

# 12th ISPCAN European Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

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JanusCentret

# The Ecological Perspective

- It is not possible to separate an individual and his environment
- An individual develops within the context of his environment and cannot be understood apart from this
- Changes within the environment will affect the individual as the individual affects his environment



# Clinical activity in the JanusCentre

- Psychological assessment of children and adolescents with sexually abusive behaviour (aged 4-18)
- Treatment of children and adolescents (group or individual therapy)
- Coordinative meetings with Social Service System/social case workers and other involved professionals
- Mediation (restorative meetings between victim and offender, and their families)
- Parents Group
- Supervision and counselling for professionals
- Teaching and lecturing in Denmark & abroad



# Assessment

- Psychological assessments: WISC IV, Rorschach, TOVA (screening for ADHD)
- AIM: Structured tool for assessing the risk of recidivism (further sexually abusive behaviour). based on an assessment of the relative level of dynamic and static risk and protective factors, both personal and contextual
- Clinical interview (3 hours); self-reporting
- Parent interviews
- Other information sources



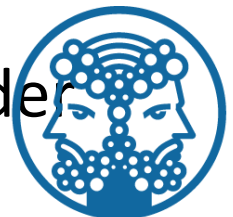
# Treatment

- Psychotherapeutic treatment
- Primarily group therapy, 20 groups so far
- Group therapy offered to specific groups, (Autism spectrum, intellectually disabled)
- Individual psychotherapy
- Parents group (counselling)
- Parents and family therapy/dialogues



# Data From the Danish Sample 2003-2011

- Approx 200 children/adolescents with sexually harmful behaviour (4-18 years old)
- Approx 320 victims
- Relationships, gender, age, residence, data about the abuse
- Information about the parents
- Psychological profile from the psychological examinations of all children/adolescents referred to the Centre
- Psychological treatment; group therapy
- Mediations: Meeting between victim and offender



# What Do We Know About Children/Adolescents With Sexually Harmful Behavior?

- 30-35 % of all sexual assaults are reported to be committed by young persons under 18 years
- Approx 25 % have been victims of sexual abuse themselves (Children under 12 years are twice as likely to have been S/A themselves)
- Approx 60-80 % have been victims of or witnessed domestic violence.
- Many have learning difficulties and other neuro-psychiatric disorders like ADHD or Autism
- ADHD is assumed to be an independent risk factor (2/3 in the Danish sample)



# What do we know?

## Cont.

- Victim and offender know each other. In the Danish sample in nearly all of the cases: siblings, school mates, children at out-of-home placements etc
- More than 30 % of the victims are boys. In the Danish sample the victims are almost equally shared among the two genders
- Recidivism studies vary from 7-14 %. The vast majority do not go on to become adult sex offenders
- Female abusers/girls: account for a significant minority. They have more frequent victimisation issues (abuse history); 10% in the danish sample





# What Do We Know?.

- "Peak" is at 12-15 years of age (high risk)
- Most have 1 victim, but some has more victims
- The abuse takes place at the home of the victims or the offender (often siblings), at school, at out-of-home placement, etc.
- Intellectual disability/retardation seems to be an *independent* risk factor



# Most important background factors

- Neglect or maltreatment (around 80%)
- Victim of or witness to violence in the family (60-80%)
- Victim of sexual abuse (25%, below 12y 50%)
- Poor level of emotional and language development
- Lack of social competences
- Low impulse control
- Lack of empathy
- Intellectual impairment
- Disorders of attention, concentration and hyperactivity (ADHD)
- Autism-spectrum disorders

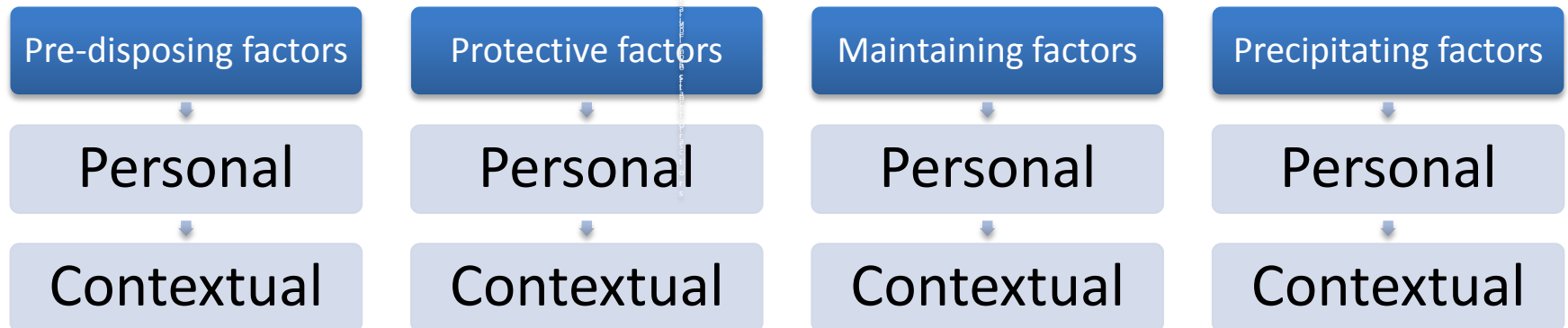
# Background factors

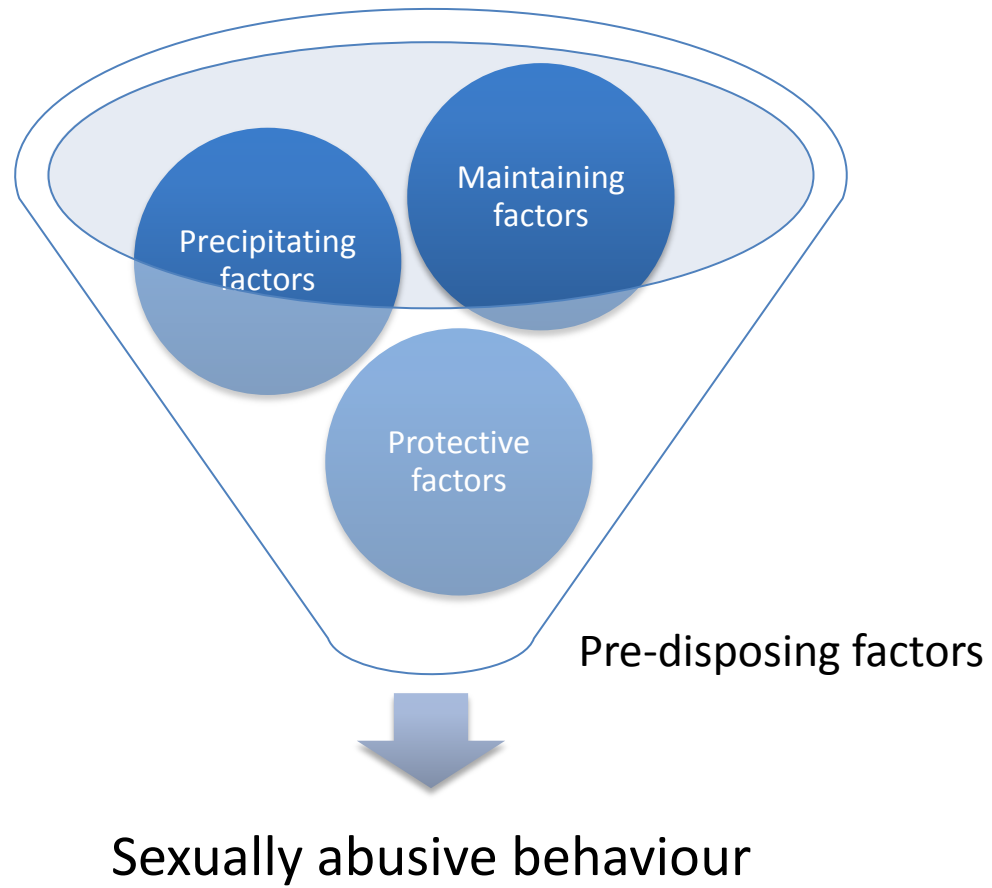
- Loneliness
- Experiences of interpersonal / social failure
- Problems in school
- Learning difficulties
- Peer group difficulties
- Rigid coping strategies
- Lack of - or distorted - knowledge of sexuality

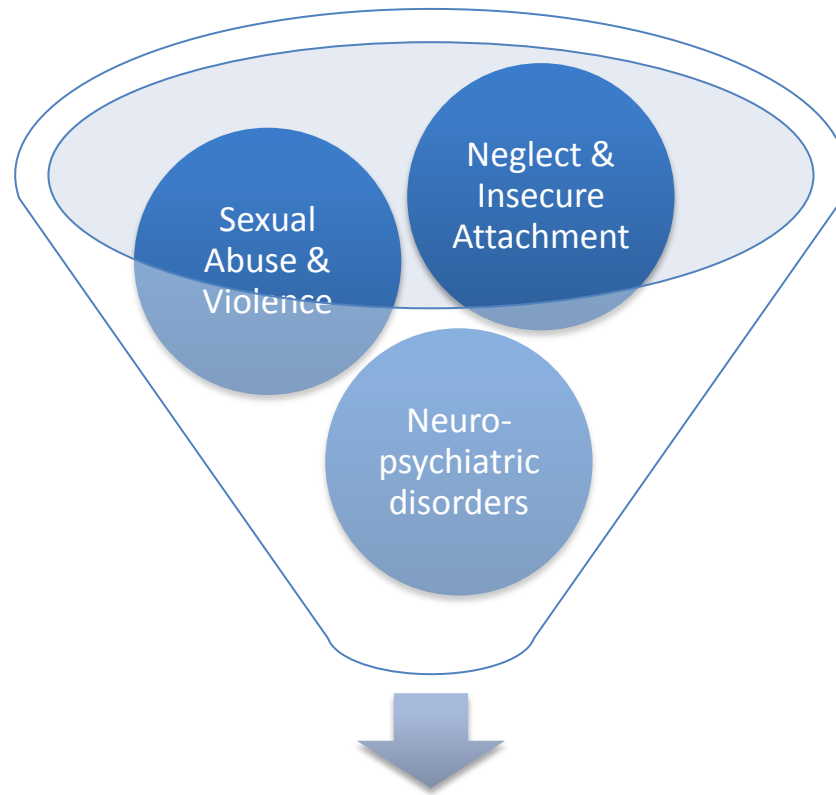
# Background factors

- Are often both victim and perpetrator of sexual abuse
- Dysfunctional family dynamics
- Low self esteem
- Poor recognition of motives behind - and consequences of - the sexual abuse
- Limited problem-solving strategies

# Alan Carr's model of risk factors (4Ps model, Carr 2006)







Sexually abusive behaviour