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A Letter to Therapists From Two Virtuous Paedophiles

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We are the founders of Virtuous Paedophiles. Our online support group is for people who are sexually attracted to children but are committed to not abusing them. More than 2,000 people have signed up, and we have corresponded with many others. What have we learned?

There are many people who are sexually attracted to children who have never molested a child and are committed to not doing so. They haven't chosen to be sexually attracted to children, and they can't stop being sexually attracted to children, but they can and have successfully resisted their attractions.

Some fear that they may harm a child in the future, but more are confident they won't. Many are depressed and even suicidal. They know most of their friends and family would reject them if they knew their big secret. Many believe they are bad people. They see a future that is totally lacking in love and intimacy.

They are also reluctant to see a therapist. They fear that the therapist will condemn them, and worse, report them to authorities. Here is a personal account that we received from one of our members:

I've never had sexual contact with any prepubescent girls, but the attraction is very strong. I knew I needed help and went to a therapist. The first session I touched on my attractions and my issues. The look he gave me was one of retreat, shying away from the conversation to a place within his own mind where it was safe from the horror of what he had just heard. I had been brave enough to ask for help, but at the end of the first session, I knew there was no way I was going to seek therapy ever again. There is no point. I am on my own.

Therapists are trained to bring empathy and understanding to people who suffer from various unfortunate conditions. Too often this ends abruptly when a client admits sexual attraction to children.

We would ask that you resist the false belief that all paedophiles abuse children. View the client not just as a potential child molester, but as a complicated person with difficult life

problems. Remember, he most likely shares your goal of making sure that no children come to harm. In addition to helping the client live a child-celibate life, be willing to address these other problems as well.

Be clear and direct about the circumstances that would lead you to make a report to authorities. If that includes your judgment of a risk of future abuse, consider the possibility that this risk might be very small. There are two kinds of mistakes you can make. Failing to report someone who then abuses a child is the obvious one. But reporting when there is no serious danger can start an investigation that can ruin an innocent person's life.

As long as paedophiles believe they can be subjected to a life-destroying investigation when they have not done anything wrong, a great many will not seek the help from therapists that could protect children.

www.virped.org