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Conference on incest slated at UM June 4-6

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University of Montana

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MEDIA RELEASE

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dailies

CONFERENCE ON INCEST
SLATED AT UM JUNE 4-6

MISSOULA--

Homosexuality, pornography, rape, abortion, venereal disease--subjects that just a few years ago were taboo--today are being openly discussed and addressed. Now incest, perhaps the last and most repugnant taboo, is about to come out of the closet.

Like the dirtiest of dirty words, it is a topic too unspeakably horrible for most people even to discuss. But just because the problem is not discussed does not mean it doesn't exist.

Experts, such as Paul Moomaw, a clinical psychologist with Bitterroot Psychological Services in Missoula, say that conservative estimates are one in 10 that a little girl will be sexually abused or molested before she becomes an adult. The odds are, Moomaw says, that the man who abuses her will be a member of her own family and someone she trusts, such as her father, stepfather, uncle, older brother or grandfather. Moomaw says that sexual abuse happens most often to girls but that it happens to boys as well.

Florence Rush, author of "The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children," limits the definition of sexual abuse to "exhibitionism or physical genital contact." Moomaw defines it as "having your hands at the wrong place at the wrong time to intercourse or anything inbetween."

A new group called the Montana Incest Prevention Coalition is trying to do something about the problem. The coalition, which is comprised of psychologists,

(over)

Incest--add one

teachers, counselors, lawyers and former sexual abuse victims, is holding a conference on child sexual abuse at the University of Montana June 4-6.

The conference is being sponsored by the UM sociology department and the Montana Committee for the Humanities. Other supporters include Blue Cross of Montana and the Human Resource Development Council.

Nationally known writer Sandra Butler, author of "Conspiracy of Silence," will be the principal speaker. Other experts on child sexual abuse, such as Freada Klein of Brandeis University, will conduct workshops for professionals and laymen. Also represented will be members of Parents United, a self-help group from Calgary, Alta., who will discuss how to start similar programs.

The purpose of the conference, Moomaw said, is to increase public awareness of the problem and to "break through the taboo." A long-term goal, he said, is to establish a statewide network of concerned people who will start treatment programs in their own communities.

Admission to the general presentations is free. There will be a \$10 charge for the workshops.

For more information call the UM sociology department at 243-5281 or write to Incest Prevention, 315 South Fourth St., Missoula, MT 59801.

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