

“We gave her a loaded gun”

Parents perspective on Online Child Sexual Abuse

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Abstract

The aim of this qualitative small-scale study was to gain more in-depth knowledge about Online Child Sexual Abuse (OSCA) in Norway from parent's perspective. 15 participants from nine families with offended children recruited by and from different Children's Houses in Norway participated in nine qualitative semi-structured interviews. Reflexive Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021; 2019b) was chosen as the Method for analysing material. Areas of literature that are relevant to my research, concerning parents mediating style and has been reviewed.

The findings show how parents perceive young and particularly vulnerable children as easy prey for OSCA. The families experience that a crisis arises in the family and there is a lot that is difficult to talk about and that creates secrecy in the family system. Parents find that the digital parental role is very difficult to balance and that despite measures to keep the young person safe online, parents experience powerlessness. In the discussion, emphasis is placed on how the digital arena and structures outside the family system are what affect the family's dynamics the most.

This research shows that OSCA is a serious problem, and families are carrying the burden of a responsibility that should lay on the shoulders of policymakers, judiciary and the big tech companies. This research also shows that parents of vulnerable children and adolescents need interdisciplinary support and follow-up after OSCA has been identified.

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APPENDIX

1.0 Introduction

This study is about internet-related child sexual abuse. As a family therapist at the *Children's House* in Bergen ('Statens barnehus' in Norwegian), working with vulnerable children and young people and their families and employed by the police, I have met children who have been subjected to Online Child sexual abuse (OSCA). I became particularly aware of one type of abuse that stood out because this group of young people did not want follow-up afterwards, and other services had no or little knowledge about the phenomenon. Internet-related abuse is equated in the law with other abuse, so the criminal case is often well elucidated. It is generally the police who uncover/disclose when children and young people are exposed to OSCA because pictures of the young people appear in other cases they are investigating. We already know that sexual abuse is difficult to uncover for the victims, and Norwegian research shows that this takes an average of 17 years (Steine *et al.*, 2016). One of the most important reasons why detection takes a long time is fear of not being believed. This is a paradox when it comes to online abuse because there is usually evidence available, but it is still rare that young people themselves say anything. There are distinctive features of online sexual child abuse, the victims have been actively involved, they have often taken the initiative to contact, and they have wilfully carried out instructions. These factors complicate the understanding of what they have been 'exposed' to. The events inflict a double layer of guilt and shame on the victims. Online abuse challenges our understanding of what is real due to the lack of physical contact between the offender and the victim. In the aftermath, when the interview is finished and the family is offered follow-up, professionals working at Children's Houses experience that these young people 'rush out the door' and neither nor families get much further help. Parents are unsure of what is okay to do in relation to the use of mobile phones and computers, they are afraid that abuse may happen again, but at the same time the smart phone is like a body part for most young people and part of everyday life for better or worse. In this

study, I hope that my systemic orientation can create different perspectives on how the young person and their families are positioned in a wider ecology that facilitates the occurrence of this type of abuse.

1.1 The Systemic framing of the Study

In this study, I am as a practitioner and researcher a participant in the research. I cannot place myself outside the system I want to investigate, and this position is considered to contribute to a valuable part of the research. I use myself, my experience and my feelings to join with and understand the participants. This qualitative and subjective study is reflexive in its design; the researcher is a practitioner who has an integrated professional ethical reflection related to his or her role as a therapist and this position also influences choices made as a researcher. The role of the ethical researcher is also reflected in the choice of ontological framework, *Critical realism*, that acknowledges that something real has happened and that access to knowledge about this is created through language and discourse. That does not reflect the truth, but language is seen as a vessel for knowledge about what has happened. Transparency in the role of practitioner and therapist is an important parameter in this context. My choices as a researcher affect both those I have interviewed and how the material was interpreted. This is reflected in the decision to use the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) method in the study. Furthermore, the findings of the study have been considered in the light of systemic theory I have found relevant.

Families can be theorised in different ways and Priest (2021:18) writes that Family Systems Theory can be defined as follows: "A theory that predicts and explains how people within a family system interact, and how interactions inside the family system are different from those outside of it" (Priest, 2021:18).

Minuchin's structuralist approach (Minuchin, 1974) sees the family as a hierarchical system, where members organize themselves into relationships characterized by specific roles, power

relations, and patterns in communication and behaviour (Michalsen, 2019:125). The family is thus understood as a system with internal structures that shape interaction and cohesion. In digital families, traditional hierarchies are challenged by the fact that children and young people often have higher digital competence than their parents, which can give them supervisory roles or influence in decisions related to technology and digital platforms. At the same time, technology can create new boundary issues and conflicts, for example through surveillance apps, sharing of images or unforeseen consequences of digital interaction.

Minuchin's theory provides a useful framework for analysing how family members interact within a hierarchical system but is limited to understanding the family as a delimited entity. To capture how young people participate in digital systems that operate in parallel with the family, it is necessary to include Maturana and Varela's theory of autopoiesis. This theory sheds light on how structural coupling enables individuals to be part of systems outside the family, while also influencing family dynamics and functioning. Such a perspective thus provides a more comprehensive understanding of how digital contexts, social relations and technological competence interact with the family's internal structures, and how this can challenge or change traditional roles and hierarchies.

And among many different definitions, I have found that Luhman's theory of social systems is particularly useful. It is non-normative, describing not evaluating but without judging what is right from wrong (Hamano, 2017). The family strives to maintain itself as a social system, in which the people in the family are themselves social systems and each member is a psychic system (Luhman, 1984).

The family's ability to maintain itself and adapt to the world is a perspective that can be useful for gaining insight into how children and young people make use of online communication, where the structural connection between the young person and the internet is characterized by exclusion of the parents. Maturana describes in his theory how these structures play a crucial

role in how systems organize and maintain themselves. This is the framework for how the system can adapt to its surroundings. Structures are physical, such as cells in an organism, or psychic, such as patterns of communication and interaction in a system.

Maturana and Varela (1992) refer to structures as the patterns of organisations and interaction that exist within a system. These structures determine the behaviour and characteristics of the system. However, this connection to something outside affects the family in terms of both adaption and maintenance. Luhman is inspired by Maturana and his theory of the ability of systems to sustain themselves and the capacity of systems to adapt to external influences.

Hamano (Hamano, 2017) writes “Given that the family today must be investigated with consideration to its wider relationships (or communications) with other social components, and that the modern family’s boundaries stretch across national borders throughout the entire globe, it leads us to focusing on the functional approach featured in social systems theory”.

New Materialism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Barad, 2007; Fox and Alldred, 2015) represents a newer theoretical direction that emphasizes the role of material and non-human actors in social processes. Technology, digital devices and platforms are understood not only as passive tools, but as active participants in relational contexts («assemblages»). This perspective opens for a new understanding of how digital technologies shape the family's everyday life, affect emotions, communication and freedom of action, and produce both proximity and distance, care and stress.

The term "assemblage" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) highlights how family, technology, emotions and discourses together form dynamic networks that are continuously negotiated in everyday life. Furthermore, New Materialism introduces concepts such as "line of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Fox and Alldred, 2015; Fox and Alldred, 2021) to explain how

children and family members can find new ways out of stuck patterns in the face of digital challenges – but also how these paths can entail new forms of risk and harm.

Together, the different theoretical perspectives provide a broad and nuanced framework for understanding parents' experiences when children are exposed to online abuse, and how this affects family life, in line with the study's systemic foundation. Bronfenbrenner sheds light on the external influences, while Minuchin and Maturana and Varela clarify the internal structure of the family and its capacity for adaptation. Luhmann and New Materialism highlight the material and relational complexities of communication and technology.

The theories are not used to prove anything, but to see the findings from several perspectives. Ecological and structural models provide an overview, while systems and materialistic approaches make it possible to analyse how technology and affect are integrated into family processes. Tensions arise between perspectives: structuralist theories focus on roles, boundaries and hierarchy, while New Materialism and Fox and Alldred challenge fixed structures with ideas of dynamic assemblages and fluid relationships, where technology can act as an actor on a par with humans. This tension between order and flexibility, control and openness, is central to understanding parents' experiences in a digital age.

In summary, it is important to understand the dynamics of the family within the family, but also how the outside world affects the family system. I have chosen this understanding because digital everyday life is something all families relate to, where parents feel responsible for guiding children and young people. At the same time, the complex digital reality is controlled by various forces outside parental control.

1.2 Aim of the research

The aim of this small-scale subjective study is to gain in-depth knowledge of how families *experience that dynamics in the family are affected when a child is exposed to online sexual abuse*. The main research question is:

How does parents find that online abuse affects the dynamics of the family?

The sub questions are:

1. How are the relations between family members affected when a child has been exposed to online abuse?
2. How do parents take care of, or give support to, children who are exposed to online abuse?
3. How do the points above affect parents' views of themselves as parents when their child has been exposed to online abuse?
4. How is a parent's perception of the child or young person affected after online abuse?

In chapter 1 and 2, I provide an introduction and background to the study. I will describe the Children's House and some understanding to what online sexual abuse is. Then I provide some framework to understand Norwegian families and children in a digital era. I also introduce the Bronfenbrenner model to show how OSCA is affecting all layers of child ecology from within the family to the wider structure on a global level. In chapter 3, I critically and analytically review relevant research literature referring to issues in my research question and in chapter 4, I present the study's methodology and provide justifications for having chosen my study design. In chapter 5, I present the study's findings. Next, I discuss findings in relation to the relevant literature and my own professional experience in chapter 6. The last chapter is chapter 7, with the conclusion of the study.

2.0 Background

In the mid-nineties, the internet became widely available. At the time, I was a student and had my first child in 1996. I'm still using my first e-mail address. I bought a mobile phone in 1999, and I remember well that younger people with mobile phones were not common. My perspective on the internet is clearly a result of the fact that when I was born and raised the internet and social media entered everyday life. I have raised four children from 1996 to date with two young people still in the house. 15 years ago, it was easy to monitor and regulate children's use of the internet, whereas today, as a parent, I experience that it is impossible to monitor my teenagers' digital life. So, I have gained interest in internet-related abuse from my own life and parenting role trying to keep my children safe, and from my experience with following up victims of internet-related abuse at the Children's House.

Technology has made a big impact on families today. To understand how Norwegian parents orient themselves in their digital upbringing of children, I have been inspired by Elisabeth Staksrud and the perspectives she have in the field of children in the digital world in Norway and has, among other things, written about how she was inspired by how the sociologist Beck, known for his theory of The Risk Society (1992), saw his theory of *Institutionalized Individualism* as useful in relation to children's opportunities and risks in digital everyday life. The term refers to how modern societies are characterized by a process towards increased individualization when traditional social structures and collective identities are weakened, and individuals are increasingly made responsible for creating their own lives. I have found this expression of individualism relevant to the problems with which I am concerned in this research study. Beck argued (1992) that institutions, such as the state, the market, and the media, play crucial roles in promoting and regulating individualism. These institutions shape individual behaviour through various mechanisms, including the creation of new norms and

values, the provision of opportunities and resources, and the enforcement of rules and regulations (Staksrud, 2013).

To be clear, individualism did not arise in post modernity, it came with capitalism before world war 2 (Giddens, 2008). Durkheim wrote about the cult of the individual and how he perceived “(...) the worth and dignity of the individual rather than the collective” (Giddens, 1971:81) to be prevalent in what he referred to as ‘organic solidarity’, namely a social organisation relying on an advanced division of labour. Beck (in Staksrud, 1992:87-90) similarly believed that the turn towards individualism was driven by modernity, globalization, technological development, and the loss of traditional hierarchies. Beck's theory is interesting in this context because it shows how the family and the individual are left with the responsibility when it is not regulated by institutions (state, broadcasting, META (company name; Facebook; Instagram; Whatsapp,)) police that could have prevented this type of shift of responsibility to the individual. The individual and the family are left with the risk and uncertainty that ensues when the responsibilities of institutions such as the state, the market, and the media are orientated towards individuals rather than groups. Parents are blamed by the media, who proclaim that parents must talk more with their children, as the police often do in their campaigns. I have also found research that shows that even therapists may blame parents for not taking more responsibility for preventing children's online vulnerability (Slane, Martin and Rimer, 2021). Similarly, a study from the UK has found that professionals, both therapists and the police in some cases, blame the young person for their own participation in the online abuse (Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020b).

Research from Norway (Gelfand *et al.*, 2011) shows that Norway, together with the United States, the Netherlands and Australia, tops nations that consider themselves as individualistic. Nevertheless, Norway has a strong history of Social Democratic government, characterized by a focus on common values and benefits that contribute to the community. High taxes

contribute to the community, with rights to free education and health care. As an example, Norway is world-leading in terms of the number of women in work, and gender equality in working life is an important focus. A distinctive feature that emerges in Gelfand *et al* (2011) is that Norway has particularly strict rules related to social norms. Norwegians have strong normative behaviour and low tolerance for deviant behaviour. Norwegians sanction normative deviance harshly (Gelfand *et al.*, 2011).

Norwegian children are brought up to be independent, and their rights are strong, in addition to the fact that they are considered individuals with their own rights, which are independent and different from their parents. In summary, Norway is a country with a strong tradition of children's independent rights in society, law, school and as individuals (Tsaliki and Chronaki, 2020).

In this thesis, I consider the individual as a system of its own and as a part of a larger system as important frames of reference to understand the study's research question. The child is part a family with their unique interaction and attachment system, but also belongs to a local environment, which is embedded in a wider society where norms, customs, culture, language, and economic factors are all layers of a larger system, that mutually influence each other, as Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) describes. The ecological model shows how the various layers or systems affect the child/individual. Fig 1. In 1979, the internet was not part of reality and therefore not part of the model. I think that the digital system/cyber system is ultimately affecting all the systems, penetrates all the layers and affects the individual in a direct way in the sense that the internet is always 'there': the only thing one needs to access it is a Wi-Fi connection. Bronfenbrenner's model reflects the idea of nested layers of social influence from the closest (family and family environment, pertaining to Bronfenbrenner's microsystem) to the school environment and country level influences, constituting the mesosystem, macrosystem, and ecosystem" (Livingstone *et al.*, 2018:5).

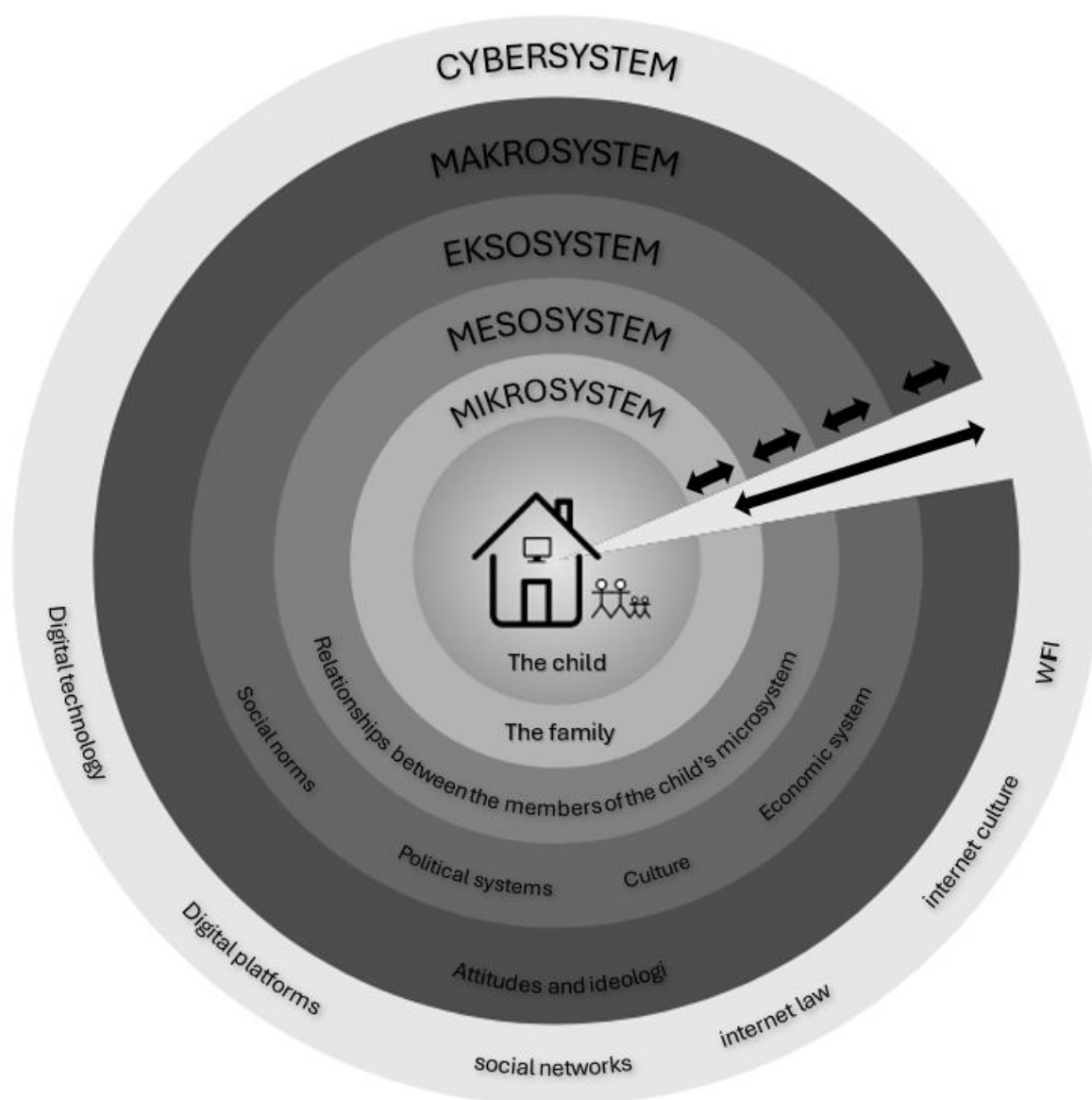


FIGURE 1

Ecological-Cyber Systems Model (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979, and Johnson and Pupilampu 2008; see also Martin, 2010; Martin and Stuart, 2011; Martin, 2013; Martin and Alaggia, 2013)

2.1 The Children's Houses

I have been employed at the Children's House in Bergen, which is part of the Western Police District, since 2016, and the Children's House in Bergen was the first to be established out of

the 11 children's houses that exist today. The Children's House (Statens barnehus) is based on the Icelandic Barnahus model (Andersen, 2022). Translated to English Children's House means 'Children's House'. Children's Houses in Norway were established in 2007 to provide children and young people exposed to violence or abuse with a co-located service. The core task of the Children's House is to carry out facilitated interviews (FI) by police specialized in interviewing children and assist with follow-up for children and families and coordinate assistance before, during and after facilitated interviews. The Children's Houses are linked to the police as it is organized today, and are financed by social, health and legal departments. The Children's Houses are relatively similarly structured in Norway and aim to adapt to children's needs. One challenge, due to the geographical size of Norway, are the large distances families must travel, especially in the north of the country. Therefore, subdivisions have been established to make the travel less stressful for children in rural areas. The work is described as specialized intermediate work that involves employees at the Children's Houses, who are mainly social workers, in addition to psychologists (Andersen, 2022). Children's Houses also provide a consulting function, in that anyone, either professionals or private citizens, can make contact if they are concerned about violence or abuse towards a child. (Statensbarnehus.no, retrieved online 30.06.24). Criminal proceedings and the best interests of the child are two considerations that must always be balanced.

2.2 Facilitated interviews (FI)

Facilitated interviews which is a special form of interview, adapted to the needs of the child 'are part of the police's investigation and is carried out by a specially trained police investigator with extensive experience. In the event of a criminal case, children and young people under the age of 16 will not have to testify in court. A recording of the interview is shown instead. A separate regulation describes how facilitated questioning should take place in Norway. Police, lawyers and any other professionals will attend the Children's House and

follow the interview via audio and video transmission in a small-scale courtroom (*'bisitter rom'*). The child is assigned a contact person in the Children's House when Facilitated Interview (FI) has been decided. The contact person is either a senior advisor from the Children's House (social worker/ family therapist) with expertise in children's mental health or a psychologist. The same employee from the Children's House follows the process from before FI to after the FI and will be available to the child and their guardians afterwards, offering screening, follow-up, and/or treatment when appropriate. They can also provide referral to the local support system (Kruse, 2023).

2.3 Online sexual abuse in Norway

In Norway, online sexual abuse is considered a serious social problem (Sylwander, Vervik and Greijer, 2021). In 2015, the National Criminal Investigation Service forwarded 899 cases of digital sexual abuse to the police districts around the country and the number of cases had increased to 3,715 in 2020 (Director of Public Prosecutions, 2021, in (Frøyland, 2021)). A special feature of internet-related abuse is that there are large cases with one suspect and many victims. Another distinctive feature is that it is usually the police who uncover the assault more than the victims who report it themselves (Aanerød and Mossige, 2018). This is often because the victims believe that they have shared photos and content with a boyfriend or girlfriend of their own age. Sexual abuse via digital media can be very different, with different formats and a wide range of actions with different dynamics and different actors involved (Frøyland, 2021). At the Children's House we make the following distinctions:

Category 1: Children depicted in sexual abuse material online

Category 2: Children tricked into sexual contact over the internet, including 'sextortion'

Category 3: Children subjected to live streamed sexual abuse on demand

Category 4: Children photographed/filmed by their peers in a sexualised situation

Category 5: Children voluntarily producing sexualised images or videos of themselves

Category 6: Children whose parent(s) are arrested for downloading sexual images of children

A Norwegian report (Frøyland and Stefansen, 2023) refers to the fact that the victim is often blamed for digital abuse and that consequently children and young people who are exposed to digital sexual abuse are given a lot of responsibility for what has happened. The report also describes how parents, schools, and support services lack knowledge and insight into children and young people's vulnerability in the digital arena (Kruse, 2023). A Norwegian literature review shows that girls are most at risk and young people aged 15-16 are most vulnerable (Frøyland and Stefansen, 2023). In some well-known serious cases in Norway, however, it is a distinctive feature that large number of vulnerable boys were exposed and there was a single perpetrator. The cases have been referred to in Norwegian media as "The Sandra case" and "Operation Krypt" (nrk.no and tv2.no, retrieved 29.07.24) In addition, we gradually know more about cases that are referred to as "sextortion", where young people are pressurized to send money or content so that their photos will not be spread to family, friends, Facebook, etc., Sextortion also affects boys, and in the United States, the FBI, Homeland Security Investigations and The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NECMEC) have issued a national public safety alert about teens forced to send explicit content (Justise.gov, retrieved 16.05.23FBI.) There are also several cases in Norway. A young man from Norway, Tobias (19), talked about his experience of being abused online "I was completely panicked and thought that my life was ruined" (tv2.no, retrieved online, 12.12.23). Particularly serious about these cases related to sextortion is that more suicides are linked to this type of victimization. After a suicide case in USA resulting from sextortion, all parents were encouraged to talk to their children about this topic (ABC news retrieved from abcnews.go.com, 03.05.23). In Norway Operation Mahlstrøm was implemented by the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos) in 2017 after a young Norwegian man took

his own life following extortion (nrk.no, retrieved, 29.06.24). These examples show that online abuse has a more complex victim gender profile than what is revealed by research. They also show that the severity of online cases is so high that suicide can be perceived as the only way out for a young person who has been caught up in deception online.

In Norwegian youth culture today, it is extremely common to share photos, with the positive and negative aspects that this can bring. For people over a certain age who have not grown up with this type of photo-sharing culture, the phenomenon is difficult to understand and easy to oversimplify. Photo sharing is not always about sexuality (Steinnes and Teigen, 2021) and the photos that are shared can simply be photos related to a secure relationship or to a contact where the photos are voluntarily shared and produced initially, but involuntarily shared afterwards. From my experience as a family therapist, parents are often normative and rule-governed in their communication about photo-sharing, and young people do not perceive it as an option to have a dialogue with their parents about this (Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023; Ringrose and Regehr, 2023).

In this thesis, the terms *online sexual child abuse*, *internet-related sexual abuse*, *image-based sexual child abuse/harassment*, and *technology assisted sexual abuse* will be used. The latter term has been developed because the online/offline dimension is often unclear following someone producing images voluntarily, or it may have been filmed involuntarily and shared involuntarily. The point of the latter term is that it is technology that contributes to the abuse. I use these terms mentioned above interchangeably in the thesis.

I use the term Vulnerable children because the parents themselves use this about their children. Seven out of nine children are described as particularly vulnerable for several reasons; Several of the children have experienced illness in a close family and the loss of a parent at a young age, several have challenges with mental health and have or have had follow-up in the support system for this. Learning difficulties and difficulties in fitting in at

school are mentioned. The parents also describe children who struggle socially and have great difficulty forming friendships and who feel lonely. The two young people who were not initially described as vulnerable were described as very vulnerable according to OSCA. With strong emotional reactions and great difficulty functioning at home and elsewhere after the discovery of OSCA. This use of the term fit how the term is used in research concerning victimized children (Felitti *et al.*, 2019; Lafton *et al.*, 2023; Simons, Noteboom and van Furth, 2024; Whittle, 2014). I use the term *Polyvictimization* to highlight “Children's exposure to multiple types of types of violence, crime, and abuse” as Finkelhor and others (2011) have described it.

2.4 Norwegian families

Norwegian society has a good welfare system and education policies that are based on traditions of universalism, social rights, and equality (Kristiina *et al.*, 2022; Staksrud, 2021). Norwegian children are brought up to be independent and to be active agents in their own lives. This characterizes the family system, school systems, and social institutions. Children are seen as active and equal social actors. Children are considered valuable in themselves and not as an individual who will become valuable to society in the long run, for example.

Childhood and upbringing should also be seen in relation to contemporary contexts of culture and time. What is considered right and good practice for parents is changing. Still, children's need for security and care is a need that most people across culture and time agree upon. It is the practice of parenting which has always been a source of debate and discussion. A large European online survey “EU-Kids online” showed that Norwegian parents were not concerned about their children being obedient (David *et al.*, 2020; Staksrud, 2021) .

Norwegian parents are close to their children until they become young adults, and many Norwegian children spend much time at home. Norwegian children report that they are very happy with their parents and that their parents have a good overview of their lives, where they

are and who they are with (Ødegård, 2021). "For today's young people, mutual openness is the very definition of a close, and thus safe, relationship with their parents – whether the parents live with them or have varying degrees of contact. At the same time, the relationship with the parents has increasingly been based on mutual respect and individualised, common interests "(Vasbø and Hegna, 2023).

2.4.1 Digital parenting

Digital parenting refers to how parents manage the digital part of life in the family and what consequences this has for children's digital everyday life, (Mascheroni, Ponte, and Jorge, 2018 citet in (Eiri, Elisabeth and Kjartan, 2021). In a Norwegian survey about parental worries, Norwegian parents report that they are most worried about the time their children spend online, and parents are more worried about this than about their children's conduct online. The existence of a warm emotional climate helps children and parents to have a dialogue about what happens online, and for young people to feel safe to talk about it with parents. This study also found that children who felt they had a supportive home environment had parents who were also less worried about their time spent online (Tsaliki and Chronaki, 2020). Norwegian parents identify with a parenting style in which they actively mediate their children's digital everyday life, which seems to result in them being less restrictive and more active in dialogue about what and how their children relate to life online (Lafton *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, Norwegian children have a higher risk of encountering sexualized images online because their parents are not very restrictive. This does not mean that Norwegian parents do not consider it risky to be online, but they choose to actively communicate both the risks and opportunities (Staksrud, 2021).

2.4.2 Norwegian children

Norwegian children grow up in a safe country with a high degree of social regulation (Seland and Hyggen, 2021). Norway is consistently rated as a world-leader when it comes to self-

reported life satisfaction (Milosevic *et al.*, 2024). An EU-Kids Online survey from 2020, including 19 countries, showed that 92 % of Norwegian children aged 9-16 reported that they felt safer online than at home, but also that 86% reported they felt safe at home (David *et al.*, 2020; Staksrud and Ólafsson, 2019). Norwegian children are leaders in terms of time spent online, with 3.5 hours compared to 2.8 which is the average. A prevailing attitude expressed by Norwegian parents is that “Children and young people are active, participatory and exploratory, which is a completely natural and necessary part of children's development into adulthood” (Staksrud, 2021). Considering how young people develop their identity through social interaction (Giddens, 1991), internet and social media will play an important role when exploring and presenting the self, as well as representing an important social arena and sense of community. Norwegian children are considered to use the Internet in an "independent" and "sophisticated" way (LSE, Online; Helsper, Kalmus, Hasebrink, Sagvari and De Haan, 2013 in Bhroin and Rheder, 2018:3).

The Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet, 2024) report that 72% of Norwegian children between 9-12 years use social media, despite the age limit of 13 years. However, the report also shows a reduction in the use of social media among young people, particularly among 11 years olds. They also encounter more risks online than other European children but have a wide range of coping skills (LSE Online; Helsper, Kalmus, Hasebrink, Sagvari and De Haan, 2013 in Bhroin and Rehder, 2018:2). These processes, however, are “understood in terms of a balance between opportunity and risk” (Giddens, 1991:178, quoted in (Joyce and Leen, 2020). This is a paradox with which the present study will engage: that Norwegian children feel safe online but may encounter increased risk related to this fact, and that children do not become vulnerable by being online, but the vulnerable children become more accessible online (Staksrud and Ólafsson, 2019; Staksrud and Livingstone, 2009).

3.0 Literature review

The aim of this study is to acquire more knowledge about parent's perspectives on children who are exposed to online sexual abuse, and this is the background for the literature review in the present chapter, where I will look at the experiences of children and young people as abuse victims, the damaging effects of online abuse, and how family factors affect these issues. Family in this context is taken to be the victim, his or her siblings, and the parents. In this literature review, I will first describe the methods and findings in the chosen studies where they are considered relevant for my own study. Then I will evaluate and compare the studies and look at how they are linked.

3.1 Research strategy

I searched literature from 2013 to 2024 to find research which is relatively recent. Internet became generally available in 1995, but I have chosen the last ten years as it is in this period that it has become common for Norwegian children over 9 years old to own a smart telephone and 56% of the 10 years old use social media (Medietilsynet, 2018; Medietilsynet, 2022).

I searched for qualitative studies as I was looking for in-depth knowledge relating to my research question and there was already an abundance of research addressing the scope and prevalence of abuse and the negative health consequences (Finkelhor, Turner and Colburn, 2022; Finkelhor *et al.*, 2023; Staksrud and Ólafsson, 2019; Frøyland, 2021) but little research relating to how abuse experiences are shaped and develop (Nygård, Kvaem and Træen, 2024; Chauviré-Geib and Fegert, 2024). Searches were carried out in: EBSCO host CINAHL Ultimate; APA PsycArticles; APA PsycInfo; MEDLINE Ultimate. Inclusion criteria were that the language was Norwegian or English, and that the studies were published between 2013 and 2024 with children under 18 years as the target group (including adults who were interviewed retrospectively about online abuse victims under 18 years) and in addition, that it was qualitative research on the sexual abuse of children which was related to online activity. I

started with the terms ‘internet’, ‘online’, and ‘sexual child abuse’, resulting in many studies which did not focus on the online element, were concerned with treatment/follow-up, or were focussed on the offender. I searched online OR internet OR web OR social media AND dynamics OR relationships AND qualitative research OR qualitative study. The result was 100 studies, many of which concerned the offender and help services, and I therefore chose to limit the search using ‘NOT offend’ and ‘NOT counsellor or help service’.

28 studies were found which I sorted manually according to relevance, leading to 5 studies for inclusion. Two of the included studies had several articles relating to the same study, which I identified by reading the articles. I received three separate articles from a colleague who was a member of a national resource group for the *Children’s Houses* in Norway. I also looked through the reference list of the most recent articles to look manually for relevant studies.

Two of the excluded articles were nevertheless discussed in the background chapter because they provided insight into the various concepts used in the field (Chauviré-Geib and Fegert, 2024; Stänicke *et al.*, 2024). An excluded article from Chile (Aljuboori *et al.*, 2021) provided an insight into family coping styles and strategies when dealing with a child exposed to abuse and which found that there were gender differences, in particular that girls were given more support than boys when they were exposed to technology-assisted abuse. They suggest that this may be due to a ‘masculine culture’ in Chile.

I did not find an article which could be described as systemic using the inclusion criteria. I found a candidate when I did not include the online dimension, which had a systemic perspective on the families of children who were victims of sexual abuse. However, there was no systemic literature connected to the article in the reference list, so the article was ultimately excluded.

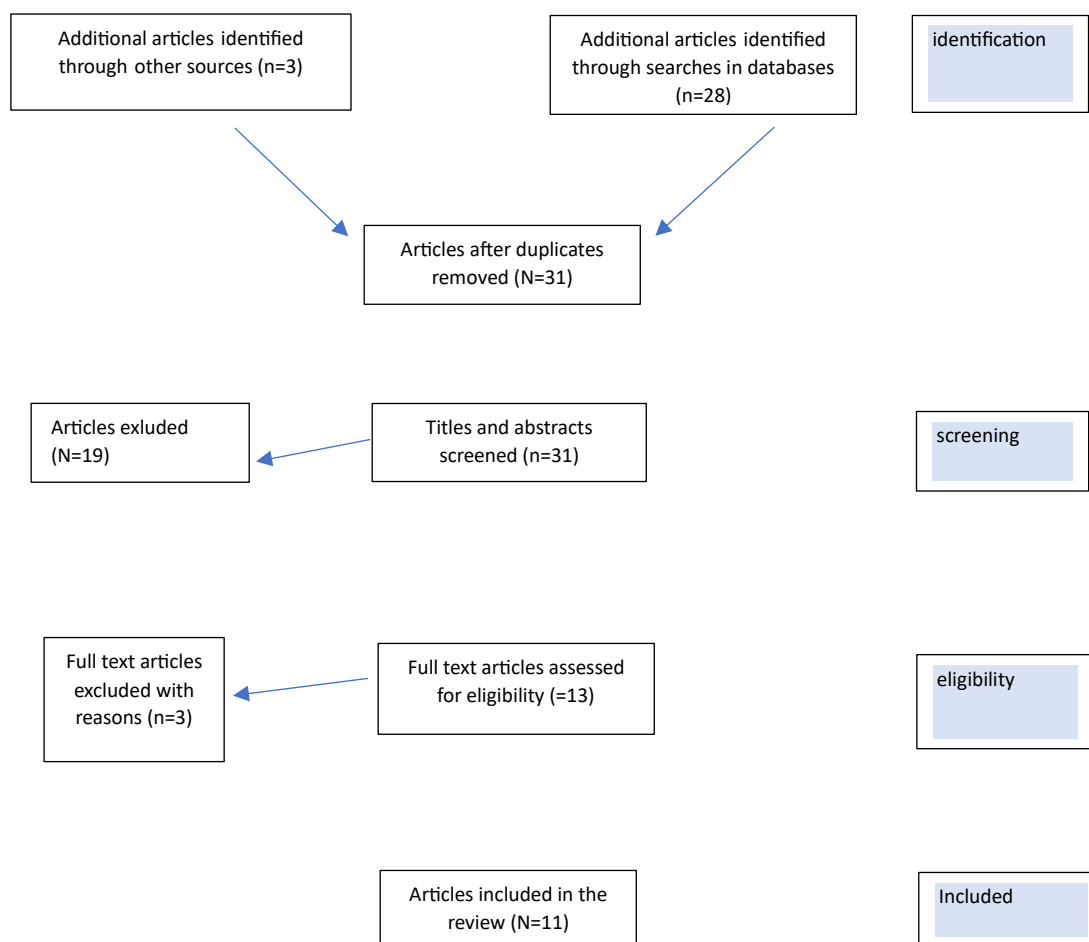


Figure 2

I use the following abbreviations: Online sexual child abuse OSCA; Sexual child abuse SCA; Technology assisted sexual child abuse TA-SCA; Image based sexual harassment or abuse IBSH-IBSA; Child Abuse Sexual Images Online CASIO; Child sexual abuse material CSAM

I start this review with a scoping review to shed light on the family context within which I place my research: Children's Vulnerability to Digital Technology within the Family: A Scoping Review (Lafton *et al.*, 2023). This is a recently published Scoping Review that provides knowledge about family dynamics in a digital age, focusing particularly on

children's vulnerability in the context of the use of digital technologies. I continue with a qualitative study that provides knowledge about vulnerability factors related to online abuse from the perspective of the victims: *In Their Own Words: Young Peoples' Vulnerabilities to Being Groomed and Sexually Abused Online* (C. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and R. Beech, 2013). I then move to two Swedish studies which contribute knowledge about how children handle difficult life situations online by what the young victims refer to as 'selling sex': "Without Internet I Never Would Have Sold Sex" (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015) and *Young Women Selling Sex Online* (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015). I then examine "All of Me Is Completely Different": Experiences and Consequences Among Victims of Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Abuse" (Joleby *et al.*, 2020). These provide a deeper insight into the psychological consequences of being a victim and the characteristics and complexities that online abuse entails. The penultimate study provides insight into how young women receiving psychiatric services view their experiences of sexual violence from a gender perspective, and the last article assessed is a study from the UK with young participants in a school setting. Finally, I have summarized the main conclusions which emerge from the review.

3.2 Family context

Children's Vulnerability to Digital Technology within the Family: A Scoping Review (Lafton *et al.*, 2023)

The aim of this scoping review was to understand the context and both the negative and positive effects of the increasing use of Information and communication technology (ICT) in which children and young people participate. In this scoping review, the authors state that children's use of information and communication technology (ICT) impacts the family dynamics.

The articles included in the study are mainly quantitative. The authors followed a five-step procedure of undertaking a scoping review as described in Seland *et al.*, (2022). The first step

was to identify keywords, step two involved using all the key words across different databases, step three included selecting studies with two reviewers and the reading of all titles, abstracts, and key words of each result. This left them with 250 articles which were mapped in relation to studies written in English, studies from Europe and OECD countries, age group 0-18 years in combination with family, and studies that covered differences in background and outcome. Finally, studies were limited to those published between 2011 and 2021. Then the author read the full text, which led to a final corpus of 100 studies published between 2013 -2021. 27 studies were excluded in this phase because of the focus on obesity, sedentary time, or screen time without also addressing situational pathogenic vulnerability. The results of the 73 articles were synthesised and described before being analysed using thematic analysis.

The five themes described in the results section are: 1 “Extensive internet use”; 2” age and gender”; 3 “risky behaviour online and exposure to sexual and harmful content; 4 “social networking as a social lubricant”; and 5 “parental mediation and care". The factor most protective of children's vulnerabilities online was the presence of a warm and supportive family climate, which helped young people to explore in a safe environment. Families with a restrictive parenting style and strict rules and control measures for internet use was associated with young people taking more risks online.

The authors do not describe the study's methodological framework, but the study's inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative studies suggests that the authors consider benefits from different research paradigms from the positivist to the social constructionist. The authors also conclude that the dominance of quantitative studies in the scoping review leads to a lack of richness, and they call for more qualitative research in this research field.

I find that this study and the methods used help to contextualize important aspects of my own study concerning children and vulnerability related to the use of technology in the family.

Both the current study and the one reviewed consider children as members of a family system and not just as individuals. Family is described by the authors as a social relational structure or network. The study also considers that young people's use of technology is something that affects family dynamics. For these reasons, this study serves as a foundation for my own study because the family is also central. Although the scoping review does not relate directly to online abuse, it is relevant for the family perspective which is central to my research project.

A clear strength of this article is that it has been published recently, and it is an advantage to have updated research due to ongoing and rapid developments in digital technology. The included articles in the review are from EU and OECD countries, apart from one from Chile, and the inclusion criterion was that the research should involve children aged 0-18 years, with 10 years as the average age. The authors wanted to look at children's vulnerability in the family, and how family life is affected in the digital age. This is the only research study I have found that is directly related to how family dynamics are affected by children and their use of technology and at the same time relating this to children's vulnerabilities.

To get an overview and understanding of a research phenomenon, a scoping review including quantitative methods can be appropriate. Lafton *et al.* contribute to our understanding at a more superficial level and provide an indication of the scope of the phenomenon in question, but do not say much about the experiences of the participants. It would have been preferable if the few qualitative studies that were included had considered what *type* of knowledge they contributed to the study.

This study sheds light on aspects of my own research interests, particularly the family perspective, but it lacks the focus on Online Child Sexual Abuse (OSCA) that I will review in the next articles. In the absence of qualitative and quantitative studies of the parents of online abuse victims, it is the experiences of the young victims themselves that I have included in the

next nine articles in my review. This is also flagged up in the summary by the authors: “This scoping review concludes that there *is* a lack of qualitative research studies examining the role of technology in the lives of children and young people and *how family dynamics are affected in the digital age*” (Lafton *et al.*, 2023).

3.3 The perspectives from young people themselves

Picking up on the conclusion from the previous study, that there is a lack of qualitative research studies examining the role of technology in the lives of children and how family dynamics are affected, I will review 3 qualitative articles addressing the experiences of young people exposed to OSCA in different contexts. I have included these articles in the review because they provide the perspectives of young people still living at home who are vulnerable. They highlight how online abuse experiences have affected them, and the families and wider networks in which they participate.

These three articles derive from the same study, namely a PhD thesis entitled “**An exploration of the vulnerabilities of child victims of online grooming and implications for professionals**” (Whittle, 2014). Early analyses divided data into three main themes, which were the starting point for the three following articles:

1) Pre-offence. This is addressed in the article **In Their Own Words: Young Peoples' Vulnerabilities to Being Groomed and Sexually Abused Online** (Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Beech, 2014b). The aim of this study was to identify factors that contribute to a young person's *vulnerability* to online grooming. Loss of family protection was a pivotal factor contributing to vulnerability, understood as online risk behaviour. Three vulnerability scenarios were described: 1) multiple long term risk factors, 2) trigger events and 3) online behavioural risks. In all these scenarios, parents and family factors were central.

2) During the offence. This is addressed in the article: **"Under his spell": Victim's perspective of being groomed online** (Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Beech, 2014a). The aim of this study was to highlight key themes within the process of online grooming from the victim's perspective. It was found that participants were exposed to a grooming experience that entailed the following elements: manipulation; deception; regular/intense contact; secrecy; sexualization; kindness and flattery; erratic temper and nastiness; and at the same time grooming of those close to the victim.

3) Post-offence. This issue is addressed in the article: **Victims voices: the impact of online grooming and sexual abuse** (C. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and R. Beech, 2013). The authors describe (p. 404) that the study is the first to identify the impact on the victim of online grooming leading to online/offline abuse. The authors describe that the victims' degree of vulnerability prior to grooming and their experience with the support system correlates with their vulnerability to grooming. The authors conclude that the young people who experienced the most long-term negative consequences also experienced a lack of support and negative feedback from their families, and they recommend more research on this.

The authors of these three articles used the following research design and methods. Eight participants (six girls and two boys) exposed to Online Sexual Child Abuse between the ages of 12 and 14 were recruited by professionals either from the police or social services. The children were given the opportunity to include their guardians in the interviews; however they declined this. First Author carried out all the interviews. Full confidentiality was not guaranteed in the case where new offences were discovered that the police were not previously aware of]. All topics from the interview guide were described. The authors elaborated on each topic with free narrative to encourage the participants to speak freely. All material was analysed in NVivo using thematic analysis as a method. It was the first author

who conducted the interviews and reviewed the coding. Coding was carried out through a bottom-up or data-driven process that the authors describe as theory-free coding.

Whittle, Hamilton-Giatrchrisis and Beech (2014a) found that when young people experience a loss of family support protection, this leads them to make riskier choices online. In addition, this type of risk behaviour entails vulnerabilities related to the individual, the social environment and the wider society and culture. The authors drew on Bronfenbrenner's (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) Ecological Model as described in the background/introduction/appendices with a systemic perspective in order to understand the results in their broader context, including the individual system, the family system, and the wider social environment.

The authors comment that the study was exploratory and descriptive. The themes identified suggest a post-positivistic positioning in which themes are regarded as something already existing in the material in contrast to describing how themes are developed or created in dialogues with the researchers. This latter approach draws on a social constructivist framework in which themes are assumed to be created in relation to social discourses. No justification was provided for this choice of study design. The use of bottom-up analysis may indicate that the authors assume that data can speak for itself without the theoretical framework employed made clear. The author writes that bottom-up coding is theory free, but it is impossible to analyse qualitative data without the researcher's assumptions influencing the data. It would have been useful to have explored the possible assumptions of the first author and to have had a short description of NVivo and the advantages and disadvantages of using this data analysis tool in the study.

Although this study was published ten years ago, the findings are still relevant. The focus on vulnerabilities in the young person in the context of family factors is a central aspect to a systemic understanding of online abuse. In line with the work by Lafton and others (2023),

factors related to the family are important when understanding the child's vulnerability to digital abuse. Online grooming is an effective way to connect with young people. Networking and access is relatively simple and can be done without the knowledge or involvement of the child's family.

It is a strength of the study that the authors have recruited girls as well as boys. Even though there were only two boys in the study, their experiences were studied in depth, and in that way can provide important knowledge even if this cannot be generalized. An example of gender differences, and why it is important to include boys and girls in research, is the finding that the girls often felt they were in a romantic relation to the suspect in contrast to the boys, who did not perceive the relationship in this way, but rather a person they took interest in and sent nude photos to. The boys in this study were offended by the same offender who pretended to be a female.

From an ethical perspective, I think it is a strength that the young people who were recruited had a professional they knew they could contact if they experienced distress. Parents consented to their children's participation in the research and there was an opportunity to be present during the interviews, although all children declined this possibility. While this underlines the importance of parental support, it also reminds us that parents do not necessarily need to know all details of what has taken place.

In these three articles, the interview setting was well elucidated both from an ethical perspective and from a methodological perspective. A strength of the study is the description of the 11 themes in the study guide: it is then clear what kind of questions the young people have been asked and possible to evaluate these in relation to the objectives of the study. The authors elaborated on each topic with free narrative to encourage the participants to speak freely. This allowed the vulnerable people's voices to be heard and is positive from a caring perspective.

With 11 topics with sub-themes, this provides opportunities for participants to talk about many different aspects of their experiences. On the other hand, the large number of specified topics may limit the depth of the answers and may act as a constraint on the aim of free narrative.

All material was analysed in NVivo using thematic analysis as a method. It was the first author who conducted the interviews and reviewed the coding. The authors write that they used NVivo to encode material, and it would have been useful with a discussion of the possible strengths and weaknesses of NVivo. Can a mechanical generation of codes lead to the material losing some of its depth compared to manual coding by a researcher? Is NVivo considered to be a more reliable method because coding takes place ‘free’ from pre-existing assumptions. This could have been elucidated further as it is part of the basic framework of the research.

One finding in this study is that young victims of OSCA do not tell their parents (C. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and R. Beech, 2013) and that young people feel that their parents will lose trust in them if they find out what has happened. This is also linked to the scoping review that I referred to above (Lafton *et al.*, 2023). The children and young people with the highest risk were those who experienced a loss of support from their family after they were exposed to OSCA. In this finding (Whittle, 2014), it was also apparent that most participants experienced support and protection from their family when they disclosed. This seems to echo the findings (Lafton *et al.*, 2023) that parenting style is predictive of how families support their children.

3.4 Young vulnerable girls selling sex online

How factors related to the family affect the vulnerability of children in the case of OSCA are well described in the previous three articles, and the next articles build on the understanding of vulnerabilities as a background factor for young people's entry into what the authors

describe as ‘selling sex’, but which I refer to as OSCA due to the young ages of the participants (average 14.1 years old). The articles highlight how young people with poor mental health can quickly find themselves in a situation in which they are subjected to abuse. This is because the internet Provides a medium in which it is extremely easy to get in touch with others.

In "**Without internet I never would have sold sex** (Jonsson, Svedin and Hyden, 2014), the aim of the study was to examine the role of the internet in young girls ‘selling sex’ in terms of different types of contact and the characteristics of contact between young women who sell sex online and their offender. In "**Young women selling sex online-narratives on regulating feelings** (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015)", the authors aimed to gain understanding of young women’s perceptions of why they started, continued, and stopped selling sex. Both studies derive from the same qualitative study.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants using different channels: Swedish journalists, non-governmental organisations, and professionals belonging to a Swedish psychiatric network. This resulted in 15 participants with an age of 15 – 25. The mean age at the first time they sold sex online was 14.1 years old. The participants in the study all reported poor mental health and 10 out of 15 used medications for this. All participants reported that they had had suicidal thoughts (p.5) and traumatic experiences in childhood.

The authors describe how they used a type of interview, “teller focused,” that was developed to safeguard and support the participant when they talk about sensitive topics, to balance the power relationship, (Hyden, 2014) and to create an emotionally safe context for the interview. The interviewer has the responsibility to stop the participant if it gets too painful. The authors also highlight how they asked open-ended questions that created a lot of dialogue in the

interview. Data was analysed with thematic analysis, following Braun and Clark's first paper from 2006.

The findings show that internet use is part of everyday life and that it is mostly positive, but that in vulnerable periods some young people can use the web in an almost self-harming way. The participants' mental health correlates with these patterns of internet use. Feeling lonely and alienated was also reported by the participants. To handle their loneliness, one solution was to find people to talk to on the Internet, a medium which was always available. The young girls described how they did not feel excluded in the same way online as they did offline since there was always someone to interact with. They described being on regular youth sites as well as on websites focusing on self-harming behaviour and sex. Some contacts involved sending photos and videos, resulting in many interactions, often of a sexual nature. Some of the contacts online led to physical meetings, meetings that turned out to be occasions for selling sex. Reasons for continuing to sell sex were: being seen/getting attention, being in control (agency, i.e., taking control vs. losing control), being touched, self-harming, and regulating a wide range of emotions. The young female adolescents said that it is easy to start, but difficult to stop. Encounters with police were also identified for some as a turning point – an incident that forced them to consider an alternative to a life of selling sex.

The authors do not describe how they position the study ontologically but they state “The interview situation is seen as a co-construction where accounts are developed together” (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015). From this we can conclude that the study uses a social constructionist framework.

An interesting aspect of these articles is that the police are highlighted positively. The young woman experienced the police she met as caring and easy to talk to. This experience with the police was put forward as an important influence on the decision to stop selling sex online.

So far, I have included 5 articles dealing with grooming online and selling sex online and these have shed light on common vulnerability factors in young people, and on risk and protective factors in the family. They have also described elements of the legal process and the meeting between the police, the victim, and their families.

3.5 The technological context

The next article is one that I have found very helpful in understanding more in-depth the ramifications of Online Sexual Child Abuse. It is also important in a relatively new field because, with its choice of study design, it combines assessing psychological consequences of impact/trauma with qualitative interviews and differs from those previously reviewed. The study suggests that OSCA may be just as harmful as Child Sexual Abuse. The aim of **“All of Me Is Completely Different”: Experiences and Consequences Among Victims of Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Abuse** (Joleby *et al.*, 2020) was to get a deeper knowledge of the impact on victims of TA-CSA from lived experiences over time.

The initial inclusion criteria were being subjected to TA-SCA when under 18 years old and that cases had been reported to the police. The latter inclusion criterion was later excluded due to difficulties in recruiting participants. Lawyers distributed recruitment leaflets to clients, which were placed in public waiting rooms, youth clinics, child and adolescent psychiatric centres, psychologist waiting rooms and various municipal organizations. Social media was also used, via organizations and celebrities known to be concerned with child sexual abuse.

In this Swedish qualitative study, seven young adult women aged 17-24 were interviewed by the first author. Participants had been exposed to TA-CSA before the age of 18. Teller focused method (Hyden, 2014) was employed when interviewing the participants. Material was analysed using Thematic analysis and resulted in three themes: “From thrilling to abusive”; “Negative effects on health and wellbeing”; and “A new self after the abuse”.

After the interviews, participants were asked to complete the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), The Linköping Youth Life Event scale (Nilsson, Gustavfsson and Svedin, 2010) and a questionnaire specifying the type of online abuse they had been exposed to and its context (Joleby *et al.*, 2020:3).

Findings from this study show how the exploration of one's own sexuality can be positively exciting until the point when the person feels manipulated or threatened into engaging in sexual activity. In addition, the study shows how it can take a long time to gain insight into this manipulation and that they had been forced into making pictures and videos. The permanence and reach of the images were also highlighted by this study. The fact that victims feel they have no control over the images leads to major challenges from the moment the police make contact. These challenges only increase as the parents become aware of the situation, and victims feel stupid in relation to both family and friends. Participants describe how everything collapses in their lives. Three of the girls became suicidal and even those who did not have mental health problems beforehand experienced depression, anxiety, as well as feeling shame and guilt. The young person is afraid that parents will see the pictures: "I was so scared that my parents would see, and I didn't want proof that I had done this. The worst aspect of the trauma (p.8) was the feeling of being deceived and also when they discovered that others knew about the abuse. One girl said that trauma only set in when the court case came up and the pictures were used as evidence.

The authors employed an exploratory and descriptive research design. In the analysis, the authors write that they identify, analyse and report themes from data.

The study provides updated knowledge in the field. It is a study from Sweden, which is a Nordic country similar to Norway, and the findings therefore have particular relevance for the current study. This also applies to the legal and administrative context of the study. This article addresses several issues that I recognize from my own practice in Children's Houses in

Norway and from encounters with young vulnerable people in facilitated interviews and follow-up meetings.

This study uses OSCA as an umbrella term including both grooming and selling sex. The preceding articles also dealt with and reviewed the same issues, but as researchers we must be aware that language and terminology is changing in line with the most recent perspectives on the victimization of children online. The use of standardised tools to map participants' mental health gives the study an important dimension, and qualitative interviews were used to elaborate deeper and assess the impact of online abuse. This combination of interview and screening tools sheds light on the severity of the abuse and the experiential and specific nature of online abuse as a phenomenon.

The age of being first-time victimized in this study were between 7 years old to 13 years old. A common link so far is the time of first time exposure to the abuse, which is mean age 14 years as was found in the study by Jonsson, Svedin and Hyden (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015) with 14.1 years and the study by C. Whittle and colleagues (2013) with 12-14 as age for the first time exposed online. The youngest participant was only seven years old.

In Joleby *et al.* (2020), both the interview method and analysis are robust. And the authors describe closely the experiences of the victims. The description of the "Teller focused interview" method was thorough, as well as the justifications for using it. Teller focused interview aims to protect the vulnerable participant by facilitating a safe space to talk about sensitive topics, taking the power balance into account. The study employs an exploratory research design but provides no particular justification for this choice. The way in which the authors identify, and report themes may be suggestive of a more positivistic ontology, where themes already exist and need to be discovered, though this is not particularly expressed by the authors.

So far, I have examined qualitative studies. In the following I will discuss a mixed method study carried out in the UK which also researched issues related to the technological context:

Technology assisted child sexual abuse in the UK: Young people's views on the impact of online sexual abuse (Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020a).

The objective of this study was to understand the effects of TA-CSA from the perspective of adolescents, and to uncover challenges which may be related to the use of digital technology.

The researchers used quantitative data from 30 young people and conducted qualitative interviews with 16 young people, 15 females and 1 male. The authors also collected screening data from 230 young people.

Participants were recruited via a helpline for children, a charitable organization for children, or a police authority. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, by telephone, or online. Questionnaires were filled out online. Five main themes were identified concerning the wider implications of OSCA, and in particular highlight the negative impact on family, friends, and school: (a) the duration and reach of the images; (b) loss of control over who viewed them and "indirect" revictimization by this additional viewing; c) immersion, fatigue and poor concentration, which were exacerbated when the offender maintained contact throughout the night and affected performance and behaviour at school, (d) self-blame related to complying with offenders' requests that focused on their actions in the physical absence of a perpetrator (rather than acknowledging the persecution and manipulation of them by the offender); and (e) negative responses from friends, family, and schools that exacerbate impact.

The methodological framework of the study was not described, but with designs that have large psychometric questionnaires we may assume a positivistic approach. In the qualitative part of the study, interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, and the authors report that they developed rather than identified topics. This may reflect a social constructionist perspective, but the authors do not clarify this point.

It is interesting that the authors bring together the two different forms of abuse and how this clarifies specifics of TA-CSA. I find this useful as this underlines that both forms of abuse are equally serious. By addressing the differences, the study provides important knowledge about how TA-SCA is particularly challenging due to the technological aspect. Children and young people do not realize what has happened to them, as they have been instructed to carry out sexual acts with themselves, which the study by Joleby *et al.* (2020) also highlights. The pictures never go away. The abuse is permanently ‘documented’, and it never really stops as long as the pictures exist. And the victims have a feeling that anyone, anywhere might have seen the abuse. By exploring the differences, I think the study brings to light new knowledge that TA-SCA has a particular complexity related to the digital element. Children and young people do not understand what they are exposed to, because they have been instructed to do sexual acts with themselves, as the study by Joleby *et al.*, (2020) also points out. Other features that complicates TA-SCA is how the images do not disappear, the abuse is documented, the abuse does not stop. And especially the feeling that the victims have of whomever could have seen them.

The authors are clear that one weakness of the study was the small sample size, but they nevertheless present the research as relevant because the multiple approaches supplement each other and provide a bigger picture than a single perspective. Recruitment to this study was difficult and the authors raise an important issue in relation to what might be called ‘professional gate keeping’, where the recruitment of participants is made difficult due to professionals who regard the exposed children as too vulnerable. They suggest including professionals in a recruitment or safety plan for each participant.

I agree with the authors’ choice of the term TA-SCA in preference to OSCA and how they propose that distinguishing between online and offline reduces the complexity of understanding this type of abuse. I think this development of new terms demonstrates how

new knowledge is emerging about the full ramifications of this type of child sexual abuse. This study is one of the first to point out that OSCA is just as harmful as SCA and it also highlights characteristics of TA-SCA that differentiates this term from other related terms. In addition, it brings out how sextortion works. They explain that there are often sliding transitions between the two phenomena (offline/ online) with online grooming leading to abuse online and offline (C. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and R. Beech, 2013). Similarly, in the case of young women selling sex, online behaviours can function as a 'door'. The study participants report that they would not have entered the relationships otherwise. The term Technology assisted-child sexual abuse makes it clearer that it is abuse facilitated by technology rather than an assault that has occurred online.

3.6 Children in the psychiatric system

This study provides insight into the extreme vulnerability of the participants, who often perceive themselves as a target in themselves because of their mental illness. It shows how a disturbed self-image and illness associated with this exacerbates the vulnerability of what is already an extremely vulnerable group. It also highlights how the digital arena makes it easy to direct attention to the body, even if it is a sick body.

Experiences of Online Sexual Violence: Interviews With Swedish Teenage Girls in

Psychiatric Care (Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023). This Swedish qualitative study aims to explore how young female psychiatric service users, current or former, experienced online sexual violence, and uses a gender perspective (p.4). The study is based on interviews with young women aged 15-20 who were admitted to psychiatric services.

The inclusion criterion was being exposed to TA-SCA before 18 years old. All the young women were regarded as polyvictimized (Finkelhor *et al.*, 2011). An ongoing psychosis and high suicide risk were considered exclusion criteria. Recruitment was first attempted through therapists working at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), but due to

difficulties, patients who had participated in another qualitative study at the clinic were eventually used. There were two meetings, where the first was used as a preparation for the interview and an assessment of previous trauma experiences. The Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire was used (Finkelhor *et al.*, 2005a, 2005b). It was the first author who carried out the interviews, who was a licenced psychologist with experience from the trauma field.

The material was analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) Braun and Clark (2006, 2019). The researcher coded with a 'latent focus,' described as the interpretation and coding of underlying ideas and concepts which give rise to the expressed verbal material which was to be analysed. During the coding process, the authors describe how they constructed themes that were revised and refined several times (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2022), but this is not exemplified. The authors explain how 'saturation' of themes after two thirds of the material had been assessed lead to them limiting the number of participants to nine.

In this study, they found that the young patients felt caught in a web. It could start with verbal insistence and end with rape. There were both similarities and differences when it came to whether the violence happened online or offline. The young people described how they thought there were different reasons why girls sought contact online. The girls said that they perceive themselves as targets because of their mental health problems and were therefore particularly vulnerable. They described a strong need for approval, a disturbed self- and body image, and a need to self-harm. The girls described the experience of not having friends or being alienated socially and having little support in the family as the underlying reason for seeking validation and emotional contact online. Sexual contact from friends or acquaintances is highlighted in the study as being particularly difficult to manage for the participants because it could put friendships at risk, as was the fear of losing friends or of friends turning against them if they didn't want to engage in sexual interaction. This study highlights the

extent to which vulnerable young girls experience offensive sexual contact online. It is a strength of this study that it highlights strategies for dealing with pressure to share images.

In this article, a constructionist perspective is taken where knowledge is seen to be context dependent (Gergen, 2015) Construction of meaning takes place between the interviewer and the participant, which is also affected by wider discourses in society. The stories told by the girls are therefore not viewed as objective truths but as constructions arising in a context.

This article has recently been published, which is a clear advantage, as developments in digital technology and social media are rapid and intensifying. The study is one of few qualitative studies on children and adolescents with mental health issues and contributes in-depth knowledge on the topic of children's experiences of online sexual abuse. It is an advantage that the study is from Sweden as the findings will be highly transferable to a Norwegian context.

I think the study provides an interesting angle on what coping strategies young people have for dealing with difficult situations online.

One of the sub-themes is demonstrating how online abuse can escalate from verbal insistence to rape in a very short space of time.

The participants' experiences underline how *the relationship to the offender* is decisive for the impact on victims. I find this an important perspective as it is often the *content* in the shared material that is in focus. Other studies (Lunde and Joleby, 2023) that show that saying 'no' to requests is clearly difficult, especially when there is a fear of losing social status or when the people involved are acquainted.

3.7 Educational setting

The last study I have chosen to review is a study that differs from the other studies reviewed both in method and in that both genders were recruited. This study recruited both boys and

girls in a school setting using focus groups, where the participants felt secure with each other and where drawings were also used as a form of expression. They spoke about how they perceive that gender shapes young people's experiences in the case of image-based sexual harassment or abuse. The authors employ the concepts of image-based sexual harassment and image-based sexual abuse (IBSHA) (see Ringrose *et al.*, 2021).

The article **“Recognizing and addressing how gender shapes young people’s experiences of image-based sexual harassment and abuse in educational settings”**(Ringrose and Regehr, 2023) is a mixed method qualitative study in which young people aged 12-17 (secondary school) and 19-21 (university students) participated. The study is school-based, and recruitment was via a charitable organisation which was set up to address the sexual education of young people. Participants were between 12 and 18 years when interviewed. The sample consisted of 88 girls and 4 young women and 55 boys and 2 young men, as well as a non-binary young person. One of the young men identified as gay. The majority of the sample was under 15 years old.

Qualified educational staff or teachers attended the sessions to ensure a safe atmosphere. Focus group sessions were carried out for up to 2 hours to gain insight into the young people’s experiences. An art-based component was included where participants were encouraged to visualize the experiences they had discussed in the groups. The older participants did not provide drawings but discussed the drawings of the younger participants.

Material was analysed with manual thematic coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which started with the focus group's data to generate starter codes, organize connected codes, and then investigate how those codes appeared in the drawings. The study used feminist discourse analysis to examine gender and power issues in the data (Lazar, 2007)

The authors found that there were gender differences, with a sexual ‘double standard’ where girls felt pressurized to send nude images. Whether they sent pictures or not, this led to experiences of sexual shaming and victim blaming. This was regarded as “image-based sexual harassment”. Boys felt pressurized to share nudes they had received without consent, this was termed “image based sexual abuse”.

The following extract from one of the participants illustrates one form of Image based sexual harassment, where a female acquaintance from school is publicly shamed:

“...When Esme did not send an image back in response to the dick pick, a further layer of abuse is levied when the boy shares her public details on a local Instagram “expose” page claiming she sends nudes, as a way to shame her because he has been “rejected”...”(Ringrose and Regehr, 2023)

The next quotations illustrate how the term “Image based sexual abuse” and victim-blaming can be exemplified in the case of a girl who was manipulated to send a nude to a boy in school who shared it with friends at the same school. The participant shares the following in the focus group: “Shanaz: Yeah. They said it was a girl even though (...)with her dad I don’t know what would have happened to her if they told her dad. Interviewer: What do you mean? Shanaz: She would probably like get in trouble, like in big trouble like, she probably would have been sent somewhere or”(Ringrose and Regehr, 2023).

The study employs two concepts, “Image based sexual harassment” and “Image based sexual abuse”, which both derive from feminist legal and criminological research (Ringrose *et al.*, 2022). This is an important supplement to this review because it shows how image-based abuse and harassment is something that happens in youth culture and highlights gender differences that had not been addressed previously. From my practice, I can recognize this and see that girls are most susceptible to sharing pictures of themselves and boys feel pressurized to share these to others. This study also pinpoints a development from the previous term

“sexting” to “Image based harassment” or “image-based abuse.” The terms used in the study are framed in a legal context and the study highlights the psychological severity and implications of online abuse.

I included this study because it provided knowledge from an educational setting. The topic is about recognizing and addressing young people's experiences with sexual harassment and abuse in various educational settings across the UK. The authors describe that they wanted to include different schools when recruiting for focus group interviews and that there is everything from elite schools to “a deprived educational ward” in the country. It is a strength that there are so many participants from a non-clinical setting who have participated in the study, this brings to light that it is not necessarily adolescents who are already struggling who experience challenges. A strength of the study is that it uses both focus group interviews and drawing as forms of expression, which may have helped the less verbal participants.

This study highlights important mechanisms between peers in what could possibly become Image Based Sexual Harassment or abuse, and this deepens our understanding of the image sharing phenomenon. It is of interest that the study finds that abuse has a bigger impact if it comes from someone the victim knows. The study distinguishes clearly between “sexting,” which is an exchange of nude pictures between grown and consenting partners, and images shared involuntarily and potentially detrimentally to those affected. It is worth noting that it is illegal under both Norwegian and UK law to take, keep, or share nude photos of anyone under the age of 18. This is without regard for whether the images were consensually made and shared from the minor. This study looks at issues related to gender in online abuse and finds differences in type and degree of vulnerability. The fact that the two systems are quite similar makes this article applicable to my study.

3.8 Summary of the review

A common link for all the studies is that they highlight that it is children and young people who are already vulnerable who are most at risk in the case of online abuse. Another common feature is purposive sampling in recruitment, i.e., that participants are recruited because they have been exposed to Online Sexual Child Abuse. The vulnerability of the young person can be of many different kinds, such as those who have poor mental health (Jonsson *et al.*, 2015) and people who are victimized (Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak, 2003), which means that they have experienced several stressful life events (Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Beech, 2014a; Joleby *et al.*, 2020). There has been an increase in the number of young people struggling with suicidal thoughts (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015; Joleby *et al.*, 2020; Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023), and the age of first-time exposure is as young as 7 years old, but most are about 13 years old and girls. The studies highlight that factors in the family are important determinants of child vulnerability and that difficult circumstances in the family sometimes result in risk-taking behaviours online which might be viewed as compensatory behaviours (Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Beech, 2014a; Ringrose and Regehr, 2023). The final study recruited pupils from different schools to talk about sharing pictures and was concerned with gender differences. The study found that girls find themselves pressurized to share pictures of themselves and that they receive unwanted pictures and feel pressurized to share back. Boys feel pressurized to share pictures they are in possession of without obtaining consent to do so. (Ringrose and Regehr, 2023) describe a youth culture that can subject most girls to online abuse, and where it is not only the most vulnerable girls who are at risk. A common feature of the articles reviewed is the harmful psychological impact of online abuse. This was made particularly clear in the studies by Joleby *et al.*, (2020) and Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, (Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020a; C. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and

R. Beech, 2013). They find that victims of online child sexual abuse show a higher severity of PTSD when images are shared. The articles demonstrate how digital reality is a central part of family life. The articles show that when children are victimised online, the young person blames themselves, parents blame themselves and the problem can be carried by both the child and the parent. Parents and their children feel powerless, and the home is no longer a safe zone. The online abuse of children presents a challenge because social media, apps, etc., have developed at a pace which policies and legislation have not kept up with. The family has an overarching responsibility to ensure that a child or young person can handle digital everyday life, with all the opportunities and risks this entails. Thus the authors of the scoping review (Lafton *et al.*, 2023) write that «'. More research is still needed about how and why parenting style and contextual factors work together to create a negative or positive impact on children's use of ICT'(Lafton *et al.*, 2023). The main issue is not necessarily about the number of hours children spend online; it is more important to understand the role and function of digitalization for young people.

Most of the studies I have reviewed and assessed use qualitative interviews of young people who have been subjected to online abuse as children/minors (7-18 years) and thematic analysis of interviews/material is used in all articles, while two articles employ focus groups. Recruitment is difficult in several of the studies, and some have suggested this may be a result of professional 'gate keeping' (Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020a). Boys are absent amongst the participants in the studies or represented in much smaller numbers in most studies except for the last one included from a school setting in the UK. This latter study highlights how the presence of both genders allows for different findings to emerge. The fact that most participants are girls may reflect the fact that girls are most at risk (Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023; Ringrose and Regehr, 2023).

The reviewed articles highlight how the psychological damage resulting from online abuse is just as serious as sexual assault. They also highlight the special characteristics of OSCA, i.e., that young people are not usually aware or perceptive that they are being exposed to abuse because they have taken the initiative or have engaged in their own activities parallel to being instructed by someone else. Moreover, the self-initiative and requirement of the self-activity of the victim and the fact that victims put themselves at risk creates an extra layer of shame and guilt. Among the most damaging consequences is that the images persist online and therefore it is difficult to finally stop the abuse. The fear that images may appear anywhere, or that the victims feel they can be recognised everywhere, is demonstrated repeatedly in these studies and constitutes a serious risk factor in relation to the mental health of the young person involved.

This review has shed light on important aspects of my own research project, in particular the involvement of the families of the young person both in the process of the abuse taking place and in the recovery from it. These aspects of the online sexual abuse of children have not been researched in depth and in this way my own research question is complementary to the previous research, particularly focussing on the parents' perspective after their child/adolescent has been exposed to OSCA.

3.8.1 Research question

In this research project, the research question is:

«How do parents experience that family dynamics were affected by their children being sexually abused online? »

This study hopes to shed light on the experiences of parents after they were informed that their child had been exposed to online sexual abuse, how they experienced that family life had been affected. The aim was to gain knowledge into how online abuse affects the role of the

parent(s), the relationship between parents, relationships between siblings, and the parents' view of the child. The choice of a family perspective is related to the fact that the use of digital technology by children and adolescents is very much determined by the individual family: it is the parents who acquire smart telephones, PCs and other technology for the family. Moreover, it is parents who both set limits on and facilitate the use of the various technologies in the home and elsewhere, something which is normally a source of much debate in the family. It is the parents who bear the financial costs relating to these technologies, such as Wi-Fi and phone data usage. Another aspect of online abuse is that abuse often takes place within the home, which is meant to be a safe haven for family members.

In this literature review, I first reviewed a quantitative scoping review which found, among other things, that an open and supportive family style can protect children from online risks and that a restrictive family style can be counterproductive. The authors recommend more qualitative research in the field. I found 1 qualitative and no quantitative articles focussing on the parents' perspective when children and adolescents are exposed to OSCA. The single article I found I have excluded, because it fell outside the criteria in that it was from Chile, but I have taken account of it as it provided an interesting gender perspective: girls in this study were supported by their family system when exposed to OSCA, boys not. My study asks about the family's experiences after OSCA, and I therefore included ten qualitative articles from the perspective of the victims themselves in the main part of this literature review. In summary, the important points were that OSCA is complex to understand due to the fact of the young person's own initiative, taking part and being instructed by the offender. Often the young person is not aware of what they are being subjected to. This also makes it difficult to disclose to adults because they often feel they have a relationship with the offender. This literature review shows that OSCA can happen in many ways and that image sharing is

intrinsic to modern youth culture and therefore difficult to control. In contrast to sexual assault, digital technology ensures that victimization is ongoing, as pictures and videos continue to be viewed online (Chauviré-Geib and Fegert, 2024). It is also apparent that the consequences are as serious and damaging as sexual abuse happening without technology, and that the OSCA may be a slightly misleading concept, as young people are not wholly online or offline, but communicate and ‘exist’ in these two arenas at the same time.

4.0 Methodology

In this section, I will describe the methodology I have chosen in my research and how the choice of research design is related to the design of research questions and to my ontological position. Braun and Clarke (2022) describe methodology as a theoretically informed framework for research.

4.1 Paradigm

This doctoral project is a qualitative and subjective research project. With my research question as background, and my position as both a researcher and clinician, my research will take place within a *subjective* and *qualitative* framework and guide the methodology of this research. Being a practitioner – researcher I have built up my own, personal ways of understanding, and I am aware that this will colour my interpretations and understanding of the present data. I am also aware that this can appear contradictory because Subjectivism is the belief that researchers' knowledge is “always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018b:21). Qualitative research can also be positivistic to the extent that we assume that what we observe is separate from and unrelated to ourselves.

4.2 Ontology

To simplify the various ontological positions, I will describe three possible positions. On one side of an ‘ontological continuum’ is the position known as relativism/interpretivism/constructionism and on the other side you have realism/positivism (Braun and Clarke, 2019b). These ends of the continuum are in many ways opposites of one another. Depending on what is studied, qualitative research can belong to *positivism(realism)*, *critical realism* or *constructionism(relativism)*. Different research paradigms reflect allegiance to the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018a). Research in the qualitative paradigm attempts to locate knowledge in *the construction*

between the researcher and the context being studied. The researcher takes part in constructing data and the meaning of these. Still, qualitative research can be conducted from a positivistic ontological stance, such as when we observe and then assume that what we observe is separate from and unrelated to ourselves. This reflects the epistemological / ontological stance of the researcher.

An ontological position at one end of an ontological continuum is called *realism* (Braun and Clarke, 2021), often referred to as a positivistic standpoint. In this approach, there is one truth which is possible to discover. Validity is ensured through procedures which are described and followed without exception and without considering the variation which different contexts might present. The researcher is regarded as objective and aims to make sure the research is not ‘contaminated’ by following rules that can be applied by other researchers to find the same result.

At the other end of the continuum, is the ontological position called *relativism/interpretivism/constructionism* (Braun and Clarke, 2021). In the centre of the continuum there is *critical realism*, which assumes that there is a truth out there but that this can only partially be discovered and only through the ‘lenses’ of the researcher interpreting. A constructionist research paradigm, which is the framework of the current research, is conceptualized as having aspects of both the postpositivist and interpretivist paradigms—*ontological critical realism with epistemological subjectivism*. Meaning is created through an interaction of the interpreter and the interpreted (Crotty, 1998). Though separate from the phenomena observed, the interpreter cannot be entirely objective, and the meaning-making interaction is strongly influenced by the phenomena and social context. For the researcher, this means that research is dealing with things that are both real and constructed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018:342).

The relationship between critical realism and constructivism is not a contradiction. Critical realism is a moderate form of constructivism that recognizes that knowledge is a social product. Critical realism considers social reality as the result of social

interactions and highlights the importance of meaning, interpretation, culture, and discourses. The difference is that critical realism includes a richer ontology, here there is also room for objective structures, causality and depth that can be included in the social sciences (Hansen and Nilsen 2014:85).

Depending on the nature of the study, qualitative research can belong to any of the paradigms of post-positivism, critical realism, or constructionism (Braun and Clarke, 2019b; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018), these various paradigms reflect the ontological and epistemological positions to which the research belongs (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Research in the qualitative paradigm aims to find knowledge through a process of co-construction between the researcher and the context which is being investigated. The researcher is part of the construction of the data and the meaning attributed to them.

4.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is the relationship the researcher has to research: and how do we acquire knowledge. The researcher's ontological stance can be seen as a starting point for research. What the researcher sees as true will direct the relationship between the researcher and the object of study (Creswell 2017:35). In this research project, I adhere to the view that knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject (Ernst von Glaserfeld, 1995).

4.3.1 Connecting paths to epistemology

In this section, I will describe 3 relevant connecting paths to epistemology: *Subjectivism*, *The Systemic Perspective*, and *Critical Realism*. In my research project, I will interview parents about their experiences with children who are victims of online sexual abuse. This places the research in a qualitative research design which involves seeking to understand how the world is perceived, experienced, and understood by a person from that person's own perspective. There is an emphasis on the meaning of the words 'at face value'. I will also be able to

include my own interpretation of the underlying meaning of what is said. In critical qualitative research, the possible meaning behind what is said needs to be analysed and the focus is on how language creates 'truths' and various types of discourse and how structures in society affect people (Malterud, 2013).

Constructionist TA research takes different forms; researchers can make claim to both relativist and critical realist ontologies and postmodern and poststructuralist epistemologies and methodologies (Clarke and Braun, 2014:6).

Who I am and how I understand the world is my tool and my lens to the world, myself and what is in between. Not assuming that to be a stable coherent point in this but taking a position to how I see through subjective lenses. This way of understanding the researcher's gaze is called *subjectivism*:

Researcher subjectivity is the primary "tool" for reflexive TA; subjectivity is not a problem to be managed or controlled, it is a resource for research (Gough and Madill, 2012). The notion of "researcher bias", which implies the possibility of unbiased or objective knowledge generation, is incompatible with reflexive TA, as knowledge generation is inherently subjective and situated (Braun and Clarke, 2022:8).

From the above, it is implied that my family, my upbringing, my colour of skin, sociocultural status, education and culture affect the gaze direction towards meaning that is connected to all this; I am the mother of four children, I have worked with vulnerable children and their families all my professional life and I have chosen infants and young people with major challenges as a field of professional specialization. So, I will also carry with me my professional knowledge from the field of trauma, attachment theory, developmental psychology, and systemic family therapy as part of my view. This also applies to how I see my role as parent to four children, how I view myself as a mother, woman and professional.

For me, all of this is interconnected and mutually dependent. It affects my view of myself, and my view of the world. This circularity, and relational understanding of the ecology I am a part

of is a third perspective I want to present here: The *systemic perspective*. This perspective implies that everything is connected, and that context is a broader framework that influences and gives meaning to a phenomenon. That what is *not* said can say more than what is said and that our bodies communicate with language on multiple levels. And this can be confusing. That what the word utters sometimes means something other than what the rest of the body is communicating.

Finally, I would like to highlight how Critical realism involves interpreting individuals considering the structures and social mechanisms that they live in. Critical realism also explores how human "agency" (the concept of actor), understood as opinions, perceptions, intentions etc., interacts with the effects of social structures such as social rules, norms, and laws. The relationship actor-structure is perceived as dynamic, and issues of power and powerlessness become central (Kjørstad and Solem, 2018).

4.4 Research design

In this section, I describe the study's research design. Research is a planned and designed activity (Aveyard, 2014). In designing the study design for my research project, I was concerned that there should be rigour, coherence, and methodological integrity. This implies how the ontological and epistemological starting point of the study should fit in with my research question and choice of method for obtaining data/material for analysis. How I collected material, and what type of material would be best suited to answer my research question. All these questions relating to how the research is carried out constitute the framework for research design. In the next section, I will describe and justify the choice of method of analysis.

4.4.1 Give voice.

An important aspect of my qualitative approach is to give the families with whom I have had contact a 'voice' in this research project. Families with children subjected to OSA are seldom

heard, and the area of internet abuse is often ‘under the radar’ of for example health and care systems. It is a new area to discover in research. I am also aware of how my previous experience with the specific families in the cases studied will influence how I interpret and understand what is said. Knowing that in another setting and involving other relationships, different stories would have emerged as well as different interpretations.

In this study, I have chosen to analyse the material through reflexive thematic analysis (RTA). For me, this provided a systematic and flexible way to identify patterns across the interviews, and to shape topics that could accommodate both variation and commonalities in the parents' experiences. I found that the method made it possible to combine quotations and my own interpretation into an analytical narrative, which provided structure and wholeness in a complex material (Braun and Clarke, 2019). At the same time, this means that individual voices are partly woven into broader themes and thus may appear less clear than they could have done with other approaches.

In retrospect, I have reflected on methods I could have used if I had wanted to amplify the parents' voices in a different way. *Descriptions of Lived Realities* (Van Manen, 1990; Geertz, 1973) could have provided dense descriptions of the parents' lived experiences and thus a stronger emotional closeness. *Composite narratives* (Willis, 2019) could have allowed me to gather several voices in one story, which would provide a powerful common voice and at the same time maintain anonymity. *Analytical vignettes* (Erickson, 1986) could present short, concrete narratives that clearly illustrated specific experiences, while the use of *metaphors* (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) could reinforce the emotional aspects of the experience. All these methods have their strengths, but also weaknesses, such as the risk of simplification, abstraction or loss of analytical structure.

Looking back, I consider RTA to be the most appropriate approach for my project. I wanted to understand how the parents experienced that family dynamics were affected, and to analyse

this considering different theoretical perspectives. RTA gave me a framework where I could develop a holistic analysis, while at the same time being able to highlight the parents' voices through quotes and my reflections. The reflection on alternative methods has nevertheless been valuable, because it reminds me that the researcher's choices always shape the stories that emerge, and that there are other ways to give voice to the participants without compromising anonymity.

4.4.2 Researcher reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity constitutes validity in a qualitative research project. The researcher's transparency goes some way toward maintaining the rigour of the research. Reflexivity in relation to researcher, methods and theory needs to be described and explained. Krause writes how this can be viewed: «Reflexivity is a way of attending to the institutional location of historical and personal aspects of the research relationship» (Krause, Taylor and Francis, 2012).

Also, the reflexivity I have as a clinician is closely linked to research ethics. Guillemin and Gillam (2014:270) discuss this relationship: "(...) ethics in practice," is the "homegrown" notion of reflexivity actually encapsulates and extends the concerns (...) of ethics".

As a clinician and researcher, I bring my own values and my own, personal ways of understanding to the research. I may share outlooks and attitudes with the families I interview. I may have the same cultural background, also be a parent, have the same social and economic background, ethnic background, gender, or age. We may have children of the same age. This might be useful, as it would then make it easier to relate to a parent's situation, but it could also be counterproductive in the sense that it may give me 'blind spots' outside my awareness that may influence the research. I may think that I know how something is experienced due to feeling similar to the person I am interviewing, but our personal epistemologies (Bateson, 2002) may be only partly overlapping.

It is important to be clear in the choices I make and the assumptions I have. This transparency partial shows how I as researcher and clinician reason about how these factors may affect my research. I am also concerned with the nature of the interviewee's relation to me as a clinician. I regard this from a hierarchical perspective: I am a professional employed by an important state institution and am aware how this implies a power structure that can influence the situation (Foucault, 1991). In addition, I am aware of the different roles people take on, what society demands of the parental role, and my various roles as female, mother, therapist, and researcher (Goffman, 2008).

4.4.3 The role of the researcher / researcher reflexivity

The joint role of researcher and practitioner can involve several dilemmas. On this subject, Bell (2002) writes that the practitioner/researcher is self-regulating in relation to ethical behaviour and therefore must consider which of the two roles will be given priority at any given time. Social workers have their own ethical framework and guidelines which are also appropriate as guidelines for research. Ethical guidelines are not to be followed as static procedures but need to be integrated as part of researcher reflexivity (Simon, 2018).

4.4.4 Data gathering by Interview.

To answer the research questions, I chose a semi-structured, in-depth interview. An in-depth interview can give the participant the opportunity to share how they make meaning of personal and relational experiences with the help of an interview guide and the interviewer. (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015) describe how the live interview situation, with the interviewee's voice and facial and bodily expressions accompanying the statements, provides richer access to participants' meaning. In-depth interviews provide an opportunity to elaborate and explain during the interview. This provides richer material than a survey consisting of partially pre-filled and pre-categorized questions. In-depth interviews also provide access to

information about people's experiences and reflections that are in line with the research question.

I addressed the main research question together with some more detailed questions. Inspired by systemic inquiry questions from Karl Tom, my interview guide provided general directions as to which questions I wanted answers to, and the more detailed, follow-on questions allowed me to broaden and deepen the responses. Kvale and Brinkman (2012) state that a research interview can be regarded as a skilled activity, where long experience and practice allows one to develop skills and knowledge. This is not unlike systemic practice.

4.4.5 Sample and recruitment

I interviewed fifteen parents of 9 children/young people who had been victims of online sexual child abuse. Children and young people who have attended a forensic interview in connection with reported cases are routinely registered at the *Children's houses*. Recruitment started when clearance and ethical approval had been given by The Director of Public Prosecutions, the Research Ethics Committee in Norway, the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee, and the police districts and *Children's Houses* involved.

Colleagues at 4 *children's houses* contributed to the recruitment of fourteen parents of nine children as put forward in the recommendation from the regional ethics committee.

4.4.6 Purposive sampling and inclusion criteria:

I recruited 14 parents in nine interviews. Colleagues identified nine children who had been victims of online abuse and contacted their parents. Parents were contacted and informed about the project and asked about participation. All parents asked wished to participate in the research project. When parents agreed to participate, they received information by telephone and were sent information and consent forms. As a researcher, I contacted parents after they had consented. I contacted the participants and provided information again and went through the consent form. We arranged an interview, and I received signed information and consent

forms before the interviews. The parents I contacted were both invited, but it was okay for them to come individually.

There was a total of nine interviews with fifteen parents recruited and conducted from four children's houses in Norway. Four interviews were with parent couples, one interview with a divorced mother who had shared custody, two interviews with widowed mothers who lived with the abused daughter, one interview with a father who was alone (as the mother was with the exposed daughter due to admission to hospital), and one with a divorced father who lived with his abused daughter and a new partner. Here, the biological mother had some contact.

Primarily, demographic information was deliberately omitted in this study to protect participants' anonymity and privacy. By not providing details such as age, gender, place of residence, or other identifying characteristics, the risk of identifying individual participants is minimized. This is particularly important in research on sensitive topics, where small samples or specific experiences may make participants more easily identifiable. The aim is to ensure that no information can be traced back to individuals, while maintaining high ethical standards and safeguarding participant safety.

Regarding participant voice and feedback, reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2019) guided methodological decisions. This approach emphasizes the researcher's active and interpretive role rather than direct validation of findings through participant "approval." Consequently, the findings represent the researcher's analytical interpretation across the dataset, aiming to identify patterns rather than reflect each participant's subjective experience. Participant feedback (member checking) was not conducted, both to avoid potential emotional burden and to preserve the thematic integrity of the analysis. While this may limit opportunities for additional nuance or corrections from participants, it was a methodologically justified choice to maintain the interpretive framework.

Several practical considerations also influenced the decision not to invite participant feedback. During the pandemic, a simplified study design was chosen to increase feasibility under lockdown restrictions. The study required substantial time for approval, as the Norwegian ethics committee considered the participant group particularly vulnerable. Recruitment was time-consuming, although all invited participants consented. Furthermore, the study was initially rejected by SIKT – *kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør* (the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research) due to Brexit affecting collaboration agreements between Norwegian institutions and the UK. An internal review at my Norwegian academic institution revealed that the requirement for SIKT approval was not aligned with Norwegian Data Protection regulations, posing a risk of losing collected data and developed themes. Work was therefore temporarily paused until a joint agreement between Tavistock and HVL was established. Personal and serious events further reduced my capacity. In summary, the methodological and study design choices were made to enable execution during the pandemic, and the analytical strategy ethically legitimizes this approach, as the study was successfully realized—unlike alternative approaches that could have led to cancellation due to increased workload and time constraints. To safeguard participants' voices and respect their contributions without employing member checking, thorough and transparent documentation of the analytical process is essential. This includes clearly articulating the researcher's reflexive considerations throughout the process. Confidentiality is maintained by anonymizing data and selectively using quotations to ensure that participants cannot be identified. Through this approach, the research can both highlight participants' perspectives and simultaneously protect their anonymity and integrity.

When permission was granted from REK and TREC, I informed the national resource group *Online Sexual Child Abuse* (set up by the *Children's Houses*) about my research project. In this group there are representatives from all 11 children's houses. I prepared a presentation to

this group of the research project in which I provided information and answered questions in connection with the information sheet and the consent form which had been prepared by me. Permission was also granted for the project by SIKT.

The recruitment of participants was carried out by the representatives of other children's houses who contacted the parents of 9 children, who had all previously been seen locally, and asked if they would be willing to participate in the project. They also provided families with the information letter and consent forms. The parents who agreed to participate in the research project responded within a week by e-mail or phone to the person who had contacted them. All parents who were asked said yes to participating in the project. This positive response I interpret as the parents being motivated for an opportunity to talk about a situation that may have been difficult to bring up with others. In addition to that they wanted to contribute to shed light on an issue of great concern to society.

Once nine parents or parent couples had agreed to participate, I received their contact details and could then arrange an interview directly. I reiterated all the information and emphasized once more that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. I audio recorded the interviews between myself and the parents. I was permitted to use the premises of Children's houses for the interviews, and three different Children's houses were finally used.

4.5 Choice of analysis method

I chose reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as a method because I found it a flexible and useful tool that could provide complex accounts of all types of data. This method of analysis is epistemologically flexible and not bound to a specific theory, which fits well considering the systemic foundation of the study. This does not imply that the method is disconnected from theory, as the researcher must make clear his or her standpoint and context as I have

described earlier in this chapter (Braun and Clarke, 2019a). The researcher is subjective and active - making choices in the research process, striving to be transparent about these choices, and making clear his or her assumptions pertaining to the research analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019b).

RTA allows the researcher to be reflexive and flexible in the different stages of analysis. The six steps described in RTA are not meant as a linear procedure to follow, this is a misconception and Braun and Clack (2019:592) themselves state that "Our approach is sometimes presented as involving a rigid, linear series of stages". Rather, the analysis method specifies six steps in an analysis process that are flexible, and which accommodate the possibility of a reflexive approach throughout between data, steps in the analysis and the researcher.

Reflexive thematic analysis is based on an understanding of knowledge as situated and interpretive and allows for an analytical process in which the researcher does not seek to uncover an objective truth in the material but rather constructs meaningful themes in dialogue with the data, theory, and personal reflexivity. The method is also flexible regarding theoretical anchoring, making it suitable for exploring complex and emotionally charged experiences, such as parents' experiences of having children who have been subjected to online abuse. RTA makes it possible to identify patterns and commonalities across participants' narratives, while also allowing for nuanced and in-depth interpretations of the relational and emotional aspects of their life situations.

Alternative analytical approaches, such as narrative method and discourse analysis, could also have been relevant but would have provided other types of insights. A narrative approach could have enabled an in-depth understanding of how each parent constructs meaning over time and through life stories but would be less suited to identifying common features across participants. Discourse analysis, on the other hand, could have revealed how parents'

language is shaped by societal discourses related to parenthood, responsibility, and morality, but would have been less able to capture the personal and emotional depth of the material.

Reflexive thematic analysis was therefore considered best suited to balance an analytical focus across participants with sensitivity to individual experiences and feelings.

I chose Inductive analysis that has several advantages when used in reflexive thematic analysis. It enables the researcher to explore the data without predetermined categories, allowing themes and patterns to emerge organically from participants' own descriptions and life worlds. This opens the way for nuanced and unexpected findings and makes it possible to discover voices, perspectives, or issues that might otherwise have been overlooked. The inductive approach also contributes to increased methodological openness and flexibility, which strengthens both the relevance and credibility of the research.

At the same time, inductive analysis can have certain weaknesses. The analysis can become less structured and more time-consuming, as the researcher must manage large amounts of raw data without a clear framework. There is also a risk that the researcher's own preconceptions unconsciously influence theme development, and that the lack of a theoretical starting point makes it more difficult to place the findings in a broader context. Thus, the analysis can risk becoming fragmented or losing the theoretical depth that a deductive method often provides.

Even when seeking an inductive approach in reflexive thematic analysis, it is important to recognize that the analysis can never be entirely theory-free or completely devoid of deductive elements. However, in reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021), one tries to keep the theory open for as long as possible and instead bring theory in later in the process in the discussion.

The researcher always brings personal experiences, assumptions, and understandings, which inevitably influence what is perceived as relevant in the material and how the data are interpreted. Thus, inductive analysis will also be coloured by deductive aspects, whether explicitly or implicitly. This underscores the importance of transparency and reflexivity in the research process, so that the researcher is aware of and clear about how their own perspectives may shape the analysis and the findings that are highlighted.

In this study, the findings are presented through a thematic structure, where each theme reflects a pattern of meaning and significance identified in the data material (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The themes are constructed in accordance with the principles of reflexive thematic analysis, where the researcher's interpretation and active engagement with the data are central. Selected quotes are systematically used to support and validate the researcher's interpretation of the themes, giving participants a clear voice in the analysis. The purpose of the quotations is to substantiate analytical claims and provide the reader with an opportunity to assess whether there is coherence between the data and the researcher's interpretation. Therefore, it is important to select quotations that clearly and strongly support the analytical points being made. This approach strengthens credibility and transparency and provides a nuanced picture of the participants' experiences (Silverman, 2020; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

4.5.1 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The aim of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019b) is to identify patterns of meaning across the data to provide answers to research questions. The patterns are identified and developed through a rigorous process of familiarizing oneself with the data, coding the data, followed by theme development and revision of these themes. This in-depth study of material and the opportunity to move between the phases of the analysis finally gave me the confidence to answer the problem as I chose.

My primary focus, the meaning that families make of their experiences, was the main reason for choosing RTA for the present study (Braun and Clarke, 2019b). RTA assumes that the creation of themes is a process formed driven by the researcher. Themes do not emerge in RTA. The researcher is active, and the researcher is co-constructing codes and themes. This fits well with the systemic context of this research. An ethical dilemma with this that I reflected on was whether the participants would feel that the topics I constructed did not make sense for them. And another was a methodological dilemma in that co-constructing can also be questioned in view of the study's ontological starting point in critical realism.

It is vital to make clear my assumptions and be transparent about the various choices I make so that the thematic analysis can be seen to be co-constructed by myself, using RTA as a guideline and not as a manual. This transparency is also how *rigour* is obtained in a qualitative research design.

4.5.2 The 6 phases of RTA

The six phases described in TA (Braun and Clarke, 2019b) should be understood as a guide, not a static procedure, and researchers must, through accounting for their choices, justify these choices and assumptions during the process.

Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with the data set

In a small research project like this, I can define the data set as the transcribed interviews. But it would have been a reduction of the context in which they were created and the significance this context has for the further analysis process.

From the start of the recruitment process, I have noted down ideas, assuming that "everything" might be data (Brinkman, 2014). I was also open to using the knowledge I gained in dialogue with other Children's house staff who were involved in recruitment.

Small info from those who recruited about "... The fact that this family has said yes, but they have to wait a bit until things have calmed down at home before making contact," also characterizes my interpretation of the data set.

I kept a research diary and jotted down thoughts and ideas continuously. After each interview, I noted down any immediate thoughts or feelings, without delay and with no form of 'filtering.' I read through and listened to the interviews as they were completed. The transcription phase was very time-consuming and fragmented, but I gained a good knowledge of the material. Which came in handy in the other phases because I knew where all the material belonged.

Phase 2: Coding

When it comes to describing 'how I coded data,' the language already feels misleading.

Coding sounds both mechanical and digital to me. Without face and without interpretation.

Coding in subjective research is an organic and creative work that has my "signature" because I feel, think, and act in a time, culture, role, and context that influences my choices as a researcher.

I started coding by reading the interviews carefully line by line. I noticed segments of text that I saw as interesting and that highlighted the research question. I coded on a semantic level. At face value. At the same time, I noted thoughts about ideas or latent interpretations of the same segments.

I started by creating codes that I believed captured something that was close to what the participant was saying and created a *code label*. For example, the statement: "... We didn't really know what we were going to do, yes, how to approach it. But now we just had to deal with it" became the *code labels*: "parenting was challenged" and "parental management." I also coded it as "parenting capacity".

Initially, it was difficult to find good names for the codes, and I was aware of making them too simple and too general. Gradually, they became more specific and experiential codes that made more sense and that I found more meaningful than the first instance of coding.

The first interviews made me a little 'blind'. I numbered all codes chronologically. And similar codes were coded as the same code. For example: "Code 1 Parenthood" was a recurring code. I concluded that some of the codes were too similar or too superficial. I had a critical review with my supervisor and saw that pre-categorization was a barrier I had to try to be reflexive about. I therefore chose to code freely for the next 7 interviews and had a critical review of the first two interviews to ensure free coding. I coded so that each code gave more specific meaning with short sentences, something that Braun and Clarke also recommend in RTA (2021:68). In my attempt to code carefully, I was somehow locked into pre-categorizing using the same code repeatedly.

After the first round of free coding, I had about five hundred codes divided into nine interviews. I spent a long time on the first interview where I coded systematically on both a semantic level and a latent level, where I marked in text each code and whether it was a semantic or a latent code. This gave me a structure to work by, but was very time-consuming, often overthinking each code. I decided to make a note if I thought there was a latent meaning in the code (yes/no), but otherwise the semantic level was considered sufficient as this is what I had chosen in the first place. I tried to keep close to what the participant was saying while keeping the possibility open to latent meaning. This coding procedure made my work more structured, while allowing me to jot down thoughts and ideas in the margins continuously.

Development of the codes

After a review of the codes, in the second round I found the codes in the first round were too simple, as they were too short and superficial. For example, the code "parenting" became "parenting was challenged", "The parenting role became too big" and "The parenting role

changed". In this round, some codes were also developed into multiple codes as described in Figure 1.1, Code 30.

I created a table divided by three columns for all tags after the first round and after the second round. These columns were numbered from 1 – 500. This way I could keep track of how the codes changed, where the number indicates which interview they belonged to. See table 1

Code Number	Initial Coding	Refined/Reviewed Coding	Description/Interpretation
21	Family life was chaos	Establishing a “new normal” in family life	Reflects parents’ experiences of disruption and the process of adjusting to altered family dynamics.
22	Treatment	Child received follow-up care from CAMHS	Highlights formal support and interventions accessed by the child.
23	Needs of parents	Parents’ need for support and assistance	Captures parents’ own requirements for guidance, emotional support, and resources.
24	Good help, relief	Positive experiences with received support	Emphasizes instances where external help alleviated stress or provided relief.
25	Positive change	Perceived improvements in family situation	Indicates parents’ observations of beneficial changes over time following intervention or coping strategies.
26	The view of one’s own child	Parents’ explanatory models of the child’s experience; Child vulnerability and susceptibility to abuse (“easy target”)	Reflects how parents interpret their child’s vulnerability and risk of victimization.
27	Grandparents	Generational gaps in understanding and support; Challenges arising from differences in perspectives across generations	Shows differences in comprehension and response between older and younger generations and associated tensions within extended family dynamics.
28	Staying connected, reaching out	Efforts made by parents to maintain connection and seek help	Illustrates proactive strategies by parents to safeguard and support their child.
30	Parenting	Offline vs. online parenting challenges; Parental role perceived as overwhelming; Parental authority and responsibilities challenged	Explores tensions between traditional caregiving and digital realities, feelings of burden, and challenges to parental authority.

Table 1

I chose to stop after two reviews of all the codes.

I checked the data set, looked at the extracts of text and tags, then moved back and forth. It was the meaning that arose between myself as researcher and my data set that guided what was shaped as a code. This co-constructive process also implies that at some point a decision must be made to move forward. At one point, there was a need for a stopping point. This phase is time-consuming, where a working model needs to be devised to obtain and keep track of useful data. It has been labelled as "messy work" by Braun and Clarke (2022), who also write that coding can continue endlessly if the researcher himself does not choose a stopping point.

Phase3: Generating initial themes

This phase involves the exploration of codes and other data gathered to find significant patterns of meaning. What could be potential topics? I started this phase with *sorting and clustering* codes like this:

I had all the codes collected in A4 sheets that I printed. I cut out the codes and sorted all the codes that were related to each other into small piles. Then I looked through the piles and moved around codes. In the end, I had 15 piles of codes that I put in envelopes.

Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes

In reflexive thematic analysis, a topic is understood not only as an accumulation of codes or quotes, but as a *coherent story* that tells something important about the material in light of the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2019; 2021). A topic is therefore developed through the researcher's interpretive work, where patterns are identified across data and tied together into an analytical narrative. Quotes from the participants serve as illustrations here, but it is the researcher's reflexive analysis that creates the overall story and gives meaning to the empirical data. In this way, the topics are both rooted in the participants' voices and shaped by the researcher's theoretical and analytical gaze, so that the presentation of the

results constitutes a combination of empirical excerpts and interpretive comments that together build a coherent narrative insight.

In phase 4, I reviewed and developed proposals for more specific topic names than the ones I had designed in phase three. And I tried to review the topics so that they were more coherent in terms of content.

I went back to the data and read and listened through what I had coded in phase 2. Then I examined the tags associated with the extracts to see if they still supported the theme as it then stood and to see if any themes overlapped. I was concerned about whether I had enough codes to form a theme, and whether it was a topic that I could rely on in the sense of being a topic that was evident across the interviews. During this phase, I was vigilant to ensure that the codes derived from all the interviews and not just a few.

In this part of the analysis, I focused on developing topics that were present across the entire the full data set and could thematize those codes.

Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes

In this phase of the analysis, there is fine-tuning and assurance that each topic has clear demarcations and has a strong core meaning. How does this theme fit into the overarching story of the material? The topics need to have unique contributions of meaning. In this phase, there was a continuous process of rejecting or refining topics. I became more aware of how a topic didn't have to be about the same thing, but that a theme could say something about a span of meaning, or differences in something. One topic, "secrets in the family", was about something difficult to talk about. It could be about an adult who found it difficult to listen, or the police who had advised him not to talk about what the young person had been exposed to before the facilitated interview.

In designing themes, I spent a lot of time going back to the codes I had originally created and checking that topics were evident across the interviews. I wanted them to be recognizable topics for the participants, while at the same time I wanted the topics to represent the richness I felt the interviews had on both a semantic and latent level. One theme that was formed early was, «crisis in the family", I believed to be a latent interpretation of material; no one saw in plain words that there was a crisis, and I found the families to be very attentive and calm in the interviews. I had to ask the question: where there events in my own life that had influenced the choice of name for this theme? I had to ask myself whether I could call the topic “crisis in the family” if no-one had said this, and was it too close to my own life? In phase 5 of the analysis, I was concerned with making sure that the analysis was ethically sound which for me was about the fact that even though RTA is subjective, I wanted the families to recognize themselves in my writing.

Phase 6: Writing up

Clifford (1972) points out the inherent challenges in translating experiences to text. When I say ‘writing up’ do I view writing up as a part of the methodology I believe so, because as noted previously codes do not capture exactly what took place. Furthermore, as I was coding in Norwegian, writing up in English might further corrupt meaning, which would be regarded as a methodological issue.

What does one lose in the writing up process?

The translation from Norwegian to English necessarily involves a loss of certain dimensions of meaning. For myself, who had been involved in the whole process, I felt that the translation process distanced me to some extent from the original material and people involved. I recognized this process as similar to the process in therapy when one needs to dis-engage emotionally after a sustained period of working together with a family. I reflected that this was no less important when doing this kind of research.

In summary, the analysis in this study is based on the empirical data, which consists of interviews with parents of children exposed to sexual abuse online. The parents' stories have been analysed through a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) with an inductive approach, where I have allowed themes to develop from the material without being bound by a predefined theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013; 2019). The analysis involves moving between descriptive representations of what the participants express, and my interpretation of how these experiences can be understood in a larger context. Quotations are used strategically to give life to and anchor the analytic claims. The developed themes constitute the results of the study, and these are presented as findings in the next chapter.

4.6 Transcription

Immersion in the data is the first step in Reflexive Thematic Analysis. It is recommended that the researcher transcribes the interviews his/herself. Though I had the interviews transcribed professionally, I listened through all of them and read and reread the transcripts to immerse myself in the data. I also compiled a log with my thoughts and ideas when reading and re-reading the transcripts. This way of making notes of thoughts and ideas is valuable, helping to systematize ideas and keep track of personal reflections from the interviews and to keep some form of track of my own inner dialogue with the text to a greater extent. This was useful in analysis later in the text.

To get an overview of the data for further analysis, it is usual to transfer the interviews from oral to written form (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder and a verbatim transcription was carried out. Pauses of up to 5 seconds were marked with full stops and longer pauses with (pause). Non-verbal features, such as deep sighing, swallowing etc., all of which can indicate feelings, were noted continuously. Brinkmann and Kvale state that being aware of voice and bodily expressions provides a richer account of meaning than merely reading transcribed interviews.

“... the live interview situation with the interview voice and facial and bodily expressions accompanying the statement, provides a richer access to subjects’ meanings than the transcribed text will do later on...these immediate expressions, based on the interviewer’s empathic access to the meanings communicated in the live interview interactions, may, in the form of notes or audio from the recorder, provide a valuable context for the later analysis of transcripts” (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015)

Keeping track of both words spoken as well as emotions occurring in real time gave important information as to what is going on in the context.

4.7 Research ethics

I asked for clearance from the 11 police districts and the leaders of the *Children’s houses* in Norway to recruit families. This way of recruiting ensures families receive follow-up from the *Children’s House* they belong to, when needed. All children who have attended a *Children’s house* have a counsellor/therapist who can assist with follow-up or coordinate help if desired. This is outlined in a contingency plan. *Children’s houses* are independent from both police and child protection services and are therefore a suitable place for families to find space and support to deal with difficult issues.

4.7.1 Ethical considerations

As a researcher and practitioner, I constantly face ethical dilemmas. This is an integral part of my practice as a family therapist and in my research work. I have worked in the field for 20 years and have extensive experience in recognizing and dealing with ethical dilemmas. For a practitioner, ethical considerations are an essential aspect of professional integrity. Both workers in social services and in health professions have clear ethical guidelines and frameworks. Ethics is also an integral and central part of qualitative research, and not a supplement or about the ticking of boxes (Gail, 2018). The activity of doing research with people clearly needs to be regulated to ensure that researchers or employers do not harm others during their activities.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) emphasize two useful aspects of ethics relating to the dual role of practitioner and researcher: “These are (a) procedural ethics, which usually involves seeking approval from a relevant ethics committee to undertake research involving humans; and (b) “ethics in practice” or the everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004:3).

I find these two dimensions of ethics useful, with procedural ethics referring to the study's ethical framework approved prior to the research by REK, TREC, and SIKT, and ethics in practice referring to the ongoing research activity.

Procedural ethics are important and formal procedures developed for research in general and are intended to ensure that, for example, people know what they are participating in and that they are not harmed by being researched. However, this provides little guidance on the ethical dividing lines in everyday life as a researcher. The same authors describe ethics in practice:

It is within the dimension of “ethics in practice” that the researcher’s ethical competence comes to the fore. By this we mean the researcher’s willingness to acknowledge the ethical dimension of research practice, his or her ability to actually recognize this ethical dimension when it comes into play, and his or her ability to think through ethical issues and respond appropriately (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004:3).

I probably limited questions concerning the relationship between parents to avoid pressuring participants if they didn't want to talk about such a sensitive topic. This was a balancing act that I experienced went well during the interviews, but I wondered afterwards if I could have asked more about the relational costs of the online abuse. Approaching themes of intimacy and sexuality felt difficult unless there were natural opportunities arising spontaneously in conversation. The need for participants not to tell more than they were comfortable with was my guiding principle in this. It was a dilemma that I, as a skilled professional in human relations, might encourage the participant to say more than he or she had intended because

they felt safe and comfortable in the interview situation (Bell and Nutt, 2002). I didn't have the opportunity to meet them again and follow-up sensitive issues that had been opened up.

Guidelines and frameworks are important, and descriptions of these in relation to the research must be explicit. In this study, a clear and precise information letter was provided for the participants which they were encouraged to read thoroughly, and they were informed that they could leave the study at any time. It is important that the participants were fully aware of their rights.

4.7.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research relates to an agreement between the researcher and the participant concerning how the data will be used. This usually means that private details will not be revealed. Confidentiality is an important point in all research-related ethical guidelines.

Where there is judged to be a real risk to the participant's health or the health of others, then this is something that may interfere with a promise of absolute confidentiality. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) write that anonymity can protect the participant but can also potentially conceal their right to be heard. In this study I have left out some descriptions of the children and offender to safeguard the families to be recognized from description of the criminal cases in media.

4.7.3 Informed consent

Participants in this study received information which provided a clear understanding about what it was they were consenting to. Potential risks and benefits of participation were described. In the present study, it was important to inform of the possibility of help/follow-up at the *Children's house* to which the participants belonged. They received information about research design, how the research was to be carried out, and that they could withdraw at any time. They received information about who was involved in the research, the purposes of the research, and where and how data would be stored and for how long. They received a written

document that they were encouraged to read thoroughly and were informed of who they could contact if they had any questions (telephone/e-mail). The participants also read the transcriptions and made corrections where they felt that the text was inaccurate. I also prepared a written contract which both I and the participants signed. I also informed the participants that I was both a clinician and researcher, as I thought that this was important in relation to transparency. Of course this influenced my role as researcher, for example the participants might have shared more sensitive information. Participants may have shared more because they knew my background, but possibly in some cases shared less if they found it inappropriate that I was already employed at the *Children's house*. Bell and Nutt (2002:75) writes that participants often reveal more when researchers reveal their clinical background.

4.7.4 Data storage

Data was stored on a PC connected to my workplace in the Norwegian State *Children's House* in the Western Police District computer system. This was part of the same system as all criminal cases and other medical records related to the Norwegian police. Data was stored in my user area that required a personal password and code. Only I as researcher would then have access to the data. All information related to names and the associated data was anonymized and information that could link data and personal information was kept separate. *Anonymized* data was shared with my supervisor in Great Britain and participants were informed about this and gave consent to this.

4.7.5 Contingency plan

When a child or young person is at the *Children's House*, they are allocated a counsellor that they and their parents can contact both during and after facilitated interview. The counsellor is either a psychologist or a health and social worker, who has follow-up and therapy as his/her work at the *Children's House*. In addition, the contact person has a good knowledge of other relevant professionals who can assist if needed. The parents in this research project were

reminded that this person could still be contacted, even after the research was completed. The contact person from the Children's house who was already connected to the case could be contacted if the parents needed to do so after the research interview. This is available to all children that have been to a facilitated interview. For example, when court cases eventually come up, or symptoms arise long after the abuse experiences, the *Children's House* will still be able to offer follow-up or carry out a referral to the appropriate services. *Children's Houses* involved in the recruitment of participants have been granted permission to assist parents after an interview if they wish.

Sponsorship

This study is not related to any sponsorship or financing.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter I have outlined a research design that fits the research question for this study. I wanted to develop a simplified study design, staying focused on what I wanted to gain knowledge about. I focused on the fact that, due to the global pandemic, the study may be subject to several restrictions. My study therefore took account of this and was designed such that any restrictions could be accommodated within its framework while still answering the research question. At a time when most people were online more, I was felt an extra motivation to contribute to the reduction of online risk for children and adolescents, and hopefully provide useful help to families and services supporting children and young people subjected to online abuse.

5.0 Findings

In this chapter I will present the themes that are the results of the analysis in this study. Nine qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with fifteen parents in four different Children's houses in Norway. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022) was used to analyse the interviews, and five themes was the result of this process. The interviews are translated from Norwegian to English and some of the Norwegian sayings is also written in Norwegian.

This chapter presents the findings of the study through a thematic structure, with each theme capturing patterns of meaning and significance identified within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The development of these themes follows the principles of reflexive thematic analysis, emphasizing the researcher's interpretive role and active engagement with the data. Themes are therefore understood as co-constructed between the researcher and participants.

To support and substantiate the interpretations, selected participant quotes are presented systematically, ensuring that participants' voices are clearly represented in the analysis. This approach strengthens both the credibility and transparency of the study while offering a nuanced understanding of participants' experiences (Silverman, 2020; Creswell and Poth, 2018). The five themes outlined below constitute the study's core findings. In line with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019), these themes reflect the researcher's interpretation of parents' experiences following instances in which their children or adolescents were subjected to abuse.

The study's findings are organized into five overarching themes, each capturing distinct aspects of parents' experiences following instances of abuse involving their children:

Theme 1: Secrecy within the Family

This theme explores how secrecy permeates family life, shaping communication patterns and relational dynamics, and influencing both parents' and children's experiences of the abuse.

Theme 2: Offline Parenting in an Online Childhood

This theme addresses the challenges parents face in guiding and protecting their children in a digitally saturated environment, highlighting tensions between offline caregiving and the realities of online exposure.

Theme 3: A Vulnerable Child and an Easy Target

This theme reflects parents' perceptions of their children's vulnerability and susceptibility to abuse, emphasizing factors that contribute to a child becoming an easy target.

Theme 4: Parental Powerlessness

This theme captures parents' experiences of helplessness and lack of control, including emotional, social, and systemic barriers that hinder their ability to safeguard and support their children effectively.

Theme 5: Family Crisis

This theme illustrates the impact of abuse on the family unit, including disruption of routines, relational strain, and the emotional and practical consequences for both parents and children.

5.2 Theme 1 Secrecy in our family

The families told stories about how a "secret" established itself in the family after they learned that the young person had been sexually abused online. A secret can sometimes be a positive thing but can also be destructive. When secrets become difficult, they are often about shame, guilt or fear. This theme seeks to capture common meaning regarding "what happened", i.e. the *abuse* the young person is subjected to, and which is difficult to talk about.

5.2.1 It was hard to tell us

In this main theme, it is a common feature that the parents participating in the study have been told by the police or others, such as other parents or teachers, about online sexual child abuse.

Often, parents learn from the police that images, video, chat, or money transfer have been found that indicate that the young person has been subjected to abuse online.

Several parents say that the young people have been keeping something to themselves, and that they may have had different reasons for it. Some of the victims are unaware that what they have been involved in is abuse. This may be because they do not know that they have been deceived, or that they feel that the relationship they have with the abuser is important. They keep a secret to protect the relationship with the abuser. Ingrid and Ivar discovered several times that their daughter Ida (12 years old) had been in contact with older boys/young adults and tried to stop the contact without success. They said:

«... She told us they were finished, then one [boy] came forward afterwards and said they had continued to keep in touch, and we found out when we went into the mobile bank and saw she had sent 500 kroner to him on Vipps (Vipps is a Norwegian mobile app used to transfer money).” (Ingrid, mother to Ida, 12 years old)

The money was to be used on public transport so that the two could meet. Her daughter was only 12 years old at the time and the person she had sent money to was 19 years old male.

A common feature in this theme is that the parents discover something that the young person has kept secret. A couple of parents talked about the day before they understood what their son had been exposed to and how painful his secret was. These parents, who usually took in their children's mobile phones at night, got into an argument with their son who was in chaos. Unni and Uwe explained how their son was ‘on the verge’ and screamed at them:

"Give me that cell phone," it was clearly important that he had to have it, and that night his whole world was raging. Actually, the whole world was falling apart for us as well, because he couldn't be home. He had to get help. We had to call the police, we

had to call anybody who could come and help him because his own home felt unsafe."
(Unni mother to Ulrik, 14 years old)

They did not yet realize what had happened and that the phone and their home were the scene of the abuse he had been subjected to.

5.2.2 Parents want to be a part of the solution

Solveig said it was so painful for her daughter Sanna to talk to her after she had learned from the police what had happened. Her daughter Sanna really didn't want to talk, but suddenly she burst into tears, telling her mother what she had been exposed to: "She cried, and I cried." The mother felt so sad about not knowing and not being able to help her daughter earlier in the process.

In this theme, the participants have in common that young people find it too difficult to share experiences with their parents. And the parents can see why it is difficult for them to talk and that they want to support their children. Unni (mother of Ulrik, 14) talked about how her son wanted to get something off his chest:

"What has happened, he will talk very little about. So, we don't know everything either. We've got something, and then he says when we were on our way to the Children's House going for a facilitated interview:

"You know what, Mom, it's a lot more than you know." Then I said "yes, OK," and then he went silent and pulled down the blinds. Then we said that we respected that. We told him "The important thing is that you tell it where it's important to tell it."

Parents want to be of help and support both practically and emotionally, but this is difficult when it comes to the secret. Mia (mother to Markus, 13 years old) felt that the openness she previously had with her son was gone: "How much should I dig when he's said, "I don't want to talk about it. I find it hard to talk to you, Mom, about it." I think that's strange, because before this we talked about everything."

The young people who have previously had a close and good dialogue with their parents become difficult to talk to. Several parents experience this as a loss, that they lost something important in their contact and relation to their child in this period.

Christian (father to Camilia, 13 years old) is concerned about how this secret comes between them and becomes the reason why his daughter is unable to tell her parents and has a very difficult time because of it. He said: "(...)parents ought to be part of the solution and not the problem. When the young person becomes so afraid to tell their parents that they'd rather be on their own with a bad secret, the parents who are otherwise safe to talk to become the biggest problem".

5.2.3 Parents' need for information

In crises, it is important to receive information, and most parents try to get as much information and overview as possible when they learn what their child has been subjected to. This is not so simple when it comes to online child sexual abuse. When a case has been reported, and the young person has been to a facilitated interview at the Children's House, parents are advised not to read through the facilitated interview or see evidence such as pictures, videos or chat, in order to protect the child/young person. Therefore, parents do not know what the young person has been exposed to, only the outline. It is difficult not knowing what has happened and this contrasts with other situations when something important has happened to their child. Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14 years old) described it this way:

"No, I thought it was a little weird to... I don't know what to say. I thought at first that I should know everything and that it was my right. But if she doesn't want to talk, then it's not good for the relationship if I were to push her to do so. So, it was really a good help that the police said that."

5.2.4 Keeping a secret in the family

After the initial shock has subsided, life in the family will move on and questions about who should know about the secret arise. Should younger siblings know, and what can be said?

How will older siblings handle it and what about grandparents and aunts and uncles? The family itself feels that it is a balancing act who should know, and what people should know within the family and in the network in general. Belinda (mother to Beate, 13 years old) was very clear about her stance:

INTERVIEWER: "But who else knows about this that has happened in their family?"

RESPONDENT: No one else.

INTERVIEWER: So, it's you?

RESPONDENT: Just me and... And the woman in the Children's House. But no one else. I don't think anyone else in the family has anything to do with this."

Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14-year-old) talked about how it affects the relationship between the parenting couple when one partner has promised the young person not to tell, or when one parent does not want to know. Because in some of these families, one parent is alone with the secret. Kari talked about how she was asked not to tell Kåre (the father in the family) by her daughter (Kamilla, 14 years old): "... And then she burst into tears. And she realized what it was: I *mustn't* say anything to her dad. "Don't tell my dad!"

The daughter asks the mother not to tell the father. But this was further complicated by the fact that the father did not want to know. The mother finds this terribly difficult:

"I thought it was very hard that [Dad] was like that. I thought that was a heavy burden, that he was completely... Completely distanced himself, didn't want to hear about it. He thought it was absolutely grotesque and cruel. So he wouldn't hear about it at all. But like I said, "Somebody's got to do it, somebody's got to take it." "Yes, but if I had been alone, I would have done it."

"Like I said, it was lonely. I was very lonely then, and I felt very weighed down."

"Is that the elephant in the room? Is it dangerous to talk about it?"

RESPONDENT: Mm, yes. I think it will be.

INTERVIEWER: How do you handle that?

RESPONDENT: Yes, how do we deal with that? We don't handle it, so to speak. We're not talking about it. Nope."

Several of the participants say that they or the other parent do not want to know much, for various reasons. Odd (father to Oda, 14 years old) was sure of his case: And the police tell me that I could listen to what she's explained, and this and that, I said, 'I don't want to hear that. I don't want to know anything.'" Ivar (father to Ida, 12 years old) was in the trial but didn't want to see the pictures and his daughter didn't want him to see:

F: "I went out when the pictures were shown (...)

I: Why did you go out?

F: I didn't want to, and F told me."

Belinda (mother to Beate, 13 years old) was divided on how to deal with what had happened and recounted this from a conversation with her daughter who wondered if she had to know everything: "You don't have to tell me everything. And your mum might not want to know everything either."

Five of the couples say that they have a completely open dialogue and collaborate on everything related to follow-up, etc. Some of the couples have different background information because the child does not want both parents to know details. There will be secrets emerging in the parents' relationship. And there are differences in how the rest of the family is involved. Some parents choose to tell siblings in stages, most say that they do not tell them everything, or that only someone specific gets to know in the family. It also emerged that they do not say that it is a sexual assault, but that "something bad" has happened online. In this way, secrecy remains. First, the older siblings may be told and then the younger ones, but the younger ones are not told much. The family lives for quite a long time with a secret that pervades everyday life and family life at home. This can be summarized in a comment by Erlend (stepfather to Eivind, 10 years old) and Ellen (mother to Eivind) who reveal a paradox – one that emerged in several interviews about the perceived openness of the family: 'Yes, we told (the older siblings, the grandparents our friends) ... yes, but not the sexual part of it.'

This comment shows how openness is considered a positive thing, but only up to a certain point.

Christian (father to Camilia, 13 years old) described how he informed the grandparents: «... I told my parents only yesterday that she is the victim of online harassment. I haven't talked about the seriousness at all, tried to keep this so that it is possible to... Live with it a little bit».

He was concerned they wouldn't handle the truth, considering their health and age.

Siblings in the family understand something is going on and start to ask questions:

Christian (father to Camilia) explained how the siblings engaged:

"She's 26, and a half-sister to my daughter. Then she has a half-brother, who realizes she's having a bit of a tough time, but not details at all. Then there's [boy name 1] who is two years younger than [girl name 1]. He understands a little bit, but has asked little, but now he's starting to ask a lot more questions about this."

Quotes from several families show that openness is limited when it comes to the sexual aspect of the abuse. This can be for several reasons: it can be too difficult for the family to cope with, or the child may be considered too young to be involved in this type of situation.

It became clear from several of the families that older siblings had learned something about the abuse before their parents.

Ellen (mother to Eivind) put it this way:

"He also has a big brother, who we tried to hide this from for a while."

"He knew a little bit, because [boy] had told big brother that he'd received nude pictures.

INTERVIEWER: Before you found out?

RESPONDENT: Yes."

Grandparents are involved and informed differently. Parents talk about how challenging this is due to the grandparents' age and lack of insight into the digital world their grandchildren

participate in. Parents convey that grandparents learn some of the truth that can be lived with, as one family said, or that grandma was told, but she gave advice they didn't need. That they should go out into the woods and do things together. As if this would have had a real impact on the situation. There is a digital generation gap and grandparents do not understand the social arena that their grandchildren participate in, nor do they understand that it cannot be solved by walking more in the woods or turning off the internet, not picking up the phone etc.

In relation to grandparents, parents feel that they are in an awkward situation – that they get a kind of explanation problem. How could they (the parents) have let this happen?

And this leads into the next common feature in this theme. Parents feel guilty or shameful. Several said it felt shameful that this could happen in their family.

Ellen (Mother to Eivind, 10 years old): "No, it was kind of embarrassing to tell them that we'd experienced this thing. That I wasn't a good mother, that it was embarrassing that I should..."

The fact that it is difficult to talk about is a common theme that all parents attach meaning to. Another common theme is that it gets better when the child has disclosed.

It became easier after the secret was out. Ellen how this was for her son: «... But he's really relieved after he was in for questioning and had an experience with it. He said that as we drove home that day, then he said, "It feels like there's something lifted off my shoulders."

Parents also say that they experience more openness with time, and that things got better after they found out what had happened.

5.2.5 Summary

In this theme, we see the parents' need to support their child when they learn that the child has been subjected to online sexual abuse, which they themselves try to get an overview of.

Despite readily available evidence in the case, which is a typical feature of online cases, parents are advised not to look at this in order for the child to feel that they have control over

the material in which they are depicted. The parents find it difficult to relate to this material. Some want more information about the details and some don't want to see or know what has happened. The theme is about how the child's secret is revealed to the parents and that it becomes difficult to talk about and a secret in the family that several people take part in. Parents say that they have told fragments to selected family members. The secret becomes easier to share when facilitated interviews have been carried out, and parents say that they feel better when they have learned more from the young person or from the support system cooperating around the young person's needs.

5.3 Theme 2 Offline parenting in an online childhood/world

This theme is about how parents in the present study manage the parental role in relation to the digital arena their children are a part of. It is generally the case that parents have previously established some clear rules and boundaries regarding the use of digital platforms. However, they feel inadequate when it comes to understanding digital applications and the use of social media in general. Belinda (mother of Beate, 15) describes this as follows:

«... Snapchat — it became the root of all evil, along with Vipps (an application that gives the user the ability to pay by mobile phone). I think Snapchat took us all by surprise. Everyone said that photos disappear right away and there was no problem. I think a lot of us parents found that we were kind of fooled. We didn't realize what was happening. It was so new, and we hadn't had it before. We got it at the same time as our kids, but I couldn't see my daughter's friends there."

They feel that it is a difficult balance because the mobile phone is so important for young people today. Some parents feel that they have little choice. Uwe (father to Ulrik) said:

"So as parents, you're pressed from all sides, so to speak, and there's no easy answer. Should you give your child a phone, or should you not give him a phone? Will he be bullied because he doesn't have a phone, or what? ... You have a lot of options where you don't know what to do."

At the same time, the mobile takes up a lot of time and provides access to a world where there is a lot of pressure for the young. Kari (mother of Kamilla, 14) talked about what it was like when the police wanted her daughter's phone prior to facilitated questioning: «... The police wanted her phone. You know, giving up your phone for a whole day when you're 15 is like death. But she actually agreed."

5.3.1 Digital/virtual arena vs. true friendship

Although parents have concerns, they are quite clear that for a young person today being without a phone is out of the question. This would create feelings of exclusion and loss of participation in an arena in which most young people participate. It is also commonly acknowledged that the digital arena can help with friendship and fellowship for young people and is especially important for those who struggle with friends outside the digital arena. Ingrid and Ivar (parents to Ida, 12) were very uncertain about the potential consequences if their daughter didn't get a mobile phone, and found it difficult to make decisions about this: 'We've been discussing what if she didn't get a smart phone, but then she wouldn't have been able to join groups of friends, which are important for everyone...'

5.3.2 Old school

Common to all participants in the study is that they grew up before the internet. The parents interviewed were between approximately 35 and 60 years old. Their children, aged 10 to 15, on the other hand, were born into a digital age that is evolving at a tremendous pace. The parents experience that they cannot keep up with this, that they do not have an overview or any substantial knowledge of the apps and social media that young people use. They feel that young people are one step ahead of them and that the digital world is evolving at a pace that is impossible to keep up with. Solveig (mother to Sanna, 14) said this: "... They know how to delete everything if they have to, we don't have a chance of finding out everything that's going

on..." It is clear from such statements that parents are aware of the technological advantage their children have and that this also raises concerns.

Common to the parents is that they have rules relating to the use of mobile phones and laptops. Time use and availability of digital platforms are regulated in most of the families participating in the study. Conversations about so-called 'netiquette' with the young are also common. Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10) felt uncomfortable about being too invasive. Young people need privacy and to be allowed to "close the door". Ellen felt this to be true also regarding the use of computers and mobile phones.

Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14), who had raised two older children before the youngest was exposed to online abuse, said she found it difficult to know how much to monitor her children: "...it was important that they had a free space and that I had confidence in them."

5.3.3 Gate keeper or gate opener

It is a paradox that most young people are given mobile phones because their parents had an intention to make it easier to contact the young person when they were not at home and get an overview of their movements. Keeping them safe. They have created groups with family members and used mobile phones to help with appointments and other important things. One parent couple also talked about how they got their son a mobile phone so that they could keep better track of where he was and that they could contact each other more easily when he was outside the home.

Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10): "He got it for his 10th birthday. It was October 14. I think most kids had them by then. He was allowed to have "Snap" to keep in touch with his family and we were going to see him on the map and stuff. Follow him."

Several of the families describe this paradox in different ways. In an attempt to protect their children, they inadvertently help them to gain access to a world over which they have no control and where young people can meet difficult challenges.

Having some form of control over their child's mobile telephone use is another issue parents often find difficult, and which causes feelings of guilt. Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10) continued: "It was in those two weeks we didn't check his phone that the worst happened."

In the aftermath of abuse, parents tend to blame themselves. For example, parents say that they should have been more aware or should have done more, while it also appears that the same parents have checked mobile phones, had rules and had a dialogue with the young person about mobile phones and Internet use. Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14) said:

"Of course we should have paid more attention, but I don't know if there was any way of avoiding it, I think... Because obviously, it brought on guilt as a parent. Why haven't we taken care? Why haven't we... Why was she allowed to sit up in her room with her laptop alone? Why didn't we insist on her sitting with us in the living room so that we could see what she was up to? But that was the issue right there ... We felt kids had a right to some privacy. We can't be looking over their shoulders all the time. And then I thought: Is it really our fault? Could we have been expected to do more? Had it just happened anyway, because kids are always exploring and trying new things"

Several of the parents discovered that something was wrong when they checked their child's payment app (Vipps), bank account, chat logs, or checked the mobile for deleted items. Despite having rules, checking phones, talking to their child or doing other things to protect their child, it didn't stop the abuse.

5.3.4 The Mobile makes it difficult to be a parent

In the aftermath of the sexual abuse, all the parents describe how they tightened the existing rules around digital platforms or even made new rules. This applies to both laptop and mobile phone use.

They explained how they felt a need for more overview and control.

Together with her husband, Kari (mother to Kamilla) changed the rules at home and felt a greater need for control:

“We said: ‘If you're going to sit on your laptop or your phone, you can't do this in your room. You need to leave it down here every day at ten pm when you go up to bed. There is nothing to discuss. It's going to stay here on the coffee table until you come down the next day.’ And that’s what we did.

INTERVIEWER: But how did she react? What happened in your family after the new rules?

RESPONDENT: At first, she was angry, because she didn't really understand why. Then she interpreted it as a punishment. And I suppose in a way it was a kind of a punishment. We needed control, and we insisted on having control.”

Parents tried to regain control by having more restrictions on their children’s internet use.

Ingrid (mother to Ida, 12) said "we want more control, but we know it's impossible". A mother is always going to worry about her and wants to know when he is not at home: "I've been worried about him. I've been a little scared to let him go out. But I've had to let him go... [laughter] But I've felt a need for control. "Where are you now?" So, the Snap Map should never go off."

Unni (the mother of boy, 14) talked about how their family rule of having one mobile-free evening suddenly became a source of conflict late one night and that it was difficult to understand why:

"In retrospect, it started with ... We've always had the rule that, in our family, we leave our phones in the kitchen when we go to bed, and they are supposed to remain downstairs. The problem started with him refusing to leave his phone one night, and then I said, "Oh well, if you're going to have your phone, you'll lose your weekly pocket money." It was no use, he insisted on keeping his phone. In retrospect, we should probably have twigged and understood something then, but we didn't. We just thought it’s probably to do with his age, I guess..."

In this theme, the parents talk about various measures put in place that the young person interprets as punishment and that in several of the families this increases the level of conflict. Solveig (mother to Kamilla, 14) felt that the conflict around the use of mobile phones escalated and said that her daughter even contacted the child protection service. She told us about the advice she received from them:

"I said no, you're not allowed to do that. Then she herself called the child protection service and the police that night, and she told them «My mum is so strict, I am not allowed to sleep over with a friend at (place outside town)". So, it was crazy. Then a representative from the service came to our house the next day to have a conversation. Kamilla cried and said I restricted her phone so much. I stopped her using her phone at night and stuff. Now I think back, I guess that was after it had happened. And then, of course, I took even more care of her phone. And she found that very difficult. That's what she accused me of to the woman from the child protection service who came to our house: "Mum's idea of looking after me is to take my phone away." Then I asked her if that was so surprising, because things have happened to her on this phone. It was the previous spring. And I found that very difficult. And then the woman said, "Maybe you have to give in a little bit to have a better relationship." I said that I had a rule that I took her phone at 11 p.m. — yes, it was 10 or 11. Then I sat there with the woman who suggested maybe Kamilla can keep her phone until 12 o'clock. But I was totally against it. I knew things about the situation that were crazy and terrifying."

In this theme, the parents talk about how the young person feels punished in various ways after being exposed to online sexual abuse. Either because the police ask for the phone to retrieve evidence, or because parents become more restrictive. Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14) describes this when they had to deliver mobile phones and laptops to the police:

" One of the policemen we spoke to said, "Come down to us with all the data." Computer, mobile phones ... And then we brought everything. It was very hard for her, that we took away absolutely all her means of communication. She took that as a punishment. She believed that she had done something wrong and that we were punishing her. So, I tried to tell her that she wasn't the one who had done anything wrong, but that we had to try to figure out who had made her do these things."

5.3.5 Our Parenting was Challenged:

The parents often partially disagree with some of the advice they receive in the aftermath of the online abuse. It's about them not being allowed to be as restrictive as they would like

against the background of the abuse that had occurred. The parents say that they choose to listen to professionals, even when this went against their own gut feeling, or ran counter to their own convictions about what was good for the young person. It seems that parents receive advice from professionals, either from the *Children's House*, or child welfare services, that they must not take away the young person's mobile phone or become too restrictive on its use. The need for the phone and the contact this provides with others is something parents say they understand, while also being afraid of the risks their young person takes online.

5.3.6 Parents feeling guilty

It also emerges that parents feel guilty. This is revealed differently, but parents have many reflections on the young person's use of mobile phones and how they as adults have tried to have rules and conversations to protect their children. The parents talk about various measures to make things safe by exercising parental control, or by making rules for online behaviour and rules for screen time. Nevertheless, in this theme also comes the parents' perceived responsibility for what went wrong in the aftermath of online sexual abuse.

Christian (father to Camilia, 14) said "we gave her a loaded weapon", referring to how much damage the mobile had caused for their daughter who had been exposed to abuse online and then subsequently publicly recognized and subjected to harassment and abuse.

Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10) said: "It was in the two weeks we didn't check the mobile that the worst happened". Ingrid (mother to Ida) said she regretted giving her daughter a phone so early: "We should have waited a year, then it never would have happened."

5.3.7. Summary

In this theme, it appears that parents handle their children's mobile phone use and online behaviour in the same way as they usually handle their parental role. It is challenging for parents when they receive advice after the disclosure of OSCA, that is perceived as contradictory when it comes to their young person's use of mobile phones. Where parents

want to restrict their child's freedom in mobile phone use, they are often advised to be less strict than what they themselves perceive as justifiable considering what has happened. On a more general level, we can conclude that the parental role is challenged when their children participate in online activities that they as parents have little control over, and that this can have effects on the whole family system.

5.4 Theme 3 A vulnerable child and an easy prey

In this study, two parents wanted to share their story of a vulnerable child before taking part in the study's research questions. They wanted to share how abuse affected relationships in their family. This provides a useful context for the current study and a family's experiences after a young person has been subjected to online abuse. The parents asked if it was ok to say a little about the young person first.

These parents found it difficult to talk about what had happened without some context being included. Vulnerability in children seems to be a common feature of the accounts of parents in the present study. Vulnerability among children can be understood in several ways: some parents told us about their child's medical diagnosis and some about difficult experiences after the loss of someone close. Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10) described the grief that her son had experienced prior to the online abuse. She said in a low tone of voice:

"Yes, of course. He's exactly the kid in the world who likes... no kid deserves this, but he was the one who didn't need this right now because he's been through so much before. But he went to football, or goes to football, but now that it's been dark outside, he runs home. Then he comes home from training and is scared. He can't handle much adversity, imagines people are talking badly about him, or talking about him behind his back and... Yes."

Some of the children carry vulnerability in the form of diagnoses that have affected the young person over time and have led to them being excluded. Belinda (mother to Beate, 15), who had lost her husband a few years earlier, described her daughter's challenges as follows: "My

daughter is 15 years old and lost her father at a young age. In addition to that, she has something called specific language difficulties, which lies behind a history of bullying.

Bottom line, she doesn't have many social skills to rely on. She doesn't have any friends.».

It becomes clear that one of the vulnerabilities that is discussed a lot is that the child does not have friends. Parents find that they struggle to acquire, maintain, or understand the rules that other children or adolescents play by. Children struggle with real-life friendships with peers and therefore seek friendship and acceptance in an online social arena. Parents understand and accept this, but at the same time are aware of the increased vulnerability this involves. A child's loneliness, exclusion, and vulnerability lead over time to parents devoting considerable resources to protecting, following up and supporting their young person's development.

A vulnerable child is associated with a family narrative which parents feel the need to share. Parents express an understanding of how this narrative might affect their child and are concerned that he or she should not feel responsible for being exposed to OSCA. Parents talk about vulnerabilities related to the young person's mental health and the need for follow-up from CAMHS both prior to and after the abuse. Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14) put it this way:

«... to elaborate the story... [girl] has had a lot of challenges. She has a diagnosis, ADD, and has some difficulty understanding things... She is very easy to lead and struggles to understand the consequences of her actions or see how things are connected. In other words, she struggles to comprehend things properly. But she's very kind, very gentle, and very trusting of other people. Very open too. She talks to everyone and says hello, and she's a very nice girl. So, she had a lot of turbulence and bullying at school..."

Several of the families feel that they have young people who have suffered a lot emotionally. When he was being told about the abuse, Odd (father to Oda, 14) received information that his daughter was having suicidal thoughts. He told us about how tough this was to hear:

"It felt... very painful. We found out at the same time she was doing... had talked about self-harm. It wasn't a problem afterwards, but she did have a certain period where it was an issue. So, we were kind of prepared for her feeling suicidal through that message."

The families have vulnerable children who are already struggling and who face additional burdens that are also serious. Ingrid and Ivar (parents to Ida, 12) talk about how they dealt with their young daughter's needs when she experienced suicidal thoughts: "We were advised by the mental health services that when she was at her lowest, and a danger to herself, we had to supervise her day and night. I went on sick leave and slept in her room for a month".

Several of the young people resumed treatment with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) after the online abuse. Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10) told us how her boy had to restart treatment after the abuse:

"He goes to a psychologist at the clinic and talks there.

INTERVIEWER: Did he start doing it after this happened?

FEMALE 1: He went there before, because he had lost his father to cancer and had experienced a lot of pain before that point.

INTERVIEWER: So, he had a contact in CAMHS that he could talk to about the abuse?

FEMALE 1: Actually, he was about to stop that treatment, because he was sort of done, and then all this happened. But it took him a long time to tell her about what had happened and what he had done."

Individual vulnerability can be an important perspective, explaining how some children are particularly at risk on the internet. Parents may feel there is an added injustice here, where children who are already in difficult circumstances become an easy target and are difficult to protect as parents. The current theme, individual vulnerability, is clearly shown in explicit statements from parents. Parents' sense of powerlessness, where they feel unable to prevent

their children from coming to harm on the internet, is often more implicit, and is discussed in theme 4: "powerlessness".

Belinda (mother to Beate, 13) told us that she thought her daughter used the internet to get the confirmation and attention that she misses otherwise, as she struggles with school and friendships:

"It's two different worlds. And what world does the web really give her? A fake one? She can present herself as very attractive... as very pretty, and then boys will tell her that. On there, she gets to lift her self-esteem a lot. That's what she would like to get in real life, of course, but she doesn't get that. That's where I'm really scared. In real life, she can't just go up to someone and kiss them. But she can do all sorts of things online, because it's safe."

Beate's mother found photos in a deleted file that completely shocked her. This raised her mother's suspicions that Beate had been exposed to online abuse.

Parents believe that their children's vulnerability makes them easy prey for those who want to exploit children. Solveig, mother of a 15-year-old girl and a widow, strongly believed that the vulnerable children were easy targets for people who wished to exploit others sexually, she explained:

"I said it at the trial as well: There's a danger that it's these kids this sort of thing happens to. They are already in a difficult life situation, they're easily persuaded, and it's easy to lure and deceive them. And that's what's so tragic about such cases."

«.. It's like that—he doesn't look that scary. They are the ones who make it happen. He was really cunning and said the right things, praised them a lot and said they were so nice and pretty. He's built them up a little bit."

"It could easily have happened. Imagine if he'd managed to meet up with them, imagine if they had gone to his house."

One girl (15) was active online, had many contacts and a large network both online and offline, but her mother pointed out that it is precisely young people with certain vulnerabilities who are most easily lead:

"He had been chatting with many— maybe several hundred – children and young people. Then, of course, there are a lot of people who say no, who never fall for that sort of dialogue with him. They just sign out. But I think those who don't sign out are those highly vulnerable young people who may already have major problems in their lives."

"Yes, I was worried, she was on the verge of something, difficult to say what, but she was very easily influenced. Anything could happen, and anything could... I felt at the time that we could easily lose control of her, so we had to keep hold of her "

Searching for contact at an age when young people are curious about their own sexuality make them extra vulnerable. But the young person's natural exploration and curiosity are difficult for parents to guide when these are happening online. Several parents also express concern that their child's online behavior will continue.

Kari (mother to Kamilla) put it this way: "I'm 110 percent worried. I think... I'm pretty convinced this is going to happen again."

Ellen and Erlend (mother and stepfather to Eivind, 10) experienced exactly this and told us: "I don't remember when we confronted him about it, but when we did, we made sure that he understood the seriousness. He insisted that he wasn't going to do it again. But we've checked the log regularly afterwards and discovered he'd been online many times.

On the internet, the young person is like an actor on a stage, where he can get attention in new ways, and where he regulates his behavior in a world where parents are not norm givers. Due to their inexperience, as well as individual vulnerabilities and needs, young people are not always able to take care of themselves. Issues such as recognizing risky behavior, setting limits for themselves, and being in (online) relationships with people they don't truly know, all contribute to putting these young people at high risk for exposure to online abuse. And this is what parents say they are worried about. That their child is at risk of repeated abuse. The urge to find relationships and the need for attention and acknowledgement is so great that it overshadows the capacity to uncover what is risky in the digital world.

Parents express concern about how the after-effects of abuse will affect children's development, particularly regarding their body awareness and self-image, their mental health, and not least their social and academic functioning at school. The families have many stories about how the young person spends less time at school and struggles with schoolwork. Uwe (father to Ulrik) gives an example of how he tries to help his son to manage his life: "I told him: "I want to be fair with you. I don't want to argue with you. I want you to go to school. I want to do well." But he just doesn't cope."

In another family, Mia (single mother to Markus, 14), described school life after the abuse:

INTERVIEWER: "How does it affect him and you, school and other things in life?

RESPONDENT: School has been difficult. He's less in school. Things have got better now generally, but he's less in school. There was a period where he spent one day at school, one day at home—two days at school and one day at home. And then it switched to staying home one day a week. I guess now it's maybe one day every two weeks."

Parents express concern about how young people will view their own and others' boundaries regarding sexuality later in life. Solveig (mother of Sanna, 15) found it useful to view the online behavior of the young person as a form of self-harm, she said:

"What was it that a psychologist called it... it's like self-harm in a way. (...) having sex though you might not want to... Or maybe you do want to do it, but... you treat your own body with little respect and let others rule over you. It's a kind of self-harm, very destructive behavior. That's how I thought about it, that she gave herself to him... But what's left afterwards? I don't get it. Why is she like that? It made me as a mother think about this. Why don't you have those limits in you? Why can't you stop this? Why would you want someone to see you naked, if that's what you've done?"

5.4.1 Summary

In this theme, we see examples of parents' descriptions of how they view their children's vulnerability. And how they understand this in the context of family life. Some young people are described as vulnerable and easy to exploit. The parents feel that online abuse often feels

like a double punishment for the child who has already had difficult life experiences - and then experiences additional ones. The parents can see that a child struggles with social relationships and friendships for various reasons but that this is often linked to their vulnerability. Parents perceive the value of online friendships ambivalently, because unlike real-world friendships it is difficult for parents to guide their children, or to uncover risks which young people may not themselves be aware of. The young person's access online to other young people, and the resulting sense of belonging and friendship, is something families perceive as ambivalent because it is so difficult to uncover risks for them as parents and for the young people.

5.5 Theme 4: Parents feel powerless

In this theme, we see how parents who otherwise feel relatively comfortable with their parenting role highlight how they struggle to find good workable solutions to dealing with their children when it comes to the use of digital media and smart phones. Most parents express knowledge and familiarity with the use of the internet in general and are familiar with recommendations and age limits on different apps. Nevertheless, they feel that it is not possible to exercise their parental role in line with their expectations.

5.5.1 Digital parenting

In this theme, it is clear how parents convey an inadequacy in their digital adaptability, while reluctantly acknowledging the advantage of young people in the digital world. Two different parental statements illustrate this situation: Ellen: "We like to be in control, but we realize that we are not". Erlend (stepfather): "I think it could have happened if you'd checked that phone daily. We can't monitor them 24 hours a day."

"They (young people in general) know how to delete everything like that, we don't have a chance to find out everything that's going on. They always find an opportunity. Even if I

removed the mobile phone and stuff, they still get access to everything afterwards or the next day or evening. So, you're very helpless." Solveig, mother to Sanna (14).

Clear rules about the use of digital platforms, and conversations about 'netiquette' are areas where parents feel they can contribute. Nevertheless, parents convey a sense of powerlessness when it comes to protecting the young person, as they feel technology develops so quickly. Belinda, mother to Beate, reflected on how early things started: "It starts from the age of one and follows them through kindergarten... That train is absolutely impossible to stop. "

Parents feel a sense of powerlessness in relation to how the digital arena is uncontrollable. Parents interviewed feel left behind in terms of knowledge and do not have a thorough grasp of the technicalities of the digital world. They feel pressured to give the child more freedom than is good for them because they are afraid that the child will be excluded.

5.5.2 Damned if you do and damned if you don't

In this theme, it emerges how parents have talked a lot with their children about the use of mobiles but still feel a sense of powerlessness when it comes to making informed choices about mobile phone use. One mother then explained it like this:

«(...) The parents can't stop that influence. And the fact is that if you don't have a phone today, you're ostracized by friends... "Why don't you have a phone?" It's after all... It goes both ways what to do. So as a parent, you are squeezed from all sides (Norwegian : mellom barken og veden), right? And should you give a phone, or should you not give a phone? Should the kid be bullied because he doesn't have a phone, or should (...)" (Kari, mother to Kamilla, 14).

Solveig, mother to Sanna (14), was very frustrated as she felt that she had rules and clear expectations about mobile phone use, but that it was impossible to be ahead of her or keep track of her mobile use. She said: "They always find an opportunity. Even if I took away her

mobile for a while, they still get access to everything afterwards or the next day or evening. So, you're very helpless."

In this theme, parents tell us that they understand that young people today see the mobile phone as a very important part of youth culture, and that the mobile phone is something *everyone* has. Or as one father put it (Odd, father to Oda, 14), «the mobile is as important as your right hand». Without a mobile phone, parents believe that their young person is at risk of being excluded because online friends are sometimes the only friends they have contact with. At the same time, they see that the mobile gives them access to a world they as parents do not understand or control. And that the young person can become easy prey for those who do not have good intentions. One father described it like this "We gave her a loaded weapon."
(Christian, father to Camelia, 13 years old)

5.5.3 Safety of home

Home was no longer feeling as safe as before. The abuse has taken place in what is supposed to be a safe haven. The four walls of the home and the presence of parents has not prevented children from being exploited online. Abuse only requires internet access and is not hindered by time and place. In this theme, parents convey powerlessness in the sense that their own home no longer represents a safe zone for their children.

One parent couple (Unni and Uwe) talked about how their son couldn't bear to stay in his room anymore and couldn't use his mobile phone after the abuse, they said:

"Eventually, he moved into the attic room and used a sofa bed there, because he didn't want to be in his old room."

MALE 1: We refurbished his old room and completely changed it. After that, he was... We even changed the floor. Everything was replaced. Then we made him move back in there. We rearranged everything, moved the bed somewhere else, and... As for his old phone, we ended up buying him a new one.

FEMALE 1: Yes, we bought a new phone.

MALE 1: Because he had so much fucked up things on it, to use his own words. Having access to that phone really made him ill.

Whether it was the right thing to do we don't know, but that's what we did."

The home is never a fully safe place whenever there is internet access. Kari (mother to Kamilla, 14) told how her daughter was abused in broad daylight in her own room, while the family was preparing for dinner:

"When she (the investigator) went through the communication between these two, which they had found on the device at the police ... There was all the communication, everything they had said to each other. Then my jaw dropped when I heard what he (the suspect) had made her do.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: What he had said to her, and then what she had said... Then I sat... It was difficult to hear it. Because I was sitting there thinking there's a 13-year-old sitting there, and then she says to him, "I can hear my mum yelling that it's dinner. I can't do that now."

INTERVIEWER: She can't do what he's asking her to do?

RESPONDENT: Yes. Then he asks her to do more things. Then I'm like, oh my God, where was I in all this? It was also very hard, I think, as a mother, to get to grips with this. Where have I been when my child really needed me?"

The steps that parents take to regain control are not perceived as effective. In one case, home became so unsafe that the young person was unable to stay at home.

It also shows how parents experience a loss of control over where images might be circulating, here and now, but also in the future. Ellen (mother to Eivind, 10 years old) said her son didn't understand the consequences yet and said he seemed relieved after facilitated questioning:

"He felt relieved. But I don't really feel like he... he doesn't see the consequences of what's happened, he doesn't see the whole picture like we do, like... we know these pictures have been sent to the U.S. and the videos and everything. Images of him have been posted on the internet. That's what I think about (...) I think a lot about those pictures and videos of him out there, everything that they haven't been able to stop. I

think it's terrible to know that there might be a pedophile out there watching my son while masturbating. I think that's terrible to think about. I'd rather there were pictures of me rather than him."

In this theme, there are also parents who do not think certain images will be shared, but they convey an uncertainty in relation to this, since they do not understand how the apps in question (Snap, Instagram etc.) work. For example, a mother thought some photos weren't shared because they were deleted on Snap right away. She had no knowledge of how it is easy to take pictures with other devices without this being noticed by those who send the pictures.

One father (Christian, father to Camelia, 13 years old) talks about the feeling that the pictures of his daughter are being shared by different groups and that this is out of control, the abuse cannot be stopped by them as parents and the police cannot stop it either.

"Continuing to send this picture... from something online called "Exposed", which are those online groups, Pictures resurfacing again and again and again. it got out of total control. And then a network of people continued (...) harassing and harassing and harassing and threatening and using threatening language, but also threats of physical violence.... we didn't realize the seriousness at first."

«...we as parents... We really feel that society doesn't have a solution to this."

"The police didn't [have a solution] either. And that's what we're faced with all the time, that it's going to pass. But it doesn't feel that way. And even now, it doesn't do that for us parents. That hope you had, or maybe you got... You were also told that by CAMS: "This will work out. Now we're going to take care of all this. Now you're not going to stand alone in this anymore, they told her and us. But when this continues, it's not easy to have those kinds of positive thoughts. But I don't know if it's the right strategy, if that... to give that hope when that hope isn't really real."

5.5.4 Summary:

In this theme, parents talk about how they handle or try to handle their young person's use of digital platforms, and the 'netiquette' related to these. Parents find that they have a good understanding of the fact that the online world has a lot of risks, and that this is difficult to

regulate with measures that they normally use as parents. Parents find that as gatekeepers; they are also the ones who let the risk in.

Internet use and access is a natural part of modern youth culture, affecting all arenas where young people participate.

Denying young people mobile phones is not really an option. Parents want their young people to participate on an equal footing with others, despite the risks. Parents find that they make rules and try to follow these up, but it is very difficult for them to keep up-to-date with the latest technological developments. Internet can be a truly pervasive enemy for parents trying to protect their children: it is unseen and can easily penetrate even the safest havens of the family.

5.6 Theme 5: Crisis in the family

In this theme, families describe how everyday life and relationships within the family were affected by what had happened. Some of the parents had a vague sense that something wasn't quite right with their child or that they had changed from their usual behaviour in some way. The participants found it difficult to determine whether this was just an expected change resulting from the progression of puberty and adolescence, or whether it was something more serious.

In addition, it was difficult to find the right balance in relation to their child's need for freedom versus the parents' need to protect them. Parents are already aware of the extra risks associated with adolescence and spend a lot of time trying to keep their children safe during this time. For several of the families, many pieces fell into place when the abuse came to light. But for some, it was a great shock. What they had in common, however, was the feeling

that what had happened radically changed family life for shorter or longer periods with the families.

One parent couple (Unni and Uwe, parents to Ulrik, 15) talked about the major upheaval the abuse had caused in their lives:

"Something happened. We didn't understand why. There was complete chaos in his life, and our lives started feeling chaotic too, because we didn't understand what was going on. Then the pieces really fell into place when he disclosed. At that point, our first and only focus was getting help. To get some support for him, to be able to do something. As parents, we knew that we were there to some extent, and that we would always be there, but that we couldn't handle this alone."

"It was kind of like the whole family had jumped off the roof together and were in freefall for a while."

5.6.1 How parents learned about the online sexual abuse

Several of the families in the research project first received phone calls from the police and went from not knowing anything to being informed that the young person had been subjected to online abuse and that they had various forms of evidence. Shock, disbelief, fear, and having to answer endless phone calls from the police and legal representatives characterizes the time immediately after the parents learn of the abuse. Some families decided to press charges soon after the young person disclosed. And some families learned that photos and videos appeared in the police inspection of the suspect's computer or phone. In the aftermath of disclosure, there is a lot to be organized, and the participants find that it is quite chaotic. Mia (mother to Markus, 13 years old) said that she was totally overwhelmed and suffering from stress after they heard what happened:

"I slept poorly. I was extremely tired, and had my phone on me all the time, waiting for it to ring. The police called a lot at first. Then the solicitor suddenly called, and it became... It was really a lot to take on. Then there was the facilitated interview, and then I went back to work the next day. While [boy] couldn't go to school the next day."

5.6.2 Advice parents received

In this phase, there are also several agencies involved who provide advice to parents about how to talk to the young person before and after the facilitated interview. One thing that recurs is that parents feel a need-to-know details of what photos and videos have been sent between the young person and the suspect. However, they are advised not to do so to lessen the burden on the young person, who finds it difficult and embarrassing to share and who wants to be in control of their story. But there are also some parents who don't *want* to know and have asked not to know when their child has felt a need to tell. The advice parents receive from professionals at the *Children's House* or from CAMHS is often contradictory to what they would have chosen themselves, but here parents are also keen to follow the advice they are given, even if it conflicts with their gut feeling. Ingrid and Ivar (parents to Ida, 13 years old) explain it like this:

F: ... “the guidance, if we should call it that, that we got at CAMHS was mainly about making sure she got the best possible help, even if the help she wanted went against all reason, and in my view, she got her way. After all, she was 13 at the time. And a teenager. But in the end, we chose to listen to professional advice(...).

M: yes, we trusted them to know more than us in this situation.”

Mia (Mother to Markus, 14 years old) found it difficult not to be able to talk to her son about what had happened. Even though she understood why, from the perspective of the investigation, it became troublesome in their relationship. She felt that it became a kind of tangled knot for them both. She told us that this was not the way she would normally have dealt with talking to her son about difficult issues.

"It was hard because we had a lot of questions. What had happened? What had he seen? In one conversation, it also emerged that the boy had been at this teacher's house. But we hesitated to ask further questions about what had happened there. Even though we really wanted to. Then we became even more...it was so hard. I felt so knotted up inside” (Mia, mother to Markus, 14 years old).

5.6.3 Something changed in our family

The parents talk about how relationships in the family are affected. Parents who lived together told us that the strength provided by their relationship was an important and decisive factor in

how they managed through the crisis. Parents can support each other even though they do not agree on every aspect of how to deal with the situation. One mother said that there were periods when they as a parent couple just had to agree to disagree. In addition, as parents, they were sometimes played up against each other by the young person. Families in these situations are truly at risk, and a mother and father described in this way how close to breaking point they were «(...) I wouldn't wish it on any family to have to go through this. That marriages and families sometimes fall apart afterwards, I understand that." (Unni and Uwe, parents to Ulrik, 15 years old)

"It wouldn't have helped the situation to break up, to put it that way. But it's clear: If we hadn't been able to work together... If we'd disagreed on certain choices. Because you make some choices along the way that you just think: Normally I would have said no to this. But to feel like we're getting somewhere, we say yes. If we had disagreed very much about those choices, it would have been difficult." (Ivar, father to Ida, 13 years old)

"I think what might have saved us, because obviously you get exhausted as parents, is that we've worked well together as a couple. It's also been the case that there were days where I've thought: I can't take this anymore. So, when I can't bear anymore, then Uwe has been up. And the days when he's been down, I've been up. We've managed to balance it. Today you can bear the brunt of this, or today you can leave it to me." (Unni, mother to Ulrik, 15 years old)

Belinda (widow and single mother to Beate, 13 years old) had also felt physically how much it cost her to stand in the center of the storm for her daughter: "Online abuse is deadly. Simply deadly. If I hadn't been such a strong mother, this would have killed me, basically. It could easily have gone that way. Thank goodness I have a psychologist to talk to as well, otherwise I could easily have drowned in it all."

Several of the parents have been on sick leave for shorter or longer periods.

A parent couple who had also experienced challenges over time with their daughter, who was in chaos and constantly fighting them at home, could see that the strain was beginning to take a toll on their health. Christian (father to Camilia) told us about his experiences with his daughter:

"But she is in 'fighting' mode and is ... going to criticize us for all sorts of weird things that are completely irrelevant to what's happened. But we're calming it down... Our main objective is just to calm this down as best we can. But I notice now that we are struggling. My sleep is getting worse. My wife goes with her to CAMHS [psychiatric institution 2]. She called... and she(wife) started crying. It's starting to get rough now, this situation."

Parents also experienced changes in sibling relationships. In the crisis phase, there was little time available to give attention to younger siblings. Ingrid (mother to Ida, 12 years old) felt that Ida's younger sister received too little attention and put it this way: "She (the younger sibling) didn't get the care and attention she needed at this time."

Older siblings could become more protective and take on a more adult role than before. Mia (mother to Markus, 13 years old) highlighted this as follows:

"They've become closer, where the big brother actually helps him a lot more. Supports him much more. Last weekend they were at a concert together. Made sure he... There was no question that... He said to Markus: "you can just walk through town, and then you can... Then you meet mum there." But then he said, "I'm following you too..." Because I think he understands that when someone has threatened his little brother he has to protect him a little bit."

Siblings were often more worried and showed more care than before, which the parents perceived as a positive response to the situation. Some parents experienced that older siblings questioned them as parents during this crisis phase. For example, there was Uwe (father to Ulrik, 14 years old) who said that they felt that the relationship with their eldest son deteriorated after the worst of the crisis was over, and that he had questioned his parents'

handling of his younger brother. He thought they should have had tighter control, and stopped him from going to parties etc. They said that they understood his concerns, but that they were trying to maintain some normality in a very abnormal situation.

"It's certainly turned our whole family upside down. Now it's been over a year and a half and we're never going to get to the family life we once had, I think."

"They're good brothers, who have a lot of respect for each other, but they haven't talked very much over the last two years. He (big brother) has watched, been quite worried and retreated a little bit. I feel like our relationship with him is worse than it was. He's probably... Even if he doesn't want to admit it, he probably has some aggression. He's probably annoyed with us, that we haven't handled this situation better than we have. Because he's seen everything his little brother has done and all the confrontations we've had. He probably thinks that we as parents should have handled it better. I'm pretty sure of that."

"Scared for his brother. Afraid that something will happen. He worries. He might be like, 'Where is [boy name 1] now? Has anything happened to him?'"

"He's worried a lot more than we realized."

«. I think the relationship between us and the eldest has deteriorated in recent years because of his concern for the youngest."

Sibling relationships can also be strengthened, and one mum talked about how good her son was at playing with his younger siblings during the period when he was too scared to go out and hang out with friends. And that this was a positive change. Several of the parents also experience that the victim turns to older siblings rather than the parents precisely because issues related to the abuse are easier to share with older siblings than parents.

5.6.4 Glimpse of hope

Parents also report about small glimmers of hope, and that they try to interpret their child's challenging behaviour as expressions of inner chaos and pain, rather than ill-will or other negative qualities. Parents find that they do a lot to maintain the parent-child relationship, and the same applies to the young person, who also shows in their own way that the parents are important even if they run away from home, argue and have behaviour that can easily be interpreted as something else. The parents talk about different ways in which they struggle to

maintain relationships during the most challenging periods. Odd (father to Oda, 14 years old) said he could get very angry even when his daughter was not being oppositional or breaking rules, because he was so much more afraid for his daughter after the abuse. This meant he could get very angry with her if she came home late for example.

«But it is clear that ... [Girl Name 1] is very trusting, and it's true that when, for example, one night she doesn't show up when before she normally would be on time, I just get a little stressed out and scared. And then I can shout at her...".

INTERVIEWER: Yes, but what happens to you then as a father when it happens?

RESPONDENT: I get scared. And even though she tells me not to be afraid for her, I'm worried anyway. I'll probably be worried until she's 70." (father to girl, 15, and boy, 10)

Grandparents were less involved. Parents said that grandparents couldn't understand the situation because of their age and lack of experience with the online world. And that grandparents could come with advice that was of very little use. Like taking away the child's phone, or being out and playing more, which parents perceived as outdated but well-meant advice. One mother said her own mother was extremely worried but could only offer advice to go out more and be in the woods. Odd (father to Oda, 15) told his mother but said it was hard for her to understand what had happened because she was getting quite old and didn't have knowledge of the online world that young people were navigating in. Another parent said they had explained a little, but no more than they thought their grandparents could bear. Ingrid (mother to Ida, 13 years old) said that she and her father, the victim's grandfather, had a difficult time because of disagreements about handling Ida afterwards.

5.6.5 Parents who blame themselves.

In this theme, it emerges that parents can blame themselves and that within the parent couple there are different reactions:

FEMALE : "The way I've felt, as a mother, I've felt like I've been a bad mother. I've felt that many times. That I wasn't paying attention, what kind of mother is that?"

INTERVIEWER: Not paying attention?

FEMALE : Yes, that I wasn't paying attention. I've been paying attention, but I wasn't paying attention for those two weeks.

FEMALE : But we (female and friend) started talking about it, then I said, "Don't you know about [boy 1]?" Then she said, "no, what?" and then I was going to sort of tell about it, what had happened. And then I felt like... I felt so embarrassed that we had experienced all this. Felt like it was so stupid because she was so taken aback.

INTERVIEWER: What was it that was embarrassing?

FEMALE 1: It was kind of embarrassing to explain that we'd experienced something like this. That I wasn't a good mother, that it was embarrassing that I should..."

5.6.6 Summary

The parents told us about a very difficult life situation that unfolded after they learned about the abuse. The severity became very apparent when the police made contact, or when the child was called in for facilitated questioning. It seems that online abuse is something they knew little about, leading to feelings of chaos and disorientation in the initial phase. What has happened, how is my child doing, how is this going to affect his/her life in the future? What will the adverse effects be?

The abuse happened at home, on a mobile phone or computer that the parents themselves provided leading to feelings of inadequacy and guilt as parents.

Stories about poor sleep and increased vigilance are a common feature among the participants. This presents in different ways different families. Some parents sleep with the child who is struggling, some parents lie awake and worry about what has happened, some go on sick leave, but common to all families is the perception of a major crisis in the family.

6.0 Discussion

My results fit with findings of other studies in the field of Online Child Sexual Abuse (OSCA). I found that for seven out of the nine families, the young people exposed to online sexual child abuse had significant vulnerabilities before exposure to OSCA, described as individual factors and mental health issues, as well as vulnerability in the family system and social network. The re-victimisation of vulnerable young people also fits with what other studies in this field found (C. Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and R. Beech, 2013; Jonsson, Svedin and Hydén, 2015; Joleby *et al.*, 2020; Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020b; Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023). The digital arena is mostly a positive and important arena for socialising and is an equally important arena as the offline arena for many children and young people (Rindestig, Gillander Gådin and Dennhag, 2023; Frøyland, 2021; Joleby *et al.*, 2020). Another common feature between my findings and other research is that OSCA complicates the understanding of abuse due to the victim's own activity, and this leads to a double layer of guilt and shame in the victims (Joleby *et al.*, 2020; Joleby *et al.*, 2021; Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020a; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis and Beech, 2014a).

This study has looked at OSCA from the parent's point of view and finds that parents are finding themselves in a pervasive paradox, which will be central to my discussion. I will first discuss the findings in relation to the family and the vulnerable child. Next, I will address how online abuse has specific characteristics that complicate the understanding of what has happened to the child and the family. Finally, I will discuss the parents' experience of inadequacy and powerlessness in a broader perspective, also bringing in the tensions outside the relationships in the family affecting the dynamics in the family.

In the media, parents are often fronted as responsible by encouraging them to talk to their children, participate together in activities and that parents must set limits for their use and participation online. This accountability of parents that is understandable and recognizable

made me curious about whether parents of children exposed to online abuse experienced that this reflected their parenting, whether their parenting role was affected and how they experienced the relationship with their own child after they learned about the abuse.

The findings of this study show that it is not sufficient to simply shed light on how the dynamics in the family are affected because it must be seen in the light of a larger context of which the family is a part, and that online abuse can hardly be understood from a single individual or family, but rather from a circular and systemic perspective.

In this study, it is parents' experiences after online abuse of their own children that shape the research question. The topic is online abuse in a family perspective because I wanted to investigate how parents experienced that family dynamics were affected. The study is located in Norway, participants are recruited by employees of the police from the National Children's House, who are social workers or psychologist's. One of the inclusion criteria is that there is evidence in the case and most of the families had an ongoing criminal case or conviction in a case. To include and illustrate an understanding of the wider ecology ie ; that it is a criminal case and that it is the police, children's houses and the state that are an important part of the context, I chose to use Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, starting with the microsystem and moving through the layers to the cybersystem, to illustrate the family in the wider picture and how, for example, online abuse in a family perspective is about several systems that together can provide a richer understanding of parents' experiences in discussing the findings in this research.

First, I will start in the microsystem discuss the finding and theme called the vulnerable child and an easy prey.

6.1 The vulnerable child as context

The vulnerable child is one of the study's most important findings because it was a common feature in the analysis of the interviews, it was also a finding that is an understanding

framework for the other findings in the study, and because much of the parents' communication can be seen in the context of how they have adapted as a family to a child who is vulnerable. The parents describe that they experience that the young person is isolated socially due to various challenges related to the child's vulnerability to adapt socially, and several described their children as lonely.

Systemic theory argues how context gives meaning to a phenomenon; therefore, this finding is a context from which to understand the other findings. To understand the finding described in the theme “lonely child and an easy prey”, I find systemic theory is useful to provide perspective that can show that there is not a linear reason for vulnerable children being exposed, but that children are not vulnerable by the internet, but the internet makes vulnerable children more accessible (Staksrud, 2017). Therefore, I will shed light on how children are self-regulating systems that are affected by their environments as a valuable angle to understand how vulnerable children become more accessible online.

According to Bateson, (1972) are individuals, not isolated entities, but nodes in a network of relationships. Children experience and are affected by the dynamics in a family and the behaviour can be a reflection of these dynamics.

Context is a central concept in systemic theory because it emphasizes how individuals and groups are inextricably linked to the systems of which they are a part. Systemic theory, which stems from systems thinking, focuses on the whole rather than the individual parts, and contextualizing behaviour, thoughts, and feelings is essential for understanding the dynamics within a system.

First, according to von Bertalanffy (1968), systems are more than the sum of their parts; they depend on the relationships between the parts and the environment in which they operate.

Furthermore, Bateson (1972) argues that communication and interaction in social systems always occur within specific contexts that shape the meaning behind these actions. This means that in order to understand an individual's behaviour, one must also look at the cultural, social, and situational factors that influence them.

And as, as described by Minuchin (1974), the context is used to identify patterns and structures in family dynamics. The therapist must understand the context in order to intervene effectively.

The difficult position that parents occupy as both gatekeeper and gate opener is important to understand in relation to the children they have and the inclusion criteria for this study.

Parents in this study have children who have been exposed to OSA, where there is evidence available in the case and the child has attended a facilitated interview at the Children's House.

Purposive recruitment was carried out with a view to gaining knowledge on highly vulnerable children who had been exposed to OSA. Parents experience that they have children who are easy to exploit due to marked vulnerabilities within the child and the family. Research by Rindestig and colleagues on vulnerable mentally ill young women exposed to OSA corresponds to the findings in the present study. One point made by Staksrud (2013) I consider highly relevant for this study: Internet does not make the children vulnerable, but it makes vulnerable children easy targets. Norwegian research (Bergens Tidende, 2025) shows that vulnerable children use the internet differently than children who have a social network offline because they do not find a sense of belonging elsewhere. In addition, I assume that young people who feel left out also lack practice in the social skills needed to navigate friendships and relationships. This issue has become clear in my practice at the Children's house, where I have followed several victims' Facilitated Interviews. A distinctive feature of OSCA is several young people exposed to the same offender. It is a distinct difference in how young people cope with what they have been exposed to. The children/young people involved

is exposed to pressure and some manage to say no, and manage to set some limits, while the most vulnerable children/young person try to set boundaries but can't stand the pressure if the offender continues.

It is also a point which made me aware of my own presuppositions in the present study. I was particularly surprised over two things: that the parents did not criticize the children more for not following rules set by the family for internet use: I thought this would be a much more central part of the stories being told. Earlier experiences with parents I met after facilitated interviews (FI) had shown that parents often explained that they had rules for internet and that these had been explained clearly to their children. I had thought of this in terms of that the behaviour of the child reflects the quality of parenting. These explanations were easily recognizable from my own experiences as a parent. A need to demonstrate that I had tried to do the right thing and that I was a competent parent.

The other thing I was surprised over was the extent of the vulnerability of the children in my study, the seriousness of the cases, and that the child's vulnerability was something that had affected the dynamics in the family over time. The parents' strong understanding of their child's needs and their special vulnerability was exemplified well in the following: " That's kind of what we've always been afraid of, in that she's been very much like that... She's so kind, she's a bit naïve, she doesn't think anything bad, and she doesn't understand that not everyone wishes her well."

Parents in this study reflect upon how being young today and being so much online is very different from their own upbringing. They understand that the young person had a need to explore online, that it was exciting and fun at first, but that it went wrong, and that the young person cannot be blamed for something they were forced or lured into. Parents in this study convey understanding for the dynamics of the grooming and victimization of the young

vulnerable person online. Seven of the nine children were already very vulnerable before the online abuse took place, and the abuse worsened the situation.

6.1.1 Reflexive -dialogue:

A reflective note on this from my own parenting to four children is how I started digital parenting for my first children (born in 1996 and 1999): I regulated ‘screen time’, I checked conversation logs etc., but there was a point where I realized it was ultimately impossible to know everything that was going on online. We kept the PC in the living room when child nr 2 and 3 grew up, and one morning my son asked for permission to search online for an Egyptian queen he had learned about in school and that he wanted to show me (he was 8 years old at the time) I said that was ok. Within a few seconds, he had pictures on the screen showing graphic images of decapitated humans. He searched for “ISA”, the Egyptian Queen, but his search retrieved results from ISIS. This was a turning point for me. Even when following advice on digital parenting, I knew from that moment that unimaginable horror can suddenly enter your home even when you try to prevent it. In other words that I as a parent cannot always be ahead of things I don’t fully understand.”

Although this finding focuses on vulnerable children, it highlights how Norwegian children are increasingly independent and adaptable in navigating digital environments. The internet gives them access to systems unknown to their parents, often inviting new influences into the home. Digital platforms allow young people to interact privately, sometimes even exposing themselves to risk, which illustrates the complexity of OSCA—a topic explored further in the next section.

6.2 The perfect crime

OSA has some special features which makes understanding what has happened difficult.

Much of this difficulty is related to the child’s own activity in the case which can make it difficult to understand that a crime has taken place. For example, no-one other than

themselves has usually touched the child. Some children experience being in a dilemma and sometimes try to protect the perpetrator. Feeling somewhat in a relation. Furthermore, the child him or herself can have taken initiative to the contact and may have broken internet rules at home to achieve this. Which makes it difficult to tell at home because of the embarrassment and being afraid of being restricted from using the mobile and being online. Parents in the present study describe several such scenarios.

In my study, I have seen how young people find it difficult to talk about what has happened with their family. And that parents can see how their child struggles to carry around these experiences with them on their own. Parents feel that they themselves are a part of the problem. This represents a new level in the already complex paradox that parents find themselves in; they are distressed as they want to be a part of the solution, not the problem. Studies from Norway (Staksrud and Ólafsson, 2019) also show that it is difficult to talk about these problems at home and 20 percent of those who had difficult experiences online never shared this to anyone. It is difficult to talk to adults about online abuse, and this can be understood in several ways. One perspective is that it is always difficult to talk about sexual abuse and one Norwegian study (Steine *et al.*, 2016) has shown it takes a long time before victims talk about sexual abuse, and that there are several reasons for this, one of which is fear of not being believed. This study shows an average time of 17 years before victims talk, which is an important finding when it comes to studies of online abuse. OSCA is often easy to prove, but there is a dilemma when it comes to presenting evidence. On the one hand the evidence is important for the prosecution case, but on the other hand the same evidence is so very difficult to talk about for the child or young person: the child has often broken rules as well as their parents trust, and they also want to protect their parents from seeing what has taken place.

Another central point is that the pictures in online abuse cases have often been taken by the victim themselves, and this self-activity is a distinctive feature of this type of abuse, where the young person feels a double layer of shame and guilt due to their own involvement. This dilemma is also described as "the children did it to themselves" by Joleby and her co-authors (2020b). The victim becomes his or her own offender. The following quote from Joleby *et al.* (2020b:9) illustrates this point well: "I was so scared my parents would see proof of what I had done". In addition, Professionals have also noted that victims of Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Abuse are more often blamed by others and seen as participants in the abuse, compared to victims of offline Child Sexual Abuse (Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2017) and victim-shaming was found in (Ringrose and Regehr, 2023).

My experience from working at a Children's House is that the stress caused by the sexualized images is carefully considered in the facilitated interviews. With a view to trauma psychology, the child should remain in control of the situation, where images are only presented to others by the interviewer if there is a clear purpose for doing so. For example, the child can confirm user details, where the pictures were taken, or whether it is in fact themselves being pictured in a particular chat sequence. But as noted earlier, there is a dilemma here regarding the needs of the prosecution and the needs of the child, and sometimes the child's needs come in the background. My role is to ensure that no more evidence is presented than is necessary, with a view to avoiding re-victimization of the child.

Victims experience loss of control over the images and revictimization by the fact that the images cannot be stopped, but also by the use of images as evidence in a court case (Joleby *et al.*, 2020; Joleby *et al.*, 2021; Hamilton-Giachritsis *et al.*, 2020a). Parents are also advised to refrain from viewing images for the same reasons.

I have reflected on whether parents feel they are inflicting further victimization on their children. Parents also feel guilty and trapped in a dilemma, as discussed initially. Feeling

damned if they provide a smart phone and damned if they don't. Parents enable digital participation for their children, they provide the phone, access to a PC, and access to internet both at home and outside the home. A quote from a father is highly illustrative of how parents implicate themselves in what has happened: "We gave her a loaded gun." The gun visualising the mobile phone and the gate to the digital arene. This quote, and the frightening image of a father giving his daughter a gun, made me realise how directly he felt implicated in his daughter's victimisation. And made me think of conversations at home with my husband where we talked about our own digital parenting. My husband said at the end of one such discussion "History will judge us!" Implying that we and parents today are harming a whole generation of children.

The parents in this study describe a reluctant adaptation in a number of areas that are directly related to their children being online. Parents' ability to lead the family is affected because the use of technology is something that interferes within the family, gradually changing different aspect in the family. Because communication changes when the earbuds are plugged in, the screens are always on, and the focus changes and the internet has always something to offer.

As a family therapist and researcher, I am interested in how the family relate and how they handle the hardships in life such as OSCA. Still, I don't raise the question "Is there underlying problems in the family when a child is victimized online" because the findings did not make this an issue to raise and the study also have a systemic framing to avoid a linear understanding of a comprehensive issue such as OSCA. I point to have the parents describe their vulnerable child in the beginning of the discussion and now move to discuss if parents are deskilled when managing the digital childhood. I link the systemic framing and understanding the child as a system that organizes itself, but they are not self-caretaking, and this is where the parental system plays a developmentally crucial role. And this intervenes in the design of the study's research question, where it is the parents who are interviewed about

experiences after online abuse. Because it is parents who are children, support for development, and when something goes wrong and children are exposed to abuse, it affects the parents' experience of their parenting role. I was interested in Minuchin's theory of family structure and how parents' hierarchy was challenged by technology and the digital social arena, in addition to the fact that a vulnerable child must be seen in the light of his or her family as part of a family system and that the family system is part of a larger ecology that affects everyday life,

6.3 The parenting role is difficult

This finding is linked and discussed through Minuchin's theory of structuralism how family roles, hierarchy, boundaries and systems are affected. The technology of mobiles and other screens and platforms serve as new players in the family system. They can disrupt a clear and well-functioning parental hierarchy by technology competing for leadership and "negotiating" for authority, attention and belonging. As the parental system is increasingly influenced and changed through technology and social media arenas, such as apps and monitoring systems, there is a risk that the boundaries between parents and children are blurred, and that authority is transferred to technological systems rather than to adult caregivers.

The parents' challenging position is also supported by Minuchin's structuralist family theory, which emphasises that functional families are characterised by clear roles, clear boundaries and a stable hierarchy, where the parents lead and protect the child (Minuchin, 1974). In a digital everyday life, where technology increasingly intervenes in family dynamics, these structures are challenged as expressed by the parents in this study. Technology and the digital arena undermine the parents' own authority and create new, invisible hierarchies in which technology takes on a controlling role. Additionally, it can make it more difficult to maintain clear boundaries between family members, which can lead to conflict. The crisis that arises in

the family can be understood since the system adapts to a threat from outside the system and seeks balance to maintain itself as a system.

Thus, both structural and emotional frameworks in the family are challenged, which has consequences for interaction, attachment, and the experience of security in the family. This is especially evident in the crisis that the parents describe the family is in before they understand what has happened and when they learn about the abuse that has occurred online.

Relationships in the family change especially during the crisis. Parents want to increase control over digital devices and become more restrictive, and the young person protests, and the level of conflict increases. Parents feel fear of not maintaining contact during a difficult time for everyone in the family. At the same time, they receive advice that is perceived as contrary to their own convictions. Siblings can get closer because the exposed person tells siblings before they reveal something to parents that may be about age and that the sibling system can be seen as a subsystem in the family. Another example is that the eldest siblings in the family blamed their parents for not having more control and criticized the rules they set for the vulnerable sibling. The father in this family said he thought the relationship with the eldest son had changed forever because of this. The parents in this study also say that the relationship was crucial for them to be able to keep their heads above water during the crisis. either by supporting each other and each taking their turn in the storms. At the same time, they pointed out that the relationship was under a lot of pressure, and one mother said that she understood very well that families in crisis were separating. Another change in the relationships was when the young person did not want the other parent to know something that created loneliness in the responsibility for the daughter and loneliness in the relationship. Other siblings get less focus for a while. The changes were related to the crisis, and this finding can be understood from the theory of a system that maintains itself by adapting and seeking balance (Minuchin, 1974).

6.4 Offline parenting in an online childhood

Minuchin's theory sheds light on important aspects of what goes on in the microsystem and private domain, but with the findings of this study, I wanted a more comprehensive theory to explain and understand that despite parents who have an upbringing style that is in line with what other Norwegian families identify with and what is considered good developmental support for children. In this part of the discussion, I will highlight the theory of structural coupling from Luhman inspired by Maturana and Varela that can show how the young person as a psychic system connects to another social system outside the family.

It is also about how the lack of regulation and social control in an arena that contributes to there being no or lack overlap between the parental system and the social system in which the child participates in the light of the Bronfenbrenner ecological model; The micro system is the different system that interacts and where social control otherwise affects the young person and how parents manage to balance the relationship between giving the young person freedom and protection. This is a relevant lens to interpret the finding in this study, which is about the fact that parents often fall short even if they otherwise provide good care. It is precisely this participation and presence in the other systems that makes it possible to influence as a parent, because one is actually present with others who create dialogue and interaction in overlaps between the different systems.

Luhman (1995,1997), who is inspired by Maturana and Varela's theory of autopoiesis, describes psychic systems as independent, self-referential entities that handle information and experiences according to their own criteria/structures. This means that children as a psychic system develop their own understanding of the world because of their experiences in the family system that psychologically constitutes the child as a system. This theoretical perspective can shed light on the finding that vulnerable children who struggle socially have a great need for contact online, little experience of manoeuvring in various friendships,

relationships and possibly a low threshold for getting in touch with others online. It can also shed light on why these children are more easily tricked and groomed online because the need for relationships is so great.

And how the family and the young person as a system are independent systems that are adaptable and that maintain their functioning in demanding events such as online abuse. This theory also highlights the individual as a psychosocial system and how the individual participates in communication that maintains the social system in which it participates. Online life enables children to self-organize, for better or worse, but the study's findings show that the vulnerable children are very vulnerable because they have previous experiences that make them vulnerable, they have diagnoses that affect functioning socially, they are described as lonely and outside socially. The families in this study already have a functioning that has been influenced and adapted to the child's functioning from before. For the majority, the online abuse is one of several serious incidents. This also might prone the parents in this study to focus on connection before correction that adheres to how research portrays the Norwegian parenting style and to research about parents mediation style where dialog before restrictions is advice.

Norwegian parents practice an active mediation style (Livingstone and Helsper, 2008) in their digital parenting, in which dialogue rather than restrictions are prominent. This helps both to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital everyday life and to prevent the risks that come with it (Lafton *et al.*, 2023; David *et al.*, 2020; Eiri, Elisabeth and Kjartan, 2021). This style of mediation fits with how most parents in this study perceived themselves. This is interesting because parents in this study have children they describe as very vulnerable before they were exposed to OSCA, and that this could have contributed to the parents being more restrictive, having an increased need for control and monitoring of the young person online activities. It is not about the parents who are permissive or ignorant of dangers, but how the

parents consider their relationship with the young person in order to keep connected in an adolescence when some young people are distancing themselves more from their parents.

In this study, a clear paradox arises for parents related to how they balanced digital opportunities and risks and their position of gatekeeper and gate opener to the social digital arena: parents open the gate to the digital arena by giving their children access to digital devices, but on the other hand try to protect them from being harmed when their children enter an unprotected and unregulated world in which they are trying to navigate.

In this study, parents regarded mobile phones and the internet as mostly positive and important arenas for the development of friendship and cohesion in the demanding transition from child to adolescent. Other research on young people also supports that the digital arena is mostly perceived as positive (Staksrud, 2013; Milosevic *et al.*, 2024; Staksrud and Ólafsson, 2019). In addition, parents mentioned benefits such as being able to reach their children more easily and that family members can keep track of each other's whereabouts, through features such as map-sharing apps. This closeness, openness and trust between parents and young people is also a Norwegian parenting feature (Ødegård, 2021; Vasbø and Hegna).

The gatekeeper position is understood as to how parents try to protect young people: they participated in parent meetings about 'cyber-sense', had conversations at home about internet rules and cyber-sense, and some installed parental controls and checked Snapchat and Vipps (a Norwegian mobile payment app) accounts among other things. The use of mobile phones and the internet was a recurring topic of discussion in the families. One parent summed up this dilemma with the following statement: 'We like to be in control, but we realize that we are not.'

A major reason 'to open the gate' and provide their child with a smart phone was to prevent social exclusion: their child would now be able to participate in the digital social world. On average, Norwegian children get their first mobile phone when they are 9 years old. This coincides with the Norwegian Media Authority's report (2022), which shows that half of Norwegian nine- and ten-year-olds are on social media, and that parents allow participation on social media earlier than they think is good for them. This finding can also be understood in light of research showing that Norwegian parents are concerned that their children should adapt socially and be independent, which reflects Norway's individualistic orientation (see Gelfand *et al.*, 2011). Norwegian children are brought up with a strong focus on cultivating independence (Staksrud, 2021:23), and this also applies to digital everyday life. Gelfand *et al.* (2011) also write that Norway has particularly strict rules related to social norms, which is a feature to take into consideration as parenting is governed by norms in society. This implies that if active mediating is the preferred norm in Norwegian parenting, it also can make Norwegian parents more permissive than they otherwise would prefer. This perspective is particularly relevant for parents of children with high vulnerability, who often strive to find friends in the off-line world, as is the case for many of the parents in this study. One parent illustrated this well: "(...) The parents can't stop that influence. And the fact is that if you don't have a phone today, you're ostracized by friends." This suggest that the smart phone is on the one hand a symbolic marker, i.e., that the child has what everyone else has and does not stand out, and on the other hand, it is way of connecting with others and a community when a child or young person feels alone and isolated.

6.5 The mobile makes it difficult to parent

Parents in this study find digital parenting challenging. The parent system adapts to digital parenting by maintaining the practices they are familiar with.

They practiced parenting in a traditional “offline” way, while at the same time expressing that they felt inadequate as parents in an online childhood. One mother described the challenge of keeping track of the rapid digital development: "That train is absolutely impossible to stop."

This can be understood from different perspectives. First, parents who were themselves not brought up in a digital world had to figure out the role of being a ‘digital parent’ themselves whilst leaning on parenting they were familiar with. I choose to see this in the context of Bourdieu (1977) and "habitus", which refers to a system of dispositions in relation to being in the world. Our thoughts and actions are the result of embodied experiences of culture and social structures, which also affect parenting. This exemplifies how parenting practices are influenced by external factors in Bronfenbrenner's ecological system. The macrosystem, in which broader cultural and societal contexts prevail, implies that habitus has a central role in shaping and maintaining social norms and values. Parents in this study, who had not grown up with the internet and a digital everyday life, could be described as lacking a ‘digital habitus’ in their parenting. This corresponds with findings that even when parents have a relatively good grasp of the practicalities of digital platforms, they soon fall behind because the young person is alone in a digital arena where parents are not the norm-setters as they are in the physical arena. In physical arenas, the young person has been with their parents and is affected by how the world is handled consciously and unconsciously. It is as if the ‘rules’ of the physical arena cannot be transferred to the digital arena because in the latter it is possible to be anonymous, there is little regulation, and developments are difficult to keep up with if you do not participate yourself. The parents in this study were providing guidance, advice and rules but were not norm-setters in the digital arena as they do not possess a digital habitus. And as discussed above, I argue that parents therefore wilfully open a gate to an arena they don’t know themselves. This also fits with how The Norwegian Media Authority (2022;2) describes the young person’s debut online: “Often the digital debut takes place on tablets,

where the children largely relate to a "closed" digital universe. (...) With the smartphone, children are incorporated into a new infrastructure and must deal with digital relationships.”

The parents in this study offered several examples that illustrate how different apps have different functions and that it is not easy for the parents to understand this. Belinda (the mother of Beate (15) describes this as follows:

... Snapchat — it became the root of all evil, along with Vipps (an application that gives the user the ability to pay by mobile phone). I think Snapchat took us all by surprise. Everyone said that photos disappear right away and there was no problem. I think a lot of us parents found that we were kind of fooled. We didn't realize what was happening. It was so new, and we hadn't had it before. We got it at the same time as our kids, but I couldn't see my daughter's friends there.

The digital world, with its apps and platforms, has its own rules, norms, and structures. This affects the dynamics in the family, because the young person connects to a closed unregulated digital social system that the parents do not have an overview of, and which increases the risk of abuse. Children are by nature characterized by self-organization but not necessarily selfcare, and therefore children need protection and developmental support from their family system. This is challenging, because the parents are not part of the digital social system in the same way that the young person is.

Seen in the light of how the family functions as a social system, the young person's participation on digital platforms forms a separate social system. These two systems operate as separate entities with their own rules and logics and are maintained by communication.

Luhmann (1998) emphasizes that social systems are not static, but dynamic and complex, and they adapt and evolve in response to societal changes. Individual behaviour is influenced by

these systems, and individuals adapt their behaviour to function within the framework of the system. Digital development is an integral part of young people's lives, and they adapt to it more easily than their parents, who Usually have grown up themselves a non-digital childhood.

This can also be seen from a generational perspective. The next generation of children of parents born in the digital shift/age will probably have parents with a digital habitus and therefore in a better position to provide norms in a digital social arena. In a local newspaper in Bergen “Bergen Tidende” I read an article about older siblings being stricter with younger siblings than their parents when it comes to online behaviour (BT, retrieved online 1.9.2024). This illustrates the point that younger generations are in the digital habitat and they report from a somewhat closed universe to the parents. Because this this mind-set is in many ways inaccessible to earlier generations.

By linking autopoiesis to habitus in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, we gain a deeper understanding of how individuals' experiences and social interactions contribute to creating self-sustaining systems of norms, values, and behaviours. Parenting is an important factor in this process, as it shapes children's habitus through continuous interactions. This perspective gives us a comprehensive understanding of how social and cultural factors affect the development of individuals' life trajectories. Ultimately the home as a safe haven is not as safe as parents think.

6.6 Our home is not safe

A quote from this study shows how a child can be exposed to online abuse at the same time as dinner is being prepared elsewhere in the house: «I have to go my mum is calling for dinner”. This contrasts with results from the EU Kids Online survey in Norway (2019) which showed that Norwegian children feel safer online than elsewhere, including at home, although the

results also show that Norwegian children generally feel safe at home (Staksrud, 2019). These results from a larger survey must be seen against the background of Norway being generally regarded as a safe society and also the fact that Norwegian children are considered digitally competent (Milosevic *et al.*, 2024). The active mediation style of parents also enables children to explore online, where they feel guided and supported by their parents.

From the parent's point of view, this also presents a further paradox: while children are at home, they should feel safe, and yet the internet is dangerous for children who have the most social contact in the digital arena and therefore are most likely to be exposed to abuse.

Vulnerable children feel more included online than in everyday life. Although parents see the positive aspects of the digital social arena, they are also aware that the internet has a downside in relation to the risks that come with participation. This is echoed by previous research showing that Norwegian children experience more risky encounters online and watch more sexual content online than children in other countries (Staksrud, 2021).

It is a paradox that parents in this study, who make so many active choices and are so concerned with balancing their parenting role, are unable to protect the young person from online abuse. They have a dialogue with the young person, set expectations and rules, introduce mobile-free days, check their mobile phones regularly and kept an eye on their bank account for unnecessary contacts or transfers, and yet ultimately cannot control everything that happens when their children are online.

The parents of 7 out of 9 victims in the study had had long-term concerns about their child's vulnerability in general. They had followed up special needs at school, facilitated social gatherings, and had cooperated with various help agencies. They told us about the paradox of spending so much of their time supporting their child's development, and yet still feeling at

the forefront of what could be potentially damaging to their children, i.e., providing internet access.

This study provides new perspectives about the parents of victims of OSCA, and different paradoxes emerge in the research that affect parents. Concerns also emerge in relation to wider structures in society. Because parents in this study have a strong sense of responsibility for their children's internet use, when something goes wrong, they feel responsible for not having been able to protect their children. The parents feel a strong sense of guilt and an overwhelming responsibility for a task that is in fact too big for them to handle alone. It seems to me reasonable to ask whether internet providers and regulatory bodies such as governments have passed on a responsibility to parents that they should have been taking themselves. Can this be seen as a shift in power from governments and service providers to individuals, reflecting a broader trend of individualisation in society. Instead of giving the individual freedom, this individualisation imposes a responsibility that should have been managed by big tech institutions such as META and the authorities (Staksrud, 2013). However, it is the parents who take responsibility and feel guilty when they find out what has happened. The individual responsibility and guilt are reinforced by the fact that perpetrators infiltrate the family's most private and 'safest' places.

One mother described her despair over having asked herself where she had been as a mother, despairing that her daughter had been subjected to blackmail and abuse in the middle of the day in her own bedroom. This then is the paradox: while the mother is at home cooking dinner in safety, the daughter is at the same time being exposed to online abuse in her own room. The mother learned this when she read her daughter's explanation in facilitated interview: 'I can hear my mum yelling that it's dinner. I can't do that now.' The contrast

between safety and being under threat is vividly revealed in the same home, a place the parents believed they could protect.

It becomes clear how the young person, considering Bronfenbrenner's model, sitting alone in his or her bedroom (the microsystem level), connects, relates and communicates through all the layers of the model. Wi-Fi and smart phones/computers are material structures that facilitate a social structure powering all homes and all children's rooms. The internet allows participants to hide who they are, and there is very little social control. Abuse only requires internet access and is not hindered by time and place. In this study, parents convey a powerlessness in the sense that their own home no longer represents a safe haven for their children. Young victims of online abuse also feel powerless because they are a potential target 24/7, the images that are shared cannot stop, and who the images are shared with is impossible to know (Joleby *et al.*, 2020).

To understand how parents in this study describe their experiences with the young person's digital everyday life, there are several perspectives that can shed light on the digital social arena in which young people participate. To lift it from parents' personal choices to social structures and mechanisms, and to underscore the fact that parents alone cannot be responsible for protecting the young person. Furlong and Cartmel argues (in Jones 2018:30) that "Intensification of individualism means that crises are perceived as individual deficiencies rather than the result of processes that are largely beyond the individual's control" (Furlong and Cartmel, in Jones 2018:114). This intensification of individualism is one way of looking at who should be responsible for risk management in relation to children and new technologies.

For parents, online abuse affects their sense of security for the future. As previously discussed, both the victims and their parents experience a sense of revictimization and powerlessness due to the permanent nature of the images and their far-reaching consequences.

This makes the parents of the vulnerable children more vulnerable in the role of digital parents. However, while the adolescent may lack the necessary maturity to fully understand the consequences of what has happened, the parents experience great distress because they fully understand the scope of the event. As in the following example of a mother and her son:

“He (her son, 10 years old) felt relieved. But I don't really feel like he... he doesn't see the consequences of what's happened, like... we know these pictures have been sent to the U.S. and videos and everything. Images of him have been posted on the internet. That's what I think about (...) I think a lot about those pictures and videos of him out there, everything that they haven't been able to stop. I think it's terrible to know that there might be a paedophile out there watching my son (...). I think that's terrible to think about. I'd rather there were pictures of me rather than him.”

This quote made me aware that what was happening in these families is a social issue, bringing tensions in from the wider society. Because in the digital era, new social norms, new societal processes, and new dangers have entered the family. It was as if a new dynamic from the wider society had been brought into the dynamics of the families in this study light of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), which shows how individual and family systems are parts of larger systems, the young person, the family, the local environment, the larger society, and politics are systems that are interconnected and affect each other. In the modified Ecological-Cyber Systems Model (Johnson and Palampur, 2008), the authors show how the cyber system/team directly affects the everyday life of families.

I argue that the way society has handled the involvement of the internet in the life of the individual child and the family is a wide-ranging issue. Forces are at work which neither the children or their families can do anything about, which is illustrated by this quote from a father: "As ... Parents, we... We really feel that society doesn't have a solution to this." This

issue is something that needs to be addressed on a global, political level, by META and the developers of the platforms involved.”

Finally, I want to connect the findings to a theory that has shaped my understanding of how family life changes in the face of digital technology. When a child is subjected to online abuse, it affects not only the individual youth but the entire family as a relational unit. For parents, it is not just about protecting, but also about navigating a landscape where technology and market forces continuously blend into everyday life. The role of technology in family life must be understood in light of capitalist production and reproduction relations; smartphones, tablets, and digital platforms are not only tools for coordination and communication but also carriers of market logics such as surveillance, data collection, and productivity optimization. This intensifies the parental role and positions both children and adults as participants in a digital market logic—with digital products aimed at children, apps, and learning platforms creating pressure to keep up with technological norms.

The material presence of technology in the family is often invisible but very powerful. Community within the family is fragmented; the allure of screens challenges spontaneous communication and the sense of togetherness. New materialism, with its focus on the agency of matter, makes it possible to see how technological objects are not just consumed but also consume time, attention, and affective energy. The family becomes a target group for a market that offers “smart” solutions to emotional and practical challenges, often with promises of more control and efficiency—thus making parents themselves a market.

To illustrate how the material and affective presence of technology changes family dynamics, I will draw on new materialist theory of assemblages. An “assemblage” can be described as a temporary network of people, technologies, emotions, and environments that together shape everyday life and relationships. Take headphones, for example: When a youth puts in their

earbuds, they partially disconnect from the family network and enter an alternative affective space—a form of autonomy and control over their own world. This is not necessarily rebellion, but a reconfiguration of closeness and distance, a micro-politics in everyday practice where power and norms operate on bodily and emotional levels through material and immaterial relationships.

The concept of assemblage is particularly relevant when we see how the presence of technology at home both strengthens and fragments relationships. Screens and apps at home create new forms of presence and absence simultaneously—they change intimacy, attention, and emotional navigation, and give rise to new family configurations and dynamics. See books about Gen Z and anxiety, which characterize a fully digital generation.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that new materialist ideas help illuminate the analysis in this study, especially by highlighting how technology affects family dynamics on both practical and relational levels. Technology is not just a tool but an active agent in everyday family life, helping to reshape the parental role, relationships between family members, and the way care and responsibility are understood and carried out. By acknowledging the material and affective circuits of technology, we gain a more precise and nuanced picture of the challenges and opportunities that arise for parents and children in an increasingly digital everyday life—and thus also a deeper understanding of how digital technology changes what we think of as a safe and cohesive family life.

Interviews with parents of children exposed to technology-assisted sexual abuse reveal a recurring pattern: even those who feel they have good strategies for protection in the child's physical everyday life are unable to transfer these practices to digital arenas. Parents who describe themselves as engaged, present, and boundary-setting feel powerless when abuse happens online. This points to a crucial divide between parents' ability to protect the child at home, school, and during leisure, and their lack of control in digital spaces. The discourse that

“active and engaged parents” can ensure their child’s digital life turns out to be insufficient (Livingstone and Blum-Ross, 2020). Rather than empowering parents, this discourse risks shifting responsibility from structural and regulatory levels to individual families (Byrne *et al.*, 2016; Stoilova *et al.*, 2021).

Another consistent finding is the parents’ experience of intensified responsibility. Even though they had done “everything right,” they were left with a feeling of having failed. This experience is closely tied to social and cultural norms. Norway is a society characterized by a strong normative culture where parenting is both morally and legally obligated to protect the child (Gullestad, 1997). At the same time, the welfare state is individually oriented, which means that risk is often seen as a matter of individual effort rather than structural frameworks (Kjørholt, 2007). When parents thus fail to protect the child in digital spaces, the responsibility becomes unbearable—not because they were absent, but because they lack real control. This normative pressure shapes parents’ feelings of guilt and inadequacy and creates a double burden: they are expected to live up to the ideal of the competent digital parent, while also handling a reality where this is impossible (James and James, 2012).

Norwegian context: trust and closeness. At the same time, parents in this study highlight a strong sense of trust and closeness in their relationship with their children. The Norwegian context is characterized by ideals of dialogue, openness, and mutual respect in the parent–child relationship (Bakken and Elstad, 2012). Parents tried to meet their children with support and understanding, also on digital issues. But this creates a paradox: the very relationship built on trust and openness can be exploited by online perpetrators. The culture of trust, which is initially a strength, thus becomes a vulnerability in digital spaces. This clarifies how Norwegian parenting carries a double challenge: it is shaped by ideals of closeness and trust but is affected by policies and regulations that impose a disproportionate responsibility on parents without giving them the tools needed to protect their children.

A recurring finding is that the children who were exposed were often vulnerable to begin with, they struggled with loneliness, exclusion, and psychosocial challenges. This aligns with previous research showing that online risks are often linked to existing vulnerabilities (Staksrud, 2013). Parents felt that even the children's room, traditionally seen as a safe space, lost its protective function when risk followed the child via internet access. Here, I see a dramatic shift: the boundary between "inside" and "outside" the family dissolves, and risk moves into the home as an invisible but ever-present threat.

Implications for policy and regulation. When I put these findings together, the implication becomes clear: political and regulatory frameworks that still rely on the idea of parental involvement as the primary protection mechanism do not ensure children's digital safety. Parents cannot alone protect their children against global technology companies and digital platforms built on data-driven business models. Responsibility must be shifted back to structural levels. This requires clear demands on platforms for safety design, age verification, and data minimization, as well as the creation of safe digital communities for children (Livingstone et al., 2017; EU Kids Online, 2020). Only when regulations account for the real power imbalance between parents and technology companies can children's digital everyday life become less risky, and the parental role regain its protective function. Finally, I have taken the liberty of including a poem I found on Instagram by a young woman writing to her younger self and how she thinks her parents were right. She describes how the phone becomes a part of life, her feelings, her choices, her body, all her relationships. How the scrolling is perceived as a medicine she cannot live without like a drug she was warned against but which she cannot be blamed for, because she was a child and did not understand. I see this poem as a note to all parents and children and also as a reflection on how technology, internet and our way of connecting and relate is wired to a phone, a screen that become a part of us. A young writer and poet I found scrolling my phone; Kori Jane Spaulding writes;

I think our parents were right
it was the damned phones
we laughed when we were children
hearing it's that snap gram and Insta chat and face talk
they didn't understand
they couldn't even say it right
we thought we knew better than them
they didn't know what it was like
having a world at the tip of our fingertips
we scroll through the trash so much
we have headlines tattooed on our skin
wires for veins
AI for brain
and they may not have understood
but they were right
it is the damn phones
a drug in my pocket
depended on stimulation
but can we blame us
we were but children when they were given
we didn't know how to stop it
if I added up all the hours I spent on a screen
existential stress and regret would creep in
so I ignored this fact by typing away

and it's not like I can throw away my phone –
it's how we communicate
it's how we relate,
it's the medicine that is surely making our souls die
I used to say I was born in the wrong generation
but I was mistaken
for do I not do everything I say I hate
when I look in the mirror I see a ghost staring back
I try not to think too much about who I would be without technology
The character behind my phone screams
has become self-aware
almost worse than being naïve
for I know it's poison but I drink anyways
we used to be scared of robots gaining consciousness
a lie in the media companies to distract us
as to not ourselves become conscious of the mess they created
We are the robots
we are the product
so I sit and I scroll and I rot and repeat
sit and scroll and rot
until my own thoughts are what is being fed to me on TV
until my own feelings are wrapped up in celebrities
until my body is a tool of my identical identity
and so I sit and I scroll and I rot
and so I post on the internet how the internet has failed us

so that I may not fail my internet presence

I think our parents were right

it was the damned phones

Kori Jane Spaulding Retrieved from Facebook 05.08.25

7.0 Conclusion

The research question for this study has been: **How do parents experience that the dynamics in the family are affected after their child is exposed to sexual abuse online?**

The findings show that parents primarily understand children's vulnerability as a core point in the risk of OSCA. Vulnerability was described as loneliness, social exclusion, difficulties at school and a strong need to seek community digitally. This also included what the parents described as "easy prey" – children who struggled beforehand were more likely to be contacted and exploited.

Another important finding is about the "silence in the family". The parents told how difficult it was for the children to share experiences of abuse, and how secrecy created distance, while at the same time the parents wanted to be part of the solution and not the problem. When abuse was uncovered, many described a "crisis in the family", characterized by self-reproach and the experience of having failed. This answers the question directly: the relationships and dynamics in the family were strongly affected, and the parents had to deal with both the child's trauma and their own reactions.

The study also shows how parents struggled to be "offline parents in an online childhood". They described a constant balancing act – wanting to protect the children, but at the same time not limiting them so much that they became further isolated. In this lay a feeling of powerlessness. It is crucial to emphasize that this powerlessness is not about the efforts of parents – they did a lot to protect and make good choices. Powerlessness arises because everything parents do happens at Bronfenbrenner's micro level, while the structural framework for risk lies in the outer layers. Technology and digital culture are not something families can opt out of. Thus, the task becomes impossible: parents actively act in the home, but their efforts are undermined by digital systems they cannot influence. When the risk

comes with the technology into the house, even the child's bedroom loses its protective function.

This points to a clear paradox: Parents are given responsibility for children's digital safety, but the digital infrastructure is controlled by global corporations and political frameworks outside their control. Here, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model provides a fruitful perspective, because it highlights how macrostructures penetrate the family's microsystem and shape the dynamics.

The implications are both social and political. There is an urgent need for regulations that shift responsibility from the families to the structural levels. Requirements for security design, effective age verification and data minimisation must be introduced, and the business models that reward commitment over security must be challenged (Livingstone et al., 2017; EU Kids Online, 2020). As NTB and VG have reported, the platforms' own proposals, such as age separation on Instagram, are insufficient when they at the same time admit that age limits can easily be circumvented. The Norwegian Media Authority (2023) has therefore called for stricter regulations – a signal that responsibility must now be placed where it belongs: with the platforms and in politics.

Parents' experiences also show that support is needed beyond technical advice. Even resourceful families stood alone in the face of abuse. Future measures must therefore include low-threshold guidance, coordinated support services and special support for vulnerable children. This is crucial to prevent control measures from reinforcing children's experience of exclusion.

At the same time, we are seeing the germ of a parent-generation rebellion: more parents are fully digital and better informed. This could open a new era where parental voices become a stronger force in challenging tech giants and demanding policies that actually protect children.

But without clear national and global regulation, this will not be enough. Grooming and digital abuse happen here and now, are documented and live on online. Children's own involvement in these processes makes the situation extra complex – many feel that they have been their own abusers in a way, which reinforces the shame and makes processing difficult.

In conclusion, the study shows that the notion of the home as a protective arena is no longer sufficient. Risk follows technology, and protection must therefore be built into the digital environments themselves. Parents are not powerless per se – they do a lot to protect their children – but they are made powerless by digital structures and policies that place too much responsibility on the family. This insight emerges clearly because the study is based on the parents' own voices, and it is in their stories that the paradoxes and tensions between the micro and macro levels become visible. In my view, this is the study's most important contribution – not only to research, but also to practice and the public debate.

Metareflexion

This study is based on a subjective and qualitative research design that is based on the parents' own voices. It is precisely in their stories that the complexity of OSCA becomes clear: the tension between the family's everyday life and the global structures they cannot control. A quantitative design could have shown scope and patterns but would not capture the deep paradoxes and feelings of powerlessness expressed by parents. Through a qualitative approach, it becomes possible to see how structural conditions intervene at the micro-level, and how parents, despite their efforts, experience that the framework within which they act makes the task impossible.

This voice from "inside the home" provides a valuable supplement to the dominant research that is often oriented towards children's experiences or regulatory perspectives. By listening to parents, we gain a better understanding of how policies and regulations must not only protect

children but also strengthen the parents' ability to exercise their protective role. In my view, this is a crucial contribution – both to the field of research and to the public debate.

7.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the study

A strength of this study is the recruitment of parents of children who have been subjected to online abuse, where a criminal case has been reported and the children have been to facilitated interviews at a state-run Children's House. This is a vulnerable group of children and families on whom there is little or no research in Norway. There is previous research on young people exposed to abuse online, but I have not succeeded in finding any research on the parents of these children. The aim of this study is to shed light on parents' perspectives on this topic.

There were fifteen parents in nine interviews, consisting of 7 mothers and 8 fathers, including a stepfather, who participated. The children consisted of five girls and four boys. As regards to gender, girls, boys, women and men were evenly distributed in this study.

A weakness is that only ethnic Norwegian parents participated, but two of the children had other ethnic origins. Moreover, most of the families in the study had both parents living with the child. Greater diversity in the families would perhaps have widened the relevance of the study's findings.

A strength and weakness of a small subjective research project like this is the small scale of the study. It has few participants and therefore cannot provide knowledge that can be generalized, but it has the advantage of being rich in qualitative, in-depth knowledge that is lacking in a research field of growing interest and value for all parents.

7.2 Implications for practice.

In line with findings from this study, it is clear that the digital arena is under-regulated and that children are easy to harm online. An implication of this is an urgent need to place

responsibility where it belongs: with policy makers, the judiciary and the owners of digital companies.

An implication arising from my study is how public institutions in Norway, especially educational institutions, have a responsibility to ensure that they have software that protects children from harm online. In Norwegian schools, children often have their own tablets, and much of the teaching and homework involves their use together with home Wi-Fi. This means that young people have a high exposure to risk, both during school hours but also at home. For young people who are already exposed to OSCA, this can lead to a feeling that they can be contacted anytime and anywhere.

In Norway, Children's Houses are in a special position in relation to knowledge about this group of vulnerable children, because they meet these children and families in connection with questioning and follow-up after facilitated questioning. Nationally and locally, Children's Houses have resource groups for knowledge development and interdisciplinary cooperation on online abuse that can improve follow-up for this group of victims. This is an important contribution, because there is little knowledge about OSCA in the various agencies working with children. This applies to child protection services, CAMHS, educational institutions and the Family Counselling Service.

Children's Houses have a very important role, because they can improve the exchange of information and care of the young person when working with legal representatives and the police in connection with facilitated interviews. Regarding the police, it is imperative that photo evidence is presented in a way that does not re-victimize the young person. Here, there are guidelines that could benefit from being clearer and more binding. The young person often wants the pictures not to be shown, and it is therefore important that parents receive adequate information and customized descriptions about what the young person has been exposed to.

Further, they must ensure that the young person and their parents receive an offer of follow-up adapted to this group of vulnerable people after facilitated questioning.

For family therapists, psychologists and others who provide follow-up and treatment for victims of sexual abuse, it is important that provision is adapted to the special features of OSCA. Findings from other research reviewed in this study support that OSCA is just as serious as sexual abuse in general and has some special characteristics that complicate the treatment. The abuse is online and cannot be stopped. Uncertainty as to where and when images are shared makes it difficult for the victims, and it challenges treatment. For many victims, they feel that they are their own abusers because they have to some extent participated voluntarily and have a self-activity that complicates the understanding of being 'exposed to abuse'. Knowledge about the characteristics of the different types of abuse and the degree of severity must be disseminated, and follow-up and treatment must be designed accordingly.

For the police and others who meet young people in connection with criminal cases, the findings in this study show that both parents and their children emphasize the importance of placing responsibility where it belongs in connection with facilitated interviews. This applies to both the police and the staff of Children's Houses. In the aftermath of OSCA, a non-judgmental and non-blaming attitude is particularly important in order not to inflict further guilt and shame on the young person and their parents.

7.3 Further research

There is a need for more research on vulnerable children and young people and their families who have been exposed to OSCA. In Norway, research on how Children's Houses facilitate follow-up and treatment is important because these institutions are in a unique position to meet the needs of these young people and their parents. Research looking at OSCA from the perspective of other institutions, such as CAMHS and family counselling services, is also

important to uncover the extent of current knowledge in the field. In summary, there is a great need for more research on the provision of follow-up and treatment for children and adolescents who have been exposed to OSCA.

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POLITIET

Notat

Angående datasikkerhet for oppbevaring av forskningsmateriale for Line Charlott Slettemyr.

Slettemyr er ansatt i Vest Politidistrikt ved seksjon Statens Barnehus Bergen. Doktorgradsprosjektet støttes av arbeidsgiver.

Som arbeidstager har Slettemyr et eget område for oppbevaring av konfidensielle dokumenter.

Området er beskyttet av politiets brannmurer og sikkerhet. Ansvarlig er PIT (Politiets IKT tjeneste). Ingen andre har tilgang på hennes område (LCS007 (//nash) (H:).

Bergen 10.11.21

Med vennlig hilsen

Kristin Konglevoll Fjell Leder Tlf: +4793255684/+4755556900 www.statensbarnehus.no



STATENS BARNEHUS
Et tverrfaglig kompetansesentrum

Bergen

APPENDIX 2 Approval REK



Region:	Saksbehandler:	Telefon:	Vår dato:	Vår referanse:
REK vest	Anna Stephansen	45008356	29.11.2021	254764

Lennart Lorås

Prosjektsøknad: «Nettovergrep i et familieperspektiv»

Søknadsnummer: 254764 **Forskningsansvarlig institusjon:** Høgskulen på Vestlandet

Prosjektsøknad godkjennes med vilkår

Søkers beskrivelse

Formålet med studien er å få mer kunnskap om hvordan foreldre opplever at nettovergrep har påvirket relasjonene i familien.

Hva skjer i familien når overgrepet blir kjent og hvordan opplever foreldre at det påvirker egen foreldrerolle og deres håndtering av situasjonen.

Formålet med denne kvalitative studien er å søke mer inngående kunnskap og forståelse om hvordan foreldre opplever sin støtte til barn og unge etter nettovergrep og få mer kunnskap om fenomenet sett fra et familieperspektiv. Kunnskapen kan gi Barnehus og andre relevante instanser relevant kunnskap for å gi tilpasset råd, veiledning og oppfølging til utsatte barn og unge og deres familie.

Omsorgsbasen og foreldrene er den viktigste arena for god utvikling for barn og unge. Derfor har denne studien et familieperspektiv, det er også i tråd med studiens forankring i systemiske forståelse og forskning.

Det skal rekrutteres 8-10 foreldre gjennom ansatte i Statens Barnehus. Foreldrene blir invitert til å delta på en times intervju. Foreldrene får mulighet til å komme med innspill på felles tema som kommer frem etter at alle intervju er gjennomført. Intervjudata skal analyseres etter Refleksiv Tematisk Analyse (Braun and Clark) Intervju vil bli tatt opp på lydbånd.

Jeg ønsker å få frem familiens stemme gjennom dette prosjektet fordi det er lite kunnskap om dette i dag.

Målet med Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun og Clarke, 2019) er å identifisere meningsmønstre på tvers av dataene for å gi svar på forskningsspørsmål. Mønstrene identifiseres og utvikles gjennom en streng prosess med å gjøre seg kjent med dataene, kode dataene, etterfulgt av tema utvikling og revisjon av disse temaene. Temaer dukker ikke opp i RTA. Forskeren er aktiv, og forskeren konstruerer koder og temaer. Dette passer godt med den systemiske konteksten av denne forskningen.

REK vest

Besøksadresse: Armauer Hansens Hus, nordre fløy, 2. etasje,

Haukelandsveien 28, Bergen

| E-post: rek-vest@uib.no

Web: <https://rekportalen.no>

Vi viser til tilbakemelding mottatt 25.11.21, i forbindelse med ovennevnte forskningsprosjekt. Tilbakemeldingen er behandlet av leder for Regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK vest) på delegert fullmakt fra komiteen, med hjemmel i forskningsetikkforskriften § 7, første ledd, tredje punktum. Vurderingen er gjort med hjemmel i helseforskningsloven § 10.

REKs vurdering

REK vest har fortsatt noen mindre merknader til prosjektet.

1. beredskap- alle bør få tilbud om en oppfølgingstime etter intervju som de kan takke nei til.
2. I informasjonsskrivet bør man si noe om hvordan deltakere ble identifisert

Ellers godkjenner REK vest prosjektet.

Vedtak

REK har gjort en helhetlig forskningsetisk vurdering av alle prosjektets sider. Prosjektet godkjennes med hjemmel i helseforskningsloven § 10 på betingelse av at ovennevnte vilkår tas til følge.

Sluttmelding

Prosjektleder skal sende sluttmelding til REK på eget skjema via REK-portalen senest 6 måneder etter sluttdato 31.12.2023, jf. helseforskningsloven § 12. Dersom prosjektet ikke starter opp eller gjennomføres meldes dette også via skjemaet for sluttmelding.

Søknad om endring

Dersom man ønsker å foreta vesentlige endringer i formål, metode, tidsløp eller organisering må prosjektleder sende søknad om endring via portalen på eget skjema til REK, jf. helseforskningsloven § 11.

Klageadgang

Du kan klage på REKs vedtak, jf. forvaltningsloven § 28 flg. Klagen sendes på eget skjema via REK portalen. Klagefristen er tre uker fra du mottar dette brevet. Dersom REK opprettholder vedtaket, sender REK klagen videre til Den nasjonale forskningsetiske komité for medisin og helsefag (NEM) for endelig vurdering, jf. forskningsetikkloven § 10 og helseforskningsloven § 10.

Vennlig hilsen,

Nina Langeland

REK vest leder,

Professor, dr.med. UiB og

Anna Stephansen

PhD

Sekretariatsleder/kontorsjef

REK vest rek-vest@uib.no

Kopi til:

Høgskulen på Vestlandet
Line Charlott Slettemyr

Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Directorate of Education and Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2548
Fax: 020
7447 3837
[www.tavi-
port.org](http://www.tavi-port.org)

Line Slettemyr

17 December 2021

Dear Line

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: How is the family relations affected when a young person is sexually abused online

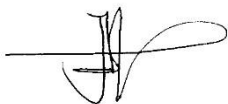
I am pleased to inform you that the Trust Research Ethics Committee formally approved your application on 22 November 2021.

Please note that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc, must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

Please note that I am copying this communication to your supervisor for information.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.



Mrs Paru Jeram
Secretary to the Trust Research Ethics Committee

Cc. Course Lead, Supervisor



Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer

474091

Vurderingstype

Standard

Tittel

Nettovergrep i et familieperspektiv

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskulen på Vestlandet / Fakultet for helse- og sosialvitenskap / Institutt for helse og funksjon

Felles behandlingsansvarlige institusjoner

The Tavistock and Portman Quality Assurance and Enhancement Directorate of Education and Training Tavistock Centre 120 Belsize Lane

London NW3 5BA Tel: 020 8938 2548 Fax: 020 7447 3837 www.tavi-port.org

Prosjektansvarlig

Lennart Lorås

Prosjektperiode

01.08.2021 - 31.05.2025

Kategorier personopplysninger

Alminnelige

Særlige

Lovlig grunnlag

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 31.05.2025.

[Meldeskjema](#) 

Kommentar

BAKGRUNN

På bakgrunn av meldeskjemaet forstår vi det slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger startet 1.8.2021 uten at prosjektet ble meldt til oss. Dette begrunnes i at forsker ikke var klar over at prosjektet skulle meldes i det forsker var student ved Tavistock and Portman Center, University of Essex og har sin biveileder ved Høgskolen på Vestlandet (HVL). HVL har nå besluttet å inngå samarbeidsavtale med Tavistock and Portman Center, University of Essex om felles behandlingsansvar for å sikre at prosjektet får vurdert lovlig grunnlag for behandling av personopplysninger.

Behandlingen omfatter alminnelige og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger. Det er lagt opp til at foresatte skal samtykke på vegne av barn. Forskningsdeltakerne i prosjektet ble rekruttert via Statens Barnehus, Vest Politidistrikt hvor forsker er ansatt. Det ble så gjort intervju med lydopptak og datamaterialet er lagret ved Vest Politidistrikt. I informasjonen til utvalget oppgis det at Statens Barnehus i Bergen, Vest Politidistrikt og prosjektleder er ansvarlig for personvernet i prosjektet. Informasjonen som ble gitt til deltakerne inneholder derav mangelfull og feilaktig informasjon om rette behandlingsansvarlige. Informasjonsskrivet mangler også kontaktopplysningene til det interne personvernombudet ved HVL. Disse punktene inngår som krav til informasjon i personvernforordningen.

Vi vurderer at følgende brudd på personvernforordningen har forekommet:

- Behandlingen av særlige kategorier av personopplysninger er igangsatt uten at prosjektet ble meldt til

Personverntjenester. Dette innebærer ett brudd på rådføringsplikten (personopplysningsloven §§ 9 og 11).

- Manglende melding r medfører også brudd på kravet om protokoll, jf. art. 30 i personvernforordningen. Kravet om protokoll er noe som ivaretas gjennom å sende inn meldeskjema til oss.
- Siden informasjon som ble gitt utvalget er noe mangelfull og feilaktig, innebærer dette et brudd på informasjonsplikten jf. art. 13 som beskriver krav til den informasjonen som skal gis ved innsamling av personopplysninger fra den registrerte.
- I den tid prosjektet har behandlet personopplysninger, har det frem til nå ikke vært fastsatt en ordning om fellesbehandlingsansvar mellom Tavistock and Portman Center, University of Essex og HVL. Dette medfører brudd på kravene ved felles behandlingsansvar (art. 26).
- Basert på overnevnte avvik vurderer vi også brudd på personvernforordningen når det gjelder prinsippet om lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5 a).

Etter dialog med forsker og kontaktperson ved HVL er det avklart at avvikene kan begrenses gjennom følgende tiltak: • Som kompenserende tiltak for mangelfull og feilaktig informasjon til utvalget vil det i ettertid bli sendt ut nytt informasjonsskriv til deltakerne som blant annet inneholder riktig informasjon om behandlingsansvarlige institusjoner samt kontaktopplysninger til det interne personvernombud og informasjon om hvor lenge opplysningene skal oppbevares.

- Det skal også utarbeides en samarbeidsavtale mellom Tavistock and Portman Center, University of Essex og Høgskolen på Vestlandet som fastsetter deres

respektive ansvar for å overholde forpliktelsene i personvernforordningen som felles behandlingsansvarlige.

Vi vurderer avviket til å ha lav personvernulempe. Alle deltakerne har fått god informasjon om hva prosjektet innebærer, og om sine rettigheter. Datainnsamlingen skjedde for relativt kort tid siden og datasikkerheten er godt ivaretatt ved at opplysningene er trygt lagret i Vest Politidistrikt sitt datasystem hvor forsker er ansatt. Det er kun forsker som har tilgang til dataene. Lydfiler og transkripsjoner blir oppbevart adskilt fra direkte identifiserende opplysninger, og alle data blir slettet ved prosjektslutt, 31.5.2025. Ulempene som følger av avvikene, vil reduseres betraktelig gjennom de oppveiende tiltakene som nevnes over. Avviket innebærer ikke brudd på personopplysningssikkerheten og er etter Personverntjenester sin vurdering ikke av en slik art at Datatilsynet må varsles.

Etter dialog med kontaktperson ved HVL og forsker forstår vi det slik at HVL selv vil vurdere det nye informasjonsskrivet som skal sendes til utvalget. Vi legger derfor til grunn at HVL følger opp med nytt informasjonsskriv og andre tiltak, og at revidert informasjonsskriv og REK-vedtak lastes opp i meldeskjema når de foreligger.

INSTITUSJONENS ANSVAR

Vi minner om at det er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon som er ansvarlig for at behandling av personopplysninger foregår i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Institusjonen er ansvarlig for å sikre korrekt kunnskapsoverføring til sine studenter og ansatte. Dersom institusjonen har behov for ytterligere opplæring om personvern i forskning, er vi tilgjengelig for å gi veiledning.

OM VURDERINGEN

Vi har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

Prosjektet er også vurdert og godkjent med vilkår etter helseforskningsloven § 10 av Regionale komiteer for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK vest) i vedtak av 29.11.2021 (deres referanse: 254764).

VURDERING AV BEHOV FOR DPIA

Prosjektet behandler særlige kategorier av personopplysninger (helseopplysninger) om en sårbar gruppe (barn), noe som kan utløse en plikt til å foreta personvernkonsensvurdering (DPIA).

Vi har vurdert at det ikke var behov for å gjøre en DPIA jf. personvernforordningen art. 35 nr. 1 for dette prosjektet. Dette var basert på en helhetsvurdering der følgende momenter ble vektlagt:

- De registrertes og de registrerte barnas foreldre/foresatte samtykker til bruk av sine personopplysninger
- De registrertes og de registrerte barnas foreldre/foresatte får god informasjon om behandlingen av personopplysningene og sine rettigheter
- Opplysningene lagres trygt hos Vest Politidistrikt
- Det er kun forsker som har tilgang til koblingsnøkkel
- Få personer har tilgang til personopplysningene
- Regionale komiteer for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK) har gjort en forskningsetisk vurdering og godkjent prosjektet
- Behandlingen har kort varighet
- Det behandles få personopplysninger

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige personopplysninger og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om helseforhold frem til 31.5.2025.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. For opplysninger om barn vil prosjektet innhente samtykke fra de registrertes foresatte. Vi har vurdert gyldigheten av samtykkene opp mot kravene i art. 4 nr. 11, som slår fast at et samtykke skal være informert. I fortalepunkt 42 går det frem at «For å sikre at samtykket er informert bør den registrerte minst kjenne den behandlingsansvarliges identitet og formålene med behandlingen som personopplysningene skal brukes til». Det kan stilles spørsmål ved om deltakerne har forstått at HVL er behandlingsansvarlig. Vi vil argumentere for at dette er tilfellet ettersom informasjonsskrivet viser til at Lennart Lorås er prosjektleder og «ansvarlig for personvernet i prosjektet», og at hans HVL-adresse er oppgitt som kontaktadresse.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen er den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a. For opplysninger om barn vil prosjektet innhente samtykke fra de registrertes foresatte. For særlige kategorier av personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes uttrykkelige samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a, jf. personopplysningsloven § 10, jf. § 9 (2). For opplysninger om barn vil prosjektet innhente uttrykkelig samtykke fra de registrertes foresatte.

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Informasjonen som deltakerne har mottatt oppfyller ikke alle kravene til informasjon i artikkel 13. Informasjonen mangler korrekte opplysninger om:

- De rette behandlingsansvarlige
- Kontaktopplysninger til det interne personvernombud ved behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
- Behandlingens varighet

Det skal ifølge dialog med kontaktperson ved HVL og forsker sendes ut ny informasjon til deltakerne med rette opplysninger. Denne informasjonen har vi enda ikke mottatt og vurdert, og kan derfor foreløpig ikke si om alle kravene til informasjon vil være oppfylt.

De registrerte har i utgangspunktet rett til innsyn, retting, sletting og begrensning i den grad de sikkert kan identifiseres i datamaterialet.

Hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, anbefaler vi at du rådfører deg med institusjonen din så snart som mulig, for bistand.

Det gjelder særlig hvis du vurderer å gi de registrerte innsyn og/eller å avslå krav om innsyn, retting og sletting.

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon har plikt til å vurdere om rettighetene skal/kan innfris, og svare den registrerte innen en måned. Vi kan også kontaktes for råd og veiledning om rettigheter.

UNNTAK FRA RETTEN TIL SLETTING

I utgangspunktet har alle som registreres i forskningsprosjektet rett til å få slettet opplysninger som er registrert om dem. Etter helseforskningsloven § 16 tredje ledd vil imidlertid adgangen til å kreve sletting av sine helseopplysninger ikke gjelde dersom materialet eller opplysningene er anonymisert, dersom materialet etter bearbeidelse inngår i et annet biologisk produkt, eller dersom opplysningene allerede er inngått i utførte analyser

Vi presiserer at helseopplysninger inngår i utførte analyser dersom de er sammenstilt eller koblet med andre opplysninger eller prøvesvar. Vi gjør oppmerksom på at øvrige opplysninger må slettes og det kan ikke innhentes ytterligere opplysninger fra deltakeren.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Tavistock and Portman Center, University of Essex er felles behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Vi legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene til felles behandlingsansvar, jf. personvernforordningen art. 26 etter at nødvendige tiltak er iverksatt.

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleleverandør, skylagring, videosamtale o.l.) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må prosjektansvarlig følge interne retningslinjer/rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilken type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

<https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for->

personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Vi vil følge opp underveis (hvert annet år) og ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet/pågår i tråd med den behandlingen som er dokumentert.

KONTAKTPERSON PERSONVERNTEJESTER LISA LIE BJORDAL Lykke til med prosjektet!

APPENDIX 5

Til :

Regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK vest)

Bergen 18.11.21

Endringsmelding forskningsansvarlig institusjon i søknad 254764

I vurdering fra Regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK vest) ble det anbefalt at forskningsansvarlig institusjon skulle endres til Statens barnehus Bergen. Jeg søker med dette om at Statens barnehus i Bergen blir forskningsansvarlig institusjon.

I Vurderingen fra REK(Brev rek 05.05.21) er dette begrunnelsen: «Det er lagt opp til at Statens barnehus står for rekruttering, forskeren ikke vil kjenne intervjuobjektens identitet før disse er forespurt av ansatte ved det aktuelle barnehuset og det foreligger et skriftlig samtykke til å delta i prosjektet. Statens barnehus må derfor meldes inn som forskningsansvarlig institusjon».

Med hilsen Line Slettevær

Training and Post Graduate Education

Tavistock Centre

120 Belsize Lane

London

NW3 5BA

VIL DU DELTA I FORSKNINGSPROSJEKTET NETTOVERGREP I ET FAMILIEPERSPEKTIV?

FORMÅLET MED PROSJEKTET OG HVORFOR DU BLIR SPURT

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt for å få mer inngående kunnskap og forståelse om hvordan foreldre opplever at foreldrerollen og relasjonene i familien blir påvirket etter nettovergrep. Studien søker å få mer kunnskap om fenomenet sett fra et familieperspektiv, slik at Barnehus og andre hjelpere kan gi passende oppfølging og behandling til utsatte barn og unge og deres familie etter nettovergrep. Du blir spurt om å delta fordi du er foreldre som har daglig omsorg til et barn eller ungdom som har vært utsatt for nettovergrep og som har vært på tilrettelagt avhør på barnehus i Norge.

Denne studien inngår som en del av doktorgraden: *Professional doctorate in advanced practice and research: Systemic psychotherapy (M10) Tavistock and Portman Foundation and Trust*. University of Essex er gradsgivende institusjon. Line Slette Myr er doktorgradsstudent og forsker i studien. Hun er ansatt ved Statens Barnehus i Bergen. Ettersom studiestedet er ved en britisk forskningsinstitusjon og forskningen gjennomføres i Norge, er det en norsk prosjektleder knyttet til forskningsprosjektet som kjenner fagfeltet og som kjenner lover, regler og etiske retningslinjer i Norge.

HVA INNEBÆRER PROSJEKTET FOR DEG?

For å delta i studien må du lese informasjonsskrivet og skriftlig samtykke til å delta. Du vil bli bedt om å stille til et intervju på et egnet sted som tar ca. 1,5 time. Intervjuet blir tatt opp på lydbånd. Du vil bli spurt om dine opplevelser knyttet til foreldrerollen og opplevelse av relasjon til eget barn etter nettovergrep er blitt kjent.

Det vil bli gjort lydopptak av intervjuet, som blir transkribert og anonymisert. Det gis mulighet til å lese og kommentere det transkriberte intervjuet. Fristen for å kommentere er to uker etter at transkripsjonen er mottatt av deltaker..

MULIGE FORDELER OG ULEMPER

En mulig fordel er at det kan være fint å dele informasjon om et vanskelig tema, som få andre har kjennskap til og kunnskap om. En annen fordel er at en kan oppleve det som nyttig å dele informasjon som kan komme andre til nytte. En mulig bakdel er at det kan oppleves vanskelig å prate om tema som berører vanskelige erfaringer i familielivet. Det er laget en beredskapsplan for deltakere dersom de får behov for å prate med noen etter intervjuet. Forsker i prosjektet er godkjent klinisk spesialist i familieterapi og har lang erfaring fra fagfeltet, og vil kunne ivareta deltakere sine behov for eventuell støtte underveis i intervjuet, om noe skulle bli utfordrende.

FRIVILLIG DELTAKELSE OG MULIGHET FOR Å TREKKE DITT SAMTYKKE

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Dersom du ønsker å delta, undertegner du samtykkeerklæringen på siste side. Du kan når som helst og uten å oppgi noen grunn trekke ditt samtykke. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg eller ditt barn hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Dersom du trekker tilbake samtykket, vil det ikke forskes videre på dine opplysninger. Du kan kreve innsyn i opplysningene som er lagret om deg, og disse vil da utleveres innen 30 dager. Du kan også kreve at dine opplysninger i prosjektet slettes.

Adgangen til å kreve destruksjon, sletting eller utlevering gjelder ikke dersom opplysningene er anonymisert eller publisert.

Dersom du senere ønsker å trekke deg eller har spørsmål til prosjektet, kan du kontakte prosjektleder (se kontaklinformasjon på siste side).

HVA SKJER MED OPPLYSNINGENE OM DEG?

All informasjon blir anonymisert i transkripsjoner av lydopptak av intervju. Du får mulighet til å lese igjennom transkripsjonene og komme med kommentarer om du ønsker det innen to uker..

Data lagres i Vest Politidistrikt sitt datasystem. Det er kun Line Slettemyr som har tilgang til data. Lydfiler blir oppbevart til forskning er publisert. Lydopptak og transkripsjoner blir oppbevart separert fra opplysninger som kan identifisere personvernopplysninger. All data blir lagret til 31.05.25. Deretter blir det makulert/destruert/slettet. Opplysningene som registreres om deg skal kun brukes slik som beskrevet under formålet med prosjektet, og planlegges brukt til 2025. Eventuelle utvidelser i bruk og oppbevaringstid kan kun skje etter godkjenning fra REK og andre relevante myndigheter. Du har rett til innsyn i hvilke opplysninger som er registrert om deg og rett til å få korrigert eventuelle feil i de opplysningene som er registrert. Du har også rett til å få innsyn i sikkerhetstiltakene ved behandling av opplysningene. Du kan klage på behandlingen av dine opplysninger til Datatilsynet og institusjonen sitt personvernombud.

Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn og fødselsnummer eller andre direkte gjenkjenner opplysninger (=kodete opplysninger). En kode knytter deg til dine opplysninger gjennom en navneliste. Det er kun Line Slette Myr som har tilgang til denne listen.

Etter at forskningsprosjektet er ferdig, vil opplysningene om deg bli oppbevart i fem år av kontrollhensyn.

DELING AV OPPLYSNINGER OG OVERFØRING TIL UTlandet

Data fra intervju vil bli delt med veileder i Storbritannia. Koden som knytter deg til dine personidentifiserbare opplysninger vil ikke bli delt. Dette lagres kun i Vest politidistrikt sin database.

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GODKJENNINGER

Studien er godkjent av Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) i Storbritannia og Norske regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK) har gjort en forskningsetisk vurdering og godkjent prosjektet med saksnummer: 254764.

Statens Barnehus i Bergen, Vest Politidistrikt og prosjektleder Lennart Lorås er ansvarlig for personvernet i prosjektet.

KONTAKTOPPLYSNINGER

Dersom du har spørsmål til prosjektet eller ønsker å trekke deg fra deltakelse, kan du kontakte prosjektleder professor Lennart Lorås eller doktorgradsstudent Line Slette Myr (se kontaktinfo nedfor).

Prosjektleder i Norge: Professor Lennart Lorås: Mail: lennart.Loras@hvl.no

Veileder Storbritannia: Stephen Mills: Mail: SMills@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Doktorgradsstudent: Line Slette Myr, mobil: 45427096 eller mail: lcs007@politiet.no

JEG SAMTYKKER TIL Å DELTA I PROSJEKTET OG TIL AT MINE PERSONOPPLYSNINGER BRUKES SLIK
DET ER BESKREVET

Sted og dato

Deltakers signatur

Deltakers navn med trykte bokstaver

Intervju guide

Hovedspørsmål:

Hvordan opplever du det som skjedde (at barnet ditt ble utsatt for nettovergep) har påvirket familien og eller hverdagen familielivet?

Underspørsmål

- Relasjonen mellom de voksne, par-relasjonen, foreldre og barn relasjonen og søskenrelasjon.
- Er det noe dere prater om i familien? Hvordan har dere forholdt dere til dette tema om det dukker opp?
- Hvordan opplever du at synet på eget barn har blitt påvirket? Hvordan merker du dette?
hvordan merker andre dette

Hovedspørsmål:

Har det på virket opplevelsen av egen foreldrerolle? Hvordan? Og hvem merker dette?

- Hvordan opplever du at barnet den unge trenger støtte? Av hvem og hvordan opplever du at dette viser seg? Hvem merker dette?
- Hvordan opplever du at du/dere som forldre håndterte det som skjedde?
- Hvordan opplevde du behovet for støtte selv i denne situasjonen?

APPENDIX 9 Informasjon for å presisere ansvar for behandling av personopplysninger

Til foreldre som er deltar i forskningsprosjektet «Nettovergrep i et familieperspektiv» ved Statens barnehus

Forespørsel om å delta i forskningsprosjekt med samtykkeerklæring

Dere får denne henvendelsen fordi dere har deltatt i et forskningsprosjekt. Dette brevet sendes til dere for å presisere ansvar for behandling av personopplysninger i prosjektet. Les gjennom og ta gjerne kontakt om det er spørsmål.

Prosjekttittel: Nettovergrep i et familieperspektiv.

Ansvarlig for undersøkelsen: Det er Høgskolen Vestlandet (HVL) og The Tavistock Institute, Storbritannia. University of Essex som er behandlingsansvarlige for prosjektet.

Prosjektansvarlig ved HVL er Lennart Lorås. Daglig ansvarlig er Line Slettemyr.

Prosjekt varighet 01.08.21 – 31.05.25

Bakgrunn og formål

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt for å få mer inngående kunnskap og forståelse om hvordan foreldre opplever at foreldrerollen og relasjonene i familien blir påvirket etter nettovergrep. Studien søker å få mer kunnskap om fenomenet sett fra et familieperspektiv, slik at Barnehus og andre hjelpere kan gi passende oppfølging og behandling til utsatte barn og unge og deres familie etter nettovergrep. Du ble spurt om å delta fordi du er foreldre som har daglig omsorg til et barn eller ungdom som har vært utsatt for nettovergrep og som har vært på tilrettelagt avhør på barnehus i Norge.

Denne studien inngår som en del av doktorgraden: Professional doctorate in advanced practice and research: Systemic psychotherapy (M10) Tavistock and Portman Foundation and Trust. University of Essex er gradsgivende institusjon. Line Slettemyr er doktorgradsstudent og daglig ansvarlig for studien. Jeg er ansatt i Statens Barnehus.

Hva innebærer deltagelse i studien?

Du ble bedt om å stille til et intervju på et egnet sted som tar ca. 1,5 time. Intervjuet ble tatt opp på lydbånd. Du ble spurt om dine opplevelser knyttet til foreldrerollen og opplevelse av relasjon til eget barn etter nettovergrep er blitt kjent.

Hva skjer med informasjonen?

Jeg tok lydopptak under intervjuet, og deretter transkriberte jeg intervjuet.

Lydopptakene blir slettet når prosjektet er ferdig. Lydopptakene og de nedskrevne intervjuene har blitt oppbevart på en forsvarlig måte, det vil si at data er lagret på en PC som er koblet til min arbeidsplass ved Statens Barnehus i Vest politidistrikt. Data lagres i den indre sonen som krever både personlig passord og personlig kodebrikke. Alle opplysningene dere ga er behandlet konfidensielt, og jeg som forsker har taushetsplikt. Deltakerne vil anonymiseres, så det vil ikke være mulig å spore informasjonen dere gir i intervjuet tilbake til dere, heller ikke når forskningsmaterialet senere blir publisert. Ved behov kan deltakerne ta kontakt for innsyn, retting, sletting og destruksjon av materiale.

Ved prosjektslutt 31.5.2025 vil personopplysningene anonymiseres og lydopptakene slettes.

Det er kun Line Slettemyr som har innsyn i personopplysningene som er registrert om deg/dere.

Behandling av opplysninger om deg er basert på ditt samtykke, skjer konfidensielt, og bare med formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet.

Godkjenninger

Studien er godkjent av Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) i Storbritannia og Norske regional komité for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk (REK) har gjort en forskningsetisk vurdering og godkjent prosjektet med saksnummer: 254764.

Sikt – kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør har vurdert at vi i dette prosjektet behandler personopplysninger etter regelverket for personvern. Har du spørsmål om denne vurderingen kan du kontakte Sikt på personverntjenester@sikt.no eller telefon 53211500.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og som deltakere står dere fritt til å trekke dere fra undersøkelsen på hvilket som helst tidspunkt, uten å måtte oppgi noen grunn for dette. All informasjon dere har gitt vil da slettes. Deltakerne kan også ta kontakt med undertegnede for innsyn og retting av datamateriale.

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet har du rett til:

- Innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- Rettet eller få slettet opplysningene om deg.
- Klage til datatilsynet om behandlingene av personopplysninger om deg

Om du vil bruke noen av disse rettighetene, vil trekke deg, eller har spørsmål om forskningsprosjektet kan du kontakte:

Personvernombudet ved HVL: personvernombod@hvl.no

Prosjektleder ved HVL: Lennart Lorås: lennart.lorås@hvl.no

Dersom det er noe dere lurer på i forbindelse med denne forespørselen kan dere ta kontakt med daglig ansvarlig Line Slettemyr: line.charlott.slettemyr@politiet.no

Statens Barnehus Bergen :55 55 69 00

Agreement on joint responsibility for data controller in connection with the research project Online sexual abuse in a family perspective

In accordance with current Norwegian personal data legislation and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016, the following agreement is between

Høgskulen på Vestlandet (HVL)

and

Tavistoc Clinic

Content

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3. Principles and legal basis for treatment.....	25
4. Types of personal data	25
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6. Security measures.....	26
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8. Use of data processors and sub-data processors.....	27
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The purpose of the agreement and joint processing responsibility

The purpose of the agreement is to oblige the partners in accordance with current Norwegian personal data legislation and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural people in connection with the processing of personal data.

The agreement shall ensure that personal data is not used illegally, unlawfully or that the data is processed in ways that lead to unauthorized access, alteration, deletion, damage, loss or inaccessibility.

The agreement regulates shared processing responsibility between the partners, including collection, registration, compilation, storage, delivery or combinations of these, in connection with the implementation of research projects.

In the event of a conflict, the terms of this agreement shall take precedence over the partners' privacy statement or terms in other agreements entered into between the partners in connection with the implementation of the project.

According to Article 26 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016, there is a joint responsibility for processing, if two or more data controllers jointly determine the purposes and means of the processing.

HVL and Tavistock Clinic agree that there is a joint responsibility for processing in connection with the project “Online child sexual abuse in a family perspective”. In the assessment of why the responsibility should be shared, it is emphasized, among other things, that both institutions contribute with data collection and/or, analysis and/or publication and jointly decide the purpose and means of processing personal data in the project.

The controllers Tavistock Clinic and HVL shall, in an open manner, determine their respective responsibilities for complying with the obligations under the Data Protection Legislation, in particular as regards the exercise of the data subject's rights and the obligation to provide the information referred to in Articles 13 and 14 in the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016, by means of a scheme between, unless and to the extent that the respective responsibilities of the data controllers are laid down in Union law or the national law of the Member States or Norwegian law to which the data controllers are subject.

The scheme, by this agreement, shall, in accordance with Article 26 (2) of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016, duly reflect the respective roles and relations of the joint data controllers with the data subjects. The essential content of the scheme, by this agreement, shall be made available to the data subject.

Notwithstanding the terms of the scheme, by this agreement, the data subject may exercise his rights under the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 with respect to and vis-à-vis each of the data controllers.

The responsibilities in this agreement on joint processing does not prevent the Data protection Authority from pursuing both HVL and Tavistock Clinic

Purpose limitation

The purpose of the partners' management of personal data *is in this small scale research project to gain better in-depth knowledge*

of how parents of young people age 10-15 who are victims of online sexual child abuse (OSCA), experience that dynamics in the family are affected when a child is exposed of online sexual abuse.

The project has been reported to NSD with a reference number 474091

The project has been approved by REK with a reference number 254764

Principles and legal basis for treatment

The joint controllers are responsible for ensuring that there is a legal basis for treatment and that this can be documented.

The partners must follow the written and documented instructions for the processing of personal data as described in the protocol to the NSD (data protection adviser) and REC (Research ethics committee).

The joint controllers must follow internal guidelines and routines that apply to the processing of personal data at their own institution.

The joint controllers undertake to comply with all obligations in accordance with current Norwegian personal data legislation that applies to the processing of personal data.

Types of personal data

The joint controllers process following personal information in the project:

- Comment: Give a short (preferably point-by-point) overview of the main types of personal information that is processed and to whom the information applies, for example students and employees at the institution OR enter the reference number to the NSD notification form **474091**
- Do the data include special categories of personal data:
 - ✓ personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin; no
 - ✓ personal data revealing political opinions;no
 - ✓ personal data revealing religious or philosophical beliefs;no
 - ✓ personal data revealing trade union membership;no
 - ✓ genetic data;no
 - ✓ biometric data (where used for identification purposes);no
 - ✓ data concerning health;
 - ✓ data concerning a person's sex life; and
 - ✓ data concerning a person's sexual orientation.

This does not include personal data about criminal allegations, proceedings or convictions, as separate rules apply.

Rights of data subjects

The joint controllers shall individually ensure that the data subject's rights are safeguarded in accordance with current Norwegian personal data legislation.

This is taken care of as described in the protocol and consent from the participants.

Specify in more detail how this is to be done in practice. Which of the parties is responsible for information to the data subjects? What is the responsibility of each of the parties when contacted by the data subjects?

The recruiting of participants will be conducted by other children's houses representatives. How will contact about 10 parents and ask if they want to participate in the project and provide information letter and consent forms. The parents who wish to participate in the research project give feedback on this within a week by e-mail or phone to the person who has contacted them. If they don't reply, they will be reminded once by e-mail or sms.

The parties responsible for the data subject are HVL and Tavistock Clinic.

The parties responsibility when contacted by the data subjects is to resolve raised issues in accordance to HVL and Tavistock clinic's guidelines.

The data subject's rights include the right to information about how his or her personal data is processed, the right to demand access to his or her own personal data, the right to demand correction or deletion of his or her own personal data and the right to demand that the processing of own personal data be restricted.

The partners are individually liable to the data subjects if errors or omissions cause the data subjects financial or non-financial losses as a result of their rights or privacy being violated.

Security measures

The joint controllers will implement appropriate technical, organizational and security measures to ensure and demonstrate that the processing is carried out in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016. The measures shall be updated if necessary, cf. Article 24 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016. This may, for example, include both parties implementing appropriate guidelines for handling security breaches, requests for access or fulfillment of the duty to provide information in accordance with applicable law.

Data Protection Impact Assessment

The joint controllers are responsible for compliance with the requirement in the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 Article 35 on Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). This means that both parties are responsible to conduct a joint DPIA, if the processing of personal data in the project will entail a high risk for the rights and freedoms of natural people. The joint controllers must before the treatment provide a Data Protection Impact Assessment of the consequences the planned processing will have for the protection of personal data.

The joint controllers are similarly obliged to comply with the requirement in the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 Article 36 on prior discussions with the Data Protection authority when this is relevant.

If there is a need, the joint controllers shall assist each other with the implementation of a DPIA and prior discussion with the Data Protection authority. Both parties are obliged to inform each other of the content and conclusion of a possible preliminary discussion.

Use of data processors and sub-data processors

The joint controllers are not entitled to use data processors and / or any sub-data processors in connection with the joint processing, unless this has been agreed directly with HVL.

In the event of any use of data processors and / or sub-data processors, both parties are responsible for complying with the requirements of Article 28 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016:

- to use data processors that provide guarantees that they will implement appropriate technical and organizational safeguards that ensure that the processing meets the requirements of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 and the protection of the data subject's rights.
- to ensure that there is a valid data processor agreement with the data processor and / or the sub-data processor.

The joint controllers shall be notified on request whether the personal data is processed by data processors and possibly sub-data processors at one party.

If the personal data is processed by data processors and possibly sub-data processors, the joint controllers shall, upon request, be notified of the content of the agreements between one party and the data processor / sub-data processor.

Protocol- overview of treatment activities

The joint controllers are responsible for complying with the requirement in the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 Article 30 on minutes of processing activities. This means that both parties keep a record of the processing for which the parties are jointly responsible for processing.

The partners prepare based on the content of each other's protocol their own protocol of the treatment activity regulated in the agreement if needed.

Notification to the data protection authority

HVL is responsible for compliance with Article 33 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on reporting breaches of personal data security to the Data Protection authority.

The joint controllers shall without undue delay notify HVL if personal data is exposed to security breaches. The notification to HVL shall as a minimum contain information describing the security breach, which data subjects are affected by the security breach, which personal data is affected by the security breach, what immediate measures have been implemented to deal with the security breach and what preventive measures have been established to avoid similar incidents in the future.

HVL is responsible for the Data Protection Authority is being notified when this is required.

Notification to the data subjects

The partners are responsible for compliance with Article 34 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on notifying the data subject of breaches of personal data security.

Transfer of personal data to third countries or international organizations

Personal data shall not be transferred to third countries or international organizations.

Duty of confidentiality

Only employees of one of the joint controllers who have official needs for access to personal information is granted access. The joint controllers is obliged to document guidelines and routines for access control. The documentation must be available to the other party.

Employees of the joint controllers have a duty of confidentiality regarding documentation and personal information to which the person in question has access in accordance with this agreement. This provision also applies after the termination of the agreement. The duty of confidentiality includes employees of third parties who perform maintenance (or similar tasks) of systems, equipment, networks or buildings that one of the parties uses to deliver or administer / other type of treatment (name of service / project).

Entry into force and termination

This agreement has been approved by HVL by the vice-rector for research and Tavistock Clinic by Lisa Harris. The approval must be obtained before the work can be started.

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature of the joint controllers.

The agreement is valid during the processing of personal data in the research project, or until the agreement is replaced by a new agreement.

Contact people

Contact person at Høgskulen på Vestlandet (HVL) for questions related to this agreement is:

_____.

The contact person at the cooperating institution for questions related to this agreement is:

_____.

This agreement is in 2 - two copies, of which the parties have their own.

Place and date

On behalf of Høgskulen på Vestlandet

Vice-Dean for Research, Christine Øye



.....

(signature) (signature)

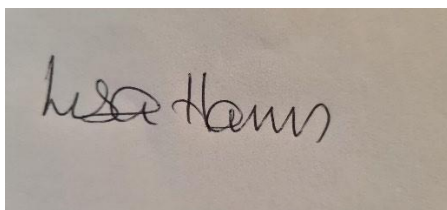
This agreement is in 2 - two copies, of which the parties have their own.

Place and date

14th April 2023

On behalf of collaborative institution

Lisa Harris



Head of Academic Registry – Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

.....

(signature) (signature)

APPENDIX 11 extracts from two interviews

UTSNITT FRA TRE INTERVJU

INTERVJU 2

INTERVJUER: Ja, da går den. Alltid litt nervøs med gang. Dere kommer jo her og møter meg, og er raus med tiden deres, og det setter jeg utrolig stor pris på. Det første spørsmålet som jeg stiller nå er litt som jeg sa i sted, hvordan har dette ... dere kan gjerne si noe om når ... hva det begynte med, hvordan fikk dere vite det? Så kan vi gå inn på hvordan dette påvirket dere i familien. Så da er det bare å ...

KVINNE 1: Han fikk telefonen sin xx. oktober til bursdagen sin i ...

MANN 1: 2020.

KVINNE 1: 2020.

INTERVJUER: Ja, du sier "han".

KVINNE 1: Ja.

INTERVJUER: Jeg vet jo ikke hvem dette er.

KVINNE 1: Skal jeg si hvor gammel han er og sånn?

INTERVJUER: Nei, det velger du selv.

KVINNE 1: Han fikk den til 10-års dagen sin. Det var 14. oktober. Så var det vel rundt ... så fikk han Snap for å ha familien og vi skulle se han på kartet og sånn. Følge med han.

INTERVJUER: Ja.

KVINNE 1: Så begynte det vel med ... det var vel kanskje i november. Jeg husker ikke helt når dette skjedde, men det ... var det ikke november?

MANN 1: Jeg tror det var november.

KVINNE 1: Ja. Det har gått litt vekk akkurat hvilken måned det var. Så hadde han ... så skulle jeg bare sjekke på telefonen hans, jeg gikk inn og sjekket på Snap hvem han hadde. Da så jeg at det sto et jentenavn der uten emoji. Så var det bare en reaksjon at jeg sa, "hvem er det?" og så sier han at det var ei som han hadde blitt kjent med på Omegle. "Hva er Omegle?" Jo, så fortalte han at det var en plass hvor de snakket med Youtubere. Det hadde han fått vite av en som han gikk i klasse med, som han hadde sovet hos ei helg.

INTERVJUER: Ja. Og da de hadde vært på overnatting så hadde de gått inn på Omegle?

KVINNE 1: Ja. Da hadde han truffet hun "[jente 1]" på 12 som var [mann 2] på 29.

INTERVJUER: Ja.

KVINNE 1: Da reagerte jeg på navnet. Så da jeg, "det er ikke jente" så sier han "jo, hun har sendt bilde av seg selv". Så sa jeg bare, "ja, men det er ikke ei jente. Det er helt sikkert ikke ei jente. Det er sikkert en gammel gris." Så bare slettet jeg det.

INTERVJUER: Klarte du å se at ikke det var [jente 1]? Hva var det som ...

KVINNE 1: Nei, fikk en følelse.

INTERVJUER: Du fikk en følelse av det.

KVINNE 1: At det var sikkert bare noe lureri. Jeg vet ikke om du ... jeg bare fikk sånn følelse av at det var ... da hadde jeg akkurat lest litt om det i avisen om sånn ... så jeg vet ikke, så bare tok jeg telefonen hans og da slettet jeg den. For da var vi akkurat ute i gården faktisk, på vei ut. Så bare slettet jeg den, så snakket vi ikke mer om det egentlig. Egentlig, de andre jentene var òg på Omegle, de hadde sunget noen sanger og noe greier. Dette var helt nytt for meg og han, så vi sa at dere har ikke lov til å gå inn der. Vi fant litt utav hva det var. Så var det vel i januar, så ringer politiet fra [sted 1] politidistrikt og forteller om ... spurte om jeg var mor til [gutt 1]. Så fortalte de hva som hadde skjedd, og det

var jo mer omfattende enn det. Men han hadde ikke vært så lenge ... det var vel kanskje rundt ei uke eller to uker. Bare på de to ukene, hvor jeg/vi ikke sjekket telefonen hans at det hadde skjedd.

INTERVJUER: Ja.

KVINNE 1: Da hadde ... ja.

Intervju 4

INTERVJUER: Hvis du starter med det du husker om hvordan du fikk vite hva som hadde skjedd.

RESPONDENT: Jeg fikk vite det av hennes lærer på skolen. Jeg vet ikke om ... I og med at det ikke er noen saksgang, så tenker jeg det kan være greit å underbygge litt med at [jente] har litt utfordringer. Hun har en diagnose, ADD, og har litt vansker med å forstå ... Hun er veldig lett å lede og har litt vanskelig for å forstå konsekvenser og sette sammen ting. Det er litt sånn ... Oppfattelsen. Men hun er veldig snill, hun er veldig blid, og hun er veldig tillitsfull til andre mennesker. Veldig åpen. Snakker med alle og sier hei, og en veldig god jente. Så etter mye turbulens på barneskolen, mye mobbing, en tung tid på barneskolen ... Mye tatt ut av klassen for å få spesialundervisning som ikke fungerte skikkelig, så valgte vi å ta henne inn på [skole 1]. Ungdomsskolen. Jeg ville ikke ha henne på en ordinær ungdomsskole. Der kom hun i en spesialklasse med barn med utfordringer, og det var veldig mange lærere på få elever. De var bare elleve elever i klassen. Hun trivdes fra dag én. Kjempegod skole. Fikk veldig god kontakt, og fikk en veldig god venn. Altså, en guttevenn, som hadde asperger og [«sånn autisme»? 0:01:41] Veldig gode venner med ham. Han var mye hjemme hos oss, og hun var mye hjemme hos ham. Og da dette hendte ... Da hun gikk på ungdomsskolen, og hun var tretten år da dette skjedde. Da fikk jeg en telefon fra læreren hennes på [skole 1], som spurte om jeg hadde tid til å snakke litt med henne. Da kjørte jeg bil. Og så sier hun: «Jeg tror du skal kjøre inn og bare stoppe, for jeg trenger å snakke litt.» «Gud, er det noe galt?» sier jeg. «Ja, vi har fått en bekymringsmelding», sa hun. «Fra en mor.» Da tenkte jeg ... Det rullet gjennom hodet: «Hva er det hun har gjort? Har hun vært stygg med noen? Er det noen som har vært stygge mot henne?» Mye raser gjennom hodet, hva som har skjedd. Så sier hun: «Moren til han som hun hadde fått som veldig god venn på skolen, hadde fått vite det av sin sønn, at disse to hadde sittet og snakket sammen, hvorpå vår datter ... Kan jeg si navnet?

INTERVJUER: Jeg tar bort alle navnene, [utydelig 0:02:54]

RESPONDENT: Da er det lettere for meg-

INTERVJUER: Du kan si alle ... Det fjerner jeg.

RESPONDENT: Det blir litt lettere å ikke bare kalle henne for «hun». For da må jeg tenke så mye. Men [jente] og [gutt] hadde sittet og pratet sammen, hvorpå hun hadde fortalt til [gutt] at hun hadde vist seg naken for en på nettet. Og dette hadde denne moren til [gutt] fortalt til skolen, at «jeg synes dere bør si det». Derfor kom denne bekymringsmeldingen til oss. Jeg bare husker at jeg ble ... Jeg kjenner det allerede nå ... At hårene bare reiste seg. Det er liksom det vi alltid har vært redd for, i og med at hun har vært veldig sånn ... Hun er så snill, hun er litt naiv, hun tror ikke noe vondt, og hun forstår ikke at ikke alle vil henne vel. Hun tror at alle vil henne vel. Hun tror ikke at noen vil gjøre henne noe vondt. Så min største skrekk hele veien fra barneskolen, da hun ble mobbet og ertet, og de fikk henne til å gjøre masse rare ting ... Det var alltid å prøve å beskytte henne mot dette med at: «Du må ikke gjøre alt som alle sier. Du har lov til å si nei. Du er ikke nødt til å gjøre det som alle sier til deg.» Spesielt dette med kroppen. Men jeg tenkte ... Jeg var i en foreldregenerasjon av en litt eldre type ... Alt dette som skjer i media, på telefoner og nettet, var ganske nytt for oss. Det var dette med at Facebook skulle de ikke ha før de hadde nådd en viss alder. 13, for eksempel. Vi måtte passe på, vi foreldrene. Jeg syntes det var så mye sånt vi skulle passe på. Hun hadde to eldre søsken. Vi hadde vært litt sånn ... Vi så at det fungerte. De klarte seg, og ba om litt hjelp ... Vi ville ikke gå for mye inn i det, for de skulle ha sine friområder. Vi stolte på dem, og det var en gjensidig tillit.

INTERVJU 1

INTERVJUER: Da setter jeg på opptaket. Intervjuet er i gang, og det som jeg lurte på, er om du kan fortelle meg litt om hvordan det var for dere å få vite det som skjedde i deres familie, når dere fikk vite om at barnet deres var utsatt for nettovergrep?

RESPONDENT: Ja, det ... Det som ... Jeg føler vel litt at dette var litt sånn ... det kom litt gradvis, og det kom ... vi fikk jo ikke all informasjonen med en gang. Og det

første så var det jo da ... For å ta litt bakgrunnen – så var det et bilde som ... ikke et nakenbilde, men et seksualisert bilde som datteren min sendte til en person som hun kjente. Denne personen sendte det da videre, og så ble det spredt ... vidt. Etter det så har [«du/hun»? 0:01:04] på en eller annen måte ... og det ... det fikk vi jo tak i ... altså, på en måte så trodde vi jo ... vi fikk jo høre, alle, at dette her kommer til å gå over, og dette må man bare ... dette er spredt, og vi får ikke gjort noe med det. Men det som har skjedd i etterkant, er jo at visse miljøer har plukket opp dette her, og fortsetter å sende dette bildet ... på noe som heter [nettsted 1], som er sånne [mobilapp 1]-grupper, som det sendes bare [«nok»? 0:01:37] og om og om og om og om og om igjen. Og det gjør at datteren min ... så fra å være en ... «oi, den der ... det var litt dumt at du gjorde, det var liksom ... det du ikke ha gjort, dette kan få store konsekvenser», og liksom snakke sånn fornuftig bare til barna, så gikk dette ut av total kontroll. Og så begynte et miljø å ... som opprettet nye grupper på [mobilapp 1] hele tiden, å trakassere og trakassere og trakassere og true og brukte slemme ord, men også trusler om fysisk vold. Og så begynte vi å tenke ... og da begynte jo etter hvert dette her å ... inn over oss, og vi skjønnte jo ikke alvoret i begynnelsen. Og da er det jo litt sånn at ... for det første så hadde ikke vi full kunnskap, og først blir du litt sånn at du snakker litt fornuft og «ja, nå må du ... ja, det var dumt at du gjorde, men dette går over» og litt sånn, til at du kommer i en sånn situasjon hvor du i det hele tatt lurte på om det går over, og at vi ... Og da endte det med at vi anmeldte tre stykker, og de ... og da var det sånn at vi fikk liksom ... Det var jo også [jentenavn 1], som hun heter, hun datteren min, hun ble mer og mer frustrert. Hun ble frustrert også over oss, og at ikke vi skjønnte, og det gjorde vi jo ikke helt. Men så følte vi at «oi, nå skjønner vi. Nå går vi til politiet og anmelder dette her», og ble møtt da av politiet, og de sier: «Dette tar vi alvorlig, og fint at dere anmelder, og dette må dere ... hold oss orientert i saken». Og så ... så kommer det dette at ... kommer det fort en henleggelse. To av de guttene er under strafferettslig alder, og en er over. Og da kommer det ny hets om at «vi vant». Og dette spres og spres og spres, og så fikk det etter hvert følger, og at ... og disse skulle da ta revansj for at vi hadde anmeldt. Og i et stort miljø så kommer ... så kan ikke [jentenavn 1] nå lenger ta noe buss eller noe som helst. Når hun en sjelden gang har gjort det, så blir ... og er på [kjøpesenter 1], så kommer helt ukjente personer bort, kjenner henne ved navn, kaller henne hore, hun

har blitt spyttet på, og det fortsetter å eskalere. Og så er det jo det der med at du forst... Det som er forferdelig for oss foreldre, det er jo at ... det er ikke alltid ... Det som jeg opplever, er at vi har litt informasjonsunderskudd, for barna vet jo alt eller ... Og vi har ikke ... og vi prøver, og vi følte at ... altså vi tok henne med til ... følte at vi tok henne veldig på alvor.

[0:05:06]

Vi tok henne inn for hjelp forskjellige steder, men så ... var det ting også hun holdt skjult for oss, og hun sa at «jeg må ha hjelp, jeg må ha noen å snakke med, for det er ikke alt jeg ønsker å prate med dere om som foreldre». Og det sa ... «det forstår vi veldig godt», og vi prøvde å være så forståelsesfulle og jobbe med dette her, men så ... Og så var det rundt juletider så ... Dette første skjedde jo før, på forsommeren, altså juni i fjor, de første tingene. Anmeldelsen skjedde i ... rundt begynnelsen av september. Men så fortsetter dette trykket utover hele høsten, og så blir det helt forferdelig rundt juletider, og vi skjønner ingenting. Og da kommer vi fram ... Så må vi hjem fra fjellet fordi hun er da veldig utilpass, og hun sier at hun tar selv kontakt med et overgrepssenter på [sykehus 1]. Jeg kjører henne inn der, og vi har en flott samtale med flott mennesker der, og hun forteller da om en fjerde hendelse som også skjer rundt juletider ... rundt sommeren. Så det skjer egentlig på samme tidspunkt, basert på det samme bildet som er på avveie, og



**DEN HØYERE
PÅTALEMYNDIGHET**

APPENDIX 12

Riksadvokaten

Statens barnehus Bergen

Line Charlott Slettemyr
Allehelgens gate 4
5016 BERGEN

Deres referanse:

Vår referanse:
21/409 - 2 / SWO008

Dato:
22.02.2021

**Søknad om tillatelse til å rekruttere til doktorgradsprosjekt i
Statens barnehus Bergen - Vest Politidistrikt**

Det vises til søknad 17. desember 2020 om å rekruttere 10 foreldre til barn som har vært på barnehus i forbindelse nettovergrep og tilrettelagt avhør. En forstår det slik at det med å rekruttere i denne forbindelse forstås å komme i kontakt med og gjennomføre intervju.

Basert på beskrivelsen i søknaden legges det til grunn at deltakelsen fra foreldrenes side vil være samtykkebasert og at det ikke nødvendiggjør tilgang på straffesaksopplysninger. En forstår det videre slik at forskeren ikke vil kjenne intervjuobjektens identitet før disse er forespurt av ansatte ved det aktuelle barnehuset og det foreligger et skriftlig samtykke til å delta i prosjektet.

Det tilligger riksadvokaten å samtykke til tilgang til og bruk av straffesaksopplysninger i forskning. Slik prosjektet er beskrevet i søknad kan en ikke se at et slikt samtykke fra riksadvokaten er nødvendig. Riksadvokaten forutsetter imidlertid at eventuell bistand til prosjektet ikke medfører at viktig arbeid ved barnehusene eller iringteföring av straffesaker blir pävirket.

Prosjektet forutsetter at ansatte ved barnehus bistär i arbeidet. Samtykke til dette mät inthentes fra de aktuelle politimestrene, eventuelt Politidirektoratet.

Riksadvokaten har ikke vurderte i hvilken grad prosjektet nödvendiggjör samtykke fra andre myndigheter.

Trond Eirik Schea
førstestatsadvokat

Svein Wiiger Olsen
statsadvokat

Dokumentet er elektronisk godkjent og har derfor ingen signatur

Gjenpart

Politidirektoratet

Fridtjof Nansens vei 14-16

0369

OSLO

APPENDIX 13 Consent form



Training and Post Graduate Education

Tavistock Centre

120 Belsize Lane

London

NW3 5BA

Consent form

This study is part of the Professional doctorate: “Professional doctorate in advanced practice and research: systemic psychotherapy(M10)” Tavistock and Portman Foundation and trust

Project Manager: Line Charlott Slettemyr, Slåtthaugvegen 22 5222 Nesttun

Mail:Lcs007@politiet.no

Partners who will participate professionally in the project:

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. 120 Belsize Ln. London 5BA, Storbritannia.

Supervisor 1 Stephen Mills: SMills@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Supervisor 2 Lennart Lorås: Lennart.Loras@hvl.no

Why are you asked to participate

You are parents who have daily care for a child or youth who have been victims of online abuse and who have been to TA (forensic interview) at children's houses.

What does it mean for you to participate?

You must read the information type and consent to participate. You need to ask for an interview in a suitable place that takes about 1.5 hours. This is being recorded on tape. You will be asked about your experiences related to parenthood and experience of relationships with your own child.

You will be allowed to respond to preliminary common topics if you wish.

There will be no recording of video only audio recording. This will be transcribed and anonymised and you will have the opportunity to read and comment on this within two weeks of receiving the transcripts.

Ethical approvals

The study has been approved by the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) and the Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK).

Your privacy

All information is anonymized, you can withdraw consent up to two months after the interview has been completed, without any consequences for you or your child.

Participation in this research project does not affect follow-up or criminal proceedings.

Researcher in the study is employed at a different Children's House than the Children's House you have been dealing with.

What happens to your information?

All information is anonymized in transcripts made by audio recordings. You will have the opportunity to read through the transcripts and comment if you wish within a week.

Audio files are kept until research is published. Audio recordings and transcripts are kept separated from information that can identify privacy information. All data is kept for approximately 6 years. Then it is shredded/destroyed/deleted.

The data generated during the research will be retained in accordance with the Trusts' Data Protection and Action Policies.: <https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/>

Publicizing

The study will be published as a monograph. There will be submitted an article for professionals in a peer reviewed journal or other relevant journals.

Your rights

Participation in this study is voluntary, all information is anonymized. Only researchers have access to data with personal data. This can be contact info from recruitment and audio files made in interview. You can contact researcher at any time with questions about your rights.

If you wish to report progress or otherwise in the meeting with a researcher or other aspects of this research project, you should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Management and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Restriction in confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be retained under applicable guidelines as described above. This section states that if information about acute danger arises to you or others, this confidentiality may be breached to provide the necessary assistance.

I have received and understood information about participation in the research project

"Online abuse from a family perspective"

	yes
I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research project	
I agree to participate in qualitative interview	
I agree that audio files and transcriptions are kept for 6 years	

(signature, date)

Training and Post Graduate Education

Tavistock Centre

120 Belsize Lane

London

NW3 5BA

Information letter

This study is part of the : Professional doctorate :Professional doctorate in advanced practice and research: systemic psychotherapy(M10) Tavistock and Portman Foundation and rust

Project Manager: Line Charlott Slettemyr, Slåtthaugvegen 22 5222 Nesttun

Partners who will participate professionally in the project:

University of Essex, The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. 120 Belsize Ln. London 5BA, Storbritannia.

Veileder 1 Sarah Helps shelps@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Supervisor 2 Lennart Lorås lennart. Loras@hvl.no

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to seek more in-depth knowledge and understanding about how parents experience that relationships in the family are affected by online abuse and gain more knowledge about the phenomenon from a family perspective, so that Children's Homes and other helpers can provide appropriate follow-up and treatment to vulnerable children and young people and their families.

Project title: Online abuse from a family perspective

How parents experience that their relationship in the family is affected after children are abused online. And how do parents experience their support for children and young people after online abuse and gain more knowledge about the phenomenon from a family perspective?

Why are you asked to participate

You are parents who have daily care for a child or youth who have been victims of online abuse and who have been to TA at children's houses.

What does it mean for you to participate?

You must read the information type and consent to participate. You need to ask for an interview in a suitable place that takes about 1.5 hours. This is being recorded on tape. You will be asked about your experiences related to parenthood and experience of relationships with your own child.

You will be allowed to respond to preliminary common topics if you wish.

You can also participate via Zoom which is a digital platform where there is video and audio. There will be no recording of video only audio recording

Ethical approvals

The study has been approved by the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) and the Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK).

Your privacy

All information is anonymised, you can withdraw consent up to two months after the interview has been completed, without any consequences for you or your child.

Participation in this research project does not affect follow-up or criminal proceedings.

Researcher in this study is working and located in a different Children's House than the staff and Children's House you have been dealing with previous.

What happens to your information

All information is anonymized in transcripts made by audio recordings. You will have the opportunity to read through the transcripts and comment if you wish within a week.

Audio files are kept until research is published. Audio recordings and transcripts are kept separated from information that can identify privacy information. All data is kept for approximately 6 years. Then it is shredded/destroyed/deleted.

The data generated during the research will be retained in accordance with the Trusts' Data Protection and Action Policies.: <https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/>

Your rights

You can resign at a given time, to months after the interview. All information is anonymized. Only researchers have access to data with personal information. This information can be contact info from recruitment and audio files made in interview. You can contact researcher about your rights at any time.

If you wish to report progress or otherwise in the meeting with a researcher or other aspects of this research project, you should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Management and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Restriction in confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be retained under applicable policies as described above. This section states that if information about acute danger arises to you or others, this confidentiality may be breached to provide the necessary assistance.

Topic guide

Key questions:

Can you tell me how you learned that your child was subjected to online abuse?

How do you experience what happened (that your child was exposed to online abuse) has affected your family relations and or your everyday family life?

How do you experience the relationship between the adults, the couple relationship, the parents and the child relationship and sibling relationship?

Is this something that you talk about in the family? How have your family been dealing with this topic?

Key question

How do you experience your perception of your child has been affected? How do you notice this?

How do you think other notices this?

Key question

How do you experience the child/ young person needs for support? By whom? And who do you think notices this? Anything else?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Key questions:

How do you experience your perception of your parenting role after what happened? How? And who do you think notices this?

How do you experience that you as parents coped with what happened?

How did you experience your need for support in this situation?

How did you experience the police during this process?

APPENDIX 17 CASP

[illegible]

[illegible]