

## Come Back Stronger After Suffered for Child Sexual Abuse: A Case Study to Understand the Resilience Process

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**Abstract:** Child sexual abuse (CSA) is quite prevalent in Indonesia, with an increased rate over several years. The negative impacts of CSA have been investigated in several studies and the coping strategies for CSA survivors. However, resilience at the family level is rarely analyzed. This study investigates the resilience process of the CSA survivors' families after they were affected by the incident. Using a qualitative approach, we collected the data by interviewing and observing a family suffering from a CSA incident, the Geulis family (informant pseudonym). Data then were analyzed using thematic analysis with a family resilience model developed by Henry et al. The CSA incident has led to several adverse events in the Geulis (family, including unintended pregnancy, dropping out of school, hesitancy to stay in the hometown, and loss of job and family income. With support from extended family and some organizations, Geulis and her mother were able to find a new place to live and a new job for Geulis's mother, and Geulis was able to start a new relationship and continue her study for a while. The complex and continuous adaptation process of the Geulis family was also analyzed using the adaptive family systems component. The Geulis family could function normally after experiencing the negative impact of CSA with some adjustment in their life and dynamic process in the family. Environment, including extended family, government, and non-government organizations, supports family resilience.

**Keywords:** adaptation; child sexual abuse; family resilience

**Abstrak:** Kekerasan seksual pada anak (KSA) cukup banyak terjadi di Indonesia dengan angka peningkatan selama beberapa tahun. Dampak negatif KSA telah diselidiki dalam beberapa penelitian serta strategi koping untuk para penyintas KSA. Namun, ketahanan di tingkat keluarga jarang dianalisis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui proses resiliensi keluarga penyintas setelah mereka terkena dampak peristiwa KSA. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara dan observasi terhadap keluarga yang pernah mengalami kejadian KSA yaitu keluarga (nama samaran informan) Geulis. Selanjutnya data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dengan model ketahanan keluarga yang dikembangkan oleh Henry et al. Peristiwa KSA telah menyebabkan beberapa kejadian buruk dalam keluarga Geulis, antara lain kehamilan yang tidak diinginkan, putus sekolah, keragu-raguan untuk tinggal di kota asal, dan kehilangan pekerjaan dan pendapatan keluarga. Dengan dukungan dari keluarga besar dan beberapa organisasi, Geulis dan ibunya dapat menemukan tempat tinggal baru, pekerjaan baru untuk ibu Geulis, dan Geulis dapat memulai hubungan baru dan melanjutkan studinya untuk sementara waktu. Proses adaptasi yang kom-

pleks dan berkesinambungan dari keluarga Geulis juga dianalisis menggunakan komponen sistem adaptif keluarga. Keluarga Geulis dapat berfungsi secara normal setelah mengalami dampak negatif KSA dengan beberapa penyesuaian dalam kehidupan dan proses dinamis dalam keluarga. Lingkungan, termasuk keluarga besar, organisasi pemerintah dan non-pemerintah, memainkan peran penting.

**Kata Kunci:** adaptasi; kekerasan seksual pada anak; ketahanan keluarga,

## A. Introduction

Stories about child sexual abuse (CSA) have been reported several times and gone viral on social media. However, child sexual abuse in Indonesia is not new since Komisi Nasional Perempuan has said the increased sexual abuse rate in 13 years, from 2008 to 2020.<sup>1</sup> CSA continues threatening children's right to life to grow and develop normally. Reports of CSA cases recorded yearly at KPAI (Indonesian Child Protection Commission) always make anyone sad to read them. The press release of the record of violations of children's rights in 2021 placed child sexual violence cases (859 cases) and cases of child victims of cybercrime pornography (345 cases) in the top two and three positions after cases of physical and psychological violence against children (1,138 cases).<sup>2</sup>

Child sexual abuse is coercion or sexual contact imposed on a child under 18 years by a perpetrator of any age or relationship to the victim.<sup>3</sup> Although the CSA definition varies across studies, the primary aspect of CSA is forced sexual

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<sup>1</sup> Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan (Komnas Perempuan), "Catahu 2021: Perempuan dalam Himpitan Pandemi: Lonjakan Kekerasan Seksual, Kekerasan Siber, Perkawinan Anak dan Keterbatasan Penanganan di Tengah COVID-19," [komnasperempuan.go.id](https://komnasperempuan.go.id/catatan-tahunan-detail/catahu-2021-perempuan-dalam-himpitan-pandemi-lonjakan-kekerasan-seksual-kekerasan-siber-perkawinan-anak-dan-keterbatasan-penanganan-di-tengah-covid-19) (Jakarta, 2021), <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/catatan-tahunan-detail/catahu-2021-perempuan-dalam-himpitan-pandemi-lonjakan-kekerasan-seksual-kekerasan-siber-perkawinan-anak-dan-keterbatasan-penanganan-di-tengah-covid-19>; Mariana Amiruddin et al., "Siaran Pers Komnas Perempuan. Catatan Tahunan Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan 2019. Kekerasan Meningkat: Kebijakan Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual untuk Membangun Ruang Aman bagi Perempuan dan Anak Perempuan" (Jakarta, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia, "Siaran Press: Catatan Pelanggaran Hak Anak Tahun 2021 dan Proyeksi Pengawasan Penyelenggaraan Perlindungan Anak Tahun 2022," [kpai.go.id](https://www.kpai.go.id/publikasi/catatan-pelanggaran-hak-anak-tahun-2021-dan-proyeksi-pengawasan-penyelenggaraan-perlindungan-anak-tahun-2022), January 24, 2022, <https://www.kpai.go.id/publikasi/catatan-pelanggaran-hak-anak-tahun-2021-dan-proyeksi-pengawasan-penyelenggaraan-perlindungan-anak-tahun-2022>.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa DeMarni Cromer and Rachel E. Goldsmith, "Child Sexual Abuse Myths: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Individual Differences," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 19, no. 6 (2010): 618–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2010.522493>; Kimmery Newsom and Karen Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor": Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 26, no. 8 (2017): 927–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2017.1360425>.

behaviour in children under 18. According to Newsom and Myers-Bowman (2017), the difference in the operational definition of CSA makes it difficult to compare findings across studies.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the occurrence of CSA is more prevalent than it seems, as many cases of sexual abuse go unreported. These combinations make it difficult to establish prevalence rates of CSA with much confidence.

In addition, victims of CSA tend to have a vulnerable position because the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence are people who are known and come from the closest environment.<sup>4</sup> It is also the main reason why CSA victims are reluctant to report. CSA prevalence rates rely heavily on self-reports from victims, families, or friends. However, reporting CSA cases is not easy because of adverse social reactions. Moreover, not every CSA case will be handled directly; many remain unsolved now.<sup>5</sup> While trying to get justice for themselves, the victims of CSA struggle to verbalize their emotional responses to the abuse. They sometimes cannot identify how they feel about being abused.<sup>6</sup> They would likely suffer from mental health problems, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse.<sup>7</sup> The adverse effects of CSA will also affect the victim's ability to function in daily life, including going to school or making friends. This negative effect might persist into adulthood.

Despite the negative impacts of CSA experiences and the increased risk of mental disorders, studies indicate that some sexually abused individuals retain normal levels of functioning.<sup>8</sup> The term that is used to discover stories of triumph and thriving despite circumstances survivors of trauma once faced is

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<sup>4</sup> Dio Ashar Wicaksana et al., *Laporan Studi Kuantitatif Barometer Kesetaraan Gender: Respons dan Sikap Masyarakat terhadap Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual (RUU P-KS) dan Undang-Undang Nomor 16 Tahun 2019 tentang Perubahan Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 tentang Perkawinan*, ed. Dian Kartika Sari et al. (Jakarta: International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), 2020).

<sup>5</sup> Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan (Komnas Perempuan), "Catahu 2021: Perempuan dalam Himpitan Pandemi: Lonjakan Kekerasan Seksual, Kekerasan Siber, Perkawinan Anak dan Keterbatasan Penanganan di Tengah COVID-19."

<sup>6</sup> Newsom and Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor': Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

<sup>7</sup> Meera Murthi and Dorothy L. Espelage, "Childhood Sexual Abuse, Social Support, and Psychological Outcomes: A Loss Framework," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 29, no. 11 (2005): 1215-31, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.03.008>.

<sup>8</sup> Matthias Domhardt et al., "Resilience in Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 16, no. 4 (2015): 476-93, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838014557288>.

resilience.<sup>9</sup> Resilience or adaptive functioning has been used in many studies. Three types of resilience usually include positive developmental outcomes, sustained competence under stress conditions, and individuals who have recovered from severe childhood traumas.<sup>10</sup> However, researchers divided into two groups to analyze the competence level needed to develop positive outcomes. While some academicians believe that competence must be performed in several areas of life, others think it must be sufficient if the positive adaptation is theoretically or empirically linked to adversity.<sup>9</sup> This study combines the two aspects, including the occurrence in several areas of life and connecting to the negative effect of CSA experience. It leads to the definition of positive outcomes used in this study as the absence of mental disorders and the adequate competency of CSA survivors to function adequately in one or several aspects of life.

Positive outcomes might seem like a state that will be achieved after a dynamic developmental process. Although positive outcomes are somehow seen as the primary component of resilience, Newsom and Myers-Bowman emphasize resilience as a process and recovery as a journey for CSA survivors. They investigated how women who experienced CSA resilience viewed themselves as sexual beings and developed healthy intimate relationships. Most participants believe resilience is an ongoing process, deliberate efforts occurring over time, including successes and failures.<sup>11</sup> Another resilience study conducted by Domhardt et al. summarised the resilience of CSA survivors and analyzed the protective factors of the resilience process. Applying a systematic literature review, they discovered that 10% to 53% of CSA survivors have normal functioning despite the difference in sexual abuse histories.<sup>12</sup>

Although there are several studies on the resilience process of CSA survivors, many studies focus on the protective factors that support individuals in overcoming a cruel past.<sup>13</sup> Evidence has found that social support from

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<sup>9</sup> Newsom and Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor': Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

<sup>10</sup> Domhardt et al., "Resilience in Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse"; Emmy E. Werner, "Protective Factors and Individual Resilience," in *Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 115–32, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511529320.008>.

<sup>11</sup> Newsom and Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor': Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

<sup>12</sup> Domhardt et al., "Resilience in Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

<sup>13</sup> Domhardt et al.; Werner, "Protective Factors and Individual Resilience."

family and friends moderates the association between CSA experiences and loss dimensions.<sup>14</sup> It showed the significant roles of the environment in the resilience process of CSA survivors. However, studies on the resilience process of CSA survivors at a family level are limited to our knowledge. On the other hand, investigating the resilience of CSA survivors at the family level will acknowledge all factors surrounding individuals, either supportive or risky to a resilience process, and examine resilience as a transactional process between the child and their environment, especially in the family. Therefore, this study utilized the family resilience model by Henry et al. as the concept “recognizes the importance of ecosystems and views families as one of several proximal contexts that increase the vulnerability or protection of individual development”.<sup>15</sup>

This study aims to investigate the resilience process of the CSA survivor’s family after being affected by the sexual abuse experience. The first author has been involved in helping a CSA survivor since 2019. The accident itself occurred in 2018, and it has been four years. The author has witnessed some parts of the resilience process of the CSA survivor, *Geulis*, and her family. As a child below age 17, she would be highly dependent on her family, financially and psychologically. The CSA cases might be abundant in social media, but approaching them personally to participate in this study might take many times to build rapport. Describing their traumatized events in the past might be uncomfortable for them, especially with ‘unknown’ people. It might also lead to biased information during the data collection. Therefore, we decided to conduct the study with a CSA survivor who already has a good rapport with us to gain a deeper understanding of the family resilience of a CSA survivor.

### **Family Resilience Model**

To analyze the resilience process in a family, Henry et al., proposed four essential components that interacted with other components outside the basic components.<sup>14</sup> The four components of the family resilience model (FRM) include a) the risks faced by the family, b) the existence of protection that

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<sup>14</sup> Domhardt et al., “Resilience in Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse”; Murthi and Espelage, “Childhood Sexual Abuse, Social Support, and Psychological Outcomes: A Loss Framework.”

<sup>15</sup> Carolyn S. Henry, Amanda Sheffield Morris, and Amanda W. Harrist, “Family Resilience: Moving into the Third Wave,” *Family Relations* 64, no. 1 (2015): 22–43, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12106>.

facilitates the ability and needs of the family to return to its original state when faced with risks and protects the family against risks, c) the existence of family vulnerability that has the potential to increase the impact of hazards, and d) short-term adjustments or adaptations made by families for the long term in dealing with risks. FRM emphasizes the interaction between family risk, family protection, and family vulnerability so that the family can make adjustments or adaptations in the short and long term.<sup>14</sup> Other components, including family situational meanings, adaptive family systems, and ecosystems, will influence the essential components of FRM. See Figure 1.

While family risks in the case of CSA are adverse effects of the incident on the family circumstances, family adaptation is the family's adjustment to cope with the negative situation. Family protection, on the other hand, is various

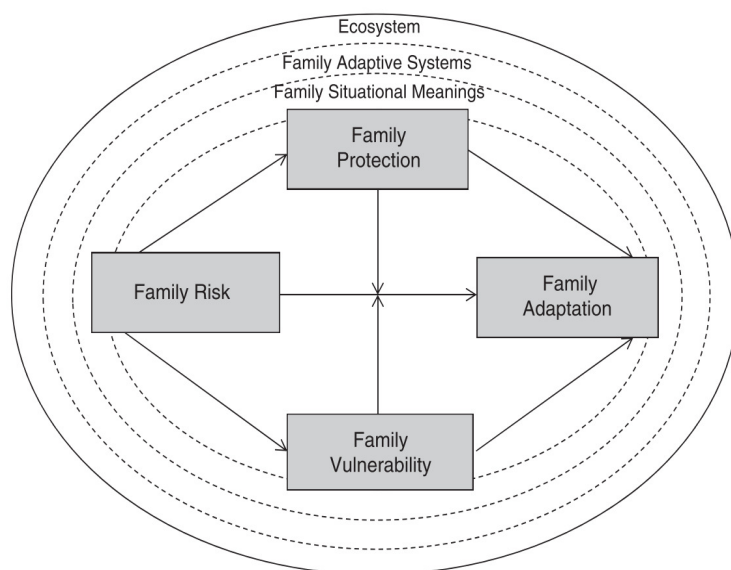


Figure 1  
Family resilience model  
Source: Henry et al.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Henry, Sheffield Morris, and Harrist.

resources existing in the family that influence the family in dealing with the adverse effects of CSA incidents. In contrast, family vulnerability is a condition that can weaken the family's ability to adapt to the negative impact of CSA. These four main components are within the family situational meaning, which is how the family defines the situation they face, and the adaptive family system, which consists of emotional, meaning, control, and maintenance systems. This ecosystem includes a social and physical environment where the family lives. While the adaptive system in the family is related to emotional bonds among family members, the control system includes leadership and role distribution in the family. The meaning system is the shared perception in the family. In contrast, the maintenance system refers to the efforts made by the family to continue fulfilling the basic needs, including food, shelter, and clothes. Using the family resilience model, the research question aroused in this study is how does a female CSA survivor develop a positive outcome and functions adequately.

## B. Methods

### Study Design

This study applied a qualitative approach, particularly a case study, to explore a viral CSA in early 2019. A case study is an intensive study of a single case or a small number of cases, using multiple data collection methods that draw on observational data and promises to explain a larger case population.<sup>17</sup> In this case, the researchers want to take a case from the lives of survivors of child sexual violence from a 'common' that we often encounter in Indonesia. In any case, case studies' contribution to subject knowledge is often exploratory (e.g., elaboration of a new theory) rather than confirmation (to test extant hypotheses).<sup>18</sup> Qualitative investigations usually focus on a small number of participants selected for a particular purpose. The objectives and research questions of the investigation should guide the selection of these cases. It is essential to gather stories and insights from children and families who have experienced sexual violence.<sup>19</sup> Call it "Geulis", a 14-year-old girl who has

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<sup>17</sup> John Gerring, *Case Study Research* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316848593>.

<sup>18</sup> Gerring, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Newsom and Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor': Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

experienced sexual violence by a 21-year-old youth still living in her neighborhood in the Subang Regency, West Java. A qualitative approach will enable us to get a comprehensive and complex picture of a socially shaped reality,<sup>20</sup> in this case the resilience story of *geulis*, one of the female CSA survivors. Furthermore, the qualitative method used is a case study, a technique, procedure, or means to collect evidence or data using research techniques such as interviews, participant observation, and document analysis.<sup>21</sup>

### Data Collection

While a case study enables researchers to use multiple data collection methods, this study collected data several times using observation and interviews, including unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Participant observations were carried out from 2019 to 2022. The unstructured interview was applied when the first author was actively helping Geulis and family, and the semi-structured interview was conducted several years later. This observation could take a long time because the researchers actively assisted victims and some parties and communities who care about “Geulis”. Data obtained from direct observation can describe activities, behaviors, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, and organizational or assembly processes. As well as open interviews to produce in-depth responses about the experiences, perceptions, feelings, and knowledge of individuals involved in the incident so that this kind of method can capture the “participants’ stories”.<sup>22</sup>

Observations were made in various places: a) in the house where Geulis lives in Subang Regency, b) in a safe house provided by the Subang Regency government for victims of sexual violence, c) Anti-sexual violence activist, Yayasan Rumah Tumbuh, provided the three recovery houses in Bandung, d) The rented house that Geulis’s mother has rented in Bandung to resume the life of this small family.

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<sup>20</sup> Warul Walidin, Saifullah Saifullah, and T. Tabrani ZA, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan Grounded Theory*, ed. Masbur M. (Banda Aceh: FTK Ar-Raniry Press, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Rob VanWynsberghe and Samia Khan, “Redefining Case Study,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 6, no. 2 (2007): 80–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690700600208>.

<sup>22</sup> Leslie Goodyear et al., *Qualitative Inquiry in Evaluation: From Theory to Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 9.



Unstructured interviews to understand Geulis and her family were also conducted in various places where they lived when the first author was actively involved in helping Geulis and her family. However, it was not very deep and only aimed to assist the security and psychological needs of the geulis. Questions are loosely sequenced and may be arranged or changed form in response to the interviewee's survivor (participation).<sup>23</sup>

Semi-structured interviews were only actively conducted in 2022, considering the severity of the traumatic experiences that Geulis and her family received. Using the family resilience framework from Henry et al.,<sup>24</sup> we constructed some interview questions to guide us in the interview session but still opened up to some elaboration. Sexual violence, called molester, is carried out under violence and followed by threats so that the victim is dominated and has difficulty expressing it.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, researchers need a long time after sexual violence to find the most appropriate time to dig up information on survivors of sexual violence. In-depth interviews are conversational, lengthy, and interactive exchanges of ideas. The researcher works to develop a close relationship with the informant so that deep and meaningful responses can emerge and most importantly. It may take several interviews before discovering the true meaning.<sup>26</sup> Each interview was as varied as an hour or two and was recorded with audio. Each session was audio recorded and transcribed. The researcher then assured the interviewees that their information would remain private and urged the survivors and their families to open out about their experiences, mainly after they had recovered.

### **Data Analysis**

After the data collection, the audio files were transcribed verbatim and checked by sorting each session. Listening to audio recorders ensures the accuracy of the story or narration. Data analysis uses thematic analysis to

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<sup>23</sup> Audrey A. Trainor and Elizabeth Graue, eds, *Reviewing Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2013), 123.

<sup>24</sup> Henry, Sheffield Morris, and Harrist, "Family Resilience: Moving into the Third Wave."

<sup>25</sup> Trini Handayani, "Peningkatan Ketahanan Keluarga melalui Optimalisasi Pola Asuh Maternalistik dalam Pencegahan Kejadian Pedofilia," *Padjadjaran: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum (Journal of Law)* 3, no. 3 (2017): 547-64, <https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v3.n3.a6>.

<sup>26</sup> Trainor and Graue, *Reviewing Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences*.

identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) in the data.<sup>27</sup> We identify themes that arose in the transcript and combine the same themes into one group. As we used the family resilience framework for the interviews, data from the interviews are easily grouped into the categories: family vulnerability, family protective, family risk, family meaning system, adaptive family system, environment, and family adaptation.

### **Validity and Data Reliability**

Validity refers to the appropriateness of the study's tools, process, and data.<sup>28</sup> Since this qualitative study has collected data from an informant that can provide the richest information about the CSA resilience process at the family level and utilized several data collection tools, the research objective may be achieved with the desired outcome. The data were collected in several ways, including observation and interviews, suitable for each resilient process. The researcher could only observe and have a small conversation (unstructured interview) while the CSA survivor and family dealt with their problems. However, after they cope with the situation, researchers can ask more detailed questions in a semi-structured interview as they are ready to share their feelings and thoughts during the hard times. This variation of data collection enables researchers to explore the resilience process with suitable tools and achieve desired outcomes.

On the other hand, the reliability of qualitative data lies in the consistency of coding or labeling the phenomenon. Researchers were constantly comparing the data that had been marked using a table and repeatedly listening to the recording. The data extraction also involved both researchers, enabling the labeled data's context and form verification process.

## **C. Results**

### **Overview of Geulis's Sexual Abuse Case**

Geulis, not real name, was a 14-year-old girl and a Subang Junior High School student when the incident occurred in 2018. Most of her life is spent

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<sup>27</sup> Ashley Castleberry and Amanda Nolen, "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Research Data: Is it as easy as it sounds?," *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning* 10, no. 6 (2018): 807–15, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019>.

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Leung, "Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* 4, no. 3 (2015): 324–27, <https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306>.

attending school, reading the Koran, and playing like normal children in her village. Her mother and father have been divorced since she was 9. Although Geulis is still raised by her mother, she mainly interacts and lives with her maternal grandmother. Matrilateral relatives, especially maternal grandmothers, will usually be more involved (in parenting) than paternal relatives when the child experiences the loss of a family member, such as the death of one parent or divorce.<sup>29</sup> Her mother focused on working as a textile factory worker in Subang City. Her income was only limited to the Subang Regency Minimum Wage (UMK) of 2.5 million per month. Meanwhile, her father decided to remarry and live in Bandung. In general, not much economic assistance or upbringing from her father was received by Geulis.

Besides the family condition, Geulis was also disadvantaged because her school friends trapped her into experiencing sexual abuse. Her parents, who are already struggling to make money, cannot properly monitor their child's friendship even though Geulis is the only child. Her male and female friends easily tricked Geulis into playing and doing activities in a quiet area, an oil palm hut in the village. Her female friends made Geulis helpless and unconscious by enticing Geulis to drink alcohol. Giving alcohol or drugs is often used as an advantage for the abuser to create tactics that make the victim voluntary or helpless, resulting in decreased ability to consent or refuse sex and resist rape.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, in gender studies, female perpetrators could also actively participate in sexual and physical violence, such as facilitating incidents, seducing victims, and recording assaults.<sup>31</sup> After she was out, Geulis was raped by several men without her ability to fight against those men.

After the incident, B approached Geulis and told her the whole story about the sexual abuse and threatened Geulis that he would spread the stories unless Geulis were willing to 'do' it again with him. Geulis had no choice but to obey B's

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<sup>29</sup> Gretchen Perry, "Non-Parental Investment in Children and Child Outcomes after Parental Death or Divorce in a Patrilocal Society," *Social Sciences* 10, no. 6 (2021): 196, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060196>.

<sup>30</sup> Kathleen C. Basile et al., "Victim and Perpetrator Characteristics in Alcohol/Drug-Involved Sexual Violence Victimization in the U.S.," *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 226 (2021): 108839, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2021.108839>.

<sup>31</sup> Louise Morgan and Lisa Long, "Female Perpetrated Sexual Offences Reported to a London Sexual Assault Referral Centre," *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* 54 (2018): 130–35, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jflm.2018.02.001>.

wish. They did it four times until Geulis was found pregnant. At first, B intended to marry Geulis, but he talked terribly about Geulis past being raped by several men in his big family. His family perceived Geulis as a naughty girl who did not deserve B as he was a relative of the head village. B did not move to marry Geulis, and his family kept badmouthing her. Finally, Geulis and their family chose to report the sexual abuse to the police, and B was found guilty and imprisoned for one month.

### **The Negative Impact of CSA: Dropping Out of School and Being Forced to Go out of Their Places**

Geulis's pregnancy had negatively impacted Geulis and her mom. Geulis was advised not to continue her education because of her pregnancy. Although no explicit regulation prohibits pregnant students, many Indonesian schools often drop out their pregnant students due to social and cultural aspects that consider pregnancy outside marriage as a bad thing. Geulis was in her last year of junior high school, and her school had choices to support her finished her studies. As a victim, Geulis also had never felt the social support she should have received in her community. Social support is an essential aspect for CSA survivors to rearrange their lives. For CSA victims to be resilient, school stability, long-term educational goals, and peer support.<sup>32</sup>

*"Sebenarnya memang minta mundur (berhenti sekolah). Tapi gimana ya kondisinya, seperti tidak mungkin untuk melanjutkan (sekolah). Gurunya juga tidak ngapain (tidak melakukan dukungan untuk tetap melanjutkan sekolah)."*<sup>33</sup>

(I want Geulis to quit (school). The current circumstances make it impossible to keep going (to school). The teachers also did not do anything (prevent from quitting school)).

In addition, the threat of killing the perpetrator's family, whose child was policed, also made Geulis and her mother uncomfortable. The community leader did not support Geulis. The village officials saw Geulis as a naughty girl who loved to play with boys and deserved sexual violence.

*"Iya itu dia bilang (salah satu keluarga pelaku). 'Awat aja kalau nanti si B (pelaku) sampai di penjara, saya balas nanti' (ancaman kekerasan terhadap Ibu Geulis)."*<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Jerusha Sanjeevi et al., "A Review of Child Sexual Abuse: Impact, Risk, and Resilience in the Context of Culture," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 27, no. 6 (2018): 622–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1486934>.

<sup>33</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

(He said (perpetrator's family members). If B (the perpetrator) gets to jail, be careful, I will take revenge).

*"Orang desanya (oknum perangkat desa) malah nyalahin Geulis. Dibilang ya cewek nakal. Cowoknya banyak makanya pantes aja hamil. Ya wajar juga dia bilang gitu. Dia (oknum perangkat desa) juga itungannya masih paman si B (pelaku)."*<sup>35</sup>

(The village officer blamed Geulis (for what had happened). Assumed Geulis is a naughty girl with many boyfriends, which is why she is pregnant. The judgment is reasonable because the village officer is the perpetrator's uncle).

In response to the family's difficulty with such unfavorable environmental conditions, Geulis's mother decided to leave the village where they lived and had never returned. She decided to stop working, which resulted in their economic situation. They became poorer than before, with no income at that time. Geulis's mother had to make this difficult decision because she wanted to focus on supporting the recovery of trauma events faced by Geulis.

*"Dulu Bibi kerja di Subang (kota) jadi karyawan pabrik tekstil. Gajinya lumayan UMR (Upah Minimum Regional). Setelah ini (kejadian CSA) ya berhenti kerja total. Soalnya kan geulis ga ada yang urus. Dia hamil, dia mau melahirkan. Campur aduk pokoknya ..."*<sup>36</sup>

(Previously, I worked in Subang as an employee in the textile industry. The salary amount is equal to the standard minimum wages (in the region). After the CSA incident, I quit my job to care for Geulis, who was pregnant and had to deliver the baby. It was really mixed up ...).

### **Family Vulnerability: Lack of Emotional Support and Income for Basic Needs**

The incident had put a lot of burden on Geulis's mother. Geulis's mother is a single parent who tries her best to care of Geulis and her grandchild. However, Geulis still needed her father during her difficult time. Without the support of a father figure, this incident was very difficult for geulis, who desperately needed the role of a father by her side. Geulis's parents have divorced, but her mother is in a situation where she must also carry out the father's role. It included the role of breadwinner, protecting the family, and being a reliable father figure. Geulis, her son, and her mother are vulnerable in the economic sector. It is quite

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<sup>34</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

<sup>35</sup> Geulis's cousin, interview.

<sup>36</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

natural, considering they are “evicted” from their village and start a new life in various places without any income. While they had no income, they only hoped for help from their families or others.

*“Kalau sekarang ingat masa-masa waktu ngurusin Geulis, suka nangis, suka ngusap dada. Ya Allah, gitu. Ini anaknya (Geulis) sampe nangis-nangis minta bapaknya nemanin di persidangan ngga datang juga. Padahal udah sampai LPSK juga yang menghubungi supaya bapaknya mau nemanin geulis. Tapi ngga mau juga datang.”<sup>37</sup>*

(If I throw back to the past when I have to take care Geulis (after the incident), I often cry, rub my chest, and call God’s name. Geulis was crying and begging her father to accompany her to the court, but he was not coming. Even the officer was helping to contact Geulis’s father, and he still did not come that time).

### **Support from Family to Find a New Place and Workplace**

With the help and support from her extended family, especially the extended family in her home village, Geulis’s family had a new place to stay, and Geulis’s mother had a new job. It was a cooking job at an official school in Bandung. Geulis’s mother admitted that her relatives immensely helped her, particularly with the job, so they could continue living in their new places.

*“... di sini (Bandung) ya kebetulan di sini (sekolah dinas) butuh orang buat masak. Terus diajakin sama ponakan buat bisa kerja di sini. Yah lumayan bisa ada pendapatan lagi.”<sup>38</sup>*

(... here (in a national boarding school in Bandung), coincidentally, they need people to cook. My nephew offered the job. It is such a relief to have a source of income).

Family support is significant in a situation like this. Financial and moral support jointly help solve the problems in the Geulis’s family. It is the best step the big family of Geulis can take. The Geulis extended family understands that Geulis and her mother must immediately find a new place to live and earn their income to recover from the trauma in their hometown, where the CSA occurred.

### **Support from Environmental Organisations that Concerned about CSA**

After deciding to bring the rape cases to legal judgment, Geulis’s family received assistance from various stakeholders to help them get justice. The

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<sup>37</sup> Geulis’s mother, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Geulis’s mother, interview.

Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) also gave special monitoring during the legal investigation of Geulis's rape case. Geulis also received legal assistance from LPSK (Witness and Victim Protection Agency), particularly during the investigation and judgment in court. While Geulis's mother decided to resign and had no income, Geulis's family received assistance from various stakeholders to help them through difficult times. The Subang district government provided a safe house in the first two months after Geulis gave birth.

Moreover, Geulis was greatly assisted by the *Yayasan Rumah Tumbuh (Rumah Ruth)* in Bandung for trauma healing for about two months after they stayed in the district safe house. Moreover, LPSK helped Geulis and her mom to find new living places outside Subang. Research conducted by Muhid et al., found that NGO facilitators help victims of sexual violence get the psychological treatment that allows them a quality of life.<sup>39</sup>

Support from external parties, in this case, a non-government organization, allows Geulis to cope with the trauma and try to rebuild a "new life." The role of the environment around Geulis to live, grow and learn is significant in restoring her mental state. Geulis admitted that psychological assistance from the RUTH House Foundation had helped increase her confidence to live an everyday life again. In addition, at the RUTH House Foundation, Geulis found a friend who had the same fate and experienced sexual violence, although he was still only a child at the RUTH House Foundation.

*"Dulu waktu kecil (awal pasca kejadian KSA) sering diajak ngobrol sama cici di rumah RUTH. Ngga Taunya itu teh psikolog, ngebantu banget lah buat saya bisa curhat. Selain itu bisa ngobrol sama temen-temen yang sama (korban kekerasan seksual lainnya yang ditampung di Yayasan rumah Ruth). Ya banyak tukar pikiran lah kalau masih ada yang sama selain (senasib) dengan saya, walaupun yang lainnya teh di sana (Yayasan rumah Ruth) udah pada gede-gede (tidak ada yang seumuran geulis yang berusia anak)."*<sup>40</sup>

(After the CSA incident), a woman in RUTH house often talk to me. I just know now that she is a psychologist. She helped me a lot and listened to me. In the RUTH house, I had other friends (who also experienced CSA) to talk. I still can share my thought with them although they are older than me).

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<sup>39</sup> Abdul Muhid et al., "Quality of Life Perempuan Penyintas Kekerasan Seksual: Studi Kualitatif," *Journal of Health Science and Prevention* 3, no. 1 (2019): 47-55, <https://doi.org/10.29080/jhsp.v3i1.185>.

<sup>40</sup> Geulis, interview.

Mental recovery is a fundamental issue and must be considered to help victims of CSA. The mental health of victims of child sexual violence, especially in their teens, is not treated quickly. It can be fatal with extreme trauma effects such as alcohol abuse, illegal drugs, disappearance from the family, and even intense stages of ending life.<sup>41</sup> Given the danger that can be caused by mental anguish for CSA victims, what the Yayasan Rumah RUTH has done cannot be underestimated.

### **Neighborhood and the Boyfriend's Family**

Geulis also received support and trust from the new community. They accept Geulis situation and treat Geulis without negative stigmatization. In her current community, namely her new neighbor, the Geulis child is often referred to as her younger brother to cover up that he is the result of the CSA incident.

*"... banyak orang yang ngga tahu ini teh (menunjuk anak Geulis) anaknya. Gara-garanya tetangga sini selalu bilang ini adiknya. Kalau yang terdekat sini aja tahu kalau kita memang korban (tetangga), tapi kalau lingkungan lainnya (masyarakat besar di luar tetangga) ngga ada yang tahu, pada bantu nutupin ..."<sup>42</sup>*

(... many people (around) do not know that this boy is Geulis's child. The neighbours assume he is her brother. Only the close neighbours knew that we are survivors of a CSA incidence, and they are not telling any people about the incidence and help us cover the story....).

It positively impacts Geulis's mental recovery as Geulis has been open to another romantic relationship. Geulis's future husband and his family never underestimated Geulis and her mother as survivors of CSA, which is usually considered a disgrace. Geulis's future husband and his family accept Geulis as a prospective wife who can be married just like any other woman.

*"Geulis cerita lah pas dia (calon suami) udah ngajakin mau nikah (dengan geulis). Katanya dia mah, ya udahlah biarin aja yang penting itu kan masa lalu. Nanti juga*

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<sup>41</sup> Tracie O. Afifi et al., "The Relationship between Child Abuse, Parental Divorce, and Lifetime Mental Disorders and Suicidality in a Nationally Representative Adult Sample," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 33, no. 3 (2009): 139–47, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.12.009>; Julia Rudolph et al., "Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Opportunities: Parenting, Programs, and the Reduction of Risk," *Child Maltreatment* 23, no. 1 (2018): 96–106, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559517729479>; Ben Mathews, "The Context of Child Sexual Abuse, and Points of Departure," in *New International Frontiers in Child Sexual Abuse: Theory, Problems and Progress* (Berlin: Springer, 2019), 3–40, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99043-9\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99043-9_1).

<sup>42</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.



*kita sama sama besarin anak pakai nama saya juga ngga apa-apa (untuk akta kelahiran).<sup>43</sup>*

(Geulis told when my boyfriend asked me to marry him. My boyfriend let the CSA incidence slide and thought it was in the past. We will take care of my child in the future, and my child can use my boyfriend's name (birth certificate)).

### **Perceiving Adverse Events as a Medium of Life Test to Be a Better Person**

After the CSA incident, several difficulties faced by Geulis's family might seem unbearable and hard. Geulis and her mother have a life principle guiding them that this disaster is a test from God to be a better person. Holding to their spiritual values, Geulis and her mother tried to survive this calamity. By being patient and going through a long time after the CSA incident, they believe the way out will continue to be open, and they can get through it.

*"Yang bikin kuat ... ya gimana ya. Bi eri teh mikir gini, misanya Bi eri hidup sendiri terus sekarang anak teh (Geulis) siapa yang mau ngurusin. Terus ini ada anak lagi (anaknya Geulis) siapa juga yang bisa bantu urusin. Terus ini teh sadar juga, mungkin ini cobaan takdir ya harus kuat nerima. Istilah ini teh tantangan hidup (merasa diuji untuk menaikan derajat di hadapan Tuhan) ya alhamdulillah ternyata banyak juga yang bisa bantu (ada jalan keluar)."<sup>44</sup>*

(What makes me strong is an eagerness to care for Geulis and her grandchild. I also realized that this is a test from God and that I have to live with a strong heart. It is just a challenge in life, but fortunately, I receive much help from others).

According to Isaacs et al., when a family faces stressors, three dimensions significantly affect the key to the resilience of a family; a) the family's belief system, b) communication processes, and c) organizational patterns.<sup>45</sup> Of the three dimensions, the family's belief system plays a role in making the family's belief that they can continue to adhere to the principles of spirituality and maintain a positive outlook.

### **Family Adaptive System**

Geulis's family was dynamically involved in an adaptation process while facing the negative impact of the CSA experience. It includes emotional,

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<sup>43</sup> Geulis, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

<sup>45</sup> Serena Ann Isaacs, Nicolette Roman, and Shantay Carlson, "Fostering Family Resilience: A Community Participatory Action Research Perspective," *Child Care in Practice* 26, no. 4 (2020): 358-72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2020.1801578>.

meaningful, control, and maintenance systems that the family built to overcome the hard times. Geulis's family tries to create their own "rhythm" that is suitable to be applied in adapting to their new environment. They try to build an adaptive system to function normally as a family after the CSA incident.

The emotional system in the Geulis family consisted of parenting style and emotional bonding. Some extended family members had advised Geulis's mother to leave Geulis's son with other family members so that Geulis could continue her study in a boarding school and she could focus on working as the family breadwinner. However, Geulis's mother ultimately rejected the idea and preferred staying with Geulis and her son. This parenting style affected Geulis's relationship with her mother. While Geulis's mother was busy going to work, Geulis, who was not emotionally stable, needed other people around her during the day. She then chose to go to her father's home or her grandparents. She met with her husband-to-be while she helped her grandparents' business, a small food stall. However, Geulis's mother got angry with Geulis when she knew that Geulis had visited her father and his new family. It created conflict between them and resulted in Geulis running away from her mother to live with her father. This conflict, caused by Geulis's mother's parenting style, was solved by the emotional bond between Geulis's son and her mother. Geulis's son could not stay away from his grandmother for long. It made Geulis have to come back home, reconcile with her mother, and live together with a stronger emotional bond.

In terms of the meaning system, Geulis's mother encourages Geulis to be a strong woman mother because she is no longer a child. Geulis must be made aware that she is a mother with children, although it is tough to instill this mindset when Geulis is still a child and has children due to the CSA incident. Therefore, the religious-based advice taught by her mother has a vital role in touching and changing Geulis's personality to be critical in living her future life. A strong character in the face of pressure as a survivor of CSA makes Geulis able to adapt to raising her child independently. Her mother always instilled Islamic values and the importance of patience in every piece of advice given to Geulis to keep her dynamic system of Geulis stable when he started to feel depressed about her life.

*"Sekarang cuma bisa nyaranin Geulis teh supaya bisa jadi ibu yang baik sama nanti (sebentar lagi akan menikah) juga jadi istri yang baik. Teruss jangan lupa sholat, ibadah lah ..."*<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

(Now, I only can suggest that Geulis become a good mother and wife. And do not forget to pray ...).

In addition, controlling systems by realizing the duties and roles of each family member like this is essential to support the resilience of families facing pressure. Geulis understood her role as a woman who helped with household matters when her mother went to work. Geulis was responsible for washing clothes, cooking water, and cleaning the house. At an age that should still be able to play and study, Geulis must get used to supporting her mother in daily household matters. Geulis learned to care for the household and her children at home while her mother focused on working to support the family. It was the best combination they could do without a father or husband as the head of the family.

*"Kalau Bi eri kerja ya geulis masih mau nyuci sama jagain anaknya. Telaten juga sekarang ngurus anak."<sup>47</sup>*

(... if I were working, Geulis would take care of her child and domestic tasks. Geulis is becoming good in taking care of her child).

For their daily needs, such as renting a house and buying food, milk, and baby diapers, the Geulis family implemented a strict maintenance system. They are frugal and adjust to these needs from three sources of income. The first is from the results of the kitabisa.com platform, which was initiated by the LIPI research team concerned with cases of sexual violence. The second is the source of income from Ibu Geulis being a cook at an official government school and finally from donations from their extended family in their home village of Subang.

*"Ya kalau ngga sama Mas Ghani (bantuan platform kitabisa.com), awal-awal itu teh ngga ada sama sekali pemasukan. Kan kita juga keluar dari subang (kampung halaman) ya berhenti kerja juga dari pabrik. Setelah beberapa bulan lah baru bibi bisa punya kerjaan diajak sama ponakan masak (jadi juru masak) di sekolah (kedinasan). Sebulan bisa dapat 1 juta sampai 1,5 juta. Cuma itu teh kerjanya 4 bulan masuk 2 bulannya ngga. Sedangkan kontrakan sebulan sewanya tetap 400 ribu. Berat sih, tapi dicukup-cukupin."<sup>48</sup>*

(If we were not getting help from Mas Ghani (the first author who initiated funding collection from the online platform), we had no income after moving to a new

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<sup>47</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

place. After a few months, my nephew offered me a job cooking for boarding students. I can earn one to one and a half million rupiah a month. But I only work for four months in one semester, and we have to pay almost half a million rupiah monthly for rent. It was hard, but I try to make our income sufficient).

Due to the difficult economic situation and life of taking care of the household, Geulis quit her high school education because she felt she could not fulfill many roles at once. It is the best system maintenance step the Geulis family can do to adapt after the CSA incident.

*"Udah ngga pengen sekolah lagi. Ini teh lagi cari-cari kerja aja. Ngga tahan soalnya kalau sekolah online juga. Kemaren kan pas pandemic si R (anak geulis) kalau lagi sekolah suka gangguin, minta digendong, nangis atau apa. Jadi saya juga ngga bisa focus belajar."<sup>49</sup>*

(I do not want to go to school anymore. I am still looking for a job. It is hard to do online school methods. During the pandemic, my boy usually disturbs me during my online study, including asking for carried, crying, etc. I could not focus on my study).

### **Family Adaptation**

Four years after the CSA incident, Geulis and her mother have adapted positively from the adverse event and will continue to adjust to functioning normally in daily life. Geulis tries to greet neighbors and take good care of her children at home, while her mother focuses on earning income by being a cook at the school government. Another positive outcome of the adaptation is the health condition of Geulis, her mother, and her son, both physically and mentally. The absence of disease after the CSA incident, safely doing childbirth, and the healthy condition of Geulis's baby, Geulis's mother, and Geulis herself. They show positive adaptation because many studies correlate CSA survivors to being prone to various sexual diseases, other physical diseases, and even disability levels when growing up.<sup>50</sup> Although the CSA incident negatively affected Geulis's life, she kept sane and completed her junior high education.

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<sup>49</sup> Geulis, interview.

<sup>50</sup> Céline Lacle et al., "Sexual Health in Women Reporting a History of Child Sexual Abuse," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 36, no. 3 (2012): 247–59, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.10.011>; Louis Jacob et al., "The Relationship of Childhood Sexual and Physical Abuse with Adulthood Disability," *Annals of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine* 63, no. 4 (2020): 332–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rehab.2019.06.005>.

Besides the positive outcomes, an adaptation from Geulis and her mother is still in progress and continues until now. The adaptation outcome might not seem reasonable, but it might be the best thing they can do in that situation. For example, Geulis decided to stop in first grade at the high school level because she was responsible for taking care of her son. Her son often bothers her when she is online schooling at home, and Geulis is also afraid that her new school friends will know her secret as a CSA survivor. Geulis might still have trauma from having friends since her friends contributed to the CSA incident. Another trauma in the Geulis family is related to the threat from the perpetrator's family, making them not interested in returning to their hometown or even just visiting. Although their extended family still hopes Geulis, her mother, and her child will want to return to their hometown. However, they also understand that Geulis and his mother have found a more comfortable life in their new environment.

*"Di sekolah Geulis punya teman. Tapi cuma satu aja ... Memang sengaja teman sedikit aja. Soalnya takut juga sih. Misalnya kenal sama orang (dapat teman baru). Terus udah kenal gitu (semakin dalam pertemanan), habis itu dia tau kalau kondisi geulis kaya gini. Yaa minder aja kaya gitu. Kalau di sekolah memang geulis ga ngasih tau kalau sudah punya anak. Geulis di sini (di rumah lingkungan baru) ga ada teman, jarang keluar aja. Ya paling nyapa-nyapa tetangga aja atau sekali sekali ikut pengajian di masjid. Soalnya kan di sini (lingkungan baru) ga pada tahu (geulis korban kekerasan seksual). Takut soalnya dulu habis kesebar kejadian (mengingat kejadian terdahulu pasca pelaporan kasus kekerasan seksual ke polisi), geulis suka takut dipanggil polisi. Ditanya-tanya juga di kantor, jadinya teh orang di desa jadinya pada tahu (merasa identitasnya tidak dijaga oleh masyarakat dan polisi di lingkungan lama)."*<sup>51</sup>

(I have a friend in school. But only one ... I purposely have limited friends because I am afraid. I am inferior to my condition, mainly if my friends know my condition. I did not tell anyone at school that I already had a child. Geulis does not have friends here. She barely goes outside. She only greets the neighbour sufficiently and joins the mosque prayer gathering once. Since this neighbourhood does not know Geulis is a CSA survivor, we fear the traumatized event will be repeated. After others knew about the CSA incidence, Geulis was often called by the police to be interviewed, making more people know about it).

*"Keluarga ya semuanya sebenarnya nyuruh pulang (berharap bisa kembali ke desa asal). Katanya ga apa-apa, ayo semua mending tinggal di sini (desa asal). Cuma sayanya sama ini (Geulis) yang nggak nyaman, karena apa ya, trauma."*<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Geulis, interview.

<sup>52</sup> Geulis's mother, interview.

(All family members asked us to come back (to the hometown). They said it was okay and encouraged us to gather with the family. But I am still not comfortable because I am still traumatized).

Overall, Geulis's family has adapted to the negative impact of the CSA incident, able to live, function properly, have the income to fulfill their needs and stay together as a family. Geulis can also start a new relationship that will benefit the family, particularly Geulis's mother, who acts as the breadwinner and caregiver. Although they still lack some aspects of adaptation, adaptation is an ongoing process. Geulis and her mother's current situation demonstrates that they have made every effort to maintain a regular family life.

#### **D. Discussion**

This research aims to analyze the resilience process of a CSA survivor at the family level since children who experience sexual abuse might not have sufficient ability and resources to cope with the negative effect of CSA incidence. While the CSA survivor ended up pregnant in this case, the unintended pregnancy had given some risks to the family, including school cessation and loss of family income. Geulis's family has made some adjustments, with the help of some parties, to cope with the adverse situation that resulted from the CSA experience. At the same time, some studies mentioned mental health disorders as the result of CSA experience.<sup>53</sup> We found that Geulis can generally function in her daily life and even take care of her son. Adolescents face inevitable "storms and stress" due to the transition from childhood to adulthood.<sup>54</sup> They are often related to unstable emotions, but Geulis, despite her development stage as a teenager, manages to live her life, juggling her study and caregiving.

Currently, Geulis is one of the victims of CSA who can come back strong to live a life after CSA. Not many victims of CSA from the lower classes of society have the resources and access to information such as Geulis to get help from various parties who care about victims of CSA. It is illustrated by the behavior of

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<sup>53</sup> Valerie E. Whiffen and Heather B. MacIntosh, "Mediators of the Link between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Emotional Distress," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 6, no. 1 (2005): 24–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838004272543>; Murthi and Espelage, "Childhood Sexual Abuse, Social Support, and Psychological Outcomes: A Loss Framework"; Domhardt et al., "Resilience in Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

<sup>54</sup> Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, "Adolescent Storm and Stress, Reconsidered," *American Psychologist* 54, no. 5 (1999): 317–26, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.54.5.317>; "Adolescent Development," *BMJ* 330, no. 7494 (2005): 789.2, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.330.7494.789-a>.

Geulis, who are quite capable of caring for children, such as bathing them and making food. Most importantly, Geulis can open up to talk and socialize with strangers and her surroundings. The results of interviews with researchers also show that Geulis had begun to tell what she felt sequentially, in contrast to the first time the researcher met her four years ago when this case emerged when Geulis kept quiet and did not want to talk to anyone. It is crucial because, with this kind of open behavior, Geulis can find a potential life partner willing to accept Geulis and his family.

The CSA resilience process might not be easy. Most CSA victims receive from their family, the community, and the perpetrator as someone who deserves sexual harassment treatment because of their behavior.<sup>55</sup> After moving to another place and studying in a new environment, Geulis and her mother managed to limit information about their families to prevent the stigma. Geulis also chose not to make many friends in school, so she does not need to socialize with many people, and part of herself is still traumatized by friendship.

Besides the difficulties, Geulis and her mother received support from several parties, including extended family, NGOs, and the new community in which they lived. Support and cohesion between families that flow strongly can predict resilience in girls who experience sexual abuse so that they get a good quality of life after CSA events.<sup>56</sup> Psychological therapies provided by NGOs play a critical role in reducing post-traumatic stress disorder after experiencing CSA. Geulis lived with other CSA survivors and received psychological treatments

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<sup>55</sup> Newsom and Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor": Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse"; Angie C. Kennedy and Kristen A. Prock, "I still feel like I am not normal": A Review of the Role of Stigma and Stigmatization Among Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Intimate Partner Violence," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19, no. 5 (2018): 512–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016673601>; Sanjeevi et al., "A Review of Child Sexual Abuse: Impact, Risk, and Resilience in the Context of Culture"; Yanuar Farida Wismayanti et al., "Child Sexual Abuse in Indonesia: A Systematic Review of Literature, Law and Policy," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 95 (2019): 104034, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104034>.

<sup>56</sup> Faith H. McClure et al., "Resilience in Sexually Abused Women: Risk and Protective Factors," *Journal of Family Violence* 23, no. 2 (2008): 81–88, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-007-9129-4>; Sanjeevi et al., "A Review of Child Sexual Abuse: Impact, Risk, and Resilience in the Context of Culture"; Muhid et al., "Quality of Life Perempuan Penyintas Kekerasan Seksual: Studi Kualitatif"; David Cantón-Cortés and José Cantón, "Coping with Child Sexual Abuse among College Students and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Role of Continuity of Abuse and Relationship with the Perpetrator," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 34, no. 7 (2010): 496–506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.11.004>.

regularly for several months. Encouraging CSA survivors to engage in therapy without delay will help improve their well-being and recovery.<sup>57</sup> The psychological treatment protected Geulis from mental health disorders and helped her cope with the trauma.

Geulis was able to continue her life and started a new relationship with another man several years after the CSA incident. Several studies have analyzed the link between CSA experience and relationship functioning. Some studies have found an association between CSA experience and relationship functioning, while others have failed to find such associations.<sup>58</sup> An intimate interpersonal relationship is one of the resilience outcomes after experiencing CSA. The negative experience traumatized CSA survivors to begin new relationships with men because it brings back old memories and is fearless.<sup>59</sup> Geulis might be among the CSA survivors who can start a new relationship after experiencing sexual abuse. It might happen because the man's and his family's excellent attitude accepts Geulis's circumstances.

Moreover, before the CSA accident, the family had significant roles for Geulis and most survivors. The poverty of families and parents with low education increases the likelihood of children experiencing sexual violence due to a lack of resources and access to information on the prevention and intervention of potential sexual violence.<sup>60</sup> The condition of the Geulis's family, which is not intact and unstable, both in terms of economics and the psychological development of children, causes Geulis to be very vulnerable to threats of sexual violence in their environment. It is inseparable from the condition of Geulis, who lacks supervision from her divorced parents. Childhood experiences of parental divorce often coexist with adverse childhood

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<sup>57</sup> Cantón-Cortés and Cantón, "Coping with Child Sexual Abuse among College Students and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Role of Continuity of Abuse and Relationship with the Perpetrator"; Gail S. Goodman et al, "Psychological Counseling and Accuracy of Memory for Child Sexual Abuse," *American Psychologist* 72, no. 9 (2017): 920–31, <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000282>.

<sup>58</sup> Kristen N. Vitek and Elizabeth A. Yeater, "The Association Between a History of Sexual Violence and Romantic Relationship Functioning: A Systematic Review," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 22, no. 5 (2021): 1221–32, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838020915615>.

<sup>59</sup> Newsom and Myers-Bowman, "I am not a victim. I am a survivor': Resilience as a Journey for Female Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse."

<sup>60</sup> Wismayanti et al, "Child Sexual Abuse in Indonesia: A Systematic Review of Literature, Law and Policy."



experiences, such as experiencing sexual abuse and witnessing other harmful forms of abuse.<sup>61</sup>

This study, however, has several strengths and limitations. It analyzed the impact of CSA survivors on their families. It elaborates on the resilience process at the family level, including the role of environments, a meaning system in the family, and family circumstances. Moreover, the first author has built a good rapport with respondents by helping the CSA survivor. It enables the author to observe how the family was going through difficult times. However, gender differences between the researcher and respondents might affect the data collection since respondents might hesitate to tell the whole story and their feelings about the experience. The interviews also co-occurred and were dominated by Geulis's mother, resulting in a lack of information on Geulis's perspectives. One-on-one interviews with Geulis were difficult due to Geulis's condition that she is not comfortable yet talking to people outside her family. Gender differences between Geulis and the interviewer might result in an awkward situation and Geulis' hesitancy to talk about herself. On the other hand, the second author could not do the interviews due to some circumstances.

## **E. Conclusion**

The CSA incident has negatively impacted the whole family, not just those who experienced the sexual abuse. Complicated lives such as dropping out of school, having to flee from their hometown, and not having a steady income are significant stressors for the families of CSA survivors. It takes years of adaptation for CSA survivors to recover mentally and function in everyday life. Geulis's family showed that CSA survivors could rebuild their lives with a positive outlook on life and the support of many parties, such as extended family, the closest community, caring NGOs, and sufficient financial support.

However, it should be noted that even though Geulis has tried to come back stronger, some things cannot be reversed before the CSA incident. Geulis and her mother are still afraid to return to the old environment and cannot have many friends because of her 'secret.' She could not continue her study due

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<sup>61</sup> Afifi et al., "The Relationship between Child Abuse, Parental Divorce, and Lifetime Mental Disorders and Suicidality in a Nationally Representative Adult Sample."

to her circumstances as her son's caregiver. It is crucial to becoming the concern of the government and other related parties about CSA survivors, which still leaves trauma even though the incident occurred many years ago.

Lastly, CSA survivors cannot fight alone. They can come back stronger if supported by a solid community and willing to accept them without stigma toward the CSA survivor. In addition, providing mental health assistance to CSA survivors after they experience an adverse event is also essential to help them recover from the trauma. Also, specialized legal assistance appropriate for the child's age must be taken into account for the child's emotions, which are frequently temperamental and erratic. The government must also consider financial support and daily needs for CSA survivors. Further research can focus on long-term adjustments CSA survivors' families conducted to cope with the negative effects of the sexual abuse incidents.

### *Ethical Considerations*

All participants have consent, and we have written evidence and proof of permission from recorded interviews. We keep evidence of informants' willingness to be interviewed, recorded, and signed informed consent. If required by a particular party, we can show it.[s]

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