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FROM THE EDITOR

There has been much media coverage of trials of historic sexual abuse, often with a focus on those prosecuted. In every such trial, there is a person for whom giving evidence has required them not only to disclose, but also to go through with bringing the case to court and all that involves.

In the first of three linked articles in this issue, Peter Jenkins, Joanne Muccio, and Nicky Paris, consider the issues involved in providing counselling and psychotherapy for such vulnerable witnesses. Pre-trial therapy (PTT), as it is known, has itself gained prominence in the media of late, and there has been a seeming reluctance to provide it on the grounds that it might undermine prosecution evidence. Practice guidance by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), however, makes it clear that both child and vulnerable witnesses can receive PTT before and during a criminal trial of their alleged abusers. The authors explore the implications for therapists providing PTT, and among the sources they consider is a survey of practitioners' experiences and views. Research into the parallel experiences of clients is now being planned.

Paula Doran's article reports her research, which explored the impact on therapists practising in sexual trauma. In reflecting on her findings about the risk inherent in this work for both client and counsellor, Paula asks for a more open dialogue about the personal consequences to therapists of working in this area.

The third of our linked features, written by Helen Leach, outlines the role of the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA). ISVAs aim to support and empower survivors of sexual abuse and violence when engaged with, or considering, criminal proceedings against their perpetrators. Helen's piece is titled *Silent Voices*, in an appreciation of the difficulties encountered by people when speaking out. Historically, a victim-blaming culture has made it difficult, if not impossible, for survivors to bring cases to court. Now, with the help of an ISVA, survivors can be provided with a clearer insight into the reporting process and the space to explore feelings.

