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*still trying to find out what they did to my head. It's different than other forms of sexual abuse, and nobody knows how to treat it. I live in fear. As long as I live dissociated, I live fine. But sometimes I'm frightened of the other parts of myself. Some of the people that did this to me are still alive and still in my life .... I'm dealing with great guilt because of some of the things I was made to do. It makes me so angry. A cousin warned me to stay away. He had changed his identity. You don't know how big it is. My real parents were murdered .... It makes me feel so helpless. I was involved in snuff movies and child porn.*

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The specifics may vary from group to group but usually there are four basic components to the indoctrination process of ritual abuse. Survivors told the Panel of intergenerational and extrafamilial cases where adults or older teenagers had regular and trusted access to young children. Initially the cult interferes with and eventually breaks the natural bond of a family and replaces it with a bonding to the cult or group through a range of techniques, often with the co-operation of the family.

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*My ritual abuse began when I was 7 or 8. I was told I would be physically harmed if I spoke of the abuse. I was not raised as human. I saw one girl being sacrificed, my age, and my mother was the one cutting up her insides. I was forced to sacrifice her and I felt I was torturing her just to save myself. I held parts of the body as it was being cut up. A cross was inserted into my vagina at these ceremonies, making me ready for a higher position. I have memories of unexplainable intense emotion, getting strong feelings of getting sick, psychosomatic bruises, pain, not being able to breathe, marks on my body. We moved 18 times by the time I was 16. I spent most of my time in and out of hospitals. Types of abuse that were done to me included molestation, forced intercourse, sodomy, group sex with adults, being photographed, breeding a child for later sacrifice, being forced to sacrifice a girl, cannibalism.*

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In the second stage, the victim is forced to take part in the abuse of others. Victims come to learn that their survival depends on their acceptance by the group and that acceptance depends on their participation in cult activities.

Survivors said they were required to take vows and oaths of secrecy, sometimes signing a commitment or some form of contract. Among small children, their signature may in fact be a bloodied handprint on a document.

The final step in the indoctrination process is the use of mind-control techniques such as hypnosis, mind-altering drugs or the implantation of messages triggered to prevent victims from disclosing their abuse. Other techniques establish dissociative behaviours which make it difficult for survivors to recall and subsequently talk about the abuse they endured. Mind control is accomplished through long-term and repeated use of torture, pain and deprivation of the young victim.<sup>67</sup> Perpetrators use threats and violence in attempts to ensure the silence of survivors.

As a result of ritual abuse, children have no ability to bond with those outside the cult or group; over time they learn that their safety lies in identifying completely with their abusers and distrusting all others. They grow up with very low self-esteem, frequently have difficulty with common social bonding and interaction skills, are withdrawn and have deep-seated feelings of guilt and shame. One of the most difficult things for survivors to do is come to terms with and disclose their abuse.

The profits from ritual abuse activities are reported to be extensive. Repeatedly the Panel heard of filming or videotaping of the abuse and of survivors recalling experiences of child prostitution. Other illegal activities frequently mentioned included drug trafficking.

The courage of the survivors of ritual abuse who came to meet with Panel members must be remarked upon. Most are threatened with death should they disclose their abuse, and many have seen those who threaten them murder others; the fear is real.