

# SECRET SURVIVORS

## USING THEATER TO BREAK THE SILENCE

TOOLKIT AND DISCUSSION GUIDE + DOCUMENTARY

### Effects of Abuse on Society

Adapted from *Darkness 2 Light* and *Prevent Child Abuse America's Estimated Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect, April 2012*<sup>ii</sup>

Child sexual abuse is at the root of many societal problems. If we examine each of the common individual consequences of child sexual abuse in light of the prevalence rate, we can see how child sexual abuse has ramifications for each and every one of us.

**FACT:** In the U.S., reported cases of child sexual abuse represent the second most expensive victim crime behind murder, costing the U.S. over \$35 Billion annually.<sup>iii</sup>

**FACT: Child sexual abuse plays an important role in the cost of mental health services.**

- The direct cost of mental health is more than \$137 billion annually.<sup>iv</sup> Indirect costs add another \$110 billion or more annually in 2010 dollars (Rice & Miller, 1996). If child sexual abuse victims have a doubled risk for mental health conditions (Rohde, et. al., 2008; Dube, et. al., 2005; Waldrop, et. al., 2007; Day, et. al., 2003; Kendler, et. al., 2000; Voeltanz, et. al., 1999), logic suggests that child sexual abuse is responsible for annual mental health costs of at least \$20 billion.

**FACT: Each instance of child sexual abuse incurs an average cost of \$9,200 in mental health care<sup>v</sup> (the highest of any crime) and over \$1,100 in social services.<sup>vi</sup>**

**FACT: Teen pregnancy is a long-term, expensive societal problem. Child sexual abuse is a major factor in teenage pregnancy rates.**

- The U.S. government estimates that teen pregnancy costs the nation over \$9 billion annually (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2004). If the applicable research (Noll, Shenk, & Putnam, 2009) is accurate, logic suggests that over \$2 billion of this is attributable to child sexual abuse.

**FACT: Over-sexualized behavior, common for child sexual abuse victims, can lead to an increased risk of sexually-transmitted infections.**

- Sexually-transmitted infections cost this nation \$8.4 billion annually in direct costs alone (Kaiser Family Foundation, 1997). If the research is accurate (Zierler, et. al., 1991; Allers, et. al., 1993; Dekker, et. al., 1990), logic tells us that over \$1.5 billion of this is attributable to child sexual abuse.
- A recent study showed that male survivors are more likely to have a greater number of sexual partners, and to consume alcohol before engaging in sexual intercourse.<sup>vii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup>[http://www.d21.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6250817/k.91D6/What are the Long Term Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse for Society.htm](http://www.d21.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6250817/k.91D6/What%20are%20the%20Long%20Term%20Consequences%20of%20Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20for%20Society.htm)

<sup>ii</sup> Gelles, Richard J., & Perlman, Staci (2012). *Estimated Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Chicago IL: Prevent Child Abuse America.

<sup>iii</sup> Darkness to Light (2012). [On-line] Retrieved from [http://www.d21.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6069261/k.E915/The Economic Impact of Child Sexual Abuse.htm](http://www.d21.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6069261/k.E915/The%20Economic%20Impact%20of%20Child%20Sexual%20Abuse.htm)

<sup>iv</sup> Gelles, Richard J., & Perlman, Staci (2012). *Estimated Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Chicago IL: Prevent Child Abuse America.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid

<sup>vi</sup> Finkelhor, David, and Hashima, P., “The Victimization of Children and Youth: A Comprehensive Overview.” *Handbook of Youth and Justice*. 2001.

<sup>vii</sup> Schraufnagel, Trevor J., Cue Davis, Kelly, George, William H., and Norris, Jeanette. *Childhood sexual abuse in males and subsequent risky sexual behavior: A potential alcohol use pathway*, [Child Abuse Negl. 2010 May; 34\(5\): 369–378](#). Published online 2010 March 31. doi: [10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.08.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.08.013)