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Ritual Abuse

RITUAL ABUSE

One description of ritual abuse is when one or more children are mistreated in a highly organised manner by a group of people who have banded together and subscribe to a belief system that, in their opinion, justifies their conduct towards that child.

Our thanks go out to **NAPAC (National Association of People Abused in Childhood)** for the following definitions:-

"Ritual abuse usually extends into family involvement and may have been practised as a religion or a way of life for years. Although survivors speak of differing experiences, many elements are common.

The Ritual may arise out a cult, or group of people who are led to believe that abuse is a necessary part of the particular ritual. It thus, within the group, becomes justified, but obviously, to an outsider, very wrong.

Criminal Gangs, the Klu Klux Klan, Nazi Cults have all been known to practise ritual abuse.

Examples of ritual abuse which may sound familiar, and which have arisen in the press are:-

- Witchcraft which seems to have derived from certain African Communities who have immigrated to England, yet persist with such behaviour towards children. The child is punished, seemingly under the instruction of a village/local "Witch Doctor"
- Female Genital Mutilation – again originating in Africa where a girl is cut as part of her initiation into adulthood and her local community.

- Satanic Abuse – this abuse is used to gain ultimate control over another human being by torture of the mind, body, and spirit. It can happen at any time but is likely to coincide with a child's birthday and on satanic holidays.
- Sexual Exploitation of young girls in several parts of the country – Criminal gangs may procure children to be abused by gang members and by paying 'customers'. We have seen several examples in Rochdale, Oxford and Peterborough
- Snuff movies – not quite a ritual, but this type of abuse does not really fit under any of the other categories. It is however a form of abuse which can only result from a highly organised activity. Children are used in extreme hard core pornographic movies, the purpose of which is to show the death of a child for the perverted pleasure of the viewer. Usually the child is kidnapped, or supplied through a paedophile network to the movie maker.

Examples of what happens during Ritual Abuse

- Elaborate rituals, "games", "set ups" and "ceremonies".
- Use of inverted crosses, candles, masks, cloaks, dressing up etc
- Systematic emotional, physical and sexual abuse.
- Photographing or filming the abuse.
- Being used in prostitution.
- Being forced to take drugs and / or alcohol.
- Being tortured (sometimes to the point of death).
- Being forced to participate in the abuse of others, coercing the child into believing they are equally culpable within the abuse.
- The use of mind control e.g. Being put to sleep and being told a bomb / listening device has been inserted into them therefore the abusers would know if the child told.
- Sacrifice – animal and human.

What are the effects of Ritual Abuse?

- Often the child "dissociates", which is a psychological state of numbness used to prevent a person remembering extremely upsetting memories from childhood.
- Multiple Personality Disorder – here the child/adult has several different personalities which they adopt again to avoid remembering the effects of child abuse. They adopt different personalities, sometimes one after another on the same occasion. They are serious forms of mental disorder which need treatment by professionals. Trauma related symptoms such as flashbacks, dissociation, amnesia and triggered flight or fight reactions to circumstances which in some way remind the survivor of abusive experiences;
- Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID);
- Self harm and eating issues;
- Suicidal thoughts and attempts;
- Confusion of concepts of good and evil;
- Preoccupation with death;
- Memories of ritualistic practices such as Black Masses and sacrifices to Satan and those which involves gang rape, murder, the abuse of animals and being buried alive;
- Memories of symbols and ceremonial objects used in rituals such as inverted crosses, swastikas and chalices.