

Section 1: Introduction

Use Slides 1-2: Understanding Sex Offenders - An Introductory Curriculum

Throughout the nation, few other crimes – if any – receive as much attention or are the focus of as much scrutiny as sex offenses. This concern and interest is understandable, as sex crimes have a profound impact on both victims and society at large.

There is no doubt that the effects of sexual assault are considerable. After a sexual assault, victims may experience a wide range of emotions, such as sadness, anger, fear, shame, guilt, grief, or self-blame; and they may go on to experience a variety of psychological, social, relationship, and physical difficulties,¹ as well as financial consequences stemming from the assault.² Certainly, these and other issues can interrupt and alter a person's life tremendously. Not only are victims left to cope with the very personal and intense after-effects of a sexual assault, but they also must deal with the tangible costs associated with the assault, including medical care, counseling, and potential lost wages.

Sexual assault is also a costly crime for our communities, both from the perspective of the law enforcement, investigative, and court processing costs and in terms of the fear, sadness, or anger that often arises when a sexual assault occurs in their particular neighborhood or community. In fact, in the last few years we have seen an increasing concern from the general public and other stakeholders about sex crimes. It is hard to pick up a newspaper or turn on the local or national news without seeing or hearing a story about sex offenders, isn't it?

As a result of the significant impact of sex crimes on victims and the community, the public is extremely concerned about sex offending and they want to know what can be done to keep themselves and their families safe. And system stakeholders who are responsible for passing laws, for protecting communities, and for providing services to victims and offenders want to know what can be done as well. They want to know who these sex offenders are, who is at risk for being targeted by them, why they offend, and how they can be stopped.

Although there are no simple answers to these very complex questions, this training curriculum is designed to shed some light on a number of these issues – namely, what current data tells us about sexual victimization and sex offenders, why experts believe that individuals commit sex offenses, and what the implications of these particular findings might be for our efforts to prevent sexual victimization.

 **Use Slides 3:**

Let us briefly review the goals of this training curriculum, which are to:

- To provide a brief overview of the extent of sexual victimization and a few basic trends pertaining to these types of crimes;
- To summarize key data about sex offenders who come to the attention of the criminal justice system;
- To review commonly identified characteristics within the sex offender population, while recognizing the heterogeneity that exists among them;
- To highlight examples of approaches used to classify groups of sex offenders into more homogeneous subtypes or typologies;
- To outline various etiological or explanatory theories of sex offending; and
- To begin to consider the implications of this information for contemporary sex offender management strategies.



Learning Activity: Introductions of Faculty and Participants

Trainer's Notes: It is important to allow time for introductions in order to set a tone for the training that will emphasize and encourage participation and interaction. It is also an opportunity for the trainer to develop a sense of the group's level of knowledge and experience, if that was not accomplished prior to the training event.

In a large group, participant introductions could be made around individual training tables. If the group is smaller, introductions of all participants to the whole group would be appropriate.

The facilitator or lead trainer should introduce the faculty and/or invite them to introduce themselves, and include their experience in working in the field of sex offender management.

Participants should introduce themselves by providing their name, the nature of their job, their experience in sex offender supervision, treatment, victim advocacy, or other fields, and their expectations of the training.

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¹ Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992

² Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996; Travis, 1996