Sex Offenders:

Understanding a Diverse Population
What We Know

General Information About Sex Crimes that Come to the Attention of Authorities
Reports of Rape Have Declined over the Last Decade

U.S Department of Justice
Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006
Adult Arrests: Sex Crimes vs. Other Criminal Conduct

- Sex offenses: < 1%
- Non-sex offenses: > 99%

(FBI, 2005; Snyder, 2004)

Juvenile Arrests: Sex Crimes vs. Other Delinquency

- Sex offenses: 1%
- Non-sex offenses: 99%

(FBI, 2005; Snyder, 2004)
Sex Offense Cases in the Juvenile Courts: Male vs. Female

(Snyder & Sickmund, 2006)
Arrests For Forcible Rape:
- Adults: 84%
- Juveniles: 16%

Arrests For Other Sex Offenses:
- Adults: 80%
- Juveniles: 20%

(FBI, 2005)
But We Don’t Know What We Don’t Know
Rape Reporting Rates

Research indicates that 84% of rapes of adult women are not reported to authorities.

Reporting of Sexual Abuse
Kilpatrick et al. (2003). *National Survey of Adolescents.*

86% not reported to the authorities

*some cases reported to more than one authority*
Reasons Cited for **Not** Reporting to Police

- Time consuming
- Fear of reprisal
- Lack of confidence in police
- Police won't want to be bothered
- Lack of proof
- Not important enough
- Offender wasn't successful
- Personal/private matter
- Told other official
- Other

(NCVS, 2000)
Other Reasons for Non-Reporting, Delayed Reporting, and Recanting

- May not recognize act(s) as abuse
- Shame and/or guilt
- Self-doubt and self-blame
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of being blamed
- Fear of retaliation
- Threats by offender or family/friends
- Emotional attachment to offender
- Concerned about family disruption
- Fear that nothing can/will be done
Reasons Cited *For* Reporting to Police

- Prevent attack on others by offender
- Prevent future personal attack by offender
- Needed help for injury
- Stop/prevent incident
- Because it was a crime
- Felt duty to notify police
- Punish offender

(NCVS, 2000)
Relationship Between Victims and Offenders
Tjaden & Thoennes (2000)

- **Children <12**: 90% Offender Known, 10% Offender a Stranger
- **Adult 18-29**: 66% Offender Known, 34% Offender a Stranger
A Closer Look
Rape: Victim-Offender Relationship

Victims who are Women
- Non-strangers: 83%
- Strangers: 17%

Victims who are Men
- Non-strangers: 77%
- Strangers: 23%

(Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006)
WHAT WE KNOW:
Location of Sex Offenses Against Victims Under 18

(NIBRS data from Snyder & Sickmund, 2006)
What Do We Know About the Individuals Who Commit Sex Offenses?

Who Are They, What Do They “Look Like,” and Why Do They Do What They Do?
Who Commits Sex Crimes?

• Legal label implies they are all the same
• Reality = heterogeneous population
• Sex offending crosses all lines
  – Age
  – Gender
  – Race
  – Socio-economic status
  – Intelligence level
  – Mental health status
Dentist convicted of sexual assaults against female patients

Mayor jailed on child pornography charges

Two women arrested in daycare sex abuse scandal

PRISON GUARD FORCED FEMALE INMATES TO HAVE SEX FOR YEARS

FRATERNITY MEMBER DRUGGED, RAPED VICTIMS

Parents prostituted daughter in exchange for drugs

Juvenile named as Westside serial rapist
THERE IS NO "TYPICAL SEX OFFENDER" OR "PROFILE"
Common Characteristics

• Early onset
• Detection lag time
• Multiple victims and offenses
• Crossover offending
• Denial and minimization
• Distorted thinking patterns
• Poor coping skills
Why Do They Do What They Do?
Theories Explaining Sexual Offending

Childhood Experiences

Biological Influences

Socio-Cultural Influences

Adult Attributes

- Deviant sexual interests
- Deviant sexual attitudes
- Emotion mismanagement
- Poor adult relationships
- Unstable lifestyle
Offender Dynamics

“Not All Sex Offenders Are The Same”

1. Motives
   - Sexual Interest
     - age, gender, behavior
   - Emotional Closeness
   - Power and Control
   - Anger/Grievance

2. Willingness
   - Criminality
   - Substance Abuse
   - Distorted Thinking
   - Intelligence
   - Stress
   - Other

3. Opportunity
   - Planned vs. Opportunistic
   - Manipulation vs. Force
Offender Types

• **Incest offenders**
  – Few victims and multiple offenses
  – Have lowest recidivism rates

• **Extrafamilial child sexual abusers**
  – More likely to have deviant sexual preferences
  – Molesters of boys have the highest recidivism

• **Rapists**
  – Often more similar to “general” criminals
  – More prone toward an antisocial lifestyle

• **Non-contact offenders**
  – Tend to be compulsive and have multiple victims
WHAT WE KNOW:

All Sex Offenders Do Not Inevitably Recidivate

But Some Are More Likely Than Others
Adult Sex Offenders:
Sexual vs. Non-Sexual 3-year Recidivism

(Langan et al., 2003)
Juvenile Sex Offenders: Sexual vs. Non-Sexual Recidivism

(Nisbet et al., 2004)
Sexual Recidivism Rates

Hanson & Harris (2004); 10 samples; N = 4,724

14% 20% 24% 27%
5 yrs. 10 yrs. 15 yrs. 20 yrs.
“Predicting things is difficult, especially when they’re in the future.”

Yogi Berra
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unchangeable Risk Factors</strong></th>
<th><strong>Changeable Risk Factors</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior sex offenses</td>
<td>Victim Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior non-sex offenses</td>
<td>Deviant sexual interests</td>
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<td>Prior non-contact sex offenses</td>
<td>Attitudes supportive of offending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrelated victims</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stranger victims</td>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male victims</td>
<td>Cooperative with supervision</td>
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<td>Never lived as married</td>
<td>Collapse of social supports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Family</td>
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<td>- Residence</td>
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<td>- Work</td>
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An Example of a Risk Instrument: Static-99

Percent Sexual Recidivism

Score (% of Sample)

- 5-year follow-up
- 10-year follow-up
- 15-year follow-up

0 (10%) 1 (14%) 2 (19%) 3 (19%) 4 (18%) 5 (9%) 6+ (12%)
Differences in Sex Offenders have Implications for:

- Sentencing
- Institutional vs. community placement
- Release decisions
- Level of supervision
- Intensity of treatment
- Approaches to treatment

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!
WHAT WE KNOW

Our efforts to reduce sexual victimization must be multi-faceted to be successful. We need to focus on “what works” and “what doesn’t”
Intermediate Sanctions

“What Works and What Does Not”

Aos, Miller, & Drake, 2006; www.wsipp.wa.gov

![Graph showing % reduction in recidivism with Intensive supervision: treatment-oriented and Intensive supervision; surveillance oriented categories.]

Intensive supervision: treatment-oriented

Intensive supervision; surveillance oriented

0% 22%

% reduction in recidivism
Adult Sex Offender Treatment
“What Works and What Does Not”
Aos, Miller, & Drake, 2006

General psychotherapy: 0%
Cognitive-behavioral in prison: 14.9%
Cognitive-behavioral in community: 31.2%
Behavioral therapy: 0%

% reduction in sexual recidivism
Hanson et al., Meta-Analysis (2002)
15 studies of primarily adults, using current treatments and a follow-up of 4-5 years

9 studies of juvenile sex offenders at an average follow-up of 5-years

Percent Sexual Recidivism

- Treatment Group: 7.4%
- Comparison Group: 18.9%

(60% reduction)
Implications:
Sex Offender Management Efforts Must Address a Variety of Issues

• Comprehensive assessments
  – To determine the level of risk posed and the most effective methods to reduce recidivism
• Sentencing/release decisions
  – Judges and release authorities must be knowledgeable and have the tools available to provide those services that will decrease the likelihood of recidivism
• Treatment
  – To deliver services demonstrated effective in reducing recidivism
• Supervision
  – By well trained staff with reasonably sized caseloads, working collaboratively with treatment professionals
• Victims
  – Victims’ needs must be addressed through information, input, support and services at all stages of the criminal justice process
• Collaboration
  – For our public safety efforts to be successful, it is critical that all stakeholders work collaboratively to assure that information is exchanged, intervention strategies are appropriate, effective service delivery is provided
The Comprehensive Approach To Managing Adult and Juvenile Sex Offenders

(Carter, Bumby, & Talbot, 2004)
Key Questions Considered in the Comprehensive Approach

• What should be done to manage sex offenders effectively?
• Who should be involved in sex offender management?
• How should we approach this work?
• Why should it be done this way?

(Carter, Bumby, & Talbot, 2004)
Implementation Requires Attention to Four Primary Areas

- **Policies** that drive practices
- Actual **practices** that are occurring
- The **empirical basis** for existing policies and practices
- **Philosophies** that drive policies and practices

(Carter, Bumby, & Talbot, 2004)
The Comprehensive Approach

**Fundamental Principles**
1. Victim-Centeredness
2. Specialized Knowledge/Training
3. Public Education
4. Monitoring and Evaluation
5. Collaboration

- Investigation, Prosecution, and Sentencing
- Assessment
- Supervision
- Treatment
- Reentry
- Registration
- Community Notification
Take Away Points

- Effective sex offender management = victim and community safety
- There is a growing body of knowledge to guide sex offender management efforts
- The rate of sexual recidivism is lower than one might expect
- A “one size fits all” approach has proven ineffective; good assessment and case planning is key to addressing the risks individual offenders pose
• Research demonstrates that a combination of appropriately administered treatment in combination with supervision nets positive recidivism reduction results.

• Experience across the country demonstrates that collaboration in terms of information and resource sharing, and coordination in terms of policy development and management efforts among the individuals and agencies responsible for sex offender management, holds the greatest promise for public safety.

• Local “experts” (members of state and local sex offender management policy teams) can be a tremendous resource in advancing effective policy.