

# **GENDER DIFFERENCES**

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Corrections  
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# Gender Differences

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- Communication Styles
- Help-seeking behavior
- Response to trauma
- Differences in socialization
- Unique life experiences, responsibilities and roles that influence dynamics in corrections

# Men

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- Guard information
- Not inclined to share innermost thoughts and feelings
- Reluctant to ask for help
- Less verbal
- Aggressive, competitive, less emotional
- Conceal vulnerability
- Identity based on defining self with a focus on independence and autonomy

# Women

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- 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
- Identity based on defining self in relation to others with a focus on connectedness and interdependence

# 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
  - Dependent on public assistance
  - Never completed high school
  - Unemployed at the time of offense, unskilled
  - Multiple arrests

# Female Offenders

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- Less likely to have committed violent offenses and more likely to have been convicted of crimes involving alcohol, drugs or property
- Many property crimes are economically driven, often motivated by poverty and/or addiction
- Strong link between substance abuse and crime; substance abuse is the most common psychiatric disorder among female offenders

# Female Offender

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- Of those females in prison for violent crimes, many of them committed their crimes against a spouse, ex-spouse or boyfriend
- Women are likely to report having been physically or sexually abused, often by the person they assaulted
- Significantly more abuse and victimization than the average male offender

# Female Survivors of Abuse

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- The majority of female offenders report prior sexual abuse which appears to be an instigator of delinquency, addiction and criminality
- More than half of female offenders reported prior abuse by a spouse or boyfriend and nearly a third by parents or guardians
- Abuse begins in childhood and continues into adulthood.
- Women are more at risk for unhealthy relationships (characterized by abuse, exploitation) with authority figures, particularly men

# Female Offender

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- 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

# 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

# Male Survivors of Abuse

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- Literature suggests there is a connection between sexual/physical assault victimization and aggressive and self-destructive behavior
- Feel intense shame, embarrassment as a result of sexual victimization
- Men feel as though they are unheard and unrecognized as sexual abuse victims
- Men defend against feeling this way by being in a constant state of anger, rage

# 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 re-victimization
- Mental Illness
  - PTSD
  - Personality Disorders
  - Depression

# 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

- Heavy emotional demands placed daily on staff creates stress
- Burnout – low morale, lack of respect, low pay, role ambiguity, managing difficult and demanding inmates, understaffing, overtime, shift work, overcrowding, disillusionment
- Highly unfulfilling private life
- Lack of adequate support from family, neighbors, church members, peers

# Staff Issues

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- Unmet staff needs will be met at the workplace whether by competent management, peer camaraderie, or by manipulation of inmates or manipulation by inmates
- Emotional Transference – emotional loyalties shifting from the institution and peers to the inmate as the period of confinement increases

# Staff Issues

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- Counseling and treatment responsibilities vs. surveillance and control
- Inadequate preparation for supervising offenders and understanding their complexity
- Inadequate supervision
- Familiarity/over-identification with offender
- Problems in personal life contributes to the time of compromise

# 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 Staff in Sexual Misconduct

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

**PSYCHOTIC**  
Impaired reality, delusions of grandiosity and love

**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

# Motivations of Staff in Sexual Misconduct

## **PREDATOR**

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

## **BULLY**

**Intimidation, power, control, domination, victim submission is satisfying**

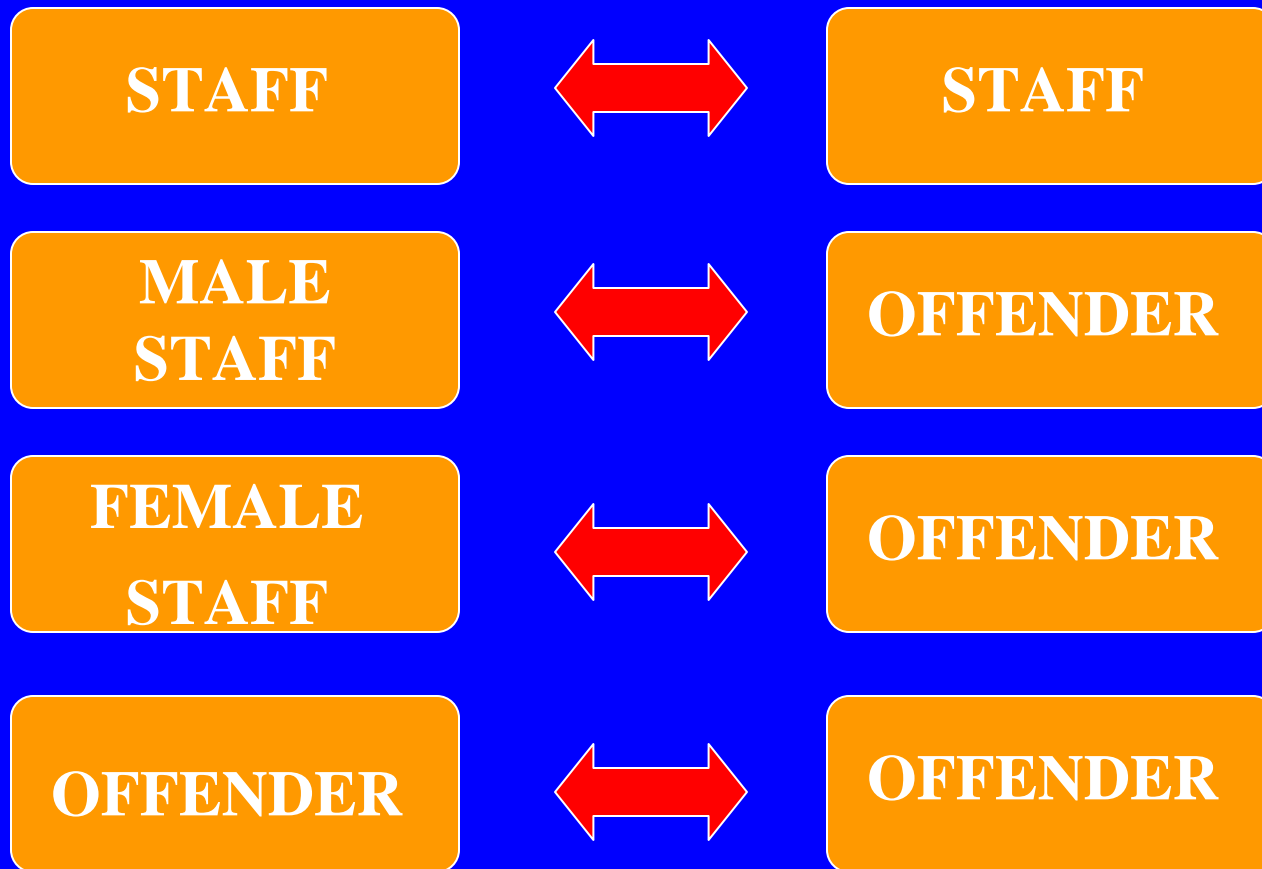
## **LOVESICK**

**Believes that they are in love with the inmate; deficiency in judgment confined to one particular inmate**

## **RESCUER**

**Believe they have special kinds of help that only they can offer to save/guide/help**

# Sexualized Environment



# 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