

Unmasking Sexual Offenders

Veronique N. Valliere, Psy.D.

Sexual offenders are surrounded by mythology, fascination, and revulsion. As clients, family members, community members, and supervisees, sex offenders present difficult and complicated issues in treatment and management. Denial, victim blaming, aggression, and blatant, chronic deception are inherent to interactions with sexual offenders. Sex offenders, almost without fail, are not well able to truly accept responsibility nor do they hold themselves accountable for their own behavior. Most importantly, sexual offenders constantly re-enact the victim-offender relationship or their deviant dynamics in many contexts in their life and especially in treatment. Traditional approaches of therapy and management with sexual offenders are not only ineffective, but can replicate the offense dynamics and increase the client's risk to the community and even the therapeutic staff.

This training is designed to help professionals develop an understanding of the sexual offense dynamics and deviant arousal patterns and an acceptance of the type of therapy and supervision that is not only most effective, but the safest in treating and managing sexual offenders. In this training, professionals will learn how to better listen to clients to better understand, confront, identify, and intervene in the sexual offense dynamics of their clients. Learning to share the offender's world view decreases the mystery and fear associated with the sexual offender.

Goals and Objectives

This training is appropriate for counselors, therapists, caseworkers, supervisors, or caretakers responsible for treatment, management, and/or supervision of the sexual offender. It also will offer valuable information for anyone involved with offenders and victims.

During this training, attendees should be able:

- To have an enhanced understanding of the sexual offender's thinking, behavior, and "world view;"
- To understand relationships between sex offenders and their victims;
- To identify the process of a sexual offense;
- To understand how deviance motivates and is exhibited in behavior;
- To have a better awareness of the manipulations and deceptions of the sexual offender;
- To understand re-enactment of the sexual offense in the interpersonal context;
- To explore the meaning and impact of traditional psychotherapeutic concepts like trust, rapport, and value free counseling in sexual offender treatment;
- To gain management strategies and understand the need for structure and rules;
- To challenge mythology and fears surrounding sexual offenders.