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Knowledge and Behavioral Impact of Adult Participation in Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Evaluation of the Protecting God's Children Program

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Running Head: Impact of PGC Adult CSA Prevention Training

Keywords: child sexual abuse, evaluation, intervention, adult prevention training, abuse knowledge, prevention behavior, sexual offending

Abstract:

Child sexual abuse (CSA) continues to be a problem with long-term implications for individuals and for society. One method used to combat CSA is training parents and teachers to recognize and respond to warning signs. This article presents findings from an evaluation of a popular adult training program (Protecting God's Children) used in Catholic institutions including schools, churches and social service agencies. The study explores knowledge and behavior change based on pretest/posttest questionnaires administered to over 500 adults and follow-up questionnaires sent six months after the training. The participants in the training were compared to a control group of adults who did not participate in the program. The results indicate that participants arrive at the training with fairly high rates of preexisting knowledge but that the program increases knowledge across demographic groups. Follow-up surveys suggest that the new knowledge is retained over six months. The study indicates that the program is associated with an increase in participants talking to their own children about CSA. Participants also report sharing information with other adults and monitoring their own and others' behavior around children more closely.

Introduction

Repeated revelations of child sexual abuse (CSA) in religious, civic, and educational institutions have encouraged the use of new safeguards to protect children. Some of these solutions, like required background checks, aim to keep offenders from working with children. Other solutions are directed toward children and the adults in their lives. For example, there are many programs that train children to resist or report potential abuse. Although less common, there are also programs that educate adults about CSA and teach them ways to protect children in their care. Often these programs are designed for those seeking to work or volunteer with children, but some social service agencies also provide training programs for their clients and there are a number of online training programs available to individuals and groups.

There are many reasons to believe that training parents, teachers, and other adults can help reduce child sexual abuse. For example, in a recent review of the literature, Mendelson and Letourneau (2015) found that parents can be taught to discuss sexual topics in an open and healthy way with children. Parent-based interventions also appear to be effective in reducing other kinds of abuse like physical maltreatment (Lundahl, 2006). Both Mendelson and Letourneau (2015) and Hebert, Levoie and Parent (2002) argue that parents are ideal participants in child sexual abuse prevention training because they generally live with their children, know them well, and have control over their movements. Similarly, teachers work closely with children and know how to tailor messages to their level. Topping and Barron (2009) believe this makes them particularly well-situated to report early signs of abuse. Other research has found that while teachers often confront evidence of child abuse in their classrooms, they need further training in

order to consistently identify and address it (Abrahams, Casey, & Daro, 1992; Kenny, 2001, 2004).

Given the strong potential for adult training to reduce CSA, it is crucial that we evaluate its efficacy across a wide range of programs. Many of the studies currently available have small and/or voluntary samples, lack a control group, or fail to follow participants over time, limiting our ability to assess knowledge retention or behavioral change. This article presents findings from an evaluation of a popular adult training program called Protecting God's Children (PGC) used in Catholic institutions including schools, sports leagues, churches, and social service agencies. All adults applying to work or volunteer with children in these settings are required to attend a three-hour training session (along with fulfilling other requirements like background checks). The immediate goal of the program is to increase knowledge about CSA, its warning signs, and to provide participants with strategies to use if they suspect abuse. The long-term goal is to reduce CSA, particularly in Catholic institutions.

Based on pretest/posttest/six month follow-up questionnaires administered to over 500 adults, this article reports on whether PGC is associated with a change in knowledge about CSA. It also examines whether knowledge is retained over six months. It is methodologically difficult to assess whether programs like PGC result in an increase in reporting abuse suspicions. This is because CSA is a relatively rare event that requires a large sample size and a very long follow-up period to detect. To overcome these problems, this study employed multiple behavioral measures and found evidence to suggest that training results in an increase in parents talking to their children about CSA. Participants in the PGC program were compared on all knowledge and behavior measures

with a control group of adults who did not participate in the program. Additional qualitative responses from participants suggest that the program may encourage adults to monitor children more closely and talk to other adults about CSA.

Literature Review

Over the last thirty years, there have been a number of evaluations of parent and teacher CSA prevention programs. In general, the literature on teacher programs suggests that training can result in increased knowledge about warning signs of abuse, appropriate ways to respond to a child who reports it, and information about whom to contact to make a report (Hazzard, Webb, Kleemeier, Angert, & Pohl, 1991; Kleemeier, Webb, Hazzard, & Pohl, 1988; McGrath, Cappelli, Wiseman, Khalil, and Allan, 1987; Rheingold et al., 2015). The findings for parent-training programs are somewhat less consistent. In one small study, parents appeared to gain little knowledge (Berrick, 1988). Other evaluations, however, have shown that parents improve their knowledge about child sexual abuse and preventative strategies (Hebert, Levoie, & Parent, 2002; McGee & Painter, 1991).

As described, many of the studies assessing the impact of CSA training are limited because they do not include a control group or any long-term follow-up. Two exceptions are studies by McGrath et al. (1987) and Rheingold et al. (2015). Both included a randomly-selected control group and follow-up knowledge assessments (at 2 and 3 months respectively). The studies indicate that teachers who were in the experimental group increased their knowledge about CSA more than those in the control group and that the experimental group retained their knowledge over time.

The ultimate goal of most CSA prevention programs is to change the behavior of adults in ways that will lower rates of abuse. This could include increasing protective behaviors or reporting CSA suspicions. As described, researchers have found it difficult to measure these outcome variables. To get around the methodological difficulties, some researchers have opted to use abuse vignettes. Participants are asked to list what they would do if confronted with a number of situations that contain evidence of CSA. The researchers then measure change from pre- to posttest. These studies generally find that training improves the ability to detect abuse and that it increases the number of protective measures participants say they would take when confronted with particular abuse situations (see Kleemeier et al., 1988).

Vignette analysis is valuable but only provides a hypothetical measure of behavioral change. Some researchers have tried to measure behavior more directly by following up with respondents several weeks or months after the training session. For example, six weeks after a teacher training program, Kleemeier et al. (1988) administered a follow-up survey asking participants how much they had read about abuse, discussed it with a colleague or an individual child, implemented prevention activities in the classroom or reported suspected abuse. The only significant difference they found was that the experimental group reported reading more about abuse than did the control group. It is possible, however, that the short time frame of the research did not allow for other types of behavioral change to occur. Randolph and Gold (1994) also studied a teacher training program but allowed three months to elapse before following up with participants. They asked about a variety of protective behaviors and found that training

affected participants' ability to identify abuse, the likelihood that they talk with children about abuse, and the probability that they report suspicious behavior.

While the Randolph/Gold and Kleemeier studies were methodologically strong, they are also somewhat dated. In a more recent study, Rheingold et al. (2015) found that three months after a training program, childcare workers in the experimental group reported being more vigilant about supervising children than those in the control group. They were also more likely to talk to other adults about CSA. There were not significant differences in CSA reporting however. In sum, findings about the behavioral impact of adult prevention programs are mixed.

Protecting God's Children Program

In 2004, all Catholic dioceses in the U.S. were required to implement training for adults who wanted to volunteer or work with children in institutional settings. This mandate covers a wide range of Catholic organizations and a wide range of adults (teachers, clergy, classroom volunteers, Sunday school staff, kitchen workers, coaches etc.). Classroom volunteers are a particularly large group, including adults who might be interested in driving the occasional field trip as well as those who want extensive involvement in the classroom. While there are a number of adult training programs used by dioceses across the country, the Protecting God's Children (PGC) program (produced and sold by the nonprofit company Virtus) is the most popular. This program consists of a three-hour instruction session led by a trained facilitator.

The content of the PGC curriculum is similar to other adult training programs including the Safeguarding Program in the Episcopalian Church and the Boy Scout adult

training. Sessions are anchored by two thirty-minute movies with time for structured discussion after each. Depending on the diocese, facilitators may be volunteers from the parish or they may be employees of the Church (like directors of religious education). Regardless of their background, all facilitators are trained in the curriculum and receive an extensive manual with instructions, prompts, frequently asked questions (with answers) and teaching tips. Sessions are relatively formulaic although there is some minor variation depending on the personality of the facilitator or the questions asked by the participants.

The movies shown in PGC sessions cover all of the main points of the program; the primary purpose of the facilitators is to lead discussion using the curriculum-provided prompts and to answer questions. The first movie features interviews with victims (who are based on real children but are portrayed by adolescent and child actors) and interviews with offenders. Victims talk about the impact of abuse on their lives and offenders focus on how they gained access to victims, how they convinced the community and family to trust them, and how they hid their crimes. Information about the prevalence of abuse is provided and a number of myths are deconstructed. For example, participants are taught that strangers are less likely to commit child sexual abuse than are people known to the child. The second movie focuses on how to make organizations safer. Requirements for volunteers and employees are discussed (including background checks and interviews) and participants are urged to recognize their own power to combat the problem.

Goals and Hypotheses of this Study

This study has three primary goals. First, it evaluates the effectiveness of the Protecting God's Children program in improving participants' knowledge about child sexual abuse. Second, it examines whether the PCG program increases the use of a range of protective behaviors including reporting suspicions and sharing information about CSA. Finally, the study measures whether knowledge is retained over six months. The hypotheses are that the program is associated with an increase in knowledge and the use of protective behaviors. It is also hypothesized that participants retain their new knowledge over time.

Methods

Participants

Participants were drawn from 22 different classes offered in the Diocese of Cleveland. The classes were offered in urban, suburban, and rural settings at various times of the week and the day. In total, 546 people attended these classes and the number of pretest/posttest matches was 503 (one class was used to assess pretest sensitivity and two pretests did not match posttests). The control group was made up of 53 people who did not take the training but who did complete a pretest and a follow-up six months later. The control was primarily drawn from a group of parents attending orientation for Catholic Sunday school. Sunday school parents are generally not required to take PGC but otherwise they are similar to parochial school parents: they are Catholic and the parents of young children. The control group was also drawn from two presentations on religious topics, one given at a Presbyterian Church and the other at a local college. The

added diversity in terms of age, parenthood status, and religion made the two groups more equivalent since the experimental group contained teachers, coaches and other school/church staff who were not parents and not Catholic.

Insert Table One here

Table One shows the demographics of both experimental and control groups. The experimental group was diverse in terms of gender, education, and age, less so in terms of religion and race. The average age was 39 years but it should be noted that there were two particularly large age groupings: one between the ages of 18 and 23 (mostly teachers, coaches, or volunteers in various activities) and another between the ages of 33 and 48 (primarily parents who wanted to volunteer in their children's classrooms). The control group had important similarities with the experimental group but also differed on some key variables. The control group was somewhat older, more highly educated, and less Catholic. There were a good balance of men and women in both groups but women were less overrepresented in the control group. Although Hispanics were slightly more underrepresented in the control than the experimental group, the percentage of whites and blacks was almost identical.

Measures

The questionnaire contained demographic questions (including age, reason for attendance, education, race, and parenthood status) as well as items designed to measure knowledge and behavior. A number of the questions—particularly those in the knowledge section—were drawn from preexisting instruments developed by Windham and Hudson (2010), McGrath et al. (1987) and Kleemeier et al. (1988). The thirteen

knowledge items (see Appendix) were selected to be as general as possible but also to match the learning goals of the PGC curriculum. The scale was intentionally constructed to include items about both victims and offenders and items were only included if the answer was given as part of the curriculum. To make the study more generalizable, all but one item involved topics covered by other popular training programs used in schools and churches. The exception—particular to the Catholic Church—involved whether priests are overrepresented among abusers.

Participants were asked to answer each of the knowledge questions using five response categories. These included, “I am very sure this is true,” “I am somewhat sure this is true,” “I do not know,” “I am somewhat sure this is false,” and “I am very sure this is false.” Most other studies, like Windham and Hudson (2010), used three category responses (true, false, don’t know). The five-category format is advantageous because it allows for an assessment of both knowledge (whether the answers were right or wrong) as well as participants’ confidence in their answers. Sample items include:

Children who do not report ongoing sexual abuse must want the sexual contact to continue.

Child sexual abuse takes place mainly in poor families.

The final knowledge measure was created by summing responses to the thirteen items (Range = 13:65). Internal consistency was acceptable (Cronbach’s alpha = .69) although reliability is on the low side due to low variability in scores (which is addressed below). The control and experimental groups pretest scores were virtually identical ($M=54.82$ for the control group, $M=54.87$ for the experimental).

To measure behavioral change, the pretest asked respondents whether they had ever discussed concerns that a child was being abused with a teacher or parent or had reported abuse to an official agency. They also asked whether those respondents who were parents had talked with their own children about sexual abuse in the last six months. The follow-up questions were identical but specified that the period of interest was the six months since the training. The follow-up also included two open-ended behavioral questions, “Did taking the class have any effect on your behavior around children or other adults? If yes, please describe” and, “Have you shared what you learned in PGC with anyone? If yes, who? What did you share?” Responses to these items were coded into categories using the TAMS software package. Counts were then made to determine the frequency of occurrence.

Because some other studies have shown pretest sensitivity effects (see Rau et al., 2011 for example), one class (N=41) was given a posttest only. Their posttest scores were not significantly different from the other group, suggesting that pretest bias was not an issue.

Procedures

The experimental group received the pretest and posttest in class and an online follow-up six months after completion of the class. The follow-up was completed by 153 people (28 percent), with 12 follow-ups surveys failing to match pretests. The follow-up questionnaire response rate of 28 percent raises concerns about bias but analyses suggest that the demographics of the follow-up group were not significantly different from the pretest group (see Table One). In terms of small differences, the follow-up group was

four percent more female, an average of two years older, one percent more white, and about four percent more likely to be parent. More notably, however, those who completed a follow-up survey scored, on average, 1.02 points higher on the pretest than those who dropped out, $t(480)=3.36$, $p<.01$. They were also somewhat more highly educated with 67 percent of those who completed a follow-up and 62 percent of those who did not having obtained at least a college degree.

The control group was recruited in person but took both the pretest and six month follow-up online. Of the original 53 people in the control group, 38 answered the follow-up survey (71.7 percent). Only two of the control group follow-up surveys did not match pretests. The follow-up was administered online with an initial email request and a reminder one week later. The difference between the group who completed the follow-up survey and those who did not was not statistically significant in terms of demographics but, like the experimental group, those members of the control group who completed a follow-up had slightly higher pretest scores than those who did not (1.8 points).

The follow-up response rate of the control group was higher than that of the experimental group (72 percent compared to 28 percent). No data were collected that would allow for a definitive explanation for this difference. It is possible that it had to do with how the researcher was perceived across settings (part of the control group was recruited in a college setting where the researcher's academic affiliation might have been more meaningful). It is also possible that the groups participated in the research for different reasons (for example the control group may have felt a heightened sense of responsibility to participate because they knew that their group was small and that their individual participation mattered).

Results

Hypothesis One: Change in CSA Knowledge

As an initial check on whether the participants in this study increased their knowledge about CSA, pretest and posttest scores on the 13-item knowledge scale were compared. These averages were based on the 468 respondents who filled in every item in both questionnaires (and it also excludes the pretest sensitivity group). The pretest mean was 54.87 ($SD=5.65$) and the posttest mean was 59.79 ($SD=4.63$). This improvement in scores represented a 9.5 percent increase (4.92 points on the 52 point scale) and was statistically significant, $t(467)=22.56, p<.01$, Cohen's $d=0.95$.

Because participants were allowed to indicate their level of confidence in their answers, an increase in scores from the pre- to posttest may reflect participants gaining confidence in their correct answers (for example moving from "I am somewhat sure this is true" to "I am very sure this is true") rather than moving from being wrong or unsure to correct. To examine this question, each of the responses was coded as right or wrong (with "don't know" and wrong answers coded as zero, and right answers coded as one) and the scores were added together. There remained a significant increase in scores (a 1.04 question improvement out of 13 translating to the average participant going from being correct on 85 percent of the items to 93 percent, $t(127)=6.04, p<.01$).

It should be noted that the possibility of improvement was somewhat constrained by high pretest scores. No less than 58 percent of respondents gave the correct response to any item in the pretest. In fact, on ten of the sixteen items, more than 80 percent of participants gave the correct answer. Additionally, the item means presented in Appendix

One show that people learned more about some topics than others. For example, the four questions with the largest changes were:

1. Perpetrators do not think the rules apply to them, so they do things with children that other people would not do.
2. The warning signs of grooming include gift-giving without parents' permission and frequently being alone with a child.
3. Adolescents and even preadolescents are sometimes sex offenders.
4. The percentage of priests who are sex offenders is much higher than the percentage of sex offenders in the general population of men.

This study's large sample size allowed for an analysis of group differences in learning. All groups (education, race, and age) increased their scores on the knowledge scale by about the same amount. While women improved their scores somewhat less than men, this is largely explained by the fact that women arrived at sessions with much higher levels of knowledge about CSA, making it difficult for them to improve their scores.

Hypothesis Two: Knowledge Retention

A one-way repeated measures analysis of variance was conducted to assess the change in knowledge scores before, immediately after, and six months following the PGC training. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of time, $F(2, 254) = 74.86, p < .001$. Three paired sample post hoc t-tests also indicated significant differences between pretest scores ($M=56.48, SD=4.86$) and posttest scores ($M=60.74, SD=4.21$). Follow-up scores were significantly different from pretest scores but were not different from posttest

scores ($M=60.33$, $SD=3.70$). This finding provides initial support for the conclusion that the class is effective in increasing knowledge and that the new knowledge is retained over six months.

Further support for knowledge retention is provided by data showing that the control group's knowledge stays stable over time. A mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was used to assess this question. Time (pretest, six month follow up) was the within-subjects factor and research group (control, experimental) was the between-subjects factor. This analysis revealed main effects of both time, $F(1, 164) = 21.91$, $p < .001$ and research group, $F(1, 164) = 15.64$, $p < .001$. Importantly, however, there was a significant interaction between research group and time, $F(1, 164) = 23.92$, $p < .001$. Looking at the mean scores, we see that there was essentially no change in the control group knowledge scores from pre- to follow-up (pretest mean for those who responded to both the pretest and follow-up was 55.39 , $SD=4.33$; follow-up $M=55.31$, $SD=4.80$) but the experimental group improved significantly (pretest $M=56.38$, $SD=4.90$; follow-up $M=60.18$, $SD=.34$). This indicates that the increase in knowledge was an effect of participation in the PGC class and was not due to some other factor like history or maturation. These findings remained the same when education, gender, and age were entered as covariates to control for the small differences between the control and experimental groups (interaction between research group and time $F(1, 161) = 20.23$, $p < .001$).¹

¹ The conclusions do not change when the analysis is run as a weighted means ANOVA. The dependent variable was the difference score between the pretest and the follow-up scale. This additional test was run to make sure that the unequal sample sizes of the control and experimental groups were not affecting results.

Hypothesis Three: Behavior Change

Only a very small percentage of the experimental group said that they had reported suspicions to an official agency since the training session (3 out of 143 responses or 2 percent). This compares to one person in the experimental group (2.6 percent of 38 responses). Five training participants said that they talked to a child because they were concerned about abuse and another five talked to a parent (three of the same people reported talking to both a child and a parent). In the control group, four people had talked to a child but only one had spoken to a parent. There are not significant differences between groups on any of these measures.

There was one behavioral measure with a notable difference between the control and experimental group. It involved the likelihood of talking to one's own children about CSA. For the analysis, only parents with children between the ages of 6 and 18 were included. A full 70 percent of these participants in the experimental group reported talking to their kids about CSA in the six months since the session. The equivalent percentage in the control group was only 38, $t(61)=1.77, p=.08$. While this difference fails to reach conventional statistical significance levels, this is largely because only eight control group members answered the question (many did not have children in the correct age range, and some who did skipped the question). It is also important to note, however, that the percentage of the experimental group talking to their children increased from 50 percent at the time of the pretest to 70 percent at the follow-up, $t(53)=2.326, p=.02$,

Tests were also run to check the assumptions of the models including homogeneity of regression for the ANCOVA model.

while the control group stayed the same. Taken together, this points to an effect of the session and it mirrors Randolph and Gold's 1994 finding that teacher training increases the likelihood that they will talk to children about CSA.

In addition to the quantitative questions, participants were asked several open-ended questions about how PGC affected their behavior. When asked if they had changed their behavior in any way since the class, a full 62 percent of the respondents responded affirmatively. The most common response was that they had begun to more carefully watch how other adults behave around children. The second most common response was that they were more careful to avoid being alone with or touching a child (aside from their own children). Also notable, when asked if they had talked about what they learned in the session with others a full 58 out of 91 (63.7 percent) said that they had. Most spoke with a spouse but friends and coworkers were also frequently mentioned.

Discussion

The findings from this study indicate that PGC is effective in increasing knowledge about CSA and that participants retain their new knowledge over six months. This is an important addition to our understanding of the impact of adult training because the few previous studies that have assessed knowledge retention have retested at three months or less. While this study's pre/posttest results show that PGC participants learn and retain new information, it should be noted that many arrive already knowing a great deal about the material. Pretest scores tend to be high (with many items garnering over 80 percent correct responses), suggesting that participants may be ready for a more

sophisticated discussion of abuse than PGC (and other similar programs) currently provide.

Evaluations of other programs have revealed that participants arrive with large differences in pretest knowledge by gender, education, race, and parental status (Calvert & Munsie-Benson, 1999; Morison & Greene, 1992; Olsen & Kalbfleisch, 1999; Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005). Notably, this study shows that all demographic groups improve about the same amount on the knowledge scale. The only exception is that women increase their scores but somewhat less than men, likely because they come in with higher pretest scores. These findings suggest that programs like PGC can include diverse participants and achieve learning across groups.

Participants in PCG sessions appear to learn more about offender characteristics and behaviors than they do about other areas of the curriculum. This is largely because the offender items had relatively low pretest means, indicating that participants arrive at sessions knowing less about offenders than they do about other aspects of CSA. Other research confirms that adults tend to lack knowledge and harbor misconceptions about offender characteristics and behaviors (Calvert and Munsie-Benson, 1999; Randolph and Gold, 1994). To make time spent in trainings more learning-intensive, increased focus could be given to offender behavior/characteristics and other topics where preexisting knowledge is lower. At the same time, it should be noted that a significant minority of participants arrive at sessions harboring misperceptions about a wide range of CSA topics (from whether recantation always signals lying to whether children play a role in abuse through seductive behaviors) so these topics should remain a part of educational outreach.

Like the majority of other studies, this study did not find a significant effect of the PGC program on reporting. This may be because child sexual abuse is a relatively rare event and requires a very large sample size and a very long time frame to detect. The study did, however, find that training increased the number of parents who talked to their own children about CSA. This is notable given Wurtele and Kenny's (2010) argument that CSA prevention efforts are most effective when children receive training in schools and parents reinforce that training at home. Wurtele and Kenny found, however, that without going through training themselves, parents do not have enough accurate knowledge to effectively serve this role. The present study shows that parents return home from PGC classes armed with more accurate knowledge that can aid them in talking to their own children. PGC Participants also report that they increase monitoring of their own and others' children, potentially reducing opportunities for abuse.

This study's finding that PGC participants talk with other adults about what they learn during sessions is important. It indicates that prevention education has the potential to reach people beyond those who attend trainings. Education programs could take better advantage of this by providing suggestions about good information to pass on to others. For example, a facilitator could recommend that participants tell others about few key CSA myths (like the myth that most perpetrators are strangers). Fact sheets could be made available for participants to give to other adults. This would ensure that the most important information is conveyed and that it is correct.

Future research should place increased focus on assessing a wide range of behavioral outcomes including those identified by the respondents in this study: sharing information with other adults, monitoring other adult's behavior, and policing one's own

behavior around children. While assessing behavioral change is always difficult, this study provides compelling evidence to suggest that programs can have an impact.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that it is based on a sample of people attending a Catholic-sponsored training in one Midwestern diocese. The resultant low racial/ethnic and religious diversity in the sample limits its generalizability. Further research needs to be conducted with minority populations, especially because other studies have found group differences in responses to CSA (Kenny & Wurtele, 2008; Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005). A second limitation of this study is that its sample as a whole, and the follow-up group in particular, are more highly educated than the general population. The higher level of education in the sample is probably because people who work with children in an official capacity (like teachers) tend to be more educated than the population. Education and knowledge about CSA are positively correlated (Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005) so it is likely that the general public knows less about the topic than do PGC participants. Finally, because the control group was not randomly selected, it was not exactly equivalent to the experimental group. In the future, it would be useful to find a way to randomly select people into the control and the experimental groups.

Conclusion

Although CSA rates have been declining over the last twenty years, it remains a significant problem with long-term implications for individuals and for society

(Finkelhor, Vanderminden, Turner, Hamby, & Shattuck, 2014; Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001). This study of the PGC program suggests that adult training can be one important tool to help increase knowledge about CSA. As organizations move forward on developing and updating curricula, however, it is important to evaluate their effects using strong research designs that can measure behavioral change and knowledge retention. This kind of continuing research is necessary because public knowledge about CSA may change over time and because different curricula may have different effects. Programs should strive to maximize their efficacy by developing curricula that review basic material but also include higher-level information that is new to participants. Most importantly, because these types of training programs appear to have the potential to change behaviors, curricula should focus on giving participants the tools to share their knowledge, engage in protective behaviors, and report suspicions of abuse.

Table One: Demographics of the Experimental (N=538) and Control Group (N=53) at the Pretest and the Follow-Up

	Experimental Group Pretest Valid Percent (Raw Number)	Experimental Group Follow-Up Valid Percent (Number)	Control Group Pretest Valid Percent (Raw Number)	Control Group Follow-Up Valid Percent (Number)
Race				
White	90.5 (488)	94.4 (134)	90.6 (48)	91.7 (33)
Black	5.2 (28)	2.1 (3)	5.7 (3)	5.6 (2)
Hispanic	1.7 (9)	1.4 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Asian	2.0 (11)	.7 (1)	1.9 (1)	2.8 (1)
Native American	.6 (3)	1.4 (2)	1.9 (1)	0 (0)
Gender				
Male	38.3 (206)	32.4 (46)	47.2 (25)	47.2 (17)
Female	61.7 (332)	67.6 (96)	52.8 (28)	52.8 (19)
Reason for Attendance				
Teacher	10.2 (55)	11.4 (16)	N/A	N/A
Coach	17.3 (93)	15.0 (21)	N/A	N/A
Volunteer	49.4 (266)	49.3 (69)	N/A	N/A
Staff Member	11.7 (63)	14.3 (20)	N/A	N/A
Scout Leader	4.6 (25)	2.1 (3)	N/A	N/A
Sunday School Teacher	6.1 (33)	7.1 (10)	N/A	N/A
Other	.6 (3)	.7 (1)	N/A	N/A
Highest Level of Education				
Less than high school	2.8 (15)	.7 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
High School	9.3 (50)	8.4 (13)	5.7 (3)	5.6 (2)
Some College	18.1 (98)	14.9 (23)	9.4 (5)	5.6 (2)
Associates/Vocational/Technical	6.4 (35)	7.0 (10)	13.2 (12)	13.9 (5)
College Degree	32.4 (175)	26.8 (38)	15.1 (8)	16.7 (6)
Some Graduate work	6.9 (37)	8.5 (12)	7.5 (4)	11.1 (4)
Graduate Degree	24.1 (130)	31.7 (45)	49.1 (26)	47.2 (17)
Parents	71.8 (385)	79.4 (112)	86.8 (46)	83.3 (30)
Roman Catholic	75.2 (404)	83.7 (118)	37.7 (20)	44.4 (16)
Age (mean and st. dev.)	39 (s=14)	41.4 (14.5)	58.0 (s=17.8)	55.9 (17.4)

Appendix: Item Means for the experimental group. Only included are pretests that had a matching posttest (N=503) and follow-ups that matched a pretest/posttest combination (N= 141)

Question Text (Correct Answer) Items in Knowledge Scale	Pretest Mean (standard deviation)	Posttest Mean (standard deviation)	Follow-Up Mean (standard deviation)
Children who do not report ongoing sexual abuse must want the sexual contact to continue. (False) ³	4.91 (.41)	4.91 (.52)	4.95 (.40)
Even good mothers may not be able to prevent their children from being sexually abused. (True) ²	4.50 (.81)	4.68 (.76)	4.82 (.48)
Child sexual abuse takes place mainly in poor families. (False) ³	4.44 (.88)	4.82 (.62)	4.81 (.66)
Most cases of sexual abuse are reported to the child protection agencies. (False) ⁴	4.27 (.90)	4.21 (1.07)	4.49 (.76)
Most sexual abusers are homosexual. (False) ¹	4.40 (.83)	4.88 (.51)	4.71 (.66)
A child who is sexually abused by a parent often still feels love or affection for him or her. (True) ⁴	4.12 (.98)	4.19 (1.06)	4.46 (.96)
The warning signs of grooming include gift-giving without parents' permission and frequently being alone with a child. (True) ¹	4.14 (.82)	4.88 (.49)	4.81 (.66)
Children often become victims of sexual abuse because of their seductive or promiscuous behavior. (False) ²	4.28 (1.04)	4.41 (1.09)	4.62 (.83)
Adolescents and even preadolescents are sometimes sex offenders. (True) ¹	4.06 (.87)	4.75 (.60)	4.41 (.85)
Nearly all sex offenders can be identified through background searches. (False) ¹	4.10 (1.11)	3.95 (1.36)	4.48 (.88)
Children who change their mind about the abuse probably lied at first. (False) ⁴	4.04 (1.14)	4.60 (.89)	4.47 (.88)
The percentage of priests who are sex offenders is much higher than the percentage of sex offenders in the general population of men. (False) ¹	3.96 (.95)	4.66 (.74)	4.38 (.99)
Perpetrators do not think the rules apply to them, so they do things with children that other people would not do. (True) ¹	3.51 (1.14)	4.65 (.87)	4.33 (1.04)

¹ These questions came directly from Windham and Hudson (2010)

² These questions came directly from or were adapted from Kleemeier et al. (1988)

³ These questions came directly from or were adapted from the Child Sexual Abuse Myth Scale (Collings, 1997)

⁴ These questions came directly from Hébert, Lavoie, and Parent (2002) * P<.05

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