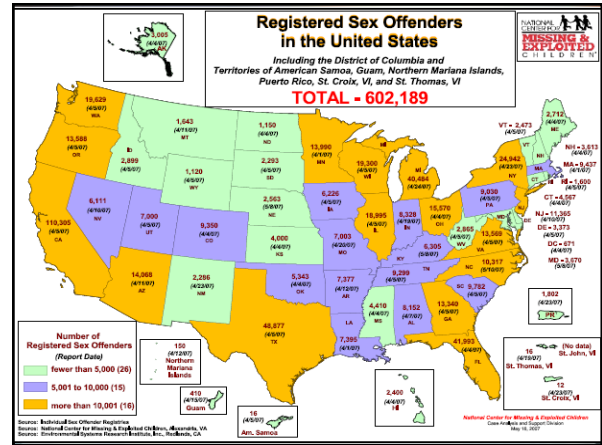
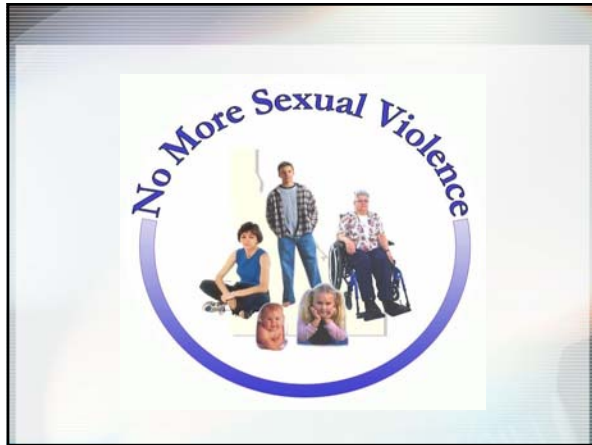


Managing Sex Offenders

A View from Law Enforcement

Detective Bob Shilling
 Seattle Police Department
 Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Unit
 Sex and Kidnapping Offender Detail
 INTERPOL Specialists Group on Crimes Against Children

"Victim advocate, law enforcement officer Bob Shilling has a unique perspective on how to tackle the problems related to child sex offenders and Internet predators. His credibility is unassailable and he's paid a stiff price for his insights into these complicated issues."



The Prevalence of Sexual Violence

The prevalence of sexual violence

- Approximately 123,000 cases of child sexual abuse were confirmed in the U.S. in 1990, and approximately 119,400 were confirmed in the U.S. in 1996. A difference downward of about 3%.
(Child Maltreatment 1996: Reports From the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System)

The prevalence of sexual violence

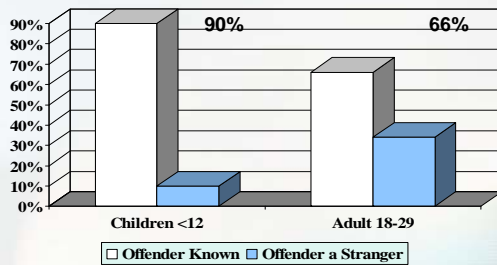
- Self-report victimization surveys have found that 23% of adults were sexually abused before the age of 18 (Finkelhor, Moore, Hamby, & Straus, 1997).
- 17-22% of women and 2-8% of men have been victims of sexual assault (Putnam, 2003; Satcher, 2001).

The prevalence of sexual violence

- In 90% of the rapes of children less than 12 years old, the child knew the offender, according to police-recorded incident data. (US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics 1/97 NCJ 163392)
- Only 7% of the perpetrators of child victims were strangers (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000)
 - 93% of child sexual abuse victims knew their abuser
 - 34.2% were family members and
 - 58.7% were acquaintances

The prevalence of sexual violence

Relationship Between Victims and Offenders
Tjaden & Thoennes (2000)

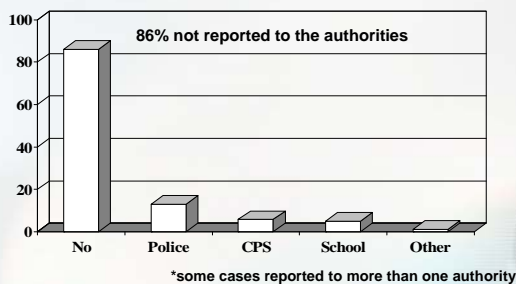


The prevalence of sexual violence

- Because many cases of sexual abuse go unreported due to victim fear, shame, or loyalty to the abuser (Salter, 1995), documented reports of sexual assault underestimate the extent of the problem.

The prevalence of sexual violence

What Do Victims Tell Us?
Kilpatrick et al. (2003). National Survey of Adolescents.



The prevalence of sexual violence

What Do Victims Tell Us?
Victims' Greatest Concerns

Kilpatrick, Edmunds, Seymour (1992). Rape in America.

Family knowing about the sexual assault	71%
People thinking it was the victim's fault	69%
People outside the family knowing about it	68%
Name being made public by news media	50%

The prevalence of sexual violence

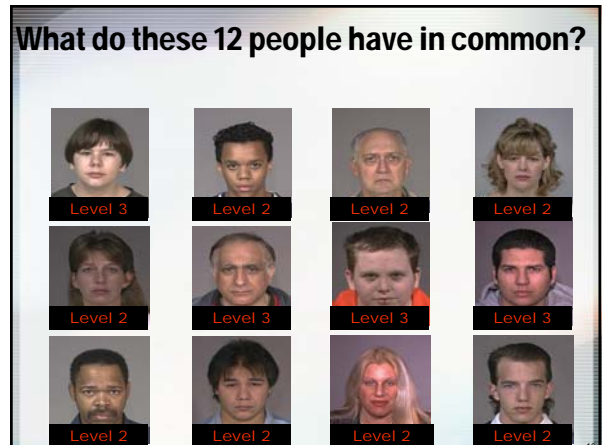
Victims and Victimization History

Jan Hindman & Jim Peters (2001)

Variable	Self-Report 1978-1983 (n=98)	Polygraphed with Immunity 1983-1988 (n=129)
Average number of victims	1.5	9.0
Percent sexually abused	67%	29%

What We Know About Sex Offenders

Public Perception, Fact and Myth



- ### Public Perception, Fact and Myth
- Public Perceptions about Sex Offenders and Community Protection Policies
(Levenson, Brannon & Fortney, 2005, under review)
 - 193 citizens of driving age
 - Melbourne, Florida
 - Late summer 2005
 - Melbourne is located in Brevard County, on the central east coast of Florida, about an hour from the Kennedy Space Center.
 - Females were slightly over-represented (57%)
 - Mean age = 37 years old.
 - Median income = between \$30,000 and \$40,000.
 - Ethnicity
 - 69% Caucasian
 - 11% African-American
 - 14% Hispanic
 - 2.7% Asian
 - Average of 14 years of education.

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

Question	Response
What percentage of sex offenders commit another sex offense?	74%
What percentage of child molesters re-offend?	76%
What percentage of rapists re-offend?	74%

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

Source	Recidivism Rate	Definition of recidivism	Follow-up period	Sample size
Hanson & Bussierre (1998)		Charges or convictions	4-5 years	29,450
All sex offenders	14%			
Child molesters	13%			
Rapists	20%			
Hanson & Morton-Bourgon (2005)		Charges or convictions	5-6 years	19,267
All sex offenders	14%			
Harris & Hanson (2004)		Charges or convictions	15 years	4,724
All sex offenders	24%			
Incestuous molesters	13%			
Child molesters / girl victims	16%			
Child molesters / boy victims	35%			
Rapists	24%			
Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003)		arrests	3 years	9,691
All sex offenders	5.3%			

- ### Public Perception, Fact and Myth
- Some sex offenders are more dangerous than others:
 - Pedophiles who molest boys 23 – 35%
 - Rapists of adult women 14 – 24%
 - Incest offenders 6 – 13%

Harris and Hanson, 2004
 - Offenders age 50 or over at time of release were less likely to re-offend than those under age 50 at time of release
 - Age 50 or over 7 – 12%
 - Less than age 50 15 – 26%

Harris and Hanson, 2004

- ### Public Perception, Fact and Myth
- N = 4,724; 15 year follow up period
 - “Most sexual offenders do not re-offend sexually over time. This may be the most important finding of this study as this finding is contrary to some strongly held beliefs. After 15 years, 73% of sexual offenders had not been charged with, or convicted of, another sexual offence. The sample was sufficiently large that very strong contradictory evidence is necessary to substantially change these recidivism estimates.” *(Harris and Hanson, 2004)*

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

Public Perception	Research (5 – 15 years)
What percentage of sex offenders commit another sex offense?	Harris and Hanson (2004) 24%
What percentage of child molesters re-offend?	Harris and Hanson (2004) Girl V= 16% Boy V= 35%
What percentage of rapists re-offend?	Harris and Hanson (2004) 24%

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

Question	Response
Abuse only occurs in low socio-economic classes.	7%
Sex offense rates are on the rise.	77%
Alcohol and drugs play a moderate or major role in sex offending.	65%
Sex offenders re-offend at much higher rates compared to other criminals.	68%

- ### Public Perception, Fact and Myth
- Myth: Abuse only occurs in low socioeconomic classes
 - Sex crimes occur across socioeconomic groups
 - Sex offenders have a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and vary significantly in age. (Center for Sex Offender Management, “Managing Sex Offenders in the Community,” April 2002)

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

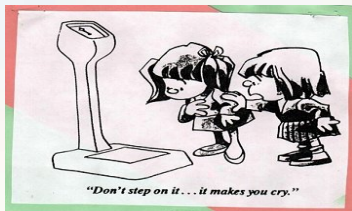
- **Myth: Sex offense rates are on the rise**
 - Sex crime rates, like other serious, non-sexual crimes (e.g., assault, robbery), have declined substantially over the past decade, based on both official crime reports and victim reports (Tonry, 2004).
 - Child sexual abuse rates also appear to be on the decline (Finkelhor & Jones, 2004; Jones & Finkelhor, 2003).

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- The 2001 rate for forcible rape was 9.6 per 100,000, the lowest rate recorded since national record-keeping practices were implemented (Maguire & Pastore, 2003).

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- **Myth: Alcohol and drugs play a moderate or major role in sex offending.**
- Cause and effect can be misleading...

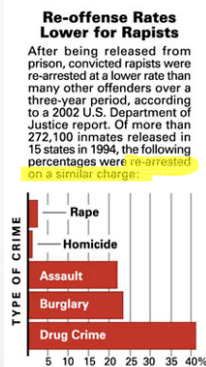


Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Past substance abuse had 0 correlation with recidivism (Hanson & Bussierre).
- Ongoing substance abuse can be a dynamic risk factor for recidivism, as it impairs judgment and lowers inhibitions. (Hanson and Harris, 1998)

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- **Myth: Sex offenders re-offend at much higher rates compared to other criminals.**



Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- There's an assumption that previously convicted sex offenders are responsible for most sex crimes
 - 1997 study by US DOJ found that 87 percent of the people arrested for sex crimes were individuals who had no previous sex crime convictions

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Congressional Record, vol. 140, statement of then-Representative Jennifer Dunn (R-WA) in support of Megan’s Law (“[t]he rate of recidivism for these crimes is astronomical because these people are compulsive.”).
- Congressional Record, vol. 142, statement of Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX) (“we know that more than 40 percent of convicted sex offenders will repeat their crimes”);

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Congressional Record, vol. 139, statement of Representative Jim Ramstad (R-MN) (“[a] study of imprisoned child sex offenders found that 74 percent had a previous conviction for another child sex offense.”). A few minutes after the statement of Representative Ramstad, then-Representative Fish repeated the same recidivism rate of 74 percent.

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Congressional Record, vol. 151, statement of then-Representative Mark Foley (R-FL) (“There is a ninety percent likelihood of recidivism for sexual crimes against children. Ninety percent. That is the standard. That is their record. That is the likelihood. Ninety percent.”).

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

“Politicians didn’t do their homework before enacting these sex offender laws. Instead they have perpetuated myths about sex offenders and failed to deal with the complex realities of sexual violence against children.”

Sarah Tofte, researcher for the US Program of Human Rights Watch and author, "No Easy Answers."

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- **Myth: Treatment doesn’t work**
- *Furby, Weinrott, & Bradshaw (1989)*
 - Combined analysis of numerous studies that was unable to detect a significant treatment effect due to methodology variability.
- *Losel, F., & Schmucker, M. (2005)*
 - Recidivism reduced by nearly 40%

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- *Hanson, R. K., Gordon, A., Harris, A. J. R., Marques, J. K., Murphy, W., Quinsey, V. L., & Seto, M. C. (2002)*
 - 17% untreated
 - 10% treated
- Sex offenders who successfully complete a treatment program re-offend less often than those who do not demonstrate that they “got it” (*Marques, Miederanders, Day, Nelson, & van Ommeren, 2005*)

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Treated sex offenders lasted longer in the community before they re-offended than offenders in any of the comparison groups. Even under varied definitions of re-offense, the treatment group lasted longer without re-offense regardless of the definition applied. (*University of Alaska & Alaska DOC 1996*)

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- So what can we say about treatment?
 - Treatment won't work equally well for everyone, and 100% success should not be expected.
 - Sex offender treatment teaches clients how to change their thinking and their behavior.
 - Sex offender treatment, like many other types of medical and mental health interventions, doesn't focus on a cure but on a reduction of symptoms.

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Men or women who get married don't stop being attracted to other men or women, they stop acting on it.
- Treatment for diabetes doesn't cure the disease, it manages the disease.
- Treatment for alcoholism doesn't cure the alcoholic, it helps teach interventions to keep them from drinking

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

Myth:

Stranger Danger

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- In 90% of the rapes of children less than 12 years old, the child knew the offender, according to police-recorded incident data. (*US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics 1/97 NCJ 163392*)
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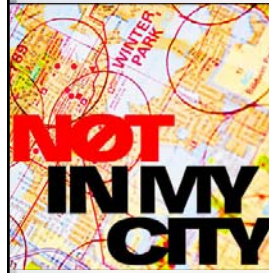
Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- About 40% of sexual assaults take place in the victim's own home, and 20% take place in the home of a friend, neighbor or relative (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997*)
- 76% of adult female victims were victimized by a current or former husband, live-in partner, or date (*Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998*)
- Nearly 9 out of 10 rape or sexual assault victimizations involved a single offender with whom the victim had a prior relationship as a family member, intimate, or acquaintance (*Greenfeld, 1997*).

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Many of our sex offender laws (Megan's Law, Residency Restrictions, etc.) reflect the assumption that children and adults are most at risk from strangers

Public Perception, Fact and Myth



Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Residency restrictions
 - Push offenders out of metropolitan areas and into rural communities with few resources.
 - Isolate offenders and limit access to employment opportunities, social support, social services, and mental health treatment.
 - May prevent living with supportive family members

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- May require the re-location of family members
- Make it essentially impossible for sex offenders in some cities to find housing
- Can lead to homelessness and transience, which interfere with effective tracking, monitoring, and close probationary supervision
 - Makes it impossible for law enforcement, probation and parole and treatment providers to monitor the offender

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

San Francisco Chronicle

California's most unwanted
Restrictions on residency make nomads
of paroled sex offenders
[Mark Martin, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau](#)
Friday, June 2, 2006

The Seattle Times

Dangerous sex felons: Address
unknown
By [Christine Willmsen](#)
Seattle Times staff reporter

The New York Times

Time Served
**Iowa's Residency Rules Drive Sex Offenders
Underground**

By [MONICA DAVEY](#)
Published: March 15, 2006

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- May increase risk by aggravating the stressors (ex. Isolation, disempowerment, shame, depression, substance abuse, lack of social supports) that can trigger some sex offenders to relapse.
- Create municipal and state one-upmanship
“If we can get these people out of our community, it's not that these crimes won't happen...It's just that they won't happen in my community.” (Christopher J. Shipley, Mount Dora, FL City Council, Los Angeles Times, July 5, 2005)

Public Perception, Fact and Myth

- Perception that chasing the offender out of town makes the community safer
- Who's town do we chase them to?
 - Isn't a victim in Seattle the same as a victim in Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Minot etc?

Managing Sex Offenders

Managing Sex Offenders

- Decades of criminological research (USA, Canada, UK) have identified social support and stable employment as important factors in successful community re-entry and decreased recidivism
- Policies that disrupt stability are likely to interfere with offender reintegration and increase risk for re-offense

Managing Sex Offenders

- Acute Dynamic Risk Factors (Harris, 2000)
 - Victim access
 - Emotional collapse
 - Collapse of social supports
 - Hostility
 - Substance abuse
 - Sexual pre-occupation
 - Rejection of supervision

Managing Sex Offenders

“The Whirlwind”



Managing Sex Offenders

- Need stability
 - In their work, social life, and housing
 - Most sex crimes are crimes of power and control
 - Lack of stability results in loss of control
 - The “whirlwind”

Managing Sex Offenders

- Risk assessment should be used to classify offenders into categories, with increased restrictions and more aggressive monitoring implemented for high risk offenders.
 - Adam Walsh Act
 - Offenders classified by crime of conviction
- Treatment programs should be a mandatory component of legislation designed to combat sexual violence

Managing Sex Offenders

- Collaborative approaches to treatment, monitoring and supervision (“containment model”) have proven to be effective and cost efficient.
- Community education
 - Let’s stop the problem before it begins

Managing Sex Offenders

- When offenders are released into the community, we should provide an infrastructure that facilitates successful re-entry rather than contributing to obstacles **known** to increase recidivism.

Managing Sex Offenders



When it comes to sex offender legislation...

Where we need the help

Where we need help

- Records
 - Needed for accurate risk assessment
 - Destroyed
 - Charged a fee
 - HIPPA
 - Offender consent
 - Needed for accurate database maintenance
 - Death records
 - Needed for prosecution for Fail to Register
- Resources
 - The bodies to do the job

In Conclusion

My Opinion

My Opinion

- Random acts of sexual violence, especially against children, generate enormous media coverage.



My Opinion

- Sexual abuse causes great harm to victims, so our society is rightly concerned about it.



My Opinion

- The public is largely misinformed about sex offenders, particularly about recidivism rates and the threat that strangers pose to children

STRANGER DANGER

My Opinion

- This misinformation leads to fear and urgency to create laws to prevent sex crimes.



My Opinion

- Lawmakers act to serve their constituency, and policies are often enacted in the absence of empirical evidence.



My Opinion

- **One size fits all sex offender legislation is not helpful, it is counterproductive**
 - It does not protect victims
 - It is not cost efficient
 - It creates an undue burden on already strapped law enforcement resources
 - It is not an investment in offender success

My Opinion

- **Social policies designed to prevent sexual violence will be most effective when they are informed by scientific data about sex offense patterns, recidivism, risk assessment, therapeutic interventions, and community management strategies.**

The moral of the story



“The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, “This procession has got to go on.” So he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn’t there at all..”

- **Do we want to remain amongst the townspeople who admire the Emperor’s invisible clothes?**
- **Or do we want to become the small child who was brave enough to speak the truth?**