



JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
The Moore Center for the  
Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

## Moore Center Projects

### Help Wanted

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to bring experts from law enforcement, therapy, victim advocacy, prevention, research, and policy together to identify strategies to help youth attracted to children avoid acting on those interests. This project is designed to create a safe place for young people to seek effective professional intervention early, to ensure that they have the skills and resources needed to prevent them from harming children, and to equip them to develop in healthy ways that are safe for all involved.

#### Background

- People often think of sexual abuse perpetrators as predatory monsters. This idea is reinforced in the media when stories frame pedophiles as inhuman and anyone attracted to children as an inevitable offender. This hopeless view hampers efforts to provide treatment services and/or promote efforts aimed at stopping abuse before a child is harmed.
- In spring 2014, Luke Malone contacted Dr. Letourneau to gather information about her project for his Master's thesis. Malone's thesis eventually became the award-winning podcast titled Help Wanted and featured on This American Life. Malone wrote an article for Medium Magazine, which bolstered the popularity of his work even more. Until these stories came out, very few people wondered how someone who self-identified as an adolescent pedophile could (or would) resist their urge to victimize children. Malone was able to bring awareness to this little-known population of non-offending pedophiles.

#### Goals

Ultimately, the aim is to develop, rigorously evaluate and broadly disseminate an effective prevention intervention for youth attracted to children.

1. The twin aims of this intervention are to prevent sexual abuse and the harm it causes by:
  - a. Ensuring these youth do not engage in inappropriate, harmful or illegal sexual behavior
  - b. Promoting the healthy development, including positive self-acceptance, self-esteem, and healthy sexuality of youth attracted to younger children.
2. It is also hoped that this project may further an understanding of why some adolescents are sexually attracted to children.

#### Timeline

- **Phase 1: Qualitative Interviews.** Qualitative interviews with young adults who have self-identified as attracted to children will focus on aspects of their sexual attraction, coping strategies and problems that resulted from the arousal or the need to keep it hidden. Interviewees will be asked what might have helped them during adolescence. Results from these interviews will help inform intervention development.

- **Phase 2: Program and Outreach.** Based on results from the qualitative interviews and our team’s expertise, we will develop assessment and intervention protocols, outreach strategies and materials.
- **Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Pilot Evaluation.** The initial outreach materials, assessment and intervention protocols will be pilot tested on a sample of youth and their families in a single site.
- **Phase 4: Intervention Revision and Large-Scale Randomized Controlled Trial.** Materials and protocols will be revised based on results of the pilot evaluation and delivered as part of a large-scale randomized control trial.

## Collaborators and Partners

<b>Principal Investigator</b>	
Elizabeth Letourneau	Director, Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
<b>Collaborators</b>	
Karen Baker	Director, National Sexual Violence Resource Center
Maia Christopher	Executive Director, Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers
Geraldine Crisci	Therapist, Geraldine Crisci and Associates
Amanda Halawa-Mahdi	Supervisor, Cook County Juvenile Court - Probation
Gerald Hover	INTERPOL Crimes Against Children
Laura Kuhle	Therapist, Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine, Charite, Universitätsmedizin Berlin
Martin Lalumière	Professor, University of Ottawa
Jill Levenson	LCSW and Associate Professor, Barry University
Michael Miner	Professor and Director of Research, University of Minnesota Program in Human Sexuality
Daniel Rothman	Psychologist, Forensic Psychological Services
Paul Schewe	Professor, University of Illinois Chicago
Ryan Shields	Assistant Scientist, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Joan Tabachnick	President, DSM Consulting
Christine Vitale	Probation Officer, Clinical Interventions Division, Cook County Juvenile Probation
<b>Consultants</b>	
Klaus Beire	Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin
Richard Laws	Pacific Behavioural Assessment
Anonymous	College student successfully living with sexual attraction to children