

EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABOUT A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF SEX OFFENDERS IN THE COMMUNITY:

A Training Curriculum

User's Guide

Format

The curriculum is designed to make it as easy as possible for trainers to follow. The lecture content, written as a script, appears on the left side of the page, with notes to the presenter on the right. Each section of the training has accompanied numbered slides/overheads, which are clearly marked in the right column and aligned with the appropriate text. Notes on points to emphasize, use of the Learning Activities, and appropriate reference materials also appear in the right column.

The following icons are used to help guide you through the materials:



This icon indicates the beginning of a new lecture topic.



This icon indicates a Learning Activity. When you see this icon, remember that this is an opportunity for breaking the audience into groups. If you plan to break into smaller groups, then the diversity of the larger audience should be reflected in the smaller groups' composition.

Other symbols include:

➤ **Use Slide #** – these appear alongside the relevant text. This symbol is designed to reinforce points made in the text. With a few exceptions where the slides provide additional detail, the slides introduce no new information.

📖 **Refer to Handout** – this is used for both Exercise and Reference Handouts, materials that should be made part of the participant packet given in the beginning of the training, or at the beginning of each section.

Time Allotment

This “menu” curriculum is based on the assumption that the length of community education sessions are highly variable, depending on the local situation. In most cases, they will be relatively brief—an hour or two. Please select from the menu of materials that is most helpful to you. Most of the material is presented in a way that is very easy to abridge, if necessary. We recommend that you do so according to the needs and interests of your particular audience.

Training Techniques and Terms

Question and Answer. Some presenters are comfortable having participants interrupt with questions. Others prefer to have participants hold questions until the end of a section or other specified period. In part this is a matter of preference, but it also can be a matter of time, since interruptions can throw off a schedule and the smooth delivery of information.

Because of the potentially volatile content in the context of a sex offender community notification meeting, it may be prudent to ask participants to hold all questions until the end of the meeting, or ask them to write questions on cards and turn them in at the end of the meeting. This helps manage the dialogue and assures the timely delivery of information. In this context, it is wise to explain that you have a lot of material to go over and that by the end of the meeting you will have answered most of their questions—if not, you will stay until all of their questions are answered.

Use of Smaller Groups. Many community education meetings take place in groups of 30 or more individuals. Since this size group does not lend itself to discussion, you may be limited to questions and answers as the primary way of involving attendees. If you are interested in soliciting comments, questions, and input from attendees, you may want to consider breaking into smaller groups for purposes of discussion and learning activities (such as the question and answer test provided). If you do break into small groups, there are a number of techniques that can assist in stimulating and managing a discussion.

There are pros and cons to dividing an audience into smaller groups. One important pro is that a more personal exchange of ideas can take place and it is easier for more people to be heard and feel involved. On the other hand, this technique requires more space, more discussion leaders, and may run the risk of participants hearing different information in different groups. Meeting organizers should consider carefully the pros and cons of using a large group or breaking into smaller groups for discussion. If you do elect to break into smaller groups, the following suggestions may help manage these discussions.

- *Gathering Input from the Group.* In any group there will be participants more willing to contribute or ask questions than others. If a meeting leader allows the normal dynamic of a group to unfold—with some participants dominating—other participants may not have the opportunity to ask questions or provide comments. One technique for leveling the playing field in a group setting is to use a “round robin” technique. This involves going around a group and asking for input or questions from each person, in order, without interruption. Usually, these are recorded in a way that gives everyone viewing access—on a blackboard or a flip chart. In this way, you can assemble a list of questions, avoiding duplication and gauging the primary interests of the group, before beginning a discussion or responding to questions. The process can continue until no one has anything new to contribute, or it can be limited to a certain number of cycles through the group. Be sure to allow enough

time to respond to the questions/comments once a list has been generated. A round robin process is an excellent way to elicit everyone's participation, make sure everyone feels heard, and to minimize the impact of dominating individuals.

- *Recording.* Writing on a flip chart, a dry erase board, or an overhead is a very simple but sometimes overlooked technique for reinforcing learning. For visual learners, it is essential. Trainers can invite a participant to serve as a recorder for a particular activity, as the process of writing sometimes detracts from effective facilitation. Asking small groups to name a recorder to capture the main points of their discussion can help to keep the small groups focused on their task. Capturing comments and questions on paper or other media also tends to focus energy—and sometimes emotion—on the written word, rather than on the discussion leader.
- *Introductions/Ice Breakers.* In a small group, it is often helpful to ask people to introduce themselves the first time they ask a question or give a comment. This sets the tone for a much more relaxed and personal discussion.

Modifying the Curriculum

Users are encouraged to adapt these materials to their own needs and circumstances. Any questions regarding the curriculum and its use can be referred to Tom Talbot, Training Manager at the Center for Sex Offender Management (phone: 301-589-9383, fax: 301-589-3505).

Authors

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