A. (2017). Religion in CSA forensic interviews. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *63*, 120-130.

Tillman, S., Bryant-Davis, T., Smith, K., & Marks, A. (2010). Shattering silence: Barriers to disclosure African American sexual assault survivors. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse, 11,* 59-70.

Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Sinha, V., Black, T., Fast, E., & Weightman, P. (2010). *Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect, 2008.* Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada.

Tyagi, S.V. & Smita,V. (1999). Tell it like it is: Incest disclosure and women of color. *Canadian Women Studies,* 19, 3.

Tyagi, S.V. (2002). Incest and women of color: A study of experiences and disclosure. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *10*(2), 17-39.

Ullman, S. (2008). Relationship to perpetrator, disclosure, social reactions and PTSD symptoms in child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 16,* 19-36.

United States Census Bureau. (2017). Population Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217#viewtop.

Ungar, M., Barter, K., McConnell, S.M., Tutty, L.M., & Fairholm, J. (2009A). Patterns of abuse disclosure among youth. *Qualitative Social Work*, *8*(3), 341-356.

Ungar, M., Tutty, L.M., McConnell, S., Barter, K., & Fairholm, J. (2009B). What Canadian youth tell us about disclosing abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *33*(10), 699-708.

Walsh, W., Cross, T., & Jones, L. (2012). Do parents blame or doubt their child more when sexually abused by adolescents versus adults? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27,*453-470.

Willis, M. (2011). Non-disclosure of violence in Australian Indigenous communities. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, (405).

Wyatt, G. (1990). The aftermath of child sexual abuse of African American and White American women: Victims experience. *Journal of Family Violence, 5*, 61-81.

Wyatt, G.E., Loeb, T.B., Solis, B., & Carmona, J.V. (1999). The prevalence and circumstances of child sexual abuse: Change across a decade. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 23,* 45-60.

Xiao, H. & Smith-Price, J. (2015). Disclosure of child abuse: The Case of Pacific Islanders. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 24,* 4.