



A TRAUMA-INFORMED VIEWING GUIDE

UNSEAMLY: THE INVESTIGATION OF PETER NYGARD

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A TRAUMA- INFORMED VIEWING GUIDE TO UNSEAMLY

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Prioritizing
**SURVIVORS
INSTEAD OF
ABUSERS**

Some Topics Covered in Unseamly: The Investigation of Peter Nygard

- **Sexual Assault/Rape**
- **Child Sexual Abuse**
- **Sex Trafficking**
- **Victimization/Exploitation**

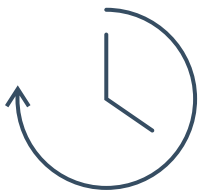
These issues are horrific, and unfortunately, they are also very prevalent in our society. For this reason, many viewers of Unseamly: The Investigation of Peter Nygard may experience intense reactions to the series. Whether viewer reactions are due to personal experiences with these issues or not, all reactions are valid and should be acknowledged with special care.

This guide is created with two intentions: to educate viewers on the difficult issues explored in the series and to serve as a support resource before, during, and after viewing the episodes. This guide is meant to support you, but if at any moment you feel like you need immediate support you should call and speak to a professional.

**CALL THE NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE AT 800.656.HOPE
(4673) OR CHAT ONLINE AT ONLINE.RAINN.ORG.**

The Staggering Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Child Sexual Abuse

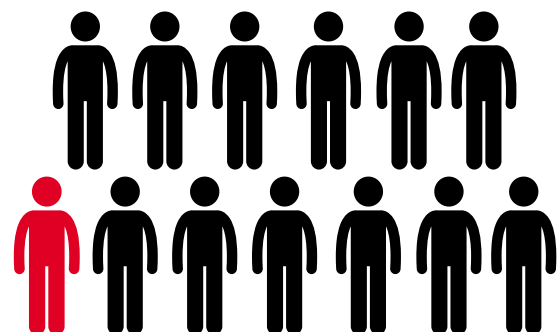
Global estimates of sexual assault and rape are difficult to gather, but experts agree on the grim fact that rape-free societies do not exist. Between 1 in 20 and 1 in 2 women have been raped by either an intimate or a non-intimate partner, depending on the setting (1). The statistics below are troubling, but they paint a clear picture of the prevalence of these issues.



In America, an individual is sexually assaulted every 73 seconds (2).

Sexual abuse of children is also extremely prevalent, and understandings of the issue are particularly difficult because victims tend to delay disclosure of their abuse for decades. This is extremely common due to the inability of child victims to speak out and the trauma and shame they experience from abuse at such a young age.

1 in 5 girls and 1 in 13 boys (roughly 20% and 8%) are sexually abused before their 18th birthday (3).



The Global Problem of Sex Trafficking

PREVALENCE

Sex trafficking is a largely hidden crime, but it happens all over the world. Prevalence is hard to determine as a result, but the number of people who are trafficked for sex is estimated to be in the millions (4).

TRAFFICKING TRENDS

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most detected form of trafficking globally. 83% of all trafficked women and 72% of all trafficked girls were trafficked for sex in 2018 (5).

DEMOGRAPHICS

Traffickers mainly target girls and women. Women and girls comprise 94% of all victims of sex trafficking (6).

IN THE UNITED STATES, 1 IN 6 CHILDREN REPORTED MISSING TO THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN IS LIKELY A VICTIM OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING (7).



The Patterns of Sexual Abusers

High-profile sex trafficking cases like that of Peter Nygard and billionaire Jeffrey Epstein reveal common patterns in abuser behavior. While there are many similarities between these highly publicized cases, it is important to remember that not all traffickers look the same.

As stated by the Polaris Project, "perpetrators of human trafficking span all racial, ethnic, and gender demographics and are as diverse as survivors. Some use their privilege, wealth, and power as a means of control while others experience the same socio-economic oppression as their victims."

Regardless of their background, all traffickers exploit the vulnerabilities of those around them, leveraging individual sensitivities to create dependency and draw their victims in.

Common Vulnerability Factors of Victims:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Financial insecurity
- Prior sexual or physical abuse
- Family structure
- Prior runaway status
- Prior neglect
- Homelessness
- History of drug dependency or substance abuse

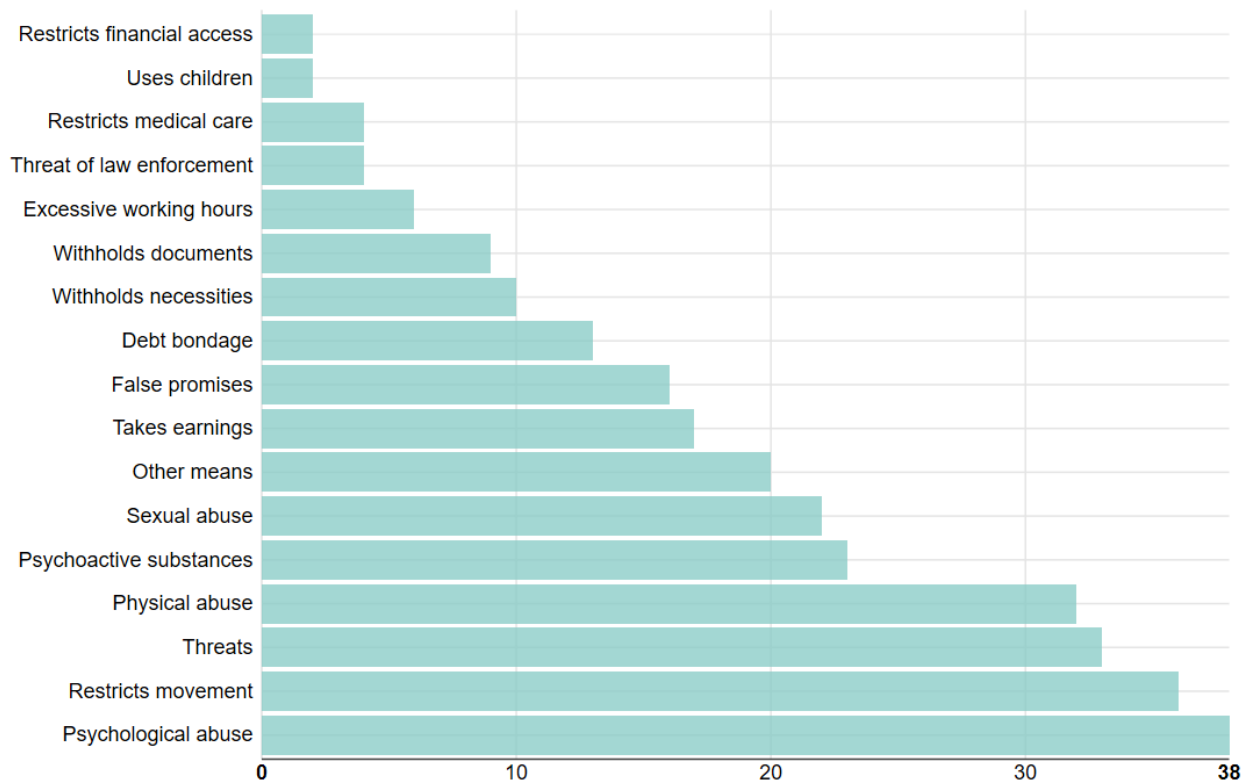
Common Grooming & Recruitment Tactics:

- Offering gifts, i.e. paying for travel, money
- Charisma, charm
- Filling an emotional need
- False promises of connections
- Offering a job opportunity that may seem too good to be true
- Offering an opportunity that takes the victim far away from their community, leading to isolation
- Taking the victim out of the country and then withholding their passport and/or identification

Coercion & Victimization

Traffickers, sexual predators, and their associates commonly employ coercion to maintain cycles of abuse. This can include physical force and/or non-physical means of coercion. Research shows that victims of sexual trafficking are more often controlled by psychological abuse and restrictions of their free movement than by actual physical force (8).

MEANS OF CONTROL USED ON VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



Victims of sex abuse and/or trafficking can experience **trauma bonding**, where they develop positive feelings and loyalty toward their abuser and take internal responsibility for their abuse. While it may not seem to make sense from the outside, this is very typical behavior (9).

Many victims are led to participate in behavior that violates state or federal laws through actions that relate to their victimization. It often takes a long time for victims to come forward because of a lack of trust, shame, self-blame, or fear of arrest.

Before viewing *Unseamly*, you should consider the following:

1. Understand that this series is about sexual abuse, assault, trafficking, and survival.

The content of *Unseamly* is understandably difficult to digest. The documentary highlights the voices of sexual abuse victims as they share their stories. This includes a frank and detailed discussion about the harm that Peter Nygard inflicted on his victims, and it also includes descriptions of disturbing and outlandish sexual acts.

2. Understand that the cases in this series are ongoing.

The series highlights abuse cases and legal battles that are not yet resolved. Because of this, the series uses the label "Nygard Accuser" beneath survivors as they tell their stories. While this kind of label may feel odd, keep in mind that it does not imply that the survivors are not telling the truth. The term "accuser" should not mislead viewers into doubting the survivor story or questioning its validity.

3. Nurture yourself, and prepare your support system.

Some aspects of this series may be triggering or distressing, especially for survivors of sexual abuse and/or trafficking. Go into the series knowing that the content may lead you to experience an array of emotions and that it is okay to feel them. Before watching, reach out to your support system and/or therapist to let them know your viewing plan and expectations.

4. Create a supportive environment for viewing.

Watch *Unseamly* with attention to your needs – choose a room that makes you feel supported and protected. Choose to watch with others or alone, depending on which is best for you. Keep in mind that you can always stop watching or pause the film for water breaks if you feel overwhelmed. Reach out to your support network before, during, and after viewing. If at any point you need immediate support, call 911 or one of the hotlines below.

5. Remember that you are in control

You are in the driver's seat for this experience. There may be external and/or internal pressures weighing on you, but you should never feel like you have to watch something if you do not believe you can handle it. Be empowered by the knowledge that you have nothing to prove to anyone. You can decide when and how to watch the series if you choose to watch it.

To speak with a professional, call:

National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or chat online at online.rainn.org.

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-4-A-CHILD

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ suicide prevention) 1-866-488-7386

How to take care of yourself after watching Unseamly

Remember that no two experiences look exactly the same

Everyone experiences trauma and re-traumatization differently. Remember that all of the emotions that you experience are valid. Immediately after watching the film and in the days and/or weeks that follow, you may experience a variety of effects. Certain practices can be helpful for stress reduction and emotional processing. Here are some activities to try out:

Suggestions for reducing stress right after viewing



Drink water and eat a healthy meal



Talk it out with someone you trust



Find a calm place to sit for a few minutes



Listen to music and/or exercise

Suggestions for longer-term stress reduction and resiliency

Try journaling and reflection



Cultivate gratitude



Each day, take time to write down three positive things or events from the past 24 hours, including what the positive event or experience means to you.

Invest in physical health

This includes:

- Getting the sleep your body needs
- Hydrating and eating for health
- Building movement into your daily routine



Recommended Reading

FOR SURVIVORS AND THOSE
WHO LOVE THEM

There are many resources out there to help survivors of child sex abuse better understand and process their abuse. Here are some of our favorite options:

To learn more about trauma and the impact of childhood abuse

- Bessel Van Der Kolk, [The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma](#)
- Nadine Burke Harris, M.D., [The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity](#)

To learn more about resilience, well-being, and post-traumatic growth

- Karen Reivich, PH.D., and Andrew Shatte, Ph.D., [The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles](#)
- Thich Nhat Hanh, [No Mud, No Lotus: The Art of Transforming Suffering](#)

To learn more about the ongoing fight to end abuse and achieve justice for survivors

- Marci Hamilton, [Justice Denied: What America Must Do to Protect Its Children](#)



For further education on childhood abuse, stories of survival, the science behind trauma, healing, and building resilience: check out CHILD USA's Child Sex Abuse Membership Portal.

The portal contains an expertly curated resource library with hand-selected books, articles, documentaries, and online resources to benefit survivors, loved ones, and advocates.

Visit childusa.org/members or email info@childusa.org to learn more

For more information on these issues contact CHILD USA or visit our website

215-539-1906

info@childusa.org

www.childusa.org

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