

EVALUATION OF THE SAN DIEGO SEX OFFENDER MANGEMENT COUNCIL COMMUNITY EDUCATION FORUMS

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION FORUMS

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

One of the primary deliverables stated in the San Diego Community Sex Offender Management Implementation Grant was community education. Since most sex offenders in San Diego County have completed their requirements of probation or parole and are not under official supervision, law enforcement depends on the eyes and ears of citizens to monitor sex offenders. The Sex Offender Management Council sought, through the community education curriculum, to empower citizens by providing accurate and pertinent information about sex offenders, including explaining registration and monitoring, and providing strategies for keeping individuals and families safe.

Initially, the curriculum was based on components from the Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM) training model. This curriculum focused on explaining the containment model more than educating the audience about sex offenders and victimization. In October 2002, the Sex Offender Management Council (SOMC) conducted a pilot community forum, using this first version of the curriculum. The forum included a Power Point slide presentation, a question and answer period, and a pre- and post-test to assess the attainment of knowledge during the forum. The pilot was delivered as a presentation at the Partners in Peace conference. The attendees included professionals working in sexual abuse, stalking, and domestic violence; such as mental health clinicians and victim service providers. The feedback from the attendees clearly demonstrated that more of the presentation needed to address the myths and realities about sex offenders, monitoring, and registration and less emphasis on the containment model. While individuals wanted to know about the containment model, it was reported that too much time was spent discussing this aspect of sex offender monitoring. The curriculum was revised to incorporate these suggestions and this was the curriculum that was delivered in the three subsequent community forums that are the subject of this report.

The Victim Advocacy Committee, in conjunction with members of the Law Enforcement Committee, dedicated over 100 volunteer hours to create the community education curriculum. In addition, a business card-sized brochure was created to provide resources and information about sex offender management. This brochure was distributed at the community forums and is available to anyone interested. For the community education component of the implementation grant alone, committee members contributed over 621 hours. If converted to monetary resources at \$25 an hour, the total cost of the community education component would have been over \$15,500.

Three community education forums have been presented to community groups. In each case, SOMC was asked by the organizing group to present the forum. It was SOMC's desire to provide the community forum only when invited by the community or an agency. The forums were presented by a collaborative team that included staff from the Sheriff's Department, Probation Department, Bullens and Bullens Forensic Assessments, and the Center for Community Solutions. The first forum was presented on July 9, 2003, to the San Diego Sheriff Department's Senior Volunteer Program. There were 22 volunteers in attendance, with a male majority. On July 10, 2003, the San Diego Sheriff Department's chaplain group attended the second community education forum. There were 22 attendees, with most being male. The last forum was presented to 24 victim advocacy volunteers at the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) and all attendees were female. A total of 64 individuals attended the community education forums.

To assess the increase in knowledge about sex offenders and the containment model, attendees completed a pre- and post-test that included 17 true/false questions (Appendix A). Due to late arrivals and early dismissals during each of the community education forums, not all of the forums had the same number of pre- and post-tests. The Senior Volunteer Program (group 1), completed 22 pre-tests and 20 post-tests, the chaplains group (group 2) completed 22 pre- and post-tests and the victim advocacy (group 3) completed 20 pre-tests and 24 post-tests.

Results of the pre- and post-test are described using frequencies and central tendency. When appropriate, inferential statistical tests, such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used. The results of the significance tests are provided in Appendix B. In addition, frequencies and measures of central tendency were used to describe the data.

RESULTS

The intent of the questions on the test was to assess the increase in knowledge about sex offenders and victimization. Questions concerned offense patterns, victimization, the impact of a sex offense on a victim, and sex offender characteristics.

An ANOVA was used to test the difference between the pre-test mean scores for each of the three groups to insure there was not a statistically significant difference. The highest score possible was 17. The means for each of the groups were 13.4 for group 1, 13.7 for group 2, and 14.6 for group 3. While group 3 had the highest mean, the difference between the groups was not statistically significant. Overall, the mean for the pre-test was 13.9, with scores ranging from 6 to 17.

Table 1 shows the frequencies for the correct answers to all 17 questions. All of the attendees answered questions three and seven correctly. Interestingly, on the pre-test, the question most often answered incorrectly was "Most child sexual abusers find their victims by frequenting such places as schoolyards and playgrounds." This was a false statement. The top five questions most often answered incorrectly were questions number 13 (41%), two (48%), 5 (53%), 16 (59%), and 15 (70%).

Table 1
FREQUENCIES FOR CORRECT ANSWERS ON PRE- AND POST-TEST QUESTIONS
Evaluation of the Community Education Forum, AUGUST 2003

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
If a child does not tell anyone about the abuse, it is because he or she must have been a willing participant. (false) (Question 7)	100%	97%
Only men commit sexual assault. (false) (Question 3)	100%	96%
Victims of sexual assault are harmed only through physical violence. (false) (Question 6)	98%	100%
It is common for both child and adult victims of sexual assault to wait some time before telling someone about the abuse. (true) (Question 8)	95%	100%
It helps the victim to talk about the abuse when they are ready to do so. (true) (Question 9)	95%	99%
Men who rape do so because they cannot find a consenting sexual partner. (false) (Question 14)	95%	100%
If a victim does not say "no", or does not fight back, it is not considered sexual assault. (false) (Question 17)	92%	100%
If someone sexually assaults an adult, he will not target children as victims, and if someone sexually assaults a child, he will not target adults. (false) (Question 10)	92%	99%
Child sexual abusers are only attracted to children and are not capable of appropriate sexual relationships (false) (Question 4)	91%	97%
Most sex offenders do not know their victim. (false) (Question 1)	91%	91%
Offenders could stop their sexually violent behavior on their own if they wanted to. (false) (Question 12)	83%	97%
Sexual gratification is often not a primary motivation for a rape offender (true) (Question 11)	81%	77%
Drugs and alcohol cause sexual offenses to occur. (false) (Question 15)	70%	100%
Only a small percentage of child sexual abusers use physical force or threat to gain compliance from their victims. (true) (Question 2)	48%	77%
Victims of sexual assault often share some blame for the assault (false) (Question 16)	59%	82%
Children rarely make up stories of abuse. (true) (Question 5)	53%	91%
Most child sexual abusers find their victims by frequenting such places as schoolyards and playgrounds. (false) (Question 13)	41%	94%
TOTAL	64	66

The number of individuals who completed the post-test differed slightly because people either arrived late or had to leave early. A total of 66 post-tests were completed. As noted above, the overall mean score for the pre-test was 13.9 and increased significantly to a mean of 16.0 on the post-test. The results of the ANOVA show that the difference in means is statistically significant. Table 1 also includes the frequencies for correct answers on the post-test.

A comparison of the five questions most frequently answered incorrectly was also conducted. The greatest change occurred for question 13, concerning the myth that child sexual abusers most often find their victims at places where children hang out. The number of attendees who answered the question correctly increased to almost 100 percent, from 26 (41%) on the pre-test to 62 (94%) on the post test.

Twenty additional people answered question 2 correctly on the post-test. The increase was from 31 (48%) for the pre-test to 51 (77%) on the post-test. The number of people who answered question 5 correctly increased from 34 (53%) on the pre-test to 60 (91%) on the post-test. More people also answered question 16 correctly on the post-test, increasing from 38 (59 %) people on the pre-test to 54 (82%) on the post-test

All attendees answered question 15 correctly on the post-test, dispelling the misconception that being under the influence of alcohol and drugs could be the only factor in committing a sex offense. As discussed during the forum, drugs and alcohol may be one factor during an offense, but not the causal factor. On the pre-test 45 (70%) attendees answered this question correctly, compared to all 66 (100%) on the post-test.

FUTURE COMMUNITY FORUMS

The community forum curriculum is now available on CD-ROM to any agency that would like to use it to educate community members or staff. This curriculum could also be used by law enforcement when providing communities with notification of a sex offender residing in the area. Many of the concerns that arise when residents are told that a sex offender lives in their community are discussed in the curriculum. The curriculum also provides residents with an opportunity to ask the experts questions about safety and risk.

SOMC continues to be available to present the curriculum to communities or agencies upon request. Likewise, the distribution of the CDs allows other agencies involved in the containment approach to provide the curriculum to communities. The curriculum was created so that it could be used by any agency interested. SOMC desires that the curriculum would continue to be used to inform citizens about safety and provide accurate information about sex offenders, notification, and registration in San Diego County.

SUMMARY

As outlined in the implementation grant, SOMC committed to conducting three community forums concerning education about sex offenders. A comparison of the pre- and post-test mean scores shows that the increase in the mean for the post-test is statistically significant. Likewise, there was an increase in the number of correct answers for the five questions most often answered incorrectly.

It is SOMC's hope that this curriculum will be used throughout the County, possibly in conjunction with notification, to provide communities with accurate information about how to protect themselves and their families and how to assist with monitoring sex offenders in San Diego County.

APPENDIX A

1.	Most sex offenders do not know their victim.	TRUE / FALSE
2.	Only a small percentage of child sexual abusers use physical force or threat to gain compliance from their victims.	TRUE / FALSE
3.	Only men commit sexual assault.	TRUE / FALSE
4.	Child sexual abusers are only attracted to children and are not capable of appropriate sexual relationships.	TRUE / FALSE
5.	Children rarely make up stories of abuse.	TRUE / FALSE
6.	Victims of sexual assault are harmed only through physical violence.	TRUE / FALSE
7.	If a child does not tell anyone about the abuse, it is because he or she must have been a willing participant.	TRUE / FALSE
8.	It is common for both child and adult victims of sexual assault to wait some time before telling someone about the abuse.	TRUE / FALSE
9.	It helps the victim to talk about the abuse when they are ready to do so.	TRUE / FALSE
10.	If someone sexually assaults an adult, he will not target children as victims, and if someone sexually assaults a child, he will not target adults.	TRUE / FALSE
11.	Sexual gratification is often not a primary motivation for a rape offender.	TRUE / FALSE
12.	Offenders could stop their sexually violent behavior on their own if they wanted to.	TRUE / FALSE
13.	Most child sexual abusers find their victims by frequenting such places as schoolyards and playgrounds.	TRUE / FALSE
14.	Men who rape do so because they cannot find a consenting sexual partner.	TRUE / FALSE
15.	Drugs and alcohol cause sexual offenses to occur.	TRUE / FALSE
16.	Victims of sexual assault often share some blame for the assault.	TRUE / FALSE
17.	If a victim does not say "no," or does not fight back, it is not considered sexual assault.	TRUE / FALSE

APPENDIX B

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE TEST RESULTS

This appendix includes information regarding the statistical tests that were conducted and the results that were discussed throughout the report. Each test that resulted in a **significant** finding is referred to, with reference to the predictive factor and outcome measure, type of statistical test, results, and the significance level.

Two primary statistical tests were used. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a test of the statistical significance of the difference between the mean scores of two or more groups on one or more variables. Specifically, the procedure involves computing a ratio of the variance within the groups (error variance) to the variance between groups (explained variance). The preferred test of statistical significance for this type of data would be a Paired Samples T-Test; however, since an identification number was not used the community forum tests could not be matched.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Predictive Factor</i>	Outcome Measure	Statistical Test	Results
<i>Page 3</i>	<i>Community Forum Group</i>	Pre-Test score	ANOVA	$F(2, N=64) = 2.675, p = .08$
<i>Page 4</i>	<i>Pre- and Post-Test</i>	Total Score	ANOVA	$F(1, N=130) = 57.82, p < .001$