

# EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SEX OFFENSES

## FACTS AND STATISTICS

### Reporting

- The majority of sexual offenses are not caught or detected.<sup>1</sup>
- Research consistently reports that between 5 and 25% of rapes are reported to law enforcement.<sup>2</sup>
- According to one study, only 19.1% of the women and 12.9% of the men who were raped since their 18th birthday said their rape was reported to the police.<sup>3</sup>
- Among college women, about 12% of rapes were reported to law enforcement.<sup>4</sup>
- Young victims who know or are related to the perpetrator are least likely to report the crime to authorities.<sup>5</sup>
- From 2006 to 2010, the highest percentages of unreported violent crimes were rape or sexual assault (65%).<sup>6</sup>
- From 2006 to 2010, a greater percentage of victimizations perpetrated by someone the victim knew well (62%) went unreported to police, compared to victimizations committed by a stranger (51%). Additionally, 46% victimizations perpetrated by a relative or an intimate partner went unreported to law enforcement.<sup>7</sup>
- Research shows that most convicted sex offenders have committed many sexual offenses before they are caught.<sup>8</sup>

### Crossover & Recidivism

- Many sex offenders have committed multiple types of sexual crimes.<sup>9</sup>
- Crime of conviction is only one indicator of risk. Risk assessment includes consideration of multiple factors.<sup>10</sup>

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1 Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith (2003). Youth victimization: Prevalence and implications (NCJ 194972). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice; Tjaden & Thoennes (2006). Extent, nature, and consequences of rape victimization: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice; Truman, Langton, & Planty (2012). Criminal Victimization, 2012 (NCJ 243389). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

2 Wilson (2010). Health Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*. 46(1): 56-64.

3 Ibid. Tjaden & Thoennes (2006).

4 Truman (2011). National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010 (CJ 235508). Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

5 Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith (2003). Youth victimization: Prevalence and implications (NCJ 194972). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice; Langton et al. (2012). Victimization Not Reported to the Police, 2006-2010 (NCJ 238536). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

6 Ibid., Langton et al. (2012).

7 Ibid., Langton et al. (2012).

8 English et al. (2000). The value of polygraph testing in sex offender management (Research report submitted to the National Institute of Justice, No. D97LBVX0034). Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Research and Statistics; Robertiello & Terry (2007). Can we profile sex offenders? A review of sex offender typologies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 12(5): 508-518.

9 Cann, Friendship, & Gozna (2007). Assessing crossover in a sample of sexual offenders with multiple victims. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 12(1): 149-163; Heil, P., Ahlmeyer, S., & Simons, D. (2003). Crossover Sexual Offenses. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 15(4): 221-236; Kleban et al. (2013). An Exploration of Crossover Sexual Offending. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 25(5): 427-443.

10 Hanson & Morton-Bourgon (2005). The Characteristics of Persistent Sexual Offenders: A Meta-Analysis of Recidivism Studies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(6): 1154-1163; Ibid., Heil et al., 2003; Parent, Guay, & Knight, (2011). An Assessment of Long-Term Risk of Recidivism by Adult Sex Offenders: One Size Doesn't fit All. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38(2): 188-209.

- A study conducted at the Colorado Department of Corrections on incarcerated sex offenders revealed the following:<sup>11</sup>
  - 78% of the child molesters report that they also have sexually assaulted an adult.
  - 52% of the adult rapists report that they have also sexually molested children.
  - Approximately one-third (36%) of the sex offenders report assaulting both males and females. A study examining child pornography offenders found similar results (40%).<sup>12</sup>
  - 64% of the child molesters who victimized their own relatives also sexually molested children who were not related to them.
  - 53% of the child molesters who victimized children who were not related to them had also victimized children who were family members.
- Child pornography offenders may be likely to also commit hands on sexual offenses against children (even if they have not been caught).<sup>13</sup>
- Approximately 12 to 24% of sex offenders reoffend. When sex offenders commit another crime, it is usually not sexual or violent.<sup>14</sup> (The figures may be lower because sex offenses are often not reported)

### Victimization

- It is estimated that nearly 1 in 5 women (22 million) and approximately 1 in 71 men (1.6 million) in the United States have been raped during their lifetime.<sup>15</sup>
- Approximately 1.8 million adolescents in the United States have been the victims of sexual assault.<sup>16</sup>
- As many as 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually abused at some point in their childhood.<sup>17</sup>
- Children ages 12–15 have the highest percentage of sexual abuse, among all types of abuse, for children under 18 years of age.<sup>18</sup>
- 1 in 4 college women will be raped during their collegiate career.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2006 alone, 300,000 college women (5.2%) were raped.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2005-10, females who were age 34 or younger, who lived in lower income households, and who lived in rural areas experienced some of the highest rates of sexual violence.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2005-10, the offender was armed with a gun, knife, or other weapon in 11% of rape or sexual assault victimizations.<sup>22</sup>
- From 1995 to 2010, the estimated annual rate of female rape or sexual assault victimizations declined 58%, from 5.0 victimizations per 1,000 females age 12 or older to 2.1 per 1,000.

11 *ibid.*, Heil et al. (2003).

12 Bourke & Hernandez (2009). The 'Butner Study' Redux: A Report of the Incidence of Hands-on Child Victimization by Child Pornography Offenders. *Journal of Family Violence*, 24(3): 183-191.

13 *ibid.*, Bourke & Hernandez, 2009.

14 Drake & Barnoski (2006). Sex offenders in Washington State: Key findings and trends. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy; *ibid.*, Hanson, R. K. & Morton-Bourgon, K. E. (2005).

15 Black et al. (2011). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 summary report. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention.

16 Finkelhor (2009). The Prevention of Childhood Sexual Abuse. *Future of Children*, 19(2): 169-194.169

17 Briere & Elliot (2003). Prevalence and Psychological Sequence of Self-Reported Childhood Physical and Sexual Abuse in General Population. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 27(10): 1205–1222.

18 Canadian Centre for Child Protection (2013). Child Sexual Abuse—It Is Your Business. Manitob, Canada: Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Inc. p. 10.

19 Fisher, Cullen, & Turner (2000). The Sexual Victimization Of College Women (NCJ 182369). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

20 *ibid.* Truman (2011).

21 Planty et al. (2013). Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994-2010 (NCJ 240655). Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

22 *ibid.* Planty et al. (2013).

## Teens, Technology & Sexting

- Teens 16 to 19 years of age were 3 1/2 times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.<sup>23</sup>
- Approximately 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner.<sup>24</sup>
- 69% of the teen sexual assaults reported to law enforcement occurred in the residence of the victim, the offender, or another individual.<sup>25</sup>
- Approximately 1 in 7 (13%) youth Internet users received unwanted sexual solicitations.<sup>26</sup>
- 4% of youth Internet users received aggressive solicitations, in which solicitors made or attempted to make offline contact with youth.<sup>27</sup>
- 9% of youth Internet users had been exposed to distressing sexual material while online.<sup>28</sup>
- 1 in 25 youths received an online sexual solicitation in which the solicitor tried to make offline contact.<sup>29</sup>
- In more than one-quarter (27%) of incidents, solicitors asked youths for sexual photographs of themselves.<sup>30</sup>
- 15% of cell-owning teens (12–17) say they have received sexually suggestive nude/seminude images of someone they know via text.<sup>31</sup>
- 4% of cell-owning teens (12–17) say that they have sent sexually suggestive nude/seminude messages to others via text message.<sup>32</sup>

A survey conducted in 2008 by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy found that:<sup>33</sup>

- 38% of teen girls and 39% of teen boys say they have had sexually suggestive text messages or e-mails—originally meant for someone else—shared with them.
- 44% of both teen girls and teen boys say it is common for sexually suggestive text messages to get shared with people other than the intended recipient.
- 36% of teen girls and 39% of teen boys say it is common for nude or seminude photos to get shared with people other than the intended recipient.
- 51% of teen girls say pressure from a guy is a reason girls send sexy messages or images; only 18% of teen boys cited pressure from female counterparts as a reason.

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23 Silverman (2001). Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality. *Journal of The American Medical Association*, 286(5): 572-579.

24 Wolak & Finkelhor (2006). Online victimization of youth: Five years later. Alexandria, VA: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

25 *ibid.* Finkelhor (2009).

26 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2011). *Child Maltreatment 2010*.

27 *ibid.*, 26.

28 *ibid.*, 26.

29 Lenhart (2009). *Teens and Sexting*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Internet & American Life Project.

30 *ibid.*, 29.

31 Kilpatrick et al. (2007). Drug-facilitated, incapacitated, and forcible rape: A national study (219181). Charleston, SC: Medical University of South Carolina, National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center.

32 *ibid.*, 31.

33 Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell (2004). Internet-Initiated Sex Crimes Against Minors: Implications for Prevention Based on Findings from a National Study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 35(5): 11-20.

- 15% of teens who have sent or posted nude/seminude images of themselves say they have done so to someone they knew only online.
- When stating the reasons why they sent/posted suggestive messages or nude/seminude pictures/videos, 44% said it was in response to one that was sent to them.
- Sending and posting nude or seminude photos or videos starts at a young age and becomes even more frequent as teens (ages 13 to 19) become young adults (ages 20 to 26).

The results of the survey describe characteristics of interactions between Internet predators and their juvenile victims. The survey found that:

- The majority of victims had met the predator willingly.
- Of the 129 victims identified, ages 17 and younger, the face-to-face meetings had occurred in 74% of the cases, and 93% of those encounters had included sexual contact.
- 75% of the victims were girls.
- The majority of victims (67%) were children between the ages of 12 and 15.
- The most common first encounter of a predator with a victim took place in an online chat room (76%).
- In 47% of the cases, the predator offered gifts or money during the relationship-building phase.
- Predators used less deception to befriend their online victims than experts had thought. Only 5% of the predators told their victims that they were in the same age-group as the victims. Most offenders told the victims that they were older males seeking sexual relations.
- The victims who responded to this survey had willingly met and had sexual encounters with the predators. The authors concluded that vulnerable youth need further education regarding the negative effects of such relationships.

### **FACTS ABOUT SEX OFFENDERS IN COLORADO**

- The total number of SVPs at any given point in the community is available on the CBI website. Please note many of these offenders may have been deported or returned to custody. In addition, there are well over 400 SVPs in the Department of Corrections and many yet to be designated by the parole board.
- Each year in Colorado, approximately 60% of convicted sex offenders are placed on probation, parole, or community corrections, with the remainder being sentenced to incarceration at the Department of Corrections or the county jail.<sup>34</sup>
- A 1998 study by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment found:
  - 1 in 150 women and 1 in 830 men in Colorado had experienced a completed or attempted sexual assault in the past 12 months;
  - 1 in 4 women and 1 in 17 men in Colorado had experienced a completed or attempted sexual assault in their lifetime. Approximately 16% of these assaults were reported to police.

### **SEX OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS**

- Sex offenders rarely commit just one type of offense.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Colorado State Court Administrator's Office

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, Cann, Friendship, & Gozma (2007); Hanson & Morton-Bourgon (2005); Kleban et al. (2013).

- There is no such thing as a “typical” sexual offender; however, *many* tend to be manipulative, deceptive, and secretive. Sex offenders come from all backgrounds, ages, income levels, and professions.
- The majority of sex offenses, (80-95%) are committed by someone the victim knows.<sup>36</sup>
  - More than half (51.1%) of female victims of rape reported being raped by an intimate partner and 40.8% by an acquaintance.<sup>37</sup>
  - For male victims, more than half (52.4%) reported being raped by an acquaintance and 15.1% by a stranger.<sup>38</sup>
  - In 93% of child sexual abuse cases, the child knows the person that commits the abuse.<sup>39</sup>
  - Most perpetrators are acquaintances, but as many as 47% are family or extended family.<sup>40</sup>
  - In 2005-10, 78% of sexual violence involved an offender who was a family member, intimate partner, friend, or acquaintance. From 1994 to 2010, the percentage of serious violent crime—rape or sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assault—that was not reported to police declined from 50% to 42%.<sup>41</sup>
- Sex offenders do not usually commit their crimes impulsively. They usually employ careful planning and preliminary steps that, if interrupted, can prevent an actual crime.<sup>42</sup>
- The vast majority of sex offenders are male; 1 - 20% of child sex offenses are committed by women.<sup>43</sup>
- Male sex offenders who sexually molest boys are not necessarily homosexual.<sup>44</sup>

### IMPACT ON VICTIMS OF SEX OFFENSES

- Overwhelming experiences such as sexual assault or abuse create significant stress responses.
  - There are many different responses to trauma that victims of sexual assault can exhibit. Numerous factors can influence an individual’s response to and recovery from sexual assault. Some factors include: age and developmental maturity of victim; victim relationship to offender; social and familial support of victim; police, medical, and victim advocate response to victim; frequency, duration, and severity of the sexual assault(s); the environment in which the assault occurred; community attitudes and values

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36 *ibid.*, Black et al. (2011).

37 *ibid.*, Black et al. (2011).

38 *ibid.*, Black et al. (2011).

39 *ibid.*, Finkelhor (2009).

40 *ibid.*, Briere and Eliot (2003).

41 *ibid.*, Berzofsky et al. (2013)

42 Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)

43 Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey (1996). Childhood Sexual Abuse and Psychiatric Disorder in Young Adulthood: II. Psychiatric Outcomes of Childhood Sexual Abuse. *Journal of The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 35(10): 1365-1374; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 14(1): 19-28; Freeman & Sandler (2008). Female and Male Sex Offenders: A Comparison of Recidivism Patterns and Risk Factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(10), 1394-1413; Vandiver, & Kercher (2004). Offender and Victim Characteristics of Registered Female Sexual Offenders in Texas: A Proposed Typology of Female Sexual Offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 16(2): 121-137.

44 Holmes & Slap (1998). Sexual abuse of boys: Definition, prevalence, correlates, sequelae, and management. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 280(21): 1855-1862.

regarding sexual assault; and the meaning attributed to the traumatic event by the sexual assault survivor.<sup>45</sup>

- Sexual trauma inflicted by a **known perpetrator** tends to create a more difficult recovery than sexual trauma inflicted by a stranger. The victim must also deal with betrayal by someone they have formerly trusted.<sup>46</sup>
- Sexual trauma can create **post-traumatic stress disorder** or other clinical reactions. Nearly 1/3 of all rape victims develop rape-related PTSD.<sup>47</sup>
- **Long term damage** to the victim may take the form of some or all of the following symptoms: depression, chronic anxiety, feelings of dissociation (not feeling connected to oneself), flashbacks to the traumatic event, avoidance of anything that reminds them of the traumatic event, intrusive thoughts, relationship disruptions such as increased conflict or divorce, loss or diminishment of sexual interest or responsiveness, loss of concentration, heightened fears, chronic sleeping or eating problems, exaggerated startle response, irritability, suicidal thoughts, a diminished interest in living and an inability to enjoy previously enjoyed life activities.<sup>48</sup>
- Teen victims of sexual assault more likely: to engage in unprotected sex.<sup>49</sup>
- Teen victims of sexual assault are 3 times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders or to abuse alcohol.<sup>50</sup>
- Young male and female victims of sexual assault are at increased risk of eating disorder behaviors.<sup>51</sup>
- The above mentioned responses are minimized and recovery is enhanced when a victim is **believed and supported** and has access to victim advocacy and treatment services.<sup>52</sup>
- **Many societal myths** continue to support the act of rape (refer to "Rape in America" under resources).
- Most victims of sexual assault do not become sex offenders.<sup>53</sup>

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45 Briere & Scott (2006). Principles of trauma therapy: A guide to symptoms, evaluation, and treatment. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; Feiring & Taska (2005). The Persistence of Shame Following Sexual Abuse: A Longitudinal Look at Risk and Recovery. *Child Maltreatment*, 10(4): 337-349; Morrison (2007). Caring about sexual assault: the effects of sexual assault on families, and the effects on victim/survivors of family responses to sexual assault. *Family Matters*, 76: 55-63; O'Doherty et al. (2001). Recovery work with child victims of sexual abuse: A framework for intervention. *Child Care in Practice*, 7(1):78-88; Patterson, D. (2011). The Linkage Between Secondary Victimization by Law Enforcement and Rape Case Outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(2): 328– 347.

46 Feiring, & Taska (2005). The Persistence of Shame Following Sexual Abuse: A Longitudinal Look at Risk and Recovery. *Child Maltreatment*, 10(4): 337-349; Wilson (2010). Health Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*. 46(1): 56-64.

47 ibids., Black et al. (2011); Mason & Lodrick (2012). Psychological consequences of sexual assault. *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 27(1): 27-37.

48 ibids., Black et al. (2011); Ullman & Filipas (2001). Predictors of PTSD symptom severity and social reactions in sexual assault victims. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. 14(2): 369-389; ibid., Wilson (2010).

49 Brown et al. (2000). Impact of sexual abuse on the HIV-risk-related behavior of adolescents in intensive psychiatric treatment. *American Journal of Psychiatry*. 157: 1413-1415

50 Kendler et al. (2000). Childhood sexual abuse and adult psychiatric and substance use disorders: an epidemiological and cotwin control analysis. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 57(10): 953 -959.

51 Neumark-Sztainer et al. (2000). Disordered eating among adolescents: Associations with sexual/physical abuse and other familial psychosocial factors. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*. 28(3): 249-258.

52 Campbell (2006). Rape survivors' experiences with the legal and medical systems: Do rape victim advocates make a difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12(1): 1-16.

## COMMUNITY SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

- Most convicted sex offenders in Colorado are subject to the supervision of a criminal justice agency, either probation, parole or community corrections.
  - Of the 39% of rapes that are reported to police, there is **only a 16.3%** chance the rapist will end up in prison.<sup>54</sup>
  - Factoring in unreported rapes, about 6% (1 out of 16) of rapists will ever spend a day in jail. Fifteen out of sixteen will walk free.<sup>55</sup>
- The Sex Offender Management Board agrees that sex offenders are potentially dangerous and recognizes the harm they cause as well as their possible risk to re-offend (criminally and sexually).<sup>56</sup>

According to the Sex Offender Management Board, community safety is paramount and comes before the needs of the offender. Community safety means that the primary goal is to prevent the offender from victimizing any other person.<sup>57</sup>

- While there is no way to know if a convicted sex offender will reoffend, the combination of comprehensive treatment and carefully structured and monitored behavioral supervision conditions may assist some sex offenders to develop internal controls for their behaviors.
- Colorado uses the Containment Approach to manage sex offenders who are placed in the community. In the interest of public safety, sex offenders are never managed by an individual person; rather they are managed by community supervision teams, consisting of supervising criminal justice officers (probation, parole or community corrections), polygraph examiners and specialized treatment providers. Supervising officers monitor conditions set by the Court/Parole Board for the offender and can impose sanctions for violations. Treatment providers gather information about the offender, assist with monitoring and administer a long-term comprehensive set of planned therapeutic interventions designed to change sexually abusive thoughts and behaviors. The polygraph examiner assists in gathering a full and accurate history of the offender's behavior and monitors current compliance with conditions and risk behaviors.<sup>58</sup>

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53 Parks & Bard (2006). Risk Factors for Adolescent Sex Offender Recidivism: Evaluation of Predictive Factors and Comparison of Three Groups Based Upon Victim Type. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 18(4): 319-342.

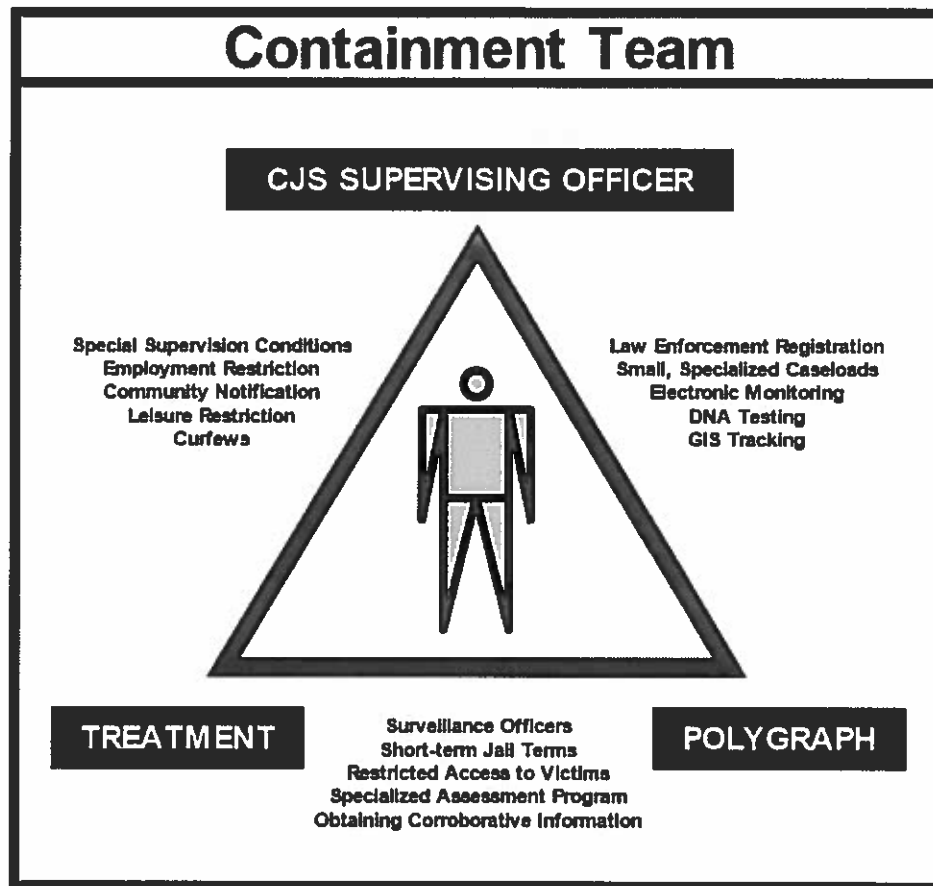
54 Reynolds (1999). *Crime and Punishment in America: 1999 (No. 229)*. Dallas, TX: NCPA Policy Report; Lonsway, & Archambault (2012). The "Justice Gap" for Sexual Assault Cases. *Violence Against Women*, 18(2): 145-168.

55 *ibid.* Reynolds (1999).

56 SOMB (2011). Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment, Evaluation, Treatment and Behavioral Monitoring of Adult Sex Offenders, Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Domestic Violence and Sex Offender Management. *ibid.*, Guiding Principles 1 & 2.

57 *ibid.*, SOMB (2011).

58 English, K., (1998). The Containment Approach: An Aggressive Strategy for the Community Management of Adult Sex Offenders. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 4 (1/2): 218-235.



### Containment Approach

Sex offenders must waive confidentiality for evaluation, treatment, supervision and case management purposes. All members of the team managing and treating each offender must have access to the same relevant information. Since sex offenses are committed in secret, all forms of secrecy potentially undermine the rehabilitation of sex offenders and threaten public safety. This approach has been identified through research to be the best way to manage adult convicted sex offenders in the community.<sup>59</sup>

- Successful containment, treatment and management of sex offenders is enhanced by the involvement of family, friends, employers, and others who have positive influence in sex offenders' lives, when these people are willing to support the conditions and requirements of the criminal justice system.
- Assignment to community supervision is a privilege (alternative to incarceration), and sex offenders must be completely accountable for their behaviors. They must agree to intensive and sometimes intrusive accountability measures, which enable them to remain in the community rather than in prison. They must learn to be completely accountable to maintain the privilege of remaining under community supervision.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, English (1998).



## COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND SAFETY ISSUES

**Personal Safety Tips:** Please be aware that there are no perfect protection strategies. There is no way to predict all possible situations. These tips are intended to reduce, not eliminate the risk of assault.

- The primary responsibility for any sexual assault rests with the offender and not the victim. ***Unfortunately, you can take all reasonable measures to reduce your risk and still be assaulted.***
- **Knowledge is power.** Though many sex offenders are NOT known to law enforcement, you can educate yourself about those known offenders who reside in your community by contacting your local law enforcement agency. Community Notification also provides valuable information about sexually violent predators (SVPs) in your community.
- **Remember, most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim.** The stranger does not pose the highest risk to you. 80-95% of sex offenders are known to their victims and includes relatives, friends and authority figures. If you feel uncomfortable in someone's presence, trust your gut and take steps to distance yourself from him or her. Don't be afraid to make a scene if necessary. Tell someone!
- **Societal myths** are beliefs that contribute to the continuation of sexual assault and abuse. Understand the current rape myths (see Rape in America handout) and help debunk these myths for others.
- **Be thoughtful and use good judgment in choosing your friends and partners.** Identify safe people in your neighborhood that you or your children can go to if you need help. Be cautious about making personal contact with those you meet on the Internet or in other similar environments.
- **Be observant and aware of your surroundings.** Avoid poorly lit areas where an attacker might hide. Be careful of your use of alcohol and drugs; you are more vulnerable to attack if you are intoxicated. Do not leave your food or drink unattended at a party or in a public place. Don't be embarrassed to use security staff at work or when shopping to walk you to your car. Do not pick up hitchhikers or stop to help a stranger in a stalled vehicle; use a phone in a safe location to call for help.
- **Do not harass the offender.** The purpose behind community notification is to **reduce** the chances of future victimization of persons by this offender. The information presented through this notification should assist you and your family in avoiding situations that allow easy victimization. Initiating contact with the SVP can increase the risk of you or your family being victimized or may drive the offender underground and place others at greater risk.
- For more information, go to <http://sor.state.co.us/>

## **What can I tell my children?**

### **1. Talking to your child before an assault happens is the best prevention:**

- Children are best protected by giving them the knowledge and skills necessary for their safety.
- Let your child know that safety rules apply to all adults including family members.
- Encourage your child to tell someone about secrets that are making her/him feel bad.
- Let your child know that you are available to talk and listen; allow your child to share thoughts and listen closely to what they are telling you.
- Help your child understand who they can trust. Talk with your child about this and listen to their input.
- Tell your child that if someone touches her/him to tell and keep telling until someone listens.
- Instilling a sense of strong self-esteem in your child may help your child avoid feelings of responsibility and guilt if they are victimized.
- Open sexual communication at home can make it easier for children to disclose sexual abuse by minimizing discomfort.
- A child is never to blame for the abuse; children cannot prevent abuse, only the offender can.

### **2. Knowing perpetrator tactics and how a child may react can help you detect sexual abuse:**

- Offenders may threaten to hurt the child or a family member of the child if they tell anyone about the abuse. This is common regardless of whether the perpetrator is a family member, friend, acquaintance or stranger.
- A child often feels that she/he is to blame for the abuse. The offender may reinforce this by using guilt tactics on the child.
- Offenders often follow-up abusive incidents with treats or gifts for the child. This is very confusing for the child, and may make her/him feel guilty for accepting the gifts and/or for feeling bad about the abuse.
- Be aware if your child talks a lot about a particular adult or older person.
- Be aware of individuals (family member, friend, and neighbor) who spend or want to spend an inordinate amount of time with your child.
- It is common for a child to deny that abuse happened when it did or tell about the abuse and then recant their original statement. There is little evidence that children make false allegations of abuse.

### **3. Responding appropriately when your child is victimized can make all the difference in her/his healing process:**

- If you think abuse is going on, act on that feeling or instinct.
- Believe your child when they tell.
- Don't force a child to talk or stop talking about the abuse. Allow them to go at their own pace. Be patient.
- Remind your child how strong she/he was for telling about the abuse.
- Getting your child involved with a support group of peer survivors can help eliminate feelings of isolation.
- Get support for you and your child; this is a very difficult issue for any one person to handle.

#### **4. Avoid scary details.**

You know more than your child needs to know. Use language that is honest & age-appropriate (e.g. "there are people who do bad things to children"). Include general information, as this may protect them from others who would try to harm them as well. If your child is likely to have contact with the sexually violent predator (SVP) or other registered sex offenders, you should show your child the sex offender's photo. Instruct them to avoid contact with the offender and encourage them to tell you if the SVP initiates contact. In general, all supervised sex offenders are prohibited from initiating any contact with children, and any contact should be reported to the SPV's supervising officer.

#### **5. Teach your child:**

- DON'T take rides from strangers;
- DON'T harass or visit any sex offender's home or yard;
- DON'T keep secrets;
- DON'T assist strangers;
- DON'T go places alone;
- DO talk to your children about inappropriate touching;
- DO ask questions;
- DO talk about any uncomfortable feelings or interactions, regardless of who it is (family member, friend of the family, etc.);
- DO tell a safe adult if anyone acts inappropriately toward them (e.g. creepy, too friendly, threatening, offering gifts in a secret way, or touching them);
- DO RUN, SCREAM, and GET AWAY if someone is bothering them.

#### **6. Role-play safety with your child.**

Act out scenarios of various dangerous situations and teach them how to respond (e.g. home alone with a babysitter who wants to play a sex game, separated from Mom in the toy store & a man comes up to talk to them; or chatting on the Internet & they are asked for their home address).

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **1) *What does SVP mean?***

SVP stands for Sexually Violent Predator. SVP is a legal federal term. It is a designation given to high risk adult convicted sex offenders. "In 1999, the General Assembly found that persons who are convicted of offenses involving unlawful sexual behavior and who are identified as sexually violent predators pose a high enough level of risk to the community that persons in the community should notification concerning the identity of these sexually violent predators."16-13-901, C.R.S. SVPs are identified by their crime of conviction **and** by their rating on a risk assessment instrument. Offenders who meet the criteria for SVP must register quarterly with their local law enforcement agency for life. If a person is found to be an SVP, the community must be notified every time the SVP changes residence.

#### **2) *If this sex offender is so dangerous, why is he/she allowed out in the community?***

Most SVPs are sentenced to lengthy prison terms, although some SVP's can be released into the community on probation, directly upon sentencing, or on parole,

following incarceration and sometimes participation in sex offense-specific mental health treatment at the Department of Corrections. This may also mean that the SVP may be granted a work release as a condition of parole or probation. In determining an SVP's risk to the community, the Court or Parole Board considers the professional recommendation of the probation officer or Department of Corrections (prison) designee, and the assessment of sex offense-specific mental health evaluator. If the SVP is determined to be manageable in the community, a recommendation may be made that he/she be supervised by probation or parole. In all cases, the court or Parole Board must make the determination regarding the placement of an SVP.

- The Court or Parole Board makes the final determination regarding the SVP's release into the community.
- Remember that not every community member will be satisfied with your answer, therefore, present the material in general terms.
- It would be beneficial to have someone who was involved in determining the release of an SVP, such as District Attorney or supervising officer, available at the meeting to discuss the factors that led to the recommendation that the SVP be released into the community.
- As a state, we do not imprison all sex offenders (65% are released into the community), including those who are supervised by the criminal justice system through probation or parole.
- In Colorado, many SVPs will be subject to our Lifetime Supervision Law, which makes it easier to contain an offender if they demonstrate increased risk.

In the case of other sex offenders who are not determined to be SVP's, many are convicted of offenses with determinate sentences, which mean that they have a time limit on their sentence or they are granted community supervision and they are not incarcerated. Offenders granted a determinate sentence may complete their required period of supervision or be released into the community without probation or parole supervision. Nearly all are required to register as a sex offender with law enforcement.

**3) *Why aren't communities notified when sex offenders other than SVPs are released?***

Communities in Colorado are notified when all convicted sex offenders move into their jurisdictions, either through the sex offender registry or the community notification process regarding SVPs. The sex offender registry lists all convicted sex offenders who are required to register with local law enforcement in each community. Every citizen has the right to obtain the registry from his or her local law enforcement agency. They can also view **adult felony** sex offenders and **SVPs** on the internet either via the local law enforcement website (police department or sheriff) or CBI.

**4) *Isn't it just a matter of time before an SVP commits another crime?***

Many sex offenders can be closely monitored for risk behavior while under supervision and treatment. Some can learn through treatment to manage their sexual offending behaviors and decrease their risk of re-offense. However, such behavioral management and treatment cannot permanently eliminate the risk that sex offenders may repeat their offenses.

**5) *Now that I know a sex offender lives in my community, what should I do differently to protect family and myself?***

Read educational and public safety materials available through this website, which offer prevention information regarding sex offenders for you and your family.

**6) *How would I know if my child has been sexually victimized?***

If you notice behavioral changes or if you suspect that your child has been sexually victimized, contact your local law enforcement agency, Department of Social Services or Child Advocacy Center immediately. Also, give your child permission to talk to you about things that may be bothering them and encourage them to attend child abuse prevention programs held through schools and community programs.

Research indicates that a person is most likely to be sexually assaulted by someone they know. Further, the majority of sex offenses are not reported to authorities. MOST importantly, ALWAYS believe your children!

## Colorado Revised Statutes

1. **Sex Offender Management Board, Enabling Statute**  
Section 16-11.7-101 through Section 16-11.7-107 C.R.S.
2. **Lifetime Supervision Criteria**  
Section 16-13-809 (1) (a) and (b) C.R.S.
3. **Standards for Community Entities That Provide Supervision and Treatment for Adult Sex Offenders Who Have Developmental Disabilities**  
Section 16-13-809 (1) (c) C.R.S.
4. **Community Notification Regarding Sexually Violent Predators**  
Section 16-13-901 through Section 16-13-905 C.R.S.
5. **Colorado Sex Offender Registration Act**  
Section 16-22-101 through Section 16-22-114 C.R.S.
6. **Sexually Violent Predator**  
Section 18-3-414.5 C.R.S.

## Resources

ATSA (Association for Treatment of Sexual Abusers)  
[www.atsa.com/](http://www.atsa.com/)

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA)  
[www.ccasa.org/](http://www.ccasa.org/)

Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)  
[www.csom.org](http://www.csom.org)  
To order publications, please call (301) 589-9383

*Rape in America*, Report to the Nation, 1992, National Victim Center

Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART Office)  
<http://www.smart.gov/>

Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB)  
<http://dcj.somb.state.co.us/>

*Sex Offenses and Offenders*, 1997, 2000, 2004, Bureau of Justice Statistics

*Sexual Assault in Colorado*, July 1999, C-CASA/Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
To order (303) 692-3016

*Standards & Guidelines for the Assessment, Evaluation, Treatment and Behavioral Monitoring of Adult Sex Offenders*, November 2011, Colorado Sex Offender Management Board, Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice