



# TRUTH THROUGH TRAUMA

Exploitation Case Study Workbook

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## Introduction

This workbook adopts a **trauma-informed approach** to understanding and addressing exploitation. It aims to provide professionals with practical tools and insights, drawing on real-life case studies and lived experience, to enhance safeguarding practices and promote healing-centered engagement.

## Case Study: Jay

Jay is a 15-year-old with a history of domestic abuse. He has experienced exclusion from school due to behavioral issues and struggles with emotional regulation. These experiences have made him particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

## Early Indicators

- Sudden changes in behavior or appearance
- Increased secrecy or withdrawal
- Decline in school performance
- New or unexplained possessions
- Associating with older or unfamiliar individuals

## Grooming Process

The grooming process involves a gradual progression from providing support and attention to exerting control and manipulation. Exploiters often build trust by meeting the victim's unmet needs, then slowly introduce coercive tactics to gain power over them.

## Missed Opportunities

System failures can include a lack of communication between agencies, inadequate risk assessments, and a failure to recognize the signs of exploitation. Opportunities to intervene are often missed due to a lack of awareness and training among professionals.

## Trauma Lens

Reframing Jay's behavior through a trauma lens helps to understand his actions as responses to past trauma. Instead of labeling him as 'difficult' or 'non-compliant,' consider how his experiences have shaped his coping mechanisms and ability to trust.

## Professional Reflection

Consider the following questions:

- How might my own biases or assumptions impact my interactions with vulnerable individuals?
- What steps can I take to create a more trauma-informed environment in my workplace?
- How can I better collaborate with other professionals to ensure comprehensive support for those at risk?

## Practical Action

- **Build Relationships:** Establish trusting relationships with vulnerable individuals by demonstrating empathy and consistency.
- **Curiosity Over Judgement:** Approach challenging behaviors with curiosity rather than judgement, seeking to understand the underlying causes.
- **Early Intervention:** Prioritize early intervention strategies to prevent exploitation before it occurs.