

One in every hundred

THE ASSESSMENT OF FEMALES WHO SEXUAL ABUSE.

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Where are we?

- ❑ Today is 22nd March 1998
- ❑ Understanding the base rate is fundamental.
- ❑ 1-3% sexual recidivism rate.
- ❑ Identify the one in 100 who will re-offend.
- ❑ Who is 'high risk'?

Static Risk

General & violent recidivism factors in males.

- Younger age
- Single
- Lifestyle instability
- Rule violations
- Prior criminal history

Sexual recidivism factors

- Prior sexual offences
- Male, stranger and/or unrelated victims.

Static indicators associated with higher general risk in females

- Prior criminal history.
- Younger age (less than 30 years)?

Potential sexual recidivism indicators.

- Prior non-sexual child abuse offences
- Prior sexual offences
- Solo Offender?

Dynamic Risk Factors

- ❑ Dynamic risk factors for women are unknown.
- ❑ Assessments of risk/need can only be based on common factors among FSO's that are suggestive of a relationship with offending.
- ❑ While FSO's possess some unique features, they do share some of the same characteristics as males – however these manifest themselves in different ways.
- ❑ Denial & minimisations of offending
- ❑ Distorted cognitions about sexual offending & abuse in general.
- ❑ Problematic relationship & intimacy deficits
- ❑ Use of sex to regulate emotional states or fulfil intimacy needs.
- ❑ Sexual gratification, desire for intimacy or instrumental goals such as revenge or humiliation.
- ❑ Anti-social attitudes, associates and substance abuse also considered.

Conducting the Assessment

- ❑ Comprehensive psycho-social history examining– dispositional factors, antisocial personality characteristics, historical factors (adverse childhood experiences, prior criminal history); contextual factors (circumstances of offences, social networks); personal life circumstances (relationship and parenting status, educational, work & social functioning) & clinical factors (mental health/substance abuse history)
- ❑ Examination of developmental & family history provides clues to the elements that have contributed to the elements that have contributed to the abusive behaviour.
- ❑ History helps establish if/how past physical, emotional or sexual victimisation links to her offending via a pattern of coping.
- ❑ Helps determine role of sexual relationships the woman's life, cognitions related to offending, type & extent of problematic relationships & presence/extent of general anti-social characteristics.

Key Takeaways

- ❑ Using risk tools designed for assessing adult male sex offenders grossly overestimates risk in FSO's.
- ❑ State of our current knowledge is weak and conclusions of likely risk factors for FSO's continue to be tentative
- ❑ Only indicator of potential for sexual recidivism is the presence of prior child abuse offences.
- ❑ General recidivism is much more likely than sexual recidivism. Select a tool with general validity for female offenders (LSI-R)
- ❑ Comprehensive assessments of risk and need should be undertaken examining those dynamic factors commonly found in both male and female clinical samples.
- ❑ Simple transfer of knowledge from male sex offender literature to females not appropriate. Examine the factors from gendered perspective.
- ❑ Base rate of sexual recidivism for FSO's is extremely low.