When the child reveals a sexual abuse: the real-life experience of the couple, its functions and the consequences

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**Theoretical framework**

A lot of studies (Davies, 1995; Dyb and al., 2003; Cyr and al., 2011; Elliot and Carnes, 2001; Kaléidos, 2008; Van Toledo and Seymour, 2013) → high level of distress after disclosure

**But:**

• Focus on parents individually
• Without focusing on the real experience

**Objective and interest**

• Couple dynamic?
• Parental suffering → child’s suffering

**Hypothesis**

Distress significantly present inside the couple after the child’s sexual abuse disclosure

**Methodology**

**Sample**

• 6 couples
• One or more child(ren) sexually assault (extra or intrafamilial, excluding a member of the couple met)

**Tools**

• Clinical analyses
• Demographic information (abuse circumstances and family characteristics)
• 6 questionnaires (LEDS, DAS, DCI, PAI, QAECEP, SDI)
• Semi-structured interview

**Results:** modelization of the process experienced by couples after a child disclosure of sexual abuse

**Discussion**

**How to explain this phenomenon?**

• Conjugal break-up?
  ➢ Necessity of a « psychosocial territory » // Minuchin, 1979
• Conjugal satisfaction?
  ➢ Temporary conjugal disappearance → adaptive in short term
  ➢ Standard conjugal satisfaction → resources to face this step
• Focus on the child?
  ➢ Appears as adaptive and reassurance
  ➢ Answers to a desire of reparation after disclosure // Scheeringa and Zeanah, 2001
• Reduction of intimacy?
  ➢ Echo with traumatic child experience → trigger disgust
• Dyadic coping
  ➢ Agreement on the procedure → resource
  ➢ Differences between emotions management → trigger a distance between partners

**Conclusions : clinical implication and future researches**

• Expression and listening of couples // Myrick and Green, 2013
• Release and restore parenthood // Valentino and al., 2010
• Contain conjugality // Delage, 2000
• Speaking space for every subsystems // Hébert, 2011
  ➢ But being careful to temporality
• Relation before disclosure?
  ➢ Compare results before and after trauma → ideal but impossible to reach
  ➢ To make up for, evaluations at different times → longitudinal study
• Influence of couples’ experience on distress and prognostic of child’s evolution