CIB #4: Continued Relationship with the Accused

This is a common issue for the CIB expert to address. Typical explanations from the expert can include:

- Shock or disbelief
- Rush to normalization
- Relationship to offender
- Prior history of assault or abuse
- Attachment, love
- "Pretend Normal"
- Relief/Return to safety/Tension Free
- Lack of resources
- Fear of leaving

Trauma Bonding

- The process by which the victim gets highly attached and bonded to the offender
- Connection to the unpleasant
- Idea/belief in responsibility for the crimes
- Hope
- Comfort from the abuser
- Reliance on the abuser
- Adapted from J. Hindman (1989) Just Before Dawn. Ontario: Oregon, Alexandria Associates.

"*When victims have a certain dysfunctional attachment that occurs in the presence of danger, shame, or exploitation" (Carnes, 1997, p. 29). "A traumatic bond is created when pain is inflicted into the attachment. This bond is stronger than a non-traumatic bond. The more traumatic the bond, the harder to get out" (Anderson, 2009). "The process by which the victim gets attached to trauma or the perpetrator of trauma" (Hindman, 1989). "When person, male or female, has suffered harsh, painful treatment over an extended period of time, he or she naturally feels a flood of love and gratitude towards anyone who brings relief, like the surge of affection one might feel for the hand that offers a glass of water on a scorching day. But in the situation of abuse, the rescuer and the tormentor are the very same person*." (Bancroft, 2002, p.220).

Research on Trauma Bonding / Continued Relationship with the Accused

The battered woman syndrome: Effects of severity and intermittency of abuse.

Dutton, Donald G. and Painter, Susan

American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol 63(4), Oct, 1993. pp. 614-622.

Abstract:

Assessed 3 major sequelae of battered woman syndrome: trauma symptoms, self-esteem deficits, and traumatic bonding or paradoxical attachment to the former male partner. This was done to establish the extent to which these factors intercorrelate and thus constitute a syndrome. The strengths of these sequelae were then related to power differentials and to intermittency of abuse, which were believed to be central features of long-term abusive relationships. Ss were 50 battered women and 25 emotionally abused women who had recently left their relationships. Ss were assessed soon after leaving the relationship and again 6 months later. For all Ss, the essential features of the syndrome were present and were significantly interrelated. Dynamic features of the prior abusive relationship correlated significantly with these sequelae. Intermittency, rather than predictability of abuse, forecast post-relationship distress

Perpetrators of Sexual Assault Continuing to Have Sex with Their Victims Following the Initial Assault: Evidence for Evolved Reproductive Strategies

Lee Ellis, Alan Widmayer, Craig T. Palmer

Criminology & Criminal Justice, Vol 53, Issue 4, 2009

Abstract

Among a sample of college students, roughly 30% of the women and 12% of the men reported having been the victim of a sexual assault sometime in their lives. Of the assault victims, approximately 23% of both sexes stated that they had sexual intercourse with their assaulters on at least one subsequent occasion. Female victims of a completed sexual assault were significantly more likely to continue being sexually active with their assailants than were female victims who managed to block the assault, while no such difference was found for male victims. This would imply that some men are using assaultive tactics to secure sex partners beyond a single sexual episode, thereby enhancing their potential reproductive success in evolutionary terms. Also, men who committed sexual assault reported having had more lifetime sex partners than did sexually experienced men with no sexual assault history. Overall, the idea that sexual assault is part of an evolved reproductive strategy is consistent with findings from this study.

Predictors of Victim-Perpetrator Relationship Stability Following a Sexual Assault: A Brief Report

Edwards, Katie M; Kearns, Megan C; Gidycz, Christine A; Calhoun, Karen S.

Violence and Victims; New York Vol. 27, Iss. 1, (2012): 25-32.

Abstract:

The researchers assessed the predictors of victim–perpetrator relationship stability follow- ing a sexual assault. Participants included 254 women sexually assaulted by a friend, casual dating partner, or steady dating partner. Results suggested that most victim–perpetrator rela- tionships (75%) continued following the sexual assault. Greater trauma symptomatology, less perpetrator blame, and nondisclosure of the assault by victims predicted relationship continuation with the perpetrator. Additionally, the odds of continuing the relationship were greater following acts of sexual coercion than following acts of completed rape. Close rela- tionships (steady dating partner) were more likely to continue following the sexual assault than less close relationships (friends and casual dating partners). Unexpectedly, the odds of relationship stability were greater for women without histories of childhood sexual abuse than women with histories of childhood sexual abuse. Implications for future research and intervention are discussed.

Bonding after trauma: On the role of social support and the oxytocin system in traumatic stress.

Olff, Miranda.

European Journal of Psychotraumatology, Vol 3, Apr 27, 2012. ArtID: 18597

Abstract:

This paper outlines the state of affairs in psychobiological research on psychotrauma and PTSD with a focus on the role of the oxytocin system in traumatic stress. With a high prevalence of trauma and PTSD in the Netherlands, new preventive and therapeutic interventions are needed. The focus is on the role of social support and bonding in coming to grips with psychological trauma, about the oxytocin system as a basis for reducing the stress response and creating a feeling of bonding, about binding words to painful emotions in psychotherapy, and about the bonds between researchers and clinicians.

Consensual Victim–Perpetrator Intercourse after Nonconsensual Sex: The Impact of Prior Relationship

Megan L. Sawatsky, Samantha J. Dawson & Martin L. Lalumière

Journal of Sex Research, 53(2), 194–203, 2016

Abstract:

Some female victims of nonconsensual sex subsequently have consensual sexual intercourse with the perpetrator and are more likely to do so if intercourse occurred during the nonconsensual sex

than if it did not. Some evolutionary psychologists have postulated that there is something significant about nonconsensual intercourse that causes women to subsequently have a sexual relationship with the perpetrator (e.g., risk of pregnancy). In this study, we investigated a parsimonious explanation that has previously been overlooked: Intercourse is more likely during nonconsensual sex when the victim and perpetrator have previously had a sexual relationship; thus, subsequent consensual intercourse may simply be a continuation of that prior relationship. A sample of 945 women completed an Internet-based survey, of whom 41% had experienced nonconsensual sex since age 14. As expected, victims who had intercourse with perpetrators prior to the nonconsensual sex event were significantly more likely than other victims to experience nonconsensual intercourse and to engage in subsequent consensual intercourse with the perpetrator. When considering only the small subsample of victims who never had a prior romantic or sexual relationship with the perpetrator, the odds of subsequent consensual intercourse were still significantly greater following nonconsensual sex with intercourse versus without intercourse.

Victim-Offender Relationships in Sexual Assault and Subsequent Disclosure and Reporting Styles

Amy R. Ramapuram

Student Theses John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Spring 5-26-2017

Abstract

There is a discrepancy between the number of perpetrated sexual assaults and the number of reported sexual assaults. Past research has shown that one factor that could contribute to this discrepancy in reporting and disclosure of sexual assaults is the victim- offender relationship. Furthermore, there is evidence that victims of sexual assault minimize when describing their offense and their offender, which could further impact reporting and disclosure. The current study seeks to look into whether the victim-offender relationship influences the disclosure, reporting, and use of minimization, in reference to sexual assault. The victim-offender relationships that were analyzed were “stranger”, “friend/acquaintance”, “partner”, and “familial”. Findings showed no significant differences among these victim-offender relationships in disclosure, reporting, or use of minimization. The results were further analyzed through looking at the frequencies in each of the victim-offender categories, in relation to the three dependent variables, in which observed differences were discussed.

Stockholm syndrome: Held hostage by the one you love.

Logan, Matthew H.

Violence and Gender, Vol 5(2), Jun, 2018. pp. 67-69.

Abstract:

On August 23, 1973, two machine-gun carrying criminals entered a bank in Stockholm, Sweden and took four hostages for 131 h. The hostages were rescued 5 days later and despite threats and abuse, including being strapped with dynamite, they were surprisingly supportive of their captors. Amazingly, one woman later became engaged to one of the hostage takers and another developed a legal defense fund to assist their captors. The concept should receive more attention in the arena of domestic abuse and in the study of trauma. It is, in fact, represented in these domains under the title of Trauma Bonding and Narcissistic or Psychopathic Victim Abuse. These terms are much more descriptive and germane to those who are thriving despite having been in the grip of an abuser or those who currently are in an abusive relationship.