

**Rewriting the Story: The Development and Evaluation of a
Group Treatment Program for Adolescent Girls who have
Experienced Sexual Abuse**

Kellie M. Cassidy, B.Sc. (Hons).

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Psychology, Murdoch University

2007

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content, work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Kellie Cassidy

Abstract

Although group treatment is often advocated for survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA), few studies have examined the effects of such treatments, particularly with adolescents. Yet adolescence is an important time for survivors of CSA as this is when they may truly begin to process what it means to have been sexually abused as a child (Berliner, 1991; Thun, Sims, Adams, & Webb, 2002). Consequently, this study sought to evaluate and develop best practice evidence for group treatment of adolescent girls who have experienced sexual abuse. The study used both a developmental intervention research approach to guide the development of a best practice intervention; and an action research, mixed methods program evaluation to achieve detailed examination of a small number of client cases so as to ethically assess the effectiveness of the intervention. In keeping with the intervention research approach and with the aim of providing specific knowledge about treatment for CSA survivors that was unattainable through reviewing treatment outcome studies, an initial study was undertaken which retrospectively and prospectively assessed a locally available treatment program for adolescent girls. This study found the locally available treatment approach was unlikely to have been effective at alleviating distress associated with CSA but that past participants and their mothers felt that such a program is important. Recommendations were made on the elements necessary to construct a more clinically responsive and effective treatment. A 16 week Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioural group treatment program was then developed. This pilot treatment program was evaluated in Study 2, using both formative and summative program evaluation methods with four adolescent girls (aged 13-18). The summative findings support the utility of the treatment program and positive benefits were noted for each group participant, including reductions in symptoms of depression, anxiety and PTSD. The formative findings indicated that the treatment program was in need of further refinement. This included altering some session content, placing more focus on group process and including parents in the treatment. The

recommendations of Study 2 were subsequently implemented and the revised treatment program was evaluated by experts in the field to enhance its content validity. The treatment program was then further evaluated in Study 3 using similar evaluation methods with five girls aged 12-15. Clinically significant changes were obtained for four of these five participants, as indicated by triangulation of data from the participants, their parents and group facilitators. Formative findings indicated that the program used in Study 3 was a significant improvement on the program used in Study 2. The major curative factor for participants appeared to lie in the group process and attendance at the program. Treatment was found to have a high degree of acceptability according to participants, parents and facilitators and was implemented with integrity, although flexibility and individualisation were important. The benefits of the research approach in terms of critical reflection, functionally relevant data, within and across case analysis and contextualisation are discussed. As the findings of this series of studies highlight, positive benefits were apparent for each participant and thus it is concluded that group treatment is a viable option for adolescent survivors of CSA.

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION & INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE LITERATURE AS IT RELATES TO GROUP TREATMENT	
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 APPROACHING THE REVIEW	4
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM	9
1.3 TREATMENT OF CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL ABUSE	22
1.4 RATIONALE & AIMS OF THE RESEARCH	63
CHAPTER TWO – METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS	
2.0 INTRODUCTION	73
2.1 LEARNING TO WALK BEFORE YOU CAN RUN – A SEQUENTIALLY PHASED APPROACH TO TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT AND OUTCOME RESEARCH	75
2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN FEATURES	79
2.3 CONCLUSIONS	101

CHAPTER 3 - STUDY 1: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE P.A.C.T.S GIRLS GROUP

3.0	INTRODUCTION	104
3.1	IDENTIFYING FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL MODELS	106
3.1.1	Model Programs for CSA	108
3.1.2	Specific Components	112
3.1.3	Treatment Failures	119
3.1.4	Summary of Treatment Issues	119
3.2	AIMS OF THE STUDY	120
3.3	METHOD	122
3.3.1	Research Design	122
3.3.2	Participants	124
3.3.3	Measures	125
3.3.4	Procedure	130
3.4	RESULTS & DISCUSSION	131
3.4.1	Program Statistics	131
3.4.2	Follow-up of Past participants of the PACTS girls group and their Mothers	133
3.4.3	Review of Past Curricula	144
3.5	SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW CURRICULUM	150

CHAPTER 4 – DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW ADOLESCENT GIRLS GROUP PROGRAM

4.0	INTRODUCTION	155
4.1	DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION	155
4.2	KEY COMPONENTS OF THE TREATMENT	161
4.3	COLLABORATION & EXPERT INVOLVEMENT	167
4.4	THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS GROUP TREATMENT PROGRAM	167
4.5	CONCLUSIONS	173

CHAPTER 5 – STUDY 2: EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS GROUP PROGRAM

5.0	INTRODUCTION	176
5.1	METHOD	179
	5.1.1 Research Design	179
	5.1.2 Participants	181
	5.1.3 Procedure	184
	5.1.4 Data Capture Methods	184
5.2	RESULTS & DISCUSSION	190
	<i>Summative Evaluation</i>	
	5.2.1 Within Case Analysis	190
	5.2.2 Cross Case Analysis	190
	5.2.3 Facilitator Ratings of Outcome	196
	5.2.4 Summary of Summative Findings	199
	<i>Formative Evaluation</i>	
	5.2.5 Program Evaluation & Component Analysis	203
	5.2.6 Program Observation & Feedback	221
	5.2.7 Barriers Encountered	226
	5.2.8 Summary of Formative Findings	231
5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO BE MADE TO PROGRAM	233
5.4	CONCLUSIONS	235

CHAPTER 6 – REFINEMENT & EXPERT EVALAUTION OF THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS GROUP PROGRAM

6.0	OVERVIEW	237
6.1	CHANGES MADE TO THE TREATMENT PROGRAM FOLLOWING STUDY 2	237
6.2	EXPERT EVALUATION	241
6.3	NEW TREATMENT PROGRAM	250

CHAPTER 7 – STUDY 3: FURTHER EVALUATION OF THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS GROUP PROGRAM

7.0	INTRODUCTION	254
7.1	METHOD	255
	7.1.1 Research Design	255
	7.1.2 Participants	255
	7.1.3 Procedure	257
	7.1.4 Data Capture Methods	258
7.2	RESULTS & DISCUSSION	266
	<i>Summative Evaluation</i>	
	7.2.1 Within Case Analysis	266
	7.2.2 Cross Case Analysis	267
	7.2.3 Facilitator Ratings of Outcome	280
	7.2.4 Summary of Summative Findings	284
	<i>Formative Evaluation</i>	
	7.2.5 Program Evaluation & Component Analysis of the Girls Group	290
	7.2.6 Evaluation of the Parent Sessions	310
	7.2.7 Program Observations	312
	7.2.8 Barriers Encountered	319
	7.2.9 Summary of Formative Findings	321
7.3	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE UTILISATION OF THE PROGRAM	323
7.4	CONCLUSIONS	325

CHAPTER 8 – COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE FINDINGS OF STUDY 2 & 3

8.0	INTRODUCTION	330
8.1	EFFECTIVENESS	331
8.2	KNOWLEDGE	332
8.3	ACCEPTABILITY	333
8.4	CONTENT	334
8.5	GROUP PROCESS	335

8.6	FACILITATION & COMMON FACTORS	338
8.7	INTEGRITY	339
8.8	PROGRAM OBSERVATIONS	339
8.9	BARRIERS	342
8.10	CONCLUSIONS	343

CHAPTER 9 – GENERAL DISCUSSION	346
---------------------------------------	------------

REFERENCES	367
-------------------	------------

ELECTRONIC APPENDICES

Appendix A: Study 1 Assessment Measures

Appendix A1: Resilience Scale

Appendix A2: Adolescent Demographics, Risk, Mood and Knowledge Questionnaire

Appendix A3: Parent Demographics, Risk and Mood Questionnaires

Appendix A4: Adolescent and Parent Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaires

Appendix B: Study 1 Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Appendix C: Adolescent Girls Group Treatment Manual (16 weeks) and Parent Caretaker Package

Appendix D: Study 2 Flier Advertising the Treatment Program

Appendix E: Study 2 Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Appendix F: Study 2 Summary of Attendance

Appendix G: Study 2 Assessment Measures

Appendix F1: Summative Knowledge Questionnaire

Appendix F2: Facilitator Questionnaire

Appendix F3: Participant Group Session Evaluations

Appendix F4: Weekly Mood Monitoring

Appendix F5: Weekly Facilitator Questionnaire

Appendix H: Study 2 Data

Appendix H1: Table of risk factor data

Appendix H2: TSCC and Emotion boxplots demonstrating variability

Appendix I: Study 2 Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommended Changes to the Treatment Program

Appendix J: Expert Evaluation Questionnaire

Appendix K: Adolescent Girls Group Treatment Manual (12 weeks) and Parent Caretaker Package

Appendix L: Study 3 Flier and Newspaper Article

Appendix M: Study 3 Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Appendix N: Study 3 Summary of Attendance

Appendix O: Study 3 Assessment Measures

Appendix O1: Summative Knowledge Questionnaire

Appendix O2: Demographics, Risk & Mood Questionnaire (follow-up version)

Appendix O3: Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire

Appendix O4: Parent Demographics, Risk and Mood Questionnaire

Appendix O5: Parent Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire

Appendix O6: Parent Session Evaluation

Appendix O7: Parent Session Facilitator Questionnaire

Appendix P: Study 3 Data

Appendix P1: Table of Risk Factor Data for each participant

Appendix P2: My Goals graphs

Appendix P3: TSCC graphs demonstrating variability

Appendix P4: Emotion graphs demonstrating variability

Appendix P5: CITES graphs demonstrating variability

Appendix P6: ACS graphs demonstrating variability

Appendix P7: SDQ graphs demonstrating variability

Appendix Q: Study 3 Changes made to the Treatment Program, Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a great number of people for their contributions to making this thesis possible.

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge and thank the young women that have taken part in this research. Their strength, courage and resilience were an inspiration to me and fuelled my passion for this area of research and the need to find adequate treatments which would assist them in processing their experiencing, so that each could lead happy, healthy lives and overcome the stifling impact of sexual abuse.

Thank you to my supervisors, Corinne Reid and Marjorie Collins. Your support, guidance and endless knowledge throughout this project has been fantastic. I am so grateful for your help to overcome the many hurdles that have come up along the way. Thank you both also for your assistance in my development as a clinician. Your advice and encouragement throughout this process has been invaluable.

I would also like to thank Clare Macrae, Jenni Brodi, Lisa McAneny, and Mandy Nayton of the Parents and Children's Therapeutic Service (PACTS) for their assistance with the initial stages of the project. Two staff members of PACTS are deserving of separate recognition. I wish to thank Katelyn Betti for her involvement in getting the project off the ground and providing endless advice about various aspects of the program. I also wish to thank Tracy Freedman for her fantastic group facilitation skills, her knowledge and her passion for working with this population. Furthermore her suggestions and critiquing of the program are acknowledged. Much of the success of Study 2 can be attributed to Tracy.

I am also very grateful for the assistance of Catherine Campbell in the facilitation of Study 3 at Murdoch University. Thank you Catherine for your enthusiasm and expertise. I really appreciate the time and effort that you put into making the group work.

To my dear friends, thank you all for your support through this process. In particular thank you to Ria Kotynia-English for your endless advice and feedback and to Monique Armstrong-Burgin for proof reading the final draft of this thesis. Also to my fellow postgraduates, Tiffany Rochester, Kaye Mills and Amanda Cole, thank you for being so supportive.

I would also like to acknowledge my family for all the encouragement, love and support they have offered. To my brother Michael, thank you for your help with referencing. Deanne, thank you for your assistance in helping to get Study 3 up and running. And to Mum and Dad there are not words to thank you for all that you have done for me along the way to get me to this point.

Finally to my amazing husband Shaun, thank you for all of the support, love and care you have given me over the past 4 years of my post graduate studies. I could never have completed this without you by my side.

List of Figures

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Figure 1.1.</i> Iterative spiral outlining literature accessed in order to undertake an integrative review of literature that could contribute to understanding adolescent CSA survivor group treatment possibilities.	6
<i>Figure 1.2.</i> A transactional model of CSA outcome (Nurcombe, Wooding, Marrington, Bickman & Roberts, 2000, p.95).	19
<i>Figure 1.3.</i> Percentage of improvement in psychotherapy patients as a function of therapeutic factors (Lambert & Barley, 2002, p.18).	44
<i>Figure 1.4.</i> Overview of relevant parameters in the evaluation of treatment programs for CSA survivors.	66
<i>Figure 2.1.</i> Visual representation of the research design used in the current study.	74
<i>Figure 2.2.</i> Phases of the intervention research approach (Fawcett et al., 1994, p. 28).	76
<i>Figure 2.3.</i> An overview of the action research cycle for the current study (Adapted from Crane & Richardson, 2000).	80
<i>Figure 2.4.</i> Within each paradigm of research are several methodologies, each drawing on a number of methods for data collection (Dick, 1993).	83
<i>Figure 2.5.</i> Fully integrated mixed model design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p.690).	86
<i>Figure 2.6.</i> Depiction of mixed methods data analysis used in the current project (adapted from Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003).	100
<i>Figure 3.1.</i> Depiction of the triangulation process that occurred following data collection to form recommendations for the new treatment program.	123
<i>Figure 3.2.</i> PA5's Trauma Symptom Checklist subscales presented as T – scores.	135
<i>Figure 3.3.</i> PA5 and MO5's ratings of PA5's emotions in the past week.	136
<i>Figure 3.4.</i> Mothers ratings of their daughter's emotions in the past week.	140
<i>Figure 4.1.</i> Depiction of the process of therapy both in terms of the overall structure and individual sessions (Campbell, 2005).	169
<i>Figure 5.1.</i> PA1's TSCC scores across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.2.</i> PA1's emotion ratings across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.3.</i> PA2's TSCC scores across the three testing phases.	na

<i>Figure 5.4.</i> PA2's emotion ratings across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.5.</i> PA3's TSCC scores across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.6.</i> PA3's emotion ratings across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.7.</i> PA5's TSCC scores across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.8.</i> PA5's emotion ratings across the three testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 5.9.</i> Session depth for participants.	205
<i>Figure 5.10.</i> Session depth for facilitators.	206
<i>Figure 5.11.</i> Session smoothness for participants.	206
<i>Figure 5.12.</i> Session smoothness for facilitators.	207
<i>Figure 5.13.</i> Participant ratings of session arousal.	207
<i>Figure 5.14.</i> Participant's ratings of session positivity.	208
<i>Figure 5.15.</i> Participant ratings of how good/bad the session was.	210
<i>Figure 5.16.</i> Facilitator ratings of how good/bad the session was.	211
<i>Figure 5.17.</i> Mean ratings of mood before and after each session.	214
<i>Figure 7.1.</i> PA1's TSCC scores across the four testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.2.</i> PA1's rating of emotions across testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.3.</i> PA1's mothers ratings of PA1's emotions across the testing.	na
<i>Figure 7.4.</i> PA2's TSCC scores across the four testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.5.</i> PA2's rating of emotions across testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.6.</i> PA2's mothers ratings of PA2's emotions across the testing.	na
<i>Figure 7.7.</i> PA3's TSCC scores across the four testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.8.</i> PA3's rating of emotions across testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.9.</i> PA3's mothers ratings of PA3's emotions across the testing.	na
<i>Figure 7.10.</i> PA4's TSCC scores across the four testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.11.</i> PA4's rating of emotions across testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.12.</i> PA4's mothers ratings of PA4's emotions across the testing.	na

<i>Figure 7.13.</i> PA5's TSCC scores across the four testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.14.</i> PA5's rating of emotions across testing phases.	na
<i>Figure 7.15.</i> PA5's mothers ratings of PA5's emotions across the testing.	na
<i>Figure 7.16.</i> Participants subjective ratings of how they felt about themselves prior to the group began and after it finished.	279
<i>Figure 7.17.</i> Ratings of session depth for participants.	294
<i>Figure 7.18.</i> Ratings of session depth for facilitators.	294
<i>Figure 7.19.</i> Ratings of session smoothness for participants.	295
<i>Figure 7.20.</i> Ratings of session smoothness for facilitators.	295
<i>Figure 7.21.</i> Participant ratings of session positivity.	296
<i>Figure 7.22.</i> Participant ratings of session arousal.	296
<i>Figure 7.23.</i> Mean mood ratings pre and post session plus or minus one standard deviation.	301
<i>Figure 9.1.</i> Summary of the phases of the current research project.	347

List of Tables

	<i>Page</i>
Table 1.1. <i>Overview of Group Treatment Studies for Child and Adolescent CSA Survivors</i>	28
Table 3.1. <i>Overview of Best Practice Principles for CSA Group Therapy with Adolescent Girls</i>	120
Table 3.2. <i>Summary of Measures used with Past Participants and their Mothers</i>	126
Table 3.3. <i>Overview of the Girls Group Programs run at PACTS from 2001 to 2003</i>	131
Table 3.4 <i>Mothers Total Consumer Satisfaction Rating</i>	139
Table 3.5 <i>Comparison of Best Practice Criteria with the PACTS Girls Group Curricula</i>	145
Table 4.1. <i>Overview of the Adolescent Girls Group Sessions</i>	169
Table 5.1. <i>Overview of Data Capture Methods and Timing of Data Collection</i>	185
Table 5.2. <i>Magnitude and Direction of Change in TSCC Subscales from Pre test to Follow-up</i>	191
Table 5.3. <i>Percentage Correct on the Knowledge Test across the Three Testing Phases</i>	194
Table 5.4. <i>Resilience Test Scores across the Three Testing Phases.</i>	195
Table 5.5. <i>Facilitator Ratings of Program Objectives for each Participant</i>	196
Table 5.6. <i>Facilitators Ratings of Estimated Attainment of Group Aims Pre and Post Group on a Scale of 1 to 7</i>	198
Table 5.7. <i>Consumer Satisfaction Item Scores as Rated by Participants</i>	204
Table 5.8. <i>Overview of the Sessional Knowledge Test Scores</i>	216
Table 5.9. <i>Planned Versus Actual Order of Session Administration</i>	222
Table 6.1. <i>Mean and Range for each item of the Expert Evaluation Questionnaire</i>	242
Table 6.2. <i>All Comments and Recommendations about the Program from Expert Evaluators</i>	248
Table 6.3. <i>Contents of the New Treatment Program</i>	250
Table 7.1. <i>Summary of Relevant Characteristics of Participants</i>	256
Table 7.2. <i>Overview of Data Capture Methods and Timing of Data Collection</i>	258
Table 7.3. <i>PA1's Scores on the CITES-R Attributions Scales across Testing Phases</i>	na

Table 7.4. <i>PA1's Scores on the ACS across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.5. <i>PA1's Rating of Achievement of Personal Goals</i>	na
Table 7.6. <i>PA1's SDQ Subscale Scores across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.7. <i>PA2's Scores on the CITES-R Attributions Scales across Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.8. <i>PA2's Scores on the ACS across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.9. <i>PA2's Rating of Achievement of Personal Goals</i>	na
Table 7.10. <i>PA2's SDQ Subscale Scores across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.11. <i>PA3's Scores on the CITES-R Attributions Scales across Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.12. <i>PA3's Scores on the ACS across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.13. <i>PA3's Rating of Achievement of Personal Goals</i>	na
Table 7.14. <i>PA3's SDQ Subscale Scores across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.15. <i>PA4's Scores on the CITES-R Attributions Scale across Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.16. <i>PA4's Scores on the ACS across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.17. <i>PA4's rating of achievement of personal goals</i>	na
Table 7.18. <i>PA4's SDQ Subscale Scores across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.19. <i>PA5's Scores on the CITES-R Attributions Scales across Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.20. <i>PA5's Scores on the ACS across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.21. <i>PA5's Rating of Achievement of Personal Goals</i>	na
Table 7.22. <i>PA5's SDQ Subscale Scores across the Testing Phases</i>	na
Table 7.23. <i>Magnitude and Direction of Change on TSCC Subscales from Pre test to Follow-up</i>	268
Table 7.24. <i>Percentage Correct on Knowledge Test across the Testing Phases</i>	272
Table 7.25. <i>Participants Ratings of Achievement of Personal Goals</i>	277
Table 7.26. <i>SDQ Subscale Scores across the Testing Phases</i>	278
Table 7.27. <i>Facilitator Ratings of each Objective of the Program</i>	281
Table 7.28. <i>Facilitators Ratings of Estimated Attainment of Group Aims Pre and Post Group on a Scale of 1 to 7</i>	284

Table 7.29. <i>Summary of Changes in each Participant Following Attendance at the Program According to Triangulation of Data Sources.</i>	285
Table 7.30. <i>CSQ Item Scores as Rated by Parents and Girls</i>	290
Table 7.31. <i>Overview of Sessional Knowledge Test Scores</i>	303
Table 8.1. <i>Comparison of Session Depth and Smoothness Between Study 2 and 3 for Participants</i>	336
Table 8.2. <i>Comparison of Session Depth and Smoothness Between Study 2 and 3 for Facilitators</i>	336