Child Sexual Abuse & Sexual Assault of a Minor

MARYLAND DEFINITIONS

- **Child Sexual Abuse:** sexual molestation or exploitation of a child (age 0-17) by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member.
- **Sexual Assault of a Minor:** sexual assault of a child (age 0-17) that does not fall under the “care or custody” or familial or household requirements of child sexual abuse.

PREVALENCE

- Approximately 67% of all sexual assaults reported to police involved persons 0-17.¹
- About 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18.²
- It is estimated that 7-12% of children (about 1 in 10 children) are sexually abused before they turn 18.³
- 18% of girls and 3% of boys say that by age 17 they have been victims of a sexual assault or abuse at the hands of another adolescent.⁴
- Child sexual abuse is significantly underreported.⁵
  - 73% of child survivors do not tell anyone about the abuse for at least a year.
  - 45% of victims do not tell anyone for at least 5 years.
  - Some children never disclose.

PERPETRATORS

- About 90% of those that sexually abuse a child are acquaintances of either the child or the family, while roughly 10% of sexual abuse is perpetrated by a stranger.⁶
- 35% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by juveniles. In fact, about 12.5% of sexual abuse is perpetrated by youth under the age of 12.⁷
- The younger the child victim, the more likely it is that the perpetrator is a juvenile themselves. Juveniles are the offenders in 43% of assaults on children under age six.⁸

CONSEQUENCES

- Studies have found associations between childhood sexual abuse and schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance misuse.⁹
- Teenage pregnancy risk is strongly linked to sexual abuse.¹⁰

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¹ Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement (2000).