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HOPEFUL PATHS

Prosocial Approaches to Changing Inappropriate Sexual Behavior

A Guided Workbook for Individuals in Treatment

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PROSOCIAL APPROACHES TO CHANGING INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

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Kingston, New Jersey 08528

This workbook is intended to be used within the context of a comprehensive sex offender treatment program. Trained therapists experienced in working with sex offenders should be available to answer questions or counsel individuals completing the assignments contained herein.

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This book is printed on acid free paper.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Hopeful Paths: Prosocial Approaches to Changing Inappropriate Sexual Behavior/
Barbara K. Schwartz, Ph.D., and Henry R. Cellini, Ph.D.
ISBN 978-1-939083-135
Library of Congress Control Number: 2017962492

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INTRODUCTION

The authors of this workbook have over seventy years of combined experience working with sex offenders in a variety of capacities. During that time they have seen the vast majority of these individuals go on to lead happy and productive lives. Thus they have chosen the title of this work, *Hopeful Paths*. This approach is in marked contrast to what the media presents and the general public believes about sex offenders. The workbook is organized around the Integrative Model, which was formulated by Dr. Schwartz to address the many different components that come together to create a sex offense. There are motivators which are factors in one's life that led that individual to believe that some need could be satisfied through sexually inappropriate behavior. These dynamics might include genetics or brain malfunction. They might include family dynamics or interpersonal problems. Deviant sexual arousal is present in a significant number of individuals who commit sexual assaults. Disinhibitors such as thinking errors, emotional problems, substance abuse, and stress can interfere with a person's ability to control his or her impulses. Consequently while one person might have a very strong sexual attraction to children, but be able to control these urges and never offend, another person may have a momentary attraction but is a slave to impulses and acts out. The model also looks at the environment and the characteristics of the victim.

All of these factors and many more are addressed in this workbook, which is meant to help individuals to develop a variety of tools which can help them fulfill their basic human needs in a prosocial way with no need to resort to hurting others. The authors encourage you to take the time to think long and hard about all of the different questions and exercises in this workbook. The deeper you delve, the more treasure you will discover in the form of understanding and insight into yourself. Hopefully you are participating in a sex offender program, either in prison or in the community, where you can share what you are discovering about yourself with others.

The authors would like to thank the thousands of sex offenders who have shared their experiences and lives with us. We would also like to thank our families, the two legged and the four legged ones. Much appreciation goes out to our publishers for their encouragement and patience.

Chapter 1

UNDERSTANDING THERAPY

This workbook was designed for individuals who have had problems with sexually inappropriate behavior. This may have resulted in criminal convictions, civil lawsuits, loss of relationships or jobs and/or status within the community. Inappropriate sexual behavior can range from downloading illegal pornography to violent sexual assaults. When a person is accused of some type of sexual misconduct, there can be many responses. One might readily admit guilt and take full responsibility or one might totally deny the charge. Most commonly the response is somewhere in between. An individual may admit that something happened but disagree with the nature of the behavior, the frequency, the degree of force, etc. The behavior of the victim might be challenged. There are as many different explanations of why people act out sexually as there are offenders. It is the aim of this workbook to help you separate and understand the legitimate dynamics of your behavior from explanations that might make you feel better but interfere with helping you to acknowledge and thus correct your behavior.



Why Should I Even Bother?

You may have heard that “sex offenders can’t be treated.” This is a myth commonly perpetrated by the media and the general public. Actually most people in trouble with inappropriate sexual behavior are very responsive to treatment. A substantial amount of research has documented this. However, you may still have doubts about engaging in treatment, and that is perfectly normal.

What is your current situation?

- I am being ordered into treatment by the court.
- I am being forced to participate by the Department of Corrections.
- I am being urged to participate by my family and/or friends.
- I want to participate.



Fear: A Normal Response

List five reasons why a person might be afraid of being in treatment.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Do any of these apply to you? _____

The Great Debate

I should be in treatment

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

I should not be in treatment

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Which side won? _____



What is treatment?

Different treatments vary by location, length of treatment and funding source. For example:

- Bill is in a therapeutic community in a prison where 30 individuals convicted of sex offenses live together in a special housing unit and receive 24 hours a week of therapy plus many hours of homework. His program lasts for over two years.
- Steve is on probation and is mandated to attend a once a week group session of specialized sex offender counseling which lasts for 90 minutes, over a set period. The required period can vary from months to lifetime depending on the state one lives in.
- Bob goes to one-on-one individualized treatment with a sex offender counselor. This approach also varies in lengths ranging from months to years.

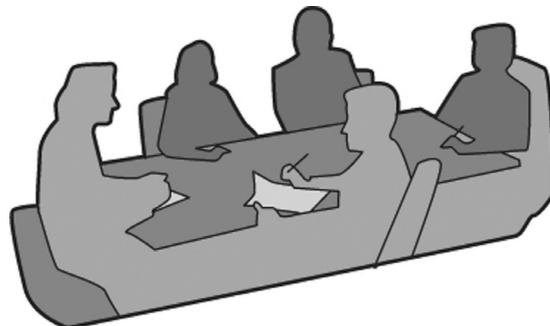
Describe your treatment program.

Most sex offender treatments have much in common regardless of the setting. They usually deal with many of the same issues, including:

- Taking responsibility for one's behavior
- Understanding how sexual abuse affects the victims and others.
- Understanding why one committed sexually inappropriate behavior.
- Identifying needs that were being pursued when one chose to engage in sexually inappropriate behavior and how to meet those needs in a prosocial manner.

Treatment programs often use an approach called Cognitive Behavioral Treatment that focuses on how thoughts shape behavior. Participants also learn to identify and deal with their emotions, including feelings, which may be related to past traumas. Additionally, through therapy participants may improve their social skills and learn to make better decisions. This workbook is designed to facilitate the attainment of these objectives. The types of treatments you may experience include:

Group therapy: You will participate along with other individuals with similar issues. Participants often become very attached to their groups as they feel less alone and more understood, and may develop connections that help group members find jobs, housing, and social relations.



Individual therapy: You may or may not be meeting individually with your therapist.



Psycho-educational classes: These classes focus on helping individuals acquire tools for their recovery such as anger management, communication skills, stress management, etc.



Homework assignments: These assignments complement various other treatment modalities, and help individuals retain concepts.



Behavioral techniques: These are used to help decrease deviant sexual interests.



Other modalities: Therapists may use a variety of other techniques that include but are not limited to art, music, and drama therapy.

Does Treatment Even Work?

We all know what the media or the average citizen would say. “Sex offenders can’t be treated.” “They all reoffend.” Research indicates that treated sex offenders recidivate much less than those who do not receive treatment, however. Studies are cited at the end of this chapter. Sex offenders can be one of the easiest populations to treat. They are much easier to treat than alcoholics or drug abusers, although some sex offenders have those problems as well (see Appendix 1.1, “Recidivism Rates for Treated Sex Offenders vs. Untreated Sex Offenders,” on page 10).

What Are You Willing to Invest in Treatment?

First let’s see what you invested in committing your last offense. Begin by figuring out what your monthly salary was at the last job you had before you were arrested. _____. What was your hourly wage? _____. If you were retired or disabled, calculate how much money you were receiving. If you were paid by the month, divide that figure by 120 to come up with your hourly wage.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Hourly Wage</i>	<i>Total</i>
Fantasizing or planning your offense	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Carrying out your offense	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Cost of lawyer	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Being in jail, court, or prison	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Covering up your crime	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Lost time from work	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Payoff or gifts to your victim	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Destroying evidence	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Moving to avoid detection	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Purchasing pornography	Total cost of pornography:		_____
Hours looking at pornography or having sexual discussions on the Internet	_____ X	_____ =	_____
Psychological evaluations	Cost to you of psych evaluation:		_____
Treatment sessions	Total cost of treatment:		_____
My offense cost me			_____

Was it worth it? _____
 What are you willing to invest in your recovery? _____

Attitudes

One of the best ways to think about and sustain behavioral change is to examine your attitudes. Remember that an attitude is comprised of a thought with an attached feeling, and learning how they affect your behavior is essential.