Treating Sex Offenders

The Shadow of the “#MeToo” Movement

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What Emotions Do You Feel?
Sex Offenses Are Not New

“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” John 8:7
2009 Survey of Normal Adults

95% Admitted to at least one sexually deviant fantasy.

74% Admitted to committing at least one sexually deviant act.

(Williams, Cooper, Howell, Yuille, and Paulhus 2009)

“… the present authors have, collectively, over a half century of experience with sex offenders. We have been struck repeatedly with the realization that these offenders, with a very few exceptions, are far from extraordinary… Most of them, apart from their sexual deviations, are not criminals. They hunger for the same things that we all do: a good education, a decent job, good friends, home ownership, family ties, children, being loved by someone, and having a stable life” Dr. Richard Laws and Tony Ward, “Desistance from Sex Offending”, p 4, 2011,
Important Disclaimer

I work with minimum to medium security sex offenders – sexual conduct with a minor, sexual exploitation of a minor.

I don’t work with the maximum security offenders – serial rapists & sex traffickers.

Predatory monsters do exist. But most sex offenders (90%) do not fit this stereotype.
Objectives

We will learn the top 3 myths regarding sex offenders and why these are important.

We will learn the collaborative model currently used in the Maricopa County Jail of treating sex offenders with mindfulness skills.
Top 3 Myths About Sex Offenders

Myth #1 Sex offenders are monsters who lurk around our public parks looking for children to abduct.

Reality

95% of children are molested by someone they know or known to the family.

90% of rapes are committed by someone they knew.

(Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics 2013)
The system we have created to protect society may be making us less safe.
2006 Federal Government Mandated Sex Offender Registries.

(ASU Clustering Study, School of Criminology 2006) Rates of recidivism were relatively low

- Fewer than 50% were re-arrested for any offense after registration.
- Among those re-arrested, charges for sex offenses were rare over a 6 yr. post registration period.
  - 6.2% were charged with sexual assault
  - 5.7% were charged with a child sex crime
Negative Experiences Resulting From Registration

• 63% lost or been denied a place to live
• 55% lost or been denied a job
• 25% have been threatened or harassed, in person, by neighbors

• We estimated that between 61.9 and 70.8 percent of registered sex offenders DO NOT reside at the address where they are registered.
Sex Offender Clustering Study done by ASU School of Criminology and Criminal Justice 2006

Only 12% of Phoenix was available for sex offenders with 2K foot boundaries from schools and parks.
Our efforts to protect society is not working.

Lipsey (1995) Meta analysis of 400 studies in criminal recidivism “employment was the single most important factor in reducing reoffending.” Quoted in “Desistance from Sex Offening” Dr. Richard Laws and Tony Ward. 2011, p. 126.

The California Sex Offender Management Board, 2011 report, “The Board believes that the rise in homelessness among sex offenders needs attention because it is so closely associated with an increased level of threat to community safety.” Sex offenders who were homeless were 4 times more likely to reoffend than those with stable housing. 91% of sex offenders returning to prison are for technical violations not new offenses.

Note: currently sex offenders are not allowed to stay in public shelters such as CASS or Phoenix Rescue Mission.
Myth #2 Sex Offenders Have A Frightening and High Re-offense rate.

Sex offenders are given extremely high prison sentences based on the myth that they have a “Frightening and High Re-offense Rate”. Not true.
Case Study

Your 19 year old nephew downloads pornographic material over the internet. Among the images he downloads are 4 pictures of naked minors. The police come to your nephew's door and arrest him. What would be an appropriate sentence?

A. Give him a stern warning.
B. 3 years on probation.
C. 6 months in jail and lifetime probation on a sex offender registry.
D. 40 years in prison and lifetime registration on the sex offender registry.
Morton Berger, a high school teacher caught with child porn on his home computer. First time arrested.
200 years in prison!

Arizona law has 10 year mandatory minimum that must be served consecutively.

Hit with 20 counts of possession of child pornography.

Sentenced to 200 years in prison.

Vice Chief Justice Rebecca Berch “it exceeds the penalties regularly imposed in Arizona for crimes that result in serious bodily injury or even death…” Arizona Supreme Court ruling on May 10, 2006. But upheld the sentence.
Myth #3 You can’t cure sex offenders so don’t bother with treatment.

Reality is sexual proclivities are deeply rooted. But you don’t give up. Example… clients who are attracted to dangerous and abusive men.

Research shows treatment can be effective. But no miracle cures.

Hanson 2002 (43 Studies  N=9,454)
Reoffended with treatment 12.3%  No treatment 16.8%

Losel & Schmucker 2005 (69 Studies N = 22,181)
Reoffended with treatment 11.1%  No treatment 17.5%

Hanson 2009 (Studied Risk Need Responsivity 23 studies N = 6,746)
Reoffended with treatment 10.9%  No treatment 19.2%
Sex Offenders and Trauma?

Sex Abuse: Journal of Research and Treatment, March 28, 2014, 679 randomly selected sex offenders were administered the ACE (adverse childhood experience) test.

SO were 3 X more likely to have experienced childhood sexual abuse

SO were 2 X more likely to have experienced physical abuse

SO were 13X more likely to have experienced verbal abuse.

SO were 4X more likely to have experienced emotional neglect or come from a broken home.

50% of SO had an ACE Score of 4 or more.

16% of SO had ACE scores of 0.
Current Treatment Program used in the men’s sex offender dorms.

- Mindfulness
- Criminogenics
- Art Therapy
- Yoga
- Happiness 101
Life’s Most Stressful Experiences

Death of a Spouse – 100
Divorce – 73
Marital Separation – 65
Jail or Prison – 63

What makes jail stressful?
Mindfulness skills

1. Introduction
2. Breathing
3. Meditation
4. Forgiveness
5. Gratitude
6. Radical Acceptance
Breathing Skills
Meditation Skills
Forgiveness
Gratitude Skills

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.
- Robert Brault

SayingImages.com
Radical Acceptance
Results of 6 weeks of Mindfulness Training – Cohen Self Perceived Stress Test

91 inmates participated in at least 1 class

Pre-Test Average Score was 17.83

Post Test Average Score was 14.93

Average reduction of stress of 17%
Five weeks of art therapy

1. Origami
2. Adult Coloring
3. Writing your Storybook
4. Coloring your Storybook
5. Mother’s Day Cards
Origami
Coloring
Creating A Story Book
Mother’s Day Cards

Miss You
Mom
Results from Art Therapy

Administered the PHQ9 (depression inventory)

143 inmates attended at least one group.

The average pre-test score in the dorms was 8.5

The average post-test was 7.4
Severe Depression

The most severely depressed indicated by a pre-test score above 20, they showed an average decrease in depressive symptoms of 28.57%.
The moderately-severely depressed indicated by a pre-test score of 15-19, they showed an average decrease in depressive symptoms of 15.71%.
Moderate Depression

For inmates who were moderately depressed indicated by a pre-test score of 10-14, they showed an average decrease in depressive symptoms of 20.27%
Happiness 101 Positive Psychology and Mindfulness Skills

1. Introduction
2. The Law of Responsibility
3. The Law of Attraction
4. The Law of Reciprocity
5. The Law of Camaraderie
6. The Law of Enlightenment
Why Yoga? Many inmates don’t respond well in typical classroom situations. They need something visceral and non-verbal.

Criminogenics means anything that causes crime. Goal of the class is to reduce recidivism.
Integration of care is easy in jail

We all wear the same medical smocks.

We all work for the same organization.

Our work stations are next to each other.
Some challenges of treating sex offenders

They are not allowed to discuss their case for legal reasons.

Admission to other cases will result in new charges.

Good Lives Model of treatment focuses on strengths and goals.

I use lots of case studies based on real life examples.
Drug Therapies

Suppress testosterone - Depo Provera & Lupron. Expensive… $800 per month for medication alone.

Reduce sexual drive by other mechanisms (antidepressants SSRIs Prozac).

ATSA, Pharmacological Interventions with Male Sex Offenders, website, approved 2012. “Findings from a meta-analysis examining the effectiveness of various treatment interventions for adult sex offenders indicated that, when used in combination with other treatment approaches, biological interventions like testosterone-lowering hormonal treatments may be linked to greater reductions in recidivism for some offenders than the use of psychosocial treatments alone (Losel and Schmucker, 2005).
Sid’s Wish List

#1 Reform the sentencing of sex offenders. The current punishments do not fit the crime.

#2 Reform the sex offender registries to make it easier to find stable housing and full employment.

#3 Eliminate lifetime probation requirements.

#4 Eliminate the government entrapment websites.

#5 Motivate you to want to work with sex offenders. 90% are not the monsters that the media portrays them to be.