

## **A Hidden Factor in Teen Suicide**

by Jerry McMullin

Child protection may be more important in preventing teen suicides and suicidal impulses than most parents realize. Child abuse can result in depression and other mental disorders that correlate with suicidal thoughts and feelings in the teen and young adult years. An additional factor, typically left unmentioned in literature, is that child predators may intentionally program their victims to commit suicide. This article is based on information from abuse survivors.

Child predators plan their crimes carefully. They court the trust of parents and others to obtain private access to victims. They typically know how to perpetrate assaults on children in ways that leave no visible evidence. A key component of their crimes is making sure that their victims don't report them to anyone. Their methods of influencing the minds of their victims to cover their crimes are psychologically sophisticated, suggesting the possibility that they have been trained.

Regardless of their source of information, it is evident that many predators know how to manipulate the minds of their victims. Instead of merely intimidating children into silence with threats of physical harm to them and their families, many predators make the abuse so horrific that children block the memory of the event from their conscious awareness, a mental process sometimes called traumatic forgetting.

Predators who use traumatic forgetting as a way of covering their crimes often supplement it with the verbal assertion "You will not remember this." Children, while experiencing the intense pain and/or terror of an assault, are highly suggestible. This suggestible state is analogous to a hypnotic trance. Statements given during the abuse can become embedded deep in their subconscious minds and have the effect of post hypnotic suggestions. Therefore, memory suppression statements such as the above can further hinder the victim's ability to remember what happened.

Traumatic forgetting, even combined with the assertion "You will not remember this," may not last indefinitely. The human mind is very resilient. As the child grows and heals to some degree from the abuse, the memory may begin to surface. Remembering the abuse, coupled with releasing out the emotions and pain embedded with the memory are natural healing processes of the mind that many therapists encourage.

To further suppress memory of the abuse, some predators will combine the first assertion with the added threat, "If you do remember this you will kill yourself." The confusing inconsistency in the two assertions probably heightens the suggestibility of the victim. This second statement is also buried deep in the subconscious mind along with the memory of the abuse.

To understand how this programming can lead to teen or young adult suicidal thoughts, consider the following hypothetical situation: A little girl between ages five and seven is accessed a number of times by members of the predator community. They use a combination of threats, traumatic forgetting, and programming (e.g., "You will not remember this. If you do remember, you will kill yourself.") to cover their crimes. Mercifully, she does forget. However later in her teens depression sets in. Her parents take her to a therapist who helps her stabilize her life.

The subconscious mind seems to hold traumatic memories below the surface until a person is strong enough to deal with them. As she stabilizes and becomes stronger, memories or flashes of memory of the abuse begin to surface into her awareness.

However, the surfacing of her memories triggers the embedded post hypnotic suggestion "If you do remember this you will kill yourself." Because the statement is coming from her inner mind, she perceives it to be her own idea.

She begins to have suicidal thoughts and feelings accompanied by flashes of traumatic memories. She is caught in a conflict between two forces. The natural healing processes of her mind are bringing the memory to the surface so she can release the associated emotional and physical pain. However, the post hypnotic suggestion that she will commit suicide if she remembers causes her to become suicidal. As she suppresses the suicidal thoughts and feelings she also suppresses the memory. Thus the predators' secrets are kept. Mental health professionals are

sometimes so focused on treating the disorders that accompany abuse that they overlook the role of programming.

Those who have seen stage hypnosis may have witnessed a more benign form of the mental processes involved. The hypnotist tells the volunteer while in trance: "When I bring you out of trance you will not remember this conversation. I will touch my tie and you will bark like a dog." The volunteer is awakened from the trance. An "hypnotic amnesia" is in place, for awhile at least. Then the stage hypnotist touches his tie, thereby triggering the entertaining response, and the show goes on. In the case of survivors, remembering the abuse is the trigger to having suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Those who have been programmed this way can choose to not act on the suggestion. Releasing their feelings of sadness, terror, rage, betrayal, etc. prior to remembering what happened may reduce their distress. It may also be helpful to them to know that some of their suicidal impulses are merely responses to statements made by the predators in an effort to cover their crimes. Just as remembering the conversation with the stage hypnotist empowers the volunteer to more easily counter his suggestions, so assuring survivors that they do not need to act on impulses that accompany their memories may empower them to give less credence to such impulses during the process of uncovering what happened.