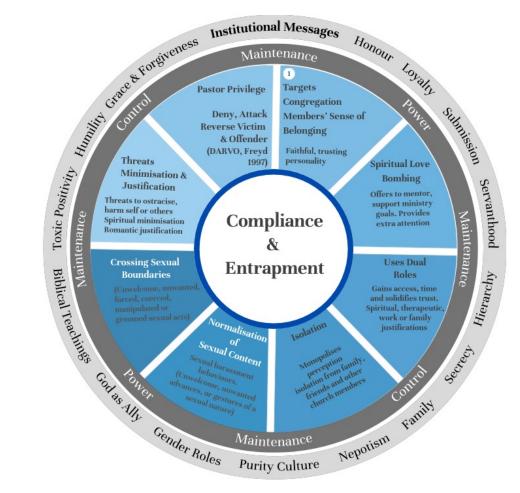
Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members



Jaime Simpson Master of Philosophy Thesis: "Broken, Shattered and Spiritually Battered"
Groomed: Pastors who Prey on Adult Congregation Members #churchtoo





"If you put shame in a Petri dish, it needs three things to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence, and judgement. If you put the same amount of shame in a Petri dish and douse it with empathy, it can't survive". Brene Brown

Research Questions / Methodological Approach

The survey was developed with several themes and constructs in mind:

Common grooming tactics

Patterns of perpetrator behaviours and features of coercion

Features of sexual harassment

Professional sexual boundary violations

The impact on the adult congregation member's well-being

The institutional response

The models used to inform the survey included:

- The Duluth Model: The Power and Control Wheel (DAIP, 2017)
- The Clergy Sexual Power and Control Wheel (Kennedy, 2009)
- · Biderman's Chart of Coercion
- Sinnamon's Seven Stage model of Adult Sexual Grooming (Sinnamon, 2017)
- Australian Human Rights
 Commission Sexual
 Harassment Survey (AHRC, 2022)
- The Sexual Experience Survey (Koss et al., 2007)

Background

#ChurchToo

A day of reckoning is coming for the church, as it is with Washington & Hollywood. Share your story on #ChurchToo" (Paasch, 2017).

A significant gap in academic literature for older teens and adults abused by pastors.

Due to being 18+, there is a misunderstanding on the nature of adult sexual grooming. It is seen as immoral or a co-equal perpetration of sin and not necessarily seen as sexual violence.

Adult clergy sexual abuse is named: "The silent epidemic" facing evangelical churches today (Tchividjian, 2019).



A note on the term 'vulnerabilities'

- Vulnerabilities are **NOT** indicative of weakness and should not be used as another weapon to blame a congregation member for the pastor's sexual exploitation of them.
 - What do you love? What are you passionate about? Your God? Your Church? Your family? Your children? Your career? There is your vulnerability.
 - What are your strengths and skills? Can you preach? Sing? Play an instrument? Serve? Have empathy? Compassion? A desire to belong and serve your community? There is your vulnerability.
 - Were you subjected to any form of abuse? Domestic violence? A strict religious upbringing? Purity culture messages?.... There is your vulnerability.
 - Are you feeling unloved? Unvalued? Lost? Lonely? Lacking in purpose and direction? Confused about your sexual identity? There is your vulnerability.
 - Are you experiencing any health challenges? Grief, loss, mental health or substance abuse disorders?... There is your vulnerability.
 - Are you human? There is your vulnerability!
- We need to shift the focus from the survivor's vulnerabilities to the scale of male pastors
 committing sexual violence against women and children within these institutions. The focus needs
 to come off vulnerabilities to address the targeted predatory behaviours employed by the
 pastors that exploit these vulnerabilities and result in compliance from a congregation member.





Consent Laws QLD Australia

There is **no** consent when:

- participates in the act because the person is overborne by the abuse of a relationship of authority, trust or dependence
- participates in the act because of coercion, blackmail or intimidation, regardless of when it occurs or whether it is a single incident or part of an ongoing pattern
- participates in the act with another person because the person is mistaken about the identity of the other person

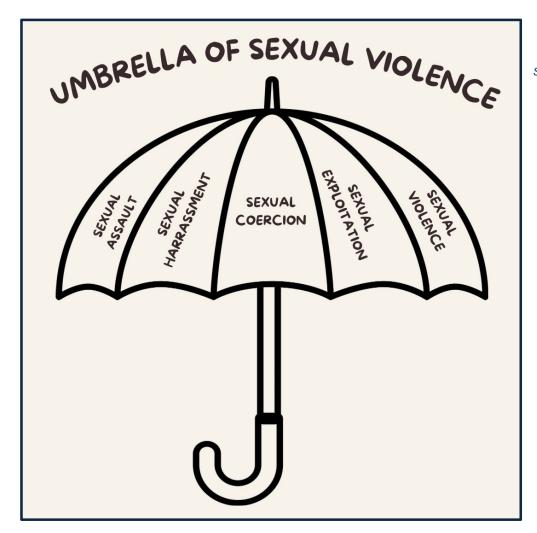
Undue Influence & Meaningful Consent

• **Undue Influence:** Dominate and control another person's thoughts, decisions or actions – overriding their free will

For a sexual relationship to be deemed consensual:

- Meaningful Consent: Free from coercion, intimidation, or fear
- Uninhibited by any factors that may impede free agreement (can not be entered into through deception)
- · Consent means to
- · Agree: Be of the same mind
- To be Informed: ALL possible risks and consequences have been communicated and understood
- Mutual means the relationship is equal
- **Meaningful** means the congregation member can say no without the possibility of harmful consequences to self, treatment, or the relationship (Australian Law Reform, 2010; Kennedy, 2009; Peterson, 1999)





Definitions of Sexual Violence Create Confusion!

Adult clergy sexual abuse occurs when clergy misuse their authority to sexually harass, manipulate, or coerce congregation members into engaging in sexual acts (Kennedy, 2009).

- Societal expectation: 'Sexual violence' typically implies overt aggression or physical coercion into sexual activity.
- "I don't resonate with the general terms of 'rape' or 'sexual violence...."
- It is essential to recognise that grooming processes are not abusive or overtly violent (Craven et al., 2006).
- PRESEARCH reveals most instances of sexual coercion involve emotional and psychological manipulation rather than physical force, dispelling the myth that sexual violence must include acts of physical aggression (Doherty & Dowling, 2024; Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003; Koss, Abbey et al., 2007).
- Sexual coercion and grooming of adults can appear as loving and caring behaviours from a trusted adult, making it difficult for victims to recognise and report what they are subjected to as abuse (Sinnamon, 2017).

Adult Sexual Grooming is Sexual Violence!



- 1. Adult Sexual Grooming is deliberate
- 2. It is about establishing power and control over the target
- 3. It is a form of coercion and sexual exploitation
- 4. It results in profound psychological harm consistent with other forms of sexual violence

"To groom someone is to assault their will, to violate their autonomy, and, in a sense, to "rape" their mind. It's an abuse of their soul, a deliberate breaking of who they are to force them to submit to the perpetrator's will. A victim of grooming is not just ultimately raped; they are violated twice—once physically and once mentally. The only reason I don't say grooming is "worse" than rape is because evil at this level defies measurement".

Josh Gilman Blog

Results: Demographics

33 respondents filled in the survey in some capacity. 32 identified as female; one respondent identified as fluid.

The average victim-survivor age at the time of perpetration was 24 years. More likely in the 18-25 years age group, more likely to be single, highly active in their faith community and seeking spiritual, counselling or mentoring support at the time of sexual victimisation.

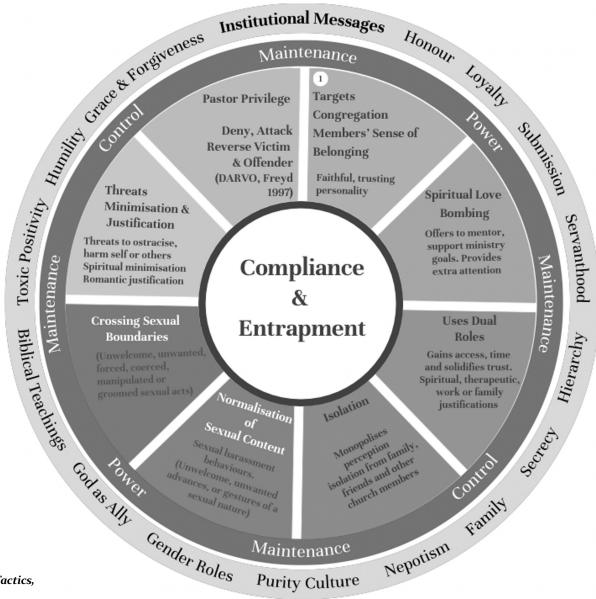
All perpetrators were male. The average age of the perpetrator pastor was 39 years old. Approximately an average age gap of 15 years. The pastor was more likely to be married.

A clear imbalance of power was noted. The pastor operating in dual professional roles such as: spiritual advisors, therapeutic roles like a counsellor, the respondent's boss or father figure.

The years of perpetration ranged for respondents from the 1980s to present day.

The survivor was more likely to have come from a religious background in their childhood, received traditional messages regarding respecting authority, gender, purity and sexuality.

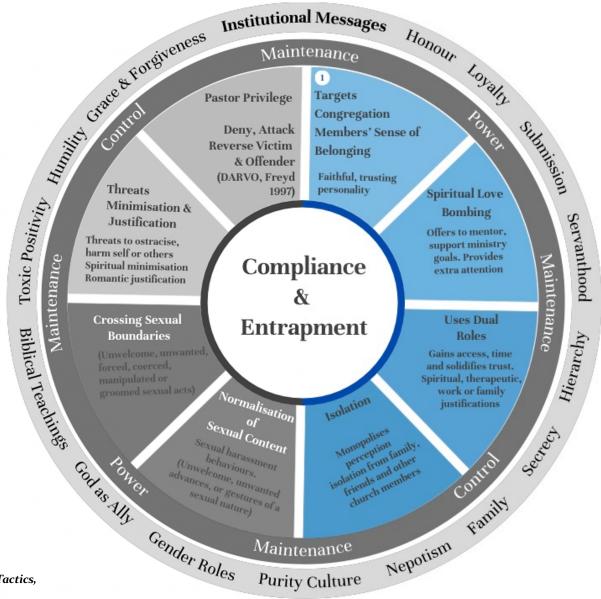
- Thematic analysis: A pattern in the data of ongoing grooming & coercive controlling behaviours
- Not a linear process
- Trust a given and then solidified
- Institutional Ring: messages identified



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Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members: Grooming Tactics, Sexual Victimisation and Post-Abuse Maintenance Tactics.

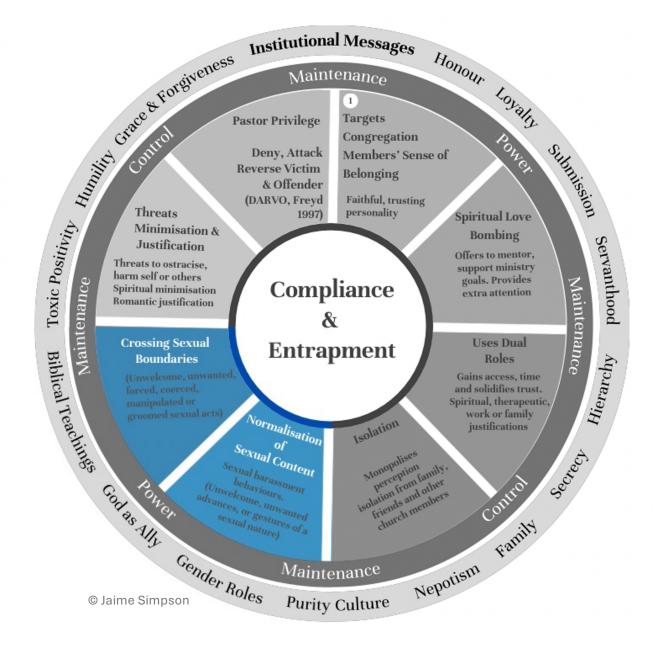
 Subthemes identified four key grooming tactics leading up to sexual victimisation



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Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members: Grooming Tactics, Sexual Victimisation and Post-Abuse Maintenance Tactics.

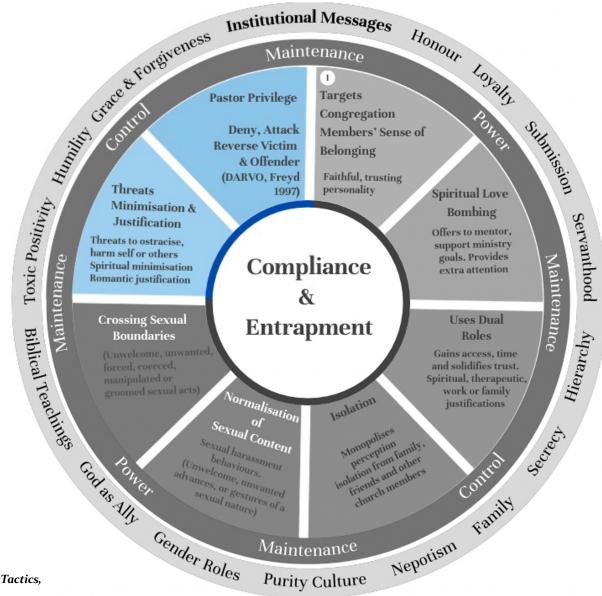
 The pastor subjected the congregation member to two distinct sexual victimisation tactics



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Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members: Gro-Sexual Victimisation and Post-Abuse Maintenance Tactics.

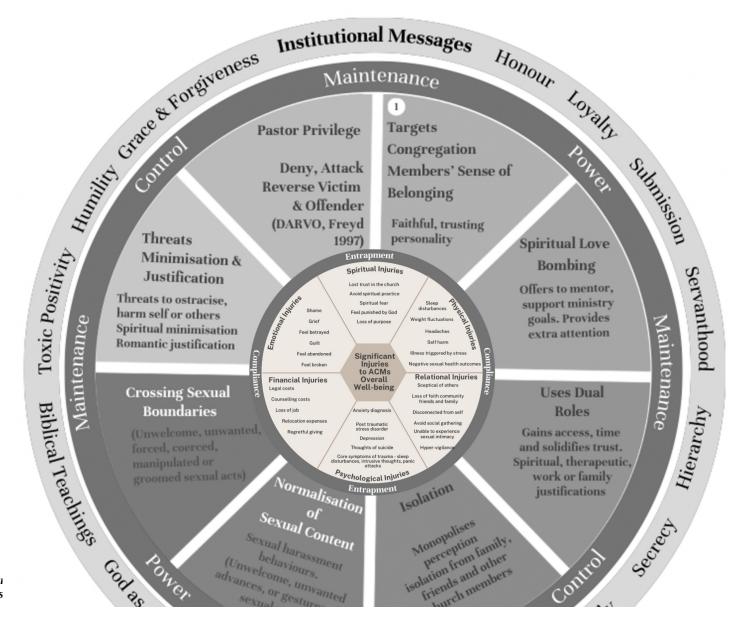
 Distinct post-abuse maintenance tactics employed



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Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members: Grooming Tactics, Sexual Victimisation and Post-Abuse Maintenance Tactics.

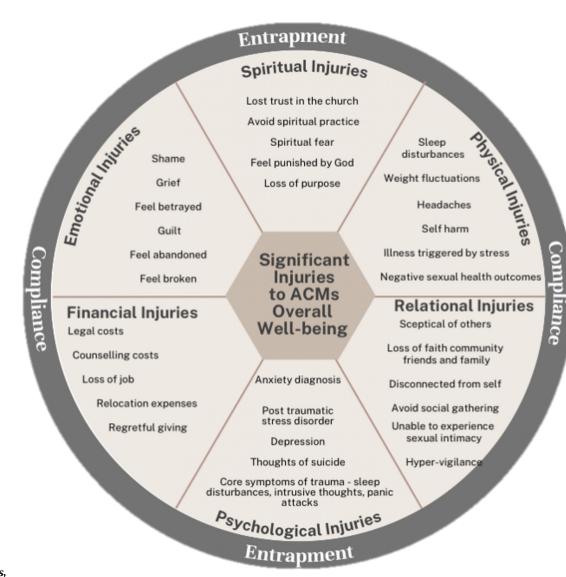
Compliance & Entrapment Ring –
 Displays the significant impacts
 resulting in entrapment



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Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Member Sexual Victimisation and Post-Abuse Maintenance Tactics

Compliance & Entrapment Ring –
 Displays the significant impacts
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Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members: Grooming Tactics, Sexual Victimisation and Post-Abuse Maintenance Tactics.

Institutional Ring

These messages, beliefs, and practices

create, maintain, and sustain an environment

conducive to sexual exploitation. While in

isolation, the institutional messages in the

outer ring alone are not necessarily abusive; it

depends on how they are conveyed within the

community, which can result in the

perpetrator pastor manipulating them to exert

Toxic Positivity Humiling Country Coun Institutional Messages Maintenance

Honour Loyally

Servanthood

Maintenance

Hierarchy

his power and control over the congregation.

Maintenance

Biblical Teachings

Gender Roles Maintenance **Purity Culture**

Nepotism

© Jaime Simpson Pastor Sexual Exploitation of Adult Congregation Members: Institution Ring, Power & Control Ring

Similar Groupings

Loyalty, Servanthood, Submission, and Hierarchy

These values create a power imbalance by demanding unquestioning obedience and loyalty to pastoral authority, making congregants vulnerable to exploitation.

Purity Culture and Gender Roles

Rigid expectations about sexuality and gender reinforce victim-blaming (Jezebel) and silence women; women are expected to submit and keep a sweet spirit, fostering an environment where abuse is hidden or excused.

Biblical Teachings on Humility, Grace and Forgiveness, and Toxic **Positivity**

Misused theological concepts pressure victims to forgive their abusers and accept what happened as part of spiritual growth, minimising accountability.

Secrecy, Nepotism, Family, and Honour

A culture of secrecy and loyalty to leadership prioritises the reputation of the church or family over justice, silencing victims to preserve communal or familial honour.



Tactic 1: Targeted the ACM's Sense of Belonging

Their faithful, trusting personality.

The common theme for all these respondents was a genuine desire to belong, be seen and contribute.

It appeared the pastor targeted:

- Empathetic, compassionate, trusting, faithful, passionate and compliant personalities
- Ministry giftings and desire to serve the church
- Those feeling isolated, alone, lost, unloved, in need of friends, living away from home, confused and uncertain about the future
- Breakdown in family relationships, divorce, separation, domestic violence
- Health challenges
- Suicidality
- Remembering child abuse
- If ACM was married, the pastor befriended the husband and targeted the congregation member predominately when her husband was travelling

"It was a confusing, lonely time"

"He had also been keeping tabs on my husband and when he was going away for work trips"

"I had the desire to find a place to fit in"

"I was completely trusting, I had never been taken advantage of, I had grown up in a sheltered home, I was extremely empathetic and caring ... I went to a Christian school, church, prayer meetings etc and I was in a sheltered bubble of 'trusted' people" "I was insecure about fitting in at church......Many of my friends had already partnered up in the church. Most had relationships that they thought they would already marry. I did not feel like I fitted in at all. I was slowly being less invited to places because I didn't have a boyfriend. All the talk at church was who was dating who and I was very left out of this scene"

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77% of respondents noted they had a compliant personality & 87% noted they had a overly trusting personality

"I was searching for

purpose and excited to use my gifts in a role

that I believed would

help many people in the church"

Tactic 2: Spiritual Love Bombing

Offers to mentor and support ministry goals. Found opportunities to provide extra attention.

"When emotional power and verbal power are combined in ways that speak to the deep longs of people's hearts, the force is great. Add spiritual language evoking the authority of God, and you can manipulate vulnerable people in hideous ways" Diane Langberg.

"He repeatedly told me, even in writing, that he loved me. I'd always assume he meant in a brotherly way"

"I was very confused as to his motive and felt it was a very blurry line"

"I felt like he was the only person that was really listening to me (I know now that was part of the grooming). He was present when others weren't"

Spiritual Love Bombing Pastor paid the ACM personal attention 82 Pastor disclosed personal information that made ACM feel like the pastor trusted them 79 Pastor gave ACM lots of compliments 75 Pastor requested private meetings with ACM 63 Pastor suggested ACM meet him at private locations 63 Pastor provided opportunities to serve "more" in church 61 50 Pastor provided resources for spiritual growth ACM felt like the pastor knew everything about them 57 Pastor invited ACM to social gatherings 53 Pastor offered to teach the Bible and develop skills 42 Pastor offered ACM personal prayer at the office 37 33 Pastor called ACM for advice

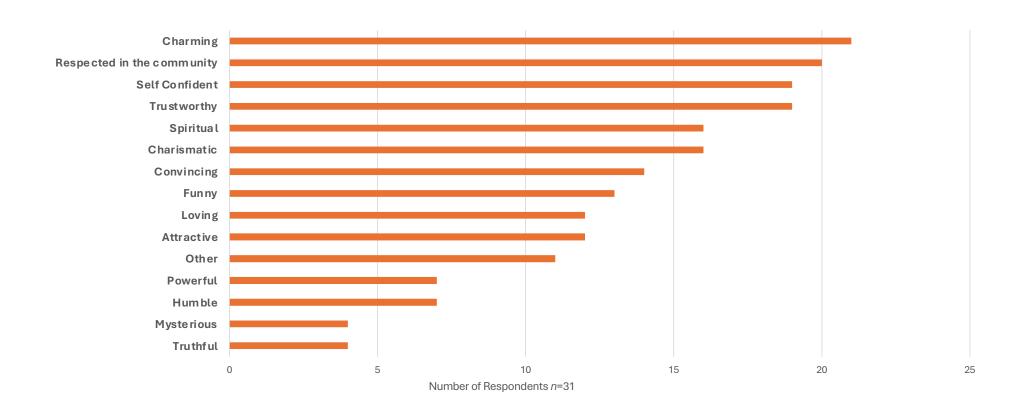
"He gave me confidence in my skill set and encouraged me to believe in myself and pointed out the skills I had, I now know this was all part of his way of trying to get me to trust him."

"He would tell me that I looked pretty, that I should wear my hair a certain way or dress a certain way not to attract the boys in the youth group. I always felt like he was protective of me"

"Invite me to stay the night at his house, invite me to family functions, invite me on family holidays, tell me he felt that he was given to me by God"

"At the time, he was so complimentary and reassuringly and fatherly — I felt grateful to be shown care and attention, especially as my own father was unable to"

Pastor's Personality During Pursuit



Tactic 3: Using Dual Roles



Gaining Access, Time & Solidifies Trust

Gaining Access, Time, Solidifies Trust	%
Spiritual Justification	
Seeking spiritual guidance	52
Bible studies or skill development	32
Therapeutic Justification	
Seeking counselling support	43
Seeking career advice	21
Prayer counselling	25
Discuss childhood abuse	11
Domestic violence support / Financial support	4
Pastor as Boss	
Work meetings	32
Ministry meetings	43
Pastor as Family Figure	
Viewed pastor as a 'father figure'	33
Gave advice on career and life direction	75
Role Confusion	
Confused about Pastor's role in life	74

- I had experienced severe clinical depression due to circumstances beyond my control. The pastor provided counselling support.
- I knew him since I was 14; at 28, the abuse occurred after starting counselling with him at 25.
- I had an emotional breakdown that he was helping me with by counselling me. I had severe depression and anxiety.
- I didn't think this was unusual at the time spending time alone because I thought he was acting as my dad, not as someone who was trying to pursue me sexually.
- He helped me decide what career I should choose, encouraged me to go to bible college and told me God wanted to use me in ministry. This would confuse me because I didn't ever want to go into ministry, but I felt that he was speaking directly from God, so I signed up for bible college.
- Counselling after leaving a dangerous cult almost losing my life, feeling lost and abused. Seeking support from church leaders.
- Facing extreme stress and burnout in my ministry position. This was the reason that I sought pastoral care support.
- I was working the dream job at a church I loved.....
- I trusted him completely and blindly.
- He played an important role in my life as a new Christian; he was my young adult's pastor, so I felt a loyalty to him. I liked him as a pastor and we got along well.
- He was my father's friend. I saw him as part of our family, it is sill confusing.
- I saw him only as a father figure ... but I didn't know how to say no to my pastor.
- He was a trusted family friend.
- I believed him to be humble, trustworthy, and that perspective meant that I saw him as also having moral integrity

Tactic 4: Isolation

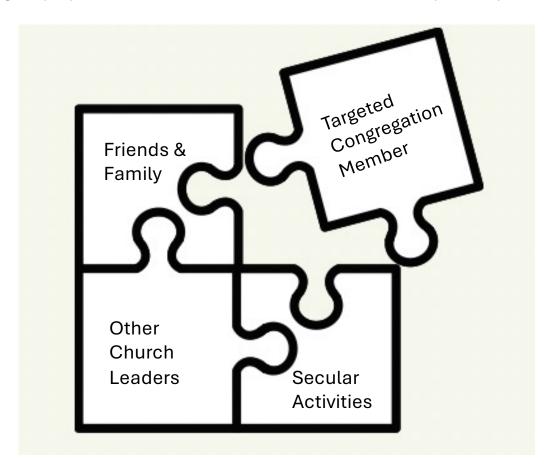
Monopolises Perception, Isolation from Family, Friends, & Other Church Members

The act of isolating the victim can lead to the erosion of their identity. Over time they increasingly view themselves through the perspective of the abuser and lose their own sense of self and independence (Stark, 2007).

"The pastor convinced me that my husband didn't love me and that's why he was away for work so much"

"I literally felt like he was 'in my head' that I couldn't think for myself anymore because the level of his contact and bombardment was SO high"

"He encouraged me to seek advice from him and not to trust my husband, my inlaws, my friends, his wife"



"He would insist on driving me home after services despite me living right behind the church, would pick me up from work, from the airport when I flew anywhere for work or personal travel"

"Felt like he was my family, felt I couldn't live without him, felt that he understood me and what was right for me in my life and that I was too anxious and depressed to know what was right, thought I wasn't trusting enough (which he also articulated to me)"

Pastor Perpetrated Sexual Violence Behaviours

Sexual Harassment (Table 9)

(Unwelcome and unwanted advances, gestures of a sexual nature)

Sexual Abuse & Sexual Assault (Table 10)

(Unwelcome, unwanted, forced, coerced, manipulated or groomed

Tactic 5 Normalisation of Sexual Content Sexual harassing behaviours

Subthemes:

- · Sexualising the relationship
- Inappropriate comments
- Asking intrusive questions
- Inappropriate disclosures
- Continued behaviour of sexual harassment

13% of abuse was a single episode
23% of abuse was two or more episodes
64% noted there was a continued pattern of abusive behaviour

Sexual Victimisation Tactics

Table 9: Descriptive Data Sexual Harassment Behaviours	%
Make suggestive or inappropriate comments about your physical appearance	93
Engage in inappropriate physical contact (including momentary or brief	86
physical contact i.e., hand on back, touch of the leg, brush up against you)	
Invade your personal space	76
Make sexually suggestive comments or jokes that were offensive or inappropriate	70
Ask intrusive questions about your previous or current sexual experience / satisfaction	66
Disclose information about their own past sexual experience or current sexual dissatisfaction	66
Inappropriately stare or leer that made you feel intimidated	61
Give repeated unwelcome sexual gestures	54
Give repeated but welcome sexual gestures	41
Speak about others who had 'affairs' like it was normal	38
Repeatedly follow you or suddenly appear in locations that you were at	38
Leave you messages on your car or at your home or workplace	34
Make homophobic comments	28

Sexual Harassment Behaviours.

Note. Questions adapted from AHRC (2022), Workplace Sexual Harassment Survey.

Tactic 6 Crossing Sexual Boundaries

Escalation from Sexual Harassment to Sexual Abuse

Subthemes

- Sexual touch
- Humiliating acts
- Sexual penetration
- Technology abuse
- Use of alcohol
- · Continued behaviour of sexual abuse

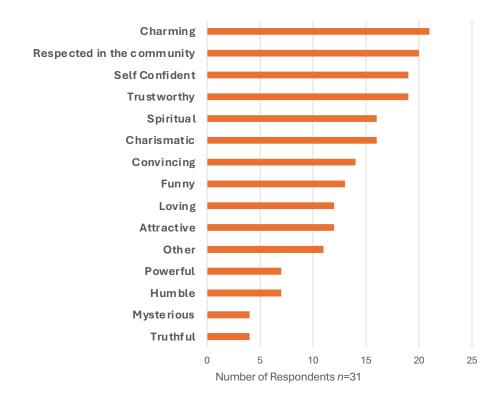
"Felt obligated to return his advances" "I initially resisted but eventually fell for his rationale and justification. I'm also now aware that was my trauma response of fawning"

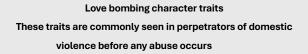
"I felt very confused, I did not understand why he wanted to have intimacy with me" "I didn't know how to say no to my pastor. I felt like I had to keep giving in"

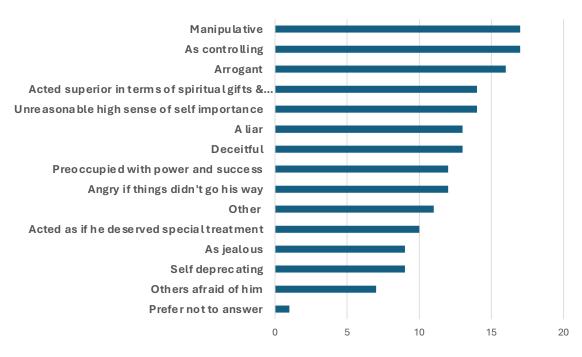
Sexual Victimisation Tactics

Table 10: Sexual Abuse & Sexual Assault Experiences	%
Fondle, kiss or rub against your private area of your body (lips,	71
breast/chest, crotch, butt or anus)	
Ever do something sexual to you that you found degrading or	59
humiliating	
Remove your clothes	46
If you are female: did a male pastor ever insert their penis into	44
your vagina or anus, or insert fingers or object	
Have oral sex with you or made you have oral sex with them	32
Send you explicit images of themselves or others via email /text/	25
social media	
Ask you to send explicit images of yourself via email/text/ social	24
media	
Engage in any sexual behaviours with you when you were drunk,	19
and you could not stop what was happening	

The pastor's personality before vs after abuse







Number of Respondents *n*=28

"I noticed these traits emerging after the inappropriate behaviour, as he attempted to silence me," and another remarking... "These behaviours only surfaced after the misconduct, when I attempted to distance myself".

Post Abuse Maintenance Tactics

"Threatened to end his own life if I told anyone. Told me that it would be my fault that his kids would lose their father"

"Commented he was going straight to hell, which made me feel condemned also"

"He had sent me pictures of the scars on his wrist from where he had previously tried to commit suicide after his wife found out about an affair he had years before I met him"

"It was a weak moment of my flesh and that as a good Christian, I should forgive and move on"

"At the time, I thought he genuinely loved me. It wasn't until after I realised it was all a lie" • 72% of respondents said the pastor made them feel unsafe!

- **Spiritual threats** to ostracise from the community
- Using Scripture to silence
- **Physical threats** of harm to victim or their family, stalking behaviours
- 33% of pastors threatened suicide
- Continued to pursue the congregation member
- Demanded the congregation member still attend church
- Threats to expose sexual acts

• 61% minimised the sexual perpetration

 48% used their emotional or spiritual state as an excuse for example, being deceived, exhausted, overworked

 Minimised it to providing support only "I was told we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory; that when we repent, we are wiped clean. Those who God gives great responsibility to are tempted more"

"He blamed the fact he was on pain medication for his lapse in judgement. He also tried to justify it by saying he gave his sister-inlaw the same kind of

massages"

Justification

Threats

DARVO (Freyd, 1997)

Minimisation

Deny: 59% of pastors denied the misconduct

Attack: 43% stated the victim was crazy or blamed her

15% of cases the pastor accused ACM of having a history of making up false accusations

Reverse Victim & Offender

44% of pastors said they were the victim

Blamed congregation member for tempting them

"He simply remained silent – ignoring me as if I didn't exist"

> "I was told I was mentally unwell"

• Romantic deception: 43% justified the abuse of power as love (to keep congregation members silent)

- Justified an 'emotional affair' based on no attention from wife
- Therapeutic Justification "I was just their counsellor / mentor, nothing else"
- Burn out
- Encouraged forgiveness/link to eternal salvation
- "No one understands me like you do"

Institutional Response

Respondents highlighted institutional messages promoting nepotism, family, and honour when they provided further context regarding their reporting experience to the church leadership or the governing bodies' response.

1. Blamed

"I was fired, told I could not return to the church. The senior pastors who were his parents blamed me and wanted me to go away"

2. Abandoned

"They abandoned us and shunned us. They believed lies"

3. Felt unprotected

"I was asked to forgive him and let it go... I was asked to stay in the church and keep the pastor accountable"

4. Protected the Pastor

"I was told a warning would be put on my staff file because they can't be seen to be taking sides. I was encouraged to think about what this could do to the pastor's family if people found out and that if I went to the police then I may be fired"

"He resigned with accolade and compassion for his burnout"



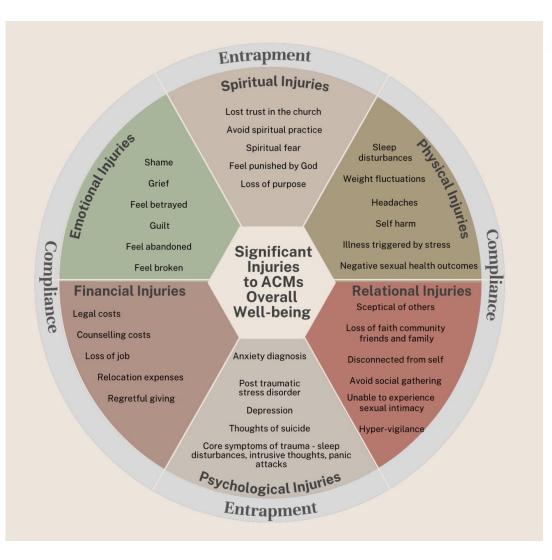


Inner Circle of Compliance & Entrapment

Entrapment is a recognised concept within the domestic violence field, describing the cumulative effects of strategic abusive behaviours aimed at keeping victims in abusive relationships or environments (Stark, 2007). One respondent noted:

18 years later I am still dealing with the ramifications of his decisions. It has taken years to recognise it as abuse and more years to get the courage to report him, as I felt so bonded I wanted to protect him at my own detriment

Entrapment	%
Made you second guess yourself	79
Was manipulating you	79
Needed to be loyal at all costs	77
Had to walk on eggshells around the pastor or church community	77
Were controlled by pastor	68
Overlooked my own needs to fulfil the pastors	65
Had lost your identity	65
Were powerless to leave the relationship	62
Had to defend the pastor	58
It was too late to 'break away' from pastor	50
Had to return to the pastor anytime they called on you	50
Made you responsible for their emotional state	50
Have never talked about this to anyone	26
Still feel bonded to my pastor	23



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- ❖ My faith was shattered. It is hard to articulate how I feel about faith now.
- I distrust churches and pastors and am confused about my own calling to ministry. I still feel shame and blame myself. I hope to be in ministry, but I am very lost and feel displaced, alone and useless.
- I started self-harming to regulate myself.
- ❖ I desperately wanted to end my life, but I was too scared.
- During that time, I started using sleeping pills during the day to get me through work. I no longer consume any drugs or alcohol.
- My body freezes with my husband.
- Embraced the concept of purity culture and restricted myself sexually until I reached the age of 40
- I could not complete the study I was doing at the time and consequently lost my career trajectory. I had to sell my apartment due to the job loss. I could not work fulltime for several years due to the stress and would only work for myself.
- The scars are written on my soul.

Similar Tactics to Biderman's Chat of Coercion

- ✓ Discourages connections with people outside the church or with those who challenge their authority
- ✓ Demands private meetings for spiritual, counselling, mentorship, work meetings
- Convince victims that only they, as their pastor, can understand or provide spiritual guidance for their needs

Isolation

This creates dependence on the pastor, limiting their ability to seek outside perspective



- ✓ Controls access to alternative views, such as discouraging secular therapy or conversations with others
- ✓ Cultivates an environment (through the institutional messages) where questioning the pastor is equated with doubting God

Monopolisation of Perception

Trapped in a controlled reality - the pastor's words dominate their understanding of morality, faith and their identity



- ✓ Wears the victim down with constant contact/serving/work
- Creating guilt, over responsibility or self-doubt through accusations of sinfulness or spiritual inadequacy
- ✓ Overloads the victim with church duties or spiritual exercises that leave them emotionally and spiritually drained and less able to resist manipulation

Induced Debility & Exhaustion

Exhaustion weakens critical thinking and resistance



- ✓ Threats of divine punishment if the victim disobeys or questions their action
- ✓ Threats that leaving the church or revealing the abuse will result in spiritual consequences, such as loss of salvation or eternal damnation
- ✓ Threats of social or work consequences
- √ Threats to expose sexual acts
- ✓ Threats of withdrawing support

Threats

Instils fear - keeps the victim compliant



- ✓ Balances coercion with kindness/support
- ✓ Offers praise, spiritual encouragement, or exclusive attention to make the victim feel chosen or special
- ✓ Gives opportunities within the church (promotion to leadership etc) to create gratitude

Indulgences

Creates confusion and reinforces the belief the pastor truly cares for them



- ✓ Abuses spiritual insight
- ✓ Pastor seems to know everything about them (uses allies to gain this information)
- ✓ Pastor emphasise their divine role as God's chosen leader
- Pastor exerts power by silencing anyone who challenges their authority

Demonstrates Omnipotence

Results in the congregation member feeling powerless and always monitored



- ✓ Criticises their spiritual or moral character to instil guilt and shame
- ✓ Uses the private confessions or vulnerabilities disclosed to enforce submission
- ✓ Coerces demeaning sexual acts
- ✓ Public humiliation

Degradation

Increases congregation members' dependency on the pastor for validation



- Requires victims to perform small, incremental acts of compliance (sharing intimate details, keeping secrets etc)
- ✓ Gradually escalating these demands until victim feels trapped

Enforcing Trivial Demand

Small acts of compliance create a pattern of obedience



Broken, Shattered & Spiritually Battered

I am motivated to make a difference in the ways this is spoken about and responded to
My purpose and passion for change are ignited filling in this survey
I am now an advocate for education to recognise the signs of spiritual abuse
I fought so hard, nearly lost my life to suicide Recovering, finding my voice



Counselling has continued my healing

I have a renewed faith in a bigger God

DE DE

The scars are written on my soul and will always be there

Confused with my own calling

I was so naive, I still feel like a fool

I was helped to move the shame and blame back to the pastor

I feel split in two

wounded & Healing

I am a work in process

My counsellor understood Adult Clergy Sexual Abuse, I would not be here without them. I am now a trauma informed counsellor because of their support

I am still single, unable to have a relationship

Everything in my life looks different

Still have shame & blame myself

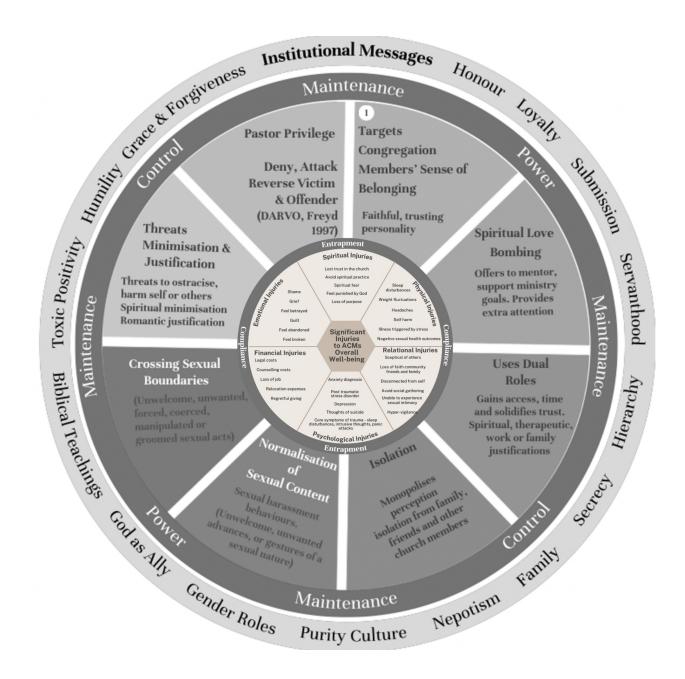
I lost my childbearing years

It's always there, lurking around like a black shadow over my life

I have a deep love for my life

I distrust the church, but have my own faith





Questions

Contributing to Previous Research

Previous Research	Researcher
Clerical Sexual Misconduct Involving Adults within the Roman Catholic Church (Australia)	Dr Stephen de Weger, PhD (QUT)
Reporting Clergy Sexual Misconduct Against Adults to Roman Catholic Church Authorities: An Analysis of Survivor Perspectives (Australia)	Dr Stephen de Weger, PhD (QUT)
"It Was Like Double Damage": An Exploration of Clergy-Perpetrated Sexual Abuse, Institutional Response, and Posttraumatic Growth	Dr. Krystal Lynne Woolston, PhD
Clergy Perpetrated Sexual Abuse of Adults Research (Baylor University)	Dr. David Pooler, PhD
The Prevalence of Clergy Sexual Misconduct with Adults: A Research Study (Baylor University)	Dr. Diana R. Garland, PhD and Dr. Mark Chaves, PhD
The Well from Which We Drink Is Poisoned: Clergy Sexual Exploitation of Adult Women	Dr. Margaret Kennedy, PhD
In Their Own Voices: Women Who were Sexually Abused by Members of the Clergy	Dr. Kathryn A. Flynn

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