# Sex as self-injury (SASI)

Cecilia Fredlund, PhD, resident physician in psychiatry, Linköping university hospital

Linda Jonsson, PhD, Senior Lecturer Barnafrid, Linköpings Universitet



# Swedish National Centre of Research and Knowledge in Child Abuse



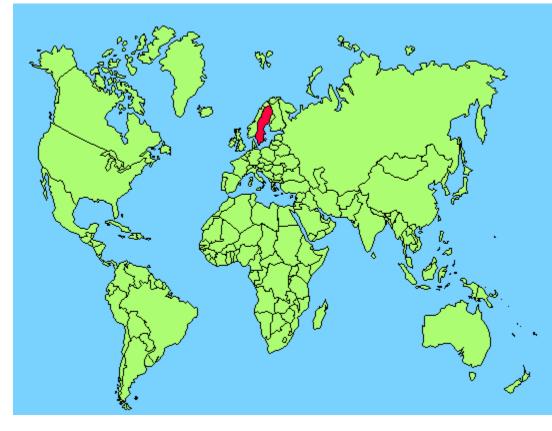
#### **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**

- Swedish context

Womens and childrens rights in focus:

- The anti corpal punishment act, 1979
- The sex purchace act, 1999
- The consent act, 2018





#### Young people selling sex in Sweden (Svedin et al., 2015)

20 n= 4	04 343	200 n= 3		203 n= 5	
Selling sex	CI	Selling sex	Cl	Selling sex	CI
%	95%	%	95%	%	95%
1,4	1,0 - 1,8 %	1,5	1,1 – 1,9 %	0,9	0,7 – 1,1 %





BEMÖTER ANKLAGELSERNA. Förre polischefen Göran Lindberg (till vänster) medger att han hade sex med flickan: □Men utan något som helst våld□, säger han i förhör. Foto: Suvad Mrkonjic

#### Polischefen Göran Lindberg medger sex: "Men utan något våld"

Flickan säger att Göran Lindberg, 63, tvingade henne till förnedringssex med förbundna ögon i en lägenhet i Bandhagen.

Expressen kan i dag avslöja hur den förre länspolismästaren bemöter anklagelserna i polisförhören - ord för ord:

- Jag vidgår att vi hade sex, men utan något som helst våld, säger han.

Före detta länspolismästare i Uppsala län och rektor vid polishögskolan.

Efter pensioneringen har Göran Lindberg kontinuerligt föreläst i frågor som engagerat honom under stora delar av yrkeskarriären: jämställdhet mellan könen, etik och moral.

Fram till gripandet i Falun i måndags.

Nu sitter han häktad, inlåst i en cell på Kronobergshäktet i Stockholm, misstänkt för tre fall av förberedelse till grov våldtäkt mot barn i Falun, Stockholm och Solna. Han misstänks också för våldtäkt mot en flicka i Stockholmsförorten Bandhagen 8 januari förra året.



### **ANNA**



I don't t want to remember the hands, eyes or the hitting.

Not the dizzyness and the anxiety.

Tied hands. Broken bottles and sharp knives.

And afterwards. Afterwards.

The blood on the bed sheet. Cuts. Bluemarks on the throat.

I ran barefoot in the snow at night that winter.

I lit fire at the water and burned notes.

Tried to choke those screams that never quieted.

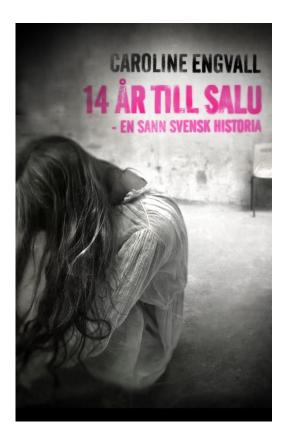
All phone numbers in the black book that I always slept with under the pillow.

Because I would never believe I was worth anytthing.

A telephone call.

Dirty money at the cupboard that created the night's anxietyfire at the water.

Without your violence, I couldn't excist. (Tessan, in Engvall, 2008, 14 year old for sale)



#### Why?

- Curious, exciting
- Like sex a lot
- Needed somewhere to stay
- Need of money, food, drugs, alcohol
- Wanted to be seen, confirmation
- Sexual abuse leading to repeating the abuse
- Threats or coercion
- Manipulation/grooming
- A form of self injury

Young women selling sex online-Narratives on regulating feelings Jonsson, Svedin & Hydén, 2015

Figure 1. Themes and sub-themes related to the process of selling sex

#### Adverse life experiences

- \* Traumatic events
- \* Feeling different and being excluded

#### The body, as a regulating tool

- \* Being seen
- \* Being touched
- \* Being in control
- \* Affect regulation and selfharming

#### Change or die

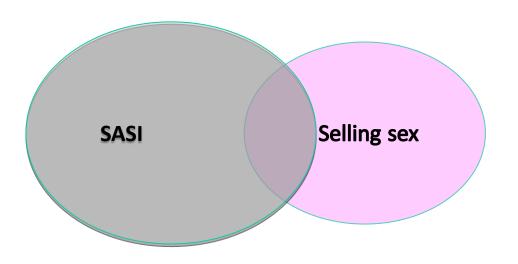
- \* Living close to death
- \* The process of quitting

Entering Immersion Exiting

9/9/2019

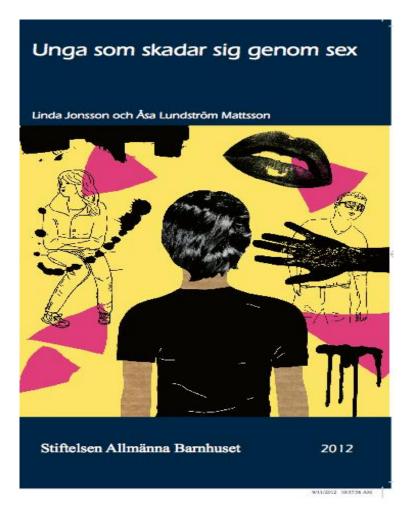
"...and I was the good one that didn't cut myself anymore. Everyone was happy but I was feeling as miserable.... Just finding other forms that wasn't that visible...things that almost killed me for real".





#### Adolescents' motives for selling sex in a welfare state (Fredlund et al., 2018)

<b>Emotional reasons</b>	Material but no emotional reasons	Pleasure only or no underlying motive
Wanted closeness	Needed money	Fun/exciting
To feel appreciated	Needed drugs	Like to have sex
Did not feel mentally well/		Influenced by peer/partner
To reduce anxiety  The buyer persuaded me		Affected by alcohol or drugs
Sexual abuse		Gender distribution
Sex as self-injury		Age of the buyer
Sexual orientation		Times selling sex
Compensation		



## Suggested denition of SASI

"When a person has conversed involving mental conversed behavior causes school, at a conversed with the conversed warning!"

(Åsa Landbe

to themselves. The or impairment at rtant areas"

lattson, 2012)

"What clearly distinguishes those who cut themselves by those using sex as self injury is that those another person is hurting instead of themselves. The young person let someone else control them."



### **Functions**

- Affect regulation

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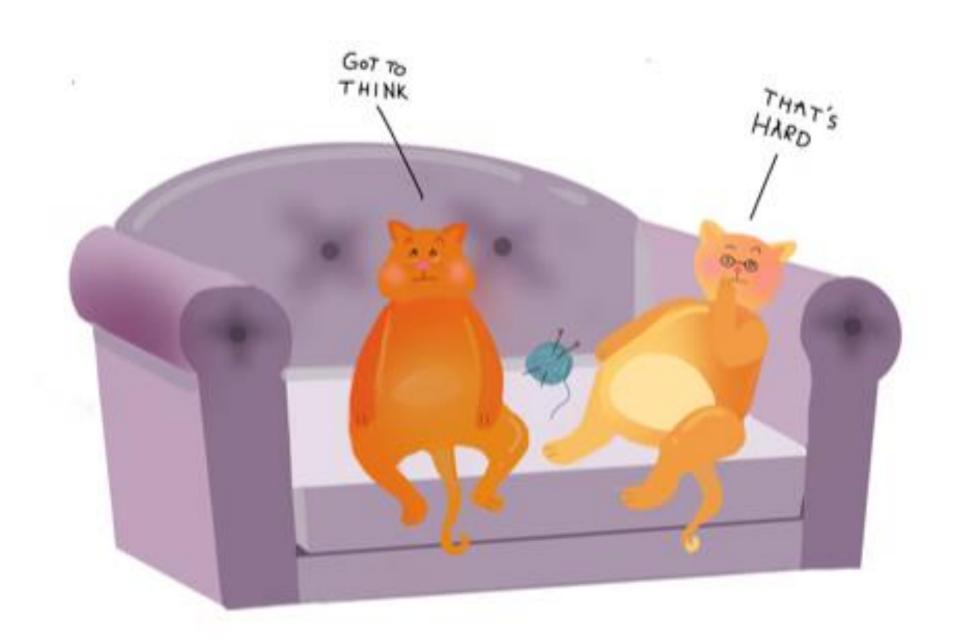
#### **Functions**

- Affect regulation
- A cry for help... (interpersonal function)

#### **Functions**

- Affect regulation
- A cry for help... (interpersonal function)
- Life or death
- Dislike oneself and the body

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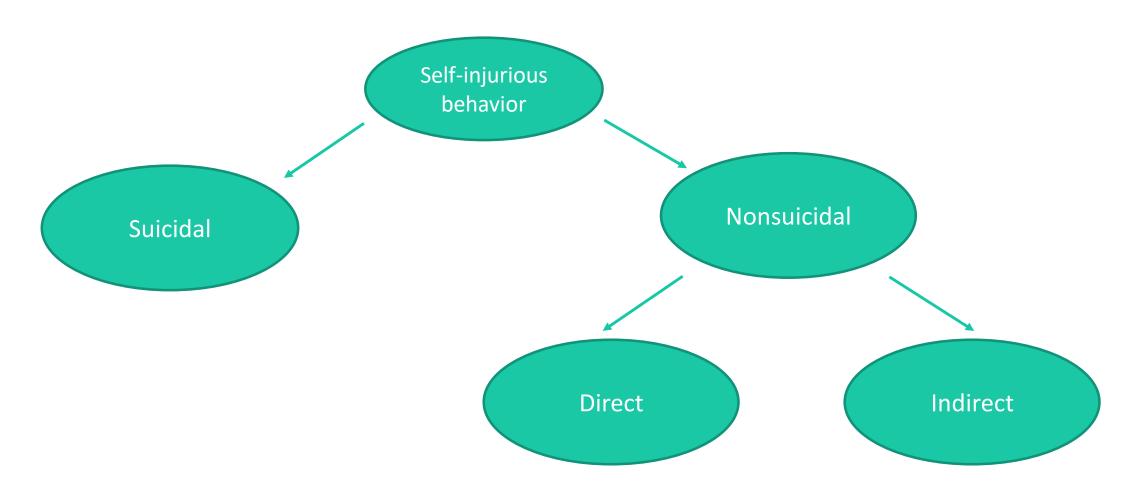


### **Nonsuicidal Self-Injury**

DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association (2013)

- Self-inflicted destruction of body tissue
- No suicidal intention
- Function:
  - Relieve negative feelings
  - resolve interpersonal difficulties
  - induce positive feelings

## Self-injurious behavior



### Tramagenic dynamics

#### Traumatic sexualization

- Compulisive sexual behavior
- Negativ attitude towards sexuality
- Seuxal abusive behavior
- Confusion about sexual identity or norms
- Negative connotations in relation to sex

#### Powerlessness

- Reenacting sexual abuse

Finkelhore and Browne 1985

### Tramagenic dynamics

#### Stigmatization

- Sens of being different
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Self-destructive behaviors

#### Betrayal

- Aversion to intimate relationships
- Need to regain trust and security

#### Adolescents Selling Sex and Sex as Self-Injury

Cecilia Fredlund





Fredlund, C., Svedin, C.G., Priebe, G., Jonsson, L., & Wadsby, M. (2017). Self-reported frequency of sex as self-injury (SASI) in a national study of Swedish adolescents and association to sociodemographic factors, sexual behaviors, abuse and mental health. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 11:9.

Jonsson, L.S., Svedin, C.G., Priebe, G., Fredlund, C., Wadsby, M., & Zetterqvist, M. (2017). Similarities and Differences in the Functions of Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) and Sex as Self-Injury (SASI). Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior (in press).

Zetterqvist, M., Svedin, C.G., Priebe, G., Fredlund, C., Wadsby, M., & Jonsson, L.S (2018). Self-reported nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) and sex as self-injury (SASI): Relationship to abuse, risk behaviors, trauma symptoms, self-esteem and attachment. *Psychiatry Research 265, 309-316.* 





#### Rapport

#### Unga sex och Internet – i en föränderlig värld

Carl Göran Svedin (red)

Gisela Priebe

Marie Wadsby

Linda Jonsson

Cecilia Fredlund





### Method

- National sample from 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Swedish high schools
- Anonymously on lecture time
- Modified version of Svedin and Priebe (2004, 2009, 2014)

Participating schools	171
Total number of participants	5839
Response rate	59.7%
Mean age (years)	18.0

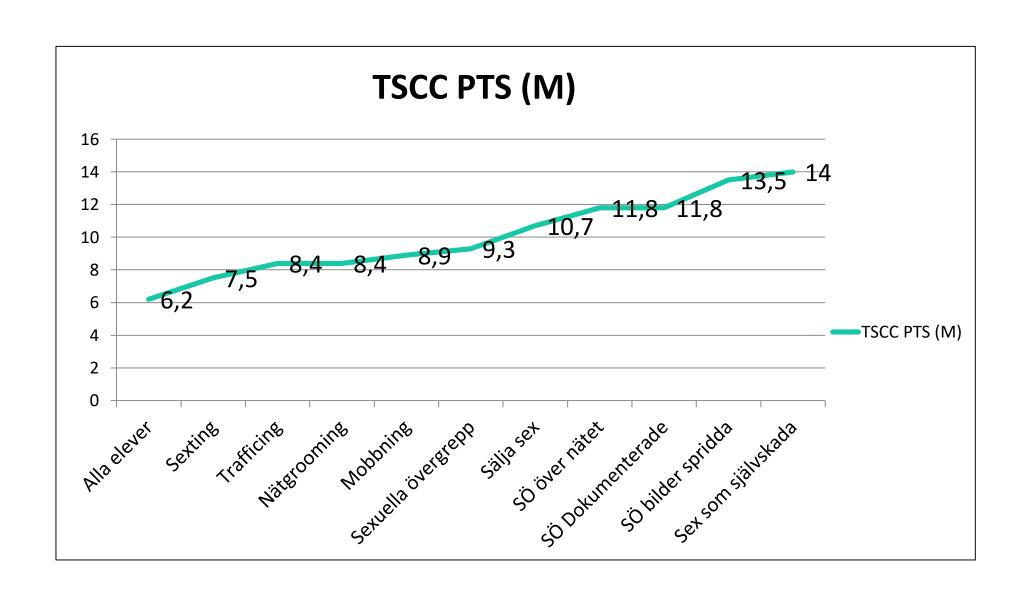
#### Have you ever used sex to intentionally hurt yourself?

	Girls % (n)	Boys % (n)
Sex as self-injury	3.2 (100)	0.8 (20)
Perceived pain	70.7	55.6

	SASI %	Non-SASI %
Heterosexual orientation	60.0	87.9
Selling sex	11.3	0.7
Any sexual abuse	75.0	19.6
Penetrative sexual abuse	48.4	5.3
Non-suicidal self-injury	65.6	16.6
Healthcare for		
Depression/anxiety	61.0	18.2
Eating disorder	28.8	5.3
Suicide attempt	31.4	3.5

#### Trauma symptom checklist for children

TSCC	SASI	Non-SASI	
	mean	mean	p-value
Anxiety	9.6	4.6	<.001
Depression	12.4	5.0	<.001
Anger	9.0	4.0	<.001
Post-traumatic stress	14.0	6.1	<.001
Dissociation	12.9	5.6	<.001
Sexual concerns	4.8	2.4	<.001



### Funktionen av SASI

	SASI %
To relieve feeling numb or empty	70.0
To punish yourself	65.5
To stop bad feelings	63.6
Because your don't like your body	58.6
To feel something, even if it was pain	52.9
To get control of a situation	49.6

	NSSI n= 910 %	SASI n=41 %	NSSI+SASI n=76 %
Social influence			
To get attention	9.3	26.8	17.1
To try to get a reaction from someone, even if it's a negative reaction	10.4	34.1	13.2

### Differences NSSI – SASI – NSSI+SASI

- Sexual abuse (penetrative)
- Trauma symptoms (PTS, dissociation, sexual concerns)
- No difference in emotional or physical abuse, self-esteem, parental care/overprotection, depression, anxiety, anger
- NSSI+SASI more exposed and burden

## Motives and Manifestations of Sex as Self-Injury (SASI) Fredlund, C., Wadsby, M., & Jonsson, L.S.

### Method

- Internet based open-ended questionnaire
- Anonymous, self-selected
- Experience of SASI, over 15 years of age
- Websites 37 NGOs
- Dec 2016 April 2017
- Content analysis (Patton)

### Questionnarie

#### 'Describe your experiences of sex as self-injury'

- 1) 'In which way did you have sex as self-injury?'
- 2) 'How did it start?'
- 3) 'How old were you when you had sex as self-injury? Do you still have it?
- 4) 'What made it proceed'
- 5) 'Describe a typical occasion when you had sex as self-injury, what happened?'
- 6) 'Think of a typical occasion. If this happened with another person, what relationship did you have to the other person and what was his/her age and gender?'
- 7) ('If you have stopped, what made you quit?')

## Background data

	n
Total number of participants	199
Gender	
Female	190
Male	4
Non-Binary	4
Age	
15-19 years	27
20-40 years	151
41-64 years	19
Age starting to use SASI	
Before 12 years	8
12-19 years	165
After 20 years	21

### Conclusions

- Direct indirect self-injury
- Part of sexual violence Sexual abuse law aspects
- PTSD, earlier sexual abuse, poor mental health
- A reason for selling sex among others
- Risk of re-traumatization and re-victimization



### **Support and Therapy**

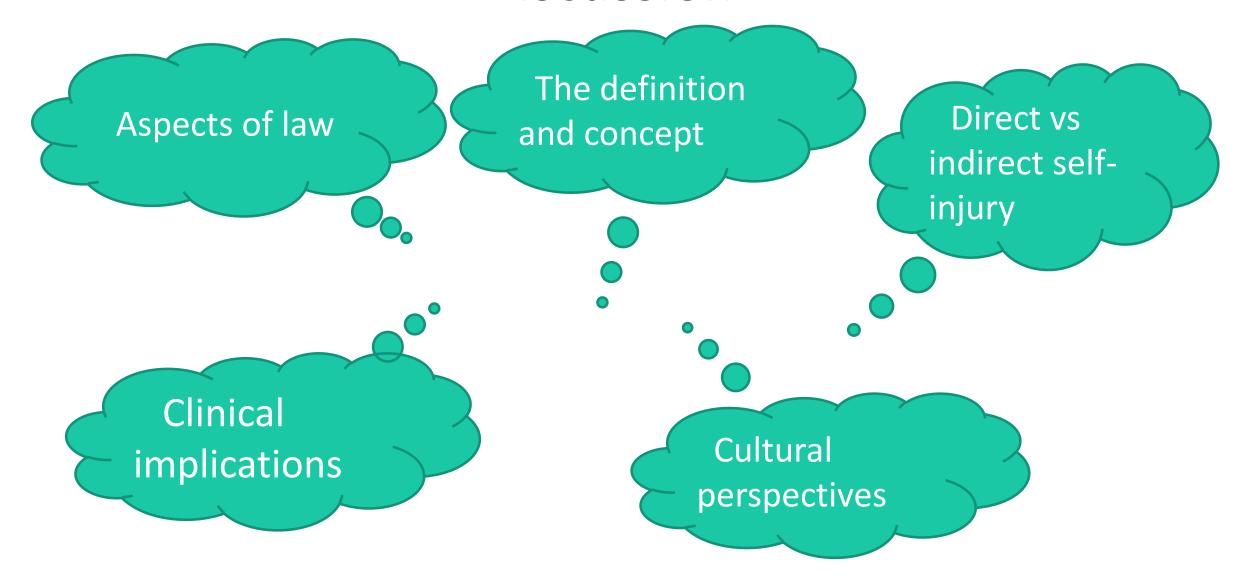
- Often a range of symptoms
- Mental illness including high scores on PTS
- History of trauma
- Risky life
- Self-injourious behavior

- Trauma informed care
- PTSD treatment e.g.TF-CBT, EMDR
- Affect regulation therapy
- Sexual health therapy for the body

Two and two and talk about....

....SEX

### Discussion



### Clinical recommendations

- Primary prevention work in school- sexual abuse
- Secondary prevention- risk groups
- In contact with authorities (hospital, police, social services etc.) and NGOs
- Different symptoms- ASK!!
- Risk assessment?
- Multi professional team

#### Cecilia Fredlund, cecilia.fredlund@liu.se

&

Linda Jonsson, <a href="mailto:linda.s.jonsson@liu.se">linda.s.jonsson@liu.se</a>

