

# GENDER DIFFERENCES

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# Behavior and Communication

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- Men

- Guard information
- Not inclined to share innermost thoughts and feelings
- Reluctant to ask for help
- Less verbal
- Aggressive, competitive, less emotional
- Conceal vulnerability

- Women

- Relating and sharing are important
- rapport building, bonding, intimacy, closeness
- Talk about their problems
- Caretakers, Empathizers
- Feelings, senses, emotion
- Inclined to ask for help
- Willing to expose vulnerability

# GENDER DIFFERENCES

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- Unique Characteristics of Female Offender
- The average female offender is:
  - Age 30
  - Of a racial or ethnic minority
  - A substance abuser
  - Unmarried
  - Experienced sexual or physical abuse since childhood
  - A mother of at least two children
  - Never completed high school
  - Unemployed at the time of offense

# Female Offender

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- Significantly more abuse and victimization than the average male offender
- Leave home at an early age, early pregnancies, lack of education resulting in diminished work skills and increased child-rearing responsibilities
- More familial responsibilities than the average male offender entering prison
- Two-thirds are single mothers
- Rapid growth of female offender population

# Female Survivors of Abuse

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- The majority of female offenders report prior sexual abuse
- More than half of female offenders reported prior abuse by spouses or boyfriend and nearly a third by parents or guardians
- Abuse continues through the childhood years into adulthood.
- Women are more at risk for unhealthy relationships with authority figures, particularly men.

# Male Survivors of Abuse

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- More than half of male offenders had been abused by parents or guardians
- Males indicated being mistreated mostly as children
- Males more likely than women to be abused in childhood by someone outside of the family
- Males are less likely to report abuse or seek help
- Males may question sexual identity and sexual preference more than women as a result of the abuse

# Impact of Victimization

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- What is normal?
- Altered development of attitude towards self, sexuality, relationships
- Poor boundaries
- Addiction
- Promiscuity
- Use or be used
- Low self-esteem
- Powerlessness
- Feelings of mistrust, betrayal, fear
- Guilt and shame
- More susceptible to victimization
- Mental Illness

# Professional Ethics

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- “... render professional service ...”
- “... uphold the law with dignity, displaying an awareness of responsibility to offenders ...”
- “... conduct personal life with decorum, neither accepting nor granting favors ...”
- “... recognize my office as a symbol of public faith ...”  
– American Probation & Parole Association
- “... expects of its members unfailing honesty, respect for the dignity and individuality of human beings and a commitment to professional and compassionate service.

# Staff Issues

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- Counseling and treatment responsibilities vs. surveillance and control
- Power & control
- Inadequate preparation for supervising offenders and understanding their complexity
- Inadequate supervision
- Familiarity with offender
- Problems in personal life

# Staff Issues

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- Institution
  - Role ambiguity
  - Overtime
  - Overcrowding
  - High staff turnover
  - Code of silence
  - Familiarity with offender population
  - Personal problems
- Community
  - Role ambiguity
  - Power and autonomy
  - Field work, flexibility
  - Large caseloads
  - Inadequate supervision
  - Prior relationship with offender of their family
  - Personal problems

# Motivations of Offenders in Sexual Misconduct

## **PREDATOR**

Narcissistic, self-centered exploiters, manipulative, gratify own needs, no remorse

## **PSYCHOTIC**

Impaired reality, delusions of grandiosity and love

## **SITUATIONAL**

Good professional history, erratic course in life, situational breakdown in judgment or control

## **NAÏVE**

Difficulty understanding or operating within professional boundaries due to deficit in social judgment

## **NEEDY**

Emotionally dependent, overly involved, not originally driven by sexual needs

## **THRILL-SEEKER**

Risk-taker, desires adventure, enjoys living on the edge

# Staff Issues

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- MEN

- Stress
- Substance Abuse
- Challenges in personal life
- Power & Control
- Aggression & Domination
- Thrill, Risk, Escape

- WOMEN

- Stress
- Substance Abuse
- Challenges in personal life
- Power & Control
- Establish less aggressive relationships with offender
- Flattery, Attention & Affirmation

# Ethics and Professional Boundaries

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- Boundaries – limits, which protect the space between the professional's power and the client's vulnerability
  - Role, time, place and space, financial, gifts and service, language boundaries
  - Boundary crossings/Boundary violation
- Dual Relationships – refers to a professional entering into a personal, political, business, romantic, social or otherwise alternative relationship with an offender; often a precursor to sexual misconduct

# Zone of Effectiveness

UNDER  
INVOLVED

ZONE OF  
EFFECTIVENESS

OVER  
INVOLVED

Apathetic, Distant,  
Dispassionate,  
Uncaring, Detached,  
Cold, Indifferent

Mutual respect and  
understanding,  
Clarification of roles,  
Professional distance

Boundary Crossings,  
Dual Relationships,  
Sharing personal  
information, Showing  
favoritism, Horseplay,  
Sexualized  
conversations

# Sexualized Environment

