

**Work-Related Exposure to Child Pornography in
ICAC Task Forces and Affiliated Agencies:
Reactions and Responses to Possible Stresses**

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Work-Related Exposure to Child Pornography in ICAC Task Forces and Affiliated Agencies: Reactions and Responses to Possible Stresses

Summary of Findings

Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force commanders and liaisons to ICAC affiliates in 564 law enforcement agencies responded to an online survey.

- In about 90% of their agencies sworn personnel had viewed child pornography while investigating cases. This report describes information from these 511 agencies (40 ICAC Task Forces and 471 affiliate agencies) with sworn personnel who were exposed to child pornography.
- These agencies included local, county, state and federal law enforcement from all across the United States, serving every size jurisdiction.

Civilian employees of the criminal justice system were also exposed to child pornography in these agencies. More than half of the 511 agencies – about 60% -- reported that prosecutors, civilian forensic analysts and other civilians viewed child pornography during investigations.

Survey participants were concerned about the possible negative impacts of viewing child pornography, but this concern was not universal.

- About half of survey participants were either somewhat or very concerned about the psychological impacts of work-related exposure to child pornography on personnel.
- Concern among ICAC Task Forces was higher than among affiliates – 90% were somewhat or very concerned, compared to half of affiliates.
- Participants who had attended presentations or educational sessions about possible problems among personnel exposed to child pornography were also more concerned.

A number of participants had witnessed problems among personnel related to viewing child pornography.

- 35% of ICAC Task Forces and 10% of affiliates said they had seen problems among personnel that they felt arose from work-related exposure to child pornography. These included personal and family problems, sexual difficulties, and work-related problems, such as lowered productivity and requests for transfers.
- However, the majority of survey participants had not seen situations where they thought exposure to child pornography had negative effects.

Some personnel were assigned to ICAC programs or affiliates “*when they didn’t want to be.*”

- While it appeared that the majority of agencies did not assign unwilling sworn employees to handle child pornography cases, about 20% did so at least occasionally.
- Further, the percentage might be larger if all situations where personnel encounter child pornography are taken into account – for example, when personnel assigned to juvenile units or general cyber crime units must handle child pornography cases.

Most agencies provided a variety of mental health resources, but close to 40% of participants thought more were needed.

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- Many participants felt that attitudes in their agencies did not always support expressing concerns about or seeking help for psychological difficulties.

Before personnel were assigned to jobs requiring exposure to child pornography, few agencies:

- Asked personnel about histories of or personal experiences with child sexual abuse
- Gave employees information about signs of possible stress

Also, few agencies:

- Required periodic meetings with psychologists or psychological assessments
- Provided formal opportunities for discussing reactions to child pornography

Many participants felt their work was strongly supported and respected within their agencies, but some did not.

Lack of forensic capacity, obsolete equipment and training were concerns for a large minority of agencies.

There was considerable support for mandatory introductory programs for personnel starting to investigate child pornography cases, but little support for other mandates, such as required rotations or psychological evaluations.

Most participants found their work satisfying despite the problems they noted, but many felt it had somewhat of a negative impact on family life and was particularly difficult for personnel with young children.

Recommendations for law enforcement responses include:

- Providing education, training and written materials about possible negative reactions to viewing child pornography to all involved personnel
- Open discussion of the possibility of adverse sexual reactions
- Recognizing the needs of small agencies and units, prosecutors and civilian employees
- Encouraging communication among and between involved personnel and supervisors
- Conducting research so that evidence-based policies and procedures to protect the well-being of personnel and to inform police psychologists and other mental health providers can be created

Introduction: The Goals and Contents of this Report

*"I have only been doing this for a couple months. What I saw made me sick to my stomach and affected me outside of work."**

"Exposure to child pornography does cause some stress, but the main stress is caused by the large number of cases to investigate and a small number of investigators to do the work."

"I feel a sworn officer learns to deal with all sorts of negativity in their work, thereby allowing them to disconnect. I see the importance of what I do and it doesn't affect me because I don't allow it to."

"It's not only child porn. It's the talking to sex offenders almost every week and then trying to lead a normal and healthy sexual experience in marriage."

The increasing availability of child pornography on the Internet has resulted in a large expansion of criminal justice activities in this area. Consequently, sizeable numbers of law enforcement personnel, including prosecutors, civilian forensic analysts and other civilians, are being exposed to graphic images of child sexual abuse. This type of work-related exposure to disturbing images of children being sexually victimized is a new phenomenon. Questions have been raised about whether it may be causing undue stress to law enforcement personnel, whether and how personnel should be screened for positions involving exposure to child pornography, and what agency policies and practices will best safeguard those conducting these important investigations. In 2007, research on this topic was identified by the Research Subcommittee of the Internet Crimes against Children (ICAC) Task Force Working Group as its highest priority.

As an initial step in responding to such questions and concerns, the ICAC Task Force Training & Technical Assistance Program sponsored an online survey of ICAC Task Forces and affiliates to gather initial information about reactions and responses to possible stresses among personnel who are required to view child pornography in the course of criminal investigations. This report describes the experiences and opinions of over 500 ICAC commanders and affiliate contact persons who participated in the survey.

The goals of the survey were to:

- Acquire basic information about the extent of exposure to child pornography among sworn personnel, prosecutors, civilian forensic analysts and other civilians in these agencies
- Determine the degree of concern about possible problems related to child pornography among ICAC commanders and affiliate contact persons, and describe the problems that participants had seen among personnel
- Understand how personnel were chosen and prepared to investigate child pornography cases
- Identify what types of supports were available to personnel exposed to child pornography

* All quotes are the words of survey participants, with minor corrections of grammar and spelling.

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- Gather the opinions of survey participants about how best to minimize negative effects of exposure to child pornography

The report focuses on the experiences and opinions of sworn personnel. The survey also included questions pertaining to prosecutors, civilian forensic analysts and other civilians. However, many of the survey participants were sworn personnel who were not sure how to answer questions about civilian employees. Consequently, we could not include much information about civilian employees in this report, although we believe that most of the report conclusions and recommendations apply to all employees who view child pornography in the course of their work for the criminal justice system.

The report has several sections that focus on:

- 1) The extent of work-related exposure to child pornography
- 2) Participants' concerns about and experiences with problems related to such exposure
- 3) How personnel were chosen to work cases that involved exposure to child pornography
- 4) Types and amounts of supports agencies provided to personnel
- 5) Participants' views about how to minimize negative effects of exposure to child pornography
- 6) Conclusions and recommendations

The report also includes 2 appendices.

- Appendix 1 provides tables that give exact percentages for the findings.
- Appendix 2 describes in detail how the survey was conducted.

This report is only a first step to answering critical questions about the impact of viewing child pornography as part of law enforcement investigations. The findings, consistent with research into other types of work-related trauma, suggest that some law enforcement personnel suffer ill effects in a number of ways, while others seem to be able to cope with any problems that arise. The findings also make clear that some agencies are alert to possible problems and provide employees with information and a variety of supports, while others are unaware of potential problems or ill-equipped to deal with them if they happen. We hope that, in the near future, further research will examine what characteristics or circumstances place some individuals at risk for adverse reactions and what agency policies and practices best alleviate negative impacts for those doing this important work.

The Extent of Work-Related Exposure to Child Pornography

In about 90% of the law enforcement agencies that participated in the survey, sworn personnel were exposed to child pornography during investigations.

The survey was distributed by e-mail to all of the ICAC Task Forces and their affiliates, a total of 1,797 law enforcement agencies. We received responses from 40 ICAC Task Forces and 524 affiliates. Over 90% of these agencies (511) had sworn personnel who were exposed to child pornography during investigations. This report focuses on information from these 511 agencies, which included 40 ICAC Task Forces and 471 Task Force affiliates.

- These organizations included local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies and represented a wide range of populations served*.
 - About one-fifth served small jurisdictions (populations 25,000 or less).
 - About one-third served medium-sized jurisdictions (populations between 25,001 and 100,000).
 - The rest, 45%, served larger jurisdictions of over 100,000. About half of these larger jurisdictions included more than 500,000 people.
 - Most agencies – over 60% – conducted at least some computer forensic examinations. However, more than one-third relied on other agencies for this.
- The agencies in which sworn personnel were exposed to child pornography also had a range of experience with the ICAC program.
 - Most of the ICAC Task Forces were established prior to 2005 and thus had extensive experience investigating child pornography crimes.
 - The ICAC Task Force program began forming formal affiliations with other law enforcement agencies in 2005. Some of these agencies had considerable experience investigating child pornography cases while others had no or very little experience.

The individuals who participated in the survey were ICAC Task Force commanders and contact persons for affiliate agencies. About 80% were men and about 20% women. Participants had a wide range of experience with the ICAC program and with child pornography investigations in particular.

- While only 10% of participants had worked in an ICAC program for 5 or more years, many more – about 40% – had been working on cases involving child pornography for 5 or more years.
- Close to 40% had worked on child pornography cases for between 2 and 4 years, while about 20% had worked on such cases for 1 year or less.
- About 35% had attended presentations, educational sessions or trainings that had discussed possible psychological reactions to work-related exposure to child pornography.

In many agencies, exposure to child pornography was not limited to sworn personnel.

In addition to asking about exposure to child pornography by sworn personnel, we asked about exposure among 1) prosecutors, 2) civilian forensic analysts, and 3) other civilians. In many agencies, exposure was not limited to sworn personnel.

- Prosecutors viewed child pornography in about half of agencies.

* Table 1 in Appendix 1 gives exact percentages for the findings described in this section.

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- Civilian forensic analysts were exposed in 15% of agencies.
- Other civilians were exposed in about 10% of agencies.

Altogether, in more than 60% of agencies where sworn personnel were exposed to child pornography, other employees also were exposed during criminal investigations.

At the same time, in many agencies the number of employees exposed to child pornography was small.

- In about 45% of agencies, only 1 to 3 sworn personnel viewed child pornography.
- In almost a quarter of agencies where prosecutors were exposed, there were only 1 to 3 such individuals.
- This was also true in the great majority of agencies where civilian forensic analysts or other civilians were exposed. The number of those who viewed child pornography was small.

The amount of time sworn employees spent on child pornography cases appeared to vary.

We did not specifically ask about how much time individuals spent working child pornography cases, but based on comments by survey participants, this appeared to vary considerably. Survey participants said,

"Over the past few years, I have only worked 3—4 cases. It is not a daily, weekly, or even monthly exposure."

"Our exposure to child pornography is limited. However, the number of child pornography cases seems to be rising in our district."

"I average 30—40 [sex crimes against children] cases a year and have been doing these cases full time for 3 years."

Concerns About and Experiences with Problems Related to Exposure to Child Pornography

About half of survey participants were either somewhat or very concerned about the psychological impacts of work-related exposure to child pornography.

We asked, “*How concerned are you about the psychological impacts of work-related exposure to child pornography on personnel in your agency or ICAC program?*”

Most survey participants had some level of concern about this question*. Only about 20% said they were not at all concerned. Close to 30% were a little concerned, and about 30% were somewhat concerned. About 20% were very concerned.

Concern among ICAC Task Force members was higher than among affiliates – 90% of Task Force members were somewhat or very concerned, compared to less than half of affiliates, which tend to be smaller agencies with shorter histories of investigating child pornography cases. All of the Task Force members had at least a little concern about this question. None said they were “*not at all concerned.*”

Participants were more concerned with problems related to child pornography exposure if they had attended presentations or educational sessions about this issue. Almost two-thirds of those who had attended such sessions were somewhat or very concerned, compared to a little more than one-third of those who had not.

One in 10 participants had seen problems among personnel that they felt arose from exposure to child pornography.

We asked, “*Have you seen any problems among personnel in your ICAC program or agency that you feel arose from work-related exposure to child pornography?*”

Despite the levels of concern expressed by participants, only 10% said that they had actually seen such problems among their investigators. Participants who worked for ICAC Task Forces were more likely to answer yes to this question.

We asked participants who had seen problems to describe “*the most serious problem you personally have seen.*” The responses included impacts, some quite serious, in both personal and professional spheres.

Some participants described personal, family and marital problems.

A number of survey participants mentioned that some employees experienced problems such as insomnia, stress, depression and weight gain that seemed related to exposure to child pornography. In addition to such personal problems, some had seen effects on family relationships. One area of concern was relationships with children. Examples included,

* Table 2 in Appendix 1 gives exact percentages for the findings described in this section.

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"Hyper-vigilance around children – always suspicious of adult males in particular"

"A wife called after her husband viewed child pornography related to a case, and said. 'He came home ... very upset and wouldn't hug either of his two daughters and was very distant.'"

"Employee was crying uncontrollably after viewing multiple images of cp the day he found out his wife was pregnant with their first child."

Some mentioned that exposure to explicit, disturbing sexual images affected sexual and marital relationships. Participants said they experienced,

"Sexual side effects – avoidance, intrusive images"

"Intrusive thoughts during intimate times with my wife all but discontinued that part of our relationship for a long period of time. Going to a therapist on my own helped put it in context."

"Marital stress, personal distancing, overall increased agitation and distress"

Some participants described work-related problems.

People also observed an array of work-related problems. Some described anger, loss of objectivity and drops in productivity.

"In general, everyone seems to be shocked and disgusted at what they have to view. This usually turns into anger at the suspect."

"The officer took an initial report of possible CP possession and was disgusted and disturbed by the few images he saw. The officer indicated he never wanted to take a report on this type of material again."

"One [employee] was transferred out of the unit after investigating a production case. Her work progress stalled, she became personally lethargic, did not want to come to work, could not write reports."

Two participants mentioned inappropriate behavior by investigators, *"one-upmanship in shock value competitions"* and *"profuse profanity at work."*

Another described an employee who seemed to have trouble gauging whether his or her reactions were appropriate.

"Employee being hypersensitive to reporting every small exposure to nudity in their life and worrying about whether they had looked at some images ... for an inappropriate period of time even though the looking was work-related."

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Finally, one participant was concerned about an employee who had *"what was perceived as an overly intense attraction to the images."*

While most participants, when asked about the most serious problem they had seen, described personal, mental health or behavioral problems, some described problems with how cases were handled. They said things like,

"Child porn/molestation cases usually require an enormous amount of paperwork."

"[I was] going numb from viewing hundreds of pictures and videos in a single session. Learned to spread it out over a period of time"

"Improper handling of evidence related to children's images. Untimely delays in getting the investigation started..."

"Inability of prosecutors in [this] county to take cases to trial"

"Not having enough time in the day to properly do the job."

We also asked whether participants had noticed any of the specific problems listed below among personnel exposed to child pornography during their work.

- About 10% had witnessed personnel spending too much time at work, being isolated at work or over-reacting and losing objectivity.
- Fewer than 10% had noted frequent outbursts of anger, *"victim mentality,"* or alcohol abuse.

But most had not seen such problems and some pointed out that they were not necessarily related to child pornography exposure. For example,

"I don't think this has anything to do with child pornography cases. I think it has to do with the stress that comes with any investigation."

Several mentioned the strains of large caseloads. One survey participant said,

"Spending too much time at work is also caused by too much work and not necessarily stress from CP!"

Small percentages of participants reported requests for transfers, complaints from family members and intervening with personnel because of problems.

We asked participants whether people in their units had ever asked to be transferred or reassigned from positions that required exposure to child pornography, whether they knew of complaints about behavior from family members that were related to child pornography exposure and whether they had ever intervened because they saw a problem related to child pornography exposure.

- Slightly less than 10% of survey participants reported that someone in their unit had asked to be transferred or reassigned because of exposure to child pornography, but this number included close to one-quarter of ICAC Task Forces compared to less than 10% of affiliates.

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- Around 5% knew of complaints about behavior from family members of personnel. This number was similar for Task Forces and affiliates.
- 5% of participants had intervened with personnel because they saw problems stemming from work-related exposure to child pornography, but this number included over one-quarter of ICAC Task Forces, compared to less than 5% of affiliates.

We asked participants who had intervened with personnel to describe what happened. Some comments suggested that transfer was a common outcome.

"The employee was having problems at work and personally. EAP was offered and rejected. Temp assignments were offered and rejected. Progress plans were created. Peer support was generated. Ultimately, I asked for a transfer [for the employee]."

"I required the person seek out employee assistance. The employee ultimately took another job that didn't involve child porn."

Other interventions were also used,

"Ensured that this employee did not have 100% of their duties assigned as viewing child pornography"

"Provided peer counseling"

"Offered to have the case transferred to another agency for examination (Offer was turned down.)"

"Seeing the employee being short with others and appearing to be angry and disruptive; talked with employee and gave them time off to pursue hobbies such as fishing for a couple of days."

Those who had attended educational sessions about possible problems were more likely to report seeing problems.

About 80% of participants had not seen situations where they perceived that exposure to child pornography had negative effects. This included over 60% of Task Forces and over 90% of affiliates. People said, *"I have not experienced any problems working these cases;"* and *"I have not seen any minor or serious problems."*

One response suggested that personnel who have difficulties with viewing child pornography may remove themselves from such work when possible.

"We have a small group of people in the unit and there have been no obvious or visible problems. Several former members left on their own due to their reaction to the material."

These results could mean that few personnel have problems related to viewing child pornography during investigations – but they could also mean that problems are going unrecognized. There is some

evidence for the latter because recognizing problems is related to having attended presentations, educational sessions or trainings about the possible psychological reactions to work-related exposure to child pornography. About one-third of participants had attended such sessions and they were more likely to say they:

- Were somewhat or very concerned about such problems (about 65% compared to about 45% who had not attended any sessions)
- Had seen problems that they felt arose from work-related exposure to child pornography (more than 15% compared to 5% who had not attended sessions)
- Had ever intervened with personnel because they saw a problem (10% compared to less than 5%)

How Personnel Were Chosen to Work Cases that Involved Exposure to Child Pornography

Few personnel were assigned to ICAC programs or affiliates “when they didn’t want to be.”

We asked survey participants how much the following statement applied to their agency: “People have been assigned to the program when they didn’t want to be.” Only 2% said this statement applied very much*. However, Task Forces were more likely to be in this group, with close to 10% saying the statement applied very much, compared to only 2% of affiliates.

Among all agencies, fewer than 20% said the statement applied somewhat, and 75% percent said not at all. (Five percent were not sure.) So it appeared that three-quarters of the agencies surveyed never assigned sworn employees to investigate child pornography cases when they didn’t want to be, but about 20% did so at least occasionally. However, it was unclear how often personnel were given real opportunities to turn down assignments as opposed to simply making no objections. In some small and medium sized agencies, personnel may sign up to work in, for example, a juvenile unit or family services division, to find that viewing child pornography “comes with the territory.” In larger departments with high tech crime units, personnel who are interested in careers in cyber crime may have to join an ICAC unit to gain experience, or they may work in a cyber crime unit that requires them to handle child pornography cases periodically.

Some participants provided more detail about how they were assigned to investigate child pornography cases. Many noted their own interest, but some described situations where employees had no choice about taking child pornography cases.

“Sheriff discussed the program with me and asked if I would be interested and able to do it.”

“Small agencies don’t see that many cases per year. Officers get assigned to handle the call, and then it’s usually turned over to the detective. ...whichever officer is on duty is expected to handle or start the investigation.”

“You just get assigned.”

Flexible assignments were valued by participants, but only 60% of agencies provided them.

We asked participants to rate the helpfulness of “having flexibility at work (transfer easily, pursue other interests, etc.)” in terms of “helping people stay healthy and productive in work that involves exposure to child pornography.” Almost 75% said such flexibility was very or extremely helpful.

However, only 60% of survey participants said their agency had “flexible assignments that allow sworn personnel to pursue other work interests.” One respondent stated,

* Table 3 in Appendix 1 gives exact percentages for the findings described in this section.

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"As a supervisor over my unit, I try to ensure that each person has a break between each child pornography case. We have ... other cases such as credit card fraud... that also need ... forensic examination."

But in many agencies, this was not the case. One person noted,

"I have requested to work other cases due to burn-out on CAC cases, but was informed no one else has the experience to work these cases in our small office."

Some personnel, even in small offices, have more control over their work load however. One noted,

"I do not have to work these cases if I do not want to. If I choose, I can stop taking a proactive approach ... and take a break from these cases."

Another strategy that offers flexibility is "exit tickets" that allow personnel to transfer at any time, no questions asked. Close to 30% of agencies used exit tickets, with the proportion being higher among ICAC Task Forces – almost 45% -- than among affiliates – about 30%.

Few agencies prepared sworn personnel for potential psychological reactions before they began working child pornography cases.

We asked, "Are sworn personnel ... given any preparation for possible psychological reactions before they are first exposed to child pornography (training sessions, group or one-on-one discussions that bring up possible reactions, etc.)?"

Only about 1 in 5 answered "yes" to this question. Among ICAC Task Forces, the number was considerably higher, almost half, while about 20% of affiliates provided some preparation. Most of the preparation took the form of interviews and one-on-one discussions. For example, one ICAC Task Force member stated,

"During the selection process, the unit supervisor discusses in detail the kinds of material ICAC detectives have to deal with. Prospective detectives are given the opportunity to ask questions, raise objections, etc."

Members of ICAC affiliates said,

"The potential assignee is interviewed and made aware of what kind of material he or she will be exposed to. If there are any reservations then the person is not selected."

"Prior to the selection process the examiners are told about some of the past cases investigated involving ... child porn."

Some agencies have more elaborate preparation. One ICAC Task Force member stated,

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"Agents are briefed on potential impacts, assist on cases to determine initial reactions, attend training, take compassion fatigue self exams."

Survey participants from agencies that provided initial preparation also mentioned:

- Exposure to child pornography content in controlled environments
- On-the-job training with peers
- Training courses that discussed child pornography exposure, ICAC courses in particular
- Meetings with forensic investigators
- Tours of computer forensics facilities
- Psychological evaluations
- Specific discussions with employees who were parents about possible reactions
- Discussions about the availability of psychological services and contact information for such services

In most cases, personnel were not screened for or asked about histories of child sexual abuse or close contact with young children.

Few agencies appeared to screen personnel who might be exposed to child pornography in ways that went beyond the normal evaluation and screening processes used for new officers.

Regarding preparation for handling child pornography cases,

- Less than 10% of agencies asked personnel about having histories of or personal experiences with child sexual abuse, although 20% of ICAC Task Forces asked this question compared to about 5% of affiliates.
- Almost 15% asked personnel whether they were currently parenting or in close contact with children, including over one-third of ICAC Task Forces and about 10% of affiliates.

Types and Amounts of Supports Provided to Personnel who Work Child Pornography Cases

Most agencies provided a variety of mental health resources.

We asked, "Are any of the following available to sworn personnel in your agency...Employee Assistance Program? Other psychological services provided by your agency? Peer counselors? Chaplains, including volunteer chaplains? Psychological services by providers outside of law enforcement? Other?"

Most agencies provided mental health resources to sworn personnel*.

- Over 80% had Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
- About half provided other internal psychological services.
- About 65% had chaplains.
- Over one-third had peer counseling programs.
- A little over half provided access to external mental health care providers.

Less than 5% of participants said their agencies provided no psychological resources. About 60% provided at least 3 of the 5 resources listed above.

Another concern is whether psychologists are knowledgeable or comfortable talking about exposure to child pornography. Of participants in agencies that had Employee Assistance Programs, only about 15% said EAP staff or psychologists were knowledgeable about work-related exposure to child pornography specifically, and only about 20% said such staff was comfortable talking about child pornography. However, close to 40% of participants were unsure about the knowledge or comfort levels of EAP staff in their agencies. At least one did not find a welcoming atmosphere from the agency EAP staff:

"I have gone to our agency sponsored EAP on my own, not with any problem, just to try to start a rapport with them and maybe set up a schedule for them to evaluate us. They basically told me that if I didn't have any real problem they couldn't help."

But others had confidence in their departments' resources:

"[Our department] employs two Ph.D-level psychologists. They have considerable experience dealing with stress, burnout, etc. Their experiences and skills are not tied specifically to child pornography matters, but they would be able to address such issues."

* Table 4 in Appendix 1 gives exact percentages for the findings described in this section.

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Almost 40% of survey participants thought more psychological resources were needed.

We asked, "Do you see a need for more psychological resources in your program or agency for personnel who are exposed to child pornography during their work?"

Almost 40% of participants said "yes." About 20% saw this need as a medium priority and about 15% saw it as a high priority.

Although most agencies had resources, many participants felt that attitudes in their agencies did not always support expressing concerns about or seeking help for psychological difficulties.

We asked whether the attitudes and general cultures of agencies supported concern about and help-seeking by personnel with psychological problems or other difficulties related to exposure to child pornography.

- Close to 55% of participants said it was very or mostly acceptable to express concern about the psychological health of personnel in their agencies. This was true of about 70% of ICAC Task Forces and about 50% of affiliates.
- Almost half of participants said it was very or mostly acceptable to seek help for psychological problems in their agency. Again, more Task Forces said this than did affiliates, about 80% compared to a little over 45%.

On the other hand, participants from some agencies noted significant resistance to acknowledging psychological problems. Over 5% said seeking help for psychological problems or expressing concern about such problems among personnel was not at all acceptable in their agencies, and around one-third said it was only somewhat acceptable. One participant said,

"In a small agency you keep your comments and problems to yourself otherwise you are ridiculed about not being able to do your job."

Few agencies required periodic meetings with psychologists or psychological assessments.

We asked if there were any mandatory requirements related to psychological health for sworn personnel whose duties included viewing child pornography. About 15% of ICAC Task Forces and 5% of affiliates had such requirements. Most of these involved annual or semi-annual mandatory visits to psychologists. We didn't ask whether such policies applied to other positions also, but one participant noted *"must meet with psychologist once a year. Not only of ICAC but anyone in a persons unit must do this."* Some participants noted that supervisors could order personnel to seek counseling if they appeared to be under stress, whether job-related or not.

Few agencies gave sworn employees information about signs of stress.

Few agencies had, in the past year, held any staff meetings or training sessions that included discussions of:

- Signs of stress at work that could arise from work-related exposure to child pornography, such as anger, depression, alcoholism – about 10% of agencies
- Signs of stress at home, such as withdrawal, sleep problems, hyper-vigilance around children – about 10% of agencies
- Sexual problems, such as lack of interest, intrusive images – about 5% of agencies

ICAC Task Forces were more likely to address these issues than were affiliates.

In most agencies, feelings about child pornography were seldom discussed among personnel.

Almost 85% of participants said they rarely or never heard personnel in their program discussing their feelings about viewing child pornography, and this number was similar for both Task Forces and affiliates. About 60% of participants had not brought this topic up with personnel in their offices in the past year, although only 10% of ICAC Task Forces had failed to do so, compared with two-thirds of affiliates.

Some agencies offered formal opportunities for discussing reactions to child pornography.

We also asked about other ways agencies might address stresses arising from work-related exposure to child pornography. Some agencies offered specific opportunities for discussion of reactions to child pornography.

- One-quarter of agencies held staff meetings where reactions to child pornography were discussed.
- One-quarter had individual case reviews where such matters were discussed.
- 5% had group sessions led by a psychologist.

However, about 60% of agencies did not provide any formal opportunities for discussing reactions to child pornography. This included almost two-thirds of affiliates and 15% of ICAC Task Forces.

Some agencies offered informal opportunities for discussion and stress relief.

While many agencies did not offer formal opportunities for discussing reactions to child pornography, this did not always mean that such opportunities did not exist. Some agencies relied on more informal processes. For example, one respondent noted, "*small agency, close working relationships.*"

Some survey participants emphasized the importance of discussing feelings about child pornography cases with peers. When we asked, "*In your opinion, what qualities help people stay healthy and productive in work that requires exposure to child pornography?*" answers included, "*access to an understanding peer*" and "*being able to talk to peers.*" One participant said,

"Having other investigators you can talk to about the cases you work and being able to express the effects it has on you without judgment because they too face the same and understand better than those outside of law enforcement."

In addition, the sensitivity of supervisors to this issue may be a factor that provides for informal opportunities for discussion. One survey participant who was a supervisor noted, "*I check on my people constantly to ensure that they are okay and not in need of relief or counseling.*"

Informal gatherings of personnel such as lunches, sporting events and after work get-togethers may be a means of forging bonds that encourage discussion. Thirty percent of participants said their agencies had informal gatherings of sworn personnel that work on ICAC cases; but about 65% said their agencies did not. (The rest were not sure.)

Physical exercise is another known means of relieving stress. Almost 65% of survey participants said sworn personnel in their agencies had access to onsite exercise facilities, but 35% said personnel did not.

Spouses or significant others almost never receive information about the nature of child pornography or possible impacts of exposure to it.

We asked, "Are spouses or significant others of sworn personnel ever given information about the nature of child pornography or possible psychological impacts of work-related exposure to it?"

Less than 5% of agencies said "yes." When we asked participants in those agencies to describe the information given, they said,

"[Our] office has an open door policy to families related to ICAC officers. They are informed of the terrible nature of child pornography and the impact that it can have on some people."

"Information regarding behavioral changes that may appear as investigator deals with his or her anger regarding the abuse of children, and a clear picture of the type of investigations their spouses are working. We encourage them to talk about their feelings..."

"Annual briefings are given to spouses concerning the nature of investigative operations and possible warning signs."

While almost half of participants felt their work was supported and respected by others within their agencies, this was not the case in some agencies.

We asked questions to determine whether participants felt that their investigations of child pornography cases were supported and respected. Almost half felt strongly supported.

- Over 45% felt that, within their agencies, a lot of respect was given to those who investigate sex crimes involving children.
- When asked to rate the statement, "*General culture of agency does not understand child pornography investigations*" in terms of how big a problem this was, 45% said no problem at all.
- When asked about the backing of prosecutors and judges, about 40% said "*conflicts or frustrations with the way prosecutors handle cases*" were "*no problem at all*," and almost 30% said conflicts or frustrations with judges were no problem at all.

In all of these categories, these numbers were similar for both Task Forces and affiliates.

On the other hand, many agencies did not feel fully supported, and some had significant problems.

- About 10% said that no or very little respect was given to those who investigate sex crimes involving children and for one-third, there was only "*some*" respect.
- About 15% said the culture of their agency was a problem, and about 10% said it was a very big problem.

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Participants noted,

"Most of the employees believe that it is not a problem in our area and don't understand that child pornography is mentally draining and can affect you on the job and at home."

"Comments have been made by other co-workers that do not work these cases [that] all 'we' do is work in the office and don't get out and do anything."

In addition, close to 30% said conflicts or frustrations with prosecutors were "a problem" or "a very big problem," and about 30% said conflicts or frustrations with judges were "a problem" or "a very big problem." Task Forces and affiliates were similar in terms of conflicts with prosecutors, but more Task Forces expressed problems with judges. Over half said such conflicts were a problem or a very big problem, compared to about one-third of affiliates.

Lack of resources regarding forensic capacity, obsolete equipment and training was also a concern for many agencies.

We also asked about technical resources and training. We asked agencies to rate how big a problem these matters were from no problem at all to a very big problem.

- Lack of forensic capacity: About 40% saw this as a problem or a very big problem, including about 20% that said it was the latter. At the same time, about 30% said it was no problem at all.
- Obsolete equipment and lack of training: About one-third of agencies said these were problems or very big problems, including almost 15% that said the latter. On the other hand, about one-third said these were not problems at all.

ICAC Task Forces were more likely than affiliates to say they lacked forensic capacity, possibly because of the high volume of cases many of them handle. On the other hand, Task Forces were less likely to report difficulties with obsolete equipment; only about 15% said this was a problem, compared to more than one-third of affiliates. Similar numbers of Task Forces and affiliates said that lack of training was a problem. In some cases, agencies were conducting child pornography investigations with little financial support or other backing. Comments included,

"My work in this area is totally voluntary. If I did not seek out training, I would have none."

"Unfortunately, the [county] does not see child sexual exploitation as a serious problem so they do not fund any formal units. Ours is a self-made unit."

"There are far more cases happening than we have capacity to investigate, prosecute and either incarcerate or manage in the community."

Overall, about 40% of agencies had good resources in that they rated all of the questions about forensic capacity, equipment and training as "no problem at all" or only "somewhat" of a problem. About 20% of agencies rated resources in one area as "a problem" or "a very big problem", and about 20% did so in 2 areas. About 15% percent of agencies had problems or very big problems in all three areas.

Views About How to Minimize Negative Impacts of Exposure to Child Pornography

There was considerable support for mandatory introductory programs for personnel starting to investigate child pornography cases, but little support for other mandates.

We asked, "Are you in favor of any of the following mandatory requirements for personnel exposed to child pornography during their work? Mandatory screening before work exposure to child pornography? Mandatory introductory programs that describe the nature of child pornography and the possible effects of work-related exposure to it? Mandatory annual or semi-annual psychological assessments? Mandatory rotations? Other?"

The majority of participants did not support most suggestions of mandatory requirements for personnel exposed to child pornography, with one exception^{*}. A full three-quarters supported "mandatory introductory programs that describe the nature of child pornography and possible effects of exposure to it."

While most did not support mandatory screening or mandatory annual or semi-annual psychological assessments for those assigned to investigate child pornography cases, there was support from almost 45% of participants for each of these suggestions. Arguments against such requirements included,

"I think mandatory screening and assessments would be intrusive and would provide no assistance of value for an individual."

"I don't think individuals would be honest during assessments..."

"The only concern I have regarding psychological testing is the potential stigma that may follow an employee if the information gets out that the employee is not doing well and needs to be transferred from the unit."

However, in some units mandatory assessment policies were in place, and participants found them to work well and felt strongly about having them. Supporters said,

"I do believe that psychological 'check-ups' of personnel involved in child exploitation cases should be mandatory everywhere, no matter the size or volume of the agency."

"Optional may lead to less participation and fear of being labeled for seeking help."

^{*} Table 5 in Appendix 1 gives exact percentages for the findings described in this section.

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Almost all participants, 90%, disagreed with the idea of mandatory rotations. Several noted the degree of training that is required and the difficulties faced by smaller agencies. For example,

"With the training expense of computer forensics, it is not practical for a small agency to rotate examiners. Most agencies this size don't even have one. If I don't do it no one else will."

"Due to agency size, it is very difficult to rotate people out and find suitable personnel who are willing to work these types of cases. Most officers and investigators in our department do not want to work child abuse/sexual abuse/child pornography cases."

Participants also noted that mandatory screenings, assessments, or rotations were not practical in many circumstances or would violate agency working agreements. For example,

"I think making these things mandatory would not work and we would lose affiliates."

"Many of these mandates would not be attainable by small agencies."

"Union contracts play a large part in what an agency can or cannot do with employees in this area."

Other participants simply didn't like the idea of mandates. As one said, *"I don't care for mandatory anything."*

Most participants were concerned that small agencies and prosecutors not be left out of services and programs, and the majority supported a variety of training and screening options.

We also asked participants to rate the helpfulness of other resources for dealing with problems that might arise as a result of work-related exposure to child pornography. The list below shows how many thought the following options would be *"very or extremely helpful."*

- Making sure small agencies are not left out of programs and services, about 70%
- Making sure prosecutors are not left out of programs and services, about 70%
- Introductory programs that alert personnel to the nature of child pornography and the possible effects of exposure, 65%
- Training psychologists in Employee Assistance Programs about child pornography, about 60%
- Screening requirements before transfer into an ICAC program, about 45%
- Including discussion about the possible effects of exposure to child pornography in technical training programs, 55%
- Making sure civilians are not left out of services and program, about 50%
- Optional annual or semi-annual psychological assessments, 45%
- Training peer counselors, about 40%
- Optional rotations, about 40%
- Developing a self-help website, about 30%

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Most participants found their work satisfying despite the problems noted above, but many felt there was somewhat of a negative impact on family life and some difficulties for those with young children.

About 70% of participants agreed that, *"People find great satisfaction in their work because investigating child pornography helps children."* They said this statement *"applies very much."*

Most participants did not believe that viewing child pornography had strong adverse effects on the family lives of personnel, but many felt there was some negative impact. When asked to rate the statement, *"Work-related exposure to child pornography has a negative effect on family life,"* 55% said, *"does not apply at all."* About 25% said, *"applies somewhat,"* and about 5% said, *"applies very much."* (The rest were not sure.) About the statement, *"People with young children seem to have particular difficulties with work-related exposure to child pornography,"* about one-third said, *"applies somewhat"* and more than 10% said *"applies very much."* Around 40% said this statement did not apply at all.

Most agreed on the qualities that help personnel stay healthy and productive in work that involves exposure to child pornography.

When we asked about what qualities, from a list of specific items, help people to stay healthy and productive in work that involves exposure to child pornography, there was about 90% to 60% agreement on the following characteristics:

- Having successful outcomes in investigations
- Having a strong family
- Having friends and interests outside of law enforcement
- Having flexibility at work
- Getting a lot of exercise
- Longevity in law enforcement

When asked to name other helpful qualities, a number of participants noted the importance of supervisors who are sensitive to reactions of employees. They said, for example, *"good communication with first line supervisor," "supervisors that understand ICAC cases"* and *"good supervision, someone who's looking out for the employee."* Others noted the importance of camaraderie and understanding peers.

Most participants felt they had a least some influence over policies and practices in their agencies that impact the well-being of personnel with exposure to child pornography.

We asked participants, *"How much influence do you believe you have over policies and practices in your agency that impact the well-being of personnel with exposure to child pornography?"* One-third of participants believed they had a lot of influence and over 40% believed they had some influence. About 1 in 5 felt they had no influence.

Conclusions & Recommendations

We found that both sworn and unsworn personnel in many ICAC Task Forces and affiliates are exposed to child pornography during criminal investigations – a finding that was expected since these programs were created to address Internet-related child sexual exploitation.

The possibility of stress related to exposure to child pornography is a relatively new issue for law enforcement. Crimes involving online child pornography have increased sharply since the introduction of the Internet to the general public in the mid-1990s and its increasing accessibility and use. Most offenders arrested for possession of child pornography have images that graphically depict children being sexually abused^{1*}. One in five such offenders have images that show children suffering sexual violence. The number of law enforcement personnel who are exposed to these images is likely to increase as these crimes continue to emerge in local, state and federal jurisdictions across the U.S.

Exposure to child pornography may be a source of stress distinct from other police work because of the vivid depictions of harm done to children and sexual content of the images. The responses from participants in this study make it clear that some personnel have suffered considerable distress as a result of viewing child pornography. The well-being of personnel who investigate these crimes is a matter of concern, not just for compassionate reasons, but also because unrelieved stress can reduce productivity and retention of the specialized and highly trained staff who investigate these crimes.

We found that many survey participants were concerned about the possible negative effects of exposure to child pornography. Some described witnessing or experiencing personal and family problems, sexual difficulties, and work-related issues such as lowered productivity and requests for transfers. However, these concerns were not universal. Relatively few participants had actually seen or recognized problems among personnel in their agencies. Also, some who had seen problems did not view them as uniquely associated with exposure to child pornography, but rather as part of the expected stresses of police work. Most participants found their work satisfying, but many felt there were some negative impacts on family life and some difficulties for those with young children. We draw two main conclusions from the findings of this survey.

First, it is important to be aware of and acknowledge that exposure to child pornography can cause problems for some personnel. If there is little awareness of the potential for problems, problems may not be recognized and addressed when they arise. Some participants in this survey even noted that they had never thought of these issues before. One said, "*You've opened my eyes to a ton of things I have not been giving a second thought to.*" Awareness among supervisors may be particularly important. One participant said,

*Wolak J, Finkelhor D, Mitchell K. *Child pornography possessors and the internet: A national study*. Arlington, VA: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children; 2005.

"Detectives assigned to a specialty ICAC unit may go unnoticed when it comes to recognizing the psychological effects of child pornography cases if they do not have a unit supervisor who is cognizant of this need."

Second, awareness is enhanced by education and training. About 35% of survey participants had attended presentations or educational sessions that addressed potential problems related to viewing child pornography, and they were significantly more likely to express concern about the well-being of personnel and to have noted problems among some employees. One said,

"I think training personnel who investigate child porn on the effects that can happen to those individuals would assist [them] to recognize and evaluate what can happen to them. Then they would be better equipped to deal with it appropriately."

Recommendations

1. Education and training about possible negative reactions to viewing child pornography should be provided to all involved personnel. All supervisory personnel in ICAC Task Force programs, including those who work out of affiliates should receive such training. It should also be included in the technical training courses personnel attend, and information should be given to family members. Because prosecutors, civilian forensic analysts and other civilians also viewed child pornography in about 60% of the agencies where sworn personnel were exposed, these employees should be included in education and training. Survey participants suggested including this topic in technical training classes and creating materials that would be available to spouses and others.

Education and training should also include personnel who work undercover investigations with sexually explicit content. Survey participants noted that undercover investigations in which personnel pose as minors may also create difficulties for some personnel because of their sexually explicit content. For example, *"Those that engage in undercover chat operations or those that work cases involving communication between adults and children are exposed to material that I believe can be just as harmful ..."* Problems related to such investigations should be addressed along with exposure to child pornography.

2. The possibility of adverse sexual reactions should be openly discussed. Sexual problems may have been the least discussed area of concern among ICAC Task Forces and affiliates. Only 5% of participants said their programs had, in the past year, held staff meetings or training sessions that included discussions of possible sexual problems related to viewing child pornography. Yet it appears from survey comments that some participants had been plagued with reactions such as intrusive images and thoughts that impaired their ability to engage in healthy sexual relationships – and, for some individuals, counseling helped them to overcome such problems. Personnel experiencing sexual distress should be provided with resources and encouraged to seek help. Developing written materials on this topic would also be helpful because some people will inevitably be reluctant to seek help for sexual problems. Materials should be prepared with the input of experienced counselors and should be written to be shared with family members and romantic partners, in case personnel need help in explaining issues and gaining understanding from their partners.

3. Employees should be clearly informed about the nature of child sexual exploitation investigations and given the opportunity to turn down assignments. While many agencies allowed personnel to choose whether to work child pornography cases, not all did. For many employees, who are confronted with all types of crimes and expect to handle whatever they are faced with, this may not be a problem. But such work may be particularly difficult for some personnel – for example, those with histories of child sexual abuse and some who are parents. Making sure that personnel are clearly informed about the nature of the work and allowed to opt in or out will help to avoid placing personnel who may be particularly prone to negative reactions in positions where they may not be able to function well or remain. There was strong support for introductory programs for personnel beginning assignments that require exposure to child pornography, but few agencies have such programs. These would be an ideal place to alert personnel to possible problems, express openness and explain available supports.

4. Address isolation among personnel by recognizing the needs of small agencies and units, prosecutors and civilian employees. There are several ways that personnel who are working in relative isolation can be supported. These include training supervisors, including those in prosecutors' offices and police chiefs of small agencies so they understand the types of problems some personnel experience and can be sensitive to reactions; encouraging regular phone calls and check-ins by ICAC Task Forces to staff in small affiliates and prosecutors' offices; holding semi-annual meetings or trainings that include all impacted employees and provide opportunities for discussion; and assisting smaller agencies when investigations arise in their jurisdictions.

5. Acknowledge the frustrations of trying to conduct investigations with insufficient resources. Lack of technical and training resources were problems for many agencies. Several participants remarked that the efforts of their agencies were hindered by groups such as county administrators that did not view child sexual exploitation investigations as priorities or understand the resources required to conduct investigations. Another noted, "*The task force is growing and affiliates are being added, but infrastructure is not keeping pace.*" While there is often no easy solution to a lack of funds, there may be ways to ease the problem. Examples include educating commanders in larger agencies, reaching out to others responsible for funding, setting priorities for smaller police departments and fostering support by the public. One participant said, "*Most people do not realize how critical a problem child pornography is. We conduct seminars and are working on a weekly information section for the newspaper.*" Even if the groups in charge of budgeting for law enforcement services lack financial resources, public support and recognizing the value of law enforcement work in this area may reduce stress to some degree by assuring personnel that their work is valued.

6. Training should encourage supervisors and personnel to address possible stresses by creating bonds with and among employees and by encouraging communication and physical exercise. Rick Anderson, ICAC Program Training Coordinator, and Elizabeth Griffin, Internet behavior consultant, have made a number of presentations to law enforcement audiences about the stresses of child sexual exploitation investigations. They have noted that these types of no or low cost interventions can make a big difference in mitigating negative effects of exposure to child pornography. Yet many agencies were not giving staff formal or informal opportunities for discussion, and many supervisors were not asking employees about their reactions to child pornography cases. Informal gatherings such as meals and holiday parties can foster a sense of community. Informal check-ins by supervisors can help staff acknowledge and discuss distress when it occurs. Opportunities for discussions about reactions and feelings can be provided at staff meetings and during case reviews. Almost two-thirds of agencies had

onsite sports facilities. Physical activities can be fun and relieve stress. Many survey participants noted the value of exercise.

7. Basic law enforcement academy training should include information about how child pornography constitutes unlawful images that depict the sexual abuse and exploitation of minors. Because the Internet has facilitated the spread of this problem worldwide, these crimes potentially touch every law enforcement agency. Such basic training will assure that personnel have some grounding to approach cases even when they emerge in jurisdictions that have no or little history of such crimes.

8. Research is needed to create evidence-based policies and procedures that protect the well-being of personnel and to inform police psychologists and other mental health providers. Survey participants described a range of negative reactions. Some of these, such as sexual problems and hyper-vigilance around children seem directly related to viewing images of children being sexually abused. Others could, as some participants noted, arise from the more typical strains of police work. So research should be aimed at 1) identifying which problems are distinctly related to exposure to child pornography, 2) examining what characteristics or circumstances place some individuals at risk for adverse reactions and 3) establishing which agency policies and practices best alleviate negative impacts. Some participants from smaller agencies believed personnel in their groups were unlikely to have problems because of the small volume of cases they saw. Research to determine whether there is less stress in these circumstances would be helpful. For some personnel, even small amounts of exposure could be problematic.

There are other problems that survey participants described that may be more difficult to address, but are also pressing. These include agencies where:

- It is not acceptable to seek help for psychological problems or express concern about the mental health of employees
- There is a lack of respect for staff who work ICAC cases
- More psychological services are needed
- Flexible assignments are not available to give personnel relief from child pornography cases

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1. The Extent of Work-Related Exposure to Child pornography

	ICAC Task Forces n = 40	Affiliates n=471	All agencies n=511
<u>ABOUT THE AGENCIES:</u>			
<u>Size of population served by agency</u>			
25,000 or less	3%	23%	22%
25,000-100,000	5%	34%	32%
More than 100,000	90%	41%	45%
Not sure or missing	3%	1%	1%
<u>Year agency became part of ICAC</u>			
1999-2001	53%	0	4%
2002-2004	31%	21%	21%
2005 and later	15%	64%	60%
Not sure or missing	3%	15%	15%
<u>Who does forensic exams for agency</u>			
My agency	60%	38%	40%
My agency or other, depending	33%	22%	23%
Other agency	7%	39%	36%
Not sure or missing	0	1%	1%
<u>ABOUT THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS:</u>			
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	83 %	83 %	83%
Female	17 %	17 %	17%
<u>Years assigned to ICAC program</u>			
1 year or less	15%	35%	33%
2 to 4 years	35%	57%	55%
5 or more years	47%	7%	10%
Not sure or missing	3%	2%	2%
<u>Years working child pornography (CP) cases</u>			
1 year or less	10%	20%	19%
2 to 4 years	23%	40%	39%
5 or more years	63 %	39%	41%
Not sure or missing	5%	<1%	1(4)
<u>Had attended training or education session about psychological impact of CP exposure</u>			
	77%	34%	37%
<u>IN THE AGENCY</u>			
Prosecutors viewed CP	93 %	49%	52%
Civilian forensic analysts viewed CP	45 %	12%	15%
Other civilians viewed CP	27 %	7%	9%
Any non-sworn employees were exposed to CP	97%	57%	61%
<u>Number of sworn personnel exposed in past year</u>			
Zero in past year	0	3%	3%
1 to 3	7%	46%	43%
4 to 10	33%	35%	35%
> 10	50%	5%	9%
Not sure or missing	10%	11%	11%

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	ICAC Task Forces n = 40	Affiliates n=471	All agencies n=511
<u>Number of prosecutors exposed in past year</u>			
Zero in past year	0%	2%	2%
1 to 3	27%	23%	23%
4 to 10	43%	9%	11%
> 10	20%	<1%	2%
Not sure or missing	0	16%	15%
No prosecutors working CP cases	7%	51%	48%
<u>Number of civilian forensic analysts exposed to CP in past year</u>			
Zero in past year	0	<1%	<1%
1 to 3	27%	8%	10%
4 to 10	17%	1%	2%
> 10	0	<1%	<1%
Not sure or missing	0	2%	2%
No CFAs working CP cases	55%	88%	85%
<u>Number other civilians exposed to CP in past year</u>			
Zero in past year	0	<1%	<1%
3 or fewer	25%	4%	6%
4 to 10	3%	1%	1%
> 10	0	0	0
Not sure or missing	0	2%	2%
No other civilians working CP cases	73%	93%	91%

Note: Some categories may not total 100% because of rounding or missing values.

Table 2. Concerns about and Experiences with Problems Related to Exposure to Child Pornography

	ICAC Task Forces n = 40	Affiliates n=471	All agencies n=511
<u>How concerned about the psychological impact of CP exposure?</u>			
Not at all	0	19%	18%
A little	10%	29%	28%
Somewhat	33%	32%	32%
Very	57%	16%	19%
Not sure or missing	0	3%	3%
Had seen problems that arose from CP exposure	35%	8%	10%
<u>Noticed the following problems among personnel exposed to CP</u>			
Spending too much time at work?	27%	12%	13%
Being isolated at work?	23%	11%	12%
Over-reactions, loss of objectivity?	17%	9%	10%
Frequent outbursts of anger?	13%	5%	6%
Victim mentality?	10%	3%	3%
Alcohol abuse?	0	3%	3%
An employee asked for a transfer	23%	6%	8%
Received complaints from a family member	13%	5%	6%
Intervened because of a problem	27%	3%	5%

Note: Some categories may not total 100% because of rounding or missing values.

Table 3. How Personnel Were Chosen to Work Cases that Involved Exposure to Child Pornography

	Host ICACs n = 40	Affiliates n=471	Total n=511
<u>People have been assigned to our ICAC when they didn't want to be. Applies:</u>			
Not at all	85%	74%	75%
Somewhat	8%	18%	17%
Very much	8%	2%	2%
Not sure or missing	0	5%	5%
Flexibility at work is very or extremely helpful	72%	74%	74%
<u>Agency has</u>			
Flexible assignments	55%	60%	60%
Exit tickets	43%	29%	29%
Preparation for first exposure to CP?	45%	19%	21%
<u>Sworn employees are screened for</u>			
History of child sexual abuse	20%	7%	8%
Close contact with children	35%	11%	13%

Note: Some categories may not total 100% because of rounding or missing values.

Table 4. Types and Amounts of Supports Provided to Personnel who Work Child Pornography Cases

	Host ICACs n = 40	Affiliates n=471	Total n=511
<u>Services available in agency</u>			
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	93%	81%	82%
Other internal psychological services	60%	50%	51%
Peer counselors	55%	35%	36%
Chaplains	65%	68%	67%
External psychological providers	53%	53%	53%
<u>Number or psychological resources available</u>			
0	3%	4%	4%
1	10%	14%	14%
2	17%	21%	21%
3 to 5	68%	60%	61%
Not sure or missing	3%	1%	1%
Agency has EAP or other mental health staff knowledgeable about CP	33%	11%	13%
Agency has EAP or other mental health staff comfortable talking about CP	45%	17%	19%
Sees need for more psychological resources	75%	36%	39%
<u>Priority of need</u>			
Low	0	4%	4%
Medium	37%	20%	21%
High	35%	11%	13%
Not sure or missing	3%	<1%	1%
Not applicable	25%	64%	61%
<u>In your agency, how acceptable is it to express concern about the psychological health of personnel?</u>			
Not at all acceptable	0	7%	6%
Somewhat	23%	32%	31%
Mostly	27%	26%	26%
Very	43%	25%	27%
Not sure or missing	7%	10%	10%
<u>In your agency, how acceptable is it to seek help for psychological problems?</u>			
Not at all acceptable	0	7%	7%
Somewhat	15%	34%	32%
Mostly	13%	22%	21%
Very	65%	25%	28%
Not sure or missing	7%	12%	11%
Agency requires periodic meeting with psychologist or mental health assessment	13%	5%	5%
<u>In the past year, agency had meetings that included discussion of</u>			
Signs of stress at work	45	10	12
Signs of stress at home	25	8	10
Sexual problems	17	5	6
Feelings about CP are discussed never or rarely	75%	84%	83%

	Host ICACs n = 40	Affiliates n=471	Total n=511
In the past year, had asked any personnel how they feel about CP	90%	32%	37%
<u>Policies or resources available in agency</u>			
Discussions of CP reactions at staff meetings	65%	22%	25%
Group sessions led by psychologist	13%	5%	5%
Case reviews	57%	22%	25%
<u>Number of opportunities for discussion, group sessions, case reviews</u>			
None	15%	65%	61%
1	40%	17%	19%
2	33%	13%	14%
3	10%	2%	3%
Not sure	3%	3%	3%
<u>In past year, program has had</u>			
Informal gatherings	63%	28%	30%
Informal gatherings with family, friends	47%	17%	19%
There is access to onsite sports facilities	60%	63%	63%
There is preparation about exposure to CP for spouses/partners	10%	3%	3%
<u>How much respect is given to staff who investigate sex crimes against children?</u>			
None or very little	13%	11%	11%
Some	27%	33%	33%
A lot	53%	46%	46%
Not sure or missing	7%	10%	10%
<u>How big a problem is general culture of agency?</u>			
No problem at all	40%	46%	45%
Somewhat	33%	26%	26%
A problem	10%	14%	14%
A very big problem	17%	8%	9%
Not sure or missing	0	6%	6%
<u>How big a problem is conflict or frustrations with prosecutors?</u>			
No problem at all	27%	42%	41%
Somewhat	35%	21%	22%
A problem	17%	14%	14%
A very big problem	20%	15%	15%
Not sure or missing	0	9%	8%
<u>How big a problem is conflict or frustrations with judges?</u>			
No problem at all	20%	29%	28%
Somewhat	25%	29%	28%
A problem	23%	17%	17%
A very big problem	30%	14%	15%
Not sure or missing	3%	12%	11%

	Host ICACs n = 40	Affiliates n=471	Total n=511
<u>How big a problem is lack of forensic capacity?</u>			
No problem at all	7%	30%	29%
Somewhat	33%	29%	29%
A problem	27%	21%	21%
A very big problem	33%	18%	19%
Not sure or missing	0	2%	2%
<u>How big a problem is obsolete equipment?</u>			
No problem at all	40%	31%	32%
Somewhat	40%	32%	33%
A problem	10%	19%	19%
A very big problem	5%	14%	13%
Not sure or missing	5%	4%	4%
<u>How big a problem is lack of training?</u>			
No problem at all	30%	34%	34%
Somewhat	30%	31%	31%
A problem	27%	19%	20%
A very big problem	13%	14%	13%
Not sure or missing	0	2%	2%
<u>About technology or training resources, agency</u>			
<u>had problems or very big problems in</u>			
No areas	25%	44%	42%
1 area	40%	20%	23%
2 areas	30%	20%	21%
3 areas	5%	15%	14%

Note: Some categories may not total 100% because of rounding or missing values.

Table 5. Views about How to Minimize Negative Impacts of Exposure to Child Pornography

	Host ICACs n = 40	Affiliates n=471	Total n=511
<u>Support for mandatory</u>			
Introductory programs	85%	75%	75%
Screening before assignment	65%	41%	43%
Psychological assessments	55%	41%	43%
Rotations	15%	10%	10%
<u>The following would be very or extremely helpful</u>			
Making sure personnel in small agencies aren't left out of services	87%	71%	72%
Making sure prosecutors aren't left out of services	87%	67%	69%
Introductory programs	70%	66%	66%
Training psychologists in EAPs	65%	57%	58%
Screening requirements before assignment	60%	45%	47%
Including discussion of CP impact in technical training sessions	65%	54%	55%
Making sure civilians aren't left out of services	77%	46%	48%
Optional psychological assessments	65%	44%	45%
Training peer counselors to talk about CP	55%	37%	39%
Optional rotations	43%	38%	39%
Developing a self-help website	37%	31%	31%
Agree very much that people find satisfaction because their work helps children	85%	69%	71%
<u>Work-related exposure to CP has a negative impact on family life</u>			
Does not apply at all	37%	56%	55%
Applies somewhat	37%	26%	27%
Applies very much	5%	4%	4%
Not sure or missing	20%	14%	14%
<u>People with young children seem to have particular difficulties with work-related exposure to CP</u>			
Does not apply at all	33%	43%	42%
Applies somewhat	45%	30%	31%
Applies very much	5%	13%	13%
Not sure or missing	17%	14%	14%
<u>The following are very or extremely helpful in keeping personnel healthy and productive</u>			
Having successful outcomes	85%	92%	91%
Having a strong family	85%	83%	83%
Having friends and interests outside of work	87%	83%	83%
Having flexibility at work	73%	74%	74%
Getting a lot of exercise	73%	62%	63%
Longevity in law enforcement	55%	61%	60%

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	Host ICACs n = 40	Affiliates n=471	Total n=511
<u>How much influence do you have over policies and practices in your agency?</u>			
None or very little	13%	23%	22%
Some	43%	43%	43%
A lot	45%	30%	31%
Not sure or missing	0	4%	3%

Note: Some categories may not total 100% because of rounding or missing values.

Appendix 2: How the Survey Was Conducted

Sample

Emails were sent to the commanders of each of the 59 Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces and to the main contact persons for each of the 1,797 law enforcement agencies designated as ICAC affiliates at the time of the study. The emails explained the study and asked respondents to participate. Two reminders were sent to non-responders at two weeks and four weeks after the first communication.

Procedures for answering questions

Participants clicked on a link in the email, which took them to a page with instructions on how to complete the survey as well as their rights as study participants (e.g., voluntary, participation would not affect their status in the ICAC program, all information would be confidential). The process of completing and submitting the survey was taken as sign of consent. Surveys took approximately 20 minutes to complete and respondents were able to save their responses after beginning and return to complete the survey later. No incentive was provided. Data was collected using Vovici online software. Vovici provides a multi-functioning survey tool that allows subscribed users to create data collection instruments, host such instruments in a secure environment, and download data directly into SPSS, a statistical data analysis program, or as a CSV file (i.e., Microsoft Excel).

Data were collected online between March 12, 2008 and June 23, 2008. The survey protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of New Hampshire's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Response rate

The response rate for this online survey was calculated as the number of individuals who submitted the survey ($n = 567$) divided by the number of email invitations sent ($n = 1,856$) less any email invitations that were returned as undeliverable ($n = 347$). The survey response rate, 37%, is within the expected range of well conducted online surveys. After examining the data for duplicate entries, a final sample of 564 was identified (40 from the ICAC Task Forces and 524 from the affiliate agencies). For purposes of this report, the responses of 53 affiliate agencies were not used because no sworn personnel had been exposed to child pornography, leaving a final sample of 511 agencies, 40 ICAC Task Forces and 471 affiliates.

Definitions and Measures

The questions in this survey asked about "*your ICAC program, meaning the one or more persons in your agency assigned to conduct ICAC investigations under the federally funded ICAC Task Force program.*" Some questions asked about "*the resources and policies of your agency, meaning the agency that hosts your ICAC program.*"

The survey was designed for the purpose of this study. The questions were developed with the assistance of ICAC law enforcement personnel known to the researchers and reviewed by such personnel before the survey was finalized. The survey was divided into sections that asked questions about sworn personnel, prosecutors, civilian forensic analysts and other civilians who may have had work-related exposure to child pornography through the ICAC program. If the ICAC program did not include a category of employee, the survey was programmed to skip those questions. Questions were also included that asked about policies, practices and resources in the respondents' larger agency as well as their opinions about them.