



# PsychLaw

## Sex Offending

### What is a sexual offence?

- Sexual Assault
- Act of Indecency
- Indecent Assault
- Sexual Servitude
- Child Prostitution
- Child Abuse Material (Pornography)
- Sexual Intercourse with a Child
- Obscene Exposure
- Voyeurism
- Incest

*“...sexual assaults appear to replicate the offender's own victimization”.*

### Typologies

Rapists, Child molesters, Incest, Cyber sex offenders, Juvenile sex offenders, and Female sex offenders.

### The Research

Most victims of sex offences are known to the offender<sup>(1)</sup>. There is a wide variety in motives for sex offending, as well as a great variety of types of sex offences. Although most victims are young and female, and almost all offenders are male, female sex offending does occur.

*“exposure to stress can often be a precursor to increased sexual fantasies and impulsivity”.*

### Female Offenders

Female sex offenders are sometimes viewed as non-existent. Traditional roles of females as non-violent, nonsexual, caregivers have caused under-reporting.

There are three well-known female typologies:

1. The category “teacher-lover” refers to an offender who does not believe her actions are criminal, but educational, beneficial, or even “true love.”
2. The “predisposed” offender, is likely to have a history of childhood sexual abuse themselves. This perpetrator is proposed to initiate the sexual offences, without the assistance of a male partner, and victimises her own children.

3. The “male-coerced” offender is intimidated into the sexual abuse by a dominant male partner, therefore, does not commit the abuse in his absence.<sup>(2)</sup>

### Abuse of Power

Scholars have found that sexual abusers who work with children employ “manipulative strategies” as opposed to coercion or force. They are more likely to perpetrate abuse in familiar settings, such as their workplace or their own home<sup>(3)</sup>.

Research has further suggested that the reasons for intrafamilial offending is rarely paraphilic, meaning children are not the preferred sexual partners<sup>(4)</sup>. Research has found that incestuous offenders are less deviant than men who molest extrafamilial children<sup>(5)</sup>, and such offenders typically have victimization of only one child<sup>(6)</sup>. In incestuous situations, victimization of only one child loses its potential as a predictor of gynephilia.<sup>(7)</sup>

### Themes of Behaviour

High rates of mental disorder, sexual deviance, and antisocial personality traits have been found to be common denominators among sex offenders. Early onset of offending is also a common theme, with a study finding the odds of adult sex or violent offending were 2.8 times higher for those who had committed a violent offense in adolescence.<sup>(8)</sup>

### Previous Trauma & Stressors

Many forms of childhood maltreatment can lead to many forms of behavioural and psychological problems in adulthood. Research suggests that individual's who have trauma from sexual abuse in childhood are more likely to engage in sexual offending later in life. In many cases, the sexual assaults appear to replicate the offender's own victimization. It is suggested that forcible, repetitive sexual assault can be understood to be a



## Treatment

result more of internal, psychological determinants in the offender than external, situational determinants in his environment, although these still exist. Research does suggest that exposure to stress such as financial stress, relationship breakdowns, injury, illness or death, can often be a precursor to increased sexual fantasies and impulsivity.

### Chemical Castration

Chemical injections may be used to significantly reduce the male sex drive. Scientific studies have demonstrated a correlation between chemical suppression of

the sex drive and reduced impulse to sexually offend. Chemical castration cannot constitutionally be forced upon someone. It can only be used with consent of the offender in exchange for leniency in sentencing, or an opportunity for parole or early release from prison (9).

### The Law

The law has responded to sex offenders with legislation for stiffer sentences, sex offender registration, and community notification.

Prior to and following court sentencing, forensic psychologists are increasingly called on to assess sex offenders, as well as treat them. One of the primary purposes of SVP laws is to provide treatment for those sexual offenders who are most at risk to reoffend if released from prison.

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### What We Do.

*At Stephens & Bradley Forensic & Clinical Psychological Services we provide treatment from short term intervention to long-term therapy, to both adolescent and adult clients.*

*Our services include:*

- *Diagnoses of DSM-5 disorder(s)*
- *Clinical neuropsychological and personality assessments*
- *Clinical treatment to both forensic (offending) and non forensic clients*
- *Diagnosis and treatment of alcohol/drug related disorders*
- *Assessment of offenders with intellectual disability*
- *Section 32 Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 assessment*
- *Fitness to Plead assessment (Presser)*
- *Offender Risk/Needs analysis*
- *Recommendations for incarceration or diversion to alternate rehabilitation programs*
- *Assessment and opinion for the likelihood of re-offending*
- *Offender behaviour modification assessment and treatment (DV, violence)*
- *Sex Offender/Child Pornography treatment*
- *Forensic court reports*
- *Immigration/Visa assessment and reports*
- *Firearm license revocation assessment and reports*