

Torture:
From Young Childhood to Young Adulthood

&

Social Myths:
Blinders that Protect “Some” Parents

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Torture: From Young Childhood to Young Adulthood & Social Myths: Blinders that Protect “Some” Parents

About the Authors:

Jeanne Sarson, RN, BScN, MEd & Linda MacDonald, RN, BN, MEd have been active in the caring about persons victimized by ritual abuse-torture (RAT) since 1993. In 1998, they initiated a “kitchen table” participatory research project in partnership with Nova Scotia women who reported being victimized by ordeals of ritual abuse-torture. The goal was to find ways to educate others and to promote greater insights into the human evil actions of the perpetrators. Involvement in advocacy and activism for global changes to help promote and prevent ritual abuse-torture from being inflicted onto innocent infants, toddlers, children, youth, and “captive” adults and seeking ways to protect the human rights of the persons so victimized is critical. They also write and manage their web site:

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Abstract:

A brief discussion on how myths about all parents being caring and valuing of their children can hide the reality that “**some**” parents are perpetrators of physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit violent crimes against their children. Such a reality is presented in a vignette of Isabelle’s ordeals of toddler to young adult torture.

Torture: From Young Childhood to Young Adulthood & Social Myths: Blinders that Protect “Some” Parents

J. Sarson, RN, BScN, MEd & L. MacDonald, RN, BN, MEd

There is probably not a day that passes without hearing a myth being spoken about parents and parenting. Myths embody some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena¹ and “... are ways in which expectations of the society are emphasized”² Myths are clichés.³ Myths are illusions that hide truths, thus reality. Myths contribute to oppression, harm, silence, ignorance, denial, disbelief, rejection, and minimization responses. Myths blame the victim, such as the common myth that it was “her” fault she was raped because of the clothing she wore or because of the way she walked. Myths provide a sense of safety when rationalizations declare “things like child abuse, child torture, or ritual abuse-torture happen elsewhere but never in our neighbourhood”. When myths are shattered shock hits—reality is transformed as happened in Magog, Quebec.

Isabelle of Magog

Magog, a little town in Quebec, had a sign beside one of its roads declaring it a place for families—caring families we assume. For some it was. For Isabelle, it was not! Her family meant dehumanizing horrors of enduring physical, mind-spirit, and sexualized tortures initiated by her father, a father who taught his sons, Isabelle’s brothers, to do the same, a parent who attended church regularly. Beer bottles, sticks, and a fishing knife were used to penetrate her body. Acts of sodomy; incest; tied to the bed and raped; an uncle filming her father and brothers raping of her in the garage—this was the family life Isabelle described. At aged six—one brother watching her being raped by her uncle. Nails and screws penetrating her tissues between her fingers that attached her body to a wooden board, her ankles tied to a pole—raped—with her uncle filming her physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit tortures. Isabelle taken to the hospital to have these wounds on her hands repaired—aged nine. Isabelle tied to a spruce tree and simultaneously raped by her brothers—in her early teens. This was Isabelle’s description of her torturous family life as told to a police woman who interviewed and videotaped Isabelle in hospital where she was being treated for ovarian cancer. A reality of torture that began when she was four years old; a reality that repeated itself even during her chemotherapy days when

¹ The Reader’s Digest Assoc. (1964). *The Reader’s Digest great encyclopaedic dictionary* (Vol. 2). (p. 587). London: Author.

² Redfield, R. (1960). How human society operates. In H. L. Shapiro (Ed.), *Man culture and society* (p. 367). New York: Oxford University Press.

³ Kramarae, C., & Treichler, P. A. (1992). *Amazons, a feminists dictionary bluestockings and crones* (p. 288). London: Pandora.

she was raped by her father in her hospital bed while her brothers held her legs. Isabelle suffered a heat stroke and died in July, 2002—age 22.⁴

Everyone from her doctor to the neighbours suspected something ... did nothing.⁵

The Reality

Myths hold “suspecting something” and “doing nothing” in place when these reinforce the social concept that *all* parents are caring and *all* children valued. Myths act to protect “some” parents who are the perpetrators of heinous crimes against their children—the parents who intentionally choose to be neglectful, to abuse, to torture, to ritually abuse-torture, and/or to kill their children. Myths about all parents being caring and all children being valued render invisible the reality that, within families, parents are the most likely perpetrators in assaults against children and youth according to police-reported statistics in 2000—in a sub-set of 166 Canadian police agencies. In this police-reported data, almost six in ten child and youth victims reported suffering minor physical injury due to physical assaults by family members. Thirty-nine percent of children and youth who were sexually assaulted by a family member were victimized by parents, followed by a sibling (32%), extended family members (28%) and spouses (1%).⁶ This sub-set of information is but a bird’s eye view of the potential for a child or youth to experience ordeals of harm within the family. Such factual knowledge ought to inform a community practice of doing something when suspicions about a child’s safety arise.

Doing something demands addressing common myths about “some” parents if, as a global community, we are to recognize for instance the signals—the indicators—that told of Isabelle’s life-threatening ordeals—that will tell of other children’s life-threatening ordeals—that tell bystanders to do something.

Exposing the myths help to remove social blinders that can generally contribute to oppression, harm, silence, ignorance, denial, disbelief, rejection, minimization, and doing

⁴ Cherry, P. (2002, December 4). Father gave sex lessons with daughter Son testifies at incest trial. Brothers were initiated at young age, were too afraid to disobey, jury told. *The Montreal Gazette*; Cherry, P. (2002, December 6). Daughter described rape by father. Video recorded before woman, 22, died. ‘I wanted to protect him,’ Isabelle Côté said, explaining why she withheld information. *The Montreal Gazette*; Cherry, P. (2002, December 7). Uncle filmed girl’s rape by father, jury told. *The Montreal Gazette*; Cherry, P. (2002, December 13) I warned daughter of sex abuse, wife says. She testifies she herself was abused and didn’t want Isabelle to suffer same fate. *The Gazette*; Cherry, P. (2003, January 20). Jury believes victim Appeal Planned. Death did not silence a daughter’s horror. *The Gazette*; Côté wants to appeal incest verdict. (2003, March 7). *Broadcast News*; Cherry, P. (2003, March 11). Molester gets the max Years of incest a horrible crime: judge. Father began raping his daughter at age 4, instructed his two sons to do the same. *The Gazette*; The Canadian Press. (2003, March 11). Quebec man gets 14 years jail for incest. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*.

⁵ Montgomery, S. (2003, January 20). Many knew. No one helped. Isabelle was doomed by other’s fear. *The Gazette*; Montgomery, S. (2003, January 21). ‘Isabel began to die the minute she was born’ Horrific sexual abuse of daughter shakes veteran cops in Quebec. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*.

⁶ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2002). *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile 2002* (pp. 2, 34). Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

nothing responses. And, helps to remove blame the victim responses. For instance, Isabelle's inability to learn in school, her depression, and her low self-esteem resulted in those around her labelling her as being mentally disabled⁷ rather than recognizing she was a tortured child who grew to be a young tortured captive adult.

We ask you to think about the following myths and the impact these may have on your thinking and perceiving of parents and parenting.

Myths about "SOME" Parents

- 1. MYTH:** All parents are caring!
FACT: Some are; some aren't.
Some are pedophiles, abusers, torturers, and ritual abuse-torturers.
- 2. MYTH:** All parents want to protect their children!
FACT: Some do; some don't.
Some achieve great pleasure in abusing, torturing, and ritually abusing-torturing their children. Some "*rent*" their children out for sexualized exploitation, for profit, and say "*bring her back when you're done.*"⁸
- 3. MYTH:** All parents are concerned when their children are hurt!
FACT: Some are; some aren't.
Some derive great pleasure in hurting their children, getting their "high" or "power-fix" by seeing how much the pain, terror, and horror they can inflict unto their child victims.
- 4. MYTH:** All parents think of their children as persons, as equals within humanity, worthy of respect, and entitled to human rights.
FACT: Some do; some don't.
Some treat their children as objects, an "it", a "thing" to use, abuse, torture, and ritually abuse-torture then discard like "*a pile of shit*" once they have satisfied their needs and desires for inhuman brutality. Some parents take dehumanizing pictures of their acts of child abuse, torture, or ritual abuse-torture as pleasure, power, and/or for profit trophies to use at another time.
- 5. MYTH:** All parents protect and value their children's lives!
FACT: Some do; some don't.
Some have great pleasure inflicting life-threatening ordeals ... ordeals like the "*sink or swim*" pleasure of holding the child's head under water until they almost drown; the pleasure of suffocating acts that leave the child lifeless; pain, terror, and horror pleasures that transport their child into speechlessness and frozen lifelessness; choking till unconscious pleasures that leave a child near-death-like; sexualized

⁷ Montgomery, S. (2003, January 20). Many knew. No one helped. Isabelle was doomed by other's fear. *The Gazette*.

⁸ A quote from a woman who participated in our "kitchen table" research project about ritual abuse-torture.

horror pleasures that zombify the child's spirit; and electric shock pleasures that say death is near. Near-death ordeals which leave the victimized child dead-like, a "dead" victim to satisfy the *necrophilic* needs and desires—the pleasures—of the parental perpetrator.

A Solution

A global community that openly acknowledges the reality of **"SOME DO SOME DON'T"** is part of the solution. A global community that acts to protect the child when there are warning indicators that suggests there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child/youth is or may be suffering, or may have suffered, or is at risk of being harmed is part of the solution.⁹ A global community that works to put into everyday adult-child/youth relationships practices of kindness, caring, respect, protection, promotion of and accountability for the human rights of children/youth, as defined in United Nations Declarations such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which is considered one of the six fundamental UN human rights treaties, is another part of the solution.¹⁰ And, by their very nature, human right principles represent a challenge to every socio-cultural system and every structure it contains, to every status quo practice, and to every relationship including parent-child/youth relationships.¹¹

A simple "some do some don't" framework fits equally for other adult perpetrators besides parents. Adults, who abuse their positions of power and trust within the adult-child/youth relationship to perpetrate violent crimes against children and youth, are: **SOME PRIESTS, SOME HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, SOME TEACHERS, SOME LAWYERS, SOME POLICE, SOME WOMEN, SOME MEN**, etc. ...

"SOME DO and SOME DON'T" is a simple guideline—perspectives—to keep in mind when concerns about a child arise and when "suspected something" knowledge is in our awareness. Such responses ought to promote "doing something"!

Postscript:¹²

⁹ *Children and Family Services Act Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990*. (September 3, 1991). (17-24). Halifax: Queen's Printer.

¹⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2001). *Statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session on Children New York, 29 January-2 February 2001*. <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crcstat.htm> (6/25/01).

¹¹ Lundy, C. (1997). *An introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Sparta, Ont: Full Circle Press.

¹² Broadcast News. (2003, March 7). *Côté wants to appeal incest verdict*. <http://www.canada.com/montreal/story.asp?id=353D0B24-79D5-4B39-9D40-1F389F40>; Canadian Press. (2004, January 29). Man sentenced to prison for sexually assaulting his late sister. *The Gazette*; NTR. (2003, November 27). Man sentenced for sexually assaulting sister. <http://www.canada.com/montreal/story>; Cherry, P. (2003, October 29). Father showed him the way: lawyer. Boy and younger brother were beaten if they did not abuse their sister, court hears. *The Gazette*; Canadian Press. (2003, March 11). Quebec man get 14 years jail for incest. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*, p. A6; Cherry, P. (2003, March 11). Molester gets max Years of incest a horrible crime: judge.

Before she died Isabelle had made three sworn video and audio tape statements to police and in court between June 2001 and March 2002.

Isabelle's father was convicted by a jury on January 19, 2003, of 14 of 17 charges including incest, sexual assault, and forcible confinement against her and two unidentified females. On March 10, 2003, the judge imposed the maximum 14-year sentence, which included the ruling half of the remaining 11 years must be served before he is eligible for a release. The jury acquitted Isabelle's father of charges relating to the incident that Isabelle described of being nailed and tied down in the garage with her uncle filming her being raped by her father for lack of evidence. Defense lawyer asked the Quebec Court of Appeal to throw out the guilty verdict and order a new trial.

Isabelle's brothers testified against their father saying he forced them into sexualized assaults against Isabelle when she was four years old. They stated if they protested they would be beaten. There was a pattern to the rape of Isabelle with the older brother forced to rape her first followed by the younger brother. Charged separately, Isabelle's 25-year-old brother was sentenced to six years imprisonment, pleading guilty to raping his sister on his own when he was between the ages of 12 and 18. His term took into account he had been jailed since 2001. Her 28-year old brother, who pleaded guilty to 15 charges of sexual assault against his sister over a period of 17 years, was sentenced to two years less a day; the judge considered he had already spent over two years in jail. Probation and counselling conditions were also imposed to these sentences.

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