

# Child Sexual Abuse

## Assessment, Intervention, & Prevention



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>

School of Social Work

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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### Purpose & Definition

#### Purpose of Project

- To identify factors associated with
  - Perpetration of child sexual abuse
  - Recovery from child sexual abuse
- To apply these factors to intervention and prevention program

#### Definition of Child Sexual Abuse

- An abuse of power where older, stronger, and/or more knowledgeable persons take advantage of children for their own sexual and emotional gratification and sometimes for financial gain
- A physical act
- A psychological experience
- Sexual & emotional gratification for abusers
- Fear and confusion for children

### CSA Betrays Principles of Healthy Child Development

#### Perpetrators

- Insensitive and non-responsive
- Abuse the power they have over children.
- Undermine children's autonomy
- Betray children's trust

#### Child Survivors

- CSA affects children's capacities to
  - trust others
  - form friendships and intimate relationships.

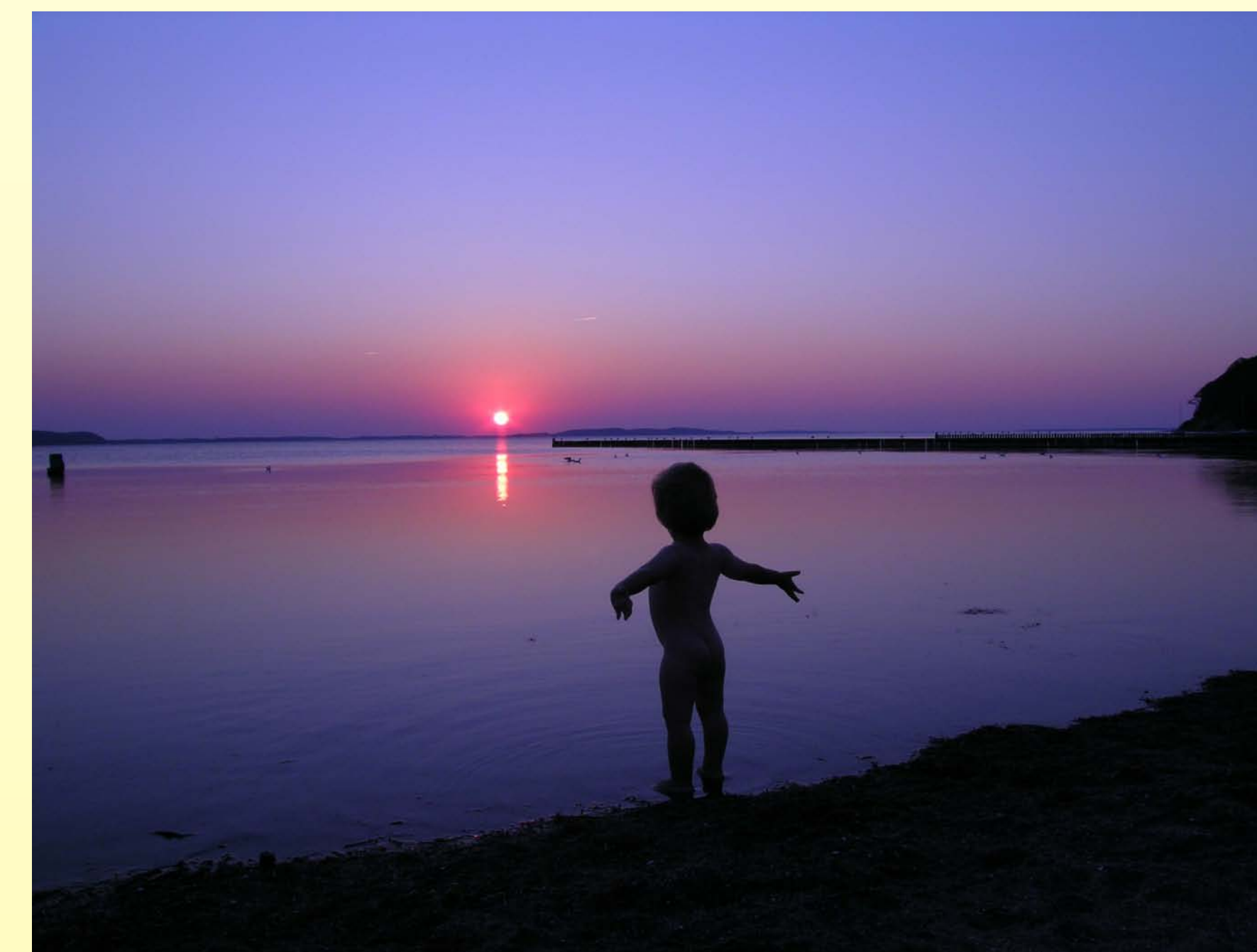
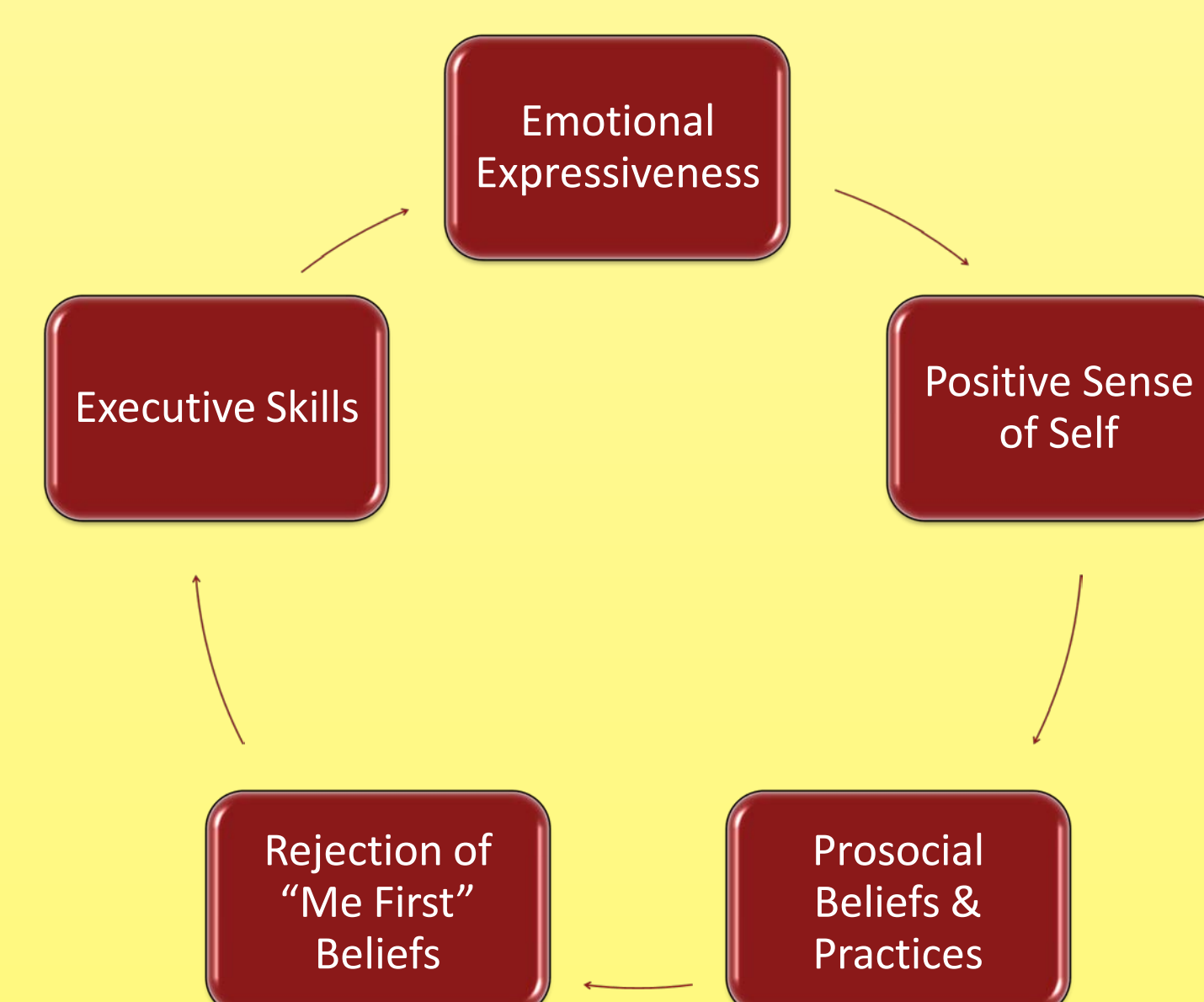
#### Recovery

- Requires sensitive responsive care
- Additional adversities complicate recovery

### Do Sexually Abused Children Become Abusers?

- **Most do not**
- **Most abusers were not sexually abused in childhood**

#### Personal Factors Associated with Recovery



#### Survivors who do not perpetrate have many protective factors

- Emotionally available parents
- Emotional expressiveness
- Confidant relationships
- Association with pro-social peers & adults
- Pro-social beliefs & practices
- Desire & resources to emulate pro-social persons
- Competence and pleasure in activities
- Sense of a positive future

#### There is a shortage of these factors in the lives of persons who abuse

Children in Safe Hands



### Prevention of Perpetration

#### Broad Principles

- Promote emotional expressiveness
- Provide healthy sex education
- Support sensitive, responsive parenting
- Challenge myths & misunderstandings about child sexual abuse
- Challenge beliefs of entitlement

#### Social Skills Training

##### Clear Expectations

- "If you have questions about sex, ask me."
- "Don't use other people's stuff without their permission"

##### Catch Children Doing Something Right

- "I'm glad you asked. I'm happy to talk to you about kissing boys."
- "Good for you. You asked your sister if you can play with her dolls. You didn't just take them."

##### Direct Instruction

- Show children what to do
- Have children practice the new skill
- Give children feedback about their use of new skill
- Give time for discussion

##### Practice These Behaviors in Everyday Life

- Be a good role model
- Children imitate behaviors they see rewarded

### What Children Need to Thrive

- Sensitive, responsive care
- Emotionally available care providers
- Contingent responsiveness
- Soothing
- Mutual regulation
- Attunement to children
- Expectations fit developmental levels

#### Inner Working Models

- Children internalize how others treated them
- Internalizations become **expectations** for how others treat them, how they treat others, and what they expect for themselves