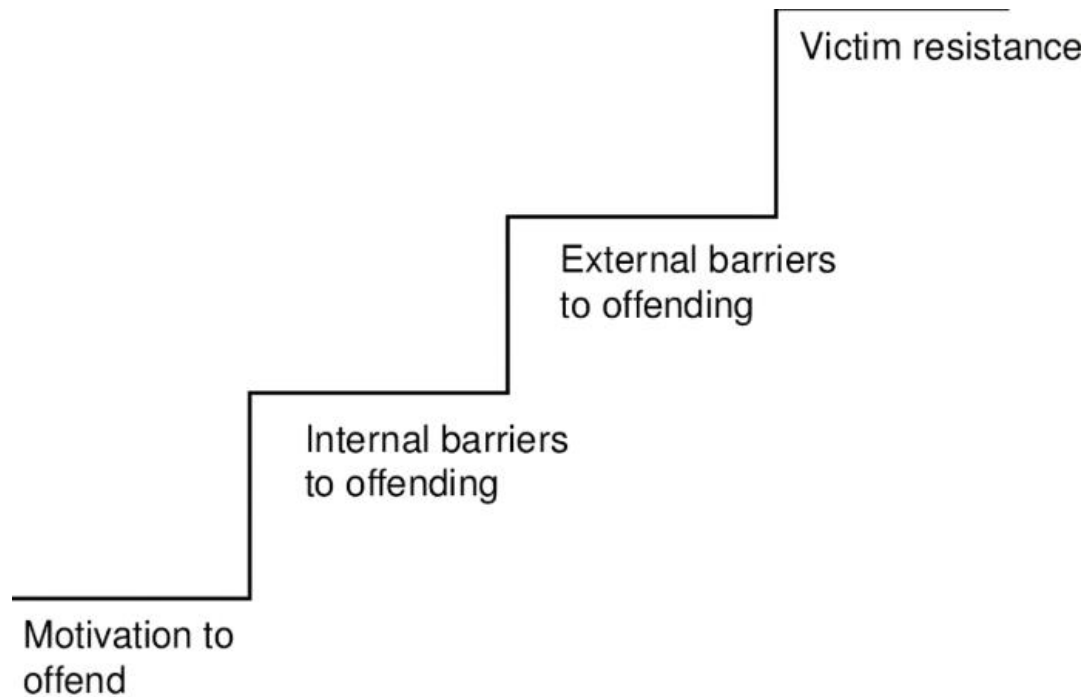


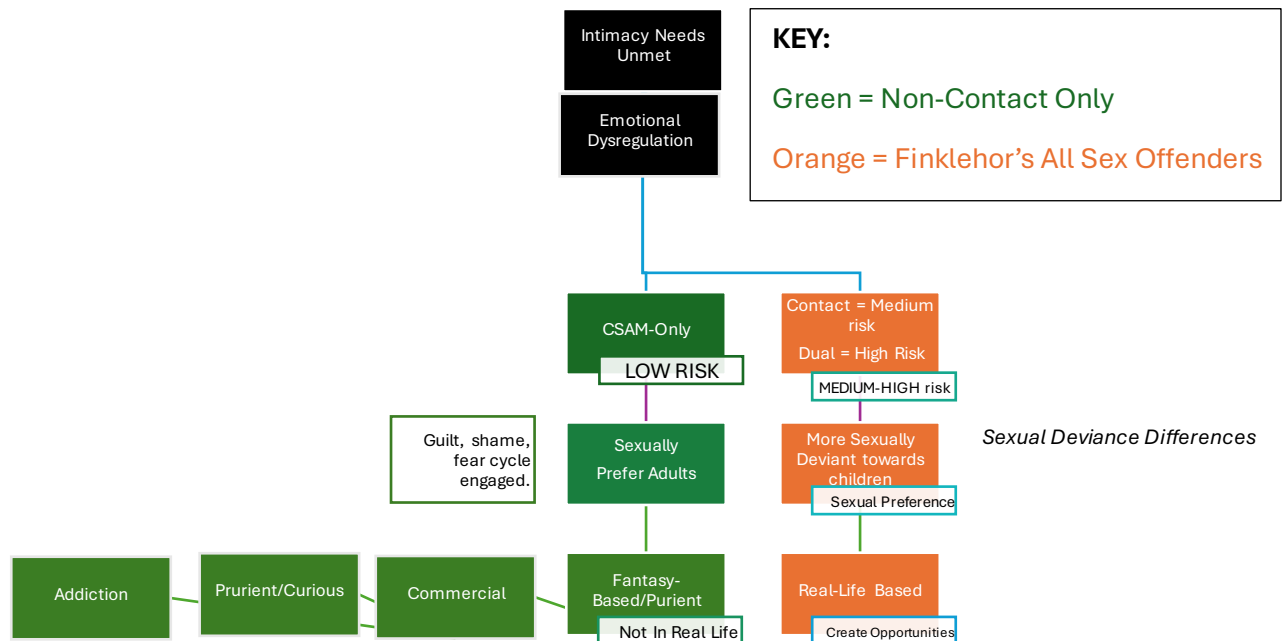
Finklehor's traditional behavioural dynamics for rehabilitative risk assessments for people who commit any sex offence.

Diagram 1: describes Finklehor's pre-conditions needed to sexually offend;



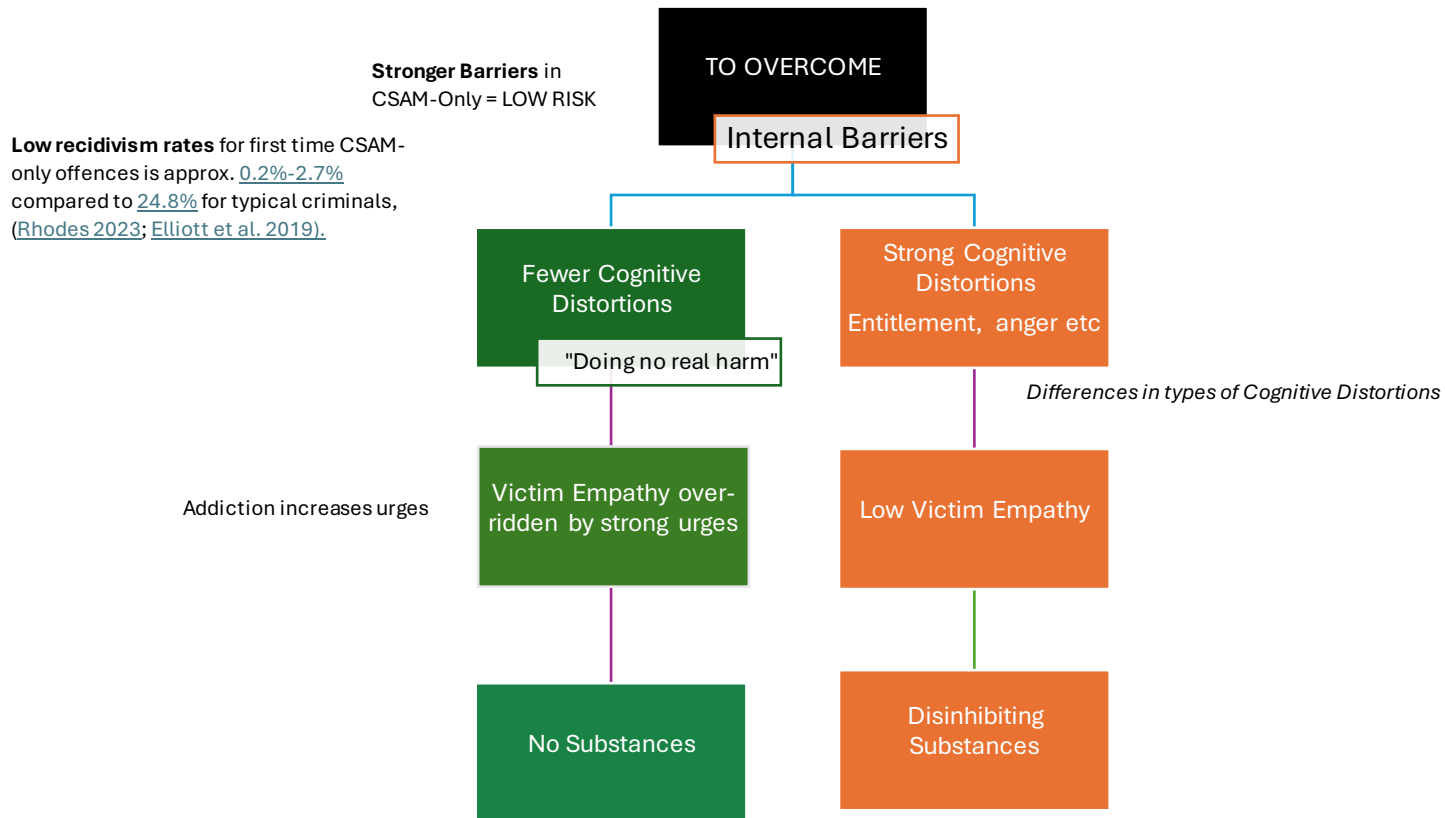
Finklehor's model applies to all sex offences (ORANGE boxes). However, research is showing **distinct differences for non-contact offenders** (GREEN boxes).

Diagram 2: **Motivation**

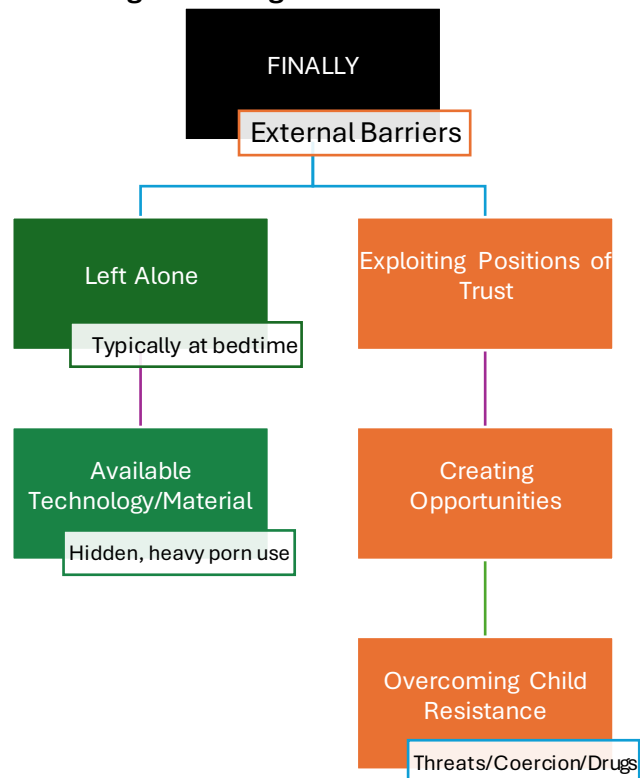




**Diagram 3: INTERNAL Barriers Preventing Offending**



**Diagram 4: EXTERNAL Barriers Preventing Offending**





## DISCUSSION

The orange boxes represent the traditional model based on all types of sex offences. However, it is not appropriate for non-contact CSAM-only offences and ineffectual for treatment purposes, ([Milligan 2014](#)). A newer model would also be better for socio-economic purposes when assessing initial risk, ([The Police Foundation 2022](#)).

While some of these 'orange' factors may be relevant to non-contact (NC) CSAM-only offences, **there are discrete and distinct new variables to integrate into the causes for CSAM-only offending**. Some have been labelled in green in this document (such as feeling/being 'alone' and internet addiction).

***“Comparison studies have confirmed that online sexual offenders differ from conventional sexual offenders in meaningful ways, including differences in average age, education, prior criminal history, and the psychological risk factors of sexual deviance, sexual preoccupation, and sexual self-regulation”. “The association between paedophilia and child pornography offending is not one-to-one”***

([Seto 2012](#)).

New models for assessing risk for rehabilitative purposes should consider these **new variables** such as CSAM-addiction, context, 'fantasy-based', motivation for profit, viewing time, mitigating factors, types of platforms used (dark web vs mainstream websites), cluster-types of 'collectors', to properly assess and treat risk adequately, ([Pizzoli et al. 2021](#)).

Other players must also be considered and how they fit into the equation for solution e.g. the pornography industry, relevant government departments, the IWF and the media. To date, causes of CSAM-only offending have not been differentiated properly, ([Tenberger et al. 2015](#)). This is highlighted with the lack of cohesiveness between disciplines, with each approaching the problem from their own school of thought. Thus, more cross-cultural **interdisciplinary research** is urgently needed, such as neurobiology, criminology, forensics, policing, sociology and psychology to agree on causes and capture all static and dynamic risk factors.

**Motivations** and **triggers** for offending for non-contact offences are on a heterogenic spectrum and often **differ from other sexual offences**, ([Wortley 2024](#)). Whilst NC's and contact offenders share emotional dysregulation and unmet intimacy needs, they differ within these pathways and differ in sexual deviance and cognitive distortions, ([The Police Foundation 2022](#); [Milligan 2014](#)). This is underscored by the cognitive dissonance CSAM-only users experience in the shame, fear, guilt cycle.

Research shows that there is **an over-estimation of risk for CSAM-offenders** within the police, public and the media, ([Giles and Alison 2023](#)). **Low recidivism rates** for first time CSAM-only offences is approx. 0.2%-2.7% compared to 24.8% for typical criminals, ([Rhodes 2023](#); [Elliott et al. 2019](#)).



An **over-estimation of risk** and **misconceptions** contribute to perpetuate the problem. In one study, the public felt that the NC CSAM-only crimes warranted a more severe imprisonment compared to child contact-offences. This is despite highly significant differences in risk classification between contact offenders and CSAM-only offenders. It is clear misconceptions are in play here.

In the early years (2012), offenders were sharing CSAM they made in real life from real victims they knew. This is compared to 2025, where most of the CSAM material removed by IWF was 'self-generated' material (92%) and uploaded by the children themselves, ([IWF 2023](#)). This is a worrying growing trend, and greater psychoeducation is needed to prevent our children uploading this material and other children and adults consuming it.

Recent research shows that there are **more differences** between CSAM-only and contact/dual offenders than similarities, ([Rhodes et al. 2023](#)). We need better models for better resource allocation and appropriate treatments, ([Milligan 2014](#)).

Hopefully this will lead to the **better treatment of secondary victims** within families of offenders from the police, Social Services, the media, schools, the community and the public. Currently, secondary victims within families experience tremendous victimisation and silencing. "Social workers are typically empathic, but it can be challenging to offer compassionate care to those who harmed others and, by extension, to the people who love them", ([Kavanagh et al. 2022](#)). This is compounded by a lack of training and the misconceptions that exist.

Thank you for reading. Please share this document with others. Feedback welcomed.  
Email: [info@theknock.club](mailto:info@theknock.club)

This paper will be followed by a more in-depth review at a later date. Research is currently underway.

We support the families of CSAM-only offenders and provide free education, resources, therapy courses, signposting and advice. We are not-for-profit and all running costs are paid out of pocket with no donations.

The author has a Bachelors in Sociology and an MSc in Information Management, extensive lived-experience and counselling qualifications.