



Sex Offenders

SEX OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

Most sex offenders engage in “crossover” behavior, i.e., when an offender acts outside of his or her usual deviant sexual interest. An offender may be caught for one type of offense but is at a higher risk to commit another type of offense involving a victim of a different age, gender, or race.

There is no such thing as a “typical” sex offender; they come from all backgrounds, ages, income levels, and professions.

Most sex offenders are generalists, meaning that they commit a wide variety of offenses, not just sex offenses.[1](#)

SEX OFFENDER PREFERRED VICTIMS

There are different theories for why offenders “choose” a certain victim. Research indicates that some offenders seek out certain victim types, and others target victims who are seen as easily accessible.[2](#)

The way sex offenders select victims is often more influenced by opportunity and access than by preference in victim type.

Most offenders sexually assault a person they already know, including family members, friends, and acquaintances.[3](#)

Existing research estimates that approximately 55% of reported online offenders (i.e., child sexual exploitation material offenders, also known as pornography offenders) have also committed unreported contact/hands-on offenses (based on offender self-report).[4](#)

Offenders who have pre-pubescent victims (children under age 13) are most likely to engage in gender cross-over, meaning they are more likely to have abused both boys and girls.[5](#)

Offenders with minor victims (under age 18) are most likely to cross-over between pre- and post-pubescent children.[6](#)

LIKELIHOOD OF RE-OFFENDING

Research indicates that, nationally, approximately 5% to 20% of adult sex offenders reoffend sexually over time.[7](#)

This re-offending rate is based on known information and is likely an underestimate due to underreporting.

Nationally, approximately 12% reoffend by committing violent, but non-sexual offenses.[8](#)

Most sex offender recidivism is for non-sexual and non-violent offenses. The majority of new sex offenses are committed by registered sex offenders.[9](#)

Offenders with male victims had higher recidivism rates than those who did not have male victims.[10](#)

Sex offenders typically respond well to treatment; studies show that those who successfully complete treatment are least likely to reoffend.[11](#)



MANAGING SEX OFFENDERS

Community supervision is an alternative to incarceration.

Most convicted sex offenders in Colorado are subject to the supervision of a criminal justice agency, either probation, parole, or community corrections.

Not all offenders will respond positively to treatment, however, some offenders can learn new behaviors and skills and be safely managed in the community.

Treatment providers use clinical interventions designed to change sexually abusive thoughts and behaviors and help the offender build upon strengths/assets.

Polygraph examiners help gather a full and accurate history of offenders, concerning their behavior. Polygraph examiners also verify compliance and identify high risk behavior.

Supervising officers and case managers monitor offender compliance by imposing conditions on their behavior and imposing sanctions when necessary.

Sex offenders must waive confidentiality for treatment and case management purposes. This ensures communication and prevents secrecy and deception, which may undermine rehabilitation and threaten public safety.

Sex offenders must be accountable for their behavior. They must often agree to intensive and intrusive measures in order to be supervised effectively in the community and successfully participate in treatment.

Offender risk and needs are constantly assessed and responded to in order to be managed effectively.

The Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) is tasked with setting standards for evaluators, treatment providers, and polygraph examiners, in addition to, providing guidance to supervising officers, treatment victim advocates, and other professionals in the field.

Community safety and protecting victims is paramount in managing sex offenders on supervision.

Colorado has moved to the TEAMS (Treatment, Engagement, Assessment, Management and Supervision) Model to manage sex offenders on community supervision. The TEAMS Model aims to encourage collaboration between every professional responsible for monitoring the offender in the community. This collaboration promotes community safety and successful offender management.

There are several professionals dedicated to the supervision and treatment of each sex offender in Colorado. They make up the Community Supervision Team (CST). They may include:

The supervising officers (parole, probation, community corrections, or in some cases, the Department of Corrections).

The offender's treatment provider (a specially trained clinician/therapist).

Evaluators (a specially trained clinician).

The polygraph examiner.



The victim representative.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Sex offenders have the same need for housing and employment as other citizens. When offenders lack stable housing, they are often at a higher risk to re-offend.

The community has a vested interest in helping offenders to be successfully managed in the community.

Harassing an offender is counter-productive to the goals of community management and may cause offenders to go underground and not register as required by law.

By providing sex offender registry information to the community, it is not the intent that this information be used to inflict retribution or additional punishment on sex offenders, which would be a violation of state law.

RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS

Many states and hundreds of municipalities have passed ordinances prohibiting sex offenders from residing close to schools, parks, or other areas where children usually congregate. The State of Colorado does not have such a law, but some local jurisdictions have similar municipal ordinances in place.

Victimization

HOW OFTEN VICTIMIZATION OCCURS

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey indicates that one in three women and one in six men experienced some form of contact sexual violence (including rape, sexual coercion, and/or unwanted sexual contact).[12](#)

Research estimates that one in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives.[13](#)

Women are most likely to be raped by current or former intimate partners (47%).[14](#)

The Campus Climate Survey Validation Study [15](#) reports that 21% of female students and 7% of male students in their sample reported being victims of sexual assault since beginning college.[16](#)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics 2014 report on rape and sexual assault among college-aged females estimated that approximately six per 1,000 females enrolled in college are sexually assaulted.[17](#)

It is estimated that one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before they turn 18.[18](#)

Research estimates that 1/3 of child sexual abuse victims are abused by a family member.[19](#)

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center estimates that 325,000 children are at risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation each year.[20](#)

The average age of first becoming forced or coerced into prostitution is 12 to 14 years old for girls and 11 to 13 years old for boys.[21](#)



REPORTING SEX OFFENSES

Research indicates that only between 19% and 23% of rapes and sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement.[22](#)

The 2006 National Violence Against Women Survey concluded that only 19% of women and 12% of men, ages 18 or older, reported their rape to law enforcement.[23](#)

According to the 2014 Campus Climate Survey Validation Study, only about 13% of rapes were reported to an official (including law enforcement, school officials, health care staff, and helplines), while 64% of rapes were disclosed to a roommate, friend, or family member.[24](#)

Minor victims of intra-familial sexual abuse are unlikely to report the abuse to authorities.[25](#)

Victims are often afraid or too uncomfortable to report their victimization. Some reasons include fear of retaliation, shame, or believing that no one will believe them.

IMPACT ON VICTIMS

Victims may exhibit many different responses (e.g., crying, anger, quiet, becoming withdrawn, etc.). There is no “normal” response.

Sex assault by someone known to the victim may create a more difficult recovery.

Victims often develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Long-term effects may include: depression, anxiety, eating disorders, flashbacks, divorce, loss of sexual interest, loss of concentration, sleeping disorders, and/or suicide.

Male victims tend to develop anti-social behavior, whereas females tend to develop depression. Both sexes often develop substance abuse problems.

Impacts on victims of sexual assault may be minimized when they are believed and supported.

BEING SUPPORTIVE OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED

Start by believing them: “I’m glad you told me. I am here for you”.

Let them know you are there for them, but remember that it is their choice to accept help or not.

Keep it simple: “I believe you. I’m sorry this happened. How can I help?”

Avoid “why” questions — these can sound accusatory or make the survivor think it was their fault.

Educate yourself about the reporting process, service available to survivors, etc. But remember, it is their choice to engage in this process.

DO NOT say things like “Were you drunk?”, “Are you sure? He’s such a nice guy”, or “Men can’t be sexually assaulted.”



Teens and Technology

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Approximately 20-39% of teenagers either send or receive sexually explicit images.[26](#)

Girls and boys are most likely to send images to their romantic partner, but boys are more likely than girls to send images to friends and people with whom they want to have casual sexual encounters.[27](#)

According to one study, 68% of high school girls and 42% of high school boys were asked by someone else to send an explicit photo of themselves.[28](#)

Girls who engage in sexting are six times more likely to be bullied than those who did not sext.[29](#)

Between 9% and 17% of youth reported unwanted online sexual solicitation.[30](#)

Approximately 54% of youth who received unwanted online sexual solicitation are between 13 and 17 years old.[31](#)

Many offenders use e-grooming (establishing a rapport through an electronic platform for the purpose of a sexual relationship), which can continue for days or weeks before the offender introduces sexual content.[32](#)

Girls are three times more likely to receive online sexual solicitations than boys.[33](#)

Most victims knew they were communicating with adults with sexual intentions, and in some cases, meeting the offender multiple times in person.[34](#)

Approximately 12% of girls and 5% of boys in grades 9-12 reported being forced to have sexual intercourse at some time in their lives.[35](#)

Contemporary Issues

SEX TRAFFICKING IN COLORADO

In the U.S., there were a total of 5,593 cases of sex trafficking in 2016.[36](#)

In Colorado, there were 152 cases investigated by the Rocky Mountain Innocence Lost Task Force. They rescued 119 sex trafficking victims through their investigations.[37](#)

In 2017, there were 41 cases of sex trafficking in Colorado (the number of victims has not yet been reported).[38](#)

The majority of sex trafficking victims are female.[39](#)

Of sex trafficking victims, approximately 45% knew their trafficker prior to victimization.[40](#)

67% of sex trafficking cases used technology to advertise.[41](#)

The average age of a sex trafficked victim is 15 years old.[42](#)



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More than half of sex trafficking victims are runaways.[43](#)

18% of sex traffickers sexually assaulted and 20% physically assaulted their minor victims to “condition” them during recruitment.[44](#)

Please see the Resources section for local and national organizations that provide information on sex trafficking and assist sex trafficking victims.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Golden Police Department
911 10th Street
Golden, CO 80401
Phone: 303 980-7300

Colorado Bureau of Investigation
690 Kipling Street
Suite 4000
Denver, CO 80215
Phone: 303-239-4222
Fax: 303-239-5788
Email: cdps.cbi.sor@state.co.us



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