Sex Offender Management in the Community

The Containment Model

An Overview for
Council of State Governments

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The Community View

Michael Ramirez
A California 290 Snapshot

+/- 100,000

Sex Offenders
San Diego County

3963 Offenders

2,933,462 Residents – Offenders = less than 1 %
Who Are Sex Offenders?

- From all walks of life
- Every community
- Majority male, but some are women
- Both juveniles and adults offend
No Typical Sex Offender
Tools for Community Safety

- Managing
- Monitoring
- Treatment
- Enforcement
- Prosecution
- Incarceration
- Civil Commitment
- Education
- Appropriate Legislation
What the Community Wants

- Incarceration

- Civil Commitment
Best Tool for Community Safety?

Education
The Truth About Sex Offenders

- 80% of adult sexual assaults are committed by a known assailant

- More than 90% of child victims are sexually assaulted by someone known to the child or the child's family.
  - Relatives
  - Friends
  - Babysitters
  - Anyone who supervises children
Sex Offender Monitoring Through The Containment Model

- Collaborative inter-agency process involving all aspects of criminal justice system and treatment community
- Participants are prosecutors, law enforcement, courts, treatment providers, probation, parole and defense attorneys
- Goals are community safety, compliance, prosecution with appropriate sentence, including treatment when warranted
San Diego County Sex Offender Management Council (SOMC)

Adult Sex Offender management
- Probation
- CA Parole and Community Services
- Sheriff
- SDPD
- Public Defender
- District Attorney
- Superior Court
- Center for Community Solutions
- Relationship Training Institute
- SANDAG
- And others
Focus

- Sexually Violent Predators (SVPs) and other mentally disordered sex offenders.
- Defendants currently on probation for sex crimes.
- Parolees released from prison for sex crimes.
- Persons living in the community who are required to register as sex offenders.
Treating Sex Offenders

- Sex Offender Treatment Programs are ordered by court or required by parole.

- The vast majority of California’s 100,000 sex offenders are in no treatment program.
Goal of Sex Offender Treatment

Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)

Community protection through effective treatment of offenders in order to reduce the likelihood of future victimization
Types of Sex Offender Treatment

- Group treatment (predominantly)
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy
- Psychopharmacology (use of medications)
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

- A type of psychotherapy in which the therapist teaches the patient to restructure his or her cognitive beliefs, (i.e. thought patterns) and hence, behavior.

San Diego Union Tribune
“Can Sex Predators Be Reformed?” 5/22/06

Aaron Wheeler, 45
SVP Fresno County
“(H)e is learning to reinterpret the thoughts which led him to view children as sexual objects. (I)f he were to see a little girl turning cartwheels in the grass, he might have believed she was try to arouse him. He said that after therapy, he now recognizes such thoughts as ‘cognitive distortions.’”
Different from Other Treatment

Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)

- Involuntary clients
- Victim and community focus
- Limited confidentiality
- Treatment goals set by provider
- Collaboration of treatment provider with others involved in the management of the case
- Local and statewide policy teams
- The primary focus of treatment is not the well-being of the client; rather, it is the protection of the community
Sex Offender Treatment Providers as Collaborative Partners

- Probation and parole officers
- Victim advocates
- Polygraph examiners
- Other assessors, evaluators, and treatment providers
- Attorneys, prosecutors, and other criminal justice representatives
Good vs. Evil…The Constant Battle

- 314 mdsmr PC290
- Sex Offender therapy
- Therapist requires polygraph
- Admits to polygrapher he is “stalking” toddler girls
- Brought back to court
- Formal probation with review hearings
- GPS monitoring
- Revoked and max’d on custody
No Silver Bullet

“Currently there are no known cures for sex offenders and there are no 100 percent guarantees that a sex offender won’t reoffend.”

California Department of Mental Health FAQs 8/23/05
Enforcing Sex Offender Laws

Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE)

A regional law enforcement team dedicated to monitoring sex offenders and enforcement of sex offender registration laws.

Participants from every major law enforcement agency in San Diego County as well as probation, state parole and the District Attorney Office.
SAFE Task Force In Action
Where do they go?

"Sorry, Howard, but you're too big to sneak up on anyone."
International Issues
Community Fear Appropriate

Aaron Wheeler, SVP and Child Molester

“I don’t know what to tell the community to set their mind at ease. No one can say 100 percent that I’m not going to reoffend. If they do, they’re lying.”
A Nationwide Issue and Public Safety Crisis

- Sex offender housing scarce
- High-risk parolees and SVPs are unwelcome almost everywhere
- All sex offenders are being restricted regarding where they can live
- State officials and local are struggling to find places for them to live keeping community safety in mind
San Diego Community Placement
Risk vs Rights
NIMBYism’s Downside

Not In My BackYard

- Fewer people around to watch what offender is doing
- Driving offenders underground
- Some offenders need lifetime treatment i.e. mentally unstable or elderly
- Decreasing social support provided by family & friends
Resources

Sex Offender Management and Treatment Issues
- California Coalition on Sex Offending  www.ccoso.org
- Center for Sex Offender Management  www.csom.org
- San Diego Sex Offender Management Council  www.sdsomc.com

Treatment Providers and Standards
- Association for the Treatment of Sex Abusers  www.atsa.com
- Safer Society Foundation  www.safersociety.org

Public Sex Offender Information – Government Sponsored
- Megan’s Law Public Website  www.meganslaw.ca.gov
- National Sex Offender Public Registry  www.nsopr.gov

Community Education
- Sex Offender Assessment Board Pennsylvania  www.meganslaw.state.pa.us/soab
- Safe NOW Project  www.safeNOWproject.org
- San Diego Sex Offender Management Council  www.sdsomc.com

Law Enforcement Collaboration
- Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement [SAFE] Task Force  www.sdSAFE.org
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Thank You....and Good Luck!

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