

## Exercise 2: Empathy

**HEALTH AND SAFETY WARNING:** This exercise is challenging and emotionally demanding. It is important that you take a break during this exercise if you feel you need to. Consider self-care, such as having someone you can talk to if you are feeling emotional afterwards or making sure that you have something nice planned to do. Remember negative mood states often put you at risk of further offending.

### PART A: How have you got to where you are?

i. As part of this exercise you should think of a child in a photograph that you have seen. Answer the following questions as realistically as you can:

1. Why are you looking at this image?

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2. How did you come across this photo?

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3. What do you gain from looking at this image?

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4. What brought you to the point of looking at these types of images?

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### PART B: Who is directing the action and why?

Using the same image you have recalled for the previous part of this exercise, extend the image to include the room where it is happening, the person taking the photograph and the instructions being given. Answer the following questions:

1. Who is taking the photograph and why they are taking it?

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2. What cues are they ignoring in the child's behaviour?

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3. What are they telling themselves in order to justify taking the photograph?

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4. What do they plan to do with the photograph after it has been taken?

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### **PART C: The Child in the Image**

i. One common justification people use to allow themselves to continue accessing Indecent Images of Children is that the children in the images are “not real children” – that what is being looked at online is only a picture on a screen. This next exercise asks you to try and get to know the subject of an image you have seen and help you understand that this child in this image is a real child – who has thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams - who is being sexually abused. Still recalling the same image, create a character sketch about them by responding to the following questions. Although the image in your head could be of a boy, girl, or both, the prompts given will reflect a female.

Prompt	Response
Who is the girl in this photo?	
Where was she born? Where does she call home?	
What makes her laugh out loud?	

What is her most treasured possession?	
What does she do in her free time?	
Who does she admire? Who is her hero? Why?	
What is her biggest fear? Who has she told this to? Who would she never tell this to? Why?	
What does she hope to be when she grows up?	
Who does she go to when she is scared?	
Who are the girl's family? Who are her parents? Does she have siblings?	
Who are her friends?	
How did the girl get to be in front of the camera?	
What does she think is happening?	

If she has been told to keep what has happened a secret, how would that make her feel?	
What will she think about before she goes to sleep at night?	

Hopefully this exercise has helped you “get to know” the human being behind the photograph with his/her own thoughts, feelings, problems, and life.

### **PART D: Effects of Victimization**

i. Return once again to the original picture during the time at which the photographs are being taken. Consider the child’s perspective of what is happening while this photographic shoot is taking place, and the effects that having this photograph taken might be on the child, by responding to the following.

1. What might he/she think and feel while being abused?

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2. For what other reason might he/she be smiling in the photograph? Focus on the reality that may lie behind that smile.

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3. Try to imagine how he/she might behave, think and feel after being abused.

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4. What impact might the continuing presence of photographs on the Internet have on the child?

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5. How might the child behave, think and feel if they try and talk about the abuse to another adult?

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5a. How might this affect their relationship with the adult?

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5b. How did this disclosure come about?

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6. Try and describe what the long-term consequences of the abuse may be for the child. Pay attention to the particular role that being photographed may have played.

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