
Preface

Sexual offending is a profound international problem that wreaks havoc on the lives of far too many persons. The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) in policy papers from May 2011 provided a perspective of sexual assault as a public health problem. Over 20 years ago, in 1995, the American Medical Association declared sexual abuse a “silent-violent epidemic;” clearly it remains one today. Close to 20 % of women and 6 % of males have reported the experience of coerced sex at some time in their lives, with a significant majority of those victims being sexually assaulted prior to age 18. Sexual offending of both adults and children is known to increase the risk of a wide range of medical and psychosocial issues for those who are its victims, including depression, substance abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder suicide attempts, maladaptive personality traits and disorders as well as physical injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, and risky sexual behavior. Secondary victims of sexual offending include family members and friends who are also often traumatized themselves when a loved one is victimized by sexual assault.

Significant scientific progress has been made in the past 20 years regarding the nature of sexual offending, particularly reoffending, and the bases for principles and practices of both evaluating and intervening to reduce the frequency and impact of sexual offending. Some regard the progress to date as a glass half-empty, while others as one half-full. The intent of this book on sexual offending is to offer a range of perspectives on multiple and important aspects of the predisposing conditions of this particular form of violent offending as well as to offer viewpoints and guidelines on a diversity of assessment practices and management issues, as well as on special populations of sexual offenders. In addition, relative to many books in the field of sexual offending, this book was informed by the decision to provide chapters authored both by well-known figures in the field of sexual offending and also by experienced, knowledgeable professionals who provide services regarding sexual offenders in their daily practice in the field but who committed to providing state-of-the-art reviews and discussions of relevant topics regarding sexual offending. We sought to include a unique breadth of chapter topics that would provide an updated, exceptional viewpoint on aspects of sexual offending, including some not addressed by other books in the field. In all of these ways, we sought to develop a volume that would be informative and useful to the great majority of the varied and increasing types of professionals—practitioners, advocates, and policymakers involved in addressing the pressing and persisting problem of sexual offending.

We hope that this book can play some role in the reduction or even prevention of sexual violence by informing and enhancing both practice and policy in the field of sexual offending.

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Sexual Offending

Predisposing Antecedents, Assessments and
Management

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