

The Prevention Podcast: Our Interview with Author Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins (1 April 2019)

Original Audio: <http://thepreventionpodcast.com/sheila-van-den-heuvel-collins>

Archive Audio ID: oPBgvK_2SPGUViSRftdTXw.mp3

Full transcript ID: oPBgvK_2SPGUViSRftdTXw.docx

Candice Christiansen [00:00:00] Welcome to the Prevention Podcast. I'm your host, Candice Christiansen. Our goal at the Prevention Podcast is to talk about dicey, controversial issues related to preventing sexual abuse. Why? Because it needs to be said. Topics include the biology of pedophilia, risk, need, and responsively principles related to non-contact and contact sex offenders. Researchers in the field of sex offender treatment and more. Join us biweekly. And let's talk about it.

Candice Christiansen [00:00:38] Welcome to the Prevention Podcast. I'm your host, Candace Christiansen. I'm really excited today. You know, we have so many cool people that come onto our podcast that reach out from all over the world wanting to share their stories. And today I have with me a woman by the name of Sheila, who is an author who's written a book titled "Past the Dark Field". So I want to welcome you, Sheila.

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:01:05] Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Candice Christiansen [00:01:07] Yeah, absolutely. I would love to start off, you know, this is the first time someone reached out and said, I've written a book about minor-attracted persons and I would love to come talk about it. So I would love for the global community to know about you first, Sheila, who you are and what really inspired you to take on a piece of work such as this.

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:01:31] Who am I? So I have several hats. My first hat, actually, [00:01:38] **I guess the most inspirational hat is that I tutor children in English.** [5.7s] The other hat that I wear is I'm a writer. Nobody really publishes my stuff. Everybody says I'm quite good, but they're not fond of the topics I choose. I would tone it down. No, I'm not that sort of a writer. It's more of a hobby for me.

Candice Christiansen [00:02:06] OK.

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:02:08] So I have self-published, because I don't want to fear the subjects that I've taken on. As for why I did this book. Well, there's the obvious. You know, in my tutoring job, I understand why we now have all these rules about protecting children. But I think society has kind of gone from one end of the spectrum to the other. We have, you know, this stranger danger and teachers can't hug children and there's a children's musical group, The Wiggles, and they had a special hand pose during all photographs so that it was proof that they were not assaulting children. So this kind of got me thinking. And I've always been interested in sexuality. In my last book, it's called "To Be Human Again", and it's based on Dr. Krafft-Ebing's "Psychopathia Sexualis", which was a psychiatric text in Germany from the 1890s. And the stories are based on the case studies in there. I was looking at his section on pedophilia and thinking, this is brilliant. Nothing has changed in over 100 years. We need to do something about this. But I couldn't find research that I thought was reasonable. I couldn't find enough. So I didn't include pedophilia in "To Be Human Again". And just after "To Be Human Again" was

published. I read Dr. James Cantor's article in The Walrus. That was in September 2016. And I'm thinking this. This is the attitude we need to have to fix what's obviously been a problem for over a hundred years. If Dr. Krafft-Ebing is saying this on the other side of the world in 1890 and we still have this problem in 2016 in North America, something needs to be done. So, you know, when the universe conspires against you, [00:04:21] I just started noticing a whole lot of anti-pedo comments on social media and stuff like that. So I decided I'm going to do this. I'm going to write a book about pedophilia. [13.3s] Now, what I was looking at was, at the beginning. I was thinking more of a prevention sort of thing. Well, why should I?

Candice Christiansen [00:04:44] Can I ask you, Sheila, what was your reason behind that in the beginning? The prevention. Like you said at first, you were thinking of doing it from a prevention lens. What was, what was your thought on that?

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:04:55] That was the only research I was really getting. [00:04:59] There was nothing about the concept that somebody could be attracted to a child and not have the threat of acting on it. That didn't seem to exist in the textbooks I was reading, [12.2s] stuff like that. But when I got on Twitter and it was [unintelligible] that I contacted because he had all these really great articles and when I ran out of articles to read, I said, have you got any more? And he's like, how would you feel about talking to real minor-attractive people? So he gave me access to a whole community and this completely changed the book. Completely. In the end. I've talked to well over 50 people have given me their personal stories, plus people giving me tips. Yeah, I'd say probably closer to 100 MAPs [minor-attracted persons] have contributed to this book in one way or the other.

Candice Christiansen [00:06:01] That's great. That's a lot. That's wonderful.

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:06:03] It's a lot. Yeah. There's a lot of MAPs [minor-attracted persons] in the world.

Candice Christiansen [00:06:07] Oh yeah, there's more than one hundred as well, but that's great that you've got one hundred that responded.

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:06:12] Yeah. So one thing they said is, there's no representation for MAPs [minor-attracted persons]. It's sex offenders. It's victims of sexual assault. And so the stories they gave me ended up in this book. Obviously the book is fiction. There's no one person story is one chapter. None of that. No. So the whole conglomeration put together became the book.

Candice Christiansen [00:06:43] I think what I like about the book, though, as far as what I've read so far, is it may be based on fiction and just of all the non-offending pedophiles that I've worked with are minor-attracted persons. It really does speak to each of their story, whether it's a female MAP [minor-attracted person] or a male, it really does speak to their experience. And so even if it is based on fiction, I want the global community to know that what you're reading has a very real flavor to it in terms of the person's experience. Wouldn't you say that too, Sheila?

Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins [00:07:19] I think one of the best compliments I've had, and actually I've had it from several people, is it made me cry so much to see myself in this book that I had to put it down for a few minutes. Finally there is this representation of somebody who isn't a monster.