

SECTION 5: SUPERVISION OF SEX OFFENDERS IN THE COMMUNITY: PRACTICAL SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Exercise 2: Interview Role Play

Please cluster yourselves into groups of three—the trainer may ask you to “count off” in order to quickly do so. Each member of each small group should choose a number from 1 to 3. All number ones will be the Observers, all number twos will play the role of offenders, and all number threes will play the role of probation or parole agents/officers. Using the facts from the case study from the earlier sections (provided again below), the person playing the role of the officer/agent in each group should do a cursory initial interview, working on getting through the stages up to the offense history, without worrying about getting all the information they would ordinarily need to get. Allow 10-15 minutes for the interview and then invite observers to share their observations with their small group. Observers should watch for challenges that the offender presents as well as techniques that the officer uses.

Please use some of the materials already presented—regarding the challenges presented by offenders, and techniques to circumvent those challenges—to “demonstrate” or “try out” some of the ideas covered in the training so far. You may also want to use some examples from your own experience to pose questions to fellow participants about how to handle specific difficult situations.

If time allows, invite the groups to switch roles and repeat the exercise.

Case Study Background and History

The Instant Offenses

Mike, a 41 year old man, is charged with and convicted of fondling the breasts of a child under the age of 14. While the authorities strongly suspect that he engaged in sexual intercourse with the child against her will (rape), the victim would only substantiate facts sufficient to bring charges and convictions for the less serious offenses – indecent assault and battery.

The Facts of the Case

Several years before he was arrested, Mike began living with his two daughters (aged 9 and 11 years when he moved in with them) and their mother (Mike had been divorced from her several years before—he had to move back to her home because of financial troubles). While maintaining residence with them, Mike engaged in sexual activity on numerous occasions with his older daughter. The

sexual assaults took place over the course of a 12-month period when his oldest daughter was 13 years old.

The sexual abuse was discovered after the victim told a friend at school what had been happening. The friend immediately reported the allegations to a school counselor. The counselor then reported the abuse to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Police Department.

As a result of the assaults, Mike's two daughters were placed in the custody of DSS, who took responsibility for finding a suitable and safe place for them to reside.

The Perpetrator's Prior Criminal Record

Mike does not have a lengthy or significant criminal record. When he was 30 years old, he was charged with two counts of criminal non-support for failing to pay child support for his two daughters. These charges were dismissed.

The Perpetrator's Sentence for the Instant Offenses

Mike received a two and one half year split sentence (approximately half to be served in jail and approximately half to be served on probation) for his conviction of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14 years of age. He served 11 months in jail, where he received substance abuse counseling. He chose not to participate in sex offender treatment while incarcerated because of his fear of being stigmatized and assaulted by his fellow inmates for being a sex offender.

The Perpetrator's Family, Educational, and Employment History

Mike has not seen his parents since he was a very young child. His parents were divorced when he was 5 years old and both died shortly thereafter (his father in a car accident and his mother from a drug overdose). Mike was raised by a number of different relatives who, he claims, physically and sexually abused him on numerous occasions over a period of many years. He does not interact with or know the whereabouts of any of his relatives except for his half sister and his two daughters. He appears to have a positive and supportive relationship with his half sister.

Mike had significant behavioral and academic problems in junior high and high school. He was expelled in the 10th grade and never returned to school. He says that he "hated" his educational experience because all of his teachers gave him failing grades and he was ridiculed unmercifully by his classmates. He claims to have had no friends in school.

Mike has a very unstable employment history, with lengthy periods of unemployment and dependence upon state and federal assistance. He is

considered unskilled and has worked inconsistently as a construction laborer, a warehouse attendant, and a clerk in a hardware store.

The Perpetrator's Substance Abuse History and Mental Health Issues

During the investigation of the sexual assaults, Mike revealed that he began using drugs and alcohol on a very regular basis in junior high school. He said that he believes that he now suffers from multiple substance addictions and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He reported daily usage of marijuana and alcohol, and weekly usage (or as often as he could afford to purchase it) of cocaine.

During his initial interviews with the investigating officers, Mike said that his PTSD is a result of his multiple tours of duty in the Vietnam War, and the trauma associated with the hundreds and hundreds of violent deaths that he witnessed as a soldier on the "front lines." Mike is, however, too young to have served in Vietnam, and his psychological and psycho-sexual evaluations revealed that his PTSD is the result of the many sexual and physical assaults he endured as a child.