

Pekkarinen, Kirsti¹, *Psychoeducative Trauma-Focused Group Intervention for Sexually Abused Boys*, Licentiate thesis, University of Tampere, Department of Psychology, <http://tutkielmat.uta.fi>, 2007, 35 p.

¹kirsti.pekkarinen@pp.kpnet.fi

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine whether psychoeducative, trauma-focused group intervention decreases psychiatric symptoms among boys exposed to sexual abuse. The subjects were seven male adolescents aged between 14 to 17 years. They were sexually abused for six months by two extrafamilial, male perpetrators. The intervention based on an applied version of Teaching Survival Skills Manual by Smith, Yule and Dyregrov was initiated half a year later. The individual interviews and evaluation were conducted both before and after the intervention process. The post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms were evaluated with The Children's Impact of Event Scale (CRIES-13), and depressiveness by the Finnish modification of the Beck Depression Inventory (R-BDI). The intervention consisted of nine therapy sessions for the adolescents and three parallel group meetings for the parents including the follow-up sessions.

The results showed that PTSD symptoms decreased significantly during the intervention. The decrease was significant in all the symptoms of PTSD (arousal, avoidance and intrusion) being greatest in the symptoms of avoidance. The depression symptoms, such as troubles in sleeping, feelings of self-accusation and irritation, decreased also prominently during the intervention. Behaviour problems and feelings of apprehensiveness lessened as well. According to R-BDI -questionnaire after the group intervention, six adolescents complained no depression symptoms whatsoever, and in one adolescent, the depression symptoms decreased by 40%.

The findings support the conclusion that the psychoeducative trauma-focused group therapy is both promising and well accepted treatment method for sexually abused adolescents. The results of the current study are encouraging and can be applied to benefit professionals in health care to develop further treatment efforts in the challenging area of male sexual abuse. However, the results are preliminary and more research is needed, especially on the question which treatment elements are the most critical for producing optimal outcomes in sexually abused adolescents.