

Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending,
Registering, and Tracking (SMART)
FY 2010 Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management Newsletter
June 2012

Introduction

This edition of the newsletter for CASOM grantees features:

- Information about new projects that will be supported by SMART;
- An overview of the myths and facts about men and boys who have been sexually abused;
- “In the News” items about a variety of topics related to sex offenders and sex offender management; and
- Important dates for sex offender management related events.

Grant Funding Available from the SMART Office

The SMART Office is following OJP's mission of developing evidence-based knowledge in the sex offender management field by supporting the following two programs (as well as the SOTIPS initiative that was detailed in the last newsletter): 1) [SMART FY 12 Promoting Evidence Integration in Sex Offender Management Program: Circles of Support and Accountability for Project Sites](#) and (2) [SMART FY 12 Promoting Evidence Integration in Sex Offender Management Program: Circles of Support and Accountability Training and Technical Assistance Project](#). The goal of SMART's Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) initiative is to support the development or enhancement of COSA programs in jurisdictions. The COSA model is a supervision strategy involving the use of community volunteers to provide support to an individual sex offender while holding

them accountable to their self-monitoring plan, typically following completion of legal supervision. SMART will fund up to three project sites, and an accompanying technical assistance provider, to substantially reduce the risk of future sexual victimization of community members by assisting and supporting released men in the task of integrating with the community and leading responsible, productive, and accountable lives. Click on the links above for more information.

[Myths and Facts About Boys and Men Who Have Been Sexually Abused](#)

1in6 is an organization whose aim is to help men who have had unwanted or abusive sexual experiences in childhood live healthier, happier lives. They recently developed a myths and facts sheet about how boys and men experience sexual assault and the implications of that abuse. This document could be very useful as a public or system/stakeholder education tool, or even a helpful piece for families. Among the facts highlighted are:

1. Boys and men can be sexually used or abused, and it has nothing to do with how masculine they are.
2. If a boy liked the attention he was getting, or got sexually aroused during abuse, or even sometimes wanted the attention or sexual contact, this does not mean he wanted or liked being manipulated or abused, or that any part of what happened, in any way, was his responsibility or fault.

Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending,
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June 2012

3. Sexual abuse harms boys and girls in ways that are similar and different, but equally harmful.
4. The sexual abuse of boys has nothing to do with an abuser's sexual orientation.
5. A boy abused by a male is not necessarily gay, nor was he abused because he's gay, nor can the abuse make him gay.
6. Girls and women can sexually abuse boys. The boys are not "lucky," but exploited and harmed.
7. Most boys who are sexually abused will not go on to sexually abuse others.

Myth 1 — Boys can't be sexually used or abused, and if one is, he can never be a "real man."

Everyone absorbs the myth that males aren't victims, to some extent. It's central to masculine gender socialization, and boys pick up on it very early in life. This myth implies that a boy or man who has been sexually used or abused will never be a "real man." Our society expects males to be able to protect themselves. Successful men are depicted as never being vulnerable, either physically or emotionally. (See [How It Can Be Different for Men](#) and [How Being Male Can Make It Hard to Heal](#).)

But boys are not men. They are children. They are weaker and more vulnerable than those who sexually abuse or exploit them — who use their greater size, strength and knowledge to manipulate or coerce boys into unwanted sexual experiences and staying silent. This is usually done from a

position of authority (e.g., coach, teacher, religious leader) or status (e.g. older cousin, admired athlete, social leader), using whatever means are available to reduce resistance, such as attention, special privileges, money or other gifts, promises or bribes, even outright threats.

What happens to any of us as children does not need to define us as adults or men. It is important to remember that that 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before age 18 (see [The 1 in 6 Statistic](#)), and that those boys can grow up to be strong, powerful, courageous and healthy men. Examples are found on our website (see [Other Guys Like Me](#)), and there are many others out there.

Myth 2 — If a boy experienced sexual arousal during abuse, he wanted and/or enjoyed it, and if he ever did partly want the sexual experiences, then they were his fault.

Many boys and men believe this myth and feel lots of guilt and shame because they got physically aroused during the abuse. It is important to understand that males can respond to sexual stimulation with an erection or even an orgasm — even in sexual situations that are traumatic or painful. That's just how male bodies and brains work. Those who sexually use and abuse boys know this. They often attempt to maintain secrecy, and to keep the abuse going, by telling the child that his sexual response shows he was a willing participant and complicit in the abuse. "You wanted it. You liked it," they say.

But that doesn't make it true. Boys are not seeking to be sexually abused or exploited.

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They can, however, be manipulated into experiences they do not like, or even understand, at the time. (See [Guilt](#) and [Shame](#).)

There are many situations where a boy, after being gradually manipulated with attention, affection and gifts, feels like he wants such attention and sexual experiences. In an otherwise lonely life (for example, one lacking in parental attention or affection – even for a brief period), the attention and pleasure of sexual contact from someone the boy admires can feel good.

But in reality, it's still about a boy who was vulnerable to manipulation. It's still about a boy who was betrayed by someone who selfishly exploited the boy's needs for attention and affection to use him sexually. (See [Sorting It Out for Yourself](#), which discusses feeling like you (partly) 'wanted' it then but now seeing it as an unwanted experience, in terms of it being part of your life and having continuing negative effects.)

Myth 3 — Sexual abuse is less harmful to boys than girls.

Most studies show that the long term effects of sexual abuse can be quite damaging for both males and females. One large study, conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, found that the sexual abuse of boys was more likely to involve penetration of some kind, which is associated with greater psychological harm.

The harm caused by sexual abuse mostly depends on things not determined by

gender, including: the abuser's identity, the duration of the abuse, whether the child told anyone at the time, and if so, whether the child was believed and helped.

Many boys suffer harm because adults who could believe them and help are reluctant, or refuse, to acknowledge what happened and the harm it caused. This increases the harm, especially the shame felt by boys and men, and leads many to believe they have to "tough it out" on their own. And that, of course, makes it harder to seek needed help in the midst of the abuse, or even years later when help is still needed. (See [How Unwanted or Abusive Sexual Experiences Can Cause Problems](#) and [How Being Male Can Make It Hard to Heal](#).)

Myth 4 — Most sexual abuse of boys is committed by homosexual males.

People who sexually abuse or exploit boys are not expressing homosexuality – any more than people who sexually abuse or exploit girls are engaging in heterosexual behavior. They are deeply confused individuals who, for various reasons, desire to sexually use or abuse children, and have acted on that desire. (See [Why Do People Sexually Use or Abuse Children?](#))

Myth 5 — Boys abused by males must be gay or will become gay.

There are different theories about how sexual orientation develops, but experts in human sexuality do not believe that sexual abuse or premature sexual experiences play a significant role. There is no good evidence that someone can "make" another

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June 2012

person be homosexual (or heterosexual). Sexual orientation is a complex issue and there is no single answer or theory that explains why someone identifies himself as homosexual, heterosexual or bi-sexual.

It is common, however, for boys and men who have been abused to express confusion about their sexual identity and orientation. Some guys fear that, due to their experiences as boys, they must “really” be homosexual or that they can’t be a “real man.” Even men who are clearly heterosexual, and men who others see as very masculine, may fear that others will “find them out” as gay or not real men. (See [How It Can Be Different for Men.](#))

Also, many boys abused by males believe that something about them sexually attracted their abuser and will attract other males. While these are understandable fears, they are not true. One of the great tragedies of childhood sexual abuse is how it robs a person’s natural right to discover his own sexuality in his own time.

It is very important to remember that abuse arises from the abuser’s failure to develop and maintain healthy adult sexual relationships, and his or her willingness to sexually use and abuse kids. It has nothing to do with the preferences or desires of the child who is abused, and therefore cannot determine a person’s natural sexual identity.

Myth 6 — If a female used or abused a boy, he was “lucky,” and if he doesn’t feel that way there’s something wrong with him.

This myth, like several of the others, comes from the image of masculinity that boys learn from very early. It says not only that males can’t be sexually abused, but that any sexual experience with girls and women, especially older ones, is evidence that he’s a “real man.” Again, the confusion comes from focusing on the sexual aspect rather than the abusive one – the exploitation and betrayal by a more powerful, trusted or admired person (who can be a child or adult).

In reality, premature, coerced or otherwise abusive or exploitive sexual experiences are never positive – whether they are imposed by an older sister, sister of a friend, baby sitter, neighbor, aunt, mother, or any other female in a position of power over a boy. At a minimum, they cause confusion and insecurity. They almost always harm boys’ and men’s capacities for trust and intimacy.

Being sexually used or abused, whether by males or females, can cause a variety of other emotional and psychological problems. However, boys and men often don’t recognize the connections between what happened and their later problems. To be used as a sexual object by a more powerful person, male or female, is never a good thing, and can cause lasting harm.

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June 2012

Myth 7 — Boys who are sexually abused will go on to abuse others.

This myth is especially dangerous because it can create terrible fear in boys and men. They may not only fear becoming abusers themselves, but that others will find out they were abused and believe they're a danger to children. Sadly, boys and men who tell of being sexually abused often are viewed more as potential perpetrators than as guys who need support.

While it is true that many (though by no means all) who sexually abuse children have histories of sexual abuse, it is NOT true that most boys who are sexually abused go on to sexually abuse others. The majority of boys do not go on to become sexually abusive as adolescents or adults; even those who do perpetrate as teenagers, if they get help when they're young, usually don't abuse children when they become adults. (See [Am I Going to Become an Abuser? What if I Already Have?](#))

Believing these myths is understandable, but dangerous and harmful, and needs to be overcome.

- These are myths that everyone absorbs growing up, and continues to hear as adults, usually without even thinking about it. So of course some boys and men will, at least for a while, believe them and suffer the consequences.
- So long as societies believe these myths, and teach them to children from their earliest years, many men harmed by unwanted or abusive

sexual experiences won't get the recognition and help they need.

- So long as boys or men harmed by unwanted or abusive sexual experiences believe these myths, they will feel ashamed and be less likely to seek whatever knowledge, understanding and help they need to achieve the lives they want and deserve.
- So long as boys, men and society as a whole believes these myths and males don't get the help they need, males are more likely to join the minority who end up hurting others.
- And so long as these myths are believed, it increases the power of another devastating myth: that it was the child's fault. It is never the fault of the child in a sexual situation – although some people are skilled at getting those they use or abuse to take on a responsibility that is always, and only, their own.

To read the Myths and Facts document in its entirety, or to learn more about the work of 1in6.org, see <http://1in6.org/men/myths/>.

Important Dates and Events

*SMART's National Symposium on Sex Offender Management and Accountability
POSTPONED*

The SMART Office's 2012 National Symposium on Sex Offender Management and Accountability that was originally scheduled for August 2012 has been postponed until 2013. Please check the

Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending,
Registering, and Tracking (SMART)
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June 2012

SMART Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/smart for updates. If grant funds have been allocated to attend the conference, grantees must submit a GAN request to extend grants beyond their September 2012 end dates or propose suggestions for reallocation. Alternatively, grant funds that have been earmarked for attendance at the conference may be returned to SMART. Please contact your SMART Program Manager for information.

National Sexual Assault Conference

The National Sexual Assault Conference is a two and a half day, advocacy-based conference providing advanced training opportunities and information regarding sexual violence intervention and prevention. This event will be held from August 22-24, 2012 at the Chicago Sheraton Hotel and Towers. See http://icasa.org/docs/misc/2011%20ad_lay_out%201.pdf for more information about the conference and how to register.

Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) Annual Research Conference

ATSA's 31st Annual Research and Treatment Conference will be held from October 17 - 20, 2012 at the Sheraton in downtown Denver, Colorado. This conference will offer symposia, workshop presentations, poster sessions, discussion groups, and advanced clinics relating to issues in both victim and perpetrator research and treatment. Each presentation will provide information and training based on cutting edge research development and clinical application. The format is designed

to best facilitate interaction with and learning from some of the most advanced practitioners in the field of sexual abuse. All sessions, with the exception of posters, have been approved for Continuing Education credits. In addition to the three-day Conference schedule, ATSA will offer a selection of intensive half- and/or full-day Pre-Conference Clinics. These Clinics are designed to provide participants with extensive training and skills enhancement. For more information about this event, visit <http://www.atsa.com/atsa%E2%80%99s-31st-annual-conference>.

In the News

NIJ Reports that GPS Monitoring of High Risk Sex Offenders Can Reduce Recidivism
The Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) recently released a study that evaluated the use of global positioning systems (GPS) technology to monitor high-risk sex offenders on parole in California. Offenders in the GPS group demonstrated significantly better outcomes than offenders who were monitored in traditional ways. The evaluation showed that risk for a sex-related violation was nearly three times greater for offenders who received traditional parole supervision, than offenders who received GPS supervision. The risk of committing an offense that resulted in an arrest was twice as high for offenders who received traditional parole supervision than for offenders in the GPS group. When compared to traditional supervision, the study found that GPS monitoring costs approximately \$8.51 more per day. The outcomes of GPS monitoring with this

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June 2012

population, however, are significantly better. To read the full report, see <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/238481.pdf>.

Native American Women Especially Vulnerable to Sexual Assault

It is commonly accepted that the rates of sexual assault against Native American women are estimated to be at least 2.5 times more than that of the general population. This issue is receiving more widespread media coverage, most recently in the New York Times (see, "For Native American Women, Scourge of Rape, Rare Justice"). This article chronicles the issue of sexual assault on tribal lands and impediments to the justice system's response. To read the article in its entirety: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/23/us/native-americans-struggle-with-high-rate-of-rape.html?_r=2&smid=FB-nytimes&WT.mc_id=US-E-FB-SM-LIN-FNA-052312-NYT-NA&WT.mc_ev=click.

Sex Offenders Fight for the Right to Use Facebook

Registered sex offenders who have been banned from social networking websites are fighting back in the nation's courts, successfully challenging many of the restrictions as infringements on free speech and their right to participate in common online discussions. The legal battles pit public outrage over sex crimes against cherished guarantees of individual freedom and the far-reaching communication

changes brought by Facebook, LinkedIn and dozens of other sites. Courts have long allowed states to place restrictions on convicted sex offenders who have completed their sentences, controlling where many of them live and work and requiring them to register with police. But the increasing use of social networks for everyday communication raises new, untested issues. To read an article about this issue in its entirety, see <http://news.yahoo.com/sex-offenders-fight-facebook-190311149.html>.

Next Newsletter

The next newsletter for CASOM grantees will be published in late Summer 2012.



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