Sex Offender Cycle
Idaho Council on Domestic Violence
and Victim Assistance
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Sex Offender Cycle
- Stage 1: Biological Formative
  - Genetic predisposition to aggression
  - Brain Functions
  - Brain Injuries
  - Hormones

Sex Offender Cycle
- Stage 2: Psychological and Emotional Development
  - Conditioning
  - Conscience Formation
  - Social Interests
  - Courtship Process
Sex Offender Cycle

• Stage 2: Psychological and Emotional Development (con’t)

• Abuse, Neglect, Brutalization
• Attachment Disorders
• Lack of Self-Esteem
• Inadequate Personality

Psychological Development

• Foundation for cognitive development and cognitive distortions
  • Self concept
  • Need for autonomy
  • Relatedness to others
  • Competence and adequacy (sexual)
  • Attachment issues

Psychological Development

• Later offenses are based on offender’s theory regarding the nature of their victims, the nature of the world, and their own self concept
• A life script is developed based on the aforementioned
Sex Offender Cycle

- Stage 3: Isolation
  - Can Be Physical or Mental
  - Closely Associated With Next Phase

Sex Offender Cycle

- Stage 4: Fantasy -- General
  - May Develop at Young Age
  - Preoccupied With Sexual Energy
  - Masturbation to Relieve Anger/Anxiety
  - Deviant Fantasies May Develop
  - If Abused, Fantasies Related to Abuse

Fantasy General

- When individuals think about possible outcomes in a concrete and systematic manner, they are much more likely to perform such actions in the future.
- Thinking about behavior to reach a goal enhances a person's motivation to behave in a certain way.
- Sexual deviant fantasies increase chances that an offender will offend.
General Fantasy
- Types of fantasies that are goal-directed
- Offense scripts
- Mental simulations

General Fantasy
- A person may script out a version of sex with a child, then act it out when environmental cues (precipitating event) are favorable
- Plans may unfold automatically without much conscious awareness
- Without realizing it, may place self in a high risk situation (covert planning)

Sex Offender Cycle
- Stage 5: Precipitating Event
- A Culmination of Chronic Stress
- Could be a Specific Incident
  - Loss of Wife or Loved One
  - Loss of Job
  - Daily hassle like an argument
  - Excessive fantasies
Precipitating Event
- First appraisal of event is automatic
- Could be cumulative chronic stress
- Could be triggered by person's associations to the event and may well be outside the person's conscious awareness
- Relevant cues that activate the offense script occur -- cues can be internal or external

Precipitating Event
- Internal cues – negative mood
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- External cues -- old haunts, pornography, previous associates,

Sexual arousal and other physiological changes may occur accompanied by powerful affective states

Precipitating Event
- Accidental or constant contact with potential victim may be the precipitating event that causes the specific fantasy and can therefore bypass the hunt
- Pornography and alcohol may be facilitators and disinhibitors
Precipitating Event

- If an "impulsive act," may encounter someone, stimulates specific patterns of thoughts, emotions, feelings, and intentions. Go right into the next phase.

Sex Offender Cycle

- Stage 6: Fantasy -- Specific
  - General Fantasies Become More Defined
  - Particular Type of Victims May Be Envisioned
  - Anxiety Levels Increase
  - Planning Directly Related to Intensity of Fantasy

Specific Fantasy

- Refine the offense script based on the person you either see in reality or in the offender's mind
- Increases the possibility of abusive behaviors
- Goals may be covertly rehearsed with accompanying states (happiness, sexual arousal, curiosity, anger, anxiety)
Sex Offender Cycle
• Stage 7: The Hunt
  • Anxiety Levels Increase
  • Look for Victim That Fits Fantasy
  • Victim May Cross Offender’s Path When Not Looking, Especially With Little Fantasy
  • Victims May Live or Work With Offender

Sex Offender Cycle
• Stage 8: Contact
  • Con
  • Blitz
  • Surprise

Sex Offender Cycle
• Stage 9: Dominance, Manipulation, Control
  • Choose People Who Are Available, Vulnerable, and Less Powerful Than Offender
Sex Offender Cycle

- Stage 10: Capture
- Victim Cannot Leave
- Hunt, Contact, Control and Capture May Occur Very Fast or Take Years
- Anxiety Levels Increase In Anticipation

Sex Offender Cycle

- Stage 11: Physical and/or sexual Assault
- Any Sexual Act Performed on Victim
- Watch for Collateral Sexual Deviations

Sex Offender Cycle

- Stage 12: Trophy or Souvenir
- Trophy -- Conquest
- Souvenir -- Fond Memories
- Could Be Parts of Body
- Photographs; Clothes; Jewelry
- Memories (Mental)
Sex Offender Cycle
- Stage 13: Post Assault
  - Post assault acts
  - Threats, gifts
  - If murder, method of body disposal
    - Dumped
    - Concealed
    - Displayed

Sex Offender Cycle
- Stage 14: Post Event
  - After Has Left Crime Scene
  - Changes in Mood, Activities
  - May Be No Change
  - Treats Others the Same or Differently
  - Trophies and Souvenirs
  - Post Traumatic Stress

Sex Offender Cycle
- Stage 15: Reconciliation
  - How to Deal With Power or Guilt
    - Kill or Offend Again—Maybe Escalate
    - Decide to Quit Offending or De-escalate
  - May Return to Previous Stages and Begin Cycle From There