# Strength-based Approaches to Online Child Sexual Abuse: Using Self-Management Strategies to enhance Desistance Behaviour in Users of Child Sexual Exploitation Material

## Abstract

*Purpose:* Increasing numbers of convictions for the use of Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) call for enhanced measures to prevent this type of offending. Strength-based approaches such as the Good-Lives-Model have made significant contributions to the management of offenders who have sexually abused against children.

*Design/methodology/approach:* The present study explored the application of these models to the rehabilitation and desistance behaviour of CSEM users, based on a thematic analysis of the self-managed desistance strategies employed by 26 offenders.

*Findings:* The findings confirmed the value of strength-based approaches in understanding self-management strategies used to enhance desistance behaviour in CSEM users.

*Research and practice implications*: The empirical and theoretical findings were then combined into a conceptual framework aimed to enhance preventative efforts and interventions targeted at undetected CSEM users.

*Originality/value:* This paper provides the first conceptual and empirical model of prevention and desistance behaviour specific to CSEM offending.

*Keywords:* child sex offending, child sexual exploitation material, Good Lives Model, strengths-based approaches, desistance, prevention

**Strength-based Approaches to Online Child Sexual Abuse: Using Self-Management Strategies to enhance Desistance Behaviour in Users of Child Sexual Exploitation Material**

The number of individuals being sentenced for child sex offences has increased across the UK (Crown Prosecution Service, 2016), resulting in significant policing and criminal justice demands, especially with regards to the investigation and management of historical and internet-related offending behaviour. For online offenders in particular, the issue of safe and cost-effective offender management is compounded by the fact that the existing empirical research body on online offenders is still limited and diverse, often based on very small and heterogeneous sample sizes (see Babchishin, Hanson, & VanZuylen, 2015). Thus, it is important to consider existing research, treatment, and policy conjointly to inform innovative ways of preventing and responding to online child sex offenders (see McCartan, Merdian, Kettleborough, & Perkins, under review).

With the increase of conviction rates for viewing, distribution, and production of online Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) in the last two decades, a need emerged to explore online child sexual abuse both empirically and conceptually, initially to inform offender risk assessment and sentencing decisions (e.g., Long, Alison, Tejeiro, Hendricks, & Giles, 2016; Taylor, Holland, & Quayle, 2001; Webb, Craissati, & Keen, 2007) and then to develop effective and risk-appropriate interventions for this type of sexual offending behaviour (e.g., Hayes & Middleton, 2006).

Seto (2013) provided a conceptual model of the link between CSEM offending behaviour and child sexual abuse. In his Motivation-Facilitation Model, Seto postulates an interaction of motivational factors (e.g., a sexual interest in children) and facilitative factors (e.g., high levels of anti-sociality) that serve to translate motivational factors into actions

which, within certain situational contexts, lead to the sexual abuse of a child. Based on interviews and psychometric profiles of convicted and/or admitted CSEM users, Merdian, Perkins, Dustagheer and Glorney (under review) expanded Seto's (2013) Model and devised the Pathways Model of CSEM Use, a case formulation model that assesses for an offender's pathway to CSEM offending behaviour and informs responsive treatment and relapse prevention planning based on the individual's identified strengths and offending propensities. The CSEM Pathways Model is theoretically grounded in the Motivation-Facilitation Model and Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition Model. However, it further distinguishes between facilitative factors as both characteristics of the person (e.g., low internal inhibitions) as well as the environment (e.g., access to CSEM online) instead of the role of victim resistance, given that it is secondary rather than first-hand victimisation involved in online offending. The CSEM Pathways Model identifies emotional disconnectedness, both long-term (e.g., interrupted parent-child attachments) and short-term (e.g., lack of intimacy within an individual's social network or relationship), significant negative life events (e.g., job loss, long-term sickness), and the perceived reinforcing features of the online environment (e.g., feeling of "being in a bubble" not related to their real-life, or failure to appreciate the harm being done) as key contributors to the individual's offending behaviour. In addition, the model integrates aspects from the strength-based approaches by assessing for protective factors (e.g., a supportive social circle) and the individual's evaluation of their own offending behaviour (*positive*, e.g., as a stress reliever, *vs. negative*, e.g., as a stress inducer). Thus, in line with the functional analysis approach, the Pathways Model focuses assessment on the function the offending behaviour fulfils for the individual, what needs are met by the offending behaviour, and how this affects the individual's future learning.

The empirical literature concerning CSEM use has already identified a number of functions relating to this offending behaviour. In a series of interviews with convicted CSEM

users, Taylor and Quayle (2003) identified six principal functions: (1) sexual arousal, (2) satisfaction from the collection process, (3) to foster online social contacts, (4) escaping real-life problems for them, (5) as a form of "therapy" that had reportedly prevented them from progressing to contact child sexual abuse, and (6) as a "by-product" of their online engagement. The identified functions have been expanded by other studies (e.g., Merdian, Wilson, Thakker, Curtis, & Boer, 2013; Seto, Reeves, & Jung, 2010; Sheldon & Howitt, 2007; Surjadi, Bullens, Van Horn, & Bogaerts, 2010), and other potential motives have been identified (see Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 around here]

Dervley, Perkins, Whitehead, Bailey, Gillespie, and Squire (2017) provided initial support for the importance of understanding one's offending motivation, the role of one's "offending identity" and how to move beyond this in CSEM desistance behaviour. Based on the evaluation of a community-based intervention programme designed for CSEM users, they identified three key themes to motivate positive change, namely, (1) identifying oneself as capable to change, (2) provision of a supportive and honest environment, and (3) developing an offence-free identity. However, the psychological processes underlying these themes need to be explored. Based on the existing research of CSEM users, Bartels and Merdian (2016) qualitatively extracted core beliefs, or implicit theories, as potential cognitive facilitators of CSEM offending behaviour. They identified five implicit theories unique to this offender group, namely, "Unhappy World" (the belief that the world is a sad, unhappy place), "Children as Sexual Objects" (the perception of the children portrayed in CSEM as sexual objects rather than human beings), "Nature of Harm (CSEM-variant)" (the general acceptance that contact sexual offending is damaging but perceiving their own behaviour as different from the abuse itself; and an argument based on the degree of harm portrayed in the viewed material); "Self as Uncontrollable" (a perception that one is "addicted" to the

offending behavior), and "Self as Collector" (a perception that one's self-concept is linked to the collecting element rather than the sexual content of the material). These core beliefs exist within a wider implicit theory of "Reinforcing Nature of the Internet" as a space that provides anonymous, fast, and affordable access to any information required. These implicit theories provide insight in how the offenders view themselves, their offending behaviour, and the context they interact with, and as such are critical considerations for any intervention development.

In the last decade, sex offender management, especially sex offender treatment and rehabilitation, has increasingly integrated strength-based approaches, most notably the Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (RNR; Andrews & Bonta, 2006) and the Good Lives Models (GLM; Ward, 2002; Willis, Yates, Gannon, & Ward, 2013). The RNR postulates that the type and depth of a rehabilitative intervention that an offender receives should be matched to their level of *risk* of reoffending, their criminogenic *needs*, and their ability, motivation, and learning style (*responsivity*). The GLM postulates that all humans strive for the same *primary goods*, such as "healthy living", "inner peace", or "community", and that enhancing these primary goods in offender rehabilitation will eventually lead to reduction in criminogenic needs. These primary goods are expressed through *secondary goods*, which are goals that are instrumental to achieve one's primary goods, such as "completing school" to satisfy the primary good of "knowledge and excellence at work" (Ward, Vess, Collie, & Gannon, 2006). Often, criminogenic needs are expressed in these secondary goals, for example "becoming a gang member" to attain the primary good of "community". Therefore, sex offender treatment is aimed to reorient an individual's secondary goods to enable them to achieve their primary

goods in an adaptive way (see Table 2; Willis et al., 2013), and thus presents a functional analysis of the offending behaviour (Craig, Browne, & Beech, 2008).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

It could thus be argued that the GLM places the RNR into a broader framework that defines a common direction of offender rehabilitation interventions, with both models affirming the argument that sex offenders are not that radically different from non-offenders and/or other non-sex offenders (Willis, Prescott, & Yates, 2013). Despite some criticism on these strengths-based approaches in general and in the specifications of integrating both theoretical models (e.g., Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011; Looman & Abracen, 2013; Ward & Brown, 2003; Ward & Stewart, 2003), both RNR and GLM have become a significant cornerstone for Western sex offender treatment and community re-integrative practices, like Circles of Support and Accountability (Hanvey, Philpot, & Wilson, 2011).

Given the low rate of historic and recidivistic offending behaviour (Faust, 2014; Seto, Hanson, & Babchishin, 2011) and the resulting focus on community intervention and integration with CSEM populations (Dervley et al., 2017), the philosophy underlying the described strength-based approaches highlights them as conceptually attractive as a framework for these efforts. The empirically identified functions (Taylor & Quayle, 2003; Merdian et al., 2013; Seto, et al., 2010; Sheldon & Howitt, 2007; Surjadi et al., 2010) link clearly with the primary goods identified in the GLM and further supports the application of the GLM for this offender group; for example, CSEM is used to seek and facilitate social relationships (primary good of *community*), for sexual gratification (primary good of *pleasure*), or to escape reality (primary good of *inner peace)*. The functions are mediated by implicit theories, and as such these are key information sources for their secondary good attainment according to the GLM. However, the application of strength-based approaches to the rehabilitation and desistance behaviour of CSEM users as a specific subgroup has not

been empirically investigated. In addition, identified CSEM users are only a subgroup of CSEM users; data reported from confidential assessment and treatment services for men who self-identify as having committed a contact child sexual offence or CSEM-related offending in the UK (Gillespie, Bailey, Squire, Carey, Eldridge, & Beech, 2016) and Germany (Beier, Grundmann, Kuhle, Scherner, Konrad, & Amelung, 2015) have alerted to the high number of undetected offenders who are accessing CSEM online and the need for preventative efforts and interventions targeted to support self-managed desistance behaviour.

The present study thus aimed to investigate the application of strength-based approaches in general, and the GLM in specific, to the rehabilitation and desistance behaviour of CSEM users as the population of interest. A second research aim was to expand these models as a framework for preventative efforts and interventions targeted at undetected offenders, as a specific criminogenic need of this offending subgroup.

## Method

### Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited from a community treatment centre and national probation services via their professional staff. Individuals were eligible for this study if they had been arrested and/or convicted for their engagement with illegal images of children, if they were of at least 18 years of age, were of male gender, had a sufficient understanding of English reading and writing and no impairment that affected the person's ability to make an informed decision about participation or to understand the test material.

### Procedure and Stimulus Material

The current study is part of a large research project on the motivational and facilitative factors related to CSEM use. A comprehensive questionnaire pack was designed by the research team, following extensive literature review and peer consultation, and requests information on demographics, personal and sexual history, and offending behaviour.

It includes a number of established scales (such as the Multiphasic Sex Inventory; Nichols & Molinder, 2003) and some open-ended questions, such as "When did you start using pornography?". Participants were provided hard-copies of the pack for completion.

Only items of relevance for the current research question are included in this study, namely: "Has there been a time you did not access Child Sexual Exploitation Material? If yes, what was different at this time?"

**Participants**

Overall, the research question was presented to 26 self-identified CSEM users. Participants had a mean age of 46 years ($SD = 11$), and 84.6% self-identified as white British. Most of the sample were either single (46%) or married (38%) at the time of the assessment; three participants were divorced and one participant was separated. More than half (54%) of the sample did not have children or step-children. All but two participants held a formal qualification; six participants had a university degree, ten participants had sat either O-Levels or A-Levels, four participants held a diploma, and two people held a National Vocational Qualification. Sixty-nine percent of the sample were in employment at the time of the study (with more than 60% working in non-manual professions), 19% were unemployed, with the remaining sample describing their employment situation as "other".

**Data Analysis**

A mixed-method analysis was employed for this study, combining descriptive analysis with inductive qualitative analysis using Thematic Analysis (TA; Braun & Clarke, 2006). All responses were analysed by the first other and validated by the research team; any discrepancy was discussed and revised until agreement was reached.

**Results**

**Self-managed desistance behaviour**

Twenty-three participants (88.5%) affirmed that they had desisted from viewing CSEM at some point during their offending period; two people negated the response, and one person did not respond to the question. For one of the participants who negated desistance behaviour, their qualitative response still described several desistance attempts during their offending period. Twenty-two participants (84.6%) provided a qualitative comment with regards to "What was different at this time?".

Overall, the qualitative responses provided reflected the theoretical framework presented in the CSEM Pathways Model and could be classed into four overarching themes, (1) a change in external facilitators, (2) a change in internal facilitators, (3) a change in both internal and external facilitators, and (4) a change in underlying motivation. .

**Change in external facilitators**. Only five participants reported a change in external factors as a cause of their desistance behaviour. These mainly referred to a reduction in opportunity, such as not having access to computers or specific file sharing programmes, or not being alone in the house anymore. Other participants pointed to the positive life-style changes that facilitated an offence-free life, such as a new relationship or less work-stress; as one participant stated: "I'm happy and [have a ] healthy, way of life and my future, my lifestyle is a lot of better and my family is better and feel so happy in non-abusive lifestyle."

**Change in internal facilitators.** The majority of responses ($n = 7$) described a change in their internal facilitators, mainly because they had no need or less time to offend: "I was much closer to my family, had a closer social circle. Was much more engaged in hobbies like gaming and walking." Others reported a change of mind, often presented with a strong emotional commitment, such as "I would force myself to stop" or "I just made myself stop". A change in internal facilitators could also arise from a different, more negative evaluation of the offending behaviour, e.g., "I felt free, free from guilt and worries about getting arrested" or "[I] didn't really like what I saw, felt sad towards them.".

**Change in both internal and external facilitators**. However, a number of participants reported that the internal change alone was not sufficient to change their offending behaviour: "I found it impossible to keep the promise to myself"; "because I didn't change my life in other areas, I think that is the reason I relapsed and went back to looking". Six participants specifically referred to a combination of internal and external factors as supporters of their desistance behaviour. Many participants reported how they purposefully orchestrated a situational change to increase their internal inhibitions. One participants reported he "concerted efforts to break the habit on landmark events i.e. moving to new flat, death of grandfather etc. I would delete my 'archive' as a gesture of finality.". Another one reported: "Sometimes I'd wipe my hard drive and rebuild my pc to try to purge myself." Again, the emotive language used points to the emotional commitment involved in these desistance attempts.

**A change in underlying motivation**: Four participants reported a change in their motivational state, linked to previously present offence-related propensities; this was different from a change in internal inhibitions, for example where participants reported a loss or change in their sexual interest in child sexual exploitation material: "[I] actually preferred different porn" or "downloaded for 18 months and then lost interest."

These responses indicate that most desistance attempts reflect a change in opportunity alongside, and enhanced by an increase in internal inhibitions, which is in line with Seto's (2013) MFM and Finkelhor's (1984) Precondition Model. In some cases these factors were serendipitously or deliberately linked by participants to further enhance their desistence.

### Discussion

The current study aimed to explore desistance behaviour of CSEM users, based on their reported self-management strategies prior to their arrest. Identified CSEM offenders only represent the "tip of the iceberg" of the much larger group of CSEM users who remain

active but undetected to criminal justice system (Beier et al., 2015); a population that is emerging within the academic literature (McCartan et al., under review). The GLM (e.g., Ward, 2002) is a theoretical model that postulates that criminal behaviour can be defined as a functional misplacement of human striving towards common primary goods, such as "community" or "inner peace". Interventions targeting criminal behaviours should thus be focused on replacing maladaptive secondary goods with (socially acceptable) adaptive goods, thus focusing on the individual's inherent motivation to lead a positive life as a potential strength. The present study explored the value of the strength-based conceptual approach of the GLM as a framework to enhancing self-managed desistance behaviour with this offender subgroup. The findings show that many participants offended for a significant time before they were arrested, and that the majority had attempted to desist at some point during their offending period, with varying successes and using varying strategies. The findings of the study supported and validated the structural elements of the CSEM Pathways Model (Merdian et al., under review), that were theoretically informed by Seto (2013) and Finkelhor (1984)'s distinction of motivational and facilitative factors. Overall, four overarching themes emerged in this study, namely (1) a change in underlying motivation, (2) a change in internal facilitators, (3) a change in external facilitators, or (4) a change in both internal and external facilitators. According to Finkelhor, it could be argued that changes in the motivational state are the most impactful ones to desist from future offending behaviour; however, it is difficult to ascertain from the participants' responses if the reported motivational changes (e.g., a change in sexual interest profile) resulted as a consequence of other variables, such as a change in internal facilitators (e.g., experience of guilt following exposure to CSEM), or as a qualitatively different response. However, the key finding from the present study is the notion that each contributing factor to offending behaviour equally portrays an opportunity to engage in desistance behaviour.

With regards to the application of strength-based approaches in general, and the GLM specifically, the responses provided some interesting insights into common themes that supported desistance behaviour, mostly concerning positive relationships or fulfilling work lives. This could suggest that if a higher number of primary goods are fulfilled prosocially, the urge to offend may be less pronounced. In addition, the responses concerning internal facilitators already point to a shift in the individual's attempt to attain secondary human goods: When the CSEM users felt that their primary needs were met elsewhere (e.g., *"I was much more engaged in hobbies like gaming and walking."*), maladaptive secondary goals (i.e., CSEM use as a distractor) are replaced with adaptive approach-behaviours (i.e., gaming, walking). Overall, these suggestions support empirical findings highlighting the role of stable employment and positive social relationships for desistance behaviour in contact sex offenders (Kruttschnitt, Uggen, & Shelton, 2000) and findings linking general criminal recidivism to absence of drug use, satisfying employment, and stable, positive relationships (for a summary, see Farrall, 2002). In summary, the findings show initial support for the application of strength-based approaches to CSEM offending behaviour, in two ways: (1) in validating the structure of the CSEM Pathway Model (which in itself contains elements of the strength-based approaches), and (2) in the identification of common themes in identified desistance approaches, that both mirror the primary goods identified in the GLM and are in line with the findings relating to other types of offenders. These findings further suggest that strength-based approaches provide a suitable conceptual framework to guide the development of preventative approaches directed at undetected or potential CSEM users.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Table 3 shows the first application of the GLM as a conceptual framework for users of Child Sexual Exploitation Material, based on the empirically identified functions and implicit theories linked to CSEM offending behaviour. For each primary good, it is listed

which secondary goods ("functions" identified in the CSEM literature) the individual may aim to fulfil through their CSEM use, and how this is linked to their cognitive conceptualisation of the world ("implicit theory" identified in the CSEM literature). This can then be translated, based on the preventative strategies empirically identified in the present study, (1) a change in underlying motivation, (2) a change in internal facilitators, (3) a change in external facilitators, or (4) a change in both internal and external facilitators. For example: For the first primary good ("Life"), it is postulated than an individual may engage with CSEM as a way to feel safe and to escape offline stressors, mediated by a perception of the world as an unhappy place. Here, preventative approaches would focus on a reshaping of one's perception of the world as a supportive and safe place. Preventative interventions could include the promotion of general support services that allow for adaptive engagement with one's life stressors, e.g., through routine questions about one's mental health when visiting the GP (change in external facilitators), or reducing one's inhibitions towards accessing them (change in internal facilitators), for example through normalisation of the experience using public media campaigns.

A strength-based approach is not meant to replace the principles and requiements of the criminal justice system but to work alongside it in a public-health, preventative approach. The present paper has delivered an initial application of strength-based approaches on CSEM offending, and provides some insight into how current empirical and theoretical knowledge can inform its prevention and desistance behaviour in a comprehensive and collaborative approach. However, this is only the first, quite crude, step to explore preventative approaches; primary research is needed to validate the identified prevention themes, and to explore in more detail how the GLM can be matched to the underlying functions of any offending behaviour, and CSEM in specific, and be translated into an effectice prevention approach. However, we hope that practitioners working with an individual that has engaged

in CSEM use will take two key messages from this paper: (1) Any step that leads closer to offending behaviour appears to equally present an opportunity for intervention; thus, identifying an individual's offending cycle equally presents an anlysis of potential intervention options. (2) The underlying functions of CSEM use may present maladaptive secondary goods linked to the primary goods identified in the GLM. Thus, effective interventions will not only focus on desistance of offending behaviour but also engage in skills practice how to meet one's primary needs through adaptive, socially acceptable and legal behaviours.

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**Tables**

**Table 1**

*Primary Goods, Common Life Goals, Definitions, & Possible Secondary/Instrumental Goods[1]*

| Primary Good | Common Life Goal | Definition | Possible Secondary/Instrumental Goods |
|---|---|---|---|
| Life (healthy living and functioning) | Life: Living and Surviving | Looking after physical health, and/or staying alive and safe. | Pursuing a healthy diet, engaging in regular exercise, managing specific health problems, earning or stealing money to pay rent or to meet basic survival or safety needs. |
| Knowledge | Knowledge: Learning and Knowing | Seeking knowledge about oneself, other people, the environment, or specific subjects. | Attending school or training courses, self-study (e.g., reading), mentoring or coaching others, attending a treatment or rehabilitation programme. |
| Excellence in Work and Play[2] | Being Good at Work and Play | Striving for excellence and mastery in work, hobbies or leisure activities. | Being employed or volunteering in meaningful work, advancing in one's career; participating in a sport, playing a musical instrument, arts and crafts. |
| Excellence in Agency (autonomy and self-directedness) | Personal Choice and Independence | Seeking independence and autonomy, making one's own way in life. | Developing and following through with life plans, being assertive, having control over other people, abusing or manipulating others. |
| Inner Peace (freedom from emotional turmoil and stress) | Peace of Mind | The experience of emotional equilibrium; freedom from emotional turmoil and stress. | Exercise, meditation, use of alcohol or other drugs, sex, and any other activities that help manage emotions and reduce stress. |
| Relatedness (intimate, romantic, and family relationships) | Relationships and Friendships | Sharing close and mutual bonds with other people, including relationships with intimate partners, family, and friends. | Spending time with family and/or friends, having an intimate relationship with another person. |
| Community | Community: Being Part of a Group | Being part of, or belonging to, a group of people who share common interests, concerns of values. | Belonging to a service club, volunteer group, or sports team; being a member of a gang. |
| Spirituality (finding meaning and purpose in life) | Spirituality: Having Meaning in Life | Having meaning and purpose in life; being a part of a larger whole. | Participating in religious activities (e.g., going to church, prayer), participating in groups that share a common purpose (e.g., environmental groups). |
| Happiness | Happiness | The desire to experience happiness and pleasure. | Socialising with friends, watching movies, sex, thrill-seeking activities, drinking alcohol, taking drugs. |
| Creativity | Creativity | The desire to create something, do things differently, or try new things. | Painting, photography, and other types of artistic expression; participating in new or novel activities. |

[1] Adapted from Yates and Prescott (2011a, 2011b), and Yates et al. (2010).
[2] The primary good that has been suggested as being separated into two primary goods (i.e., Excellence in Work and Excellence in Play; Purvis, 2010).

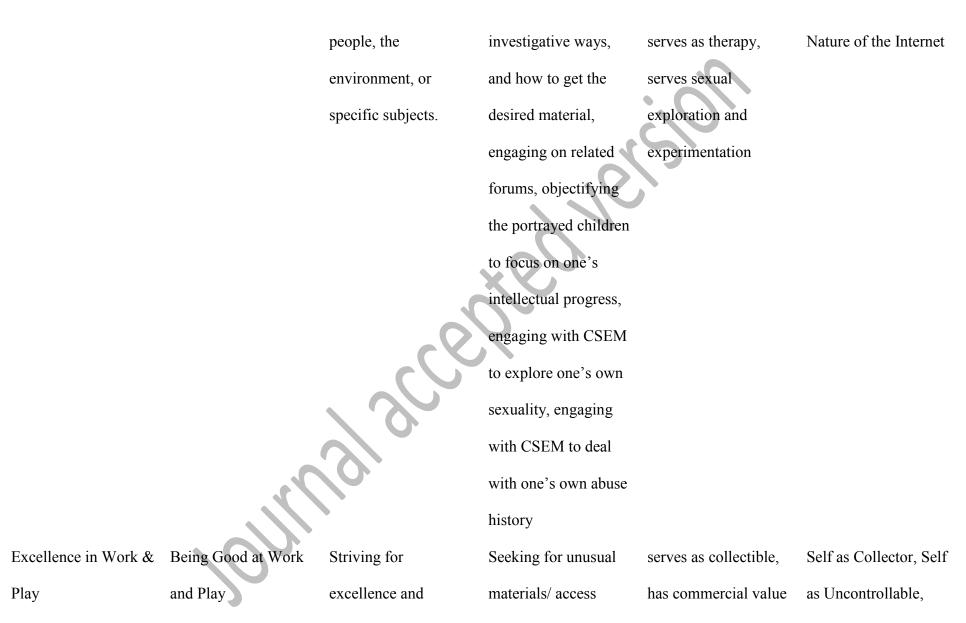**Table 1: Functions of CSEM Offending: Summary of the Literature**

| Child Sexual Exploitation Material |
| --- |
| serves as collectible |
| has commercial value |
| functions as online currency (also for credibility) |
| facilitates social relationships |
| is a means of escaping from the real world |
| is expression of a risk-taking lifestyle |
| is expression of a general criminal lifestyle |
| serves as therapy |
| serves sexual gratification |
| serves sexual exploration and experimentation |
| is an interactive tool in the victim grooming process |
| serves as a template for real-life sexual abuse |
| functions as means for blackmailing a victim |
| to keep as trophy/momentum of the abuse |
| desensitises society in general |

**Table 3: Application of the Good Live Model for Users of Child Sexual Exploitation Material**

| Primary Good | Common Life Goal | Definition | CSEM-related Secondary Goods | Target for Desistance Behaviour | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Functions | Implicit Theories |
| Life (healthy living and functioning) | Life: Living and Surviving | Looking after physical health and/or staying alive and safe. | Engaging online as a way to feel loved/ worthy, engaging online to escape offline stressors, engaging online to earn money to pay rent or meet basic survival needs | has commercial value, functions as online currency (also for credibility), facilitates social relationships, is a means of escaping from the real world | Unhappy World, Children as Sexual Objects, Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |
| Knowledge | Knowledge: Knowing and Learning | Seeking knowledge about oneself, other | Becoming "experts" at online security, | is a means of escaping from the real world, | Children as Sexual Objects, Reinforcing |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | people, the environment, or specific subjects. | investigative ways, and how to get the desired material, engaging on related forums, objectifying the portrayed children to focus on one's intellectual progress, engaging with CSEM to explore one's own sexuality, engaging with CSEM to deal with one's own abuse history | serves as therapy, serves sexual exploration and experimentation | Nature of the Internet |
| Excellence in Work & Play | Being Good at Work and Play | Striving for excellence and | Seeking for unusual materials/ access | serves as collectible, has commercial value | Self as Collector, Self as Uncontrollable, |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | mastery in work, hobbies, or leisure activity | ways, making oneself known as a collector, striving for exchange with other collectors, perception as oneself as intrinsically linked ("addicted") to one's activity | functions as online currency (also for credibility), facilitates social relationships, is expression of a risk-taking lifestyle, to keep as trophy/momentum of the abuse | Children as Sexual Objects, Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |
| Excellence in Agency | Personal Choice and Independence | Seeking independence and autonomy, making one's own way in life | Developing an abuser/collector identity, not disclosing to others, challenging authority/ societal norms | is a means of escaping from the real world, is expression of a risk-taking lifestyle, is expression of a general criminal lifestyle, serves sexual lifestyle | Children as Sexual Objects, Self as Collector, Nature of Harm (CSEM-variant), Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |

| | | | | gratification, serves sexual exploration and experimentation, is an interactive tool in the victim grooming process, serves as a template for real-life sexual abuse, functions as means for blackmailing a victim, desensitises society in general | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Inner Peace | Peace of Mind | The experience of emotional equilibrium; freedom | Use of CSEM as distractor from real-life stressors, | serves as collectible, has commercial value, functions as online | Unhappy World, Self as Collector, Children as Sexual Objects, |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | from emotional turmoil and stress | development of justifications for one's offending behaviour, use of drugs/alcohol alongside offending behaviour, distancing one-self from the abusive component of CSEM, used to engage with one's own abuse | currency (also for credibility), is a means of escaping from the real world, is expression of a general criminal lifestyle, serves as therapy | Nature of Harm (CSEM-variant), Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |
| Relatedness/ Community[1] | Relationships and Friendships/ Being Part of a Group | Sharing close and mutual bonds with other people, including relationships with | Engagement with CSEM to facilitate social relationships, engagement with CSEM as | functions as online currency (also for credibility), facilitates social relationships, is a means of escaping | Unhappy World, Children as Sexual Objects, Nature of Harm (CSEM-variant), Self as |

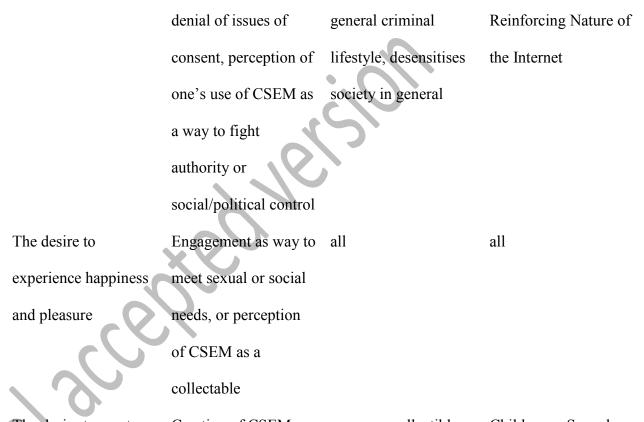| | | intimate partners, family, and friends/ Being part of, or belonging to, a group of people who share common interests, concerns, or values | substitute/consequence of a desired relationship with a minor | from the real world, serves sexual gratification, is an interactive tool in the victim grooming process, serves as a template for real-life sexual abuse, functions as means for blackmailing a victim, to keep as trophy/momentum of the abuse | Uncontrollable, Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spirituality | Spirituality: Having Meaning in Life | Having meaning and purpose in life; being part of a larger whole | Perception of sexual contact as an expression of love, | is expression of a risk-taking lifestyle, is expression of a | Unhappy World, Nature of Harm (CSEM-variant), |

| | | | denial of issues of consent, perception of one's use of CSEM as a way to fight authority or social/political control | general criminal lifestyle, desensitises society in general | Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Happiness | Happiness | The desire to experience happiness and pleasure | Engagement as way to meet sexual or social needs, or perception of CSEM as a collectable | all | all |
| Creativity | Creativity | The desire to create something, to do things differently, to try new things | Creation of CSEM, seeking for unusual materials/ access ways, seeking to overcome security | serves as collectible, is expression of a risk-taking lifestyle, serves sexual exploration and | Children as Sexual Objects, Self as Uncontrollable, Reinforcing Nature of the Internet |

| | |
|---|---|
| controls , to engage with a potential victim, or to protect oneself in innovative ways | experimentation, is an interactive tool in the victim grooming process, serves as a template for real-life sexual abuse, functions as means for blackmailing a victim |

[1]These were combined due to their similarities in behavioural manifestations.