

ABSTRACT

GOLDBERG, DANIEL BENJAMIN. College Student Narratives of Childhood Sexual Abuse and Navigating Campus Life: The Intersection of Past Experiences and Present Developmental Tasks. (Under the direction of Dr. Sylvia Nassar).

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to determine how college students described childhood sexual abuse (CSA) experiences and how (or if) those experiences were relevant to their present lives on a college campus. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors theoretical framework (SVTF) of college student development was the theoretical foundation of this research. A secondary purpose of the study was to evaluate the applicability of the SVTF for use with college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Three undergraduate women between the ages of 18- and 25-years old from a single urban state university participated in this study. Each woman participated in two standardized, open-ended interviews and completed a formal instrument, the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment (SDTLA), that measured constructs associated with the SVTF. The data were used to construct case studies of the participants' past CSA experiences and present life in college. Analysis was guided by Riessman's (2008) approach to narrative inquiry and the SVTF acted as a sensitizing concept for coding purposes. The research findings included four themes and 10 subthemes. Concepts identified by the themes and subthemes included the following: acting the abuse narratives; responding to the discourse around CSA; difficulties with trust in relationships; and navigating the developmental constructs defined in the SVTF. Implications for college student development, clinical conceptualization of college students with a history of CSA, applicability of the SVTF, and future research directions were discussed.

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College Student Narratives of Childhood Sexual Abuse and Navigating Campus Life: The
Intersection of Past Experiences and Present Developmental Tasks

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Counseling and Counselor Education

Raleigh, North Carolina

2017

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the three indomitable women who trusted me enough to share their stories. Your voices – and the voices of all survivors, whether they choose to share their stories or not – matter.

BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Goldberg was born in Augusta, Georgia. He was a charter member of the ALF fan club and a four-year letterman as the statistician for the 1993 South Georgia Champion Lakeside High School baseball team. Daniel attended The University of Georgia, where he earned a bachelor's degree in journalism, a minor in English, and later a master's degree in journalism and mass communication. Daniel's journalism career included stops at newspapers in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. At various points in his career, Daniel wrote about general features, arts and entertainment, local government, sports, and higher education. He was an award-winning movie critic. Daniel's second career began at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he earned a master's degree in counseling with a concentration in student development in higher education. He interned at the Guilford College Counseling Center, where he discovered that this counseling thing really was for him. At NC State, Daniel worked as a graduate assistant at the university counseling center for more than four years. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor in North Carolina and National Certified Counselor. Daniel works as a generalist counselor with an emphasis on academic issues at the NC State Counseling Center. In his leisure time, Daniel enjoys practicing Taekwondo, attending Durham Bulls baseball games with friends, going to the movies, and watching re-runs of "The Golden Girls" with his wife, Alexana.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My wife and partner, Alexana: You deserve all the quality time you've wished for the last several years. Let's go to the beach. And Disneyland. Maybe a road trip through California. A day at the coffee shop. Or just hanging out on Saturday with nothing else to do...

My parents, Steven and Marsha Goldberg, have always supported and believed in me, even when my next turn seemed to be a hard left, which, in the case of a counseling career, it was. Thanks to Jay, Moe, Sue, Megan, Ben, Morgan, Crawford and Anna Rose (that last one may be aspirational) for making me feel interesting and reasonably intelligent, even at times when I might not have been either.

Anna Aguiniga-Garcia and Alex Garcia are bottomless wells of optimism, humor, support, encouragement, and love. You were also pretty great at raising Alexana. I'm so lucky to have you both in my life.

I am grateful to all the people who connected me with the world that exists outside of work, school and dissertation: My non-academic, non-counselor friends; Wool E. Bull; and my wonderful Taekwondo community.

So many thanks to the people who had been through this, or were going through this, and encouraged me to keep going: Aisha Al-Qimlass, Giovanni Haertel, Beth Glueck, Megan Tajlili and probably a lot more people that I'm forgetting at the moment.

The opportunities I've been given to learn as a counselor and grow as a person while working at the NC State Counseling Center are immeasurable. I appreciate the support and encouragement I've received from everyone there and I'm honored to be a part of our work going forward. Thanks squared to Dr. Monica Osburn and Dr. Mike Bachman for your patience and belief in me.

I will be eternally grateful to Dr. Katherine Glenn in Greensboro, who certainly has no idea she is being acknowledged here, nor that the most wonderful thing in my life may not have been possible without her help.

I greatly appreciate the work of my committee. Dr. Nassar shepherded the fragment of an idea that formed during my master's program into this fully formed project five years later. Thank you for helping me to find the patience to trust my process. I will also never forget that you recommended me for an assistantship at the counseling center, which put me on the career path that I wanted all along. I've learned so much from Dr. Baker about research design and the importance of being creative when addressing academic questions. Thank you for showing me the freedom to be bold and create the study that I wanted. Dr. Bass

challenged me to build a better qualitative study. The research contained in this document is definitely better than my early vision because of your questions and suggestions. And Dr. Tyler-Walker, last but not only because of the alphabet. Time and again you provided insight, balance, and a way forward when I've needed help, often when you had a dozen other things to do in the middle of the day. I look forward to many more years of interrupting your day with my uncertainty and stress.

During my course work, I had the privilege of sharing classes with doctoral students from other disciplines in the field of education. Having been in contact with so many innovative ideas and well-crafted research projects amplifies the honor I feel at being selected by the College of Education Research Committee for a 2016-17 Dissertation Support Award. I'm grateful for COE's belief in my work.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2011, while working as a master's degree-level intern in a college counseling center, I met with an undergraduate woman who came in to discuss what she described in her intake paperwork as a series of issues that were common among students making the transition to college. Mary (this is not her real name) was in her first semester at the mid-size, urban university. She was struggling to make friends and did not feel close to any of her peers. Mary was briefly in an intimate relationship earlier in the academic year with a man who broke up with her to date a mutual acquaintance. Mary described feeling anxious in crowds and out-of-step with the way that her peers made friends, dated, and seemed to manage the many stresses of college life. She attempted to fit in and dull her anxiety by drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana. Mary talked about feeling like she had lost control of her emotions, her substance use, and her ability to make progress towards her educational goals.

I met with Mary four times before my clinical supervisor recommended that I refer the student to an off-campus agency that had the resources to provide long-term counseling. Mary made a strong impression on me in a short time. She had never participated in counseling before and described multiple cautious attempts over several years to talk to family members about feelings of sadness and isolation. Mary was left feeling dismissed, like she was the problem, each time her mother or sister cut short her attempt to reach out. My meetings with Mary felt like the first time that she was given the space to tell her story. Mary sobbed without restraint during each of our meetings as she described a pattern of

disappointing friendships and dating experiences, broken trust, and endless hours alone in her room wondering what was wrong with her. In between the tears, Mary was a charming, funny college student with hopes and goals. And at the end of our meetings, when her tears subsided, she expressed relief and gratitude for my willingness to listen.

During our third session, Mary disclosed that she had been touched in a sexual manner by an older relative. Mary was less than 10-years-old at the time of the incidents and she had not seen the relative in a few years. Her previous conversations about feelings with her mother and sister were attempts at disclosing the abuse, but in light of the negative responses, Mary did not try to talk about her experiences again until our meeting. During our conversation, it became clear that Mary was deeply troubled by her childhood experiences. She believed that she must have done something to attract the older relative's attention. Mary suspected that other people could see whatever it was that was wrong with her. She believed that was why men treated her badly, she did not have close relationships with peers, and her mom and sister left her alone to deal with her pain. Mary had been able to cope with those feelings in less stressful circumstances, but with the demands of college courses and a part-time job, and ubiquitous examples of "normal" peers who she perceived were handling the transition just fine, her life felt like it was unraveling.

Mary was the first student that I met with who disclosed childhood sexual abuse. I have met with other abuse survivors since Mary, each with distinct experiences and perceptions of how they were impacted – or not impacted – by the abuse. Mary felt alone at

the time that I met her, however, the research on childhood sexual abuse indicated that is not the case.

Statement of the Problem

There is not a single, universal definition of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). In general, CSA is the sexual victimization of a child by an adult acquaintance or family member (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005; Dube et al., 2005; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Leserman, 2005). Sexual victimization can refer to a broad range of physical contact and non-contact activities including vaginal, anal, or oral sex; fondling or digital penetration; kissing; verbal propositions, suggestions, or comments; and sharing of sexually explicit media (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008; Finkelhor et al., 1990; Hunter, 2010).

Perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse include parents, stepfathers or stepmothers, siblings, family acquaintances, extended family members, teachers, babysitters, neighbors, other children, and strangers (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008; Draucker et al., 2011; Hunter, 2010).

Differences in how government organizations and researchers define the age of CSA survivors and perpetrators as well as variance in state laws complicate attempts at a universal definition for childhood sexual abuse. Some official sources define childhood sexual abuse as the victimization of a child who was 13-years-old or younger by someone who was five years older or more (Leserman, 2005). Other agencies also count abuse among people legally defined as children, such as a 12-year-old abused by a 15-year-old (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005). Local, state, and federal agencies collect data with varying age definitions for survivors and perpetrators. Data has been collected by local, state, and federal agencies that

attempted to determine how many children were sexually abused in a single year (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005). Other research asked adults about their childhood experiences in an attempt to determine the lifetime prevalence rates of CSA (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005). The various reporting methods and definitions of CSA have contributed to a large amount of data and several prevalence estimates, but no official agreement on the scope of the problem. Official sources do agree, however, that childhood sexual abuse is widespread. The most recent state-by-state data available from the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported 57,286 substantiated cases of childhood sexual abuse in the United States in 2015 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). The same data indicated that 8.4% of child maltreatment reports to state and local social service agencies were related to childhood sexual abuse. Those statistics only included abuse that was reported. Research consistently indicated that many instances of CSA were not reported or that disclosure was delayed, often until adulthood (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005; Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011; Hunter, 2010).

Researchers frequently cited a lifetime prevalence estimate of 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men that reported they were sexually abused as children (American Psychological Association, 2011; Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005; Dube et al, 2005; Leserman, 2005). CSA was linked to a range of mood and anxiety disorders, substance use and abuse, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (Bryant-Jefferies, 2003; Dube et al., 2005; Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011; Hunter, 2010; Molnar, et al., 2001). Survivors reported relational difficulties related to trust, intimacy, and vulnerability to re-victimization (Bryant-Jefferies,

2003; Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011; Hunter, 2010). Research data about CSA experiences was typically gathered from two broad sources: reports and interventions conducted at or around the time the abuse occurred, or via retrospective surveys or interviews with adults who were abused as children. In the existing research literature, adulthood was most often treated as an expansive life stage that began at 18-years-old and continued until death. For instance, in Draucker and Martsolf's (2008) extensive interviews with adult survivors of CSA, the researchers' theoretical foundations and questions were the same regardless of whether the subject had only recently graduated high school or was retired from a decades-long career.

Need for the Study

My interactions with Mary – and other students that I have met since then -- led me to wonder whether there was something unique about the intersection between her CSA experiences and her status as a college student that impacted her problems at the time she sought counseling. The literature provided a strong foundation of knowledge about childhood sexual abuse, its effects, and interventions to facilitate healing among the general population. There was considerable research on college students, student development, and students with CSA experiences. However, there were significant gaps in research investigating the impact of CSA on college student development.

College professor and researcher Arthur Chickering created a comprehensive theory of college student development that was used as a foundational text within my graduate department at the time that I met with Mary. Chickering and Reisser (1993) updated the

theory in a second edition, a map for conceptualizing the normal intellectual, social, and emotional development of college students that was intended to be useful for college personnel in a variety of student affairs environments, including counseling centers.

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory was organized as seven vectors, so named because each phase of development was equated with an arrow – or vector – pointing in a direction of progressive change, rather than a stage to be completed before continuing to another task. Researchers studied the seven vectors theoretical framework (SVTF) extensively. Key constructs such as developing competence, moving through autonomy to interdependence, and developing mature interpersonal relationships were validated in multiple studies and adapted for measurement by formal research instruments (Bates, Cooper, & Wachs, 2001; Wachs & Cooper, 2002). Researchers and practitioners working with college students adapted the broadly defined theory for use with student athletes, and lesbian and gay students on campus, among other groups (Harris, 2003; Zubernis, Snyder, & McCoy, 2011).

The SVTF addressed normal relational tasks encountered by most college students, interactions such as making friends, exploring sexuality, and dating. Discussion of unhealthy experiences such as interpersonal violence and stalking was limited. Childhood sexual abuse was not discussed within the SVTF, so while Chickering and Reisser (1993) created a framework that was intended to be broadly applicable to college students, a gap in what seemed to be an otherwise comprehensive theory became apparent when I attempted to apply the seven vectors to my work with Mary. Many other studies sampled college students in research about the social and psychological effects of childhood sexual abuse, but none of

those studies considered whether the particular developmental tasks encountered by college students impacted the experiences they reported at the time of their research participation. Research focused on clinical interventions did not differentiate college students from other adolescents or adults. Studies of childhood sexual abuse that included college student samples also relied disproportionately on survey or quantitative data, methods that resulted in limited information about students' interpretations of CSA experiences. There was little to no qualitative research in the literature that gave students the opportunity to describe the impact of CSA on their college development in their own words.

Purpose of the Study

This study had two primary purposes. First, this study intended to contribute to the research on childhood sexual abuse and college student development by gathering the first-person accounts of student survivors. College students were asked to share and interpret the impact of their CSA experiences on their present lives on a college campus, including perceptions of how CSA was meaningful to relationships with friends, intimate partners, family members, instructors, and personal decisions related to social activities, academics, and wellness. College student perceptions of the intersection of CSA with student development contributed to the second purpose of this study, which was to expand, evaluate and/or critique the SVTF. Chickering and Reisser (1993) wanted researchers and practitioners to apply their broad framework to more specific uses or environments. My study considered whether the SVTF was useful in conceptualizing college student survivors of CSA and, if the vectors were not useful in their existing form, whether there were changes

that could adapt Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory for use with this group.

Recommendations for using the SVTF in clinical practice were provided in conjunction with the evaluation of the framework's applicability to college student survivors of CSA.

Subjectivity Statement

I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. In almost every other way, my life has been cushioned by privilege. I grew up in a nice house, in a safe neighborhood, with supportive parents and brothers. I had access to good schools where I made friends easily and was encouraged by teachers who assumed that college and future success were a given. I went to college where I had more of the same, and a lot more fun than was available in my hometown. In retrospect, I was resilient. My CSA experiences were never far from my mind for long. At the time I started college, I had only disclosed to a few people, but in my mind, I was exposed. I naively perceived that my friends matriculated through the developmental obstacles of college – especially the ones related to what Chickering and Reisser (1993) called mature interpersonal relationships -- with a lightness that I could not grasp. There were many parts of college that I relished. I did well in school, I studied abroad, I went to football games and basketball games, I went to a lot of rock concerts, and I stayed out on the town until the early morning hours. And still I perceived that every little thing that went wrong was a product of my CSA experience: every time I was too anxious to talk to that cute girl in class or at a party, every time I did try and failed, every time I didn't feel like one of the boys, every time I was sad for no apparent reason, every time my confidence failed. There was a nagging awareness that I was not "normal" and I thought that everyone else could see

it, too. I did not engage with counseling until a few years after finishing my undergraduate work. I was again privileged to work with a wonderful counselor who helped me to begin healing in earnest. That counseling experience changed my life and what I believed was possible for myself and for others.

There are a few questionable assumptions I believe many people make about survivors of CSA and college students in general that have influenced my research. Every time someone asks me about my research interest in casual conversation, I see their eyes get wide and I feel the air go out of the room when I say the words “childhood sexual abuse.” Most people are not comfortable discussing this topic and, when they do, they speak in hushed tones. Reports on the television news about CSA – Jerry Sandusky, Elizabeth Smart, and Woody Allen – are delivered with dire heaviness that implies doom for the victims. The public discourse seems to assume there is no recovery or redemption with CSA, that survivors of CSA will never be normal again. There is also research that reinforced a problematic assumption that students who proceed to higher education must be resilient, and therefore any negative consequences from CSA are minimal and/or manageable (Fromuth & Burkhart, 1989; Rind, Tromovitch, & Bauserman, 1998). Those studies contributed to another assumption that exists in the discourse, that CSA is something people can just “get over” or should keep as a secret.

Childhood sexual abuse is not easy to talk about or hear about, and I do not anticipate a time when that will change. I believe that maintaining silence promotes the perception that CSA should be the deepest, darkest secret, an experience that cannot be redeemed. I have

found great meaning in my experiences. Knowing what it feels like to keep CSA as a secret and choosing the long, winding road of recovery have deepened my empathy for other survivors who have done both, and for other people in general. As a survivor, counselor, former newspaper reporter, and believer in the constructivist position that individuals build their own realities under the influence of the dominant discourse, I think it is important that everyone has an opportunity to share their story. Telling our story can be a step toward healing. That was the case for me and it seemed to be the case when I counseled Mary and others. The privileges that I enjoyed before and during my recovery from childhood sexual abuse left me with a sense of responsibility to help other survivors to discover the power of their stories, and to help them heal. I am conducting this study because the academic literature has not done due diligence in sharing college student accounts of experiences with CSA or in providing recommendations for using those narratives to facilitating recovery.

Research Questions

1. How do undergraduate college students describe their experiences of childhood sexual abuse?
2. Is childhood sexual abuse relevant to the college student development of survivors, according to the personal narratives of survivors?
3. According to the personal narratives of college student survivors, how does childhood sexual abuse impact development, as defined by the seven vectors framework of college student development?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

College student. For the purposes of this study, a college student was any person between the ages of 18- and 25-years-old that was enrolled in classes at a two-year or four-year institution of higher education at the time the study was conducted. “College” thus included universities like NC State that offered the minimum of a bachelor’s degree as well as institutions defined as community or junior colleges that typically granted an associate degree or equivalent as the highest level of education. College students were required to be enrolled in classes at the time of their participation in the study. Enrollment could be mix of on-campus classes and online classes, however, students enrolled exclusively in distance education, online courses, or online universities were not be included in the study.

Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) research included the aforementioned age range, two-year and four-year higher education institutions, and the critical element of experience with a campus environment among their theoretical foundations.

Student development. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theoretical framework, outlined by seven vectors or expected directions for normal development among students, was the basis for interpreting student development in this study. The seven vectors were named for the constructs they defined: developing competence; managing emotions; moving through autonomy toward interdependence; developing mature interpersonal relationships; establishing identity; developing purpose; and developing integrity. References to “college student development,” “student development,” “the seven vectors,” “the seven vectors

theoretical framework,” and “Chickering’s theory” may be used interchangeably within this study. The researcher often referred simply to the “SVTF.”

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA). In this study, childhood sexual abuse was defined broadly as physical contact and non-contact activities that included vaginal, anal, or oral sex; fondling or digital penetration; kissing; verbal propositions, suggestions, or comments; sharing of sexually explicit media; or other sexual experiences that college students encountered in childhood and now perceived as abusive, coercive, or conducted without consent. In keeping with the literature, CSA referred to instances wherein someone 13-years-old or younger at the time was subjected to sexual activity by another person who was five years older or more (Leserman, 2005). This study also included research participants who reported CSA perpetrated by other children (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005). I chose to include instances of CSA perpetrated by other children because the negative effects of those experiences on social and emotional development were reported in the literature to be the same or similar to the effects of abuse conducted by an adult.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one outlined the problem to be explored in this research, the rationale and purpose of the study, the researcher’s position relative to the problem, the research questions, and the definition of terms. Chapter two includes a comprehensive review of the literature on definitions, prevalence, and long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). In addition, there is a review of the literature related to the seven vectors theoretical framework (SVTF), issues of college student mental health, and previous research on college student survivors of

CSA. In chapter three, methodology is discussed with respect to research participants, procedures, instruments, analysis, and validity. A narrative study is proposed that will use one-on-one interviews with college student survivors of CSA as the primary method for gathering data. Case studies of the three research participants are presented in chapter four and findings of the study are detailed in chapter five. The significance of the research findings will be discussed in chapter six.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on childhood sexual abuse and college student development. The chapter is organized with the following sections: (a) an overview of childhood sexual abuse (CSA), including contributing factors, prevalence, and long-term effects; (b) theoretical frameworks for understanding CSA; (c) the seven vectors theoretical framework of college student development; (d) college students and mental health; and (e) college students and childhood sexual abuse. Topics included in the literature are synthesized at the end of the chapter and a rationale for the study is provided.

Overview of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a problem that impacts people from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Dube, et al., 2005; Finklehor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Leserman, 2005). Survivors are men and women of all nationalities, sexual orientations, and gender identities; they come from both two-parent and single-parent families in neighborhoods that are both wealthy and poor (Hunter, 2010). Perpetrators are usually people familiar to the survivor (Finklehor, et al., 1990). They are family friends, babysitters, teachers, parents, siblings, relatives, people in the neighborhood, and strangers. Some survivors experienced a single episode of abuse, while others were abused repeatedly over a period of days, weeks, months or years (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker, et al, 2011). Researchers have concluded that survivors of CSA are vulnerable to re-victimization and abuse by multiple perpetrators (Draucker & Martsof, 2008).

A single definition for childhood sexual abuse was elusive based on several factors. Not all cultural or ethnic groups living in the United States have the same customs regarding sex or appropriate relationships between adults and children (Finkelhor, et al., 1990). For instance, in some cultures, women marry at an age that the dominant culture in the United States would consider childhood, but that age is not in conflict with state law. Stanley, Bartholomew, and Oram (2004) documented a common theme in “age discrepant” sexual encounters among gay and bisexual men – sex with someone five years or older at the time the research participant was 16-years-old or younger – that was not perceived as abusive or coercive. Legal definitions of abuse and consent also vary by state and geographic region. Finkelhor, et al. (1990) hypothesized that higher reported rates of CSA in California reflected strict legislation and attempts at prevention in response to a well-publicized abuse trial at the time of the survey.

Leserman (2005) considered legal and cultural differences when she defined childhood sexual abuse as an encounter in which the victim is younger than 13-years-old and the perpetrator is five years older or more. Stanley, Bartholomew, and Oram (2004) argued for a definition that looks beyond age differences and into perception, i.e. childhood sexual abuse is an experience that is “perceived as negative, coercive, and/or abusive” (p. 384). The latter definition, however, revealed a complication of CSA experiences, which is that survivors are often too young to make sense of the encounter(s) and spend years trying to explain or rationalize what happened (Draucker & Martsof, 2008). In those instances, survivors are not sure whether the experience was abusive, coercive, or negative – they may

not even be sure that the experience occurred or that it is a problem – they just know that something feels wrong.

Defining and estimating prevalence of childhood sexual abuse was further complicated by patterns of disclosure among survivors. Men sometimes delay or avoid disclosure of abuse because of expectations that men are supposed to be in control, that men are not victims, or other cultural ideas that equate masculinity with strength (Alaggia, 2005; Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008). Boys who were abused by other men may fear that they will be perceived as homosexuals, a perception that is unwelcome by many men in a society where being gay is often in conflict with narrow standards of masculinity (Alaggia, 2005; Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008). Women may delay or avoid disclosure because of fears that they will not be believed or that they will be blamed for the incidents (Alaggia, 2005; Draucker & Martsof, 2008). Other factors that inhibit disclosure include the fear of physical harm for the survivor or people close to the survivor; negative emotions for the survivor; potential legal consequences for a perpetrator who is close to the survivor; and the absence of opportunities to share the story with someone who can be trusted (Jensen, et al., 2005; Malloy, Brubacher, & Lamb, 2011; O’Leary, Cooney, & Easton, 2010). Children who do report CSA or experience confirmed abuse sometimes deny the incident or recant their story (Bradley & Wood, 1996). These denials and recantations typically occur under pressure from the abuser or after the child becomes aware of the discomfort involved in adjudicating the crime.

All of the aforementioned factors were taken into account when considering the prevalence rate of childhood sexual abuse. Extensive surveys of childhood sexual abuse experiences estimated 1 in 4 women (25%) and 1 in 6 men (16%) experienced CSA (Dube, et al., 2005; Finkelhor, et al., 1990; Leserman, 2005). Estimates of college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse were drawn from limited samples. Wellman (1993) found that 6% of collegiate men and 13% of collegiate women who participated in a research study of attitudes and beliefs about sexual abuse reported experiencing sexual abuse as children or adolescents. However, that study focused on a narrow sample: All of the 824 participants were enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses at a single urban New England college, and volunteers for the study were overwhelmingly women (80%) and White (86%). Rind, Tromovitch, and Bauserman (1998) found that 14% of men and 27% of women in a meta-analysis of college samples had experienced childhood sexual abuse. Those estimates are similar to figures for the overall population. However, 44 of the male samples and 25 of the female samples, out of a total of 70 samples, did not include usable data for estimating prevalence rates (Rind, et al., 1998).

Long-term effects. CSA experiences were linked to depression and other mood disorders, a range of anxiety disorders, alcohol and other drug (AOD) abuse and dependence, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Bryant-Jefferies, 2003; Dube, et al., 2005; Molnar et al., 2001). Dube et al. (2005) reported that “a history of suicide attempt was more than twice as likely among both men and women who experienced CSA” (p. 430) compared with people who were not sexually abused. Dube et al. (2005) also reported that men and women with a

history of CSA were more likely to marry an alcoholic and more likely to report problems in their marriage. Leserman (2005) reported that women who were sexually abused as children cited more instances of negative physical conditions including: abdominal pain and gastrointestinal disorders; pelvic pain and gynecologic disorders; headaches; and symptoms such as shortness of breath, heart palpitations, chest pains, numbness, dizziness and weakness that are associated with panic or PTSD. Hunter (2010) and Bryant-Jefferies (2003) compiled case studies that illustrated the diverse relational difficulties (loss of trust, vulnerability to re-victimization, inability to engage in or maintain romantic relationships, etc.) and negative coping mechanisms (dissociation, denial, substance abuse) that remained in the lives of childhood sexual abuse survivors long after the incidents ended. CSA experiences reported in the literature varied greatly. No two survivors coped exactly the same or encountered the exact same difficulties. Some survivors experienced few CSA-related difficulties or none at all (Hunter, 2010).

Understanding and Moving on from CSA: Theoretical Frameworks

Claire Draucker and Donna Martsolf, researchers in the Kent State University College of Nursing, conducted extensive qualitative interviews with survivors of sexual abuse and childhood sexual abuse in northeast Ohio. Their work contributed to the literature on the long-term effects of CSA, the variations in individual CSA experiences, and the path to recovery from abuse. Draucker and Martsolf also provided evidence that sexually abused children were vulnerable to additional episodes of maltreatment in childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

The foundation of Draucker and Martsolf's research into how adults respond emotionally and behaviorally to childhood sexual abuse was the Sexual Violence Study, a series of interviews conducted by a research team between December 2004 and April 2006. Researchers interviewed 121 survivors of sexual violence between the ages of 18- and 62-years-old. Initial questions focused on general sexual violence rather than childhood experiences only. Examples of interview questions included, "Tell me about the sexual violence you experienced?" and "How do you feel the violence affected your life?" (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, p. 1036). Ninety-five participants in the total sample reported CSA. The first of three articles discussed in this section of the literature review, a theoretical framework of how adults "story" or disclose their childhood sexual abuse experiences, was the product of follow-up interviews with 74 survivors of CSA that participated in the Sexual Violence Study.

Draucker and Martsolf (2008) identified five processes in the "Storying Childhood Sexual Abuse" theoretical framework. Adult interview participants recalled struggling to make sense of CSA almost immediately after the first occurrence. Draucker and Martsolf called this first process "Starting the Story: The Story Not Yet Told." Survivors described a range of experiences and perpetrators. They were abused by family friends, siblings, stepmothers and stepfathers, cousins, teachers, baby sitters, and, in fewer instances, strangers. The abuse occurred once, on multiple occasions during a short period of time such as summer break from school, or repeatedly over the course of years. Survivors characterized the intensity of their experiences as gentle, even loving, or violent and degrading; subtle and

coercive, or forceful; clear and unambiguous, or the source of doubt for years to come. In most cases, the first process in the theoretical framework was defined by the secret of CSA that is kept between the survivor and the abuser. Survivors struggled to understand experiences for which they were often too young to have context, and perpetrators had power to shape perceptions. Study participants reported believing the abuse was their fault because perpetrators called the survivor “seductive or bad” (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, p. 1039). One participant was told that the sexual experiences were “not a big deal,” a normal part of a caring, mentoring relationship between a stepfather and daughter (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, p. 1040). The “Starting the Story” process was often the beginning of a long effort by the survivor to determine the boundaries of normal behavior. This “story-not-yet told” was limited in scope, with a shallow understanding of cause, participant roles, consequences, and resources for help. There was a great deal of confusion and shame that compelled the survivor to either keep the secret or make sense of it by sharing with others (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008).

Based on qualitative data collected and analyzed during the course of the Sexual Violence Study, as well as an extensive review of narrative theory, Draucker and Martsolf (2008, 2010) and Draucker et al. (2011) determined that survivors of CSA gained a deeper understanding of their experiences by sharing the story. Disclosure of CSA is a process, rather than a single event or telling. Survivors may drop hints about their abuse to get a sense of how the listener will receive their story. Survivors may tell the whole story all at once. They may decide to tell and then recant, making progress in their meaning-making journey

and then regressing. The process of storying can change over time, depending upon the circumstances of the survivor's life and the audience. The story may seem important and relevant at some times in a survivor's life and less impactful at other times. Survivors of CSA may tell their story multiple times throughout life, emphasizing different details or perspectives as their understanding of the abuse evolves. Draucker and Martsolf (2008) called the second process in the theoretical framework "Coming out with the Story: Story First Told," and although their research disputed the common assumption that disclosure is an event rather than a process, this step in the theoretical framework indicated that the first telling was especially significant. Survivors of CSA were typically concerned with how their efforts to share their story would be received. A positive response to the storying process often encouraged more sharing and, according to Draucker and Martsolf (2008, 2010) and Draucker et al. (2011), increased the likelihood that the survivor would heal from the abuse. A negative response resulted in the survivor keeping the secret under wraps, sometimes for years or decades.

In this part of the storying process, survivors recalled trying to work the abuse into everyday conversation or asking for help without doing so face-to-face. One survivor left a note for her mother describing her stepfather's abuse and asking her mother to make it stop (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008). Her mother never acknowledged the note. Another woman reported telling her mom directly about her stepfather's abuse. "I told my mom about it and she just called me a whore" (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, p. 1041). Participants in the Sexual Violence Study were more likely to receive a supportive response as adults. One man

disclosed CSA as an adult because it was the first time he believed someone – the woman he was dating – was really interested in him and wanted to know about his family (Draucker & Martsof, 2008). Several survivors found support in therapeutic relationships with mental health providers, but others described encounters with therapists who dismissed the sexual abuse story and directed “the participant back to more surface issues or day-to-day concerns” (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, p. 1041).

Negative responses to efforts to share a CSA story often resulted in the survivors getting stuck in the third theoretical process, “Shielding the Story: The Story as Secret.” Men who participated in the Sexual Violence Study believed society did not recognize them as victims (Draucker & Martsof, 2008). Women often reported feeling they were blamed for the abuse, citing reasons that included the clothes they wore, alcohol consumption, communication style, and choices about where and with whom they spent time (Draucker & Martsof, 2008). Both genders reported elevated fears about how the story would be received and an absence of opportunities to share it. Survivors who kept their story a secret were unable to change their understanding of CSA or their place in the story. They often felt helpless and victimized. “If you’ve never talked about it and don’t remember a lot about it, it’s subconsciously beating you up,” said one man who was abused by multiple family members (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, p. 1042).

Positive responses to shared stories facilitated movement to the fourth process in the theoretical framework, “Revising the Story: The Story as Account.” Draucker and Martsof (2008) observed that opportunities to share the abuse experience and receive feedback –

often in multiple encounters spread out over time – helped survivors to deepen their understanding of what happened to them. Draucker and Martsof (2008) described several survivors who “indicated that they abdicated blame only over time and after several people reassured them that the abuse was not their fault” (p. 1043). By revising their stories, survivors were able to develop “an explanation of the abuse that included the culpability of the perpetrator, the family, the community, and society” (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, p. 1043). The last process in the storying framework, “Sharing the Story: Story-as-Message,” evolved from the revised account of abuse. Survivors found a sense of purpose in their experiences and used their stories to advocate for other people who had been abused. This final process in the theoretical framework closed the circle on the initial struggle to understand what had happened and why. Draucker and Martsof (2008) observed that several participants “suggested that the question why it happened was answered because they could help others” (p. 1044).

Life-course typology of sexual violence. The Sexual Violence Study was also the basis for a collection of models describing varieties of life-course trajectory for sexual violence survivors. Draucker and Martsof (2010) used the same sample of 121 interview participants and the same initial questions to construct life story narratives of each survivor. The research team’s analysis of data was focused on revealing experiences that occurred often enough among participants to be considered themes (holistic-content analysis) and discerning the overall trajectory of the life course (holistic-form analysis) common among groups (Draucker & Martsof, 2010). The six typologies identified by Draucker and Martsof

(2010) were informed by narrative theories that established three prototypical life story forms: the “stability narrative,” wherein “progress to a goal remains unchanged”; the “progressive narrative,” wherein progress is steady; and the “regressive narrative,” wherein the subject moves away from the goal (p. 1151). A visual representation of each group was produced, featuring a horizontal line with peaks and valleys to represent a steady course, progress and regression. Draucker and Martsolf’s typology highlighted turning points and unique outcomes in the lives of sexual violence survivors that were common to each group. Turning points were “exceptional events” that were “memorable” and resulted in a “drastic change in life pattern” (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010, p. 1162). Making a final decision to leave an abusive relationship and ask a community agency for help was an example of a turning point. Unique outcomes were often “barely noticed events,” however, the researchers considered them notable because they “display the hidden strength, ability to resist oppression, or vitality of the narrator” (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010, p. 1162). Developing some healthy relationships or a successful career amidst a problem-saturated personal narrative were examples of unique outcomes.

The life course typology of adults who experienced sexual violence illustrated a spectrum of traumatic responses and resilient behaviors with a common thread throughout. At least a single occurrence of childhood sexual abuse was a common feature in all six groups, and in four of the groups ongoing sexual abuse began in childhood and continued into adulthood. Survivors in group one (“Life of Turmoil”) experienced ongoing sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in childhood and adulthood (Draucker & Martsolf, 2010).

Their lives were a cluster of family chaos, legal trouble, addiction, mental illness, and isolation. Draucker and Martsof (2010) observed that members of this group had no social support – efforts to share abuse stories were rejected or silenced -- and few examples of personal agency. Sexual abuse in childhood and adolescence perpetrated by family members, acquaintances or other caretakers was frequently followed by abuse in adulthood from intimate partners. Study participants in this group “expressed a lack of hope” that their negative circumstances would ever improve (Draucker & Martsof, 2010, p. 1170).

The life story narratives among group two (“Life of Struggles”) were slightly better, with some examples of social support and a few unique outcomes. For instance, Tonya, an exemplar case study selected by Draucker and Martsof (2010), had access to therapy and was in a romantic relationship that she described as healthy at the time of her interview. Similar to participants among group one, however, Tonya experienced CSA by multiple members of her family, rejection when she disclosed the abuse to her grandmother, addiction, psychiatric problems, and multiple suicide attempts. Participants among groups one and two did not encounter a turning point that marked a change in life trajectory.

Group three (“Diminished Life”) was one of two groups that lacked ongoing CSA as a typical feature. Some participants among group three did experience childhood sexual abuse, however, it was often a one-time occurrence and more likely to be perpetrated by someone outside the family than in other groups. Draucker and Martsof (2010) observed that participants in this group reported less family dysfunction than in previously described groups. The exemplar of this group, Charlene, experienced anxiety, low self-esteem,

depression, and unawareness of personal agency; she believed that her romantic relationships in adulthood were negatively effected by a single incident of childhood sexual abuse (Draucker & Martsof, 2010). Her life trajectory was stable, with several unique outcomes (including employment as a teacher) and no turning points.

The presence of a significant turning point in the life narrative was notable among participants in group four (“Taking Control of Life”). Individuals in group four recalled childhoods and portions of adulthood similar to the abuse and family chaos of group one. The emergence of social support and discovery of personal agency was typically the turning point from a “problem-saturated” life to a positive sense of well-being (Draucker & Martsof, 2010, p. 1167). One woman counted among this group was sexually abused by her grandfather and became an addict as a teenager. She recognized traumas and negative behaviors in her life while watching a documentary video about sexual abuse. The woman began counseling and was able to remain sober. Group five (“Finding Peace in Life”) was also distinguished by the presence of a turning point, usually spiritual or religious in nature. Participants included in this group also reported ongoing sexual abuse in childhood and adulthood, mental health difficulties, and isolation before developing a relationship with God, often in conjunction with recovery from addiction (Draucker & Martsof, 2010).

Group six (“Getting Back to Normal”) was different from the others in that participants reported stability in childhood and adulthood that was typically interrupted by “a single episode of sexual violence that did not involve physical violence” (Draucker & Martsof, 2010, p. 1169). The exemplar of this group, Andre, was a 27-year-old man who

reported an attempted sexual assault by an acquaintance. Andre shared the experience with his family, received support and affirmation, and believed that he had resolved his feelings about the experience and moved forward (Draucker & Martsof, 2010).

Healing from childhood sexual abuse. Draucker et al. (2011) reviewed previous models of sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse when they formulated the CSA Healing Model. This model, based on transcripts of interviews with 95 survivors of CSA who participated in the Sexual Violence Study, focused specifically on the theoretical path to healing among adults who were sexually abused as children. The research team engaged in an iterative process of re-examining five models developed during the course of the Sexual Violence Study; confirming, rejecting, or modifying theoretical assumptions about constructs that were relevant to childhood sexual abuse; and creating a comprehensive framework that described the journey from abuse to healing (Draucker et al., 2011).

The CSA Healing Model included four stages, with five relevant constructs explored in each stage: life patterns, parenting, disclosure of CSA, spirituality, and altruism. Draucker et al. (2011) also identified six enabling factors that influenced whether or not individual survivors proceeded from one stage to the next. The research team concluded that not all survivors heal from CSA. Some participants in the Sexual Violence Study were stuck in the first healing stage or stalled in a later stage without reaching the highest level of healing.

In the first healing stage, “Grappling with the meaning of the CSA,” survivors continued to live a troubled life (Draucker et al., 2011). Career and relational instability, abuse, emotional and physical difficulties, and legal problems were common. Survivors in

the first stage struggled with the question of how to disclose – or if they should disclose – the abuse. Many participants in the Sexual Violence Study had kept the secret of CSA. Others disclosed it indirectly or indiscriminately to people who did not provide a supportive response. Participants in this stage maintained a shallow understanding of the abuse consistent with the “Starting the story” process described by Draucker and Martsof (2008). They were also more likely than CSA survivors in later healing stages to physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse their own children, or fail to protect their children from abuse by others (Draucker et al., 2011). Movement from the first healing stage to the second healing stage was facilitated by reception of affirming messages about the abuse – that the abuse was not deserved or the survivor’s fault – and discovery of personal agency in responding to the abuse.

Draucker et al. (2011) called the second healing stage “Figuring out the meaning of the CSA.” Survivors in this stage had received some positive messages about the abuse, often via friends, therapists, or popular culture, and had shared some version of their story in a way that facilitated deeper understanding of the abuse context. Characteristics of a troubled life were still present, but were mixed with at least limited awareness of unique outcomes. Spirituality played a role in healing for some participants in this stage. Draucker et al. (2011) described participants in the Sexual Abuse Study who “prayed to God for answers to their questions whereas others questioned why God allowed the abuse to happen” (p. 452). In stage two, participants had a growing concern for others who experience abuse and a desire

to protect their own children, however, they typically did not have the knowledge or resources to turn ideas into action.

Enabling factors associated with moving on from stage two were ongoing support from others and personal resolve. Draucker et al. (2011) reported that participants in the Sexual Abuse Study described someone who would “be there for me” during the period of time in which survivors were attempting to make meaning of the abuse and initiate positive life changes (p. 454). Participants also relied on their own inner strength to heal from abuse. Survivors who were able to navigate through stage two progressed to the stage Draucker et al. (2011) called “Tackling the effects of the CSA.” In this stage, participants took action to get out of abusive relationships, improve physical health, and pursue new economic and educational opportunities. In addition to discussing their abuse with supportive friends, mental health professionals, and others, participants were attempting to use their account of CSA to pass on wisdom or stop the abuse cycle among others with similar experiences (Draucker et al., 2011). Some participants described being on a spiritual journey, “overcoming trials and tribulations that God provided for them in order to make them stronger” (Draucker et al., 2011, p. 455).

Participants in the Sexual Violence Study who reached the fourth stage of healing, “Laying claim to one’s life,” experienced a critical event that contributed to a commitment to “transcend the CSA rather than just recover from it” (Draucker et al., 2011, p. 457). Critical events could be either positive or negative – a spiritual awakening or a severe episode of abuse. Participants in this stage of healing believed they could use their experiences as

survivors of CSA to help others. They transformed the altruistic impulses of previous stages into action, often volunteering with advocacy organizations or pursuing careers in helping professions such as social work or counseling.

The Seven Vectors Theoretical Framework

Researchers and mental health practitioners have dedicated considerable energy to understanding the prevalence, disclosure patterns, and short- and long-term symptoms and disorders associated with childhood sexual abuse. Draucker and Martsolf in particular provided a broad view of the impact of CSA on adults between the ages of 18- and 62-years-old. All of the aforementioned studies viewed adulthood as an undifferentiated developmental period and CSA as a problem that impacted adults in a uniform way, regardless of whether the individuals in question had just graduated high school or were preparing for retirement from a career. Some developmental theorists disagree with the assumption that development ends or is static at adulthood. Among them was Arthur Chickering, a long-time college student affairs researcher who concluded that college is a unique developmental experience bridging adolescence and adulthood. Chickering published his seven vectors theoretical framework of college student development (SVTF) in 1969 as a broad guide to developing higher education programming that addressed the most common psychosocial tasks encountered by traditional-age students. The second edition of his theory, updated in 1993 with contributions from Linda Reisser, re-organized and expanded the theory, building on the premise that, although all individuals develop along the vectors in a

unique manner influenced by differences in experience, the vectors represent themes encountered by all college students.

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), “The vectors describe major highways for journeying toward individuation – the discovery and refinement of one’s unique way of being – and also toward communion with other individuals and groups, including the larger national and global society” (p. 35). Chickering conceptualized his model as vectors rather than stages because each construct was intended to indicate movement along the path of development. Students did not always encounter the vectors sequentially, one after another, and development occurred along multiple vectors simultaneously. Chickering believed that some vectors were of a lower order and others were higher. He concluded, for instance, that the first five vectors occurred earlier in a student’s college experience and created a foundation for development along the last two vectors. The seven vectors are outlined below.

Vector 1: Developing Competence

Chickering and Reisser (1993) discussed three domains of competence. Intellectual competence was defined by abilities associated with reflection, formation of reasoned arguments, and the creation of meaning. College students who have not developed intellectual competence are limited to memorization and skills associated with passing tests. The second area defined by Chickering and Reisser referred to physical and manual competence developed by athletics and/or art that contribute to lifelong wellness. Interpersonal competence, the third area defined by this vector, was associated with “an array of discrete skills, like listening, asking questions, self-disclosing, giving feedback, and

participating in dialogues that bring insight and enjoyment” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 72).

Vector 2: Managing Emotions

Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed their theory was different from previous developmental theories because the SVTF included extensive consideration of the importance of emotions and relationships. This vector was defined by the experiences of becoming aware of feelings, their sources, and “the consequences of acting on impulse” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 88); exploring the range of emotions, both good and bad; learning to cope with emotions; and expressing feelings in a way that meets the needs of the student. Some students come to counseling to discuss strong feelings and explore confusion about feelings that they have never had before or have been encouraged to stifle. There are also students who need help differentiating among feelings, naming their emotions, and learning the appropriate responses to those emotions – issues that were all discussed by this vector.

Vector 3: Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence

This vector was concerned with balance among the needs of the student, the needs or expectations of people in the student’s life, and the intersection of those interests, which were sometimes in conflict. Chickering and Reisser (1993) assumed that the student who makes progress along the seven vectors will have a better grasp of individual needs, feelings, goals, values, preferences, etc. at the end of college than at the beginning. This vector was concerned with that journey away from the influence of others, toward individuality, and the

acknowledgement that interaction and compromise are necessary. Chickering and Reisser divided this vector into three components. Emotional independence was “freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance, affection, or approval from others” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 117). The ability to engage challenges and solve problems was dubbed instrumental independence. And interdependence was defined as “an awareness of one’s place in and commitment to the welfare of the larger community” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 117).

Vector 4: Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Chickering and Reisser (1993) defined mature interpersonal relationships as those characterized by tolerance, appreciation for others, and a capacity for intimacy. These relationships incorporated the interpersonal skills defined by the previous vectors – including appropriate management and expression of feelings – and included skills related to resolving differences and making “meaningful commitments” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 145). Development within this vector was often accompanied by increasing discretion in friendships and relationships, i.e. less developed students with a large circle of friends and some unhealthy relationships transformed into more developed students who focused their energy on meaningful relationships.

Vector 5: Establishing Identity

The constructs defined in the previous four vectors contributed to a “solid sense of self” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 181) that included awareness of life roles, sexual identity, physical identity, and the individual’s place in the lives of others. Chickering and

Reisser assumed that development in this vector was critical to movement in the final two vectors.

Vector 6: Developing Purpose

Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed that development of purpose required the evaluation of interests, goals and preferences that are supported by the variety of experiences offered by college life. Purpose was defined as “an increasing ability to be intentional, to assess interests and options, to clarify goals, to make plans, and to persist despite obstacles” (p. 209).

Vector 7: Developing Integrity

This vector emphasized a move away from dualistic thinking and toward the establishment of a relativistic approach to life. Development in this vector was associated with students who were less likely to believe there was one right or wrong way to act or think and a greater acceptance of alternative perspectives. Chickering and Reisser (1993) defined integrity as congruence between behavior and values, responsibility for self and others, and accountability to a set of ethical principles.

Theoretical Foundations

A broad range of theoretical influences including prominent psychosocial, cognitive, typology, and person-environment theories informed the vectors. The SVTF borrowed theoretical ideas from some of the best-known thinkers in the social sciences, including Erikson, Kohlberg, and Perry. Chickering and Reisser (1993) established a “current context for student development” (p. 3) by outlining relevant work in psychosocial, cognitive,

typology, and person-environment interaction theories. The influence of those theories was evident in what the seven vectors were (a conceptual tool for cognitive, social, and moral development) as well as what they were not (a stage theory in which specific crisis or experiences must be overcome for the individual to move forward).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) cited Sanford's assertion that college should balance challenge and support, introducing "disequilibrium" as "an essential catalyst for learning new skills and knowledge, for differentiation and integration" (p. 1). This idea was intertwined with the most basic assumptions of the SVTF: college challenges with new information, experiences, and people, while offering support via the coherent student services encouraged by Chickering and Reisser; college is an inherently social endeavor; and perseverance through the unique contextual experience associated with the traditional college environment moves the individual closer to congruence with the self and harmony with others. The principle of disequilibrium was consistent throughout the SVTF. The difficulty of overcoming disequilibrium – recognizing the challenge and seeking the right support – feeds the anxiety and depression that often bring students to the university counseling center.

Piaget's ideas about cognitive development as an evolution from simple structures and concrete modes of thinking to more complex, abstract, reflective perceptions were also incorporated throughout the vectors. Chickering and Reisser (1993) elaborated on each of the vectors as a journey from dualistic perspectives, choices and feelings to more relativistic experiences that were more mature and complex at the completion of college. They adapted Piaget's belief that development "proceeds through a predictable sequence, but at an uneven

pace” (p. 7). Chickering and Reisser decided against proposing a stage model similar to Erikson’s seminal model of lifespan development, but the influence of Erikson’s work cannot be ignored. Chickering and Reisser (1993) cited Erikson’s epigenetic principle as a catalyst for the creation of the SVTF: each part of the ego “exists in some form before the time when it becomes ‘phase-specific’ – that is, when the individual’s readiness and society’s pressure precipitate its psychosocial coming of age” (p. 22). The SVTF assumed that identity is phase-specific at the point in development when adolescents typically begin college, and continued to be phase-specific at least until the point in young adulthood that coincides with the end of school.

Perry and Kohlberg’s theories also influenced each of the seven vectors. Chickering and Reisser, like Perry, concluded that intellectual and ethical development continued beyond childhood. Perry also described “developmental turning points that can affect relationships, integrity and identity” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 8). Vector 4 reflected elements of Perry’s ideas about the move away from dualistic thinking in its consideration of the impact of contact with others’ experiences on mature relationships. The move toward relativism was also reflected in Vector 7. Kohlberg’s model of moral development was a touchstone for Vector 7, which deals with the development of integrity. Chickering and Reisser (1993) acknowledged that there was debate about Kohlberg and Gilligan’s theories concerning differences in moral development among men and women, and rather than continuing the debate, they recommended that college student personnel create “learning environments responsive” (p. 20) to those differences.

Chickering and Reisser acknowledged dozens of other theorists and researchers throughout their work. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) were cited repeatedly throughout the seven vectors. Their body of research covering topics that included student-faculty relationships, student housing, athletics, and emotional development significantly informed the expansion of Chickering's theory from 1969 to 1993. The theoretical framework can be used as a guide to organizing all phases of student services, including counseling services, academic advising, residence life, campus recreation, student government, etc. Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that they used "language that is gender free and appropriate for persons of diverse backgrounds" and suggested that, as with the first edition of the SVTF, researchers and practitioners seeking more specific applications can adapt the theory to those uses (p. 44).

Adaptations of the SVTF

Chickering and Reisser based the SVTF on constructs that transcended culture, gender, and individual context. Issues of social competence, emotional management, identity, purpose, and integrity were applicable to most individuals, regardless of family background or personal experiences like childhood sexual abuse. The broad nature of the SVTF essentially forced practitioners and researchers to adapt the theory in an active way, seeking out the contextual information that defined a specific problem and using the SVTF as a theoretical overlay that helped to conceptualize a client. Researchers adapted the SVTF to issues not specifically discussed by Chickering and Reisser, including counseling lesbian and gay students (Zubernis, Snyder, & McCoy, 2011) and development among injured student

athletes (Harris, 2003). Chickering and Reisser (1993) briefly discussed intimate partner violence and sexual violence, but did not address the issue of CSA history among college students.

Criticism of the SVTF

Critiques of the theoretical framework focused on cultural and gender differences in development and the order in which college students encountered the vectors. Taub (1997) conducted a survey of 325 undergraduate women that showed no differences among first-year, junior, and senior women in the construct of autonomy until senior year. Taub argued that those findings supported her hypothesis that autonomy developed later among women than men and conflicted with Chickering and Reisser's assumption that students develop within multiple constructs simultaneously. Taub (1997) also found that parental attachment among women did not decrease from year to year, suggesting that women developed autonomy with the help of their parents, rather than as a product of differentiation from their parents. Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed that differentiation from parents was necessary for the development of autonomy. In addition, Taub (1997) found differences in autonomy among white women, Latinas, and African-American women. Those findings reinforced previous research that found cultural differences in the development of autonomy and mature interpersonal relationships (Taub & McEwen, 1991).

Foubert, Nixon, Sisson, and Barnes (2005) administered the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory to 247 undergraduate men and women with the purpose of measuring gender differences. The SDTLI was based on the original formulation of the

SVTF. A multivariate analysis of variance showed that students developed within all vectors measured. Univariate analysis indicated significant changes in the areas of developing purpose, developing mature interpersonal relationships, and academic autonomy. A marginally significant change was indicated for tolerance, a component of mature relationships measured by the SDTLI subscales. There was no significant development, in men or women, in the areas of mature relationships or tolerance between the first and second year of college, however, academic autonomy increased at each testing stop. Study results indicated that development of purpose began during the first year of college and continued throughout the experience, a premise the researchers interpreted as in opposition to Chickering and Reisser's later placement of purpose among the seven vectors. Foubert et al. reported gender differences in each variable, $F(4, 191) = 10.89, p < .001$, with a low effect size (.19) for these differences. Significant differences were found in constructs related to development of mature relationships and tolerance. Foubert et al. (2005) reported that women "began their college experience with tolerance scores exceeding those reached by men at the end of their college experience" (p. 467).

Many criticisms of the SVTF in the literature shared common weaknesses. Taub (1997) focused her critique on the original SVTF rather than the second edition. Foubert et al (2005) was published 12 years after the revised SVTF, but the instrument used for analysis was based on the original, outdated developmental framework. Both studies revealed differences in development that occurred among genders, races, and cultures, however, neither study determined that the constructs included in the SVTF were invalid. Critiques of

the SVTF also focused on the order in which college students encountered the vectors, a facet of the theory that would vary among individuals, according to Chickering and Reisser (1993). This review of the literature did not find reproduction of those critiques relevant to the updated edition of the SVTF. Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999) created an updated instrument – the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment -- designed to measure development within the constructs defined by the most recent version of the SVTF. The SDTLA was available, but not used, at the time Foubert et al. conducted their study.

College Students and Mental Health

The SVTF, with its focus on broad applicability to multiple college student affairs functions, provided a developmental guide that can be useful in a clinical mental health setting. Zubernis, Snyder, and McCoy (2011) provided an example of the framework's durability when they integrated Chickering's ideas about student development with Cass's developmental theory of lesbian and gay identity to outline a vector-by-vector conceptualization. Zubernis, Snyder, and McCoy (2011) concluded that most college students at some point compared themselves to peers – “Am I normal?” – and that counselors working in a clinical setting on campus played an important role in helping to explore those questions (p. 122). They wrote that a “significant part of college counseling is facilitating normal psychological development by helping students add new skills and coping strategies to their repertoire” and made suggestion for practice, such as group counseling for lesbian and gay students searching for a sense of community (Zubernis, Snyder, & McCoy, 2011, p.

141). Sexual identity and sexual abuse are drastically different counseling issues, however, both may intersect with development in ways that may compel students to seek counseling.

According to the American College Health Association (2013), one-third of students experienced a problem functioning as a result of depression in the past 12 months. Nearly half of students experienced significant anxiety. Twenty percent considered suicide during their lifetime, and 5.8% attempted suicide. Sleep difficulties, stress, anxiety, and depression were among the top factors presenting substantial obstacles to students' academic success (American College Health Association, 2013). Douce and Keeling (2014) confirmed that those issues were among the emergent mental health problems encountered by college counseling centers. As discussed previously in this chapter, many of those symptoms were present among survivors of CSA and prevalence rates in the general population suggested that at least a segment of those students experienced sexual abuse as children. For example, 17,535 men and 14,584 women were enrolled at NC State University during the spring 2016 semester (NC State, 2016). Approximately 10,600 students out of the total NC State population would have had a problem functioning as a result of depression, if the statistical estimates in the American College Health Association study held true. Approximately 6,556 students at NC State were survivors of childhood sexual abuse if the student population mirrored prevalence estimates for the general population in the U.S.

Multiple factors contribute to college counselors' status as a potentially important point of contact for CSA survivors. For many college students, the experience of higher education – more demanding academic work, increased independence and personal

responsibility, separation from familiar family and social supports – is the most stressful set of challenges faced in life to that point (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). College students who experienced CSA may come to college counseling centers for help with the symptoms of abuse, not the underlying cause, which were exacerbated by stress. Those symptoms are an additional roadblock on the highway of normal development described by Chickering and Reisser (1993), a collection of tasks wherein the primary drive for identity development is not compatible with the confusion associated with childhood sexual abuse.

Students engage with questions of identity related to competence, integrity, values, self-expression, and social connection. Confusion about masculinity, femininity, sexuality, trust and even whether sexual abuse occurred may obscure the answers to those identity questions in ways that further complicate the experience of higher education (Alaggia, 2005; Draucker & Martsof, 2008; Sorsoli, Kia-Keating, & Grossman, 2008). Amidst these challenges, college counseling centers can be an accessible source of support. Students who are away from home for the first time can access the counseling center without the knowledge or judgment of family members, friends, and peers. The counseling center is often in a central campus location, which makes it a convenient source of support that can fit into the busy schedule of college students. Furthermore, students on many college campuses are required to pay a student fee that includes access to the counseling center, so students do not have to pay out-of-pocket for support. All of these factors contribute to the neutralization of logistical barriers that may otherwise discourage college students – and CSA survivors – from seeking counseling.

College Students and Childhood Sexual Abuse

The literature on childhood sexual abuse in the general population generally accepted that this problem was associated with negative psychosocial outcomes, including mood and anxiety disorders, substance abuse, relational difficulties, and vulnerability to further victimization. Research on the impact of childhood sexual abuse in the college student population produced a complex and conflicted account of this common social problem. Some studies found support for the assumption that college student survivors were more likely than peers who were not abused to experience depression, anxiety, and additional sexual abuse in college. Other research dismissed CSA as a factor in student distress in light of confounding variables or did not find evidence that CSA was associated with negative psychosocial outcomes.

Undergraduate women were overrepresented in the research on college students with CSA, which was predominantly based on surveys and quantitative analysis. Wellman (1993) found that women were more likely than men to experience CSA, and that the abuse reinforced gender roles related to sex, i.e. that women were expected to be compliant and men were expected to be aggressive. Her survey of 824 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a New England college included a high rate of women (80%) who were White (86%). That imbalance between genders in the sample may have made Wellman's comparison unreliable.

Other studies focusing on non-White undergraduate students found cultural differences in how CSA can be a factor in the college social environment. A survey of

Mexican-American college women found that 32% had childhood experiences consistent with CSA (Ernst, Salinas, & Perez, 2009). In that study, CSA survivors had a comfort level similar to students who did not experience CSA when it came to disclosing details of their personal lives, but survivors were less comfortable answering questions about childhood sexual abuse. In a survey of 461 undergraduate women, Ullman and Filipas (2005) also found differences among ethnicities in the willingness to disclose CSA and concerns about how peers would respond. Harter et al (2009) found that college men had a more negative view of a peer disclosing CSA when compared with disclosure of other personal traumas, like the death of a mother or pet. Such negative attitudes reinforced the idea that childhood sexual abuse should be a source of shame or should be held as a secret. Discomfort with sharing personal information with peers may be a barrier to creating the mature interpersonal relationships and developing the healthy sense of identity conceptualized by Chickering.

White and Strange (1993) surveyed 131 undergraduate women at a Midwestern university and found greater degrees of negative psychosocial outcomes among women who experienced severe childhood sexual abuse. Negative outcomes were identified in domains related to interpersonal intimacy and career planning. Severe CSA included experiences such as incest, whereas less severe abuse was limited to verbal propositions of a sexual nature. In a later survey of 441 male and female students at two community colleges and two predominantly low-income universities in Southern California, Young, Riggs, and Robinson (2011) found that the physical intrusiveness of childhood sexual abuse itself was not a reliable construct for determining the severity of the experience. That study suggested that

second-order variables were more influential in the severity of symptoms related to CSA. Survivors who were familiar with the perpetrator experienced more severe symptoms, as did survivors who were exposed to violent or humiliating forms of CSA that resulted in fear of disclosing the abuse. The studies of White and Strange (1993) and Young, Riggs, and Robinson (2011) had sampling limitations that raised questions about their results. White and Strange (1993) acknowledged that college-enrolled study participants were likely to have resilient qualities that may be lacking in a non-college sample, and thus college students may not exhibit as many negative outcomes. White and Strange (1993) also invited only women in active romantic relationships to participate in their survey, a research decision that excluded some survivors affected by the interpersonal problems common among people who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Participants in the Young, Riggs, and Robinson study had an unusually high CSA prevalence rate. Sixty-two percent of the 441 male and female students who completed the survey instrumentation reported some form of childhood sexual abuse. That high prevalence rate may have been related to the students' low-income status, which limited generalizability to a larger college population.

White and Strange (1993), and several other studies of CSA with college student samples, were unable to conclude definitively that childhood sexual abuse was the reason for negative psychosocial outcomes. White and Strange (1993) did find difference in some developmental domains between survivors of CSA and students who did not have those experiences, however, the researchers noted that incidents of abuse occurred so long ago that associated problems may be confounded with issues within the general family environment.

In a survey of 253 college men in the Midwest and 329 men in the Southeast, Fromuth and Burkhart (1989) found a low correlation between CSA and psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, and hostility. They did not find a correlation between CSA and sexual behavior in college in either sample (Fromuth & Burkhart, 1989). The researchers for that study acknowledged several limitations, including healthy, college-age men who may have been reluctant to disclose CSA or failed to recognize that it was linked to problematic behavior. Furthermore, Fromuth and Burkhart (1989) restated an assumption that childhood sexual abuse was correlated with homosexuality in adult men that now seems outdated and false. Gipple, Lee, and Puig (2006) studied dissociative coping mechanisms and CSA among college women. In their survey of 311 women, they found a stronger correlation between negative home environments and dissociation than between CSA and dissociation.

In an unpublished doctoral thesis equivalent study, Goldberg (2015) compared undergraduate students with CSA experiences to peers at the same university who did not have those experiences. The research question underpinning Goldberg (2015) asked whether there were developmental differences between college students who experienced CSA and college students who did not experience CSA. Student development was defined by the constructs of the SVTF. Thirty-four students completed a survey based on the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment and a supplementary survey of CSA experiences. CSA experiences were defined as sexual touching between a person 13-years-old or younger and someone five years older or more, or non-contact sexual behavior that

was interpreted as negative, coercive, or abusive. Responses from the two groups were compared using a t-test and the Mann-Whitney U test.

This was considered to be a promising line of inquiry because most previous surveys related to CSA did not incorporate theoretical foundations that specifically considered college student development, and the one study located by Goldberg (2015) that did address college student development used an outdated model. No statistically significant differences were found between students with CSA and students without abuse history. Goldberg (2015) concluded that the sample size was too small to measure differences, if they exist.

Recommendations for future research included conducting survey research with a larger sample size and an equal number of college student participants with and without CSA experiences. Goldberg (2015) also observed an absence of qualitative, first person accounts of the impact of CSA on college student development. Goldberg (2015) recommended a qualitative inquiry into CSA experiences, through the lens of the SVTF, as an alternative approach to the more common survey studies.

The aforementioned research studies were sometimes in conflict regarding the impact of CSA on college student samples. Most of the literature agreed, however, that a negative family environment was associated with deficiencies in psychosocial development, and intrafamilial CSA (incest) was consistently associated with poor outcomes in adulthood. Melchert (2000) attempted to clarify the impact of parental substance abuse, CSA, and parental care on adult adjustment by conducting a survey of 255 college men and women. Questions focused on participant recollections of parental substance use, incest, and

incidences of CSA perpetrated by someone outside the family. Student participants completed the Beck Depression Inventory and the Global Severity Index of the Brief Symptom Inventory. Melchert (2000) found that issues of parental acceptance and responsiveness had a significant impact on adult adjustment. Incest and parental substance dependence explained significant variance in adult adjustment among student survey participants. Childhood sexual abuse was not found to be statistically significant factor in adult adjustment.

Synthesis

Melchert (2000), like several other studies cited in this literature review, made significant contributions to what we know about the impact of CSA on college students and the difficulty in determining whether negative psychosocial symptoms were truly related to CSA or other life experiences. Melchert (2000) also provided an example of limitations in the literature. College student participants in the study were treated as adults, with no distinction made between their developmental progress or needs and those of older adults. The instrumentation used by Melchert (2000) was not developed for specific use with a college sample. In fact, White and Strange (1993) and Goldberg (2015) were the only studies found during the course of this literature review that explored the relationship between college student development and CSA using an instrument developed in accordance with constructs specifically related to college student development. The instrument used in White and Strange (1993), the SDTLI, was based on the original formulation of the SVTF. That instrument is now obsolete. White and Strange (1993) omitted men from their study, as well

as women in active relationships, and in doing so produced research with limited breadth. The literature on college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse did not reflect Chickering's determination that college students are a unique developmental demographic faced with unique psychosocial challenges.

Furthermore, the literature on college student development and CSA was overwhelmingly based on survey studies and quantitative analysis. This literature review did not find a single published research study that took a qualitative approach to college students and CSA through the lens of a developmental theory intended for use with that specific demographic. Quantitative studies based on formal research instruments like the SDTLI and the Beck Depression Index can provide useful information that may be generalizable to other samples. Those instruments do not provide insight into individual experiences. The literature review did not find an in-depth account of personal experiences among college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse that exhibited the rich data and robust qualitative methods of Draucker and Martsof (2008, 2010) or Draucker et al. (2011). In the discussion of lessons learned from my research, Goldberg (2015) recognized the challenges of connecting CSA directly to psychosocial development. Goldberg (2015) also acknowledged the limitations of quantitative research in his effort to understand more about the personal experiences of college student survivors of CSA. Goldberg (2015) reflected upon the abundance of quantitative studies of CSA and the scarcity of studies that directly addressed constructs associated with college student development.

The instruments used in previous studies were also limited in the same way that all formal instruments may be limited: they were based on normative samples, which can be subject to the whims of social discourse and political power. White and Epston (1990) believed that the norming process used to develop diagnostic instruments required that people were put into groups or categories, and that dominant groups (often White, heterosexual, and male) had unequal influence over the construction of measurable norms. The result was that diagnostic instruments could be biased to reflect dominant ideas and values, limiting the free expression of individual participants in a research study.

Draucker and Martsolf (2008) attempted to define the psychosocial problem of childhood sexual abuse – “the challenge of understanding an experience that both defies and demands and explanation” (p. 1038) – and in doing so provided an example of the value that can be found in giving survivors a voice. Their work provided insight into the range of CSA experiences and implications for clinical practice. The literature on CSA lacked a comparable study that considered the personal narratives of college student survivors and interpreted their abuse experiences through the lens of a dedicated model of student development. The limitations in the existing literature outlined here suggest the need for a different approach to studying CSA that is grounded in student development theory and a qualitative methodology that emphasizes the unique personal perspectives of college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) on college student development from the personal perspective of current college students. In this chapter, I will discuss the methods for conducting the study. This chapter is organized with the following sections: (a) doctoral thesis equivalent study; (b) research design and research questions; (c) participants; (d) procedures; (e) instruments; (f) analysis; (g) validity; (h) limitations and de-limitations; and (i) summary.

Doctoral Thesis Equivalent Study

Goldberg (2015), previously discussed in the literature review, did not find support for the hypothesis that there were statistically significant developmental differences between college students with a history of CSA and students who did not have those experiences. That study, however, did provide several methodological lessons that influenced the present research. Goldberg (2015) was conducted at the same time as my continued review of the literature. Those parallel activities brought attention to the limitations of quantitative research discussed in the literature review and the scarcity of qualitative studies of CSA and college student development. Goldberg (2015) revealed challenges to recruitment for a study about CSA. College students responded better to a guarantee of compensation for their participation than to other strategies. I also learned that it was critical to identify multiple strategies and sources for recruitment / referral of research participants from the beginning of a study. The instrument used in Goldberg (2015) – the SDTLA – also provided a theoretical

touchstone for adapting the concepts included in SVTF to a qualitative approach. The influence of the SDTLA will be discussed further in the instruments section of this chapter.

Research Design

This study integrated narrative research methods with case study organization. I collaborated with each participant to construct a narrative of the student's lived experience of childhood sexual abuse, focusing on how CSA was relevant to the student's present development through the lens of the SVTF. Narrative research is a qualitative, postmodern approach that invites interview subjects to participate in determining the direction of the research by sharing their interpretation of lived experiences via interviews, written documents, audio or video recordings, pictures, and other data sources (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 2008). Participants are often asked to review and validate interview transcripts and other materials that result from research. In this way, participants are given a voice in how their lived experiences will be presented to the research community. A formal survey instrument was also incorporated into this study to augment data collection, which relied primarily on qualitative interviewing. The survey provided an additional tool for interpreting participant experiences and contributed to the construction of detailed case studies.

Narrative research acknowledges that individual stories are constructed in particular places and times, and that the subjects of narrative research shape and are shaped by that context. The process of constructing and analyzing narratives attempts to illuminate aspects of social discourse that act upon research participants and influence the way that lived experiences are understood by the people living them (Riessman, 2008; White & Epston,

1990). Riessman (2008) explained that narratives do not develop in a vacuum, but rather they are constructed in conjunction with dominant social values and performed in a specific time and place for an audience. Narrative research is, in part, the study of where society and the individual meet for the purpose of interpreting lived experience. Because narratives are constructed – under the influence of social discourse and offering no essential truths – they must be interpreted (Riessman, 2008). Narrative research can describe the intersection of past experiences and present feelings and action. Riessman (2008) wrote of the “complicated relationship between narrative, time, and memory for we revise and edit the past to square with our identities in the present” (p. 8).

The participants in this study were asked to share their interpretation of how lived experiences that occurred years ago influenced thoughts and feelings about themselves, and how students performed their narrative in this specific time (college) for a specific audience (peers, teachers, parents, intimate partners, counselors, etc.) that had a unique set of dominant values. By participating in narrative research, student survivors of CSA had the opportunity to collaboratively determine the data that was included and how it was analyzed. In this co-construction of narratives, I provided the questions that gave this research study necessary structure. The interview participants made choices about which parts of their personal narratives were shared or prioritized, which information was excluded, and the chronology of events. Participants reviewed transcripts of their interviews and a summary narrative reconstructed from the transcripts. Students also completed the online survey and were later given an opportunity to validate or suggest alternate interpretations to those results. This

approach to member checking gave participants input into the analytical process. Similar opportunities for collaboration were not present in previous research on college students, childhood sexual abuse, and student development.

This study, which used multiple interviews and data points, fit with Creswell's conceptualization of a case study, which "may be used to understand a specific issue, problem or concern ... and a case or cases selected to best understand the problem" (2013, p. 98). Case studies are "bounded or described within certain parameters, such as a specific time or place" (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). My study addressed issues associated with the past and the present. The primary purpose of the research, however, emphasized the impact of childhood sexual abuse on "contemporary" life, another hallmark of case study research (Yin, 2009, p.8). In this study, the bounded system was life on a college campus and the contemporary issue was how students narrated and were affected by childhood sexual abuse. According to Yin (2009), case studies are most applicable to questions that ask "how?" or "why?"

Creswell (2013) and Yin (2009) observed that the term case study referred to both a specific research methodology and an approach to organizing the data that can be adapted to various methods. Faced with great difficulty recruiting students willing to talk at length about traumatic experiences in the past and the contemporary issues associated with those experiences, the case study approach was a vehicle for gathering and organizing rich data from multiple sources that could be analyzed to address the research questions guiding this study.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. How do undergraduate college students describe their experiences of childhood sexual abuse?
2. Is childhood sexual abuse relevant to the college student development of survivors, according to the personal narratives of survivors?
3. According to the personal narratives of college student survivors, how does childhood sexual abuse impact development, as defined by the seven vectors theoretical framework of college student development?

Participants

Three undergraduate college students between the ages of 18- and 25-years old who experienced childhood sexual abuse participated in this study. That age range was consistent with student participants in Chickering's foundational research on the SVTF. The three participants all attended the same large, urban public university in a state in the southeastern U.S. Participants were referred to the study by mental health professionals who evaluated the students to be appropriate for the research, shared basic details of the study with the students, and encouraged them to contact me. This study did not set out to focus exclusively on college women, however, no men willing to participate were located during the period of recruitment. The study participants included Riley, an 18-year-old white woman and first-year student from a small town in the southeast; Blaire, a 19-year-old African-American woman and college sophomore from a small southeastern town; and Tallulah, a 22-year-old white woman and college senior who had lived in multiple small towns near military bases.

Procedures

Recruitment. Recruitment of participants for this study was conducted between August 2016 and February 2017. I contacted on-campus and off-campus mental health professionals and counselor educators within my network who were identified as potential recruiting partners. Mental health professionals included therapists at college counseling centers on 11 campuses in a single southeastern state, as well as more than a dozen counselors in private practice. Networking also connected with specialty centers situated in student life, such as centers for women and LGBTQ students. All recruitment was initiated via e-mail, with the exception of the campus counseling center where I was employed. Recruitment in that center was initiated during a staff meeting attended by approximately 30 mental health professionals and included regular, in-person follow-up with counselors who expressed interest in the study. The snowball sampling method was used. I asked campus and community partners to refer potential participants and also share details of my study with other prospective partners who could be helpful to recruiting.

I provided all recruitment partners with an outline of inclusion and exclusion criteria that guided referral of potential research participants. See Appendix A for an example of the talking points script. Recruitment partners were asked to provide potential research participants with basic information about the research study and my e-mail contact information. Students interested in participating in the research study were encouraged to contact me. Five students e-mailed me expressing interest in the study. Two of those students did not meet the eligibility criteria. The other three students completed the study. In an effort

to maintain confidentiality and data security, e-mails related to this study did not include the name of the study or specific details about the subject matter of the study. Potential research participants were encouraged by recruiting partners and by me to refrain from sharing confidential information related to CSA in e-mail communications. E-mail was used primarily to schedule telephone conversations and in-person meetings. All potential participants completed a brief screening interview during our initial telephone contact. See Appendix B for the telephone screening protocol. The screening interview included more details about the purpose and procedures of the research study, participant inclusion and exclusion criteria, and other aspects of informed consent. Students who verbally agreed to participate in the study over the phone were scheduled for an in-person interview.

Interviews. I conducted all interviews in a secure, one-on-one environment. Interviews were conducted in an office typically used for individual therapy at a college counseling center. I met with each participant twice. During the first meeting, participants were provided with a paper copy of informed consent terms and an opportunity to ask questions about the research study before the interview began. The informed consent document is in Appendix C. Participants chose a pseudonym to maintain the confidentiality of information shared during the interview. Pseudonyms were used to refer to participants in writing throughout the research study. Participants were not identified by their real name at any time. The remainder of the first meeting followed the interview protocol outlined in Appendix D. First round interviews ranged in length from 89 minutes to 97 minutes.

All interviews were audio recorded on two portable digital recorders. I then transcribed each interview verbatim. Audio recordings were downloaded to a secure, password-protected computer only accessed by the researcher. I erased all interviews from the recording devices. Between meetings, students were e-mailed a link to an online survey, with instructions for completing the instrument at their own pace in a secure location. All three students completed the survey within 24 hours. The verbatim transcripts and survey results were used to construct a chronological summary narrative intended to be more accessible than the full-length versions of the interview transcripts, each of which filled more than 30 double-spaced pages. Narratives constructed by interview subjects often moved back and forth through time, and included anecdotes and other interjections outside the scope of the research purpose. The summary narratives distilled essential information from the first interviews and survey results and kept participants' own words intact.

Participants were contacted by telephone to schedule a second meeting when all research materials from the first interview and survey were synthesized. Students were given the option of receiving documents for member checking by e-mail or in-person at the second meeting. One student, Blaire, chose to receive the documents in an encrypted, password protected file sent by e-mail that she then reviewed before our second meeting. Riley and Tallulah preferred to review paper copies of those documents at the time of our second meeting. In each case, the second in-person meeting was structured as an opportunity for participants to validate or dispute the researcher's interpretation of their narrative, which included results of the survey. The remainder of the second meeting was used to clarify or

elaborate upon information gathered during the first interview. Second interviews ranged in length from 26 minutes to 50 minutes.

Compensation. Research participants received \$25 in cash at the completion of each interview for a total of \$50 in compensation.

Post-interview resources. I asked participants to think about personal, sometimes traumatic experiences in the past and their impact on present feelings and behaviors. Those questions may have caused discomfort lasting beyond the duration of the in-person interview. Research has shown that survivors of childhood sexual abuse may experience psychological distress, including but not limited to symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (Leserman, 2005; Molnar, Buka, & Kessler, 2001). The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) defined PTSD as a broad range of psychological and physiological disturbance that resulted from “exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 271). People with symptoms of PTSD experienced personal trauma, witnessed a traumatic incident, or were subjected to details of a traumatic event experienced by a family member, close friend, or significant other. The symptoms of PTSD include: intrusive thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks; avoidance of thoughts or external reminders associated with the trauma; negative impact on self-esteem, detachment from other people, an inability to experience positive emotions; and alterations in arousal, such as hyper-vigilance, irritability, or an exaggerated startle response (APA, 2013). Distress associated with PTSD or symptoms similar to PTSD

can be triggered or exacerbated by written and verbal allusions to similar abuse, images of similar abuse, and other references.

I was careful to consider the vulnerability of participants. Recruiting partners were discouraged from referring students with PTSD or symptoms of PTSD, such as depressed mood or avoidant behaviors, to this study. In the initial telephone screening of students, the researcher clarified the topic and purpose of the research and associated risks. Potential risks of the study were again reviewed in the informed consent form. All participants in this study were connected with campus and off-campus support services at the time of their interviews. Contact information for additional on-campus counseling services and off-campus resources, including the National Sexual Assault Hotline, was provided to participants as part of the consent process. I conducted an evaluation of each participant's emotional state at the conclusion of each interview. All participants reported feeling comfortable sharing their experiences in the research environment and none of them endorsed distress that required additional support.

Instruments

Interview Protocol. Patton (2002) wrote that researchers conduct qualitative interviewing to “find out what is in and on someone else’s mind, to gather their stories” (p.341). Gathering the stories of college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse was precisely the purpose of this study, so qualitative interviewing was the primary research instrument. I used an interview guide based on a standardized, open-ended approach (Patton, 2002). I conducted all interviews using defined, carefully worded questions supplemented

with multiple prompts designed to address specific topics with each interview participant. Standardized, open-ended interviewing encourages interview subjects to answer questions in their own words while also minimizing variations in the data gathered by the interviewer (Patton, 2002). In addition, Patton (2002) wrote that institutional review boards often “insist on approving a structured interview, especially if the topic is controversial or intrusive” (p. 346). The interview protocol is included in Appendix D.

All questions were based on a review of the literature and grounded in the SVTF. I adapted theoretical themes for a qualitative approach based on my unpublished doctoral thesis equivalent study, which used the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999) as the primary measurement instrument in a survey of 34 undergraduate students. The thesis equivalent study (Goldberg, 2015) used a survey built upon a limited version of the SDTLA that addressed developmental constructs featured in Chickering’s fourth vector, mature interpersonal relationships (MIR). The interview guide for the present research proposal was adapted from Winston, Miller, and Cooper’s (1999) work for a few important reasons. As discussed in the literature review for this proposal, research has shown that childhood sexual abuse has an impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships, specifically in areas related to trust, self-esteem, empathy, tolerance, and the ability of individuals to make and maintain friendships and intimate partnerships. Those constructs are also vital to the SVTF.

The interview guide did not draw questions from all vectors, but was instead adapted from the fourth vector, which conceptualizes mature interpersonal relationships. In the course

of designing this study, I concluded that attempting to address all seven vectors would result in an excessively lengthy project beyond the scope of a single dissertation. Focusing the interview guide on constructs associated with mature interpersonal relationships did not, however, limit the scope of the narrative interview to a single vector. Chickering and Reisser (1993) explored relationships and emotions throughout each of the seven vectors and believed that college students develop within multiple vectors simultaneously. The open-ended narrative interviews conducted for this study presented research participants with opportunities to introduce and discuss constructs defined by other vectors, including emotional management, personal competence, and differentiation from parents. In addition to the constructs explicitly outlined by the fourth vector, the interview guide included prompts that encouraged research participants to consider the impact of their gender identity, racial identity, and cultural identity on decisions to disclose CSA and the process of healing from CSA. Gender, race, and culture are socially constructed and thus relevant to the relational issues explored by the SVTF.

Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment. Participants in this study completed an online version of the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment, which can be found in Appendix E. Winston, Miller and Cooper (1999) developed the SDTLA to measure college student development based on constructs defined by Chickering and Reisser. The SDTLA represented more than two decades of research on college student development and was a major revision of previous versions of the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory (SDTLI), which was criticized for failing to recognize developmental

differences among genders and races, and insensitivity to change over time (Wachs & Cooper, 2002; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). The SDTLA was also updated in accordance with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) revision of the seven vectors framework.

The SDTLA includes three tasks based on the Chickering constructs, 10 subtasks, and two scales. The Establishing and Clarifying Purpose task includes the Educational Involvement subtask, Career Planning subtask, Lifestyle Planning subtask, and Cultural Participation subtask. The Developing Autonomy task includes the Emotional Autonomy subtask, Interdependence subtask, Academic Autonomy subtask, and Instrumental Autonomy subtask. The Mature Interpersonal Relationships task includes the Peer Relationships subtask and the Tolerance subtask. Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999) also included two scales: the Salubrious Lifestyle scale measures students' overall wellness, and the Response Bias scale evaluates whether a survey participant is attempting to portray himself or herself in a favorable light. There are 153 items in the complete instrument. Students usually complete the survey in between 30 and 40 minutes using a pencil and paper answer sheet (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). As of March 2014, Appalachian State University – the copyright holder for the SDTLA – has made the instrument, manual, and scoring forms available for free download on the Internet. ASU no longer offers administrative or scoring services of the SDTLA (Appalachian State University, 2014).

Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999) used a normative sample of 1,458 students from 31 higher education institutions, including 4-year public and private colleges and 2-year community colleges. Students ranged from 17- to 25-years-old, with 88% of students falling

between 18 and 21-years-old. Test-retest reliability for the tasks and subtasks ranged from .73 to .89. Cronbach's alpha measures of internal consistency ranged from .62 to .88. Validity was measured by correlating each primary task and associated subtasks with multiple similar instruments / scales. The SDTLA's Establishing and Clarifying Purpose task showed correlations ranging from .33 to .53 with six similar scales. Subtask correlations ranged from .28 to .60. Developing Autonomy showed correlations between .37 and .56 with three similar scales. Subtasks were correlated between .21 and .67. Mature Interpersonal Relationships correlated in a range between .41 and .58 with two similar scales, and the subtasks correlated in a range between .32 and .54.

This study of college student development and childhood sexual abuse did not utilize the entirety of the SDTLA. Student participants completed Form 4.99 of the survey, which includes all questions associated with the Mature Interpersonal Relationships task (Peer Relationships and Tolerance subtasks), as well as the Salubrious Lifestyle and Response Bias scales. Form 4.99 includes 47 questions / items and takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The online version of the SDTLA used in this study was created using Qualtrics survey software that is made available to N.C. State faculty, students and staff. The questions used in the adapted online survey were taken verbatim from SDTLA Form 4.99.

Analysis

Analysis of the narrative research data began with the transcription of each interview. I transcribed each interview as it was completed. Coding was conducted by hand on paper copies of the transcripts, using a variety of highlight markers. I began with a priori codes

adapted from the SVTF and identified during transcription, including seven codes related to tolerance, 10 codes related to peer relationships, and four codes related to salubrious lifestyle. Patton (2002) described the use of a sensitizing concept as an alternative to the open coding approach of analyzing data to discover themes that were not predetermined. A sensitizing concept is an idea, construct, framework, or theory that provides the researcher with a frame of reference for data analysis. According to Patton (2002), “Using sensitizing concepts involves examining how the concept is manifest and given meaning in a particular setting or among a particular group of people” (p. 456). In this study, the SVTF provided concepts that were then identified in the narrative accounts of college students who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Initial coding of the transcripts also identified two emergent themes outside the scope of MIR, including five codes associated with relationships specific to family, and five codes related to healing from CSA. The color-coded transcripts were then organized into a database that grouped themes and codes together. Each student’s data were kept separate for individual analysis. Further review of themes and codes resulted in consolidation of overlapping codes.

Results from the SDTLA were calculated for each individual student. Winston, Miller and Cooper (1999) provided mean scores for their normative group broken down by gender and academic class standing for each task and subtask included in the SDTLA. The results for Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah’s surveys were calculated as mean scores for each of the two subtasks included in Form 4.99, the salubrious lifestyle scale, and MIR as a whole. Responses to the six questions designed to measure bias were also evaluated. None of the

responses to those questions indicated response bias. Mean scores for study participants were then converted to Z-scores, which provided a general measure of how Riley, Blaire and Tallulah performed in tasks associated with MIR in comparison with peers in the normative group.

After coding the first interviews, identifying emergent themes, consolidating codes, constructing a database of codes, and scoring surveys, I wrote the first draft of summary narratives that were to be submitted to participants for member checking. Summary narratives relied heavily on direct quotes in order to retain the power of participants' descriptions and interpretations of events, thoughts, and feelings. This construction of written narratives was influenced by Riessman's (2008) method of creating a chronological narrative that can be analyzed as a whole to identify underlying assumptions of the interview subject and connect personal experiences (micro) to the broader social context (macro). The connection between micro and macro was of significant interest in this study of individual childhood sexual abuse experiences, life in the college environment, and adaptation of a particular experience to the broader framework of the seven vectors.

Participants reviewed the transcript and summary narrative before or during the second interview. They were provided time to ask questions, clarify or challenge interpretations, or fill in perceived gaps in the data. All three students confirmed the validity of information and interpretations included in the summary narrative. Clarifications were limited. For example, Tallulah asked me to clarify in the summary narrative that although she identified as bisexual, she had recently dated men exclusively. I asked follow-up questions

intended to clarify or complete accounts provided during the first interview. I transcribed second round interviews verbatim, coded the transcripts according to the revised and consolidated codes, and entered the data into the database. Data in the database was again reviewed to identify codes that could be consolidated or additional emergent themes. Final, updated versions of the summary narratives were written incorporating data from second round interviews. Those narratives of childhood sexual abuse and college student development, written as case studies and included in the next chapter, represented the most complete, essential interpretations of all data collected for this study. Each of the three cases was analyzed individually with respect to the research questions that guided this study. After individual analysis, a cross-case analysis was conducted to identify common themes and differences among the narratives. The resulting themes are discussed in Chapter Five.

Validity

There is no formula for ensuring validity and trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Riessman, 2008). In this study, the events recalled by interview participants could not be confirmed down to the last detail, nor could the chronology of experiences and interactions among them be objectively validated. Chronology and objective truth were less important to the narrative accounts collected in this research project than how those elements were perceived by the interview participants and interpreted by me. Researchers participating in narrative inquiry can take steps to “persuade audiences about the trustworthiness of their data and interpretations – they didn’t simply make up the stories they claim to have collected, and they followed a methodical path,

guided by ethical considerations and theory, to story their findings” (Riessman, 2008, p. 186). I took such steps with this study, beginning with the process of bracketing, or locating the role of the researcher in the study, that was included in the first chapter of this project. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to discuss “ any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation – either negatively or positively – in the minds of users of the findings” (Patton, 2008, p. 566). Relevant information may include personal experiences with the topic of study, relationships with people being studied, professional training, knowledge of the research topic or theories, etc. (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2008; Riessman, 2008).

I also maintained a fieldwork journal as a record of personal perceptions, methodological decisions, and interpretive foundations that arose during the course of data collection and analysis. Riessman (2008) believed that the exercise of journaling encouraged “critical self-awareness about how the research was done” (p. 190) and served as evidence that research was systematic and rigorous. Patton (2008) wrote that collection of detailed field notes was essential to conducting meaningful qualitative research. He urged researchers not to assume that observations and feelings that arise during research will return when revisiting qualitative materials later. Patton (2008) described the writing of field notes as a researcher’s first contact with insights and ideas that will later inform analysis. In my study, I recorded field notes in a journal immediately at the conclusion of each narrative interview and at other times relevant to the procedures of the study, including after screening interviews and transcription of interviews. Field notes included concrete descriptions of

research participant behaviors that were useful in interpreting the influence of the research environment on data collection. Observations of the researcher's feelings and behaviors were also recorded. The field journal was a practical application of my awareness that subjectivity existed in my relationships with the topic of this study and my methodological approach to performing research. Journaling encouraged me to be accountable for methodological consistency and subjective observations or experiences that may have interfered with analysis of the data collected. As Patton (2008) noted, this fieldwork journal represented an initial step from data collection to analysis.

The practice of transcribing all interviews and submitting reconstructed or summary narratives back to research participants for review also bolstered the validity of the study. Research participants had the opportunity to confirm, deny, or clarify the content of their personal accounts of CSA and student development. This practice of member checking was intended to confirm that the researcher addressed topics considered to be important and relevant among participants and that the data collected was a valid reflection of the personal experience of CSA survivors.

Summary

This chapter detailed a qualitative, narrative research study of college students who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Standardized, open-ended interviews based on an interview protocol were the primary method for gathering data. A formal survey instrument, the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment (SDTLA) was also administered to augment data collected through the narrative interview process. Three women who

attended a large, urban, public university participated in the study. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, synthesized with the results of the SDTLA, and interpreted and summarized as case studies that were presented to the participants for member checking. Analysis of the data incorporated a priori and open coding and used the Seven Vectors Theoretical Framework (SVTF) as a sensitizing concept. Themes and differences among the cases identified during analysis of the data will be discussed in-depth in the next chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 4: STUDENT NARRATIVES

The summary narratives of Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah are included in this chapter. These are the final versions of the narratives constructed from two in-person interviews with each study participant and the completion of the SDTLA. Narratives emphasize each participants' own words, so quotes are prominent. The narratives were constructed with an emphasis on chronological events. Each narrative began with a re-telling of (a) the childhood sexual abuse experience; moved to the (b) disclosure of CSA; incorporated (c) relevant reflections about the influence of CSA on family, friend, and other relationships; and shifted to (d) the effects of CSA on college life and issues associated with (e) mature interpersonal relationships. Narratives also discussed (f) healing from CSA and (g) and general wellness. In constructing these narratives, I was careful to respect the unique experiences and narrative style of each participant. For example, Tallulah provided longer responses than Blaire, shared more explicit details about her personal life, and relied heavily on tangential anecdotes that often returned to an important point. Each narrative included the elements outlined above, however, the narratives were not written in adherence to a template, so the location of those elements in the narratives varied with respect to each participant.

Riley: "I'm sick and tired of being that girl."

A family friend sexually abused Riley regularly between the ages of approximately five- and 11-years-old. Riley knows that the man also abused her younger sister, a cousin, and possibly other children in the family. The perpetrator was "a fake grandpa" who dated Riley's grandmother and became close with the extended family, most of whom lived within

30 minutes of each other in a small southeastern city. Proximity and necessity gave the man access to Riley and other children. At various times, he lived in Riley's family home or with her cousins next door. "Fake grandpa" helped with household chores, contributed his share to bills, and drove the kids to school. "So he was kinda like part of the family. Yeah, so, it was kinda like an all the time thing. He babysat us all the time. So there wasn't a set time, it was just all the time."

Riley compared the kids in her family to a "secret society." Those that were being abused knew that others were having similar experiences. The children never discussed the abuse among themselves, but "fake grandpa" talked about it when he and Riley were alone. Other adults treated Riley like a mature child, which may have made it easier for her perpetrator to talk openly with her about his problems and the abuse. "It was very casual. It wasn't like, 'Hey, let's talk privately.' It was always... He would drive us in the car and talk about it. It was kinda like normal life. It was... I don't know how to explain it. It was everyday life kind of stuff. "

Riley remembered one time that the abuse was almost uncovered. "There was a time when I think when I was about 5 or 6, when it first started. My grandmother thought she saw something. I don't remember this, but he later talked to me about it. I don't even know. I think maybe my mom mentioned it after she found out. There was a time when my grandmother accused him of doing something so the parents talked to all the kids, but we were like 4 or 5 years old. He told us to lie, so obviously we all lied kind of thing, but then after that it wasn't even brought up." Riley suspected that her perpetrator stopped abusing her

because she was growing up and pushing back against the emotional abuse that accompanied physical abuse, and he was afraid she would tell someone.

Riley disclosed the years of childhood sexual abuse when she was a freshman in high school. By that time, she was coping with the pressure of keeping her secret by drinking alcohol, lying, and engaging in non-suicidal self-injury (cutting). That year, Riley saw the movie adaptation of the book “The Perks of Being a Wallflower,” about a teenage boy navigating the social demands of high school and struggling with chronic mental health issues. Riley connected with the story and responded by writing a poem about her sexual abuse. The poem scared her boyfriend at the time. He told a school counselor, who called the police and Riley’s parents. “It was very stressful because it went from completely normal to, boom, your entire childhood past comes up. And it was kind of weird, because I forgot how much I forgot. It was all suppressed, and then it all started coming up. My parents found out, my aunt and uncles found out, my sister... Yeah it was a big mess for a while.”

“It was a very long day. ... The first day I talked about it to like six different people. So it went from literally not saying anything my entire life to every single person. I had to tell it to the guidance counselor, and then the policeman came, and I had to tell it to two different detectives, my parents. ... It was just over and over and over again, and that poem that I wrote was printed out like 20 times for like 20 different people. It was very shocking. I think both my sister and I... I remember we were in a room by ourselves while they were talking to our parents and we were both like, this is serious. And we were both in shock, like

this is a big deal, can we go home? We couldn't comprehend that it was happening. It was sudden.”

Riley's perpetrator was arrested and, as far as she knows, he is in prison for the rest of his life. Riley remembered feeling supported by the adults around her amidst the shock that accompanied the unraveling of years of trauma. She was also concerned about her parents. “My parents were okay. Obviously when they saw us leaving they started crying. My mom was like, ‘Why didn't you tell us?’ She understood I think, it was just the initial reaction. She was like, ‘Why didn't you tell us?’ And I was like, ‘How was I supposed to?’ And she was like, ‘I know, I know.’ But very supportive and I honestly felt more bad for them than myself. They don't have a lot of friends because with a lot of kids you lose friends, and he was kind of their only external friendship plus parental figure. They trusted him with everything and so when they found this out it was like... This was happening right in our own household. They're still really hurt about it. My mom will mention it sometimes and still can't even comprehend. Overall it was pretty okay. Anytime I tell people... I don't, like, go around telling people, but anytime it comes up or something it's usually very supportive. ‘I'm sorry that happened,’ kind of thing.”

Riley believed the fear of how she would be perceived played a role in keeping abuse as a secret for so long. “I just feel like overall sex is not a cool thing to talk about, it's very taboo. And so there's always this aspect of maybe I'll be a bad kid, and I don't want to talk about this stuff because you're not supposed to talk about this stuff. ... You've been told you're not supposed to talk about that stuff, but then your parents tell you, you can tell us

anything if it ever happens, but you just told me I'm not supposed to talk about this stuff. It makes it very awkward. I think even today like you're not supposed to talk about that stuff. So I think as a kid it was very confusing to be told if anything ever happens you can tell us, but if there is sex on TV don't look at it, if this happens don't ask questions. It was very back and forth. I just went with the fear. Don't talk about it. A lot of mixed messages.”

Riley and her family were accepted into a research study that provided therapy for sexual abuse survivors. This was the second time Riley participated in therapy to address difficulties within the family. Riley is the oldest of four children. In sixth grade, her parents became the guardians for three of Riley's cousins, who came from an abusive, unstable home. Riley entered therapy to help cope with the new dynamic in the family. She believes she had some coping skills in place after the sexual abuse was disclosed. The research and therapy program began when she was a junior in high school. The fallout from the revelation of childhood sexual abuse thus cast a shadow over most of Riley's high school career.

Riley's high school experience was non-traditional for other reasons as well. She attended an arts school 90 minutes from her hometown. Riley drove back and forth for school and therapy, and worked multiple jobs in-between to pay for gas. Writing and music provided Riley with an outlet to express her feelings. The distance – and public disclosure of childhood sexual abuse – made it difficult for Riley to develop deep, trusting friendships or feel like a normal high school kid.

“ (Hometown) is a really small city, where I come from, and so of course we're friends with all the families and so my parents had to ask, like, hey... We would have giant

sleep overs with him right there and, I didn't mention this before, he bought the house right next to ours and that ended up being the party house, you know, all of us middle schoolers would come over and hang out, and we were friends with everyone in (Hometown), so everyone would come over, and when it came out, my parents had to ask all the parents to talk to their kids about it. And so all the kids found out and my mom, she has her friends and she would tell her friends, and of course I'm friends' with their kids and so the parents mentioned something to their kids. That's why we ended up moving. My mom was getting letters in the mailbox from people she didn't tell. People we knew. And they would be, like, 'We're so sorry,' and it would be like how did you find out? And then there was this news article on it. Everyone knew back home because it was such a small town. It was definitely stressful because my band mates found out and I didn't tell them. ... We were just hanging out and it came up. And I was like, okay. And so then we had a conversation about it and they knew, all of my friends knew. And then it just got to the point that I was 'that girl' and it got very stressful for all of us, so we just left and we were really done with it. I don't really volunteer to talk about it. If it comes up, I'll be like yeah, I shouldn't be ashamed to talk about it but, yeah, it depends. It was definitely... Everyone just knew. And everyone knew his name and when it was in the paper it was pretty easy to put two and two together. It was this person and then victims one and two. Who could that be, you know?"

College Life: First Interview

Riley's first interview with the principal investigator for this research was in October. At that time, Riley had been away from home and in college for approximately two months.

Her second, final interview for this research was completed near the end of spring semester of her first year in college. Riley read the transcript and narrative summary of her first interview in my office before immediately proceeding with the second interview. She was startled at how much had changed in her daily life and her understanding of herself and her experiences. The case study of Riley – the only first-year college student in this research study – provided insight into the steep developmental learning curve encountered at the beginning of college.

In our first interview, Riley reported that social life was her biggest concern at the start of college. She is quiet, leans toward introversion, and just left a situation at home wherein the most sensitive details of her personal life were broadcast to the public. Riley explained that the commute from home to high school made it difficult to maintain friends in either place. She was worried that she would not be able to make friends at her large southeastern university. That concern was quickly put to rest when Riley attended a retreat with 40 other students who were participants in an extra-curricular program that she is a part of at her university. Riley bonded with several peers who lived on her hall in university housing. She described being closest to eight guys who “took me up.” Riley reported that since childhood she has shared common interests and communications styles with boys, playing in a music band with all boys, and hanging out with the “techie, weird guys.” She was exploring the freedom of college, staying up late to study and hang out with friends on her hall – with the emphasis on hanging out – and enjoying the opportunities of “city life,” where she would encounter new people every day. At the time of her first interview for this

study, Riley had recently broken up with her high school boyfriend. She had come to believe that she used him as “emotional support” in the absence of real friends. Riley had recently agreed to a date over coffee with a boy she just met, but she planned to take a break from serious relationships. Riley elaborated on her complicated relationship with boys and her own ideas about gender during our first interview. She talked about favoring casual clothes that were not particularly “girly” and activities like playing video games and watching “Star Wars” movies that she considered to be male activities.

“When I was little my parents tried dressing me up in stuff and I was okay with it, but my old therapist thought it had something to do with my sexual abuse because she noticed that as the sexual abuse came out I did become more girly. And she said the more I opened up... I don’t know if it was because I was opening up or if it was because I was about 16 and it was a big transition time, so it could be multiple things. But I was always very uncomfortable with being female. I just wasn’t into the things that were female. I saw as a kid that if you were a female you did this and I didn’t want to do that. I wanted to go play football with the guys and do all this other stuff. ... It was actually like fourth grade all I wore were jeans and giant t-shirts. I came to fifth grade graduation in a dress and people lost their minds. I always had a girly side, I was just ashamed of it. I didn’t think there was a mix. I thought you had to be one thing or the other and I chose the guy side. Also I had to grow up really fast in my household and I feel like when girls were being really emotional I had to not be. So guys just tend to be less emotional, at least growing up, so I would hang out with them

more. I was just a lot more comfortable. I'm still a lot more comfortable with guys than with females."

Riley was still considering her previous therapist's hypothesis about the connection between sexual abuse and gender expression. "I do think there are some strands that came over because there was a sense of being ashamed of being a female, and that could be because of what he did to me. Being a female I was, like, I don't want to be a female. This stuff keeps happening. I never made that connection but it could be. I don't know. I just saw it as I had different interests. I was always in the middle ground and not quite girl or boy. Now I'm like I can be female and wear my jeans, t-shirts and lipstick and now I'm at the point where I can do whatever I want, but when you're a kid things are definitely categorized and you have to be one or the other. I'm just going to cut my hair and I kinda just do what I want now."

Riley acknowledged during our first interview that she sometimes still felt like she was different from many of her peers. She referred to "a wall that sets me apart" and "a wall of insecurity" that influenced how she interacted with people. Riley cited instances when other women described being "catcalled" or touched inappropriately by a man and Riley found herself comparing those accounts with her years of abuse. In those situations, she typically remained quiet. At the time of her first interview for this research, Riley believed that she may reach a point when she can use her experiences to advocate for other people who have been abused, but she was still processing where she fits in the world outside of her hometown. She was still most comfortable with people who shared familiar qualities. "I tend

to go for people who are also insecure. If you look at my friend group they call themselves The Rejects because they all come from areas where they weren't the coolest, or they had friends, but they make too many pun jokes and that kind of stuff and they just got thrown together and I got adopted into it."

Riley was still reminded often of her traumatic past, even among the new possibilities of college and friends that didn't know at home she was "that girl." Her roommate made occasional passive-aggressive comments about feeling excluded if Riley spent time with other friends. Riley knew the comments were not malicious, however, they still took her back to her perpetrator's persistent emotional manipulation and claims of victimhood. In those moments, Riley had to remind herself that she is here now and her roommate didn't mean any harm. Riley also discovered that her college first-year peers didn't always think about the experiences of everyone in the room.

"There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about it. So there's always something that comes up that reminds me of it. I can't take... It pissed me off when people make rape jokes or make pedophile jokes. I'm like, that's not even funny. And those seem to be very popular for some odd reason among college students. It's like can we talk about what you're actually saying? It's not okay. But for some reason people think it is. But you don't want to be that person that says something because then you're that person..."

Riley did not tell her new group of college friends about her childhood sexual abuse and she didn't plan to reveal it, unless perhaps the rape jokes became too unbearable or her experiences could be helpful for a friend in crisis. "Because once you know something about

someone, every time you look at them you're going to see it. I'm just sick and tired of being that girl. It's nice starting over. Nobody knows me. I used to have long blonde hair and I just changed that, so nobody here knows about my long blonde hair and it's just kinda that. They just know me as the (Riley) that I am now, which is really refreshing and I'm just kinda, like, it's very nice."

Early in Riley's first interview with the principal investigator, she made a prescient observation about her new life as a college student. "My social life has definitely changed drastically in the past few months. It's weird because I'm in this situation where I'm in close relationships with people, but I've only known them for two months, so how close am I to them? Really, relationships can change and they definitely have changed."

College Life: Second Interview

Riley's daily life changed considerably over the course of six months, from the time of her first interview for this research study to the follow-up interview. She got a job at a popular restaurant near campus that requires an early start to her days. Riley engaged deeply with her program of study and extracurricular social justice events related to it. In December, she met a man on a digital dating application, a friendship that blossomed into a new, exciting and unexpected romantic relationship within a few months. Her social life no longer revolved around the group of men that she hung out with at the beginning of the year. "It's not as guy focused anymore. Like in there (first transcript) it was like I have all guy friends and that's not the case anymore at all. I think just maturity levels and what guys like doing and what I like doing are not the same at all. I've met new people and I hang out with

different people and I'm also really busy, so I don't really have time for, you know, come to the giant hang-outs. It's part of growing up, I think."

Riley attributed those changes to three influences that emerged during the course of her first year in college: Her new boyfriend, who is four years older than Riley, a college graduate, and seemingly more emotionally available to her than previous boyfriends; a new therapist, who helped Riley to explore thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in a new way; and her academic program, which emphasized social justice and diversity. Each of these forces reinforced the influence of the others – fostering simultaneous development as envisioned by the SVTF – and encouraged Riley to explore new social, emotional, and cognitive ground. Riley clearly viewed these changes in the context of developmental growth.

Riley realized early in her interactions with her new boyfriend that "he was nothing like anyone I've ever dated before. Completely different. My past boyfriends have always been introverted, not many friends, just kind of we depended on each other for our social lives. They were just kind of nerdy, whatever kind of guys. He's very extraverted, he's a little bit older, he's graduated college, he's extremely smart and outspoken. He's nothing I've ever experienced before."

This new kind of relationship did not automatically translate into new relational or emotional patterns. Riley was still affected by past experiences. She had to learn to trust her new boyfriend. "I didn't realize that (trust) was as big of a deal as it is. Just opening up and being comfortable being myself around people. Also, because of the abuse I have little anxieties, social quirks. I cope with things differently in social interactions. So I do little

weird things. I'm not comfortable with silence, so sometimes I don't talk at all or I talk too much. Like random things that don't make... Really dumb jokes. That probably also has to do with the fact that I'm the oldest of six kids and child humor is just a thing that I've been used to. So even though I'm really mature, I do have a childish humor and some people don't really care for that. And the trust and... I don't know his friends. I remember when we first started going out, he's very extraverted, so he wants to go out with his roommates and go to parties, which is cool, but I wasn't at a level... I didn't trust him enough to do that yet because what if he just left me? What if, because I'm more introverted than him and we went out in public, could I trust him enough to notice those things? And like, not take care of me, but understand that I do have special needs? So just that level of trusting him to understand. ... I don't know. It's really hard to put into words. Trusting him to not leave, too, was really scary because what if I tell him too much and he gets scared and leaves, because this is some serious shit. It's not like, oh my dog died when I was six. It's pretty scary stuff and sometimes I can be a bit to handle because of the things I do... Obviously this is a part of my life and he's a part of my life now and so I have to be open with him about it, like what if it's too much and he can't handle it anymore? But we finally got to the point where I just opened everything up to him and he's like, no, I'm still staying. It was a big trust leap and it definitely worked out. So trust is still an issue and other than that... Really just trust. Knowing that he's going to be there and it really hasn't come up in any of my other relationships, and I don't know why."

Riley identified “the emotion stuff with relationships” as one of the biggest challenges she needed to overcome. During the second interview, she elaborated on how her family’s response to hardship influenced her communication style and fear of disclosing childhood sexual abuse to others. Her insight into how she has been affected by the family response – an issue that she was unable or unwilling to delve into during our first interview – developed in response to work with her new therapist and her boyfriend’s acceptance of her experiences.

“Another part that I’ve thought about a lot is telling people these kind of things, because I don’t tell everybody. For me to open up to somebody and then having that fear of not sticking around and then having that feeling of why did I tell you if you’re not going to stick around kind of thing, so that was definitely part, but I think there is another part because.... The sexual abuse, but then also just the way my family was structured, and me being the oldest and my cousins living with me, I always had to be the stronger kid and I had to be the one taking care of everyone else. So it’s a weird mix where I’ve done that for so long that sometimes I just want someone to take care of me. And I don’t want to blame it on one or the other. I think it’s a deep mix of the family and the sexual abuse, of having to constantly be the one to take care of things and my parents telling me, (Riley), you have to keep your shit together because everyone else is falling apart. So now I’m on my own and when things get stressful I just want someone to take care of me. I just want to be here and for someone to bring me food and to love me. And the fact that I can trust him to do that is really helpful because... It just sucks sometimes. I don’t want to be in charge anymore. And I

think, I don't know, if he leaves I don't have that anymore and I have to take care of things on my own, and that's kind of scary. That seems scary.”

Riley began meeting with a therapist at her university's counseling center within a few weeks of enrolling in college. Therapy was part of her self-care routine. The counseling center could only provide short-term services, so at the end of her first semester, Riley was referred to an off-campus counseling agency. She began working with her new therapist, a graduate student in counseling, in January. In addition to new insights about family and relationships, Riley realized that she dissociates in uncomfortable situations, withdrawing into her own thoughts, detaching from surrounding physical and intellectual stimuli, and experiencing numbness in her body. Her therapist helped devise strategies for staying in the present and her boyfriend learned to be attentive to Riley's comfort in social situations. “I've been to a lot of therapists and he has done so much more for me than any of my other therapists. ... All of my other therapists would just listen, like oh, it's cool, and I would rant for an hour and then leave. And with him he does exercises with me and is like, ‘Why do you think that? Let's dig deeper into this.’ And I'm like, holy... So that helps me a lot. It's definitely been a lot and I'm more accepting of my emotional side, which is healthy. ...”

“Yeah, I thought I was good. I've been to so many therapists and literally like the first two sessions, so much came up. And I was so nervous because I had never had a male therapist before and I got in and I was just like let's try this out. He's been by far the most helpful and he's forced me to dig into things and realize things. I've cried in sessions with him, which is something I've never done before. I'm just like, I'm scared of leaving him

because I don't know if he's coming back next semester and that terrifies me because I love him.”

Riley was keeping her childhood sexual abuse as a secret during her first interview for this research study. At that time, she was afraid of becoming “that girl” again. She had vague thoughts about using her experiences in an altruistic way in the future, when or if it became clear that she could be helpful to others. Six months later, at the time of our second interview, Riley was more comfortable sharing her experiences. The curriculum for her academic program included seminars and enrichment experiences related to social justice and public service and, within those requirements, Riley began to test the boundaries of her sense of purpose. She recalled an in-class program about diversity wherein each student was asked to write privately about an important personal issue. Students were then invited – but not required – to share with the group.

“I was not going to say anything, but I just knew that if I didn't I would be really angry with myself for not saying anything. It is a big part of my life. It's something I want to talk more about. You know, normalize the conversation a bit so people can talk about it, which ended up happening, actually. They were all very supportive, we had an open conversation about it, and a few of them came up and hugged me afterward and they were like, we're here for you. One of the facilitators of my group ... came to me and was like, 'I went through the same thing, I've just never gotten help for it.' And I was like, 'I've never liked talking about it.' And because I was able to bring it up we were able to have that

conversation. Like, I know that can happen, so I'm trying to bring it up more when necessary.”

Riley discussed her CSA publicly three times between the two interviews for this study. She remained selective about when she would reveal experiences, preferring to share in a group environment rather than a one-on-one situation. She expressed uncertainty about why it was easier for her to share with groups, but mulled the hypothesis that there may be more to lose in an intimate conversation. “Maybe. It depends on how people react. Because a lot of times what I'll notice is that I mention it and people just kind of clam up because they just don't know how to respond, which is understandable, but then it's just never mentioned again. And I'm like... Okay, I brought this up for a... I don't want to talk about it all the time obviously, but I say something really personal and they don't say anything and then it's just dropped. And even though I don't want to be hurt, it's pretty hurtful because this is a pretty big deal in my life. Like, what do you mean? ... I think that's one of the other reasons I got comfortable with my boyfriend. Because he's like, are you okay, how's therapy going? ... He understands the basics of this stuff, so he check in, he's like, is this okay?”

Healing

Riley was devoted to a self-care routine that included therapy, meditation, yoga, writing and exercise. During our first interview, she was pragmatic about the role that childhood sexual abuse plays in her present life. She intended to continue in therapy indefinitely because, even though she graduated from the research / therapy program in high school and felt like she had progressed toward healing, she was still afraid that her

psychological well-being could regress if she did not remain vigilant. Six months later, at the time of her second interview, she described feeling stronger. “I’ve had to deal with a lot of different situations, and I think because of that I’ve grown up. Like even more so. I thought I was pretty grown up when I got here, but I think college has made me realize how not grown I was, and so college has made me grown in a lot of parts of my life. There are still insecure times and times when I can’t talk to people but I think because of the new environments I was forced to adapt and I did adapt in a really good way, so I have gotten better. ...”

“I was not as secure in it (at the start of college). I was not as outspoken, I was still quiet, so if someone came to me I just looked like a scared child. I was afraid they would connect that and be like, oh, she went through this as a kid so obviously she’s just a scared child. She’s that girl. And I think now I am a lot more confident and I’m a lot stronger, so if someone wants to have a conversation about it, like I can bring up facts, I can have a conversation about it. It’s more that people look at me as someone who... I feel stronger and I feel more and I feel that radiates so people will be like, she’s been through that but she’s okay with it, so I can talk to her. It’s not like she’s still dealing with this. It’s more of a good for her kind of thing. So that’s more my attitude.”

Riley was still processing the role childhood sexual abuse plays in her life and the role that she can play as an advocate for others. She seemed to be a long way from an earlier version of herself that had just arrived on campus, knowing only that she did not want anyone to know who she was before. In the second interview, she talked about the

importance of raising awareness about childhood sexual abuse and speaking up when people make insensitive comments about difficult topics.

“I try to bring it up whenever I can, which is, I think, the first step. Having those conversations. I definitely want to do more, but I don’t want to... I don’t want to have like a charity run for childhood sexual abuse victims. I’m kind of doing it slyly, I think. I want to do more work in schools. ... I kind of want to do that, but do it where I come at it from an angle and... I mostly want to go to school where kids don’t get exposed to college, the lower end of the spectrum kind of thing. So I want to go there and be like, here’s where I come from and I still made it. I want it to be a part of the conversation, like here’s what I’ve been through, here is where I come from, and it’s still possible. It’s kind of inadvertent advocacy, where it’s not the entire conversation, but it is bringing it up still. It’s a thing. I still want to do more with it, but I don’t know what.”

Blaire: “I guess I’m still trying to protect the child that I was at the time.”

Blaire’s paternal grandfather sexually abused her when she was very young. She was not sure at what age the abuse occurred – Blaire estimated that she was around 3- or 4-years-old – and her memory of the events surrounding that time were blurry. Blaire knew that her older sister was also abused. She suspected that either she or her sister told their mother or grandmother. At the time, Blaire’s family was living with her grandparents in a southeastern state. Blaire remembered that a representative of social services came to the house and asked Blaire and her sister to use a doll to show where they were touched. Blaire was not sure how

long her grandfather was in jail. She remembered her grandmother asking Blaire and her sister to write him in jail, and that Blair was old enough to write the letter.

“Well the thing is, it’s something that once it happened, when he was arrested, we didn’t talk about it. To this day I haven’t talked about it with anyone in my family. I don’t know if my grandmother told us why we were writing the letter. I think she just told us, okay let’s write this letter so we can move on, you know. I think that’s where she was coming from. Just trying to make it seem like things were okay.”

Blaire never talked about the abuse with her mother, sister, or grandmother again. She remembered a conversation among adults in her family that led her to believe that her grandfather sexually abused a younger cousin, too. In general, Blaire believed that “my mother and my grandmother, they were telling us, they were showing us not to talk about it.” Blaire’s family was living with her grandparents again when her grandfather touched her in a similar sexual manner. She was 11 or 12-years-old at that time. Blaire never told anyone about that incident. She learned to be on guard, to keep her distance from her grandfather, and she later made an effort to keep her younger siblings away from him.

Blaire remembered at least two incidents in which her grandfather touched her inappropriately, but nonetheless, her feelings about home reflected happiness and support. Blaire’s mom is a retired teacher. Her father is a truck driver. Blaire recalled that he was often on the road when she was young, but now that she has two younger siblings – an 11-year-old sister and a three-year-old brother – her dad stays closer to home. Blaire’s other sister is older than her by a little more than a year. A visit home is filled with conversation

and laughter. “We really talk about anything. I feel comfortable talking to them about anything... except this. And that’s just because I know my dad would be very upset, especially because it’s been more than 10 years that we’ve kept it from him, and that’s just because we don’t know what he would have done. He probably would have tried to hurt my grandfather and so it’s probably best that we went this way. But I know that I’m not ever going to tell him. I don’t think I’ll ever tell him.”

Blaire’s grandfather died in 2015. Her memories of him were complicated and tinged with empathy. He was a war veteran and Blaire believed that he drank to self-medicate untreated PTSD. When he wasn’t drinking, she felt like they had a normal relationship. “I remember some times, like during Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, my dad would want us to wake up really early. And I remember one year we got easy-bake ovens and so, me and my sister, we started cooking and, my grandfather, we gave him the food that we cooked. I remember there were times when me and my sister would put on little concerts or sing songs and he would be the only one who listened. I don’t remember it being tension until probably after the second incident when I was older and I really realized, like, this was not okay. Because there was a while when I really hated him. Like I remember one time after we had moved out, there was a time when he and my grandmother came over to our house, because it was just right across the road, and they were over and I was just in my room like, ‘Why is he here? I don’t want him here.’ Like I was just in there crying. I was so upset. And I just remember writing a letter, or I typed up an e-mail, and sent it to his name, but it didn’t send

to anyone, and I just told him how upset I was, how hurt I was. And after that I kinda was okay. The added distance made it better, too. I was okay for a while.”

Blaire believed that her family response to childhood sexual abuse was not unique. “I think a lot of families, they prefer to keep that hidden. Also, since I am African-American, we do typically like to keep things hidden more because we want to appear a certain way. You still want to appear strong, so we’re not just some broken family. I think that does have a part in it. ...I am from a very small town and if it had come out that it had happened and it was my grandfather everyone would know because everyone knows everyone or knows of everyone, and so I definitely think that was something my family wanted to avoid. We wanted to avoid that shame. And I would also say like I don’t think my mom told her side of the family because her mom didn’t initially like my dad and didn’t want them to be together at all. So I think if they had known she would have tried to pull my mom and us away, and so I don’t know how that would have turned out. ...

Disclosure of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Blaire talked about her abuse experiences and the impact on her life at length for the first time with counselors at her university a few months after she began dating her current boyfriend. “That was my first relationship and on a serious level, too, so it was a lot of emotions and I didn’t know how to handle it. I didn’t know how to process the situation. At the time, I still wasn’t to the point in my self where I was comfortable enough opening up to my boyfriend, talking about certain things. Not because of any vibe I got from him, but just because I take a while opening up to people. So I was like I can’t be happy one moment and

say we have a little disagreement and I'm completely sad about it. Because that was new for me. I was really just not used to caring that much and now here's someone I care a lot about. I just didn't know how to handle it. ... I was definitely overwhelmed. I was overwhelmed by everything."

During her second interview for this research study, Blaire offered clear insight into what she learned about herself in therapy. "I discovered or came to the conclusion that I'm the type of person that, if I'm sad, then I'm just going to mask it with the opposite of that. So if I'm sad, I'm going to just like shut off or appear to be angry, and so I did in myself polarize it in a way. And I didn't know how to deal with that at all. I didn't know how to be vulnerable when I was so used to having to protect myself. It was just a lot for me, at the time."

Sharing her pain and confusion with her best friend at the time was not helpful. Blaire felt like her friend would "egg me on" – focusing on strong negative feelings and validating Blaire's impulse to "take out" her feelings on her boyfriend. Blaire came to the conclusion that mental health professionals might offer a different response. "The people over here, they don't know me. It's not like they can judge me because they don't know me. I was just like I'm going to go. I made the decision and it wasn't that serious to me. I say it's not that serious a lot, but I didn't think the world was going to end if I go to therapy, like they're going to think I'm such a bad person. At the end of the day I know everyone has feelings and I just like to talk about them."

During Blaire's first interview for this research study, her account of choosing to discuss personal problems with a counselor was marked by conflict. She recognized that talking about her problems in counseling was helpful, but she was cautious about revealing her participation in counseling because of a long-standing cultural stigma.

"I still haven't told my mother or my parents. I haven't told my friends, either. It's just something... You know, in the black community it's a stigma to seek help for mental illness. I definitely see it as something people would say you should be able to fix yourself. Get over it, pretty much. And that's definitely... I've seen episodes of television shows where people are just told to get over it. It's definitely very hard for people to accept someone getting extra help. I don't think my parents would care, just because I know my mom is not judgmental at all. I think I told her when I was going to go the first time and she was like, 'I don't think you need it, but okay, though.' Because at the time, um, I told her I thought I could have been depressed or bipolar, and she was like, 'I don't think you're bipolar, but if you think you want to go, then that's fine.' My dad, he would just be very worried. He's always been very protective of us. He would want to come up here or ask me to come home because he thought I couldn't handle stuff on my own."

In addition to counseling, Blaire started going to church about a year ago. She did not grow up going to church regularly, however, in recent years Blaire decided that she "wanted a closer spiritual relationship with God. ... That's definitely helped me a lot, too." Blaire met a woman at church who revealed her own childhood sexual abuse experience. Blaire recognized that the woman would not judge her for sharing her story. "That's what's kept me

from telling other people. She... it was a good response. I just asked her, how do I get to the point of being comfortable talking about it? How do I get it to be normal? Because, you know, my parents, my mother and my grandmother, they try to hide it. We didn't talk about it. So I just knew it was something that you don't talk about. But then here's someone who is just openly talking about it. I just wanted to be to that point because I knew that it happened. It helped me to be who I am today, so I just want to accept it."

Blaire was careful about with whom she will share personal information. She was doubtful that peers who do not share her experience could understand or withhold judgment or gossip. Blaire described herself as slow to open up to new acquaintances, and she made a clear distinction between acquaintances, or "associates," and friends. The former were people that she sees in church, in class or at work. Blaire interacts with them, but was is reluctant to take a step toward a closer relationship, in part because of a self-identified fear of rejection and also because she has had bad experiences with friends that wanted too much influence over, or too much knowledge about, her life. People who become friends are usually more outgoing than Blaire. They're among a short list of people in her life who have taken the initiative to get to know her and prove to be dependable, stable, and trustworthy. None of Blair's friends know about her childhood sexual abuse experiences.

"I've always been the type to keep things inside. This is just one thing that I would always keep inside. Feelings, too. I normally keep them inside, too. I would just say my personality and also, I guess, because I'm a woman, too. I didn't want that stigma of being a victim surrounding me. I know I'm not a victim. This is not something I think about

everyday. It doesn't disable me from functioning. And so I didn't want to take on that role of victim. I didn't want people to look at me differently and say, oh, she's just poor, defenseless, so... That stopped it, too."

Blaire talked about making an effort to expand her social network – she identified people in class or at work who may be friend material and she was thinking about pledging a sorority – but the need to maintain clear boundaries that she felt she could control was a dominant theme in her story. Blaire recognized that privacy came with a cost. "I think part of me feels like I'm keeping a part of myself from them, but also like not wanting to be judged or not wanting them to look at me a certain way keeps me from disclosing that about myself. Just because I don't know how it would make me feel about the relationship. If I felt like they started treating me in a different way that might make me want to leave the relationship, or feel a different way, make me uncomfortable."

Blaire was comfortable enough to continue the relationship that began during her second semester at college. Her current boyfriend of more than a year stood out from other boys or men who pursued Blaire in the past because she was comfortable talking to him and didn't feel pressured. Building trust was still slow and difficult but ultimately resulted in sharing information with her boyfriend that she has shared with few other people.

"I know I do struggle with self-esteem a lot, and self-identity, knowing who I am as a person. And so, I'm sure that stems from childhood trauma, but I haven't really thought about it that much. ...Like I mentioned earlier, how I ended up telling my boyfriend about this, it was because we were talking about how I was having trouble opening up to him, and I

know that does stem directly from this, and that's just because I have a hard time trusting people. I was vulnerable then with someone that I should have been able to trust and that happened, so what happens now if I'm vulnerable with someone that I can't trust? That definitely does play in my mind. I don't want to be made a victim again. I don't want to be done wrong by anyone and so that's why I don't open up to people, to give them a chance. That's why it takes a lot for me to trust people. In past relationships, I didn't even hold hands. I didn't like affection, I didn't like to be hugged, didn't like to kiss or anything. I'm not like that now, but people leading up to my boyfriend I was like, 'Don't hold my hand. We can walk with space between us.' I definitely think that's part of it, just with the whole, how to trust someone with myself."

Healing

Blaire observed that childhood sexual abuse "made me more protective of myself. I guess I'm still trying to protect the child that I was at the time." At the time Blaire was concluding her participation in this research study, she was also finishing her second year in college and offered signs that the resources available at her university supported healing from childhood sexual abuse. Blaire was feeling more comfortable with a romantic relationship than at any time in the past and cobbling together the beginnings of a strategy for expanding her social network. She also recognized that her childhood experiences gave her the power to be an advocate for other children and adults with similar histories. She shared thoughts of getting involved in an organization or scholarship program to support survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Shortly before her second interview for this study, Blaire had shared her childhood sexual abuse experiences with her boyfriend's teenage sister, who disclosed her own history of sexual assault. "I just told her how I've been through therapy, and when I was younger I was molested by my grandfather, and that really impacted how I am, how I open up to people and everything, so I think I just said it so I think she could like, you know, feel okay opening up to me. She already feels like she can't open up to her family about certain things, so I just want her to know that she can talk to me. I just wanted her to know that I'll be here, because I want to be a friend to you."

Blaire was still working to make meaning of her childhood sexual abuse experiences. "I know how my life has been. I know the impact that it has had on me. I know how it was in high school when I was really dealing with it and I just want to help people. I want them to see that this doesn't have to define you. It helped to make you who you are, but it's not all you are."

Tallulah: "This is part of your childhood that you're still grieving over."

Tallulah was sexually abused by her aunt, her mother's younger sister, who was about five years older than Tallulah. For years before the physical abuse, the aunt emotionally abused Tallulah and subjected her to increasingly risky "games" during summer trips to a town where family lived. At various times, the aunt locked Tallulah outside, naked, in the cold of winter or recruited Tallulah to be the getaway driver in a teenage vandalism spree. Her aunt also introduced Tallulah to pornographic media before Tallulah was an adolescent. Tallulah recalled multiple episodes that should have served as "red flags" to her grandparents

or other adults that her aunt was acting inappropriately, but many of these incidents were dismissed as “a funny story” in the family. On one occasion, when Tallulah was approximately six years old, her aunt convinced Tallulah to leave her underwear in the mailbox of an adolescent boy in the neighborhood as part of a “prank.” The boy’s mother was alarmed by the way older kids were treating Tallulah and concerned that her son could get in trouble for the incident. Tallulah recalled that her grandparents never seemed willing or able to acknowledge the potential consequences of such risky behavior. At the time of these “games,” Tallulah’s father was often deployed with the military or staying at another house, and her mother was absent or incapacitated by physical or mental illness.

The “games” escalated into an incident of sexual abuse that Tallulah recalled in vivid detail. Tallulah was 11-years-old at the time. “My aunt came home with two of her friends that were women and a boy named Mike, and Mike was younger than them by like a year, so we were closer in age. Um, I don’t know, maybe it was a fight, maybe I did something “wrong,” and there’s definitely air quotes on that because I was young, and she told me that the only way I could make it better is if I stuck a spoon into my vagina. And I was like this really doesn’t make sense. This is like my first something is very wrong. And she’s like, well if you don’t want to do it you can just leave, you can go home, nobody cares about you up here, you don’t have any friends around here, you can go walk down to your other grandma’s house, you don’t have to come back here again. And it felt like a do or die scenario, like if I don’t do this I’m going to lose half of my family. And I said no, and she was like you really don’t have a choice about this. They had a really small bathroom on the first floor, probably

3x4, purple flowers everywhere, and not, like, a white toilet, like a different colored toilet. And she and her two friends walked me in there, and so it's like a really small space with four people in it, and so they sat me down and they broke my hymen with a large serving spoon. And for the rest of weekend I had to eat with that spoon. Um, and I just... All I could remember was that Mike was running around the bathroom, like he wasn't allowed in it, but he was just running around and running around and he just seemed really excited about the whole thing. Like it was a group activity. Like the rest of the weekend, the porno books exploded.”

Tallulah's aunt called Tallulah's mom and forced Tallulah to explain that she was menstruating. Tallulah's parents initially suspected that something was wrong. Her mom took her to a doctor who explained away bleeding caused by the assault as the result of stress or hormones. Tallulah keeps those medical records as proof that something bad happened and that her parents' initial instincts were the right ones.

Tallulah kept her distance from her aunt for years after the abuse. Tallulah enrolled in a prestigious magnet high school away from home. She formed close friendships there and maintains many of those relationships today, with high school classmates who attend the same college, and others who are scattered around the world. She recalled that her early romantic relationships “used to not be so awesome.” Her first sexual relationship, in eighth grade, was with a boy who refused to date her publicly, judged her physical appearance, and would withhold physical affection as a form of emotional manipulation. At age 17, Tallulah met a British man “older than my father” on an airplane. After “fooling around on the plane,”

the man contacted Tallulah later, while visiting her region on business, and continued the physical relationship. “The first few times... I don’t know if it was grooming. I felt like I was in control of the whole thing, I was also 17 and stupid. So we would meet up, we would go to these really nice dinners, there was all this stuff, and then he would just drop me off. So it wasn’t like there was a sexual component innately, but the more times he would come back from England I was like, fuck it, we can do anything you want. I think a lot of that stemmed from... I physically had the thought, wow, this guy has flown across the seas to see me specifically more times than my own father has.”

Tallulah reported that she always connected with people emotionally. She makes strong, lasting friendships and described scenarios of fierce loyalty to longtime friends. She acknowledged, however, that for as long as she can remember, she has not connected emotional attachment with sexual contact. “I don’t know if that’s related to child abuse specifically, but I know that after I was abused as a child, I entered into relationships that were mostly physical, right? Used and be used scenario, right? And I didn’t have that emotional component so putting them together in my adult years, or my almost adult years, has been pretty challenging. To put them together like you actually want to know why I do and don’t do things in bed? You want to talk? You want to mix these things? Uhhhhh. You want to hold me afterwards? Uhhhh, God. Jesus. So I think that’s been the hardest part and it’s still something I work with.”

Disclosure

Tallulah never felt like childhood sexual abuse was “a deal to me” until her aunt moved in with Tallulah’s parents about 90 minutes from where Tallulah attended a large state university. Tallulah was in her second year at college when her aunt decided – without an invitation – to move into Tallulah’s one-person dorm room while the aunt searched for jobs. One day Tallulah came home from class and was locked out of her own room because her aunt had the keys. Tallulah then discovered that her aunt had rearranged everything in the room, including the contents of Tallulah’s dresser drawers. “I just absolutely freaked out.” Tallulah kicked her aunt out and then had to attempt to explain the reaction to her mother. “And I was just like, ‘You really have no fucking idea, right? Like you’re totally clueless.’ And I told her, and at first my mom was like, ‘I’m so, so sorry. This shouldn’t have happened, we should have known, I knew something was wrong, we took you to the doctor.’” Tallulah’s mom later brought up the accusation to Tallulah’s aunt over glasses of wine and the aunt denied that the abuse happened. Tallulah’s mom attempted to resolve the situation by engineering an unwelcome intervention, bringing Tallulah’s aunt to the university.

“And so I’m telling her all of these things, like this is what happened, this is what you did to me, this is how it’s affected me, our relationship has always been on unequal ground. And she just goes, ‘That didn’t happen.’ She’s like, ‘I don’t know where you’re pulling this from and I’m sorry if it was another family member and you’re misunderstanding, but that just wasn’t me.’ And I’m just like, ‘What the fuck are you talking about?’ And my mom just

said, ‘Well, I’m glad we got that cleared up.’” Tallulah’s family has denied that the abuse occurred ever since that meeting, at times blaming Tallulah for causing discomfort within the family. Tallulah described feeling like her family is “gaslighting” her – systematically denying something that she knows is unquestionably true.

Tallulah fell into depression after being forced to confront her aunt, recall the childhood experience of sexual abuse, and attempt to navigate her parents’ steadfast denial of Tallulah’s trauma. She struggled to go to class, her grades fell, and Tallulah began thinking about suicide, with plans for how she would carry it out. At that point, during her second year in college, Tallulah went to the university counseling center. She was paired with a woman therapist, M, who had experience treating trauma. M provided Tallulah with unconditional positive regard. She believed Tallulah’s story, gave her a chance to disclose her experience of childhood sexual abuse for the first time, and helped Tallulah through the worst of her depression. Tallulah and M continued working together for approximately three years. Tallulah learned skills for managing difficult relationships with her family and self-care.

During her work in therapy, Tallulah discovered that members of her family, including her grandmother, did know about the abuse as it was happening. Her grandmother “thought that I was really close to my aunt when I was younger and she just asked me. She was really surprised that we weren’t living together and like that question... It was like someone T-boned me. It was like, what the fuck do you mean? How do you not know that all of these things have been going on? It was because my parents have been changing that dialogue as it gets pushed up the pipeline. And I was just like, this might make you sad or

whatever, but I'm going to tell you exactly what happened because I don't care who else in the family you tell. And I told her basically all the stuff that I told you, minus the illegal stuff, like breaking into houses and breaking things, because I'm ashamed of that. I'm ashamed that I went into their community and I helped that kind of shit happen. That's awful. And I told my grandmother, and she's just crying, and I told her about my mom, that she didn't believe me and she goes, 'I knew about it. Everybody knew about it. We talked about it as a family.'”

Tallulah has created distinct boundaries in her relationships with her mother and her aunt. She avoids her aunt and acknowledged that this may lead to difficult choices and family confrontations in the future, such as deciding not to attend a family funeral or wedding in order to protect herself. Tallulah safeguards her “emotional energy” by minimizing the relationship that she has with her mother. She now considers home to be her own apartment in her university city, because her mother's house does not feel like a safe, supportive space. Tallulah is clear about the pain that the abuse and her parents' denial of it has caused. In recounting her story of childhood sexual abuse and the impact on her life now, it seems that the aftermath has been at least as destructive as the event itself.

“Honestly it just makes me really angry. It's so simple as a parent to say, 'I believe you.' What do you need next? Initially my parents did that, they hit all the points, but when what I needed was uncomfortable for them... I needed to not spend Christmas with my abuser, I needed them to promise me that I don't have to go to my own wedding and face the person that molested me. I needed them to promise that years in advance of when I even find

the person that I'm going to marry and they can't just say that's do-able. You're my kid. You're my blood. You're not some sibling that I wish I knew better, you're my kid and I raised you and I'm here for you. And just the fact that that's not theirs is really mindboggling. There's a lot of anger. It makes me confused, like, am I remembering it right? Like, how... I don't know. So I guess, like, a lot of anger and confusion about how my parents to this day respond to it."

Tallulah believed her family's response to her disclosure of childhood sexual abuse was influenced by military culture. Her father was part of a small community of highly specialized soldiers until his retirement a few years ago. In her experience, military culture emphasized strength and resilience, solving problems in the home or within the community, sometimes at the expense of individuals who needed professional support. Tallulah recalled multiple examples of women who committed suicide while suffering from untreated postpartum depression and one officer who was not officially reprimanded after child pornography was discovered on his work computer. "Its definitely a culture in which people sweep things under the rug very quickly and very efficiently."

"There has always been a stigma against getting mental support in my family and almost every family that I've seen in the military. For any sort of mental support, including any abuse, whether it's childhood sexual abuse or abuse of a spouse or just in general, verbal abuse, because everyone is afraid that it's going to show up on their security clearance, right? Everyone is afraid that they're going to lose their jobs because they can't handle being a person. When M, my counselor, made the (N.C. Child Protective Services) call because my

sister was living in the home with the person that abused me at the time, right, like that will show up in my dad's security clearance forever, and he will have to explain away that forever, right? That's fucking on them. I don't care. It happened, that's your life. I think to pretend for your entire country that people who are making these decisions aren't real people with real problems is kind of ridiculous, right? Yeah, so that's definitely played a large part in whether or not I would ever get the help that I needed. At a certain point, when my dad was closer to retirement, it was just like, yeah, I'm doing it."

College Relationships

Tallulah pursued supportive relationships in her college life. During her first interview for this study, Tallulah reported that she and her boyfriend at the time were more like best friends than romantic partners. The absence of romantic or physical spark eventually resulted in a change of relationship status: Tallulah and her boyfriend of more than four years broke up several months before her second interview, however, they continue to live together and plan to do so indefinitely. Her ex-boyfriend was there for her when she has needed him, through treatment of her trauma and uncomfortable interactions with her mother, and that loyalty and dependability is more important to her than sticking to the traditional conventions of relationship behavior. Tallulah imagined a time when she and her ex-boyfriend might get back together, in a "healthier" relationship marked by better communication, even as she was dating someone else at the time of her second interview. "I think (ex-boyfriend) is the most stable thing in my life that I've ever had, even compared to my family, and I'm not prepared to let that go because we're not romantically together anymore, and he feels the same way

about me in context of his family, so we're going to continue living together. And I know that might be a clusterfuck. M thinks it is, I think it is, but I'm going to continue doing it and we'll see what happens."

Tallulah identifies herself as bisexual. She and her ex-boyfriend were in an open relationship. Tallulah has also dated women. At the time of her second interview for this research study, Tallulah was in a monogamous relationship with a man that she met on a night out at a bar. She was on an unsuccessful first-date with a different man with whom she shared mutual friends when she connected with her current boyfriend. Tallulah reported that she still struggles to integrate the emotional and physical parts of a relationship.

"Man, the sex is really good. Hot damn the sex is good. Emotional connection is not great. So I think that's what stands out reading back through these transcripts. Like I say, these two things are on very different planes. We still talk and we still have very deep conversations, but when seeds of anxiety come up, I just push him out, like I just want to have fun in this relationship right now. I want it to be a lively, fun, adventurous relationship. I still have problems dealing with the emotional component." Tallulah continued to identify signs of childhood trauma in her adult sexual interactions. She thought of herself as open and adventurous sexually, however, she drew the line at allowing a partner to penetrate her with any objects. Large spoons were still a trigger. Tallulah did not keep them in her home. She made note of those triggers multiple times during the course of our interviews.

In addition to exploring her romantic preferences, Tallulah held on to her friends from high school and made a few new friends at college, many who share her academic and

research interests. Social interactions were typically a mix of old friends and new ones, hanging out in someone's apartment, playing games and maybe drinking a little or smoking marijuana. She preferred a small gathering – “I think my max number is like 16 people” – to going out on the town. Her boyfriend and a couple of close, long-time friends knew about the childhood sexual abuse. Tallulah felt like she would confront the issue of childhood trauma if it came up in conversation, but she was discerning about how and with whom she shares her experiences. “There are friends that have heard a longer story, there are friends that have heard a shorter story. You know, you're playing a game like ‘Never Have I Ever’ and there's always one friend who must have never, ever interacted with people ever before and they're like, ‘Never have I ever been sexually abused,’ and you're like, oh my god, has no one here ever been raped? And it's, like, we were just having fun. We were just sitting around drinking and stuff and look at what you did. You just made this an awful situation. It's like, how do you respond to those moments? Are you true to yourself? It just really depends. To quote one of those closer circles it's like, yeah, it happened and I'm not really going to go into the details right now, but it doesn't make me a different person, it just means you know different facts about me. But if it's someone I don't know it's just like, what? What are you talking about? Because if you don't know me already and that becomes your primary fact that you learn and that's what you associate with me, that's not who I am, it doesn't define me, then that's like way down there. Like if you write about me I hope that's way down on the list.”

Tallulah described college as a time when she learned to guard her privacy appropriately, speak up for herself when necessary, and, in general, take better care of herself. At the time of our second interview, she still met regularly with her therapist. Tallulah adopted two cats. She credited that responsibility with forcing her to keep a schedule, getting out of bed in the morning, which facilitated basic care like brushing her teeth, and thus keeping depression at bay. Tallulah was learning to eat better and feel good about her physical appearance. “I think a larger portion of my not feeling normal in comparison to my peers was my weight. I’m 100% sure that’s probably effected by a slew of things that happened in my childhood. It’s something that I’m working on actively now, though. So in the last year I’ve been seeing M, and that was really good, and I’m seeing a nutritionist, and that’s even better, and I’m working out most days of the week, and that’s even better, right? So the more time I started investing in myself, the less broken I felt. I was just like, ‘Aw shit, I’ve got it going on.’”

Healing

Tallulah believed that her mother’s refusal to believe her trauma was the “worst disservice my mom ever did to me.” That pain came up repeatedly in her story. Her experience comes up occasionally in other ways, usually when the topic of abuse arises in any context, but Tallulah learned to “acknowledge it to myself and then I can move on.”

“So I think you hear that grief is like an ocean. It comes in waves. I think the same is said for... That is a part of your childhood that you’re still grieving over. I think the analogy can still be used. So in the beginning, when I talked to my family about it, I felt like I was

drowning. I felt like I was being pulled under the water, and I couldn't handle anything. I couldn't handle getting up and brushing my teeth. And now I feel like I'm sitting on the shore, I'm watching, and I'm like, oh shit, the sunrise. It's another day. We're doing pretty good. And that's not to say later on in my life, I might be swept back to sea. It's a wedding and everyone is like, oh, grandpa or so and so is dying and it's the last time for him to see all of his family in the same place all at once. And it's like, it sucks for grandpa so and so that he didn't catch on to the fact that I was getting molested, but it's not my fault anymore. That might bring up more... So right now I feel good about it. It doesn't come up in my day to day, I feel like I'm working on me right now. I can't change the past. I don't need to change the past, right? And so I'm just doing it. But I know in the future like there's going to be parts where it's just going to suck. What do you do when your favorite grandmother dies? Right? And then you go the funeral and it was her mom. You can't be, like, you can't be at your own mom's funeral. So there will be things and it will come in waves for the rest of my life and it's fine. Gonna have to deal with it."

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to gather the first person accounts of college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and learn how – or if – those abusive experiences were relevant to their present lives. Three students enrolled at a large, urban state university participated in interviews and completed a formal survey instrument developed to measure constructs related to college student development. The Seven Vectors Theoretical Framework (SVTF) and other prominent contributions to the literature on developmental themes among survivors of CSA, especially those made by Draucker and her collaborators, guided all data collection methods. In addition to gathering accounts of childhood sexual abuse and analyzing how survivors told their stories, this study intended to evaluate whether the SVTF conceptualization of college student development was applicable to CSA survivors or could be adapted for use with students who have those experiences.

This study addressed three research questions:

1. How do undergraduate college students describe their experiences of childhood sexual abuse?
2. Is childhood sexual abuse relevant to the college student development of survivors, according to the personal narratives of survivors?
3. According to the personal narratives of college student survivors, how does childhood sexual abuse impact development, as defined by the seven vectors framework of college student development?

The six interviews – two with each participant – were transcribed verbatim and organized into extensive case narratives, constructed with an emphasis on the student’s own words. Survey responses were scored and calculated in comparison to normative groups. The survey results provided an additional data point for evaluating study participants in light of the SVTF. My observations, recorded as field notes after each interaction with the study participants, also provided a touchstone for building narrative cases. Data were analyzed in accordance with Riessman’s approach to narrative analysis, recognizing that individuals are actors in their narratives, which are performed for a specific audience and are influenced by the discourse of external institutions (2008). A priori codes of the data were developed based on the SVTF conceptualization of college student development. Open codes were developed in conjunction with themes that emerged during analysis.

This chapter provides an overview of the findings from this study, with each of the three research questions addressed one at a time. Findings for the research questions were organized by themes and subthemes, with a total of four final themes and 10 subthemes. The results of the survey are also presented in conjunction with the findings for Research Question 3, which addressed the array of constructs identified by the SVTF.

Research Question 1: How Students Narrate CSA Experiences

The first goal of this study was to answer the question, “How do undergraduate students describe their experiences of childhood sexual abuse?” In order to address this question, I first had to operationalize the broad query, “How?” Riessman (2008) provided a framework for narrative analysis, elaborating on the intentions of the individual

Research Question 1: How do undergraduate college students describe their experiences of childhood sexual abuse?					
Theme	Acting the abuse narrative			Discourse of CSA	
Subtheme	Emotional Tone	Attention to detail	Feelings about the abuse perpetrator	Family	Community
Research Question 2: Is childhood sexual abuse relevant to the college student development of survivors, according to the personal narratives of survivors?					
Theme	Trust				
Subtheme	Friends / Peers		Intimate Partners		
Research Question 3: According to the personal narratives of college student survivors, how does childhood sexual abuse impact development, as defined by the seven vectors framework of college student development?					
Theme	Emergent Vectors				
Subtheme	Managing Emotions	Moving through autonomy toward interdependence		Establishing identity	

Figure 1.
Findings by Research Question

communicating a narrative – in this case, the three undergraduate students interviewed for this study. Riessman believed that each individual, or narrator, is an actor in the telling of their narrative, performing for a specific audience. Each narrator makes assumptions about who they are in the story and decisions about the information that is included or omitted from the story in order to achieve a specific purpose and communicate in a way that is congruent with their own assumptions. Those assumptions are shaped over time in a dynamic process influenced by discourse, which Drewery and Winslade defined as “a set of more or less coherent stories or statements about the way the world should be” (1997, p. 35). Many

institutions and dominant forces in society contribute to discourse: government, faith, family, educational systems, and media all contribute to ideas about what is acceptable or ideal. In the case of many narrators, including the participants in this research study, assumptions about the narrator's role and the influence of discourse are so ingrained that performance of a narrative is a reflexive, perhaps even subconscious, act.

Riessman (2008) furthermore believed that the audience receiving the narrative influenced how the narrator communicated the story. A narrator may tell their story differently depending upon who is receiving the narrative, the environment in which the story is being told, the response of the audience, and other considerations. The communication of a narrative is a dynamic process – an interaction between the individual telling the story and the audience receiving it – just as the shaping of narrator assumptions involves interplay among multiple stakeholders. Discourse was thus a critical element of Riessman's conceptualization of narrative and was important to analyzing how each of the participants in this study shaped their narrative.

Answering the question of "how?" began with the a priori theme "Discourse of Childhood Sexual Abuse," which focused on institutions and external factors that each student identified as influential in their understanding of the impact of childhood sexual abuse on their life. Two subthemes ran through the narrative of each research participant, including family and community. An additional theme, "Acting the Abuse Narrative," emerged during analysis. This theme included three subthemes – emotional tone, attention to detail, and feelings about the abuse perpetrator – that were common elements of how each

study participant shaped their narrative. Some elements of this second theme, “Acting the Abuse Narrative,” were apparent early in interviews and gave color to the students’ descriptions of discourse factors. I will address the emergent theme first.

Acting the Abuse Narrative

There were similarities and differences in the roles each student played in their narrative of CSA. Each student was enrolled in the same state university. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah, however, were enrolled in different academic majors, so elements of their daily campus experience – place of residence, class locations, work spaces, classmates, etc. – were different. There were also differences in academic standing. Riley was a first-year student, Blaire was a sophomore, and Tallulah was a fifth year senior. The SVTF assumed differences in development based on class standing. According to Chickering and Reisser’s theory (1993), Riley would have made the least progress toward development in the constructs of the SVTF and Tallulah would have made the most progress. Each student reported childhood sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member or close family acquaintance and each student was a current participant in therapy. The students, of course, brought a different array of complex life experiences into their performance of the narrative.

The explicit audience for each narrative was the same. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah each responded to a set of questions posed by me, a counselor working in a campus counseling center. The fact that each student had a working relationship with a therapist outside of this study may have effected the assumptions they made about how the audience would receive this narrative. All three participants reported positive counseling experiences

of varying duration. Tallulah was still working with her original therapist after nearly three years. Blaire had worked with two therapists and participated in group therapy in less than a year. And Riley had worked with multiple therapists since middle school, including two different counselors in the five months preceding her final interview for this study. Two complete narratives were performed in a small, private office at the university counseling center. Tallulah constructed the first half of her narrative in her own off-campus apartment, speaking to an audience of two: me and her cat. The purpose for constructing these narratives – at that time, in that place, and for that specific audience – was ostensibly the same for Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah. Each was referred to the study by their regular therapist at the time, and each student expressed a desire to contribute to the advancement of counseling knowledge about childhood sexual abuse.

Three subthemes emerged that were present in each student's performance of the abuse narrative. An emotional tone was explicitly communicated, referenced, or could be discerned within each student's first person account of CSA. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all made choices about how details of their CSA experiences were shared. All three students also expressed feelings – often complicated feelings – about their abusers.

Emotional tone. Establishment of the emotional tone for each narrative began before the first interview question. Riley arrived to both interviews dressed casually in a t-shirt, athletic shorts, and athletic shoes. Her aesthetic presentation communicated comfort and informality. She sat in a plush chair in a counseling center office and answered interview questions in a calm, straightforward manner, paused occasionally to gather her thoughts, and

often processed her ideas out loud. Riley's narrative of CSA was not accompanied by expressions of high or low emotion. She reflected upon the past as if communicating a fact-based report for which feelings were not accessible or were unnecessary. Riley described the abuse and other interactions with her abuser as "everyday life kind of stuff." She was matter-of-fact in describing a series of interviews with social services representatives and disclosures about CSA to her parents as "a very long day." Riley recalled that on the day the abuse of her and her younger sister was disclosed, "we were in a room by ourselves while they were talking to our parents and we were both like, this is serious. And we were both in shock, like this is a big deal, can we go home? We couldn't comprehend that it was happening. It was sudden." Her recollection of being in shock was not, however, delivered with a return to that feeling.

Riley's narrative took a more emotional tone when it connected with current events. At the time of our first interview, Riley had recently discovered that her college peers could be insensitive to traumas experienced by other people. "It pissed me off when people make rape jokes or make pedophile jokes. I'm like, that's not even funny. And those seem to be very popular for some odd reason among college students. It's like can we talk about what you're actually saying? It's not okay." This observation was an exception to Riley's even, matter-of-fact reporting of her experience. Riley's voice rose slightly as she was in touch with the feeling of being angry. At other times in her narrative Riley expressed a combination of frustration at the family expectations that she should be a stabilizing force and worry that, should her current romantic relationship end, she would return to a time when she did not

feel the freedom to be vulnerable. Those related concerns intersected when Riley observed that, “It just sucks sometimes. I don’t want to be in charge anymore. And I think, I don’t know, if he leaves I don’t have that anymore and I have to take care of things on my own, and that’s kind of scary. That seems scary.”

Blaire’s interviews were conducted in a similar counseling center office. She was dressed neatly in a t-shirt tucked into blue jeans, giving the appearance of being casual enough to blend in on a college campus, with enough attention to detail to express discipline. Blaire’s interview responses were congruent with her appearance. She answered questions thoughtfully and meticulously. Her responses were clear, neat, and largely devoid of the verbal fillers common to casual speech. Blaire presented as ready to engage the research process while also being intentional about guarding her privacy. She maintained this aesthetic of control throughout both interviews. Blaire’s voice rarely if ever changed pitch during our meetings, staying even and intentional through descriptions of betrayal, concerns about her own mental health, and hopeful thoughts about the direction of her romantic relationship.

For example, Blaire succinctly linked a period of anger at her abuser – her grandfather – with a later time when her grandparents lived in a separate house and Blaire felt better. “‘Why is he here? I don’t want him here.’ Like I was just in there crying. I was so upset. And I just remember writing a letter, or I typed up an e-mail, and sent it to his name, but it didn’t send to anyone, and I just told him how upset I was, how hurt I was. And after that I kinda was okay. The added distance made it better, too. I was okay for a while.” The

tone used in describing those different emotions was essentially the same, as was the entirety of Blaire's narrative.

The first interview with Tallulah was conducted in her off-campus apartment. We sat on opposite sides of a sectional couch, with Tallulah's cat on the couch between us. Tallulah was dressed casually in a shirt and sweatpants. At times during the interview, she held a blanket over her legs, a common practice among some therapy clients who find a familiar fabric or article of clothing to be soothing. Tallulah's narrative was emotionally charged. She responded to interview questions at length with emotions that ranged among anger, disappointment, confusion, and pride. She peppered her descriptions of past CSA experiences and present conflicts with the qualifier, "Right?" Her use of the word suggested flexibility of meaning. At times, Tallulah asked "Right?" as if seeking validation of her observations or feelings from the audience. In one such instance, Tallulah described difficulty integrating the physical and emotional elements of intimate relationships. "I don't know if that's related to child abuse specifically, but I know that after I was abused as a child, I entered into relationships that were mostly physical, right? Used and be used scenario, right? And I didn't have that emotional component so putting them together in my adult years, or my almost adult years, has been pretty challenging." Her performance of that part of her narrative sounded like she was requesting a response from the audience, a professional counselor that Tallulah expected may be able to validate the relevance of CSA to her personal experience.

Other times, "Right?" appeared as an exclamatory statement, expressing unequivocal disbelief or indignity. Tallulah recounted the time her counselor called child protective

services “because my sister was living in the home with the person that abused me at the time, right, like that will show up in my dad’s security clearance forever, and he will have to explain away that forever, right? That’s fucking on them. I don’t care. It happened, that’s your life. I think to pretend for your entire country that people who are making these decisions aren’t real people with real problems is kind of ridiculous, right?”

Tallulah’s emotional response to performing the narrative was apparent in non-verbal as well as verbal cues. In addition to the variations of emotion present in the loudness or tone of her voice, Tallulah made consistent, often emphatic eye contact and allowed her feeling to intersect with the content of her sentences. During her telling of the specific incident of CSA, Tallulah shared that “they sat me down and they broke my hymen with a large serving spoon. And for the rest of weekend I had to eat with that spoon. Um, and I just... All I could remember was that Mike was running around the bathroom, like he wasn’t allowed in it, but he was just running around and running around and he just seemed really excited about the whole thing.” The pause in her account at “Um, and I just...” was punctuated by a crack in Tallulah’s voice, an indication that the pain of her experience was still present and accessible. That tangible, verbalized and observable emotion was consistent throughout both interviews with Tallulah.

Attention to detail. Riessman (2008) wrote that individuals “use the narrative form to remember, argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain, and even to mislead an audience,” (p. 8). Narrators construct stories for a purpose. They include some details and exclude others to fit the purposes of the narrative. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah ostensibly constructed their

narratives for the purpose of contributing to the research on childhood sexual abuse. There may have been other implicit purposes as well: to continue their recovery from CSA, to find validation, to further shape and process their story, to practice sharing their story, to please counselors who referred them to the study, or to earn \$50 for their participation in the research study. Each participant selected and omitted details about their experiences that fit their purposes for constructing a narrative in this particular time and place, and for this particular audience. Analysis of the details included in the students' narratives, and inferences about details that were omitted, provided insight into how each participant narrated childhood sexual abuse.

Riley did not provide any specific details about the acts of childhood sexual abuse. She reported a rough timeline for the duration of the abuse, named the perpetrator, and observed that other family members were abused as well. She did not identify the sexual acts or delve deep into her feelings at the time of the abuse. "So he was kinda like part of the family. Yeah, so, it was kinda like an all the time thing. He babysat us all the time. So there wasn't a set time, it was just all the time. ... It was very casual. It wasn't like, 'Hey, let's talk privately.' It was always... He would drive us in the car and talk about it. It was kinda like normal life." Later in our first interview, Riley elaborated on the messages she received about discussing sex. "I just feel like overall sex is not a cool thing to talk about, it's very taboo. And so there's always this aspect of maybe I'll be a bad kid, and I don't want to talk about this stuff because you're not supposed to talk about this stuff." Riley did share details about the "very long day" that her CSA was exposed. She described a series of meetings with law

enforcement and social services representatives, as well as her mother's shock at the disclosure.

Riley also talked at length about the intrusive quality of being a CSA survivor in a small town. She recalled that the public disclosure of childhood sexual abuse was “why we ended up moving. My mom was getting letters in the mailbox from people she didn't tell. People we knew. And they would be, like, ‘We're so sorry,’ and it would be, like, how did you find out? And then there was this news article on it. Everyone knew back home because it was such a small town. It was definitely stressful because my band mates found out and I didn't tell them. ... We were just hanging out and it came up. And I was like, okay. And so then we had a conversation about it and they knew, all of my friends knew. And then it just got to the point that I was ‘that girl’ and it got very stressful for all of us, so we just left and we were really done with it.”

Riley's narrative drew attention to her resilience and pointed away from the uncomfortable details of her abuse. In her telling of the story, she was a young woman from a small town, where there were limited educational options, who earned a prestigious scholarship from a respected university. She was intentional about leaving behind the person she was at home. Riley found emotional insight and new coping skills in counseling. She secured a healthy, supportive romantic relationship, albeit a relationship wherein some of her insecurities as a survivor of CSA still lingered. “Obviously this is a part of my life and he's a part of my life now and so I have to be open with him about it, like what if it's too much and he can't handle it anymore? But we finally got to the point where I just opened everything up

to him and he's like, no, I'm still staying. It was a big trust leap and it definitely worked out. So trust is still an issue and other than that... Really just trust. Knowing that he's going to be there and it really hasn't come up in any of my other relationships, and I don't know why." Riley moved from the isolation of her small town, where she was "that girl," to a college campus where she explored new opportunities for social connection and expressions of her intellectual values. At home, in high school, at the time that her CSA became public, she did not have an opportunity to take control of her own narrative. Telling her story in a counseling center office far from home, choosing which details to emphasize and which to omit, was an opportunity for Riley reclaim control.

Blaire also omitted specific details about her CSA experiences. She reported that she was too young to remember the first incident well. At the end of our first interview, Blaire decided to offer some clarification. "You said I don't have to go into detail about the abuse itself, but I should mention that it wasn't like penetration. It wasn't my definition of rape, which is like penetration. It was like fondling and stuff like that. And it was pretty much the same thing when I was like 11 or 12. But that's about it." Blaire provided limited details of her meeting with social services as a child. She observed that her family did not talk about the abuse again and speculated that "my mother and my grandmother, they were telling us, they were showing us not to talk about it."

Blaire's narrative was also rooted in an assumption of resilience. She was an African-American woman from the South, the daughter of a truck driver and a teacher who at times relied upon financial support from extended family to make it through day-to-day life. Blaire

did not suggest at any point in her narrative that her family should have seen red flags of CSA or handled the aftermath differently. In telling her story, Blaire was vigilant about upholding family honor and dispelling any notion that CSA has power over her. “I didn’t want that stigma of being a victim surrounding me. I know I’m not a victim. This is not something I think about everyday. It doesn’t disable me from functioning. And so I didn’t want to take on that role of victim.” Blaire acknowledged in her narrative that she has felt vulnerable, and had to learn to cope with those feelings of vulnerability, especially in the relationship with her boyfriend. However, Blaire’s narrative – like Riley’s narrative -- focused on the current successes of making it to college, navigating a healthy romantic partnership, and working toward future opportunities.

Tallulah’s narrative offered more details of the abuse experience than either of the other participants in this study. In her telling of her aunt’s abuse, previously described in this study, Tallulah spared few details. She remembered that her grandparents’ house “had a really small bathroom on the first floor, probably three by four, purple flowers everywhere, and not, like, a white toilet, like a different colored toilet.” Tallulah’s narrative suggested that she had little concern for guarding her privacy, deterring the audience from viewing her as vulnerable, or protecting the reputation of her family. She recalled that after her aunt’s behavior escalated to physical abuse and an increase in pornographic media, “they made me call my mom the next day, and my mom was in North Carolina still, and she was recovering from surgery still, which is why she didn’t come, and they made me tell her that I had my period and that now I was a real woman. And my mom’s really freaked out, and my dad

comes and collects us, and he asks me like, ‘Hey, what’s up?’ and I didn’t say anything, right?” Tallulah’s complex feelings of anger, betrayal, disappointment and loss in relation to her parents’ failure to follow up on their suspicions, and later denial of Tallulah’s experience, permeated her narrative.

Tallulah narrated around other factors that may have contributed to her CSA experience. She suggested throughout both interviews that her mother struggled with physical and mental illness and substance use, but never elaborated. Tallulah acknowledged only briefly that her parents’ state of mind affected the way they responded to her disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. “I know that my mom had been sexually abused as a child, and then I was sexually abused as a child, and then one of my dad’s sibling’s children had a substitute teacher in his class for one week and then three weeks after he was gone the school released a report that he had been molesting children and the parents weren’t notified. It happens. And like nobody’s talking about it and nobody saw the signs, because it couldn’t happen in our family, but it is, and it’s fucking rampant in our family, right. That’s not okay.” In this way, Tallulah did not completely omit details about her experiences, but she did de-emphasize them in favor of a series of anecdotes that highlighted a still-raw sense of trauma, abandonment, and vulnerability. In comparison with Riley and Blaire, whose disclosures of CSA were validated, if not treated comprehensively, Tallulah reported feeling “gaslighted” by her family, like she had merely misinterpreted or mistaken her own experiences.

Tallulah’s emphasis on graphic details and immediately accessible feelings in her narrative

could be interpreted as seeking from the audience the validation that she never received from her family.

Feelings about the abuse perpetrator. All three students included some discussion of their relationship with the abuse perpetrator. Draucker and Martsof (2008, 2010) and Draucker et al (2011) identified the conflict that often results from CSA perpetrated by a family member. Survivors experienced a sense of confusion and betrayal at being hurt by someone who was supposed to care for them. There may also still be feelings of love for the perpetrator, and a reluctance to be associated with problems in the family or legal consequences for the abuser. That range of complicated thoughts and feelings were present in the narratives gathered for this study.

Riley's initial descriptions of interactions with her abuser, discussed previously in this study, were consistent with her emotionally muted narrative construction. She reported general recollections of emotional abuse and arguments with her abuser until "he knew that I was too smart to deal with it. And so he stopped." Later in the first interview, Riley observed, "he went to jail. I heard he tried to commit suicide several times, I don't know if he's still alive. He got like four life sentences for all the stuff he did." Riley had not interacted with her abuser in several years at the time of her participation in this study. Nonetheless, he still had a place of relevance in her current life. Riley referenced her abuser when describing her path to recovery from CSA, a process that continued with her current counseling relationship. "I've read some books about it, and also in defense on perpetrators, I've read some books and some studies on it, and so that's helped me too to kind of come to terms with not necessarily

play the blame game and be like this is all your fault. Also I know a lot about his past life, he had a pretty crappy life. I'm not saying its okay what he did by any means, but I'm definitely more understanding and I'm not filled with hate. It's more of a... Things happen and I'm moving on." Riley relationship with her abuser thus served her narrative of emotional and intellectual development, and resilience.

Blaire also had complicated memories of her abuser. In her narrative, her grandfather represented both happy times with her family and the rare acknowledgment of a time when Blaire felt angry and vulnerable. Blaire recalled one Christmas when she and her sister cooked food in a toy oven for their grandfather, who encouraged their play. "I remember there were times when me and my sister would put on little concerts or sing songs and he would be the only one who listened. I don't remember it being tension until probably after the second incident when I was older and I really realized, like, this was not okay." On another occasion, Blaire would lash out in anger, as described earlier in this study, crying when her grandparents came to visit.

Blaire summarized her feelings about her grandfather during our first interview, when she expressed empathy for him, and suggested that family was a more prominent concern than her childhood sexual abuse experiences. "But even now, I do miss him," Blair said. "Even though like what he did, I just tell myself, he was clearly in a bad place at the time. He had fought in Vietnam and I know he probably had PTSD and he was an alcoholic, like I mentioned. I just keep telling myself that because I know that he did love me. He helped me get my car, you know, anything he could do for us he would do it. Looking back now, that

might have been guilt, maybe, but still I know he did love me. He would have done anything for me too, just like my dad did. ... I guess maybe, just knowing that he did love me, that he did care. Like, he named me. He named me. And so he did care about me in a normal way. I just don't know what motivates people to abuse children. It's one thing I will never understand. Whatever switch turned there... But I know he was a good person, he was always there for me." Blaire's feelings about her grandfather also fit within her narrative, which emphasized the importance of family and a belief in moving forward.

Tallulah's feelings about her aunt were the most black-and-white within the three research participants' narratives. She consistently described her aunt in negative terms, creating a characterization of someone whose reckless behavior was enabled from an early age and never resulted in consequences. "My aunt from a really young age had, well, everybody called it a jealousy issue," Tallulah reported during our first interview. "She had been raised with my mom for six years and then my mom left and had me shortly thereafter, right, and I was the brunt of all of this anger, displaced anger, that she had about the situation. Um, but I think it really escalated over time that, everybody saw what was happening, right? But nobody took the time to say, oh, this is really messed up." In contrast with the narratives of Riley and Blaire, Tallulah's narrative avoided empathy for her abuser or a sense that Tallulah developed a deeper understanding of her abuser's motivations.

Tallulah's current relationship with her aunt was limited to lingering anger, confusion, and a dedication to maintaining distance between them. Tallulah viewed her parents and her aunt as united in denying the truth of Tallulah's CSA experience. "I needed

to not spend Christmas with my abuser, I needed them to promise me that I don't have to go to my own wedding and face the person that molested me. I needed them to promise that years in advance of when I even find the person that I'm going to marry and they can't just say that's do-able. You're my kid. You're my blood. You're not some sibling that I wish I knew better, you're my kid and I raised you and I'm here for you. And just the fact that that's not theirs is really mindboggling. There's a lot of anger. It makes me confused, like, am I remembering it right?" Tallulah's feelings about her abuser – and her abuser's role in the narrative – were congruent with the narrator's purpose of living in the experience that was denied by her family and seeking external validation for her story.

Discourse of CSA

Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah directly referenced several social institutions or external forces that informed their assumptions, thoughts, and feelings about childhood sexual abuse. The cumulative influence of those institutions and forces shaped the discourse around CSA, the second theme addressed when interrogating the question of how research participants narrated their experiences. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah consistently referenced two social institutions throughout the course of their interviews: family and community. This section of the study will elaborate upon those two subthemes.

Family. Riley described “a lot of mixed messages” about sex that influenced her experience of CSA and the aftermath of abuse. “You've been told you're not supposed to talk about that stuff, but then your parents tell you, you can tell us anything if it ever happens, but you just told me I'm not supposed to talk about this stuff. It makes it very awkward.” Riley

worried that she would be perceived as a “bad” kid if she disclosed her abuse at the time it was happening, a common concern among children according to Draucker and Martsolf (2008). She was also aware that disclosure would cause problems in her family. Her perpetrator was enmeshed in the daily functioning of her family, including preparing meals, driving kids to school, and helping to pay bills. On multiple occasions during her interviews for this study, Riley observed that adults treated her as a mature, responsible child. Riley was reluctant to disappoint adults – including her parents – by bringing attention to a problem that was ultimately too complicated for a child to manage on her own. Riley “went with the fear” of what would happen if she disclosed the CSA because her choice seemed to be to endure those experiences or be responsible for disrupting the typical functioning of her family, and in doing so, potentially lose her status as a good, responsible child.

As a college student, Riley was still grappling with the familial consequences of childhood sexual abuse. She reflected that, when the facts of the abuse were revealed, “I honestly felt more bad for them than myself. They don’t have a lot of friends because with a lot of kids you lose friends, and he was kind of their only external friendship plus parental figure. They trusted him with everything and so when they found this out it was like... This was happening right in our own household. They’re still really hurt about it. My mom will mention it sometimes and still can’t even comprehend.” This emphasis on empathy for others as a function that runs parallel to her own social and emotional challenges was a thread throughout her narrative.

Elsewhere within her narrative, when Riley acknowledged feelings of vulnerability and brushed against criticism of family expectations, she did so in a way that advanced the conception of Riley as a survivor and reaffirmed her role as a responsible child. She remembered that “just the way my family was structured, and me being the oldest and my cousins living with me, I always had to be the stronger kid and I had to be the one taking care of everyone else. So it’s a weird mix where I’ve done that for so long that sometimes I just want someone to take care of me. And I don’t want to blame it on one or the other. I think it’s a deep mix of the family and the sexual abuse, of having to constantly be the one to take care of things and my parents telling me, (Riley), you have to keep your shit together because everyone else is falling apart. So now I’m on my own and when things get stressful I just want someone to take care of me. I just want to be here and for someone to bring me food and to love me.” Riley’s family did support her recovery from CSA. Her parents recognized the importance of mental health treatment and participated in a therapeutic program designed for survivors and their families.

Blaire received implicit messages from her mother and grandmother suggesting that CSA is not something that should be discussed. In addition to the silence that followed her initial disclosure, Blaire’s family never told her father. “We really talk about anything. I feel comfortable talking to them about anything... except this. And that’s just because I know my dad would be very upset, especially because it’s been more than 10 years that we’ve kept it from him, and that’s just because we don’t know what he would have done. He probably would have tried to hurt my grandfather and so it’s probably best that we went this way. But

I know that I'm not ever going to tell him. I don't think I'll ever tell him." In our second interview, Blaire expressed tentative interest in getting involved with programs or organizations that speak out against childhood sexual abuse, with a specific limitation. "I still have to be careful with it because I don't want my dad finding out in any way, but I definitely would be more comfortable talking to other people about it." Allegiance to her family and its values was a consistent theme throughout Blaire's narrative. Those concerns continued to influence Blaire's processing of her abuse experience.

The messages about CSA that Tallulah learned from her family were interwoven in her narrative and were discussed at length in the previous section of this study. According to her narrative, Tallulah's parents valued silence about CSA and were so committed to keeping problems within the family that they were willing to deny her experience. Her family's ideas about CSA, and how to respond to it, were linked with the next subtheme.

Community. Family ideas about and responses to CSA intersected with community discourse in the narratives collected for this study. In the context of this study, community existed in multiple forms. Community referred to membership in an institution such as a church or branch of the military; inclusion in a peer group such as the student body of a college campus; identification with a culture or race; or the traditional meaning of community associated with residence in a neighborhood or town.

Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah included at least two similar forms of community in each of their narratives. Blaire and Riley reported that residence in a small town influenced decisions about disclosing CSA and concerns about the consequences of their experiences

becoming public. As discussed previously in this study, the abuse Riley experienced became a matter of public discussion. Familiarity among neighbors in the small town intruded upon Riley's privacy and ability to control the narrative around her experiences. The message she received from neighbors – some of whom left unsolicited letters in the family mailbox referencing the abuse – was that CSA should be a source of pity, shame, and gossip. That experience informed her willingness to share her experiences with new friends and acquaintances at college.

Blaire clearly identified the intersectionality of discourse in her narrative. She recognized the overlapping influence of family, culture, race, and community in her decision to remain silent about CSA. “I think a lot of families, they prefer to keep that hidden. Also, since I am African-American, we do typically like to keep things hidden more because we want to appear a certain way. You still want to appear strong, so we're not just some broken family. I think that does have a part in it. ...I am from a very small town and if it had come out that it had happened and it was my grandfather everyone would know because everyone knows everyone or knows of everyone, and so I definitely think that was something my family wanted to avoid. We wanted to avoid that shame. And I would also say like I don't think my mom told her side of the family because her mom didn't initially like my dad and didn't want them to be together at all. So I think if they had known she would have tried to pull my mom and us away, and so I don't know how that would have turned out.” Blaire was influenced by an additional community as well – her church – where she found a model for sharing her experiences in a non-judgmental friendship.

Tallulah did not cite a specific small town as an influence on her experiences. As part of a military family, however, she was a member of a small, insular community with particular ideas about addressing private conflicts. “Its definitely a culture in which people sweep things under the rug very quickly and very efficiently. ... There has always been a stigma against getting mental support in my family and almost every family that I’ve seen in the military. For any sort of mental support, including any abuse, whether it’s childhood sexual abuse or abuse of a spouse or just in general, verbal abuse, because everyone is afraid that it’s going to show up on their security clearance, right? Everyone is afraid that they’re going to lose their jobs because they can’t handle being a person.” Tallulah participated in therapy for the first time at college. Her narrative of CSA and its impact on her life indicated a determined unwillingness to “sweep things under the rug” any longer.

Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all identified themselves as part of a campus community that made a range of assumptions about CSA. The campus community discourse about CSA and trauma in general influenced each of the students’ willingness to share and connect with their peers, a theme that will be addressed extensively as the next research question is interrogated.

Research Question 2: Relevance of CSA to Present Life

The second research question guiding this study asked, “Is childhood sexual abuse relevant to the college student development of survivors, according to the personal narratives of survivors?” Student narratives of childhood sexual abuse, analyzed in the findings associated with the first research question, clearly indicated that those experiences were

relevant to their lives. A priori coding of the narratives was in part based on the developmental constructs of the SVTF and, specifically, the fourth vector concerned with mature interpersonal relationships (MIR). In addition to the narrative interviews guided by the constructs associated with MIR, research participants completed form 4.99 of the SDTLA, which was developed to measure progress along the same constructs. Keeping in mind that a purpose underlying this research study was to provide survivors with the opportunity to share and interpret their own childhood sexual abuse experiences, the question of relevance to development was interrogated based on two principles. First, relevant issues associated with CSA were those that were cited directly by the research participants. Those issues were explicitly relevant to developmental issues associated with CSA. And second, issues found to be relevant in this section were limited to constructs outlined by the mature interpersonal relationships vector that served as a theoretical foundation of the research study design. Constructs associated with other vectors defined by the SVTF will be addressed in the next section of this study. That section, interrogated by the third research question, will consider emergent or implicit developmental constructs within the student narratives.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) conceptualized mature interpersonal relationships as interactions with peers that reflected tolerance, appreciation for others, a capacity for intimacy, and the ability to make meaningful commitments and resolve differences (p. 145). The MIR vector focused primarily on relationships with peers, friends, and intimate partners. Relationships with parents and other acquaintances from home are better discussed within the context of other vectors and will be addressed by the next research question. A single theme

associated with MIR dominated student first-person narratives. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah highlighted, and repeatedly returned to, contemporary issues of trust, linked directly to their experiences with CSA, that underscored development in the domains identified by Chickering and Reisser. Trust was the primary theme identified in association with the second research question. Two subthemes considered trust as a function of relationships with friends/peers and intimate partners.

Other elements of MIR – appreciation for others, tolerance, and resolution of differences – were broached within the narratives of the three research participants. Those elements did not play a central role in the narratives constructed by Riley, Blaire and Tallulah, but rather, allusions to them were coaxed through my initial and follow-up questions.

Trust

The literature on childhood sexual abuse described a range of relational damage, including difficulties with trust, a crucial element in forming friendships, intimate partnerships, and managing commitments (Bryant-Jefferies, 2003; Hunter, 2010). The array of relationships shared by the participants in this research study indicated that Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all experienced both stagnation and progress in their development of relationships. Their narratives were awash in relationships wherein the most prominently cited characteristic was the ability or inability to trust the other party or parties. Trust as it pertained to family relationships was not included as a subtheme in this section. Chickering and Reisser's conceptualization of MIR focused primarily on friend, peer, and intimate

partner relationships. Issues of trust in family of origin relationships were more pertinent to the third vector, *Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence*, which is discussed in accordance with the third research question and may receive more attention in future research focusing on that element of the theoretical framework.

Friends / Peers. During her first interview, Riley identified “a wall that sets me apart” from her peers. That figurative wall prevented Riley from bonding with other women who cited instances of sex- or gender-based mistreatment, at least in part because Riley did not trust that her peers would understand the depth of her childhood pain. Riley initially chose to form friendships with men because she viewed those interactions as more emotionally shallow – based on jokes, video games, and movies – than deep relationships with women. Approximately two months into her college career, Riley observed, “guys just tend to be less emotional, at least growing up, so I would hang out with them more. I was just a lot more comfortable. I’m still a lot more comfortable with guys than with females.” Riley decided to hide her trauma because she could not trust that new friends at college would treat her differently than she had been treated at home. “Because once you know something about someone, every time you look at them you’re going to see it. I’m just sick and tired of being that girl. It’s nice starting over. Nobody knows me. I used to have long blonde hair and I just changed that, so nobody here knows about my long blonde hair and it’s just kinda that. They just know me as the (Riley) that I am now, which is really refreshing and I’m just kinda, like, it’s very nice.”

Among the three participants in this study, Riley exhibited the most dramatic difference in MIR-related constructs between her two interviews, perhaps because she was a first-year student and had the most to learn. By the end of her first year in college, Riley used more discretion in choosing how and with whom she spent her time, a component of MIR identified by Chickering and Reisser (1993). Riley spent less time with groups of similar aged men who appreciated “rape jokes.” She found value in peers with similar academic and social justice interests, and older friends viewed as more likely to could tolerate her “little anxieties, social quirks.” At the time of her second interview, Riley was removed from insisting that she would not share her CSA experiences for fear of returning to “that girl” status. Her participation in social justice and enrichment activities connected Riley to other people who were willing to share personal hardships. A confluence of supportive experiences in college – therapy, new friends, and a new boyfriend – gave Riley the confidence to share, too, and her willingness to trust others expanded. “They were all very supportive, we had an open conversation about it, and a few of them came up and hugged me afterward and they were like, we’re here for you. One of the facilitators of my group ... came to me and was like, ‘I went through the same thing, I’ve just never gotten help for it.’ And I was like, ‘I’ve never liked talking about it.’ And because I was able to bring it up we were able to have that conversation. Like, I know that can happen, so I’m trying to bring it up more when necessary.”

Blaire referenced her “fear of rejection” multiple times during her two interviews. That fear influenced her capacity for intimacy in relationships with friends and potential

dating partners. “I think part of me feels like I’m keeping a part of myself from them, but also like not wanting to be judged or not wanting them to look at me a certain way keeps me from disclosing that about myself. Just because I don’t know how it would make me feel about the relationship. If I felt like they started treating me in a different way that might make me want to leave the relationship, or feel a different way, make me uncomfortable.” At the time of her interviews for this study, Blaire had never told a friend about her childhood sexual abuse. She maintained distance from someone that she previously considered a “best friend” because that person insisted on asking questions about Blaire’s personal life. Blaire’s dedication to protecting herself suggested that she did not trust her own emotional response to vulnerability or that others would take care of her.

Tallulah, the closest to the end of her college career among participants in this study, expressed less concern about issues of trust with friends and peers. She maintained a close circle of friends, many of whom she had known since attending a magnet high school in a nearby city. Tallulah described keeping up with friends who lived far away and being vigilant about resolving small disagreements that arose. Relational difficulties associated with CSA were much more likely to involve family and intimate partners. Tallulah did not share Riley or Blaire’s worry about being exposed as “that girl” or treated differently because of her CSA experiences. “There are friends that have heard a longer story,” she said in reference to CSA. “There are friends that have heard a shorter story.” During our first interview, it was apparent that Tallulah had thought about how she would respond to scenarios in which CSA came up. Her response would depend upon whether or not there was

a trusting relationship. “It’s like, how do you respond to those moments? Are you true to yourself? It just really depends. To quote one of those closer circles it’s like, yeah, it happened and I’m not really going to go into the details right now, but it doesn’t make me a different person, it just means you know different facts about me. But if it’s someone I don’t know it’s just like, what? What are you talking about? Because if you don’t know me already and that becomes your primary fact that you learn and that’s what you associate with me, that’s not who I am, it doesn’t define me, then that’s like way down there. Like if you write about me I hope that’s way down on the list.”

Intimate partners. Riley reported using her high school boyfriend “as my go-to emotional support and because I didn’t have other friends he was the holder of all of my baggage.” Looking back on that relationship at the time of our first interview, Riley did not believe she was able to trust an intimate partner enough to have a healthy, mutually beneficial relationship. That changed with her current boyfriend, who she described as “completely different.” He is older, more mature, and had earned a psychology degree, which helped Riley to believe that he could have a basic understanding of past trauma and present insecurities.

“I didn’t realize that (trust) was as big of a deal as it is. Just opening up and being comfortable being myself around people. Also, because of the abuse I have little anxieties, social quirks. I cope with things differently in social interactions. So I do little weird things. I’m not comfortable with silence, so sometimes I don’t talk at all or I talk too much. ... I remember when we first started going out, he’s very extraverted, so he wants to go out with

his roommates and go to parties, which is cool, but I wasn't at a level... I didn't trust him enough to do that yet because what if he just left me? What if, because I'm more introverted than him and we went out in public, could I trust him enough to notice those things? And like, not take care of me, but understand that I do have special needs? So just that level of trusting him to understand. ... I don't know. It's really hard to put into words. Trusting him to not leave, too, was really scary because what if I tell him too much and he gets scared and leaves, because this is some serious shit. It's not like, oh my dog died when I was six. It's pretty scary stuff and sometimes I can be a bit to handle because of the things I do." Riley's second interview for this study coincided with the two-month anniversary of the official transition from friendship to a dating relationship with her boyfriend. She had shared her CSA experiences with her boyfriend and he had been supportive – regularly driving Riley to her counseling appointments. Her words suggested, however, that concerns about trust were not completely resolved.

Blaire explained that she decided to seek counseling after recognizing that she didn't know how to "handle" intense emotions in her first serious relationship. At the time of her first interview for this study, Blair explained that conflict as a result of differences in communication styles exacerbated her inability to trust her boyfriend. Her response to those feeling was so distressing that Blaire suspected she may have bipolar disorder. "Like I mentioned earlier, how I ended up telling my boyfriend about this, it was because we were talking about how I was having trouble opening up to him, and I know that does stem directly from this, and that's just because I have a hard time trusting people. I was vulnerable then

with someone that I should have been able to trust and that happened, so what happens now if I'm vulnerable with someone that I can't trust? That definitely does play in my mind. I don't want to be made a victim again. I don't want to be done wrong by anyone and so that's why I don't open up to people, to give them a chance. That's why it takes a lot for me to trust people. In past relationships, I didn't even hold hands. I didn't like affection, I didn't like to be hugged, didn't like to kiss or anything. I'm not like that now, but people leading up to my boyfriend I was like, 'Don't hold my hand. We can walk with space between us.' I definitely think that's part of it, just with the whole, how to trust someone with myself."

During her first interview, Tallulah acknowledged difficulty integrating the emotional and physical aspects of relationships. "I've always connected with people emotionally, right? I'm not guarded. If you're going to be here for a little bit that's okay. If you're in it for a long time that's fine... As long as people are in it for the right reasons, to be loved and accept love and give love, there's always room for one more. So I've never had a problem with the emotional part. I think the bigger problem comes in with the sexual component." Tallulah specifically ruled out talking, cuddling, or other forms of emotional intimacy in connection with sex. Tallulah did not use the word "trust" in defining the issue, but her words suggested that she separated forms of intimacy and the people that fulfilled those purposes.

At the time of her second interview, Tallulah and her long-time boyfriend had recently ceased to be intimate partners, but remained roommates and confidants. She called her ex-boyfriend "the most stable thing in my life that I've ever had." Tallulah was simultaneously involved in a sexual relationship with another man. She was unwilling or

unable to open up to him emotionally. “Like I say, these two things are on very different planes. We still talk and we still have very deep conversations, but when seeds of anxiety come up, I just push him out, like I just want to have fun in this relationship right now. I want it to be a lively, fun, adventurous relationship. I still have problems dealing with the emotional component.” Tallulah observed that CSA likely influenced the way she compartmentalized the physical and emotional aspects of her relationships. She gave the impression that she was still trying to figure out the best style of interaction for her.

Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah reported unique experiences with mature interpersonal relationships. A common thread throughout their interviews, and the narratives they constructed, was that each student tended to conceptualize peer relationships more specifically as romantic or intimate partner relationships. All three women talked at length about the impact of CSA on dating and intimate partner relationships, whereas details about interactions with friends and peers were shared in response to persistent follow-up questions. Only Tallulah identified a stable, established group of friends. The narratives of Riley and Blaire indicated that both women had not addressed or resolved that part of their social development, or that securing and maintaining an intimate partner relationship was a priority at the time of their interviews. Each narrative communicated some degree of isolation among their peers that resulted from multiple factors: the psychological “wall” described by Riley, an inability or unwillingness to trust others, or the prioritizing of just one or two intimate relationships above all others.

Table 1.
Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment Results

Student	PR Subtask		TOL Subtask		SL Scale		MIR Task	
	Mean	Z	Mean	Z	Mean	Z	Mean	Z
Riley	4.4	62.04	4.42	64.28	3.47	54.38	4.42	65.71
Blaire	4.1	55.92	4.5	63.19	3.94	63.27	4.33	63.25
Tallulah	3.0	32.88	4.64	65.27	2.35	33.89	3.96	53.55

Note: PR = Peer Relationships. TOL = Tolerance. SL = Salubrious Lifestyle. MIR = Mature Interpersonal Relationships. Z = Z-score.

Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment

Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah each completed the SDTLA within 24 hours of receiving a link to the survey. The results of the survey will be discussed in four parts: (a) the Peer Relationships Subtask, (b) the Tolerance Subtask, (c) the Salubrious Lifestyle Scale, and the Mature Interpersonal Relationships Task as a whole.

Peer relationships subtask. The mean score for Riley’s responses to the 10 items included in this subtask was 4.4 out of 5. Her Z-score of 62.04 indicated that Riley performed “somewhat higher than the normative sample” of women who were first-year college students, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Responses to individual items were consistent with high achievement in this task, with the exception of one item wherein Riley indicated that she usually has a hard time communicating the need to be alone without hurting the feelings of people around her. Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999) reported that high achievement in this subtask was associated with peer relationships “shifting toward

greater trust, independence, frankness, and individuality”; open, honest communication and the ability to resolve or accept disagreements; “appreciation for individual differences”; and the ability to distinguish between and maintain both friendships and acquaintances (p. 13).

The mean score of Blaire’s responses to the 10 items included in this subtask was 4.1 out of 5. Her Z-score of 55.92 indicated that Blaire’s achievement in this subtask was “about the same as the normative sample” of sophomore college women, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Blaire’s responses to questions in this subtask suggested that potential areas for continued developmental focus included self-esteem and communicating emotional needs. Blaire reported that she usually has a difficult time communicating her desire to be alone to others in a way that doesn’t hurt their feelings. She also reported that she sometimes wonders what friends say behind her back. Other responses to questions in this subtask were consistent with peer relationships that were “shifting toward greater trust, independence, frankness, and individuality” as defined previously in this section of the study (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p. 13).

The mean score for Tallulah’s responses to the 10 items included in this subtask was 3.0 out of 5. Her Z-score of 32.88 indicated that Tallulah’s achievement in this subtask was “substantially lower than the normative sample,” according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Tallulah’s responses to questions in this subtask indicated that she was concerned with whether or not people like her, she sometimes wondered what friends say about her behind

her back, and she always found it difficult to accept the ways close friends have changed over the past year. Compared with other college senior women who completed Form 4.99 of the SDTLA, Tallulah's responses indicated high achievement in confronting or attempting to resolve disagreements with friends.

Tolerance subtask. The mean score for Riley's responses to the 14 items included in this subtask was 4.42 out of five. Her Z-score of 64.28 indicated that Riley performed "somewhat higher than the normative sample" of women who were first-year college students, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999) reported that high achievement in this subtask reflected "respect for and acceptance of different backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, races, lifestyles, and appearances" (p. 13).

Riley's responses to individual items were consistent with high achievement in this task, with two exceptions. Riley responded that she always felt uncomfortable around persons whose sexual orientation was different from her own. She also indicated that she seldom expressed disapproval when hearing others use racial or ethnic slurs or put-downs. During the follow-up interview, after Riley had completed the survey and the principal investigator calculated the results, Riley indicated that her recorded response to the item about sexual orientation was a mistake of answer selection on her part. Her response to the item about speaking out against racial slurs reflected the difficulty of responding to uncomfortable social situations that is common for many people, and especially first-year college students who are typically still exploring personal values and integrity.

The mean score for Blaire's responses to the 14 items in this subtask was 4.5 out of 5. Her Z-score of 63.19 indicated that Blaire performed "somewhat higher than the normative sample" of women who were sophomores in college, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Among Blaire's responses, there was one exception to consistent high achievement in this subtask. Blaire reported that she has seldom "gone out of my way to meet students who are culturally or racially different from me because I thought there were things I could learn from them" (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999).

The mean score for Tallulah's responses to the 14 items included in this subtask was 4.64 out of 5. Her Z-score of 65.27 indicated that Tallulah's achievement in this subtask was "somewhat higher than the normative sample" of college senior women who complete the SDTLA, according to Winston, Miller and Cooper (1999, p. 21). Tallulah's responses to questions in this subtask uniformly reflected "respect for and acceptance of different backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, races, lifestyles, and appearances" (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p. 13).

Salubrious lifestyle scale. The mean score for Riley's responses to the 17 items included in this scale was 3.47 out of five. Her Z-score of 54.38 suggested that Riley performed "about the same as the normative sample" of women who were first-year college students, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). The mean and Z-scores of Riley's responses to the salubrious lifestyle scale were the lowest among her results for all parts of

SDTLA Form 4.99. Riley's answers to individual items suggested ambivalence, misunderstanding, or some other limitation in her approach to personal wellness.

Winston, Miller, and Cooper (1999) reported that the salubrious lifestyle scale measures "good health and wellness practices," which included alcohol and other drug use, nutrition, exercise, stress management, and avoidance of dangerous activities. Riley's Z-score suggested that she is in the normal range among peers, however responses to individual items revealed some conflicts. Riley reported that she does not always practice safe sex, a response consistent with another item wherein she acknowledged personal habits that could be dangerous. She reported maintaining good nutrition, sleep habits, and a healthy weight, but denied making time for exercise or planning well-balanced meals. Riley's self-report of behaviors on the SDTLA suggested at least some conflict with the array of self-care behaviors reported in interviews.

The mean score for Blaire's responses to the 17 items in this scale was 3.94 out of five. Her Z-score of 63.27 indicated that Blaire performed "somewhat higher than the normative sample" of women who were sophomores in college, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Blaire's lowest scores in this scale were related to diet – seldom paying attention to the nutritional value or fat content of foods that she eats – and dissatisfaction with her physical appearance. Otherwise, Blaire's responses supported her self-reported interview account of herself as a cautious person who was making an effort to be more mindful of self-care.

The mean score for Tallulah's responses to the 17 items included in this scale was 2.35 out of 5. Her Z-score of 33.89 indicated that Tallulah's achievement in this subtask was "substantially lower than the normative sample," according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Tallulah reported that she only attended parties where plenty of alcoholic beverages were available, she most often responded to stress by having a few drinks to relax, did not always practice safe sex, and never limited the amount of fat in her diet. At the time that that she completed the SDTLA, however, Tallulah reported that she had "seldom" engaged in activities that were dangerous to her health, and she was "usually" satisfied with her physical appearance. Tallulah's responses to the salubrious lifestyle scale were consistent with her answers to questions in two interviews, wherein she acknowledged regularly drinking alcohol with friends and seeking excitement in her sex life, but had also recently settled into a committed, monogamous relationship.

Mature interpersonal relationships task. The overall mean score for Riley's responses to 41 items that make up this task was 4.42 out of five. The Z-score of 65.71 suggested that Riley performed "somewhat higher than the normative sample" of women who were first-year college students, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21). Those results supported Riley's subjective narrative account – reported in two face-to-face interviews – of a high-achieving first-year college student who has so far committed to finding meaning in her personal experiences by seeking a greater degree of openness and honesty in

relationships with peers, and learning more about those around her who had different experiences.

The mean score of Blaire's responses to the 41 items included in this task was 4.33 out of 5. Her Z-score of 63.25 indicated that Blaire performed "somewhat higher than the normative sample" of women who were sophomores in college, according to the interpretive framework recommended by the developers of the instrument (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p.21).

The overall mean score for Tallulah's responses to 41 items included in this task was 3.96 out of 5. The Z-score of 53.55 indicated that Tallulah achieved "about the same as the normative sample" of women who completed the SDTLA during their senior year in college (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p. 21). These results suggested a complex relationship within and between the qualitative and quantitative elements of this study. In interviews, Tallulah described herself as a devoted friend who is vigilant in her efforts to maintain longstanding relationships. She acknowledged that her romantic relationships have been unhealthy or risky at times, a trend that her therapist has challenged. Those complexities in her peer relationships explained her lower than normative achievement in the corresponding subtask. Tallulah was aware that her wellness behaviors need improvement. Her results on the salubrious lifestyle scale suggested that she was candid about that part of her life. The results of Tallulah's SDTLA, consistent with the contents of her interviews, described a woman who felt like she has developed in some ways through her college experience, and still had several areas where improvement was clearly possible.

Research Question 3: CSA and Other Vectors

The third research question guiding this study addressed the query, “According to the personal narratives of college student survivors, how does childhood sexual abuse impact development, as defined by the seven vectors framework of college student development?” Previous research questions were used to explore how college students narrated their CSA experiences and how those experiences were relevant to constructs associated with mature interpersonal relationships, the fourth vector defined by Chickering and Reisser (1993) and a theoretical foundation of this study. I previously explained that the SVTF conceptualized college student development as a process that occurs within and among multiple vectors simultaneously, so while the interviews conducted for this study were rooted in the fourth vector, extensive responses from the participants invoked constructs associated with the other six vectors as well. This section of the study will identify themes in the narratives of CSA that were consistent with constructs in vectors beyond MIR.

Emergent Vectors

All three narratives constructed during the course of this study touched upon additional vectors. None of the narratives clearly invoked constructs associated with all seven vectors. For instance, Riley’s narrative articulated progress toward interpersonal competence, a component of the first vector. Interpersonal competence, one of three pillars of a more general perspective on competence, was defined as “an array of discrete skills, like listening, asking questions, self-disclosing, giving feedback, and participating in dialogues that bring insight and enjoyment” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 72). Riley’s narrative touched on this

vector when she described participation in academic programming that encouraged dialogue, self-disclosure, and consideration of previously unexplored social justice issues. Her CSA experiences were a catalyst for creating new understanding of individuals and the world around her. Riley's preliminary thoughts about leveraging her CSA experiences for an altruistic purpose – more committed than those offered by Blaire, but not yet fully-formed – were consistent with the development of purpose conceptualized by the sixth vector.

Tallulah's narrative clearly invoked progress toward physical competence, the development of skills associated with lifelong wellness conceptualized elsewhere within the first vector. She connected a long history of being overweight and “not feeling normal in comparison to my peers” with damaged self-esteem that resulted, at least in part, from CSA. “I'm 100% sure that's probably effected by a slew of things that happened in my childhood. It's something that I'm working on actively now, though. So in the last year I've been seeing (a counselor), and that was really good, and I'm seeing a nutritionist, and that's even better, and I'm working out most days of the week, and that's even better, right? So the more time I started investing in myself, the less broken I felt. I was just like, ‘Aw shit, I've got it going on.’” Riley's regimen of yoga and exercise as strategies for managing the anxiety and emotional instability that she connected to CSA also touched upon concepts discussed by the first vector. Blaire did not offer compelling evidence that the first vector was relevant to constructing or interpreting her narrative.

The aforementioned issues associated with the first and sixth vectors were, however, largely peripheral to the dominant developmental themes that appeared throughout the

student narratives. Three additional vectors, beyond MIR, played a significant role in the CSA narratives of Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah. Those vectors – which addressed management of emotions, movement through autonomy toward interdependence, and development of identity – will be discussed as the subthemes associated with research question three.

Managing emotions. Riley was introduced to counseling before she disclosed her childhood sexual experiences. She and other members of her family participated in therapy around the time that Riley’s parents took guardianship of several younger cousins. Riley believed she already had some basic coping skills by the time she entered the experimental therapy program for survivors of CSA and their families in high school. Her account of coping skills was somewhat contradictory, however, as Riley also acknowledged using alcohol, non-suicidal self-injury, and lying to cope with trauma up until the time that her abuse was disclosed. At the time of her first interview for this study, Riley was meeting with a therapist at her college. She described this relationship as necessary maintenance to keep her emotionally stable. Riley was determined to keep her CSA experiences as a secret from her peers.

Riley’s understanding of her emotions and the purpose of counseling had evolved by the time of her second interview. “I’ve been to a lot of therapists and he has done so much more for me than any of my other therapists. ... All of my other therapists would just listen, like oh, it’s cool, and I would rant for an hour and then leave. And with him he does exercises with me and is like, ‘Why do you think that? Let’s dig deeper into this.’ And I’m like, holy... So that helps me a lot. It’s definitely been a lot and I’m more accepting of my

emotional side, which is healthy. ... Yeah, I thought I was good. I've been to so many therapists and literally like the first two sessions, so much came up. And I was so nervous because I had never had a male therapist before and I got in and I was just like let's try this out. He's been by far the most helpful and he's forced me to dig into things and realize things. I've cried in sessions with him, which is something I've never done before." Riley cited the interaction of a confluence of factors – her recent work in counseling, freedom from the limitations of home, academic and social justice opportunities, new friends and acquaintances, and her boyfriend – as contributors to a sophisticated emotional outlook that seemed more open and honest than what existed before college.

Blaire offered a similar endorsement of emotional management facilitated by counseling. In contrast to Riley's experience, Blaire had never participated in counseling before leaving home for college. She received messages at home that problems, and CSA specifically, were not discussed. "You know, in the black community it's a stigma to seek help for mental illness. I definitely see it as something people would say you should be able to fix yourself. Get over it, pretty much. And that's definitely... I've seen episodes of television shows where people are just told to get over it. It's definitely very hard for people to accept someone getting extra help." Aforementioned challenges in her first committed romantic relationship moved Blaire to reconsider her notions about therapy. The accessibility of a counseling center on campus where she could go without judgment from anyone at home helped Blaire come to the conclusion that therapy was worth a try. "I discovered or came to the conclusion that I'm the type of person that, if I'm sad, then I'm just going to mask it with

the opposite of that. So if I'm sad, I'm going to just like shut off or appear to be angry, and so I did in myself polarize it in a way. And I didn't know how to deal with that at all. I didn't know how to be vulnerable when I was so used to having to protect myself. It was just a lot for me, at the time." At the time of her second interview, Blaire described feeling comfortable in a relationship for the first time in her life. She had shared her CSA experiences with her boyfriend and encouraged his sister to seek counseling for her own sexual trauma.

An unwelcome intervention from her mother forced Tallulah to confront her CSA while also trying to manage college responsibilities. Tallulah reported that she "got really, really depressed. It was to the point that I can't go to class, I can't function, and so I'm going to talk to someone." Tallulah was thinking about suicide the first time she told her counselor about the childhood sexual abuse, her family's denial of her experiences, and their refusal to accommodate her desire to withdraw from school for a semester to focus on mental health. "The first time I told (my counselor) it just came out and I tried to brush it aside and she was like, no, we need to talk about that. I believe you. Whatever you say next, I believe you. And it was like, I was sitting in this office with this person that I had met three times, and they had done more for me in 20 minutes than my mom had in 20 years, and it was like, what the fuck is wrong? I thought about suicide a lot that semester. It was the worst... I got like 2 or 3 D's overall, it took a lot to pull my GPA back up over a 3.0."

Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah each referenced skills and strategies useful to managing emotions that developed during the course of college. Some of those skills and strategies

were developed in cooperation with counseling or other supportive resources: journaling, yoga, exercise, mindfulness and meditation. Those coping strategies encouraged autonomy and could be deployed by the students' any time they were needed. Other skills – talking, trusting, and connecting with a sense of purpose and community – could be supported in counseling or exercised in a multitude of other social and academic domains throughout college life.

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence. In her account of finding validation in counseling, Tallulah also described learning the importance of setting boundaries. Tallulah said her counselor “was like, you know, you can say no. Look at your plate right now, there’s too much shit on it, just stop. And I was like, okay. She was like, seriously, no is a full sentence, and after three or four years I was just like, you’re right. I think it was just that constant reassurance that you don’t have to please everyone, and that really helped because I lived in a family where you couldn’t say no, you couldn’t disobey, everyone was on a schedule, you couldn’t disobey your parents. So being in a place where I could say no was crazy.”

Chickering and Reisser (1993) defined emotional independence as “freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance, affection, or approval from others,” (p. 117). This was one of three pillars of the third vector, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, and Tallulah’s account of learning to say “no” was an exemplar. Vector three was especially complicated for Tallulah because her relationship with her family was intrinsic to the difficulties her CSA narrative imposed on her college career. In comparison

with MIR, which focused primarily on relationships at college with friends, peers, and intimate partners, the third vector was also connected with the expectations that followed from home. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence was about establishing individuality, distinguishing oneself from external influences, and recognizing when compromise was possible (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Tallulah made progress toward some of these goals by learning to set boundaries and find support where it was available, outside of her family. Tallulah observed that the rift with her parents over CSA meant her “immediate family hasn’t been as much of a pillar for developing those values. I think a lot of students might call back home and really cherish their parents’ opinions while they’re going through these metamorphoses, right? That wasn’t like that for me. I still do at times crave my parents’ approval or opinion. I don’t hold it in the highest regard. I don’t need to. I think that’s the best way to put it, in that it minimized my current family’s impact on my development.”

The connection between the narratives of Riley and Blaire and the third vector were less pronounced, but still present. Riley’s desire to move beyond what life had been at home was a central theme of her narrative, even as she became more comfortable with sharing her CSA experiences and finding purpose in them. Riley expressed awareness of the pressure she faced to be a responsible, stabilizing force in her family and on multiple occasions during her second interview she described trying to welcome new opportunities to let go. Riley’s participation in a counseling relationship that contributed to emotional awareness and her general embrace of promising opportunities away from her hometown was interpreted as an

attempt – conscious or not -- at renegotiating the values and expectations that shaped her. In contrast, Blaire was reluctant to differentiate her values or expectations from those of her family, community, or culture. Her desire to succeed at college, project strength and self-sufficiency, and commit to a traditional romantic relationship seemed to align with the expectations of her parents and those that Blaire identified as important to an African-American woman.

Tallulah found her home and values wherever she lived at the time. Riley was in the process of establishing herself independently from the values and opportunities of home. Blaire signaled that she wanted to carry the values of home with her at all times. Her decision to talk about her CSA experiences in counseling was an exception to her general compliance with family and community standards. Her narrative was in conflict with those of Tallulah and Riley with respect to the third vector, but it's worth noting that Taub (1997) found differences among white and African-American women in the timing of differentiation from their parents. Taub (1997) also found that development in the third vector occurred later for women in general, which might explain Blaire's trajectory. All three women did show evidence of progress toward a third component of the third vector. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all engaged with challenges and looked for ways to solve problems, a pillar of the vector that Chickering and Reisser (1993) dubbed instrumental independence.

Establishing identity. The fifth vector, establishing identity, was conceptualized as “a solid sense of self” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 181) that resulted from the accumulation of development in the previous four vectors. Components of that sense of self

included awareness of life roles, sexual and physical identity, and a place in the lives of others. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all referred to development within this vector, especially progress or attempts at progress in the areas of sexual identity, gender identity, or preferences and roles in intimate partnerships. The participants' own words invoked the importance of their CSA experiences, feelings of competence, increasing command of emotional responses, and trust of others and their own impulses.

During her first interview, Riley observed that as a child she was ambivalent about traditional gender roles. She did not like clothes made for girls, preferred activities usually associated with boys, and resisted traditional expectations for either gender. A previous counselor suggested to Riley that her rejection of gender preferences that were socially constructed as "female" may have been related to the vulnerability Riley experienced when she was being sexually abused. Riley was still considering that possibility at the time of her first interview for this study, but regardless, she described feeling more free to be herself in the college environment than at home. "Now I'm like I can be female and wear my jeans, t-shirts and lipstick and now I'm at the point where I can do whatever I want, but when you're a kid things are definitely categorized and you have to be one or the other. I'm just going to cut my hair and I kinda just do what I want now." By the time of her second interview, Riley was more focused on having a better sense of self in the new romantic relationship detailed at length in this study. She referred often to her "boyfriend" and expressed excitement at being the girlfriend in an emotionally generous, supportive relationship. She acknowledged that

CSA was “part of my life.” Confronting the impact of abuse experiences was a necessary part of finding comfortable sense of self in the relationship.

Blaire communicated a strong sense of self in most areas that was rooted in values instilled at home and within a broader cultural context. Romantic relationships were the most prominent developmental concern identified by her narrative. Blaire described resisting romantic interest from men in the past and avoiding attempts at physical intimacy. She connected her discomfort with the damage to trust associated with CSA. Blaire identified developing self-awareness about how she acts and what she needs in her current relationship, which has coincided with participation in counseling. “He is caring, in his own way. Like we have different love languages, which causes me problems sometimes. Mine is definitely words and his is more so quality time and just being around the person. And so, I need reassurance, I need words, and he’ll just be like, I think all this stuff, but if you know how I feel... I do know that he does care about me, so it is a caring relationship. He’s gotten way better at comforting me because before, when I would get upset, it would just be like the end of the world. He doesn’t know how to handle crying, and I would cry really easily. Now I’ve gotten to the point when I can tell him this is why I’m upset it’s not necessarily about you, it’s more like an internal thing, and so when that happens, especially if its something I’m insecure about, he’ll say, you know, I only want you, I want to be with you, and all this stuff, and I know he means it.”

Tallulah speculated that CSA had an effect on her ability to trust intimate partners. She touched on this point multiple times throughout her interviews, observing difficulty

integrating emotional and physical intimacy in a single relationship. Tallulah identified as bisexual. Her most recent long-term relationship was open to sex with other partners. At the time of her second interview, Tallulah continued to have an emotionally trusting, cohabiting relationships with her long-time boyfriend, with whom she had recently separated, and a predominantly sexual relationship with another man. Tallulah acknowledged that she was still trying to figure out most appropriate style of intimate relationship for her needs. “So now that we’ve officially broken up, when we do hang out it’s quality time and we have the time for other things and so its this odd period where we’ve both had conversations explicitly over the past two months about what are our goals if we do want to get back together. What does that look like as people? Because we cannot go back to what we had before because that was not healthy. So if we re-enter a relationship what does that look like? It looks like a closed relationship, I’ll tell you that much. It looks like a closed, healthier relationship, but with the same level of communication.”

Summary

Chapter five elaborated on the findings of this research study, identifying themes and subthemes in student narratives of childhood sexual abuse in accordance with the three research questions. Four themes and a total of 10 subthemes were identified. The themes identified how research participants narrated their stories of childhood sexual abuse and the social institutions that influenced those narratives; elaborated on trust as a primary student development concern; and highlighted emergent developmental constructs beyond mature interpersonal relationships, the vector that helped orient the conceptualization of this study.

The next chapter will discuss the implications of these findings with respect to the applicability of the SVTF, clinical work with CSA survivors, the literature on CSA and college student development, and future research.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research study was to determine how college students narrated their childhood sexual abuse experiences and how (or if) those experiences were relevant to their present lives on a college campus. Chickering and Reisser's seven vectors theoretical framework (SVTF) of college student development guided this research. A secondary purpose of the study was to evaluate the applicability of the SVTF to use with college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Three undergraduate women between the ages of 18- and 25-years old from a single urban state university participated in this study. Each woman participated in two interviews and completed a formal instrument, the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment, that measured constructs associated with the SVTF. The data were used to construct case studies of the participants' past CSA experiences and present life in college. A priori coding was based on the SVTF. I also was sensitive to themes that emerged from meticulous coding and analysis of the data. Four themes and 10 subthemes were identified. This chapter will further discuss the findings of the study; identify implications and limitations; and suggest future directions for research.

Summary of the Findings by Research Question

Research Question 1

Analysis of the three student narratives was conducted according to Riessman's approach to narrative analysis. Riessman (2008) emphasized that narratives are performed by narrators in a specific context, are influenced by discourse, and that narratives do not exist in a vacuum, but must be interpreted. Each narrative was analyzed individually and across all

cases, resulting in two themes and five subthemes. The two themes were “Acting the Abuse Narrative” and “Discourse.” Participants in this study constructed, or acted, as defined by Riessman, their abuse narratives. The students moderated their expression of emotional connection to their stories in accordance with their feelings of connection to the past experiences of CSA and present life experiences. For example, the pain Tallulah felt at having her story denied by her family was still present. Her emotional arousal was apparent as she seemed to still be seeking validation. Riley, in contrast, had worked in therapy for years to address her CSA experiences. Her focus was on creating distance from her abuse and the person that she was at home. The emotional tenor of Riley’s narrative, in comparison to Tallulah, was muted.

Each student went beyond a simple reporting of their experiences, however, in that all participants included complex thoughts and feelings about the abuse perpetrator. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah were all sexually abused by a family member, or de-factor family member. Draucker and Martsof (2008) suggested that abuse perpetrated by a family member or other caretaker can exacerbate the complexity of negative implications associated with CSA and this study supported that conclusion.

Students included some details, and excluded others, to meet the purpose of the narrative, and shared an interpretation of their life congruent with how each wanted to be perceived. For instance, Tallulah shared graphic details of her CSA experiences and layers of anecdotes supporting her strong feelings of physical discomfort, betrayal, and an ongoing need to be believed and accepted. She was at the center of her narrative. Her story de-

emphasized evidence of abuse, negligence, and mental illness in her family that may have constructed a story that was more systemic in nature. Riessman (2008) recognized that individuals construct their narratives with an audience in mind. The initial purpose of this study was to consider how students constructed their narratives for multiple audiences that exist on a college campus: friends, peers, roommates, intimate partners, etc. During the course of this research, however, I determined that the only audience I could successfully consider was me. Each student performed their narrative one-on-one in a secure location in response to my questions. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah were all aware that the purpose of this narrative was research for a doctoral dissertation and that I was a counselor. All participants were currently working in therapy and thus they brought assumptions about the role of a counselor and their relationship with me. I acknowledged the limitation of interpreting the data from the perspective of my role exclusively rather than attempting to interpret the narrative purposes and decisions of these students outside the counseling office where this research was constructed.

The narratives of Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah interacted with discourse about CSA. Each student directly cited the influence of family and community in their interpretation of and responses to CSA. For example, Blaire's story observed that her family discouraged talking about CSA, chose to value family above that indiscretion by welcoming her grandfather, the perpetrator, back into the family after his release from jail, and resisted additional help such as counseling. Blaire received additional messages about CSA from her communities – both the small town where she lived and the larger African-American culture.

She believed it was necessary to be strong and deal with problems on her own. Moving away to college gave Blaire an opportunity to re-examine how she responded to the problem of childhood sexual abuse. For Blaire, healing was an incremental process. She chose to get help from a counselor, but her commitment to the values of her family were essentially unwavering. She avoided criticizing how her family responded to the problem of CSA.

Research Question 2

Participants in this study unequivocally cited CSA as a factor relevant to the constructs outlined by mature interpersonal relationships, as defined by the SVTF. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah were, in various ways, still attempting to make sense of their CSA experiences and the effect they had on college student life. Draucker and Martsolf (2008), among other researchers, reported that attempts to make meaning of CSA often continued throughout life, and that interpretation and understanding of CSA could change in relation to various contexts. Draucker and Martsolf (2008) concluded that narrating, or “storying,” the abuse fostered development of a deeper, more complete understanding of CSA experiences. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah did not need further consideration to be certain that CSA had a direct effect on their ability to trust other people. Each student cited trust as a factor in their inability or unwillingness to create close, reciprocal connections with friends, roommates and peers. The students expressed doubt that their college peers would understand their CSA experiences, withhold judgment, or avoid treating them like “that girl” who stood out because of a negative experience beyond the participant’s control. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah universally did not trust that others would or could resist defining them by CSA. Riley

described feeling like “a wall” separated her from her college peers. That wall effectively delayed or stalled progress toward the mature interpersonal relationships defined in the SVTF.

Trust was furthermore a factor in developing the satisfactory intimate partner relationships that were a component of MIR. All three participants described varying complications in their attempts at dating and relationships. For example, Blaire was burdened by an unwillingness to be vulnerable with men. She referenced the CSA perpetrated by her grandfather as evidence that she could be hurt deeply by someone she trusted, someone who was supposed to take care of her. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah provided evidence of incremental progress in resolving problems of trust in this domain, however, it was clear that CSA was a significant factor in development.

Research Question 3

Students repeatedly referenced three constructs that were differentiated from MIR. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all sought support for emotional distress from a counselor and provided evidence of progress toward the developmental task of managing emotions. Tallulah and Riley were aware their counseling needs were related to CSA. Blaire reported that her introduction to counseling was more explicitly related to stress in her intimate partner relationship, which she was eventually able to connect to CSA. Each student went beyond initial attempts at addressing urgent distress and stabilizing emotions to incorporating new strategies for distress tolerance, emotional management, and overall wellness into their daily routines.

Students connected their CSA experiences to the fifth vector, establishing identity, which represented an accumulation of development in previous vectors. For example, Riley cited the continuing progression of development related to gender identity and how she sees herself in a romantic relationship. Concepts associated with third vector -- individuation from parents and the values of home, and developing the ability to emphasize one's own needs -- were also addressed by the student narratives. A broad range of experiences was represented in relation to this vector. Blair's narrative suggested her relationship with her parents supported her development, in contrast to Chickering and Riesser's (1993) conceptualization of the SVTF, which viewed individuation from home as a task of development. Tallulah's negative feelings toward her parents meant she would have to move forward on her own -- an extreme and unwelcome example of individuation. Riley occupied the middle of the developmental spectrum. She was reluctant to criticize her parents approach to CSA, but was beginning to recognize that healing and development required an increased emphasis on her own needs. Findings associated with the third vector supported criticisms in the literature that the timing of development can occur with great variance depending upon the individual, and that that cultural background is a factor in the timing of development.

Discussion of the Findings

College Students

Previous research in the literature examined the impact of childhood sexual abuse on survivors or college student development. The literature did not provide research on college students who experienced childhood sexual abuse from a perspective that also considered the

unique developmental issues of people in a higher education environment. A primary assumption of this study was that college students occupy a unique developmental space between adolescence and young adulthood, and therefore should be treated differently for research, treatment, and programming purposes than children and younger adolescents, and older adults. Only college students who experienced childhood sexual abuse participated in this study, a fact that established some natural limitations on the scope of conclusions that can be drawn. I did not interview or administer the SDTLA to college students who did not experience CSA, so I am unable to draw a direct comparison between the two groups. I also did not include younger people or older adults in the research, so my ability to compare was limited to my review of the literature. Comparison was not a purpose of this study. The purpose was to learn more about the CSA experiences of college student survivors and analyze how they made meaning of those experiences in the context of college life. I did learn a lot about the experiences of Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah that can be useful to counselor educators and clinicians in the future.

Resilience. The participants in this study overcame more than childhood sexual abuse. Among them, they faced family dysfunction, substance abuse, financial difficulties, non-suicidal self-injury, pressure to grow up fast, denial of their most painful experiences by the people who mattered most, social isolation, and the intrusions of small town neighbors. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah each faced some of those issues as children and teenagers and were still successful enough to earn admission to a competitive state university. At the time of their final interviews for this study, Riley was fully engaged with the enrichment

opportunities that came with a prestigious scholarship; Blaire had found her academic footing and was planning for further social engagement; and Tallulah was preparing to graduate. Any number of hardships can be a barrier to student development and college success. It is impossible to determine how the array of challenges faced by the participants in this study may have interacted with or overshadowed CSA to cause the challenges to college life that Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah narrated for this study. Research in the literature – especially quantitative research – diminished, dismissed, or declined to make a definitive conclusion about the relevance of CSA to college student life because confounding factors were always present. Confounding factors will always be present in a complicated life. This study found, however, that each of the students believed CSA was a significant, and at times primary, factor in the challenges associated with development during college. Presenting college students with that opportunity to add their own voices, experiences, and perspectives to the research on the effect of CSA on college student development was a contribution of this study to the literature.

Isolation. As I mentioned earlier, this study was not designed to make a side-by-side determination that college students who experienced childhood sexual abuse were objectively different than any other group. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all described feeling different from their peers, and that feeling tended to be chronic. Feelings of difference were signified by Riley’s “wall” between her and college peers, Blaire’s persistent doubt that other students could distinguish her from her history of abuse if they knew about it, and the struggle with physical wellness that Tallulah attributed to CSA. Zubernis, Snyder, and McCoy (2011)

observed that most students wonder if they are “normal” at some point in their college career. The participants in this study cited CSA as a concrete reason why they were different. The shame and secrecy associated with CSA in the discourse – factors identified by all three participants – made it difficult for each of them to share their stories and begin to construct a deeper, healthier, less isolating understanding of their CSA experiences.

Opportunity and resources. Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified disequilibrium as a critical catalyst for development. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah experienced disequilibrium in the typical ways described by the SVTF. They met new people from different places, encountered new ideas on campus and in class, and accumulated the type of emotional and intellectual challenges that often results in either a retreat to familiar patterns or a push forward to new ways of interacting with the world. As survivors of childhood sexual abuse, the participants in this study also experienced disequilibrium that was not typical to all college students. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah moved away from the discourse about CSA that existed in their families, small towns, cultures, and other types of community. They were distanced from the specific forces that denied their abuse, encouraged silence, or inspired fear of a negative, violent reaction to the reality of CSA.

College did not provide immediate safety to begin revising the narrative of abuse, but it did provide enough disequilibrium that all three students eventually sought supportive resources for beginning, or continuing, to understand their story of CSA. The college students that participated in this research cited factors encouraging healing that were different compared with other environments. Children are dependent upon their parents to seek out,

give permission, and pay for counseling services. Blaire's story was an example of that dependence. Her family reported the abuse, and her grandfather was punished by the legal system, but Blaire was not provided with counseling because her family and culture did not believe it was necessary. Older adults may have to fit therapy into rigid schedules of work and other responsibilities. Private counseling can be expensive. Participants in this study all cited counseling as a factor in their student development. Blaire and Tallulah came from homes where counseling was discouraged and, according to their narratives, the convenience, freedom from additional cost, and confidentiality of counseling on campus were key factors in seeking help. This study could not determine that college students are objectively different from other demographics of survivors. The study did illustrate that these three participants had a pattern of resilience – persisting through difficult conditions – and taking advantage of the on-campus resources that helped make meaning of CSA.

Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment

One of the purposes of this study was to evaluate the SVTF's applicability to college students who experienced CSA, critique the framework, and suggest changes if necessary. The de-limitation of focusing the theoretical foundation of the study on one vector, mature interpersonal relationships (MIR), was an acknowledgement that a study of all vectors would be too expansive for containment in this project. That decision resulted in a welcome, unintended result. The narratives of Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah all included incidental references to constructs outside the scope of MIR. Themes associated with the second, third, and fifth vectors emerged through analysis of the data. Allusions to constructs associated

with the first, sixth and seventh vectors were less consistent or robust, but still present in the narratives. The components of college student development identified as pillars of typical college student development by Chickering and Reisser (1993) were relevant to the lives of participants in this study and at times CSA experiences played a role in how the vectors were navigated.

Critique. I did not conclude that the SVTF could be changed or expanded to better serve college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse. This study supported Chickering and Reisser's (1993) intent that the SVTF serve as a broad framework that can be adapted for use with diverse populations of students and campus programming. Data collected in this study suggested some support for assertions by Taub (2007) and others that, while the constructs outlined in the SVTF were valid, the order in which college students encounter them may be more fluid than Chickering and Reisser's framework implied. The SVTF assumed that students at or near the end of their college career would exhibit more development within the vectors than students entering college. Narratives and SDTLA results for this study contradicted that assumption. Riley's Z-scores were higher than Tallulah's in one of two subtasks, a scale, and the overall task, results that are worth noting but were also tempered because means were calculated according to peer group. It is not possible to draw conclusions about the effect of CSA on those SDTLA results. The qualitative design and sample size of this study were insufficient to contribute to critiques of how the SVTF was organized. The contribution of this study was, again, that student narratives validated use of

the vectors as a conceptual tool for work with college students and, in this case, expanded that applicability to students who experienced CSA.

Implications for Clinical Work

The narratives of participants in this study indicated that survivors who made it to college had a foundation of resilience. College counselors can emphasize that inner source of strength when students disclose CSA. For example, Tallulah came to counseling because she was depressed and suicidal. She wanted help, but her impulse was to dismiss the impact of childhood sexual abuse on her present life. Draucker and Martsof (2008) determined that survivors are often confused or unaware of the effect trauma had on their lives. Survivors – including Tallulah, Blaire, and Mary in the introduction to this study – felt left alone to process the consequences of CSA. The SVTF is not a treatment for CSA, but it can provide a sense of order amidst the chaos of memories, emotions, insecurities, and doubts. One application of the SVTF can be to identify development of mature interpersonal relationships as a normal task faced by most college students. A counselor could help Tallulah to recognize how issues of trust and feelings of abandonment were interfering with that task, working to illustrate that there was not something inherently wrong with her and attempting to normalize the problem. Tallulah’s counselor may help her to recognize the many challenges she has already overcome, emphasize the counseling relationship and other social connections that combat isolation, and use evidence of resilience and competence to frame ongoing clinical work. Other vectors referenced by Tallulah’s narrative would be approached

in a similar manner. The SDTLA can be an additional tool for identifying developmental areas that would benefit from attention in counseling.

The problems associated with childhood sexual abuse thrive in isolation. Group counseling may be helpful for students who are comfortable sharing and learning from others, especially students who have disclosed CSA in individual therapy or other environments and have begun the process of revising their understanding of the experience. Individual counselors and/or group leaders could help students identify SVTF constructs referenced in group counseling. The SVTF would continue to function as a tool for creating order, normalizing experience, and promoting connection with others in the campus community.

Implications for Counselor Education

The SVTF has been used as a foundational theory in graduate courses designed to train counselors for careers in clinical and non-clinical environments. This study validated continued use of the SVTF for those purposes and expansion of training to more specific applications, including with survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Limitations and De-limitations

Narrative research provided a great amount of rich data. As in other researchers' studies of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, however, I relied upon the imperfect memories and personal interpretations of students who were asked to remember events that occurred many years ago. In some cases, those events preceded the research participants' ability to make sense of the abuse. It was sometimes difficult to isolate the impact of CSA

from other confounding experiences, such as family dysfunction or present social conflicts. Research participant accounts of CSA and the impact of those experiences on student development were ultimately their own and I did not actively dispute the accuracy of student interpretations of events. I did make every reasonable effort to clarify participant responses during interviews, as well as clarifying student interpretations of interview questions.

Research participants were self-selected. They shared a willingness to discuss childhood sexual abuse and their present lives as college students. No men were referred to or included in this study and all participants were students at a single university. All participants were connected to a counselor at the time of the study, so the sample was entirely clinical. All participants reported sexual abuse perpetrated by a family member or de-facto family member. In light of the research design de-limitations specifying that research participants should not be disclosing CSA for the first time or in psychological crisis, and should be able to thoughtfully discuss their CSA experiences, students willing to participate in this research were in the later stages of the Draucker and Martsof theoretical models. Thus, the sample of interview participants represented a limited spectrum of college student survivors of CSA.

Future Research

The next steps in researching the effects of CSA on college students should bridge the limitations identified in the section above. Narrative research should collect data from college student men; non-clinical samples; and participants representing greater diversity of race, ethnicity, nationality, faith background, physical ability, gender-identity, and sexual

preference. Future research may also elaborate upon the effect of CSA on developmental constructs associated with other vectors in addition to MIR. This study briefly discussed resilience as a factor in the narratives of study participants. A comprehensive exploration of resilience as a factor in college student development among survivors of CSA is warranted. And finally, this study identified counseling as a critical resource to promote healing from CSA. Riley, Blaire, and Tallulah sought out that resource on their own, but the literature suggested that many other survivors choose to remain silent. Future research may examine best practices and innovations for increasing awareness of the benefits of counseling among college student survivors of CSA, promoting access to services, and encouraging students to seek help.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample recruitment talking points

Hello, _____.

Thanks again for your interest in helping recruit students to my dissertation study. I've outlined below some talking points related to the research that you may want to discuss with students that you think would be a good fit for the study. Students who may be interested in participating are invited to contact me directly. I will provide a more in-depth description of the research study and what students can expect to experience at that time.

- The researcher (Daniel Goldberg) is looking for undergraduate students between the ages of 18- and 25-years-old to participate in an in-person interview about students' personal experience of being sexually abused as a child and how that experience relates (or does not relate) to present life as a college student.
- I'm looking for students who will be comfortable providing basic (not graphic) details about their childhood sexual abuse experiences, such as how old they were when the abuse occurred, whether the student told anyone about the abuse at the time it was occurring, whether the student participated in therapy, etc. It will also be important that participants in this research be able to talk candidly about present details of their life such as relationships with friends, family, significant others, and feelings about their comfort level in the college environment. Participants should not be experiencing a depressive episode or an acute episode of anxiety at the time of the interview, as determined by the clinician that referred the potential participant to the study and the preliminary screening interview.
- Interviews will be conducted in a secure, private place, such as an office at the NC State Counseling Center, where the researcher works. Interviews will last approximately one to two hours.
- Information provided by participants will be confidential. Students will be given a pseudonym. Real names or other identifying information will never be shared in study documents and students will never be linked to their personal experiences. Real names and other identifying information associated with non-participant third parties (parents, friends, sexual abuse perpetrators, etc.) will also not be included in any written materials that result from this research.
- All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis by the researcher.
- Student will receive \$25 for their participation in a completed interview.

- Students interested in participating in this research should contact Daniel Goldberg directly via e-mail (dbgoldbe@ncsu.edu) or cell phone (919-360-3350).
- Students who contact me by e-mail are encouraged to refrain from mentioning the topic of the research or any details of their childhood sexual abuse experiences. I want to minimize the amount of unsecure communication (like e-mail) that may link research participants to their personal experiences. E-mail messages sent by students to me can be a brief statement, such as, “Hi. I heard about your research and I’m interested to learn more about it.” Students are encouraged to list a preferred, secure telephone number – such as their personal cell phone number – and multiple times when I may call to provide more information about the study. I will reply to the initial contact with a follow-up e-mail confirming that I will call at one of the times listed.

Once again, thank you for your help with my research. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Daniel Goldberg
NC State University
Counselor Education

Appendix B: Preliminary phone screening protocol for research participants

Hello, _____

Thank you for your interest in my research study. The purpose of this conversation is for me to provide details about the study, evaluate whether you are a good fit for participation in the study, and give you an opportunity to ask questions. Before we continue to specific details about the research study, I want to give you a little information about this screening.

Your participation in this phone call is voluntary. You may interrupt at any time to ask questions or decide that you do not want further information about the study. Your participation in this phone call does not obligate you to participate in the research study. Your participation in this phone call does not guarantee that you will be chosen to participate in the study. You will not receive compensation in the form of money or class credit for participating in this conversation.

During this phone call, I will provide you with information about my study and ask several questions that will determine whether you are eligible to participate. The information you provide is confidential, but not anonymous. That is, the answers you provide during this call are strictly between you and me: it will not be shared with anyone else or published in any way. This call is not anonymous because I know your name and will be recording your answers to “Yes / No” questions on a screening form that I am reading from now. Your first and last initials are written on the screening form as well. If you are selected to participate in the research study, all information about your experiences will remain confidential. You will be given a pseudonym during your participation in the study and your personal experiences will never be linked to your real identity. If you are not selected for this study, choose not to participate, or end this conversation before the screening is complete, the form on which I am recording your answers will be shredded immediately and I will not contact you again about this study.

Some of the topics discussed and questions asked during this phone call are related to personal experiences with childhood sexual abuse. Your answers to these questions will be either “Yes” or “No.” I will not ask you at this time to share specific details about your experiences, but nonetheless these topics and questions may make you uncomfortable. It is important to bring up these topics now because they are at the heart of the research I am conducting. With all of this information in mind, do you consent to continuing this telephone call?

Okay, first I’ll tell you about the study. My research is about college students who experienced sexual abuse as children. There is a lot of research about the impact of childhood sexual abuse, but there is not research that specifically focused on college students and gave

college students a chance to share their perceptions of how childhood sexual abuse is (or is not) relevant to their lives now. I want to know how (or if) childhood sexual abuse impacts your feelings and experiences with dating, friendships, your relationship with family, and what it's like to exist in the college environment. If we agree that you are a good fit to participate in this study, you and I will meet for an interview that will take between one and two hours. You would receive \$25 for your participation in this study.

Does this sound like something you are interested in?

- If "Yes," continue the screening.
- If "No," thank the student for their time, make aware that they can contact me again if they change mind, and end conversation.

Next I'll ask you some basic questions to determine whether you meet the criteria for participation. You can simply answer "Yes" or "No" to these questions. You should not provide additional details at this time. (If student answers "No" to any of the questions in this section, student is not eligible to participate in the research study.)

- Are you an undergraduate college student? Yes No
- Are you enrolled in at least one on-campus course (i.e. not online) this semester? (If this screening is taking place during summer semester, student is eligible if enrolled last spring and next fall.) Yes No
- Are you enrolled at a four-year university or two-year community college? Yes No
- Are you between the ages of 18- and 25-years-old? Yes No

Okay, you meet most of the basic criteria. The last part of the criteria is that I'm looking for students who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. In conducting research, I have to be specific about how childhood sexual abuse is defined, so the next question may be uncomfortable. If we agree that you will participate in the research, I will not ask you to provide specific, physical details of abuse. At this time, however, I need to ask for a "Yes" or "No" answer regarding whether you experienced one or more of the following. Ready?

- At the time that you were 13-years-old or younger, were you ever subject to vaginal, anal, or oral sex; fondling or digital penetration; kissing; verbal propositions, suggestions, or comments; sharing of sexually explicit media; or other sexual experiences that you now perceive was abusive, coercive, or conducted without consent? Yes No
- If the student answers "No," they are not eligible for this study.
- Was the person who did this to you five-years-older or more? Yes No
- Was the person who did this to you another child? Yes No

I know this is a difficult subject to talk about, so thank you for answering my questions. You meet all the basic criteria for participating in the study. Now, I want to give you some

- Student may also take more time to consider all aspects of the study and contact the researcher again later with a final decision about participation.

I've shared the important details of this study and asked all of my questions. Do you have any questions for me?

- At this time, ask student if they would like to participate in study. If "Yes," schedule a day and time for the interview. Remind student to keep my contact information and let me know if they need to make changes for any reason. Thank student for their time and let student know I am looking forward to our interview.
- If "No," thank student again for their time, remind student that they may contact me again in the near future if they change mind about participation, and wish student a good day.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

North Carolina State University INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

College student narratives of childhood sexual abuse and navigating campus life

Principal Investigator: Daniel B. Goldberg
Nassar

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Sylvia

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the college experiences of students who were sexually abused as children. Research has indicated that adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) often experience challenges related to self-esteem, the ability to trust other people, forming and maintaining intimate relationships, regulating emotions, and use of drugs and alcohol. The domains that are often problematic for adult survivors of CSA – relationships, emotional development, identity development – are similar to areas of life that students typically learn to manage in college. This study intends to explore how college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse navigate those developmental domains.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a brief telephone conversation intended to evaluate whether you are appropriate for further participation in the study. Appropriate participants are current college students between the ages of 18- and 25-years-old who experienced sexual abuse as children. If you are selected for participation in the study, you and the principal investigator will schedule an in-person, one-on-one interview. The interview will take place in a secure, private location such as an office on campus or a reserved room in a public library. The information shared in the interview will be completely confidential. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity and your real name will not appear anywhere in the completed study or any future publication that results from the study. No information that can be used to identify you will appear in written notes from our interview or in the analysis and conclusions that result from this study. All interviews will be audio recorded and will last approximately one to two hours. At the conclusion of the first interview, the principal investigator will ask to contact you again in the future to schedule a follow-up interview. The principal investigator will also share a link to an online survey that you can complete in a secure, private place of your choosing. E-mail may be used for scheduling purposes, but e-mail messages will not connect you with the name of the study or any information about the study. All taped interviews will be transcribed verbatim and will be used by the principal investigator to interpret the conclusions of the study. During the follow-up interview, you will be given the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of a transcript of the first interview and a chronological summary of the experiences described. Your confirmation of accuracy will be an important part of conducting a valid, scientific study. The purpose of the second interview will be to clarify and/or elaborate upon themes identified in the first interview. Your participation in the study will be finished after you have completed two interviews, reviewed the documents from the first interview, and completed the online survey.

Risks

The principal investigator will ask participants to consider highly personal experiences that occurred many years ago. In instances where past sexual behavior is or was perceived by the participant to be abusive, these questions may cause discomfort that ranges from none to very strong, depending upon a number of personal characteristics. Participants may also experience distress if the interview brings to mind incidents that were experienced by friends, family members, significant others, etc. The principal investigator will also ask participants to consider present personal behaviors and preferences related to interaction with peers and family members, substance consumption (alcohol and other drugs), and general health habits. Those questions may cause the participant to feel uncomfortable about everyday behaviors. Participants should not be experiencing a depressive episode or an acute episode of anxiety at the time of the interview, as determined by the clinician that referred the potential participant to the study and the preliminary screening interview.

Non-participant third parties (your friends, family, perpetrators of sexual abuse, etc.) are also at risk of personal discomfort in the unlikely event that they are linked to this study. The researcher will take great care to protect the identities of any non-participant third parties that you discuss during the course of our interview. Real names and other identifying information associated with non-participant third parties will not be revealed in any written materials that result from this study. Participants will be provided with contact information for the principal investigator (who is a graduate assistant and counselor at the NC State Counseling Center) and for the NC State Counseling Center. Participants are invited to follow up in counseling at NC State or with a referral to an off-campus mental health provider. The researcher will refer participants seeking counseling to a therapist other than the researcher. Any contact between the researcher and participants beyond the scope of the research study may inject bias into the researcher's analysis of data. Participants will also be provided with contact information for off-campus help resources for survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Benefits

Students may gain insight into specific personal behaviors and events addressed by the interview. Whether the research causes distress or not, students will be made aware of the opportunity for counseling support and other help resources. Indirect benefits to the scientific community (specifically the counseling and mental health community) include increased knowledge about survivors of childhood sexual abuse and expanded application of a theory of college student development that is useful to higher education personnel in multiple professional fields. Those elements may contribute to theories of mental health treatment for college student survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Confidentiality

The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely in a password and firewall protected computer accessed only by the principal investigator. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

There are limited exceptions to confidentiality. The principal investigator of this study (Daniel Goldberg) is required by law to report disclosures of on-going child abuse or elder abuse to the appropriate law enforcement and/or social services authorities. For example, if you (the participant in this research study) reveal knowledge of a minor such as a sibling, cousin, or other child currently experiencing abuse by an adult or other child, the principal investigator must report the abuse. This scenario could result in legal consequences for the perpetrator of the abuse, social services actions intended to help the person(s) being abused, and other consequences. The principal investigator may further be required to break confidentiality if called by a court of law to testify in legal proceedings that result from the aforementioned situation.

Compensation

You will receive \$25 in cash for each interview, up to a total of \$50 for participating in this study. Compensation will be awarded at the completion of the in-person interview. You will not receive compensation

if you withdraw from the study prior to its completion. Participants will not receive class credit for participating in this study.

What if you are a NCSU student?

Participation in this study is not a course requirement and your participation, or lack thereof, will not affect your class standing or grades at NC State.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Daniel Goldberg, at dbgoldbe@ncsu.edu, or 919-360-3350. You may also text the researcher at that number.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator at dapaxton@ncsu.edu or by phone at 1-919-515-4514.

Consent To Participate

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For Information about on-campus counseling or off-campus counseling referral, contact:

Daniel Goldberg
NC State University Counseling Center
2815 Cates Avenue
2423.
Raleigh, NC 27695-7312
a.m. to 4 p.m.
dbgoldbe@ncsu.edu
during those times
(919) 360-3350 – cell
counseling appointment.
(919) 515-2423 – counseling center
919-515-3000 and ask

If you prefer to speak with a counselor other than Daniel Goldberg, you may also call the NC State Counseling Center main number at (919) 515-

The Counseling Center has walk-in hours from 8

Monday through Friday. You may walk-in

for urgent situations or to schedule a regular

For after-hours and weekend emergencies, call

to speak with the counselor on call.

Visit the website for the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) for more information about the effects of childhood sexual abuse on adults. <https://rainn.org/get-info/effects-of-sexual-assault/adult-survivors-of-childhood-sexual-abuse>

To speak with someone trained to help, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673) or chat online at online.rainn.org

Appendix D: Interview Protocol by Theoretical and Empirical Sources

Interview Question / Prompt	Source
<p>1. Please tell me, with as much detail as you are comfortable sharing, about the childhood sexual abuse that you experienced. You do not have to tell me about specific physical acts or your responses unless you feel that those details are important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What age or ages were you at the time of the abuse? • Did it happen once or multiple times? What was the duration (days, weeks, months, years)? • Who perpetrated the abuse? • Where did the abuse occur? • Did you tell anyone at the time? • Why did it stop? 	<p>Variations in abuse experience have an impact on how survivor responds to CSA. Abuse by a trusted person results in greater degree of negative psychological and relational symptoms. Disclosure and treatment enable recovery. (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011)</p> <p>Students develop mature interpersonal relationships in college. Early / family relationships influence development in college. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
<p>2. How have you shared those experiences with other people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you talked to your parents? • Have you talked to other family or friends? • Have you shared your experiences with a significant other or others? • What were their reactions? • How did you feel about sharing your experiences? • How did your gender identity influence your decision(s) to share your CSA experiences? • How did your racial and/or cultural identity influence your sharing decision(s)? 	<p>Disclosure and treatment enable recovery. Negative reactions to disclosure of CSA may result in survivor keeping the abuse as a secret. Positive reactions to CSA encourage survivor healing. (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011)</p> <p>Students develop mature interpersonal relationships in college. Early / family relationships influence development in college. Relationships influence feelings of competence, personal values, sense of identity. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
<p>3. If I spent a weekend at the place you call home when you are not at school, who else would be there? What would your relationships with those people be like?</p>	<p>Disclosure of CSA experiences and support from others in processing those experiences enables healing. (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010;</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about your comfort level there. • What is the tone of this place? (calm, tense, loud, happy, angry, etc) • In what ways do you feel supported? • In what ways do you feel held back? • What role does your CSA experience play in those relationships? 	<p>Draucker et al., 2011.</p> <p>Students develop mature interpersonal relationships in college. Early / family relationships influence development in college. Healthy development includes the re-definition of roles among students and their parents, development of independence. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
<p>4. Tell me about your social life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a lot of friends? A few friends? • How have you made your friends? (one at a time, in a group, through an organization or club, etc.) • Tell me about some of the important people in your life and your relationship with him/her/them. • When you disagree, how do you resolve the disagreement? • When you have multiple social options at the same time, how do you decide which to pursue? • Do your friends know about your childhood sexual abuse experience? Why did you choose to tell them or not tell them? How did they respond, or how do you expect they would respond? How has your disclosure or choice not to disclose impacted your relationship with your friends? 	<p>Survivors of CSA may have difficulty with self-esteem and trusting others. Those issues can lead to difficulty making and keeping friends / significant others and trusting their own judgment in relationships. (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011)</p> <p>College is a time for exploring and developing mature interpersonal relationships. Trust and a solid sense of self are important factors in making and keeping healthy relationships. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
<p>5. Describe your romantic life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a significant other or do you date? Who do you date? • How easy or difficult is it for you to begin or maintain relationships? • How do you describe the quality of your relationship(s)? (secure, volatile, caring, abusive, etc.) 	<p>Survivors of CSA may have difficulty with self-esteem and trusting others. Those issues can lead to difficulty making and keeping friends / significant others and trusting their own judgment in relationships. (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008, 2010; Draucker et</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is your romantic life now similar or dissimilar to your romantic life in the past? • Have you experienced sexual violence or intimate partner violence as an adult? • Describe your level of satisfaction with your romantic life. • How is your level of satisfaction with your romantic life related or not related to your experiences with CSA? 	<p>al., 2011)</p> <p>Survivors of CSA are vulnerable unhealthy or abusive relationships and victimization later in life. (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al, 2011; Dube et al., 2005)</p> <p>College is a time for exploring and developing mature interpersonal relationships. Trust and a solid sense of self are important factors in making and keeping healthy relationships. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
<p>6. Let's talk about your overall college experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe college so far? • What are you good at? What areas of college are you not doing as well as you want to be? • How do you describe your place in college? (i.e. do you "fit in"? Are you still looking for your niche? Etc.) • How is college what you expected and/or not what you expected? • How do you take care of yourself while you're here? (stress management / coping behaviors) 	<p>CSA survivors often experience difficulty with self-esteem and questions about their own competence. CSA survivors often feel like they are not "normal," that something is wrong with them. Survivors may in negative coping behaviors, such as substance use, reckless sexual encounters, and self-harm. (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011)</p> <p>Feelings of intellectual, physical, manual, and interpersonal competence are important in healthy development. Normal development includes the ability to manage stress and emotions in a productive manner. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
<p>7. And now the last thing we'll talk about. Where are you now in the process of healing from</p>	<p>Healing from CSA is a process. Healing is enabled by opportunities</p>

<p>childhood sexual abuse?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In what ways is childhood sexual abuse still a problem for you?• In what ways are you “over it”?• What experiences have helped you to heal?• What experiences have reminded you of the abuse or detracted from healing?• How have issues of gender identity, racial identity, and/or cultural identity contributed to or detracted from healing?• How do you feel about your childhood sexual abuse experiences now?• How often do you think about the childhood sexual abuse that you experienced? How much of an impact, overall, does it have on your life now?	<p>to find meaning in the abuse. (Draucker & Martsof, 2008, 2010; Draucker et al., 2011)</p> <p>A solid sense of self and expanding abilities to define one’s own values and sense of integrity are important to normal development. (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999)</p>
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Appendix E: Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment

The text contained in this appendix is a verbatim reproduction of the online survey completed by participants in the research study.

Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment (Form 4.99)

You have received a link to this survey because you are a participant in Daniel Goldberg's dissertation research study. Thank you again for your participation, patience, flexibility, and willingness to help!

About this Survey

The survey should take you approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. The survey can be completed on your own time and in a location of your choosing. Your responses to the survey are completely anonymous. It is very important that you respond to all survey items.

Confidentiality

The information collected in this survey will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Your participation in this study is anonymous. Only the principal researcher (Daniel Goldberg) will have access to the survey results. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Daniel Goldberg, at dbgoldbe@ncsu.edu, or 919-360-3350.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator at dapaxton@ncsu.edu or by phone at 919-515-4514.

Consent To Participate

By continuing with the survey below, you agree that you have read and understand the informed consent information presented to you during our previous meeting. You agree to voluntarily participate in this study with the understanding that you may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment, Form 4.99
Copyright Student Development Associates, Inc., 1999

The Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment is composed of statements shown to be typical of some students and is designed to collect information concerning college students' activities, feelings, attitudes, aspirations, and relationships. The Assessment is designed to help students learn more about themselves and for colleges to learn how to assist students more effectively. The SDTLA's usefulness depends entirely on the care, honesty, and candor with which students answer the questions.

The following survey includes Form 4.99 of the SDTLA. This is a partial version of the Assessment. You will need approximately 10-20 minutes to complete this survey

Directions: You should complete the following survey in a secure, private location in order to protect your anonymity. You may also want to clear your computer's Internet history and cookies after completing the survey. For each question choose the one response that most closely reflects your beliefs, feelings, attitudes, experiences, or interests. Please answer all items on the survey. Consider each statement carefully, but do not spend a great deal of time deliberating on a single statement. Work quickly, but carefully. In this questionnaire, "college" is used in a general sense to apply to both two and four year colleges, as well as universities; it refers to all kinds of post-secondary educational institutions. If you have no parent, substitute guardian or parent equivalent when responding to items about parents(s).

Part I: Demographic Questions What is your racial or cultural background? (Select one best response.)

- Black or African American (1)
- Hispanic or Latino (2)
- Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander (3)
- Native American (4)
- Caucasian (5)
- Bi-racial or multiracial (6)
- Other (7)

How do you identify yourself?

- I am a man. (1)
- I am a woman. (2)
- I do not identify myself as exclusively a man or exclusively a woman. (3)

I am:

- Below the age of 18-years-old. (1)
- Between 18- and 25-years-old. (2)
- Over the age of 25-years-old. (3)

What is your academic standing? (Select one.)

- First year (1)
- Second year (2)
- Third year (3)
- Fourth year (4)
- Fifth year (5)
- Other (6)
- Graduate student (7)

Where do you presently live? (Select one.)

- In on-campus residence hall (1)
- At home with parent(s) (2)
- At home with partner or spouse (3)
- In an on-campus apartment / trailer / house (not with parent or spouse) (4)
- In an off-campus apartment / trailer / house (not with parent or spouse) (5)
- In a fraternity or sorority house (6)

Are you an international student?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

How many semesters (fall or spring) have you attended a college or university, excluding the current semester?

- 1-2 (1)
- 3-4 (2)
- 5-6 (3)
- 7-8 (4)
- 9-10 (5)
- More than 10 (6)

Part II: Respond to the following statements by selecting either True or False. I never regret anything I have done.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I have personal habits that are potentially dangerous for my health.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I like everyone I know.

- True (1)
- False (2)

It's important to me to be liked by everyone.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I would prefer not to room with someone who is from a culture or race different from mine.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I never get angry.

- True (1)
- False (2)

During the past twelve months, I have acquired a better understanding of what it feels like to be a member of another race.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I only attend parties where there are plenty of alcoholic beverages available.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I never say things I shouldn't.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I never lie.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I always take precautions (or abstain) to assure that I will not contract a sexually transmitted disease.

- True (1)
- False (2)

Within the past twelve months, I have undertaken an activity intended to improve my understanding of culturally/racially different people.

- True (1)
- False (2)

I never get sad.

- True (1)
- False (2)

Part III: Respond to the following statements by selecting the most appropriate choice. I avoid discussing religion with people who challenge my beliefs, because there is nothing that can change my mind about my beliefs.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I'm annoyed when I hear people speaking in a language I don't understand.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I pay careful attention to the nutritional value of the foods I eat.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I plan my activities to make sure that I have adequate time to sleep.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

When I wish to be alone, I have difficulty communicating my desire to others in a way that doesn't hurt their feelings.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I avoid groups where I would be the minority race.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I limit the quantity of fats in my diet.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

Because of my friends urgings, I get involved in things that are not in my best interests.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

A person's sexual orientation is a crucial factor in determining whether I will attempt to develop a friendship with her/him.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I have plenty of energy.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

It's more important to me that my friends approve of what I do than it is for me to do what I want.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I am satisfied with my physical appearance.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I feel uncomfortable when I'm around persons whose sexual orientation is different from mine.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

My weight is maintained at a level appropriate for my height and frame.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I try to avoid people who act in unconventional ways.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I eat well-balanced, nutritious meals daily.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I find it difficult to accept some of the ways my close friends have changed over the past year.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I exercise for thirty minutes or more at least three times a week.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I don't socialize with people of whom my friends don't approve.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I plan my week to make sure that I have sufficient time for physical exercise.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I become inebriated from the use of alcohol on weekends.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

I try to dress so that I will fit in with my friends.

- Never (almost never) true of me. (1)
- Seldom true of me. (2)
- Usually true of me. (3)
- Always (almost always) true of me. (4)

Learning to live with students from cultural or racial backgrounds different from mine is an important part of a college education. (Select best response.)

- Strongly agree. (1)
- Agree. (2)
- Disagree. (3)
- Strongly disagree. (4)

Part IV: Respond to the statements below by selecting one response. I wonder what my friends say about me behind my back.

- Never. (1)
- Seldom. (2)
- Sometimes. (3)
- Often. (4)

I dislike working in groups when there are a significant number of people who are from a race or culture that is different from mine.

- Never. (1)
- Seldom. (2)
- Sometimes. (3)
- Often. (4)

Within the past three months, I engaged in activities that were dangerous or could be risky to my health.

- Never. (1)
- Seldom. (2)
- Sometimes. (3)
- Often. (4)

I have used my time in college to experiment with different ways of living or looking at the world.

- Never. (1)
- Seldom. (2)
- Sometimes. (3)
- Often. (4)

I express my disapproval when I hear others use racial or ethnic slurs or put-downs.

- Never. (1)
- Seldom. (2)
- Sometimes. (3)
- Often. (4)

In the past six months, I have gone out of my way to meet students who are culturally or racially different from me because I thought there were things I could learn from them.

- Never. (1)
- Seldom. (2)
- Sometimes. (3)
- Often. (4)

Part V: From the alternatives provided, select the one response that best describes you. After a friend and I have a heated argument, I will...

- Never (almost never) speak to him/her again. (1)
- Seldom speak to him/her. (2)
- Usually speak to him/her. (3)
- Always speak to him/her. (4)
- I never have disagreements with friends. (5)

When I have experienced stress or tension this term,

- I have most often sought relief by listening to music, reading, or visiting friends. (1)
- I have most often had a few drinks or beers to relax. (2)
- I have most often exercised, worked out, or played a sport. (3)
- I have kept on going and ignored the stress. (4)
- I have had occasions when it became too much to handle and I had to take days off to relax or rest/sleep. (5)

When I have heated disagreements with friends about matters such as religion, politics, or philosophy, I...

- Am likely to terminate the friendship. (1)
- Am bothered by their failure to see my point of view but hide my feelings. (2)
- Will express my disagreement, but will not discuss the issue. (3)
- Will express my disagreement and am willing to discuss the issue. (4)
- Don't talk about controversial matters. (5)

I use tobacco products (smoke, chew, or dip),

- Never. (1)
- Once a week or less. (2)
- Several times a week. (3)
- Most days. (4)
- Every day. (5)

I have more than one drink (i.e. 1.5 ounces of liquor, 5 ounces of wine, or 12 ounces of beer)

- Never. (1)
- Once a week or less. (2)
- Two or three times a week. (3)
- Most days. (4)
- Every day. (5)

Thank you for completing the survey! Please remember: If any questions or statements in this survey caused discomfort, you are encouraged to follow up with the N.C. State Counseling Center, located on the second floor of the Student Health Center at 2815 Cates Avenue. You may also call the Counseling Center at 919-515-2423 or contact the principal investigator of this study, Daniel Goldberg, directly at the same phone number or by e-mailing dbgoldbe@ncsu.edu. I will contact you by e-mail soon to share a case study of your participation in this research and schedule a follow-up meeting.