

July 21, 1994

SEXUAL ABUSE IN ISRAELI FAMILIES: ANALYSIS OF A SURVEY

An article and a 25 items questionnaire dealing with child sexual abuse issues were published in LA'ISHA, a very popular weekly magazine in Israel. The information appeared in two issues - December 27, 1993 and February 21, 1994.

Informants mailed back the questionnaire to a post office box in Tel Aviv which was set up specifically for this study.

Our cut date for data collection was set for April 1, 1994.

The data was then given to GALLOP POLL a well respected Israeli research company.

Total of eighty eight people responded to the questionnaire, eighty one females and seven males. The disproportionate number of women was expected since women report more sexual victimization. In our society, in general, men report very little sexual abuse. In Israeli culture, where masochism plays a big roll, it may deepen the veil of silence and consequently the wound by not permitting a man to express his victimization. Later, we'll review specifically the figures of the male survivors.

The sample had an age distribution of between sixteen and fifty seven years of age. The majority of the responded fall between the ages of nineteen and thirty. Nine subjects were twenty-four years old.

The majority of responded, forty one (47%), were single. Twenty nine (33%) were married and ten (11%) were divorced, the rest didn't indicate marital status.

The composition of the sample reflects that most of the survivors (82 percent) had grown up in cities.

In this study there was no evidence that sexual abuse occurs or tolerated more in any particular ethnic background.

The religious breakdown reflects a majority of reform Jews (fifty one percent). Thirty three percent were conservative. Twelve percent were orthodox.

This findings by itself shade light on the myth that sexual abuse doesn't occur among religious Jews. Our evidence clearly suggests to the contrary - religious homes are not immune to such problems.

G. A 24 year old orthodox woman who was sexually abused from age five to nine by several cousins and a good friend of her father, told us about her dreams and nightmares: "Very often I dream about snakes thrusting down on the face while crawling into my mouth and chocking me. I panic, cover my eyes and wake up while trying to dismiss them..." We spoke about the meaning of this dream and what could it

represent for her (the associations were the abusive men's penises controlling her -penis-envy conflicts), when we questioned her: "What could you do before going to sleep to help keep this dream away?"

She looked at me and said: I learned that when I say SHEMA ISRAEL (a Jewish prayer said twice a day, in which a person bestow full fate in the only mighty God) before going to sleep the dream doesn't appear. You have to believe in something..."

Our data also cast some light on the myth that incest and sexual abuse occurs in poverty stricken families or lower social classes. Thirty eight (43%) of the responded in this survey came largely from middle-class family background. Twenty eight (32%) were lower class and sixteen survivors (18%) were from a middle-upper class background.

Clearly this research shows that sixty (69%) survivors have been experiencing traumatic disorders, even though most of them are well functioning adults.

They've been reliving a traumatic experience, whether in the form of intrusive memories, dreams, or actions, which carries with it the emotional intensity of the original event.

Traumatized people who cannot spontaneously dissociate may attempt to produce similar numbing effects by using alcohol or narcotics (Benward & Denden, 1976; Miller, 1990) or sinking themselves into repetitive eating binges. It seems clear that traumatized people run a high risk of compounding their difficulties by developing dependence on food, alcohol or other drugs. Thirteen percent of our subjects abused alcohol or drugs.

#49 A 21 year old survivor who was sexually abused by her brother wrote: "For a long time I took sleeping pills, I was anxious and used to abuse men (sexually)..."

#45 Another twenty six year old survivor was sexually abused by an uncle and a neighbor wrote: "In regards to the section about self-destructive behavior all the points are set right for a certain period. Today I rebuild myself and my future. I no longer deal with drugs, alcohol and prostitution..."

Twenty three (26%) of our informants developed eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia and obesity.

#77 A forty three year old woman who was abused by her father at the age of fourteen wrote: "My last resort was often food. It was the good thing I could have (the pleasure). It was only mine..."

Bulik, Sullivan and Rorty (1987) in a study examining the family environment and psychiatric history of women with bulimia, found that 34% of thirty five outpatient bulimic women had been sexually abused. Another study (Oppenheimer, Howells & Palmer, 1985) of anorexic and bulimic women reported a similar prevalence of sexual abuse.

Wilson, Hogan and Mintz (1983) indicated that the fear of being fat can mask unresolved incestuous conflicts. Their study of 50 anorexia nervosa patients, revealed strong exhibitionistic parental sexual behavior.

Researches (Springs & Friedrich, 1992) in the Mayo Clinic looking at health consequences of sexual abuse, conducted a study in a rural mid western community. They found that 40% of the sexually abused women are overweight.

In an addendum to the questionnaire many of the subjects added that they are experiencing sexual problems which causes them more and more anxiety. Some survivors may repeatedly sabotage their own best efforts to form close relationships. They are self-denying pleasure.

#44 A nineteen year old survivor who was sexually abused by her father wrote: "I would occasionally be involved in sexual encounters, on purpose, so it will make me feel emotionally bad..."

#62 A twenty seven year old who was often abused by a brother-in-law wrote: "It is obvious to me that what happened caused me to be an introvert toward men and women. It is especially destroy my marriage, because I can't please my husband and often avoid intercourse. All the ugly pictures are surfacing only now...It's sad that my childhood is lost..."

#67 A twenty two year old who was sexually abused for over two years by a relative wrote: "Because of the past I keep having recurring nightmares and fears of failure. I try to avoid sexual relationships..."

Some other survivors used sex like a bait and engaged in promiscuous and dangerous sexual activities.

#55 A forty two year old survivor who was abused by a variety of family members wrote: "I sleep with men indiscriminately, I can't say NO..."

Eleven (13%) of the subjects selected inappropriate romantic relationships. They couldn't develop a capacity for intimacy out of an environment where all intimate relationships are corrupt, and an identity out of an environment which defines them as a whore and a slave.

#84 A twenty year old survivor wrote: "I choose older partners who are married and who need me..."

A thirty eight year old survivor who was also severely beaten by her ex-husband, told us: "All what men want is SEX, so I give it to them under my control. I work at 056, the erotic hot-line, I can turn them on and off like a faucet...I rather do this then let them go and rape their sisters, children or wives..."

A secure sense of connection with caring people is the foundation of personality development. When this connection is crushed, the traumatized person loses their basic sense of self. Trauma forces the survivors to relive all their earlier struggles over autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy.

The survivor's intimate relationships are driven by the hunger for protection and care and are haunted by the fear of abandonment or exploitation. In a quest for rescue, they may seek out powerful authority figures who seem to offer the promise of a special caretaking relationship. By idealizing the person to whom she becomes attached, she attempts to keep at bay the constant fear of being either dominated or betrayed.

Inevitably, however, the chosen person fails to live up to her fantastic expectations. The survivor's desperate longing for nurturance and care makes it difficult to establish safe and appropriate boundaries with others.

Her dissociative defensive style makes it difficult for her to form conscious and accurate assessments of danger (Herman, 1992). Survivors are at great risk of repeated victimization in adult life. Eleven (16%) of the subjects were raped in adulthood and sixteen (18%) were battered by their significant others.

#56 A thirty six years old survivor noted: "On top of being a battered wife, I was raped by a neighbor not long ago..."

Self destructive behavior has a mean to regulate ones emotional state. Thirty eight (43%) of our informants tried at least one suicide attempt.

#26 A thirty eight year old survivor who was sexually abused by her brother-in-law and her physician wrote: "I am constantly thinking about suicide. Also, through my childhood I was consumed with those thoughts...I suffer from depression...I refuse to get pregnant, I am afraid they (the children) might be raped and suffer like me..."

#29 A twenty seven year old survivor who was sexually abused by her father noted: "When we were alone, dad used to take his penis out and touch me, I couldn't take it and went to live in a boarding school, I tried to commit suicide..."

Many survivors of childhood abuse do indeed attempt suicide or inflict self-injuries. Self-injury is intended not to kill but rather relieve unbearable emotional pain.

One of the survivors we met, was raped rapidly by her father between the ages of three and fourteen. She later engaged in numerous self-destructive behaviors and today is an accomplished artist. She tries to piece her life together but suffers from severe depression. She told us: "Think of the Dead Sea - the lowest place on earth, I'm lower..."

Most studies (Finkelhor 1979; Miller, 1984; Butler, 1978; Sgroi, 1982), including this one, have shown that children are vulnerable at all ages. Sexual experiences at age three or four are not at all rare. Five (6%) of our participants reported to be sexually abused at age three.

The majority of the survivors, Seventy seven (87%) were under eleven years of age when a perpetrator first approached them sexually. The average age was ten.

Giarretto (1976), reports that the average age of the daughter is ten years when her father begins his sexual advances.

Sexual abuse is difficult to remember. It is estimated that about half of all survivors suffer from some form of memory loss. It is often not until survivors seek help that they begin to recall their sexual abuse.

Survivors may also be unsure how to distinguish sexual abuse from other experiences. They may not know where to draw the line or how to evaluate a particular experience. A normal sex play among children of the same age is common through childhood. It's a healthy sexual curiosity that are important to developing positive feelings about one own sexuality.

The sexual play may had coincide with sexual abuse by an adult which confused the child. Moreover, perpetrators have been known to give victims amazing rationalizations (Herman & Hirschman, 1977) for their behavior: "I'm teaching you about sex." "We were just having fun." That's how parent show love."

#48 An eighteen year old survivor who was touched and fondled at the age of five by a family friend wrote: "My father blames me for what happened. I was only a little girl and he doesn't understand it. In my opinion we need to educate children...In my case I didn't know what happen till I grew up..."

Moreover, the abuse may have started early in a pre-verbal stage in which the child was unable to form thoughts or put her feelings into words. It's harder to remember an event we have no words available to describe it. Similarly, abuse can be hard to recall if it occurred when one was asleep, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

#33 A forty six year old woman who was abused from age six to sixteen by her brother-in-law wrote: "He would rape me while I was a sleep, later he started to do it during the day..."

Further, most sexual abuse is developed gradually and repeatedly overtime. Perpetrators may "groom" their victims by engaging them over a long time in activities that progress from less threatening and nonsexual to overtly sexual (Machotka, Pittman & Flomenhalf, 1967).

All of the above contributes to the confusion and uncertainty when the abuse occurred. Because a child may have been groomed since three years of age but penetrated by seven years of age. Then suddenly the child realizes that this behavior was inappropriate.

Furthermore, survivors of sexual assault may become desensitized to sexual abuse. Abusive activities begin to seem "normal" and expected.

Some survivors minimize the abuse because it did not involve overt sexual conduct, resulting in penetration.

The most common kind of sexual activity between children and older partners was some kind of bodily touch and genital fondling (Peters, 1976). Fifty nine (67%) of the survivors experience had been of this sort. Sixteen (18%) reported intercourse.

A great deal of misunderstanding exists about the role of intercourse in adult-child sexual encounters. Between consenting adults intercourse is the goal. But several elements must be considered in child sexual abuse situations: 1. Physiology - it is difficult and sometimes impossible, for grown men to have intercourse with most young girls. Their vaginas are too small. The offender does not want to inflict injury upon the child which may force the secrets out and dissolve his hunting spree. 2. Behavior - many adult perpetrators derive satisfaction from the shock and surprise their behavior creates in their victims. They may use profanity or revert to exhibitionism. This explains twelve percent of the subjects response. 3. Intimacy - Many perpetrators have chosen children so they can escape from the normal adults forms of sexuality. 4. Fantasy - Some offenders would like to slowly groom the child to become a woman and then live up their fantasy.

Some encounters were episodic, spanning many years, few weeks, a few months. There was a great variety in the patterns but the majority of experiences forty two percent, were reported to be often. This coincide with other studies, which suggest the sexual contact was repeated whenever the father could find an opportunity (Bass & Thoronton, 1983; Russell, 1983).

As the survivors reached adolescence, they were beginning to develop secondary sexual characteristics. They often became more assertive after achieving some degree of social and sexual awareness. They started to have a better idea of the significance of the perpetrator's behavior. This coincides with the twenty five (28%) subjects who remarked that by the age of eleven or twelve the abuse stopped. On the average, the sexual abuse went on for three years. Maisch (1972), also reports that 71% of the fifteen hundred cases he studied went on for more than a year,

with the average being three years.

Sixty nine (78%) of the perpetrators in our study were known to the survivors; Fifty three (60%) of the survivors reported their experiences to actually be with family members, including fathers, mothers, stepfathers, brothers, uncles, brothers-in-law, cousins and other relatives. Twenty one (24%) were fathers.

These figures are additional confirmation of the now well-established fact that sexual victimization occurs to a large extent within a child's intimate social network.

Rush (1980), Butler (1978), De Vine (1980) and other authors suggest that 75% of molesters are family members, men well known to the child.

The myth of the child molester as a stranger is just part of a larger mythological process that surrounds all kinds of antisocial behavior. In fact, most assault occurs among family and friends in people's own houses.

Through a personal interviews with most of the survivors (sixty one percent requested personal interview), we debunked another myth: parks, schoolyards, dark alleys are not the primary sites of abuse. The most frequent location is the home of the victim or the home of the offender.

A twenty nine year old survivor told us: "My mother worked the grave yard shift, and when she left he used to take a shower put on a cologne and molest me and my sister...He always did it at home, it was quite and safe for him. It was hell for us..."

In fifteen (17%) families the survivors indicated that at least another sibling was sexually abused. They reported the majority, sixty seven percent were sisters. The remaining eleven percent were brothers.

As the offender experiencing their pry slipping out of their control, they start planning for a substitute. In Herman's (1981) study 28% reported the incest to continue with younger sisters. Sloane (1942) report even higher proportions of this "moving on" phenomenon.

Fifty three (60%) of the survivors were also physically abused. Thirty five (40%) reported that their father was beating, hitting, and slapping them. Nine (10%) subjects reported physical abuse by a mother and another nine survivors indicated being beat by a brother.

Several researchers (Groth, 1979; Finkelhor, 1980; Kempe, 1984) found that one of the most significant distinguishing characteristic of the aggressors was their need to assert their manhood by dominating their families through the use of force.

Given that these experiences seemed to inspire mostly negative reactions, the majority of the subjects, fifty nine people (67%) did not tell anyone about the experience.

#72 A 39 year old woman who was sexually abused by a family friend, wrote: "How can a child come and tell her mother such a thing on a man loved by all the family? It is an embarrassment and humiliation for the child. That is how I felt...The offender is today a high ranking officer in the Jerusalem police department..."

Only seven percent reported their experiences to a family member. Almost third of our subjects (29%) indicated that their parents have known about the abuse. This finding is a sad commentary on the state of sexual anxiety in most families and communities. In general most families give children very little practice in discussion of sexual matters and prevention of sexual victimization.

This also explains why children have been choosing the path of silence, since no one ever equipped them with the tools of expression regarding sexual victimization. The message was always a taboo - no one talks about it.

57 A nineteen year old survivor who was molested for two years by a teacher at school, wrote: "We're trying to clue our parents...and it's as though they ignore the problem by thinking it will resolve somehow. I am nineteen, going through many crisis which I don't conceal, but I get no reaction from my parents...Good luck! with this research, may be you will unfold parent's blind eyes..."

This is also another explanation to a commonly asked question: "Why do we hear lately about so many cases of abuse, is sexual abuse increasing?"

We are witnessing a revolution in consciousness. As professionals we're more educated and sensitive in identifying cases. Conjointly we started to arm our children with information through different prevention programs and media campaign. Programs were initiated to empower children: to respect themselves, to trust their feelings, to discriminate and understand appropriate child-adult interaction. We must teach it to our children, so they wouldn't have to learn about molestation from an offender.

CONCLUSION:

The figures of our research should be accepted with some caution. This is not a random sample, it is not fair to generalize about the general population or even about LA'ISHA magazine readers. We can only say that within this sample the results are as followed: If anything, in fact, there are reasons to think this rate of returns might be artificially low. There were certainly some readers who failed to report their experiences because of embarrassment, dogma or memory loss. So we might want to regard these figures as low estimates for the prevalence of sexual abuse in the Israeli population in large.

This study should also leave no doubt that sexual abuse does occur among Israeli families. The experiences cut across social class and ethnic lines and involves both girls and boys of all ages.

One of the survivors we interviewed was a well composed, bright and educated woman in her late twenties. She was sexually abused by her father from the age of eleven to eighteen. "Me and my sister went to sleep rapping ourselves around three times in a sheet whi holding tight the opening with our fists protecting our chest, so my dad couldn't touch or disrobe us during the night."

"I've married a great man whom I share and tell everything, but he knows nothing about my abusive background. We have a terrific and loving relationship. The only cloud was my inability to get pregnant. We both were physically fit. We tried for two years and then in the end of December while at work I came across the article in LA'ISHA. After few days of hesitation I filled up the questionnaire and sent it away. In January I felt sort of strange, I went to the doctor and found out I was pregnant. That night I told my husband about the new baby and about my early sexual abuse..."

If we as researchers did nothing with this study the above declaration of hope and rebirth serves us.

Thank you LA'ISHA readers.

ANALYSIS OF THE SEVEN MALE SURVIVORS

Less than ten percent (8%) of the respondents were men. Seven male survivors in all. They are between the ages of twenty one and forty three years old. Five single, one married and one divorced. Three are heterosexual, two bi-sexual and two didn't respond. Four came from conservative background and three were reform. Three were Ashkenazies, three Edot Mezrach, one didn't write. Four came from a middle class two from middle-upper class and one lower class. They were all sexually abused by someone they knew. Five of them were sexually abused by a family member. Two by a mother, one by a mother and a father, one by a neighbor, one by an uncle, one by a brother and one by a friend and a stranger.

The abuse took place from age five to fifteen.

Five informants engaged in self-destructive behavior. It was distributed as following: Four attempted suicide, of those, two selected inappropriate romantic relationships. One subject developed eating disorder and two didn't reply. One man was raped in adulthood.

All respondents indicated that they suffered further emotional and physical abuse.

#65 A twenty four year old survivor who was raped at age thirteen by his uncle, wrote: "No one paid attention to me...I was never up to their expectation...Every thing I did was always wrong..."

Only in one case the molestation was reported by the mother to police .

Three survivors noted that another sibling was molested. Out of the three one was another brother. The rest didn't reveal gender.

Five of the survivors requested to be contacted.

Natti, for your convenience the males are # 68, 65, 15, 52, 31, 37, 76.

Further research projects:

1. Men under pressure and despair: Young men who commit suicide while serving in the army...
Is there a connection between early sexual abuse and later suicide or attempted suicide in the army?
2. Natti lets talk about other possibilities I don't want to hold the fax...
- 2.

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INCEST AND MOLESTATION IN JEWISH FAMILIES
QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: _____

1. Your name (optional): _____
2. Your sex: ___Female ___Male
3. Your age: _____
4. Are you presently working outside the home? ___Yes ___No
If yes, what do you do? _____
If no, what is your occupation? _____
5. Check highest level of education completed:
___High school or less ___Some college ___B.A. ___M.A.
___Ph.D. ___M.D. ___Other, please specify _____
6. Are you a student? ___Yes ___No
If yes, what are you studying? _____
7. Current marital status:
___ Single
___ Married. If more than once, please state # _____
___ Homosexual relationship
___ Separated (How many times? _____)
___ Divorced (How many times? _____)
___ Widowed
8. If you are married, did you marry someone of the Jewish faith?
___Yes ___No
9. If you were married more than once, which of these marriages were to someone of the Jewish faith? # __1 __2 __3 __4 __5 __6
10. How many siblings are in your family (including you)?
___Male ___Female. Are any deceased? ___Male ___Female
11. Your birth order: ___Oldest child ___Middle ___Youngest
12. Please complete the following chart to the best of your knowledge.

	Birth Place Country of Origin	Born Jewish Y/N	Converted
You			
Your Father			
Your Mother			
Paternal Grandfather			
Paternal Grandmother			
Maternal Grandfather			
Maternal Grandmother			

13. Was your family (check all that apply):
 ___Orthodox ___Conservative ___Reform ___Reconstructionist
 ___Unaffiliated ___Other _____
 ___Member of Kibbutz ___Member of Moshav
 ___Ashkenazy ___Sepharadic ___Yemenite

14. Would you consider that your family of origin was:
 ___ Lower class ___ Lower middle class ___ Upper middle class
 ___ Upper class
15. While growing up was your family a member of a synagogue?
 ___ Yes ___ No
16. Did you attend ___ Religious day school or ___ Hebrew school?
 ___ Yes ___ No. If yes, how long? _____
17. Were you ever molested as a child? ___ Yes ___ No
18. What is your earliest memory of molestation? Age _____
19. At what age did the molestation end? Age _____
20. Were you molested by more than one person?
 ___ Yes ___ No. If yes, please mark in questions 18 and/or 19
 P for primary molester and O for other molesters.
21. Was the perpetrator(s) a family member?
 ___ Yes ___ No. If yes, please mark all that apply.
 ___ Father ___ Stepfather ___ Mother ___ Stepmother ___ Brother
 ___ Sister ___ Stepbrother ___ Stepsister ___ Aunt ___ Uncle
 ___ Cousin ___ Grandfather ___ Grandmother ___ Unsure or
 don't remember ___ Other, please specify _____
22. If the perpetrator(s) was not a family member, please indicate
 all that apply (Use P for primary perpetrator and O for other)
 ___ Family friend ___ Teacher ___ Scout leader ___ Neighbor
 ___ Rabbi ___ Doctor ___ Unsure or don't remember
 ___ Other, please specify _____
23. TYPES OF MOLESTATION: (Use all applicable code letters as shown
 below)

Perpetrator	Acts Committed by Perpetrator	Duration		
		Once	Few Times	Often

- A. Fondling-waist up
- B. Fondling-waist down
- C. Kissing in an overt sexual manner (French kissing)
- D. Shown pornographic material intended for adult sexual stimulation
- E. Modeling for pornography
- F. Masturbating self in front of the child
- G. Masturbating the child
- H. Exhibitionism (indecent exposure)
- I. Fellatio (penile oral sex)
- J. Cunnilingus (vaginal oral sex)
- K. Attempted vaginal intercourse
- L. Attempted anal penetration
- M. Intercourse
- N. Anal intercourse (sodomy)
- O. Forced to watch adult sexual acts
- P. Seductiveness (behavior which was clearly sexually motivated, but which did not involve physical contact or a requirement for secrecy)
- Q. Use of explicit sexual language toward the child
- R. Other, please specify _____

24. Did you ever report the molestation?
 ___Yes ___No. If yes, please specify all that apply.
 ___Police ___Physician ___Friend ___Teacher ___Rabbi
 ___Family Member. If yes, to whom? _____
 ___School Counselor ___Social Service Worker
 ___Other, please specify _____
25. Was your ___mother or ___father aware of the molestation?
 ___Yes ___No ___Not/Appl ___Unknown
 If yes, how and for how long? _____
26. To the best of your knowledge were any other siblings molested?
 ___Yes ___No. If yes, please indicate who _____
 By whom were they molested? _____
27. Were any of your children ever molested?
 ___Yes ___No. If yes, which child/ren _____
 and by whom _____
28. How did you find out? _____
29. What did you do? _____
30. Was your father or mother ever molested?
 ___Yes ___No ___Unknown. If yes, which one _____
 and by whom _____
31. Were you ever physically abused as a child?
 ___Yes ___No
 If yes, TYPES OF PHYSICAL AND/OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE (Use all
 applicable code letters as shown below)

Abusive Act/s	Committed By	Duration		
		Once	Few Times	Often

- A. Beat
- B. Kicked
- C. Slapped
- D. Punched
- E. Pushed, shoved
- F. Strangled or suffocated
- G. Shook
- H. Bound
- I. Confined to a space
- J. Burned
- K. Object thrown at you
- L. Knifed, stabbed
- M. Shot, threatened with a gun
- N. Food was withheld
- O. Verbal Abuse
- P. Hypercritical
- Q. Physical Abandonment
- R. Other, please specify _____

32. Have you been in a battering relationship?
 ___Yes ___No

33. Have you ever been raped as an adult?

___Yes ___No

If yes, how many times _____, and by whom? _____

34. Did you ever engage in self-destructive behavior?

___Yes ___No

If yes, TYPES OF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR (Use all applicable code numbers as shown below)

Self-Destructive Behavior	Duration		
	Once	Few Times	Often

- A. Drug abuse
- B. Alcohol abuse
- C. Attempted suicide
- D. Cutting (self-mutilation)
- E. Eating disorder
- F. Stealing, i.e shoplifting
- G. Promiscuous and indiscriminate sexual activity
- H. Prostitution
- I. Molested another child
- J. Selecting inappropriate romantic relationship
- K. Repeatedly in situations which lower self-esteem
- L. Being with people who lower your self-esteem
- M. Tolerate more than other people
- N. Other, please specify _____

35. Are you aware of other incest in a Jewish family?

___Yes ___No

If Yes, Please describe _____

36. Is there anything you wish to add?

37. Would you like to be contacted for further interview?

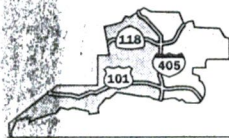
___Yes ___No. If yes, please provide your:

Name _____
Phone (____) _____ - _____ Best time to reach you _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

NOTE: All the above information is totally confidential.

THANK YOU

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- Agoura
- Agoura Hills
- Calabasas

- Canoga Park
- Chatsworth
- Encino

- Granada Hills
- Hidden Hills
- North Hills

- Northridge
- Reseda
- Tarzana

- West Hills
- Westlake Villa
- Woodland Hill

TARZANA

Therapy Game Helps Children Discuss Abuse

Instead of testing players' knowledge of North African geography or the evolution of the French farce, this deceptively cheery-looking board game asks more disturbing questions.

- Some grown-ups kick children. Has it ever happened to you?

- Some children pretend they can't see. What don't they want to see?

- What did the person say to you while they did the yucky stuff to you?

It's called Playing It Safe . . . With SASA, and if the questions are disturbing, the answers are often more so. But for an abused 5-year-old, playing a game—even a difficult one—can be less traumatic than sitting on a giant couch and being grilled by a strange therapist.

"SASA is actually a clinical procedure used . . . as a way to stimulate conversation about deep-rooted issues that are otherwise difficult or impossible to elicit during normal counseling," said co-inventor Susan Brown, director of the Julia Ann Singer Center in West Los Angeles. "It is another way of tapping into the subconscious."

There is a bright board with spaces marked home, the police station, the worship house, where a player can go after landing on the proper space and discuss what happened there. There are color-coded cards, one set for direct questions about abuse, another for less touchy subjects.

Even the more subtle questions can offer surprising insight. When one young boy drew a card asking, "How would you dress an animal?" he responded, "I would dress it sexy."

And there is the straw-haired SASA (Speaking About Self-Awareness) puppet. First, the doll is for cuddling, but it also can act as a less threatening counselor. When a question is just too difficult to discuss with the therapist guiding the game, the child can speak to the puppet.

"Children's medium is game and play," said clinical psychologist and co-inventor Etti Hadar of Tarzana, also a therapist at the Singer Center. "They don't always want to talk to you."

Frustrated with traditional—and often uncomfortable—counseling methods, Hadar and Brown created the game nearly a decade ago. It is now used at therapy centers around the United States and in several other countries.

And though it was created as a tool for counseling children (a therapist must guide the game, which is only available



ANACLETO RAPPING / Los Angeles

Therapists Etti Hadar of Tarzana and Susan Brown, left, watch as a girl plays the therapeutic game they inven-

to professional counselors) SASA has proven effective with adults and families as well, the inventors said.

At the Singer Center recently, one mother and her 5-year-old daughter—both having been sexually and physically abused by the girl's father—played the game as part of their ongoing therapy. It is not always fun, the mother said, but it works.

"I've seen a lot of growth for both my daughter and I," said the 31-year-old mother. "It's both difficult and rewarding."

—ERIC SLATER

CANOGA PARK

Robinsons-May Plans Reopening Festivities

Nearly a year after the Northridge earthquake forced its closure, the Robinsons-May department store in Topanga Plaza will reopen Thursday.

The store was retrofitted and brought up to seismic requirements after the tremor damaged the building in January, said Jim Watterson, vice president of public relations for Robinsons-May.

The work cost in excess of \$20 million,

Watterson said.

About 30,000 square feet of shopping space were added, including an atrium on the top floor that floods the building with natural light.

"We really consider this our flagship store for the entire San Fernando Valley," said Watterson.

The Topanga Plaza store, originally a May Co. store, was built in 1966, making it the 10th in Southern California. Forty-two stores have been erected since that time, and were renamed Robinsons-May in 1993 when the parent companies of the two chains announced their consolidation.

The store's reopening will feature a weekend of special events.

Customers can pick up home decorating tips from experts at noon Friday. KROQ radio personality Tami Heide will headline a young men's fashion show from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, when models from local high schools will show off the latest clothing trends.

A character from the Walt Disney film "The Lion King" will make a special appearance Sunday to highlight the opening of a department filled with stuffed animals, clothing and toys depicting characters from the film.

Former Los Angeles Dodgers star

Steve Garvey will sign autographs from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

—ALICIA DO

WOODLAND HILLS

Pierce College Seeks Applicants for Spring

Enrollment applications for the spring semester at Pierce College will be accepted starting Nov. 15.

Fees are \$15 per unit for California residents with no advanced or bachelor's degrees.

Classes are open to anyone over 18 years of age, and to students under 18 with consent from a school counselor.

The college recommends that an applicant interested in taking a class should submit an application as soon as possible because classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Application forms are available at the college admissions office, 6201 Winona Ave., Woodland Hills, between 8:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday.

For more information, call (818) 719-6404.

—MAKI BEC

