

UNDERSTANDING PAEDOPHILIA

Current Inter-Disciplinary Definitions and Understandings of Paedophilia

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Despite the current high-profile nature of paedophiles and paedophilic activity there is no easily accessible or widely accepted definition of paedophilia. Child sexual abuse, and by default paedophilia, is thought of as one of the most misunderstood crimes in modern society, with society arguably denying its occurrence and underestimating the frequency with which it occurs. Current theories and hence definitions of paedophilia are a combination of strongly held beliefs and relatively few facts, which can be problematic for both offenders and practitioners involved in their risk treatment and/or management. This paper attempts to address this omission by looking at conceptions of paedophilia from a multidisciplinary viewpoint, taking into account definitions and perspectives from historical, cultural, sociological, clinical, and legal sources. The paper endeavours to draw these divergent conceptions together in an effort to reach a coherent and acceptable working definition, although also questions whether a 'one size fits all' definition is first possible, but perhaps more importantly, desirable.

Professionals' Implicit Theories of Paedophilia

McCartan, K. F.

This paper will discuss professionals' implicit theories of paedophilia. This research is based upon empirical qualitative research with a range of professionals working with paedophilia, or in related fields (Practitioners, Academics and members of the Media) (n=28). This research used content analysed semi-structured interviews so that the participants' implicit theories of paedophilia could be accurately uncovered. The findings suggest that

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professionals' implicit theories of paedophiles and paedophilia (incl. definitions; typologies; the causes of paedophilia; paedophilic behaviours and personalities; typical paedophilic offending) were fragmented as well as ambiguous. Professionals' implicit theories of the treatment of paedophilia were more unified, with the majority agreeing that paedophilia is incurable, with no effective treatment and is therefore a case of risk management. These findings produce a more coherent overview of current professional understandings of paedophilia, and identify implications for further research, public education and government policy.