Journal of Trauma & Dissociation ›

Volume 18, 2017 - Issue 3: The Abused and the Abuser: Victim-Perpetrator Dynamics

512 Views | 3 CrossRef citations to date | 0 Altmetric

Articles

Extreme adaptations in extreme and chronic circumstances: The application of “weaponized sex” to those exposed to ongoing incestuous abuse

Warwick Middleton, MB, BS, FRANZCP, MD

Pages 284-303 | Received 23 Oct 2016, Accepted 05 Dec 2016, Accepted author version posted online: 28 Feb 2017, Published online: 20 Mar 2017

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/15299732.2017.1295378 Check for updates

Sample our Behavioral Sciences Journals

>> Sign in here to start your access to the latest two volumes for 14 days

Full Article Figures & data References Citations Metrics

Reprints & Permissions Read this article Share

ABSTRACT

This paper examines Kluft’s construct of “weaponized sex” through the prism of long-term clinical and research involvement with individuals subjected to ongoing sexual abuse during adulthood, a group that by definition has been exposed to more sexual abuse and for longer than any other defined victim population. Examples of the same sort of phenomena described by Kluft are repeatedly observed in therapy with members of this population, but usually not in a dramatic form. As might be anticipated, in order to survive, when an individual is closely attached to a long-term and extreme abuser, the sort of enduring ambivalence carried by the victim towards

their primary abuser is manifested in compartmentalized states that wish their abuser dead, while other states in equally compartmentalized ways maintain the attachment via the use of sex—by continuing to be sexually involved with their primary abuser (usually their father), by fantasizing about sex with their abuser, by being sexually involved with those who co-abused with their father, or by staging reenactments with individuals whose sexual behavior re-evokes the abuse by the absent (or deceased) father. The process of healing means that inevitably some manifestations of the responses to such abuse spill over into therapy.

KEYWORDS:

Weaponized sex | incest | adulthood | roles and skills | dissociative disorders

Related research

People also read | Recommended articles | Cited by 3

The abused and the abuser: Victim–perpetrator dynamics >

Warwick Middleton et al.
Journal of Trauma & Dissociation
Published online: 20 Mar 2017

Weaponized sex: Defensive pseudo-erotic aggression in the service of safety >

Richard P. Kluft
Journal of Trauma & Dissociation
Published online: 9 Mar 2017

Conflicts between motivational systems related to attachment trauma: Key to understanding the intra-family relationship between abused children and their abuser... >

Giovanni Liotti
Journal of Trauma & Dissociation
Published online: 20 Mar 2017

Information for

- Authors
- R&D professionals
- Editors
- Librarians
- Societies

Open access

- Overview
- Open journals
- Open Select
- Dove Medical Press
- F1000Research

Opportunities

- Reprints and e-prints
- Advertising solutions
- Accelerated publication
- Corporate access solutions

Help and information

- Help and contact
- Newsroom
- All journals
- Books

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email

Sign me up

Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited Privacy policy

Cookies Terms & conditions Accessibility

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG