

Table 4.1 Risk Factors Associated With Child Sexual Abuse

System Level	Risk Factor
Child	Demographic characteristics such as female sex, early adolescent age, sexual minority status
	Disability status including cognitive, physical, and mental health
	Psychological characteristics such as low self-esteem, susceptibility to persuasion/easily manipulated, emotional immaturity, behavioral difficulties, lonely, few close friends, passivity, quietness, trustingness, emotional neediness
Perpetrator	Demographic characteristics such as male sex, adolescent or early adulthood age, someone with a relationship with the child
	Childhood history variables such as a history of child maltreatment (sexual, physical, psychological, neglect), witnessing violence, poor parent–child attachment, early sexual experience including viewing pornography
	Sexual deviances, including sexual attraction to children and/or adolescents, fantasies about sexual activity with children, high sex drive
	Presence of disinhibitors, such as alcohol and drug use/abuse and cognitive distortions
	Social deficits, including low social skills/competence, empathy deficiencies, loneliness, difficulties with intimate relationships, emotional congruence with children
	Behavioral problems/disorders including externalizing (aggression/violence, criminal behavioral, anger/hostility, paranoia/mistrust, and antisocial personality) and internalizing (anxiety, depression, low self-esteem)
	Neurobiological/psychological markers such as deficits in IQ, increased frequency of childhood head injury, abnormalities in brain anatomy
Family	Family structural characteristics such as a female child living with a nonbiological father or single parent, absence of both parents
	Conflicted family relationships such as marital discord, divorce, intimate partner violence, absent and emotionally detached parenting, poor parent–child relationships, and absence of family cohesion, warm parenting, and family support
	Parent characteristics such as maternal lack of education, maternal unemployment, substance abuse, parental history of CSA, mental health problems
Society	Social attitudes that fail to recognize or understand CSA, sanctioning male/female power and status differentials
	Sexualization of children
	Sanctioning sexual relations between adults and children through media portrayals of children

SOURCES: References are representative rather than exhaustive: American Psychological Association (APA), 2007; Averdijk, Mueller-Johnson, & Eisner, 2011; Bebbington et al., 2011; Butler, 2013; L. Cohen & Galynker, 2009; Davies & Jones, 2013; Finkelhor, Turner et al., 2013; Friedenberg et al., 2013; Friedman, Marshal, Guadamuz et al., 2011; Houtepen, Sijtsema & Bogaerts, 2016; Jack, Munn, Cheng, & Macmillan, 2006; A. Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009; Laaksonen et al., 2011; Lund & Vaughn-Jensen, 2012; Pérez-Fuentes et al., 2013; F. Putnam, 2003; Sedlak et al., 2010; N. Smith & Harrell, 2013; Whitaker et al., 2008; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Beech, & Collings, 2013; Widom & Massey, 2015.