

SECTION 3: MANAGING SEX OFFENDERS IN THE COMMUNITY

30 Minutes




Lecture Content	Teaching Notes
<p>TOPIC: INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)</p> <p>LEARNING OBJECTIVES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ To help citizens understand the concept of managing sex offenders. ❑ To inform citizens about promising practices for dealing with sex offenders. ❑ To provide citizens with information about their role in the comprehensive management of sex offenders in communities. <p>As we have previously discussed, people who commit sexual offenses, whether convicted for these offenses or not, live in our communities. Two of the ways you can help to maintain a safe community are to know and understand how sex offenders who are residing in your community are managed and—to the extent possible—play a proactive role in protecting yourselves, your family members, and your communities from sexual abusers (both those you know about and those you do not know). Once again, remember that there are many more sexual abusers in your community than those who have been identified by our court system.</p> <p>This next section provides a brief overview of the various components of an emerging state-of-the-art sex offender management system—the overarching goal of which is the prevention of future sexual assault. As we discuss the various pieces or components of this comprehensive approach to sex offender management, it will become clear that community participation in and awareness about the management of sex offenders is important because sexual assault is a community-wide problem that cannot be solved or contained in a vacuum. In fact,</p>	<p><i>Please note that this section of the training is intended to be used only by those jurisdictions that have adopted a specialized approach to managing sex offenders in the community and where there is a desire to educate and inform the community about this approach.</i></p> <p>➤Use Slides #1-3: Title and Learning Objectives</p> <p><i>In the interest of time, you may wish to skip the review of the learning objectives.</i></p>

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<p>current management methods require the assistance of and collaboration among a variety of stakeholders, including police officers, supervision officers, treatment providers, victim advocates, judges, community members, and many others.</p>	



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<p data-bbox="186 300 906 422">TOPIC: WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT MANAGING SEX OFFENDERS IN THE COMMUNITY?</p> <p data-bbox="186 436 324 468">(5 minutes)</p> <ul data-bbox="186 506 938 1612" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="186 506 938 657">• It is inevitable that sex offenders will reside in the general community, either immediately following sentencing or after a period of incarceration in prison or jail.<li data-bbox="186 663 938 1010">• The research that has been conducted regarding the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault reveals that most sex offenders are not under correctional supervision. That is, the majority of those individuals who sexually abuse are not apprehended by the criminal justice system. As such, we should be just as concerned about the sex offenders we do not know about.<li data-bbox="186 1016 938 1129">• With specialized treatment and supervision, some sex offenders can be more safely managed in the community.<li data-bbox="186 1136 938 1249">• Communities can help by supporting sex offenders' attempts to reintegrate into society and become productive community members.<li data-bbox="186 1255 938 1612">• Because of the nature of sexual assault in our society, the majority of sex offenders have victimized someone who will be affected by their incarceration and post-incarceration requirements. In other words, helping sex offenders reintegrate into society helps the families (who may include the primary victim) of sex offenders both financially and emotionally.	<p data-bbox="966 468 1372 611">➤ Use Slide #4: Why do we need to talk about managing sex offenders in the community?</p>



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<p>TOPIC: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT? (5 minutes)</p> <p>The best way to understand what we are calling sex offender management is that, in order to prevent future victimization, a sex offender requires both internal and external controls over his or her behavior.</p> <p>To strengthen the offender’s internal control and impose external controls on his or her behavior, a multidisciplinary approach is required. The most effective management occurs when supervisors and treatment providers work together to individualize the supervision and treatment plans according to the unique challenges faced by and posed by a specific offender. Yet, research and experience is indicating that victim and community safety is best achieved when parole and probation agents and treatment providers work with advocates for victims and community members in supervising individual offenders. Thus, collaboration is an important principle in effective sex offender management.</p> <p>The puzzle image may be a helpful way to illustrate the concept behind comprehensive sex offender management. Each piece of the puzzle on the slide represents an entity that has responsibility for imposing external controls on offenders or enhancing his or her internal controls. When linked through a coordinated and collaborative approach, each piece plays a role in the prevention of future victimization.</p> <p>Treatment helps the offender develop internal controls. Sex offender specific treatment works on helping offenders identify their individual pattern of abuse—what the thoughts, actions, and events that precede their offense behavior are and how they can</p>	<p>➤ Use Slide #5: Sex Offender Management Is:</p> <p> Refer to Handout: <i>An Overview of Sex Offender Management</i> This document is a quick introduction to sex offender management. All trainers are encouraged to become familiar with this material before conducting training on this topic.</p> <p>➤ Use Slide #6: A Comprehensive Approach to Sex Offenders</p> <p><i>Point out the section in their handout that discusses the unique challenges of treating sex offenders.</i></p>

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<p>respond differently to avoid reoffending.</p> <p>The community supervision component performed by probation or parole agents constitutes external control. The supervision agent (following the orders of the court) limits what the offender does or is allowed to do, and tries to limit an offender’s exposure to potential victims and high-risk situations. One specific kind of external control is making sure that the offender participates in appropriate treatment.</p> <p>The community component can include a variety of people. Typically, members of the community who are involved in imposing external controls on the offender are his or her employer, family, and friends. Law enforcement agencies may also be involved in surveillance of the offender’s activities.</p> <p>The victim advocate component is handled differently in different communities. At a minimum, this component means that concern for the safety and privacy of known victim(s) and victims’ families influences the supervision plan designed for an individual offender. A small number of communities have actually created a role for a victim advocate on the team that supervises the offender and are reporting very positive results.</p>	<p><i>Point out the section in the handout that describes supervision practices.</i></p>



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<p>TOPIC: LAPSES (10 minutes)</p> <p>Despite the imposition of external controls and the development of internal controls, most offenders have lapses that, especially in the beginning of supervision, may initiate their sexual abuse cycle. The great majority of sex offenders do not commit their crimes impulsively without any planning or forethought. Most (with the exception of the approximately 4 percent who are mentally ill) have an abuse or offense “cycle” that is associated with their offending behavior. As such, their offending behavior begins hours, days, weeks, or even months before the actual crime is physically perpetrated.</p> <p>WHAT IS A LAPSE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lapses are “stumbles” or steps in the wrong direction.• Lapses are not necessarily reoffenses in and of themselves and do not necessarily lead to reoffense.• A series of lapses <u>may</u> lead to a reoffense.• With regard to lapses, a goal in treatment is for the offender to identify their lapse behavior, talk about it, and take appropriate steps to avoid past patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that have led them to commit sexual offenses.• Offenders cannot always be trusted to be able or willing to talk about their lapses, therefore, close monitoring is essential in combination with treatment. <p>Sex offender treatment and supervision are designed to hold offenders completely accountable for their behavior and to address the problems and issues in their lives that put them at risk to reoffend. Sex offender supervision officers monitor the offender’s</p>	<p>➤Use Slide #7: What Is a Lapse?</p> <p><i>If time permits, you may want to share with the audience an illustration of how a lapse can lead to a reoffense. For example, a sex offender, who is already having difficulty controlling his deviant sexual thoughts, experiences stress at work, and goes out to buy alcohol to try to relax. Instead of bringing alcohol home, he stops at a bar, where he proceeds to get intoxicated and fume about his problems. He then begins fantasizing about committing a sexual assault, which propels him into his cycle of abuse. In this example there are a number of places where the offender could have ‘interrupted’ his path to the reoffense (e.g., not drinking, not going to a bar, talking about his stress with</i></p>

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<p>external activities and sex offender-specific treatment providers monitor the offender’s internal thoughts and feelings. Both are intended to assist the offender in developing the skills and the ability to identify triggers in their cycle of abuse and stop his or her inappropriate, abusive, and dangerous behavior.</p>	<p><i>someone).</i></p>



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<p>TOPIC: VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACH (5 minutes)</p> <p>A fundamental guiding principle of a comprehensive approach to managing sex offenders is making it what we call “victim-centered.” Because of the devastating impact of sexual assault upon victims, focusing on and prioritizing victim safety and privacy as a critical element of community supervision has become an urgent challenge for those responsible for sex offender management. Concerns for the recovery of the victim and for the well being of the community guide the development of policy, the implementation of programs, and the actions of criminal justice practitioners and other professionals working with sexual assault victims and supervising perpetrators. These policies and programs must be sensitive to specific needs of victims and must not increase victim trauma.</p> <p>DEFINING A VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACH</p> <p>A victim-centered approach to the management of sex offenders in communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values public safety, victim protection, and reparation;• Is designed to aid victims and control offenders;• Strives to empower victims of sexual assault;• Requires a commitment by and coordination of victim advocates and key professionals involved in investigating, prosecuting, and managing offenders in the community; and• Attempts to optimize the likelihood that victims will report their sexual assault and receive support in the form of advocacy with the medical and legal systems and/or medical treatment. Recent research indicates that these victims are better able to overcome the	<p>➤Use Slide #8: A Victim-Centered Approach</p>

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<p>trauma of sexual assault and/or minimally begin to integrate the trauma into their lives.</p> <p>Examples of a victim-centered approach to the management of sex offenders in communities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child victims being interviewed in child-friendly settings involving professionals who coordinate their efforts to avoid repetitive interviewing and increased trauma to the victim; • In cases of intra-familial sexual abuse, the offender, rather than the victim, is removed from the home. This not only protects the victim but also validates his/her suffering by holding the offender responsible for his behavior and forcing him to experience the consequences of his behavior; • Giving adult victims access to information about the perpetrator's status within the criminal justice system; • Victim notification of significant changes in the offender's status so they can take whatever steps necessary to feel safe; and • No contact orders for the victim whenever requested or appropriate. <p>A victim-centered approach to the management of sex offenders in the community is also a community-centered approach. As we can see by the national and local statistics, not only are there many unidentified sex offenders already living in our communities, there are at least as many unidentified victims living in our communities.</p>	