

SEXUAL MURDER AND SEXUAL SERIAL KILLERS:
TOWARDS A MIND-BODY DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

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Sexual murders and sexual serial killers have always been of popular interest with the public. Professionals are still mystified as to why sexual killers commit the “ultimate crime” of both sexual assault and homicide. Questions emerge as to why some sexual offenders kill one time vs in a serial manner. It is understood that the vast majority of sexual offenders such as pedophiles and adult rapists do NOT kill their victims. The purpose of this chapter is to explore serial sexual murder in terms of both theoretical and clinical parameters in an attempt to understand why they commit the “ultimate crime.” We will also examine the similarities and differences between serial sexual murderers and typical rape offenders who do not kill their victims. Using real-life examples of well-known serial killers, we will compare the “theoretical” with the “practical;” what happened, why it happened, and what we may be able to do about it. The authors of this chapter present two perspectives: (1) A developmental motivational view as to why serial killers commit these homicides, and (2) Implications for treatment of violent offenders. To adequately present these perspectives, we must look at four distinct areas: (1) Differentiating between the two types of “lust” murderers i.e. rapists and sexual serial killers, (2) Examining personality or lifestyle themes, (3) Exploration of the mind-body developmental process, and (4) treatment applications for violent offenders.

DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL MURDER VS SERIAL SEXUAL MURDER

Sex offenses can be viewed as a continuum from non-contact or covert offenses to contact or overt offenses. The ultimate contact offenses include sexual murder and serial killings that also result in cannibalism and necrophilia. The dynamics of one-time murderers are much different from serial sexual killers who commit repeated crimes as part of his offense pattern. The one-time murderer is governed by the situation or circumstances of the offense, while the serial killer maintains a continuous offense pattern with a “cooling-off” period between murders (Ressler, 1992, 1997).

It is essential to differentiate between sexual serial murderers and serial rapists. Both are violent “contact” offenses. Proulx, Beauregard & Nichole (2002) found that in terms of personality profiles, rapists and sexual murderers have more similarities than differences. Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1988) found that both types of offenders often experienced childhoods of physical and emotional abuse, caretaker instability, and perceptions of unfair treatment within the family. In unique populations such as the United States armed forces, offenders who are incarcerated for sexual aggression against women report thoughts, behaviors and personality styles similar to civilian sexual serial killers. This problem has exponentially compounded since the number of female US service members has risen so rapidly in the past decade (Kohut, 2004). Proulx (personal communication with second author, April 2003) make the crucial point that the differences between sexual murderers and rapists may lie in the situation where the offense took place and the particular circumstances of the offense rather than any underlying differences in offense-related thought process.

THE LIFESTYLE OF A SEXUAL SERIAL KILLER

The “lifestyle” concept originated from Alfred Adler (1941) and expanded by Dreikurs, (1950) & Mosak, (1979). “Lifestyle” refers to related themes and patterns of an individual’s daily life, including behavioral patterns, personal characteristics and life themes. Adler (1941) proposed that everyone has a distinct lifestyle pattern and serial killers are no exception. This chapter attempts to summarize previous observations about lifestyle themes, including those of serial killers. We can expand Adler’s original concept to include ego states or contextualized behavioral patterns along with other commonly found personality themes easily identified in the lifestyle of serial sexual killers. An examination of lifestyle themes includes dissociative ego states, antisocial traits, narcissistic traits, schizoid traits and borderline personality traits. Sexual serial killers do not necessarily have all of these themes and/or personality traits, except for dissociative and ego state phenomena. Likewise, the themes and traits may differ in degree and specificity. These were adapted from Carich & Adkerson 1995, 2003; Carich & Calder 2003; Carich, Jones, Egger & Meyers 1996. The themes are discussed below.

In the commission of their crimes, serial killers appear to enter into dissociative states (Carich, Jones et al, 1996). Dissociation refers to a sense of detaching emotionally from current reality while also maintaining contact with external reality (Carich & Metzger, 1999, 2004); Carich & Calder 2003; Lankton & Lankton 1983; Yapko 1984, 1995). Dissociative behaviors take the form of deviant fantasies and other forms of covert arousal. Hypnotic trance states occur when the offender exhibits intense concentration and is completely absorbed in the commission of his crime in which

immediate awareness is temporarily suspended. The killer is usually oblivious to his external surroundings. This is not a psychotic state, however, but is simply a level of unconscious awareness. Dissociation is considered to be a form of hypnotic behavior because hypnosis or trance-like states do require some form of dissociation.

The trance state phenomena is similar to the concept of the “hidden observer,” or the dissociative hypnotic behavior of a killer observing himself from an emotional distance or imagining himself engaged in some violent or deviant act while detached from his current surroundings (Yapko, 1984). During confessions, treatment sessions, mental health evaluations and court proceedings, many serial killers describe feeling “unreal” as they sexually assault and kill their victims, as if they were watching someone else commit the act. Again, this dissociation is not a psychotic state and therefore cannot be used as a legal defense. Another chapter in this book discusses the legal aspects of serial homicide, as well as the oft-tried (but seldom successful) “insanity defense.” The killer maintains full knowledge that his acts are illegal, and he could conform his actions to the requirements of the law if he wished.

Watkins & Watkins (1997) took the concept of the “hidden observer” and developed ego states. The sexual serial killer’s lifestyle involves ego state phenomena. For some offenders this involves generalized behavior such as that demonstrated by Ted Bundy whose crimes were committed in a definite identifiable pattern. Bundy even generalized his choice of victims i.e. targeting girls with long hair parted in the middle. Other killers may literally switch ego states. The legendary classic example of this phenomenon is Robert Lewis Stevenson’s “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” in which, through some ill-advised biochemical experiments, the “good” Dr. Jekyll unleashed his brutal and

evil “dark twin,” Mr. Hyde. Stevenson’s portrayal of the dual nature of ego states was far ahead of its time; modern sexual serial killers like John Gacy maintained several conscious ego states including rapist, killer, family man, and community leader. In sexual serial murder, the killer’s ego states contain well-defined sexual “scripts” or templates as described by Ward & Hudson (2000). Such templates are blueprints or internal maps and belief systems including core schemas that guide the killer’s decision-making patterns. These offenses, then, can be viewed as a state of contextualized behaviors. The killer simply accesses state dependant memory, learning and behaviors (SDML&B) systems which may be in the form of ego states as defined by Rossi (1993, 2002). SDML&B systems appear to be the common denominator of dissociative trance behavior and Rossi (1993, 2002, 2003) emphasizes that behavior is **state dependent** and learned in contexts, or states. Learning is a psycho/physiological process housed in the hypothalamus limbic system of the brain. Thus, sexual “scripts” are ingrained throughout the mind-body process as discussed later in the chapter. Similarly, other lifestyle themes that play a role in deviant behavioral choices are state dependent. Other lifestyle themes include personality traits of antisocial, narcissistic, schizoid and borderline characteristics found in the DSM-IV-R (APA, 280). A brief description follows below:

Antisocial (psychopathic) Themes

Without a doubt, sexual serial killers have antisocial, or psychopathic, lifestyle themes as indicated by their high level of violence and their seeming complete lack of conscience and empathy. Although there are different views of antisocial/psychopathic personality characteristics, the primary theme centers around lack of empathy and remorse, exploiting others to meet their own needs, victimization, manipulation, failure to

learn from mistakes, and an uncanny ability to blend into society, chameleon-like, to avoid suspicion and capture (Carich & Calder, 2003). Ted Bundy, John Gacy, Gary Ridgeway, (The Green River Killer), Albert DeSalvo, Ken Bianchi and Angelo Buono (the Hillside Strangers), and Jeffrey Dahmer all led rather “normal” exterior lives with no observable hints of the sexual psychopathology that lurked deep in their subconscious minds. Hare (1993) considered psychopathy and the antisocial personality disorder as separate entities, while others view these behaviors on the same continuum (Marshall, W. L. personal communication with first author, 2001). These behaviors occur in degrees. For example, not all serial killers engage in their psychopathic state continuously, while others do. Bundy earned a degree in psychology, attended law school, and worked as a volunteer in various political campaigns. Henry Lee Lucas and his sometime-partner Ottis Toole, however, could not hold jobs, made money by stealing, kept themselves well-hidden from mainstream society, and heavily abused substances. Lucas regularly engaged in necrophilia with the bodies of his victims and, with Toole, sadistic homosexual behavior. Bundy, Ridgeway and Dahmer also practiced necrophilia – the ultimate form of power and control.

Narcissistic Themes

Antisocial/psychopathic serial killers and sexual serial killers display significant degrees of narcissistic traits, being self-centered with marked feelings of entitlement (Carich & Adkerson 1995, 2003; Carich & Calder, 2003). In addition to these two traits, other narcissistic themes of grandiosity e.g. exaggerated vicious behavior and feelings superiority towards others, especially law enforcement officials who are unable to capture them. Charles Manson not only thought of himself as a gifted musician, he also managed

to convince his followers that he was the new Jesus Christ, specifically referring to his last name and adopting the interpretation that he is “The Son of Man” (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974). This grandiosity is not the same thing as normal, healthy, realistic self-esteem. In reality, these killers typically feel quite inferior to others in a number of areas in life including their own “core” self-view. Thus, they compensate for their perceived inferiority by behaving as if they are superior to others, including their victims. These killers enjoy grabbing newspaper headlines and thrive on publicity. Many relish grandiose thoughts of “outsmarting” law enforcement. After his capture, Lucas stated that being a notorious serial killer is “just like being a movie star.” He confessed to hundred of murders and thoroughly enjoyed his notoriety. In reality, Lucas is thought to have killed only two people – his mother and his teenage girlfriend. Otis Toole was convicted of another homicide. Law enforcement officials are certain that Toole’s most infamous murder was that of six-year-old Adam Walsh, son of “America’s Most Wanted” host John Walsh. He never confessed to this crime but thrived on tormenting the victim’s family with innuendos about Adam’s murder until his own death in prison of AIDS (CourtTV.com, 2005; Walsh, 1997).

Borderline Themes

Most serial killers have underdeveloped or dysfunctional emotional attachments to others (Carich, Jones, et al, 1996). Their detachment in relationships is especially found all types of sexual offenders (Carich & Adkerson, 1995, 2003; Carich & Calder, 2003; Marshall 1996, 1999). Sexual serial killers have very superficial interpersonal relationships, at best. However, many seem to maintain an ability not to allow others into their deviant world. Many have families, raise children, and relate well to employers and

fellow workers. Others, like Bundy, Richard Ramirez (The Night Stalker) and Tex Watson (Manson Family killer) go so far as to marry while they are incarcerated for murder. They are the ultimate emotionally distant partner, and seem to attract women who, for unfathomable reasons, choose this type of unstable, chaotic relationship. Gary Ridgeway, thought to be the most prolific serial killer in America with as many as ninety victims over a twenty-year period, married three times and had a son; all of these relationships were chaotic and superficial. (Arts and Entertainment network series “Biography,” 2005). Sexual serial killers display the borderline personality behavior of numerous dysfunctional relationships, poor mood regulation skills and persistently unstable affect, poor impulse control (inability to refrain from deviant behavior), and jealousy, possessiveness and a need to be in total control of relationships. Many killers form relationships via fantasies, and then project these fantasies onto their victims. These characteristics often seem to project a psychotic dimension, when in fact, most are not psychotic states.

Schizoid Themes

Sexual serial killers have significant intimacy defects and most are unable to form “connected” relationships. They may prefer to remain isolated and alienated from others. The schizoid theme consists of avoiding intimate relationships, and a flat, restricted affect. Bundy and Gacy, for example, had good external social skills that they used to lure their victims into trusting them. Conversely, Ted Kazinsky (the Unabomber), isolated himself in a remote mountain shack in Montana. He had no neighbors, no telephone, and no automobile. Although he was highly intelligent, he had no social skills and never had meaningful, intimate relationships – not even with his mother and brother.

Kazinsky even killed from a distance, sending his cleverly constructed explosive devices to carefully selected targets through the mail. Sexual serial killers with schizoid personality features tend to exploit their victims but never attempt to become emotionally intimate with them.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS: A PROPOSED THEORY
OF MIND-BODY DEVELOPMENT

Life is a constant state of emotional and social evolution and development. All people, including sexual serial killers, remain within a developmental process. This section discusses this process including specific motivational factors that propel a killer to sexually assault and murder his victims. Several theoretical assumptions are discussed followed by an etiological developmental process entered through the mind-body SDML&B system. The premise of this chapter hinges upon these basic assumptions: constructivism, self-determination, teleogy, holisim, and evolution.

Constructivism

This perspective is based on the view that people construct, or create, their own internal reality (Bateson 1978; Carich 1999, 2002; Kelley, 1963; Mahoney 2003; Rychlak, 1981). Constructivism stems from Plato's idealistic philosophy in which external reality doesn't exist and Kant's critical realism in which external reality does exist – however, given the human perceptual filtering system, we may never know it (Rychlak, 1981). Constructivism encompasses both individual and societal constructs. The latter refers to the constructed social realities created by groups of people. This concept is crucial to fully understanding the serial killer's motivations and developmental experiences and the symbolic meanings of their sexual assaults and homicides. Mahoney

(2003) acknowledges the internal self-organizing processes along with the biological processes of the human system, including individual differences and our birthright of being able to make choices in our behavior. He points out that the principle of constructivism is that we are active participants in our own lives. We all make choices, and those choices make important differences in our lives and the lives of all with whom we are connected. Relationships, in Mahoney's viewpoint of constructivism, are critical to our development. Constructivism emphasizes the developmental process. Thus, sexual assaults and murders have different meanings and purposes among killers that highlight individual differences among offenders (Burgess, Hartmann, Ressler & McCormick 1986; Egger 1990).

Teleological Perspective

The teleological perspective proposed by Adler (1941) is that human behavior is goal-oriented and serves purposes within the system (Dreikurs, 1950, 1967; Mosak 1979). This perspective encompasses purposeful, goal-oriented behavior; sexual assaults are goal-driven. This is evident in clinical work with offenders. For example, one offender related a theme or factor as to why he raped and killed his victims; he has a small penis and feared he would be rejected by a consensual sexual partner. Through sexual assault and homicide, this offender gets many of his need met besides sexual gratification. (Carich & Calder 2003; Carich, Jones et.al. 1996; Ward & Stewart, 2003) Most of these needs involve power and control over their victims.

Self-Determinism

According to Adler (1941), this is a concept that emphasizes that individuals make conscious decisions and choices. Decisions to rape and/or murder are complex

choices made at all levels of awareness, including a variety of experiential domains (Carich & Metzger 1999, 2004; Carich & Calder 2003). The act of entering a deviant cycle, accessing deviant sexually violent “scripts” and ego states requires a sense of decision-making. For example, a serial rapist told this chapter’s first author that at night as he was driving down a street near his house, if he turned right he would go to his home, and if he turned left he would rape and possibly kill a victim. Fortunately for the intended victim, he turned right and went home. Another serial child molester and rapist of adolescents and adults consciously made a decision one night to rape or not when he spotted a female potential victim who was using the phone near a gas station. As she drove away, he decided that he would indeed kidnap and kill her. Again, this victim was spared when she left the gas station and unknowingly escaped her would-be killer. These offenders describe themselves and their behavior as “being on autopilot,” but they are making both conscious and unconscious decisions.

Holistic View

This view encompasses the whole-person concept, including the mind-body process (Adler 1941; Dreikurs 1950, 1967; Keeney & Ross, 1983; Mosak 1979). This view has been adapted to include sexual offenders and serial killers. (Carich & Calder 2003; Longo 2002; Carich & Stone 1996). For many, deviance is only one part of themselves. Of course, other sexual offenders and killers are consumed with deviancy. Dennis Rader held jobs, had a family, and was as very active in his church. People who thought they knew him were astonished when he was arrested as the BTK killer. Danny Rowling, however, was a drifter living in the Florida woods in a tent and was obsessed with thoughts of rape and murder (CourtTV.com, 2005). The concept of “self” can be

subdivided into experiential domains, i.e. the cognitive (perceptual) domain, the affective (mood) domain, the behavioral (overt activity) domain, the social (interpersonal) domain, the biophysiological (internal body processes) domain and the contextual (environmental) domain. Emphasis in this chapter is placed on the mind-body connection along cognitive-affective domains involving the developmental encoding processes through developmental experiences.

Developmental Patterns and Processes

The premise of this chapter emphasizes developmental patterns. It is widely accepted that individuals and their social systems evolve through time (Erickson 1963; Carich 1985). Developmental processes are demarcated into patterns and tracks with stages arbitrarily assigned. Similarly, the serial killer moves through these evolutionary processes and patterns. The typical sexual killer does not randomly simply decide to rape and murder; this decision requires a developmental process. Deviant offending patterns and processes emerge. Based upon clinical observations, serial killers offend in a pattern often referred to as cycles, pathways or processes (Carich & Stone 1996, 2001; Carich, Gray, et al 2001; Carich & Calder 2003; Laws 1995, 1999; Ward & Hudson 1998; Bays & Freeman-Longo, 1990). These patterns can be demarcated into arbitrarily selected stages or specific behavioral steps. They evolve through time and incorporate developmental experiences. The serial killer's behavior can clearly be "tracked." Both Dahmer and Ridgeway began to commit violent crimes while still in adolescence, beginning with the killing of animals. Ridgeway was an arsonist by the time he graduated from high school. In tracking the stages of these killers' developmental processes, it is clear that they both experimented with dealing in death as young men,

graduating to full-blown sexual serial homicide in their twenties. Studying the violent forensic behavior in children that develops into antisocial psychopathology in adults, the term “*superpredator*” is often used in the vernacular to describe children who exhibit the “terrible three” traits of a conduct disorder in their early years: cruelty to animals, fire-setting, and bed-wetting. Whether or not early intervention with these children will deter them from developing violent behavior as adults is yet to be proven.

The Etiological – Teleological Mind-Body Developmental Process

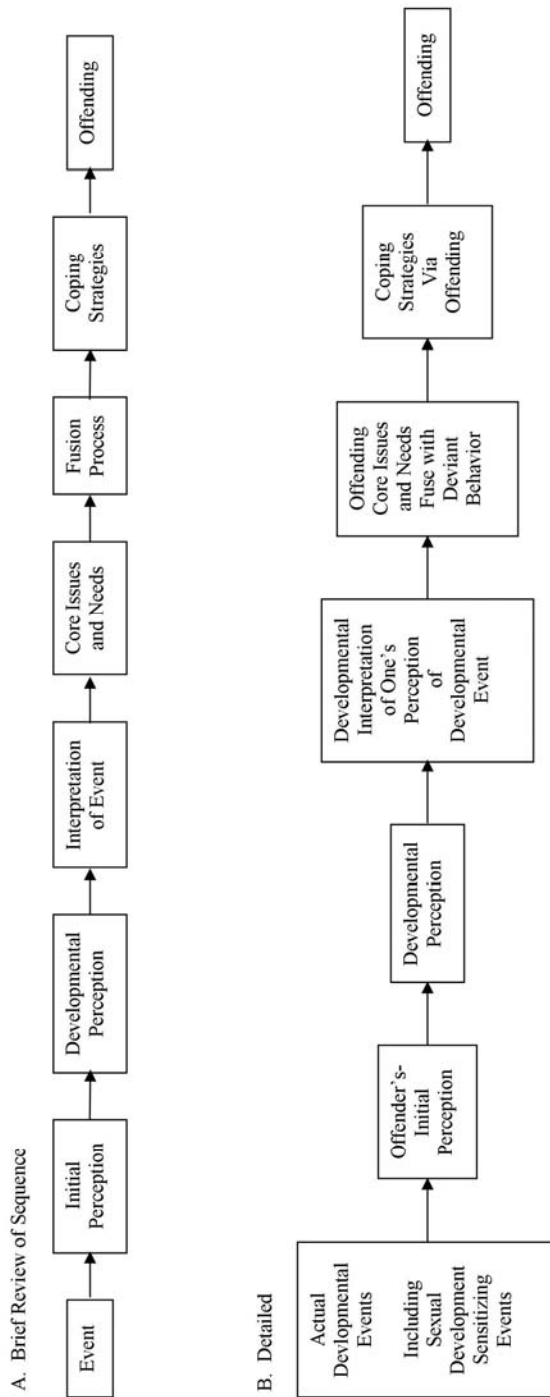
This process emphasizes the mind-body process via SDML&B systems described by Rossi (1993, 2002) and was applied to sexual offenders by Carich & Parwatarikar (1992, 1996). This concept is the key to understanding the understanding the learning and decision-making processes. Etiological factors refer to both generic (global) and specific developmental events and experiences, while teleological factors refer to specific needs, goals and purposes, otherwise known as motivational factors. As the serial offender develops or evolves through life, he/she experiences a number of developmental events and incorporates these internally through the mind-body process, or SDML& B systems.

The developmental perspective is supported by Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas, & McCormack (1986), who explain the role of these formative events. “The developing child encounters a variety of life events, some normative, and others non-normative....One assumption regarding early traumatic events is that the child’s memories of frightening and upsetting life experiences shape the child’s developing thought patterns. The type of thinking that emerges develops structured, patterned behaviors that in turn help generate daydreams and fantasies.” Burgess et. al. (1986) maintains that traumatized children remain fixated on those events. “Early traumatic

events such as direct sexual and physical abuse are influential in the child's social development...concurrent with the abusive event, the child may experience a sustained emotional/physiological arousal level. When this sustained arousal level interacts with repetitive thoughts about the trauma, the child's perceptions and patterns of interpersonal relations may be altered." Female serial killer Eileen Wuornos was raped at an early age. Declaring herself to be a lesbian who hated men, she earned money through prostitution and ended up murdering her customers because she perceived that they attempted to rape her. Her early sexual trauma resulted in the development of her perception that all men are bad, all men are rapists.

Developmental information is encountered, processed and interpreted by the sexual offender as he develops. Interpretations are guided by current frames of reference, based upon multiple levels of cognitive-emotional structures including beliefs and core schemas as described by Polaschek & Ward (2002). The filtering process, the intensity of the experience determines the interpretation of the experience and defines various issues, needs and core beliefs. The interpretation of the experience of the experience leads to specific core issues and needs, and perhaps reframes core beliefs. Core issues stem from core schemas embedded in our internal "templates," sexual scripts with the SDML&B. A detailed view of this developmental process is found in Figure #1 on the following page. In this depiction, the offender encounters a developmental event. The following initial perceptions lead to an interpretation of the event. This interpretation forms an offender's current frame of reference, leading to core issues and needs. The current frame of reference can be altered, depending upon the magnitude or intensity of the experience.

Figure 1
DEVELOPMENTAL/MOTIVATIONAL — OFFENDING DYNAMICS



The “fusion” process refers to the incorporation of deviant information associated with specific needs or issues. Coping strategies are the methods used by the offender to manage or regulate his behavior in relation to his needs. At some point, a cycle or pathway of deviance and offending is initiated, reinforced when needs are met, and maintained. It is thought that this entire process involves the SDML& B system.

This line of thought follows McFall’s (1990) informational processing model as described by Polaschek & Ward (2002) regarding serial rapists. “There has been a modest amount of research focusing on what is arguably one of the most preliminary parts of an information-processing model: men’s perceptions of women’s heterosocial cues, or the process of receiving, perceiving and interpreting the relevant incoming sensory information in heterosocial situations (McFall, 1990). Polaschek & Ward (2002) state “We argue that rapists’ cognitive distortions emerge from underlying causal theories about the nature of their victims, themselves, and the world rather than stemming from unrelated, independent beliefs. These implicit theories function like scientific theories and are used to explain empirical regularities (e.g. other peoples’ actions) and to make predictions about the world. They are relatively coherent and constituted by a number of interlocking beliefs and their component concepts and categories. We suggest that there are likely to be a number of schemas, or as we prefer to call them, implicit theories, that are causally related to individuals’ sexually abusive actions toward women. We have addressed this issue recently, arguing that sexual offenders’ cognitive distortions stem not from unrelated independent beliefs, but from underlying causal (implicit) theories that first develop in childhood.” In essence, Polaschek & Ward emphasize: “Implicit theories develop in individuals from early in life as ways of organizing knowledge about their

own experiences and behavior, as well as that of others. Most implicit theories are thought to be acquired in childhood, although they may develop over the life-span in response to the discovery of substantial contradictory evidence. Additionally, different cultural models and social norms can impact children's early learning environments and influence the way they understand and interpret the world."

Implicit theories define one's frame of reference and are held in unconscious levels. These theories can change, and do in fact seem to change, depending upon how rigidly an offender upholds the theory. Most serial killers appear to be locked into a particular theory. Throughout his adult life, Gary Ridgeway rigidly believed that prostitutes were "garbage" and deserved to die. Implicit theories are encoded through the mind-body connections or the SDML&B systems. In treatment, an offender's implicit theories are accessed, targeted and changed if the offender is to maintain long-term treatment effects. Implicit theories seem to include, at varying levels, the lifestyle themes mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Beech, Ward & Fisher (2005) explored the types of implicit theories held by sexual offenders. Polaschek & Ward (2002) identified five offense-related implicit theories that are common with both rapists and serial sexual murderers:

1. *Women are unknowable* and thus are deceptive in their communication with men.
2. *Women as sex objects*. Women exist to meet the sexual needs of men and constantly desire sex, even if it coerced or violent.
3. *Male sex drive is uncontrollable*. By denying sex to men, women cause men's sexual drive to be beyond the offender's control.

4. *Entitlement.* Men are more powerful than women, and their needs are more important than women's.

5. *Dangerous world.* Since men live in a dangerous world, they need to control and dominate others.

More about these implicit theories is addressed in another chapter. The essential point made in this chapter is that implicit theories – underlying beliefs about the world – make a direct contribution to the thoughts and behaviors of sexual serial killers.

Mind-Body Developmental Encoding Process.

The information processing system occurs at multiple levels of awareness through the SDML&B systems. These systems are housed in the hypothalamus limbic system of the brain. (Rossi, 1993, 2000, 2002) One proposal is that the sexual serial killer's deviant behavior is encoded through the SDML&B systems. A specific typology of development defining the etiology of aggressive behavior is illustrated in Table #1.

This typology includes general themes (ongoing life experiences and situations) and specific events or life experiences that can be traumatic and have great impact. Until he was a teenager, Ted Bundy was told (and he believed) that his birth mother was his sister, and that his grandparents were his true birth parents. When Bundy discovered that his "sister" was in reality his mother, and that he was born illegitimate, this event had traumatic impact upon his ability to form genuine, empathetic relationships later in life. This may be viewed as the etiology of his violent behavior. Within these developmental life experiential themes, an offender becomes sensitized as he is exposed to deviancy.

Table 1

TYPES OF THEMES OF DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES

1. General Themes – ongoing situations, relationships, *etc.*
2. Specific Events – single life experiences or incidents
3. Initial Sensitizing Events in the Deviancy
 - a. Direct exposure – direct involvement, participation or observation (exposure) to the deviancy
 - b. Indirect exposure – indirect exposure and ore involvement in the deviancy (participant-observer)
 - c. Self-generated – deviant events that you generated or discover on your own

This sensitization process may be due to direct exposure, observation from a distance, or random self-generated behavior. Life experiences are encoded into contextual memory states. Deviant patterns are engrained into stored memory or sexual scripts within an offender's internal template. The deep-seated core beliefs that form one's implicit theories of life support these deviant patterns. An offender accesses his implicit deviant theories and then behaves accordingly when "cycling" or committing crimes. Therefore, the serial killer accesses deviant states derived from sexual scripts and implicit theories. These killers, at an extreme level, seem to exclusively access deviant states, while other types of offenders may not.

A serial sexual killer learns to meet various needs from sexual aggression and violence. Needs or core issues stem from translating life experiences into his own frame of reference. All people have issues and needs that stem from life experiences which, in healthy individuals, are met through socially acceptable means. Most people have life experiences that teach them to meet needs and core beliefs in non-aggressive ways. A violent offender learns to meet his needs through deviant behavior. Examples of the specific needs of such an offender include abandonment/acceptance/rejection issues, feelings of inferiority, poor self esteem, lack of real intimacy with others, loneliness, power and control needs, desires for revenge, and a need for attention. Jeffrey Dahmer had such a poor sense of self-worth – as an alcoholic homosexual – and fears of abandonment and rejection that he killed, dismembered and ate his victims in an attempt to create "love slaves" that would never, ever leave him. The mere act of committing a sexual assault and/or homicide evokes a high level of adrenaline, thus reinforcing the

process and false fulfillment of needs. At least, until the next time the offender's needs overwhelm him after a "cooling-off" period.

Mind-Body Process.

Rossi (1993, 2002) proposes that the key mind-body processes occur through the hypothalamus limbic system of the brain. Information from the "outside world" is perceived and encoded within the brain through bio-molecular processes via the exchange of informational substances. Thus, learning occurs at all levels of awareness as information is processed and translated within one's frame of reference through Piaget & Inhelder's (1963) concept of accommodation and assimilation; incorporating new data into existing beliefs and changing current beliefs to include conclusions arrived at through new data. It's thought that most learning occurs within a psycho-bio-physiological stating, thus creating state-dependent memory systems as information is perceived, interpreted, translated and stored into memory at multiple levels. The specific mind-body processes occur at molecular levels involving manipulation of the "housekeeping genes (Rossi, 1993). Although some researchers suggest that aggression stems from "hard-wired" structures within the brain, (Hare, 1993) while this chapter's authors suggest that "soft-wiring" (nurture) interplays with "hard wiring" structures (nature) and this inter-relationship produces learning. Thus, the encoding process involves the interplay of both housekeeping and genetic genes to create the outcome.

Case Example: The clinical description of a pedophile child/adolescent rapist illustrates the concept of SDML&B. Rapist "Jack" had a dysfunctional childhood, complete with numerous negative life experiences including sexual molestation by his father and perceived abandonment by his family and peers. After completing a fourteen-

year sentence for molesting his seven-year-old daughter, he was very proud of completing an associate degree in college. Upon returning to his parents' home one evening, he noticed there was a footprint on his degree certificate. He accessed and entered a "rage state" and blamed his now fourteen-year-old daughter. In fact, he intended to rape and kill her; he ripped her clothes off and trapped her in the bathroom. His daughter vomited out of fear and "grossed him out." Jack abruptly left the scene and ran down the street – the aggressive state had collapsed. Prior to the contemplated rape and murder, his apartment overlooked a playground that fed his deviant fantasies of raping children. Jack's thoughts and behavior has special relevance to the treatment of sexual offenders, including sexual serial killers.

TREATMENT APPLICATIONS

The current treatment approach with sexual offenders is cognitive-behavioral group therapy. The authors have added the term "dynamic" to this approach, with emphasis on all experiential domains. This reflects a deeper, more intensive treatment approach that accesses and restructures the offender's implicit theories and underlying core schemas. This process typically occurs at intense emotional unconscious levels.

Amenability Issues

Many professionals view serial killers and psychopaths as "untreatable," even with today's scientific technology and advances in treatment techniques. It is certainly true that some of these offenders cannot be reached due to their high level of deviant thoughts and behaviors. Clinical experience with this population indicates distinct differences between those that can be treated vs those who cannot include the available level of internal resources including inhibitions or barriers, their of motivation to change, their

level of violence or psychopathy as indicated by past behavior, their victimology pattern (i.e. number of victims, types of victims, length of offending time, etc.), and their degree of psychopathology (i.e. the presence of psychosis, other personality disorders and paraphilias). To be successful in treatment and avoid recidivism, the sexual serial killer must have the desire to stop his violent sexual homicides. Although, after apprehension and conviction, sexual serial killers are invariably confined to correctional institutions, it should not be assumed that their violent behavioral patterns will cease. They do not. If housed in general population, these offenders merely turn their sexual violence onto other prisoners whom they perceive as vulnerable, or even onto the correctional authorities who may be under-trained in how manipulative and dangerous these offenders are. Taxpayers whose dollars are spent to “warehouse” sexual serial killers for the rest of their lives often wonder “Why bother to treat them? They’ll never get out of prison.” Thinking dispassionately, the answer is clear: although these offenders will never stalk our streets again, a maximum security correctional facility is one of the most expensive to maintain and dangerous communities in the world today. Untreated violent offenders pose a tremendous threat to other non-violent offenders who are amenable to rehabilitation, to the correctional support staff, and to the public at large when an escape is successful. On 4 November 2005, multiple murderer Charles Thompson escaped from death row in a Houston penitentiary. Thompson had only been at the facility for one week before he escaped. He managed to obtain civilian clothes and a phony ID badge, told the correctional staff that he was an attorney, and simply walked out of prison. Considering the extreme violence of his double murders, Thompson was certainly a threat to society and was captured a week after his escape. (CourtTV.com, 2005). Long ago we abandoned

the concept of “prison colonies” such as Botany Bay (Australia), and Devil’s Island in favor of more humane and civilized approaches to crime. But this “humanity” comes with a price – paid by the American taxpayers – and consistently stirs up controversy about the death penalty as being “cruel and unusual punishment.”

Treatment Parameters and Considerations

The authors of this chapter have direct clinical experience with the criminal justice system and with the violent offender population, (adult and juvenile) including chronic/serial offenders of all sorts. In our experience, serial killers were placed into intensive sex offender treatment groups. These offenders were either civilly committed or had been sentenced by the justice system to extensive time in prison – including those who drew life sentences without parole. These treatment groups were highly charged emotionally and followed the key assumptions discussed earlier in this chapter as specific elements are targeted. These elements and methods of treatment are described by Carich & Calder (2003) and Carich & Mussack (2001).

Key Assumptions

The basic assumptions described earlier in this chapter apply to treatment methods commonly used with sexual offender rehabilitation programs (ATSA, 2001; Carich & Calder, 2003; Marshall & Eccles, 1991; Marshall 1996, 1999, 2005; Marshall, Anderson & Fernandez, 1999). Some of the key assumptions include self-determination and holistic views. Offenders are held completely accountable and responsible for their actions. There are conscious and unconscious “choice points” throughout the offending process, and these choices become the focus of treatment goals.

The holistic view allows the therapist to include the mind-body connection of the SDML&B systems and all other experiential domains within the treatment process. This includes accessing developmental deviant states, collapsing or restructuring existing core schemes and sexual scripts as well as implicit theories. To achieve and maintain long-term change, developmental life experiential states and related issues need to be accessed and re-coded. If successful at any level, the offender learns different interpretations of “outside data” (the re-coding of information) along with issue resolution. Therefore, an offender who utilizes available and newly-developed resources can rebuild non-offending states. The offender’s existing constructs or meanings within his life are altered into non-offending states.

This entire process directly involves accessing and changing existing SDML&B systems while developing new ones. The psycho-physiological processes are altered as old memories and experiences are de-coded and then re-coded. This is accomplished by targeting key elements or dynamic risk factors within the treatment process. A detailed treatment plan of this type was designed by Metzger & Carich (1999), Carich & Adkerson (2003) and Carich & Calder (2003). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide the details of treatment plans since they are unique to each offender. However, a list of necessary treatment elements includes:

1. Offense disclosure and acceptance of personal responsibility
2. Offense-specific cognitive restructuring
3. Offending process (assault cycle) and interventions
4. Victim empathy
5. Arousal control

6. Clinical core issue resolution
7. Social skills, interpersonal restructuring and affective regulation skills
8. Lifestyle restructuring

These factors are supported in relevant literature (Calder, 1999; Carich & Mussack, 2001; Carich & Adkerson 1995, 2003; Carich & Calder 2003; Hanson & Harris 2001; Marshall & Eccles 1991; Marshall 1996, 1999; Marshall et. al. 1999; Grossman, 1985, Grossman, Martis & Fichter 1999; English 1998; Schwartz & Cellini 1995; Metzger & Carich 1999; Thornton 2002).

With the higher-level or “hard core” offenders (i.e. serial/chronic psychopathic personality disorders) and serial killers, the intensity of treatment is elevated in order to bring about a higher level of change in the behavior of the offender. “Change” is defined in terms of recovery based upon eight factors mapped in various treatment plans and recovery schemas (Carich 1999; Carich & Adkerson 1995, 2003; Carich & Calder 2003; Metzger & Carich 1999). To evoke change, several key points are emphasized in conjunction with the targeted elements.

Key Points

First, it’s important to facilitate some level of internal motivation by the offender. “Motivation” is defined as the desire and commitment to stop offending (Carich 1999; Carich & Calder 2003). The higher the level of motivation, the more receptive the offender is to engage in the therapeutic process and make necessary changes to avoid recidivism. This process is enhanced by developing a good therapeutic relationship with the offender (Marshall 2005; Blanchard 1995).

The second key point is that the clinician needs to “connect” or develop rapport with the offender. There should be an acceptable level of professional bonding or attachment. The best strategies for developing timely rapport with an offender include motivational interviewing skills and approaches (Miller & Rollnick, 1991, 2002) and utilizing Ericksonian approaches (Erickson, Rossi & Rossi, 1976; Lankton & Lankton, 1983).

A related area to core schemas is motivating core issues and needs. The offender’s vulnerabilities are further revealed, as his antisocial behavior begins to change. At the same time, the offender is held fully accountable for his behavior. Ultimately, the serial killer targets, and then changes, lifestyle behaviors while learning self-regulation and arousal control skills. He identifies his cycle and/or offending processes and develops effective interventions.

An important aspect of treatment is enhancing victim empathy and remorse. This is balanced with developing an appropriate self-concept. Within the intensive treatment process, the offender must take risks and develop adequate relationships based upon quality and true intimacy, thereby learning interpersonal and relationship skills.

The key task in treatment is “reaching” the offender, mobilizing his resources toward change, reducing deviancy while increasing appropriate behavior and teaching management skills. Treatment is a very long-term process, at best, and is viewed on a continuum, perhaps indefinitely. Again, we note that some sexual serial killers just cannot be therapeutically reached with our current practices and technologies, therefore must be carefully managed in secure correctional centers.

CONCLUSION

Sexual homicide offenders are distinguished from non-sexual serial killers; for example, Jeffrey Dahmer committed sexually-motivated murders, while Charles Starkweather killed, but did not sexually assault his victims during his infamous “spree killings.” Sexual serial killers are typically severely personality disordered and psychopathic to various degrees. These individuals are some of the most difficult to treat, and the vast majority of professionals in the forensic field will not attempt this type of treatment.

This chapter has examined the developmental process of the serial killer, and a mind-body developmental theory was outlined. Offenders journey through a developmental process just like any other person. This process, along with “soft and hard-wiring” processes, deviant behavior becomes encoded through the SDML&B system that is housed in the hypothalamic-limbic system of the brain. This creates the offender’s deviant sexual scripts and implicit theories found in one’s internal templates. Ward & Hudson (2000) describe templates and scripts that are conscious and unconscious constructed of deep-seated inner belief, cognitive schemes and themes. They state “A third view construes “scripts” as a set of rules for predicting, interpreting, responding to, and controlling a set of interpersonal meaningful scenes, for example, knowing how to respond appropriately during an argument with a partner in a restaurant. Finally, social scripts provide a template with which to structure fundamental social interactions and help individuals locate values, beliefs, and goals within a cultural context.”

In terms of treatment, perhaps the most severe sexual serial killers could not benefit from treatment sufficiently to warrant their release from incarceration. However, to

effect treatment, a therapeutic relationship with the offender is essential. This requires cohesive group involvement where there is a combination of support, challenges, and accountability. It is self-defeating if group members enable each other to continue deviant patterns of thought and behavior. The offender needs to be receptive to the treatment process since this opens up vulnerabilities within the offender. At this point, various necessary changes can be evoked and sustained. The underlining key point is that the offender must have internal motivation to change.

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