

Resituating masculinity and power in preventing child sexual abuse

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While attempts to address the perpetration of child sexual abuse often reduce focus to individual, psychopathological and actuarial levels of analysis in psychology, contextual understandings of gendered power relations are largely unexamined. A statistical focus on the prevalence and risk of sex offenders to the community excludes critical, contextual and discursive understandings of how masculinity is practised and how it contributes to men's sexual offending. Through locating issues of child sexual abuse within hegemonic institutional and social power relations of masculinity, we challenge dominant reductionist positionings of the offender to simplified constructs of deviancy and abnormality. We present two case studies of the experiences of men who were child sex offenders, interviewed as part of a wider study. In investigating their narratives, we examine their experiences of power and powerlessness, and the discursive resources available to them, determined through their socio-political contexts, which influenced their masculine identities, practices, and subsequent offending. Questioning masculinity as a socially determined practice of power and powerlessness opened a space for the men to become reflective of how their community contexts confirmed their gendered practices that led to sexual offending. Such insights could create transformative possibilities and interventions that could prevent child sex offending.

Gender based violence has been widely recognised to be one of the most serious threats to the wellbeing of women and children worldwide. In the United Nations Report on the Status of Women published in 2011, Aotearoa/New Zealand was ranked worst of all OECD countries in rates of sexual violence. New Zealand has an alarmingly high rate of reported child sexual abuse, although variations in definition and methods make it difficult to ascertain the prevalence. A review of the international literature suggests that approximately 10% of men and 20% of women experience some form of sexual abuse during their childhood (Seto, 2008). New Zealand studies have suggested rates of childhood sexual abuse as high as 32% (Anderson et al., 1993). This early study has been supported by longitudinal research that indicates between 13.9% and 30.4% of girls and 2.7% - 6.1% of boys have experienced sexual victimisation prior to the age of sixteen (Fergusson et al.,

1996; 1997; Fergusson et al., 2000). Other New Zealand research has found that between 23.5% and 28.2% of girls are subject to unwanted and distressing sexual contact or are forced to participate in sexual acts before they reach the age of fifteen (Fanslow et al., 2007; Fanslow et al., 2008).

Prevalence studies may provide useful information to draw attention to the problem of sexual violence in the population, and to access resources to reduce it and its effects. However, the problem with using prevalence data is that it excludes how experiences of sexual abuse might be understood and reported. For example, victimisation studies such as the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey exclude children under the age of 15 from participation, and only ask participants to report their experience over the last 12 months (Mayhew & Reilly, 2008). Despite methodological issues, it is clear that girls are more frequently abused than boys, and that the actual incidence of victimisation is

much higher than reported. Most acts of sexual abuse against children are unreported with only an estimated 9% of incidents reported to police (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2009). Prevalence studies also raise questions as to how much is 'enough'; whether it is 1 in 3, or 1 in 7, it is a problem that warrants further resources for change.

The problem of child sex offending is not gender neutral. A key feature of official data that has been consistent over time is that the majority of those who sexually offend against children are men (Cowburn, 2010; Finkelhor, 1984; Seto, 2009) and that most do not encounter the criminal justice system. International studies suggest that between 0.95% and 5% of all sexual offences against children are perpetrated by women (Cortini & Gannon, 2011), which is reflected in New Zealand Police apprehension data (NZFVC, 2015). According to Ranger (2014), less than 2% of those arrested for child sexual abuse are women and 0.63% of incarcerated child sex offenders in New Zealand are women.

Most of our attempts to address the perpetration of child sexual abuse relates to community safety, based on what we know about sex offenders. According to Cowburn (2010), the focus on known offenders is misguided, given that most acts of sexual abuse are unreported and even where incidences of child sexual abuse are reported, difficulties in reaching conviction are entrenched (Butler, Goodman-Delahunty, & Lulham, 2012). Similar to international studies, Butler et al. (2012) estimate that 15% of all child sex offences reported in Australia result in criminal proceedings and these do not necessarily translate into convictions. Given the relatively few convictions, alleviating the harms caused by sexual abuse must surely go beyond interventions based on forensic knowledge of convicted offenders. Furthermore, understandings of gender are largely absent from criminological and psychological discourses that tend to focus on how to correct and manage deviance through the development of theories that explain offending and their application to the treatment of individuals. Despite the history of feminist and critical inquiry into sexual

violence, there remains a persistent ideology that aims to reduce this phenomenon to an individual level of analysis in psychology (Lea & Auburn, 2001).

Much of the literature focuses on treatment interventions or rehabilitation programmes that seek to control the deviant behaviour of particular 'risky' men, with varying degrees of success. This is especially the case within forensic settings, where the main focus is on reducing an offender's risk of reoffending (Woldgebreel, Day & Ward, 2014) based on cognitive behavioural and psychiatric approaches that locate 'deviancy' within the individual and neglect sociocultural resources that mitigate or normalise sexually harmful behaviour (Rickard, 2015). Despite the inconsistent results of rehabilitation programme effectiveness, in Australia and New Zealand they continue to operate in prisons and within the community. There has been international recognition that cognitive-behavioural treatments targeting the links between offence cognitions, emotions, and behaviour to address maladaptive processes within individuals have the *potential* to enable offenders to manage the risk factors that are attributed to re-offending. There appears to be some consensus that treatment following a cognitive behavioural (CBT) approach through the risk-need-responsivity model (Andrews & Bonta, 2010) is effective in reducing the likelihood of recidivism. The Good Lives Model (Ward, 2002; Ward & Marshall, 2004) of offender treatment has gained momentum in the last decade. It assumes that offending is a maladaptive attempt to meet an individual's self-determined needs, and treatment focuses upon creating the conditions required (both individual and social) to achieve human 'goods' in prosocial ways. These models both focus on individual factors that lead to an offender's decision to offend and therefore target the reduction of risk or the opportunity to lead a prosocial life. The success of treatment is assessed through recidivism data. For example, Lambie and Stewart (2012) evaluated community based sex offender programmes in New Zealand

and found offence recidivism for completers to be 8.1% compared with 21% non-completers. However, offence recidivism is a measure that depends on offences being reported and recorded as offences.

Additionally, rehabilitating men in the community depends on access to programme providers and has a high drop-out rate (45%) when compared to prison programmes (15%), especially when the duration of the community programme exceeds probation supervision (Lambie & Stewart, 2012).

There have been two recent systematic reviews of the efficacy of treatment and rehabilitation interventions that have the prevention of reoffending as their focus (Långström, et al., 2013; Walton & Chou, 2015). While there is some support for reduced recidivism following treatment “the effectiveness of these treatments remains neither clearly nor convincingly demonstrated” (Walton & Chou, 2015, p. 402). Furthermore, sexual offenders have been found to have no unique psychosocial or psychopathological characteristics (Rickard, 2015) suggesting that influences beyond the individual are at play.

The focus on the assessment and treatment of offenders, often categorised by an index offence, is misleading, especially given underreporting even of recidivism of those who have come to the attention of the criminal justice system. Despite the underreporting of child sexual abuse, community responses to the release of known sex offenders is often fuelled by fear of risk (Willis, Malinen & Johnston, 2013). This has implications for our communities, where media reports represent child sexual abuse as perpetrated by a few deviant, sick men rather than as a socio-cultural problem that pervades society (Mowat, 2012).

Media representations of child sex offenders reproduce the fear of the dangerous and deviant other so much so that in our social imagination, communities become dangerous places where child molesters and paedophiles lurk as “signifiers of legal discourse on sex offending” (Mowlabocus, 2015, p. 2). While we continue to focus our attention on the psychological narrative of

deviant individuals and media representations of child sex offenders as the monstrous other (Lewis & Mega, 2009; Simon, 1998; Young-Hauser, 2010) we also continue to understand child sex offending as the individual behaviour of strangers.

Contrary to what is portrayed in the media, the academic literature reports that the majority of child sex offenders are not strangers to their victims (Lambie, 2007). It is difficult to accept that a family member can also be a child sex offender. However, by ignoring familial child sex offences, media representations provide a false sense of security (Cowburn & Dominelli, 2001) and reproduce the notion that the nuclear family is a safe haven for children, free from the threat of being sexually abused (Young-Hauser, 2010). The complex relationship between the monstrous and the deviant other, the blurring of the boundaries between the media representation of the other and the psychological production of the subject (Mowat, 2012), is a necessary site for transforming our understanding of child sex offending.

One problematic in the statistical narrative of deviant individuals is that the measures embody a hegemonic understanding of sexual violence and offenders (Cowburn, 2005); the meaning is limited to legal definitions and embedded within a framework of legal and forensic institutional knowledge, ignoring the gendered power relations in the sociocultural construction of masculinity. In developing strategies for community safety, criminological and psychological discourse of assessment and risk management is predicated on knowledge of convicted sex offenders of whom the majority are men. Yet, in the research and literature on the management and treatment of child sex offenders there is “no mention of ‘men’ or ‘masculinity’ or ‘masculinities’ or ‘gender’ in their indexes” (Cowburn, 2010, p. 229). If the assumption of the Good Lives Model (Ward, Mann, & Gannon, 2006) is that individual and social goods are likely to increase various measures of well-being, then *surely* gender identity is a necessary site

of interest and masculinity/masculinities is/are relevant to facilitating personal change. As Cowburn (2010, p. 230) argues, “identities are a complex area that underpin attitudes and are embodied in behaviours. This would involve exploring how convicted offenders behave as *men* and could change as *men*”. Where the hegemony of men and practices of masculinity delimit research through the authority of science, the knowledge produced is a hegemonic discourse, and psychological discourse is implicated in its perpetuation.

This paper attends to the omission of masculinity as a construct which, by virtue of its privileged status, has been awarded exemption from scrutiny (McCarry, 2007), and to how this exemption has limited our opportunities for understanding child sex offending and therefore the prevention child sex abuse. To engage with the problem of child sex offending, attention to how men exercise and maintain their individual and collective power requires an interrogation of the hegemony of men – the different ways of being men in relation to women and children (Cowburn, 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that men position themselves in and through discursive practices of gendered power relations of domination and subordination according to normative sociocultural understandings of masculinity and femininity (and ‘other’ subordinate masculinities). Masculinity, therefore, “does not represent a certain type of man, but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 841). Normative understandings of gender operate within a hierarchy of masculinities “as a pattern of hegemony” (p. 844) that is contextually legitimated and associated with authority and social power within which hegemonic masculinity emerges as a material practice of authority, control, independence, competitive individualism, aggressiveness, heterosexualism, and the capacity for violence, including sexual violence (Gough, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2000b). It is through these socially available resources that men can demonstrate to others the

accomplishment of a masculine construction of ‘manliness’. Hegemonic masculinity is, therefore, not a static characteristic of individual men or a gender identity. Rather, it is dynamic, subject to change and contested (Connell, 2008). It is through the performance of gendered social power relations that hegemonic masculinity is rendered meaningful (Messerschmidt, 2012), where performativity is constituted “by the very expressions that are said to be its results” (Butler, 2006, p. 34).

Hegemonic masculinity therefore is not the expression of real men, but constitutes real men as its subject. Where there is an embedded assumption of the unquestionable right for men to have heterosex (Gavey, 2005), the meaning of hegemonic masculinity is intensified in men’s struggles to enact meaningful masculine performances of doing sex (Messerschmidt, 2000b). Hegemonic masculinity can thus be understood as a system of power that serves to justify the order of things institutionalised through gender relationships, including men’s heterosexual privilege.

Discourses of normative heterosexuality that assume men’s ‘natural urge’ for sex, position women as justifiable objects of sexual abuse (Gavey, 2005), normalising men’s sexual violence as ‘boys being boys’ (Messerschmidt, 2012). Heteronormative discourses produce and reproduce men’s sexuality as active and women’s sexuality as passive. Within this discursive context, women are responsible for male desire, for meeting or refusing his sexual pleasure. Cossins (2000) argues that the relationship of sexuality to the construction of masculinity is where relations of power are established among men and between men and women. Heteronormative discourses therefore limit men’s accountability for aggressive, abusive and criminal sexual behaviour, and at the same time, are implicated within the ever-present risk of failure to be a real man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cossins, 2000). Cossins (2000) argues men’s position in the social hierarchy is achieved through

exploitative masculine sexuality. It is the prevailing discourses of desire structured within hegemonic masculinity and participation in the sets of gendered social power relations, that we argue, provide the conditions for child sexual abuse.

The institutionalisation of socially dominant masculinities that legitimate the meaning of ‘manliness’ through the marginalisation or delegitimisation of alternative forms of masculinity, are embedded in everyday socio-political contexts. Hegemonic masculinity is structurally produced and reproduced across historical and local socio-political contexts embedded in intimate relations of globalisation: institutional practices of neoliberalism, western hegemony and everyday practices of normalisation (Coombes & Morgan, 2015). In turn, they are reproduced in families, communities, political, social and economic institutions.

With a focus on critical analysis of the institutionalisation of heterosexuality, Flood (2008) located the meaning of masculinity in the homosocial organisation of men’s heterosexual relationships and found men’s sexual relations with women were “strongly organised by their relationships with other men”, (p. 340), including homophobic violence. Homosociality within the culture of the military, for example, includes the ritualised sexual abuse of women to enhance the relationship between men. Langa (2008) found that rape in the context of the military is a legitimated expression of masculinity. It is the institutionalised gendered social power relations in the military, sports, social spaces, academic institutions and so on that bring hyper-masculinity, predicated on coercion and violence, into view in significant ways.

School is a particular site of producing and reproducing the gender hierarchy. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) argue that structural and cultural mechanisms, such as the rules that govern behaviour and disciplinary practices, the allocation of space, the composition of curriculum, participation in sport, and the way authority is exercised, are all technologies of gendered power. These technologies of power constitute the social

and political space to actively influence all its inhabitants as to how gender is performed (Connell, 1996) and they are implicated in the production of gendered violence (Renold, 2007).

The focus on gender in educational institutions has most often been directed to the construction of violent and hyper-masculinities in school settings (Connell, 2000). An example of the performance of the normalisation of sexual violence is Messerschmidt’s (2000b) study of sexually offending boys. He found adherence to a hegemonic masculine ideal was aggressively and violently policed in schools through a “culture of cruelty”, whereby those who did not meet the socially specified standards were frequently rejected, ridiculed, physically abused and given derogatory and emasculating labels, such as “wimp” and “mama’s boy” (Messerschmidt, 2000b, p. 27). The threat of being feminised represents a failure of achieving ‘manliness’, and simultaneously reproduces the inferiority of women. To achieve social status, adherence to this highly seductive, largely unobtainable world of masculine power influenced Messerschmidt’s participants to the point where they sexually abused other children.

Messerschmidt (2000a) locates child sexual abuse in the tension between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities where, in the absence of a competing discourse, participants’ masculinity was resolved through the enactment of sexual violence as a masculine rite of passage. What emerged from Messerschmidt’s study is that hegemonic masculinity is both institutionalised and enacted, and for these boys there was limited space for subversive performances. Without access to other forms of available masculinities for men and boys who may be marginalised, the failure to “be a real man” has serious consequences. The failure to perform as a real man intensifies hyper-masculinity as the only meaningful masculinity for self-performance.

The discursive constitution of hegemonic masculinity provides the socio-political conditions for the performance of masculinities and gender negotiations,

including the conditions for child sex offending (Messerschmidt, 2000b) and sexual offending in general (Flood, 2008; Turckik & Edwards, 2010). Where masculinity and femininity are institutionalised as a relationship of domination and subordination and reproduced as timeless and indisputable, discourses of masculinity both enable and constrain sexually harmful behaviour, including child sexual abuse. Our efforts to eliminate child sexual abuse therefore require attention to the social and cultural conditions that enable sexual abuse to emerge (Flood, 2002).

The Study

The purpose of this research was to gather novel insights into the lives of child sex offenders, providing possible points of intervention that could prevent child sexual abuse from occurring. In particular, this study aimed to challenge the dominant understandings of child sex offending that produce the offender as a deviant 'other' to the norm. In addition, this study aimed to locate the problem of child sexual abuse within hegemonic institutional and social power relations of masculinity. The practices of masculinity were also examined as sites of transformation. Questioning masculinity opens space where men can talk, as men, about the effects of masculinity for men and speak to the silent privilege of gendered social power. In doing so, we open up possibilities for transforming performances of masculinity that are pre-emptive.

This research takes masculinity as the site of inquiry in two ways. The first was through listening to the narratives of child sex offenders as they made sense of critical periods and influences in their lives and negotiated the meaning of masculinity in conversational interviews with the first author, often for the first time. The second was an analysis of the discursive constitution of masculinity in the men's accounts. The narrative approach to the interviews was necessary to the project to avoid positioning the men as subjects of the psychological production or media representation of the deviant/monstrous other. The narrative-discursive analysis enabled the interrogation

of the institutional and social power relations that produce masculinities in particular ways rather than individualising the problem to the 'known' offender.

Hearing the silenced. Hearing the narrative accounts of child sex offenders is likely to meet with resistance and/or raise anxiety for some researchers and practitioners. Giving a voice to the most abhorrent elements of child sexual abuse and offending can be anxiety provoking. Child sex offenders are routinely positioned outside of the discursive rules of normativity, and are simultaneously subject to the governance and control from within. Once branded a child sex offender, men are silenced by the discourses that produce 'him' as deviant other: a subject with no right to a compassionate hearing. Indeed, perhaps it is intelligible to exclude and dehumanise individual child sex offenders rather than confront the notion that somebody who has committed a crime so 'monstrous' could be like 'us' (Cossins, 2000). We understand the anxiety. However, hearing the voice of the other of normative discourse is an opportunity to negotiate multiple meanings by locating our research and practices in ethically responsive methodologies. Listening to the voice of the other enables us to attend to the constitution of meaning in the narratives of everyday lives, in the complexities and multiplicities that cannot be reduced to individual risk (Coombes, Denne, & Rangiwanga, 2016) so as to produce change in gendered social power relationships.

In the following sections, we present two case studies of child sex offenders who were part of a larger study, investigating how the narratives of men who had sexually abused children provide an opportunity to examine specific productions of socially and culturally meaningful masculinities, and the relationship between these constructed meanings and the discursive resources available to the men in their particular socio-political contexts. The material social conditions, discourses and practices that informed their masculine identities across time were of interest; not an account of their offending. This distinction is important as we

were focused on the resources available to these men, as men, and Auburn and Lea (2003) have found that men who have completed treatment programmes speak about their offending through a culturally constructed narrative consistent with the narrative of the programme.

Method

Informed consent

The research gained ethical approval from Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC, Southern A 09/85). The information sheet provided to participants reflected the tensions between confidentiality and the requirement to report any potential risk of reoffending being disclosed. Participants were informed that the research focused on their understandings and experiences of masculinity and not their offending histories. The men were also informed that the first author, and interviewer, was a trainee psychologist interested in the prevention of child sex abuse.

Recruitment

The criteria for participation were men who had been convicted of sexual offences against children, had completed a 12-month mandatory treatment programme in the community, and were willing to engage in a conversational interview about their life experiences of masculinity. This history provides a context for the conduct of the interviews.

Interviews

All of the interviews were conducted at the location where the men completed their treatment programmes, as required by the ethical protocol, and specified in the information sheet. This is significant in the production of the narratives that were generated, as the storying in the present is constrained by institutional, social and cultural discourses, and the setting for interviews was the organisation that served as the gatekeeper of the participants' freedom previously.

The interviews were conversational so that both the interviewer and the participants could meaningfully explore masculinity in the to-and-fro of talk between men, in a

particular social relationship. The men were encouraged to begin their stories from their earliest childhood memories and, from there, their narratives were loosely structured in a temporal ordering of key events including parental and familial relationships, school, intimate relationships, occupations, offending and how they understood masculinity through these events. Particular attention was paid to moments of special meaning in the men's lives, regardless of whether these moments seemed to be especially relevant to masculinity. For example, where the interviewer noticed naturalised constructions in the men's language such as, "that's just the way it is", he responded with questions such as "where do you think that [feeling/belief] comes from?" .

Gender specific language was explicitly used, and masculinity became realised in the conversations when talking about key moments and turning points in the men's lives. For example, the question "you described your father as a 'manly man'; what was a manly man?" was asked to investigate a paternal performance of masculinity that was being discussed. Often the conversations would lead to how particular discourses of masculinity had transformed through their lives. Further questions were asked concerning the implications of adhering to a certain type of masculinity, for example, "what would it mean if you did cry in front of your [male] friends?" or "how is it the men at school had more authority?". Such questions often developed insight for both the interviewer and the men in the flow of the conversation as to the implications of particular constructions of masculinity and the subject positions that were enabled and constrained through them. The conversations lasted between 1 ¾ and 2 ¾ hours.

Process of Analysis

The analysis of the men's narratives sought to identify the discursive positioning performed by the men in storying their negotiations with masculinities, and their implications for understanding masculinity as a site for pre-emptive intervention. As researchers, we are very aware that in doing so, the analysis runs the risk of minimising

the effects that child sexual abuse has on victims. On many occasions, it would have been easier to talk about researcher anxiety over some of what we heard in terms of 'disgust' or 'revulsion'. We deeply acknowledge the harm the children suffered, although the stories of those harmed remain obscured. We are committed to the *prevention* of child sexual abuse, not a reduction in the 'risk' of re-offending. Applying such a methodology to the problem of child sexual abuse, and questioning the most taken-for-granted assumptions, allows us the opportunity to examine the problem and find new and useful ways to influence interventions.

The following analysis is organised around two case studies from the larger study. The two cases were selected to enrich Cossins' (2000) theorisation of masculinity with specific instances of the way that men's position in the social hierarchy implicates experiences of dynamic power relations involving both domination and subordination. While there is diversity of experience among men and masculinities, the centrality of sexuality to the construction of masculinity locates sexuality as the site where masculinity and power are intimately connected.

The case studies presented are organised through a narrative analysis to construct and present moments of Chris and Josh's life stories with particular attention paid to key relationships and events that informed their positioning and the performance of their masculine identities. Each case study is organised chronologically to form a pattern of meaning that represented how masculinity was negotiated from their childhood through to their offending and beyond. They are represented through the storylines that emerged in the narrative (re) construction of masculine identities to make visible the ways in which masculinities were produced, and resisted.

We then consider how the men's discursive positioning reproduced relationships of domination and subordination of normative heterosexuality, specifically how they enabled and

constrained gendered experiences across time and context. Language that adheres to the rules of the permanency of gender indicates a naturalisation of the discourse (Hook, 2001). For example, comments such as, "that's just what men do" or, "it's just the way it is" suggest that performances of masculinity are embedded in the social and cultural imaginary of men. This dimension of the analysis also considers taken-for-granted assumptions about heteronormativity that might condone, or mitigate the subordination of women and children. For example, the discursive construction of the right for men to have sex, to dominate, or to use violence as a means of control is analysed. It is precisely where dominant discourses are produced as stable in their adherence to hegemonic masculinity that the conditions for child sex offending are produced (Messerschmidt, 2000b). Normalised discursive practices of gendered social power relations that legitimate exploitation and oppression in the performance of masculinity are the focus of this analysis.

The men drew on dominant discourses of masculinity as they reflected on their own position in the gender hierarchy. Such discourses consisted of clusters of terms, networks of meanings or systems of statements that provided content to their understanding of masculinity as an 'object', in this case to their position as a man. The most salient discourse produced by the men in this study was the 'manly man'. As a network of meaning, this discourse resonated with discourses that reproduce traditional masculinity (Flood, 2010), where manly men are constituted as stoic, emotionally restricted, independent, powerfully present, heterosexually virile, physically competent and the protector and provider to the family.

Analysis – Case Studies

Both participants (Chris and Josh) were men in their thirties who had served a prison sentence for sexual crimes against children. Josh could be considered privileged (in an economic sense) and Chris located himself as "working class". Chris had a career in the armed forces and Josh had pursued a specialist position in medicine.

Josh

Josh came from a two parent, seemingly supportive, middle class conservative family. In the interview, he constructed his identity through his difference to their values, positioning himself as a risk taker.

I guess they're kind of 'one job for life', the white picket fence, 'you've got to have good savings', quite sort of conservative, quite middle-class; whereas I think I'm a lot more adventurous, a lot more risk taking. I'm a bit more kind of 'a sensualist', like I'll spend my money on rich foods and drinks or travel or experiences like bungee jumping, whereas they'll be like 'buy a new carpet for the lounge'.

Within his narrative, Josh's mother is mostly absent and he attributed this to the culture of the military where the homosocial organisation of men's heterosexual relationships formed the familial structure. Josh positions his mother in a relationship of domination and subordination through his grandfather's powerful masculine presence that not only subdued his mother, but also any feminine expression of emotion.

Mum came from a family, which was, although it was four daughters, utterly, utterly dominated by my grandfather, the father figure. He was a military guy, in the air force. I think mum, compared to a lot of other mums, was quite subdued. So even she doesn't kind of show her emotions that much in public, I get the feeling that she thinks if she does it's a bad thing it's not something she is supposed to be doing.

Competition was encouraged between Josh and his brother and he felt that he failed to achieve the success expected of him. His brother was more accomplished in "popular" sports such as rugby and cricket, and earned his masculine position alongside his father.

Josh positioned himself as less effective than his brother in attracting women, another form of successful masculinity. Positioning his brother as "manly" like his father signified his failure. His brother thrived in traditional masculine pursuits but achieved "average" grades at school. Josh, on the other hand, achieved excellence academically and was an athletics champion, lower on the masculine hierarchy, including in his physical presentation. He understood himself as failing at both masculinity and as a son. He resisted the homosocial bond shared by his father and brother to produce an identity as an intellectual. While this may constitute a subordinate position in the social hierarchy of masculinity, a lack of physical and sexual power is juxtaposed with a gain in intelligence aligned with economic power.

I always felt that my brother had the closest relationship with dad than I did...I always saw [my brother] as a better athlete. He had more girlfriends, he was just more the sort of 'jock' kind of guy and I was more the academic, sort of booky, crafty or whatever; whereas he was more kind of physical. But, I don't know, I think we are very, very different people, I mean he's more like my parents.

Josh positioned his father in the gendered social hierarchy through features of masculinity that are authoritarian, physically imposing, and emotionally restricted.

He's like sort of an authority figure type of a man, so both in a hierarchical sense and in physical capability. He was like, I guess what you'd call, a stereotypically manly man. He's kind of fairly unemotional just gets things done. If there's a tragedy, 'ok we'll deal with it -no point getting upset about it'.

Josh reflected that discipline and boundaries were not a prominent part of his childhood. Both he and his brother were generally obedient, and as such, their parents adopted a "permissive" approach to

parenting that offered little in the way of structured rules and guidance. Josh recalled that at school, discipline and guidance was similarly vague and seemingly unnecessary. His academic achievements and his allegiance to the 'academic'/'geeks' group meant that he rarely resisted the schools boundaries or behaved inappropriately.

During his primary school years, Josh was typically reserved and withdrawn. He described himself as "invisible" within the school culture. However, in his narrative (re) telling he drew on examples of using threats of violence when he felt criticised. Within the social spaces of school, institutionalised forms of masculine violence were brought into view.

When I was 8 or 9, [I'd do] things like picking a chair up and threatening to throw it at one of the kids in the class because they'd said something that had pissed me off. I got in a fight in form 3 at high school with, again it was a really good mate of mine, and again I can't remember what set it off - which shows how trivial it probably was. I got really angry, then the 2 of us were rolling around the floor knocking over desks in the class room; pulling each other's ties and trying to like push each other into the floor. I had lots of examples...I'd take things really personally or whatever and eventually I guess I kind of learned to deal with that and you know by the time I was 16 or 17 it kind of all stopped.

Technologies of power that structure school life, including the hierarchical organisation of space and the authority to enact power relations between men impacted on Josh's narrative of masculine identity.

Every form was expected to hassle the form below. There was very much division at school into juniors and seniors. The assembly hall was set up with Form 7 down the front and all

the juniors are like around the outside and the back. It was all just structured around moving to the next level.

Josh discussed how the rules that govern masculine performance in the social hierarchy are maintained and consolidated through participation in the violent subordination of non-masculine boys. Participation in the violent subordination of less 'manly' groups or individuals is necessary to the construction of relations of masculinity and power. In the relationship of power and powerlessness, proficiency in sport is a way authority is exercised and gender is performed.

We had a guy in our class and we used to have this game where we were standing around the hallway waiting for the class to be open and we'd bounce him around. He was on the chess team so it was like 'ah that's not very manly thing to be so we're allowed to pick on you because you're on the chess team'. I would have got bullied like that had I not been [an accomplished athlete], I'm almost certain of it because I would have just been this chess playing geek.

The rights associated within a masculine identity of athleticism enabled Josh to enact violence in the subordination of other boys, and simultaneously protect himself from his own vulnerable location in the social hierarchy. Reflecting on his participation in hegemonic relations of domination and subordination at school, Josh observed that he had enacted violence to confirm his masculinity and maintaining silence confirmed his position in the social hierarchy. To take up a position of resistance would represent a failure and a loss of protection.

I don't think anyone would have listened [if I tried to stop the bullying]; it's just one guy saying. Maybe that's what I felt sometimes, but I joined in

because that was going to be more in my self-interest.

As Josh repeatedly engaged in certain social practices that confirmed his masculinity, adolescence heightened sexuality as the site through which masculinity and power produced and reproduced power relations between men and men between men and women. In his (re)telling, Josh remembers being attracted to girls as an adolescent, but was too “afraid” to approach them. Indeed, the masculine hierarchy at Josh’s school extended to expectations of sexual adventurousness, with those in their senior years expected to be more sexually experienced. The school culture sexualised girls through stories of sexual exploits, pornographic playing cards and biology lessons that objectified girls and women. Without access to alternative representations of women, his adherence to heterosexual normativity confirmed his masculinity and continued to dominate his sexual relationships into adulthood.

I couldn’t really have girlfriends at school because it was all boys. I just remember conversations like this one guy going on about ‘oh in 3rd form you’re supposed to kiss and in 4th form you’re supposed to have a bit of a feel and in 5th form you’re supposed to have sex’ and this is just the way it is...it’s the older brother introducing the younger brother. Certainly in early uni’, most of uni’ actually, girls were seen as a way to get a bit of action.

As Josh negotiated his masculine identity both in resistance to his father and through relations of power and powerlessness among boys at school, he began to test “boundaries and their consequences” especially in relation to heterosex.

I used to be extremely moral about the whole faithfulness thing. When I was with [my first girlfriend] I was at a party and basically there were these drunk fifth formers who were throwing themselves at everyone. I was

like whoa! What are you doing sitting on me? Get off I’ve got a girlfriend!...More recently, I’ve been very bad at being faithful - something changed around Form 7. I think it was, basically, that when I did cheat on someone it was like ‘oh is that all it was?’ I didn’t get struck down by karma or anything. I think the wrong thing to do was to start because then it became easier to do - like drinking and drugs.... It’s almost like there was this barrier in my mind that was just this illusion or I felt was just an illusion.

Josh recognised heterosexual power as a turning point in the narrative of his masculine identity. He recognised he had the authority to break monogamy rules without consequence; shifting his moral boundaries confirmed his masculinity. Josh reflected on the tension between the relations of power in sexual relationships (dominant) and work (subordinate) where he experienced a contradiction between agreement and entitlement. The experience of power and powerlessness dominated Josh’s moral positioning by his failure to meet the contractual obligations of heterosexuality.

I’m almost a bit obsessive because even if it’s going to be really inconvenient for me to carry on doing this thing, even if it’s something like meeting someone for coffee, but suddenly my day is really busy and I can’t really fit it in, I’ll still do it but then I’ll be pissed off doing my other stuff later on because I’ll have to stay late. When I feel that I’m fairly entitled to something you know, that’s put in a contract or something like that, and someone’s not giving it to me then I’d be really pissed off.

He also described being in a constant tension between inside and outside a heterosexual relationship, losing his self-

interested focus when in a relationship.

Actually, I tend to go too far when I'm in a relationship. Maybe I spend too much time with them and don't give myself enough chance to do what I want to do. When I'm out of one I spend a lot of time of my own and suddenly crave for it again.

Yet, through this tension, Josh also felt a sense of freedom at the end of a relationship. Sex had become a key experience through which power was derived and his masculinity was accomplished. This signalled the beginning of a trajectory in which moral boundaries were repeatedly broken, re-established and broken again.

I thought, 'man, I just fucked up in the biggest possible way but it's done now, the relationship's over, now I can do whatever I like' and so there was this sense of freedom as well, and so I went through a sort of reckless sort of period.

In the accomplishment of his masculinity, the competing experiences of success and failure continued to plague his narrative of identity.

I guess it's a fear of not being respected or recognised as someone significant. I guess I have this fear of being the guy in the corner that no-one wants to talk to because no-one's interested so I don't even start. I always like to be seen as someone who is successful or someone who is an achiever, and people who know me maybe see that but people who don't know me don't like [the] first impression and [may] not realise this kind of stuff about me. I don't like giving the wrong impression so I'd rather give no impression.

Within the competing experiences of power and powerlessness, Josh performed his masculine identity through its relation with sex. In the following extract, he reflects on how he confirmed his masculinity through a narrative trajectory that brings into view his

experiences of losing both social and personal power, including his professional identity as subordinate in the social hierarchy at work, in relation to his understanding of the order of masculinity and his masculine identity.

Effectively what happened was that there was a progression - again it's one of those barrier kind of breaking things. I was 24 at the time and so I started talking to people [on a social networking website] who were 20 -24. I mean why would you want to talk to someone who was 18 or something - that's a first year student, you want nothing to do with them? But then, sometimes at night there weren't many people online it was like 'oh ok I'll talk to this person they're only 19 or whatever' you know?...Once the barriers are broken then it's not a barrier anymore, 'oh 17 that's not big deal'...A lot of it was this desire to just defer work for as long as possible, um through going out, through drinking, through chatting online, like chatting online until 3 in the morning...So they just got younger and younger until it eventually got to the point where I met up with someone who was 15 via this process of chatting. I mean eventually that's when the offending began. Never in a million years would I ever imagine myself talking to someone who was 15...I think it was basically the availability and ease, [with younger girls] it was easier to get what I was after because they were much less guarded and cautious, they were more reckless than grown up girls. There were two 15 year old girls. Then at this party up here [there were] a couple of [underage] girls who I hadn't

had sex with but who I kissed and stuff...[and we'd] just lie on the bed and talk or whatever and then have sex and then she'd go home...I think a relationship is the wrong word because it was just meeting up for sex.

The narrative of offending here reflects the tensions of power and powerless, both social and personal that produce a vulnerability to masculinity in relations among men. Cossins (2000) argues the pattern produces exploitative masculinity as a response to heteronormative failure, where masculinity can confirm gendered identity through endless conquests, reproduced and affirmed through the social and cultural conditions of hegemony “where the characteristics of less powerful objects of desire include willingness, compliance, petiteness, submissiveness – in short, the characteristics of children” (p.115).

Chris

Chris came from a two-parent working class family that was organised around gender difference and maintained through physical violence against his mother and in the discipline of Chris and his sister. When considering his position in the family, he clearly understood that his gender necessarily meant disproportionate physical punishment.

I always felt sort of second best to my sister - with regards to my dad anyway, I always felt that things were a bit harder, and a bit rougher on me than her. He was always a very manly man.

Within his narrative, it was the normality of violence both against women and as a form of discipline, that signified manliness. Positioning his father as manly, through his expression of violence, maintained a hierarchy of masculinities, which consolidated Chris's heterosexual identity at an early age. The intergenerational narrative affirms violent masculinity in a relation of domination and subordination between men; male homosociality is necessary to the use of interpersonal violence and maintains a gendered hierarchy of power

and powerlessness.

[Dad] had a very rough upbringing, his father used to beat him and burn him with cigarettes. He's one of these guys where you hear stories about; 'Oh I used to ride a horse to the school and keep my feet warm in cow pats'... Dad was the youngest so he was the one doing all the work as the youngest child. I mean, if he got it wrong he'd get a whack. His dad used to cut his hair with sheep clippers – the old hand sheep clippers - and if he moved while he was getting his hair cut it would be whack across the head with the sheep clippers. Dad's got scars across his head where his head's been ripped open, so yeh it was pretty rough for him.

Through a narrative of heterosexual violence, Chris's father dominated his childhood memories to the point where he found it difficult to recall his mother. He understood the positioning of his mother as subordinate to his father's powerful performance of masculinity.

Mum was very quiet, I can't pick any particular memories [of her], I mean mum's always been there but always sort of quiet and in the background. I suppose that's from being suppressed by dad.

Chris experienced his father's disciplinary practices as a requirement of masculinity that is emotionally restricted, where feelings were not an available resource for being 'manly'. Even experiences of anger were produced as authorising discipline, and therefore involving maintenance of a physical (dominant) rather than an emotional (subordinate) relationship.

We'd get pulled around and yelled at. [Dad's] temper was on a very short wick so if things weren't going right he'd get angry pretty quick...he never really explained why he did [discipline us]. I suppose it was

part of him as well - you don't talk about that sort of thing, you don't talk about feelings, you don't talk about all that sort of stuff.

Chris found it difficult to consolidate his understanding of his father as 'manly' through the position of protector, especially where he experienced harsh discipline enacted through violence.

I don't exactly understand it myself but um manly man, the way I saw it was, the protector [of the family] - which doesn't make sense either - being the protector and then beating up on the family.

The contradiction between protection and violence affirmed for Chris that expression of emotion within the social hierarchy of masculinity was a weakness, and opened up a vulnerability that could be exploited by other men.

[Dad] didn't get taught how to teach me properly. He's always been a 'manly man' and 'don't cry' and, the 'man of the house' and 'you've got to be strong'. Being brought up not to talk about things - about feelings and um yeh how we're feeling and stuff like that, you just didn't talk about it.

In resistance to his subordinate position at home, Chris manufactured a "macho" identity that served to protect him from physical threat and elevate his masculine status at school. He engaged in violence to gain power and demonstrate his masculinity.

It was something to hide behind, so no-one sort of knew what was really going on [at home]... I was just real confident, cocky um probably [portrayed being] bigger and tougher than I really was. It sort of helped a wee bit that I got into a lot of fights and I very rarely lost, so the tough side of the whole image sat quite well.

As he gained status through repeated performances of 'winning fights', he began to confirm his masculinity; in control, strong,

respected and dangerous. Approaching adolescence, the affirmation of his masculinity became entwined with a growing sexual interest in girls and women. During his adolescence and early adulthood, and to not expose his vulnerability, his masculine identity was affirmed through competing experiences of success and failure at sex. Chris was initially fearful of rejection when negotiating sex. He had a long history of casual sexual relationships before his first serious relationship, when he was 22 years old.

I certainly didn't think much of them [girls]. If I didn't sort of like a girl, I didn't think much of her at all, you know?... I suppose it was a bit more of a personal build up but again or a like a reassurance thing, if I can get back a second time then I've obviously done something right the first time so yeh I think that is more what it was about as well - personal reassurance.

Chris constructed a set of rules to his engagement with sexual relationships; casual relationships were privileged over one-night stands. In this way his success at sex, confirmed his masculinity. Chris resisted controlling girls through violence, stating he "didn't really hit girls", resisting the form of masculinity taken up by his father. The experience of power and powerlessness dominated his sexual relationships.

Chris's chosen career was in the armed forces, an institution that is overtly masculinised and stressful, particularly during deployment. The legitimate form of masculinity that is constructed through homosocial bonds between men in the armed forces is constituted through the perpetuation of physical toughness, endurance, aggression, heterosexuality and unemotional logic (Flood, 2008). The construction of a masculine soldier identity therefore, is affirmed through relations of homosociability. Voicing emotional distress following his deployment was understood by Chris to breach the homosocial bond and threaten his masculine identity. Chris

described the events of his deployment that overwhelmed him.

The hardest thing about dealing with mass graves was [the] women and children. A lot of the women were the same age as [my wife] and a lot of the children were the same age as my kids. I just had a baby three months before I left and one of the bodies I picked up was a baby about the same age as [my baby]. I picked up this [baby's] body and it basically disintegrated. I came home and would go to pick up my own children and that's the first image that flicks through my head, and that's why I started to detach myself which was the start of my problems.

However, it was a failure of masculinity that was a turning point in his masculine identity, where the expression of emotional sensitivity was understood as unmanly, and risked a loss of masculine status. Chris had no means to produce an account of his experiences and maintain his masculine identity. Effectively, his adherence to manly masculinity produced a vulnerability that could not be articulated.

If I have to talk about it then I'm going to break down and being the manly man that I was I couldn't break down in front of my family and friends. I suppose I thought I was too much of a man to be able to break down in front of my family. Every time I want to talk to someone about it, the emotion came up and I just wanted to break down and I couldn't let that happen. Then I started having sexual issues...

Within the competing experiences of power and powerlessness, where Chris's masculine identity was deeply embedded in a desire to be manly, he also confirmed his masculine identity through its relation with sex. In the extract below, he reflects on how he confirmed his masculinity through a telling that brings into view the experiences

of emotional powerlessness that threatened his masculine identity as structured through homosocial relations of power.

Chris sexually assaulted his 13-year-old stepdaughter.

I started looking at porn on the computer. I was using that as an escape and the lack of sex that I was having at home and because of my own issues that I was having with detaching myself from everyone and everything...I wasn't coping with the fact that [my wife] had medical issues that meant she couldn't have sex. We'd plan to have sex like a week in advance and then the kids would do something and that would just screw the whole thing up so I was getting real angry with the kids and with [my wife] and then I'd get angry at myself because I was getting angry at them. Everything just sort of built up and built up, and um yeh, the opportunity basically arose and I took that opportunity. I was um basically I was just being selfish, I saw what I wanted and I went for it...I didn't sort of realise I was doing it until it was done and I sort of sat back down and went 'shit what have I just done?'

Chris's narrative of sexual offending emerges in "circumstances where there are real or perceived challenges to their masculine power" (Cossins, 2000, p. 126), in this case, vulnerability to his emotional response to trauma.

Masculinity as a Site of Intervention

The interviews with Chris and Josh, provided an opportunity to reflect on masculinity and their experiences of the hegemony of men and opened up spaces for them to discuss how pre-emptive interventions might have been effective for preventing their sexual victimisation of girls. Both men reflected on the lack of available resources to warrant breaching the socio-cultural norms that held their masculine identities in place.

Both participants made explicit the need for men to change their relationships, to shift from constructing their identities through practices of masculinity that produce independence and competitive individualism and particularly the feminisation of emotion as markers of success. They wanted a shift to a more communicative recognition of interdependence, empathy and awareness of each other.

Drawing on his experience of treatment, learning to communicate with other men opened the possibility for Josh to understand that homosocial relations could provide the context for changing relations between men. Treatment provided a context where men were encouraged or, arguably, forced to express emotion, discuss failures and expose vulnerabilities; not just in private sessions but in front of other men.

In the [treatment] programme it [communication] was a lot easier to do once I could see other people doing it in the group. So I think maybe at school, or [other institutions], small group work [would be helpful] where you are encouraged to share that sort of stuff. I could see it working...let's just get together and share concerns. (Josh)

I think that as a society we'd do well to do more of that rather than just let people cope on their own. That never really went on at my school...no-one really took a deep interest in [me]. [It was the] same in [postgraduate study where junior staff] were expected to be these robots that could do everything. I think I have accepted that it's a really stressful job and that maybe people have poor coping strategies and even if they are coping, just checking up on people you know - 'what's going on?', 'how's your relationship?' Things like that - more communication. (Josh)

Chris advocates for compulsory education and counselling support across the

armed forces, especially for recognising signs of un-wellness and wishes he "had someone to talk to" prior to his offending, calling for a cultural level change that challenges masculine practices that inhibit help-seeking behaviour.

I think not only the army but everyone [would benefit from a] greater awareness of depression. I suppose at the end of the day greater awareness from commanders looking at their soldiers, or friends looking at their friends and saying 'look hey you need help, something's going on, speak to someone'. I suppose in the army's case they need to order their soldiers to have counselling. If something happens that going to adversely affect their soldiers, get some counselling because their soldiers are going to be better for it. (Chris)

Josh's masculine identity depended on his academic success and independence. When facing failure the possibility of asking for help was incomprehensible to him.

In our family we never, asked each other those sorts of questions...I never wanted to ask my parents for help because I was supposed to be this successful independent son who'd achieved this, this, and this. I knew that things were going badly and I could have rung up mum and dad and said 'look I'm really unhappy at the moment, can I come and live at home for a few months?' but it never crossed my mind to do that because that's not the done thing. (Josh)

For Josh, establishing networks of open communication for men is vital in preventing child sex abuse. He reflected that changing the culture of heteronormativity where people both recognise and feel they can intervene and offer support when they notice a friend is struggling, or acting harmfully to others, would go some way to preventing

child sex abuse.

I think that people should take a deeper interest in the lives of the people around them. When I was [offending] I was living in a flat with 4 others and there were people coming and going in my room and no one said anything. It's me that was doing it, I'm not blaming them or anything, but things could have been completely different if one of my flatmates had said 'oh who was that girl she looked kind of young what's going on'? It has made me think a bit about the people around me, is there anyone around me in trouble? (Josh)

More specifically, exposing heterosexual normativity by challenging the representations of child sex offenders as the other was a site for intervention for Chris.

Sexual offending is a huge thing and it's happening all the time and in places that you wouldn't expect it to be happening and yet it's probably the least talked about thing in the world. (Chris)

Chris was unable to recognise the grooming that preceded his offending as his understanding of child sex offending was through the representation of the monstrous other. Not recognising himself in that representation at the time of his offending, during the interview, he was able to reflect on the moments in the process where he might have been able to stop the trajectory of grooming he was undertaking.

I suppose for me being on the outside seeing that sort of thing happen to someone else then I could step in and say 'hey you know this is what's happening? You've got to be careful, you might need to go and see someone, do talk to someone because this is what's going on' ... I think it would [help] but I also think that a lot of people would sort of brush it off 'oh it won't happen to me, I'd never do

that sort of thing you know' I used to say that all the time 'I'd never do that I hate people that do that' but yet that's exactly what I did because all you really see is that end effect of the end offending, you don't see what's gone on before. Had I known about the build up to [offending] then I could have gone 'hold on whoa this is what I'm doing'. So I suppose the awareness of how it builds up and what leads up to it [would be helpful]. (Chris)

The purpose of this research was to gain insight into the lives of child sex offenders to provide possible points of intervention that could prevent child sex offending. The analysis of the men's narratives identified the relations of power and powerless between men and between men and women as they negotiated their masculinity. The narrative analysis articulates the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and child sex offending, where exploitative masculine sexuality confirmed their gendered identity. The examination of child sex offending in terms of what it tells us about masculine social practices brought into view the normative sexual elements that are affirmed through child sex abuse. Listening to the stories of Josh and Chris provides an insight into pre-emptive strategies that locate the possibility for transformation in changing relations in the homosocial bond.

Discussion

The two case studies, drawn from a larger study and analysed in this paper aimed to extend our understanding of preventing child sex offending by attending to masculinity in the context of the hegemony of men that enables men to exercise individual and collective power in relation to women and children. Omitted as a construct from the predominantly clinical and forensic investigations of child sex offending, masculinity provided a site for interrogating

the homosocial bonds that bind men in relationships of power and powerlessness through the dominance of a form of hegemonic masculinity and the subordination of alternative masculinities. Engaging with the case studies of Josh's and Chris's experiences of masculinity provided insights into the trajectories of their sex offending against children that began in their own childhoods, families of origin that were steeped in the privilege and dominance of men, the valuing of manly masculinity, and the dominance and subordination of women and children. Throughout their childhoods and into adulthood, Josh and Chris repeatedly encountered the dominance of manly men and sanctions, often violent, against alternative masculinities within their families and other social spaces and institutions.

Although there are distinct differences between the two cases, they come together through the operation of hegemonic masculinity and heterosexual relations. As a system of social power relations among men, hegemonic masculinity is enacted to produce the characteristics of the manly man as a figure of the successful achievement of masculinity (Gough, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2000b). For Josh and Chris, the location of the manly man within the homosocial organisation of men's heterosexual relationships was disciplined through a regime of violence against alternative masculinities. The institutionalisation of gendered social power relations limited space for subversive performances of masculinity where the failure to perform as a manly man within the social hierarchy was sanctioned by physical punishment or emotional abuse. Real or perceived failure intensified the relationship of sexuality to masculinity through relations of power among men and between men and women.

Significant to their narratives was the irrelevance of their mothers, except as subordinate to the manly men in their families. The prevailing figure of the manly man excluded an account of women other than as inferior and as men's subordinate. The feminisation of emotional expression and the subordination of women converged to

threaten successful masculinity if emotional connectedness was felt or enacted. Unable to access compassion for the subordination of women in their lives, women were positioned within the homosocial bond as objects of desire and sexual exploitation in the men's self-performance of sexual gratification.

What emerged through the analysis of the men's narratives was a distinctive set of gendered social power relations; when their power was compromised because of their relationships with other men, child sex offending became a particular practice to achieve the successful performance of a manly man for themselves. Within the narrow confines of the manly man, the men deteriorated to a point where they committed offences that had previously been unthinkable or abhorrent to them.

We recognise the limitations of analysing only two case studies of experiences of masculinity in the lives of child sex offenders. Nonetheless, this study indicates that the absence of gender analysis from criminological and psychological approaches limits opportunities to deepen our understanding of the ways in which gendered power relations and the sociocultural construction of masculinity are implicated in child sex offending. By enabling Josh and Chris to engage in reflective conversations about their experiences of masculinity, and the development of their identities as men, this study draws attention to the crucial importance of sociocultural phenomena that is often ignored when criminological and psychological research and interventions focus on treating deviance and constructing child sex offenders as monstrous others (Cowburn, 2005; Flood, 2002; Messerschmidt, 2000b).

Despite differences in their life-stories of masculinity, Josh and Chris exemplify normative understandings of gender and tell of how they specifically operated in their lives to produce material practices of authority, control, independence, competitive individualism, aggressiveness, heterosexualism, and the capacity for violence, including sexual violence. The interplay of power and powerlessness in their

social and familial relationships with other men produced the accomplishment of a masculine construction of 'manliness' as an imperative for them. They recognised the serious consequences of failing as a 'manly man,' intensifying their self-performance of hypermasculinity and enabling the conditions under which they sexually offended against children.

Through storying their experiences of masculinity in the interview context, Josh and Chris' reflections and our analysis of their cases provide insights into the kinds of services that could be provided in communities, to provide pre-emptive interventions through transforming the meanings of masculinity and opening spaces for social acceptance, among men, of alternative masculinities. Rather than the reactive, individualistic approach offered within psychological treatments of men who have already offended, psychologists and other providers have the opportunity to initiate sites, such as group programmes (including clinical interventions) or community conversations, where men are able to reflect on their relationships with each other, with hegemonic masculinity, and with the effects of power and powerlessness in their relationships with other men, as well as with women and children. Community education and mobilisation to transform the meanings of masculinity alongside services that allow men to seek help before they sexually offend, without fear of the stereotype of the monstrous other, could enable men like Josh and Chris to shift the imperative to perform themselves as 'manly men' and pre-empt their offences against children.

As researchers and practitioners located variously within community and clinical fields, we argue that it is the ethical responsibility for all psychologists to be critically reflexive of the dominant practices of masculinity to transform understandings, minimise harm and maximise protective aspects/strengths of men as a responsible response to the prevention of child sex abuse.

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