

Titus House Newsletter

Titus House Ministries, PO Box 2376, Tijeras, NM 87059

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Our addiction to criminalizing addicts

By Sandy from NARSOL



Portions of this are written based on conversations with several registrants. No one is identified, and any reference to them is stated in general terms.

By Sandy and John D . . . The latest figure for persons registered as sex offenders in the United States is over 795,000 as of August 2024. A very high percentage of offending behavior was

for what has come to be known as CSAM, child sexual abuse material. (In the federal system, it is often still called child pornography.) For the first time, the percentage of those charged within this category exceeded 50% of the total. The latest available data from 2024 shows that the percentage of sexual abuse offenders sentenced for charges related to child pornography increased to 52.8%. This includes behaviors ranging from viewing something accidentally, to seeking it out, to downloading, to sharing, to collecting, to production and selling.

The problem

Regardless of where one's behavior falls along that line, there is a criminal charge and a corresponding sentence meted out. Any behavior that molests a child is and should be a matter for the criminal justice system, but isn't that the end of the chain? Doesn't it start with viewing, progress to downloading, to sharing, to collecting, and then, like most addictions that need more and more to achieve the same high, move on to production? Certainly, most who view, download, even share, progress no further, but doesn't everyone who continues start with just looking?

A solution

What if, in those early stages, we treated sex addiction as we do its peer compulsions, like alcoholism or substance use disorder, rather than a crime? Accountability could still be satisfied with the threat of prosecution if the treatment program was not completed. Could that result in fewer progressions to the hands-on behaviors that wreak the most harm?

We cannot know for sure, but we do know this: What we do now does not stop it or help prevent it. It increases every year.

Other addictive behaviors—alcoholism, substance abuse, gambling—are known for their prominent treatment and support programs. Additionally, there are a number of sex addiction 12-step programs such as Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous and Sex Addicts Anonymous. The International Institute for Trauma and Addictions Professionals credentials a variety of addiction treatment providers, including Certified Sex Addiction Therapists, all who are trained in trauma-informed care, including the cycle of sexual abuse and effective ways of treatment that are not shame-based.

Think of it this way: What would happen if someone at age 13 turned to drugs and alcohol to cope with their trauma? They would become an addict, possibly land in prison, be released, receive compassionate treatment at a drug rehab, and be celebrated and even awarded for overcoming their obstacles. Now, what if that same person turned to pornography and sex at age 13 — just when youth are discovering their sexuality? What if their journey took them, not from alcohol to party drugs to hard methamphetamines but rather to porn, more risqué porn, and finally to illegal materials? Society treats them as monsters, restricts their movement and rights, and puts them on a public list where they will be targeted with vigilantism and shame.

Sadly, the criminal legal system has yet to embrace, or often even consider, taking a trauma-informed, addiction-recovery focused model of harm prevention.

“Safe” phones

A large percentage of those in the first stages of this progression are teenage boys. Some parents, for the purpose of limiting their children's exposure to the internet, only allow them phones that cannot access online sites. Phones made by Gabb™ are a popular brand. Advertised as “kid-safe phones,” parents like them because they protect their children from what is “out there.”

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Our addiction to criminalizing addicts (continued from pg. 1)

Several registrants, however, familiar with the Gabb and other similar phones, have expressed a concern. It has been discovered that some of these “safe” phones allow apps to be installed that open a “keyhole” to the internet. In fact, one of the Gabb phone models includes a disclaimer and warning to parents that while their phone does not have an internet browser installed, “. . . some third-party apps contain backdoor internet access through in-app web browsers.” Probation officers handing these phones out to registrants would do well to heed the warning also. The bigger problem

And what of the broader warning? Unless we start managing addiction to child pornography the same as other recognized addictions, with treatment and support, what do we risk?

We risk more offenders progressing through all the steps to hands-on production and significant harm. An overwhelming majority of those convicted for CSAM/child pornography are males—99.8 percent. We risk the futures of the boys and young men who will find themselves making that first illegal mouse click, making them criminals rather than addicts in treatment and recovery. We will make them registered sex offenders with all it entails: reduced expectation of meaningful employment, damaged community acceptance, destroyed social status and support, often destroyed family connections and support.

NARSOL believes that this risk is too great to take. For several decades, people with addiction problems have been living lives shaped by the criminal system. This has a negative impact not only on each individual but also on society as a whole.

We can stop that now. No; we must stop it now. Offer the option of entering a treatment program to all CSAM users who have not committed hands-on offenses. The reduction in prison costs will offset the cost of proven treatment programs.

The reduction in the number of lives lost and the benefit to society will be incalculable.

If you or someone you care about is misusing sex or pornography and you’re worried they might have a problem, you can refer them to the following resources:

B4UACT

StopItNow.org

The Moore Center for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention’s Prevention.Global

Fellow Travelers Sex Addiction Recovery for Minor Attracted Persons

Sexual Life and Legal Consequences

Innocent Until Proven Guilty: A deep dive into the stages of a sex crime investigation

At MinistryWatch, we run reports almost weekly of pastors getting arrested for various crimes — but an arrest doesn’t mean that person has been found guilty. Just recently, a jury found an Arkansas pastor who had been arrested on charges of possessing child sexual abuse material not guilty.

“After 17 long months,” the pastor said, “we finally had our day in court, a moment I had prayed for, not just to clear my name, but to affirm a principle that seems increasingly lost in our time: that one is innocent until proven guilty.”

Not all pastors who are arrested are guilty, and not all guilty pastors are arrested. Studies show many sex crimes go unreported, and many reports don’t lead to arrests. With this in mind, it’s helpful to understand both civil and criminal cases — what goes into a civil lawsuit and the process that takes a crime from a reported incident to conviction. Terms like alleged, arraigned, and burden of proof all fall somewhere along the investigation process.

First in a criminal case comes the arrest. Typically, an arrest is based on allegations made by an investigative agency, such as a police force or department of justice. An arrest can only be made based on probable cause — the facts and circumstances exist that would lead a reasonable person to believe a crime has been committed. After making an arrest, law enforcement takes the alleged perpetrator into custody, informs them of the charges, and sometimes questions them. They have the right to remain silent and have an attorney present.

An arrest typically requires someone to report the crime. That said, a low percentage of crimes ever get reported—in 2018, according to a report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, only 24.9% of sexual assault instances were reported to the police. Even then, few reports lead to an arrest. An NBC News investigation into 10 cities found that only 12% of reported rapes in 2023 led to an arrest.

Once a person is arrested they are taken to a detention facility and booked. They are fingerprinted and pose for a mug shot. If a judge sets bail, an individual can go home to await their court date. But, depending on the nature of the crime and other factors, a judge can deny bail. (Continue on page 3)



Innocent Until Proven Guilty: A deep dive into the stages of a sex crime investigation

vania, writes, “You can have a phone that looks like your peers’ so you can avoid the inevitable questions that come when you pull out a flip phone.”

Ironically, the same sorts of phones, even some of the same brands, are given by probation officers to some of the registered sex offenders they monitor, and for the same reason: to prevent them from accessing the internet. Registrants with a first offense of CSAM who are on probation speak of being thankful for the restraints. Prison doesn’t treat their addictions or their compulsions. They aren’t sure they trust themselves. Putting barriers to access is one tool individuals with sex and pornography addiction can use to help prevent them from relapsing into their compulsive behaviors, but it must be accompanied by honesty, openness, and willingness to change. (Continue on page 2)

A civil case begins when a victim brings a civil lawsuit, typically seeking monetary compensation or court orders. The case begins when the plaintiff files the initial suit, stating their claims and desired relief. A civil lawsuit does not require the victim to have reported the crime to police. Typically the lawsuit will be in public record, but sensitive cases can be sealed and certain details redacted.

The first court appearance in a criminal case is called the arraignment. The defendant hears the charges read aloud and can plead guilty, not guilty, or no contest. “No contest” means the person is not disputing the facts of the case, but they are also not pleading guilty. Defendants often plead not guilty to challenge the evidence and give their attorney time to investigate. At this point, the judge might issue a no-contact order—meaning the defendant can’t interact with a particular person or age group. A public defender is assigned to those who can’t afford an attorney to represent them.

Both types of lawsuits include an investigation and discovery process. Attorneys for the prosecution and defense both gather evidence to support their arguments. For sex abuse cases, evidence can be difficult to gather since the crime may have occurred decades prior to the accusation—the average age a person reports childhood sexual abuse, for example, is 52. During this process, the defense attorney can request the evidence the prosecution plans to use. The defense develops a strategy to defend against that evidence. This process can take a long time.

At the trial, the defense and prosecution present their cases. Depending on the circumstances, a jury or judge will deliver a verdict. If guilty, the judge generally determines the sentence.

There are different requirements for criminal and civil cases, an important one being the burden of proof. A criminal case is always brought by the government, and the burden of proof rests on the state prosecutor. The prosecutor must prove the defendant’s guilt “beyond a reasonable doubt.” The defendant is presumed innocent and has no burden of proof.

A civil case, on the other hand, requires meeting a standard of proof called “the preponderance of evidence.” This means that the standard of proof is lower — the plaintiff is required to prove that their claims are more likely true than not, rather than beyond a reasonable doubt.

Of the individuals sentenced in legal cases for sex abuse crimes, 52.8% are sentenced for production of child pornography; 28.3% for travel for prohibited sexual conduct; and 10.7% are sentenced for rape; 2.8% are sentenced for statutory rape; 2.8% for abusive sexual contact; and 2.6% for “Other.”

Once an individual is convicted, they will most likely go to prison. According to the United States Sentencing Commission, 99.2% of individuals convicted of sexual abuse in the fiscal year 2024 were sentenced to prison. The average sentence for individuals convicted of production of child pornography was 273 months. For an individual convicted of criminal sexual abuse (rape), the average sentence was 229 months.

Defendants can accept plea bargains, which avoid trials and sometimes reduce sentences. One report found that 75% of prosecutions lead to plea bargains.



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We're on the Web
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Hebrew 13:3 - Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Remember:
change of address
thankyou for letting
us know that way we
may sustain sending
you your Titus House
Newsletter.

I hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year. Ours was calm, full of peace with rest plenty. Thank you for your patronage, thoughtfulness and for the donations to Titus

House.prison and aftercare ministry program. The renew program judicial order is ongoing meanwhile orange steady step steady begins, February into June. We still need help with fundraising ideas, business ideas and decisions pursuing prayers for our inmates, the Parole Officers and staffs and the communities within, among, throughout this United States, the winter Season itself is beginning with remarkably low temperatures and months before Spring Season. This years winter season our Titus House ministries headquarters has received light snow enough to cover the ground with inches each time more

than two. Until next time do remember to keep our fellow inmates throughout our prisons on your prayer tills. Keep your each selfs in your each daily life schedules and keep encouraged each other and our Officers and Staffs as our councils, wisdoms, workers continue effectiveness efforts toward getting we Americans tucked into addresses steady enough to eat, sleep, continue toward wellness and build for prosperous futures knowingly. Please pray our inmates and that of the Post-Release Supervision maintain efforts with the build care teams and buddies to stay out of harms way and away from temptations. Prices are higher with inflation, taxes are at all time high this century and praising God for the blessings we search for daily can bring about Accomplishments toward continued confidence improvements as a group missing our Titus House Director Alice M. Benson. Keep praying and Championing! Continue your studies and remember also, we are just a postage stamp or telephone call away.



Circle of Concern

has gone **ZOOM**



Circle of Concern is aimed at breaking down isolation and fear by providing a safe place for registrants and their loved ones to get together, build community, and learn ways to step out & take charge of their lives and overcome the stigma they face. The Circle of Concern is a group of concerned registered citizens, family and friends that meet together on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on **January 18, 2026** and **February 15, 2026** 3 pm—4 p.m. MST (Mountain Standard Time). We will meet on Zoom. We encourage and try to help each other. It is a safe place to share our strengths and struggles. We hope you will join us. If you are planning to attend call Don at **(505) 315-7940..**