

## **A Precarious Balance: Understanding Risk and Protective Factors in the Effective Management and Reintegration of Sexual Offending Perpetrators**

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### **Level**

Intermediate

### **Track**

Clinical/Legal/Sex Offender

### **CE**

CPA/BBS/CJER/MCLE

### **Bio**

**Mikaela Vidmar, M.Sc, MA, Reg Psych, Psy. Assoc.** has been a registered clinical and forensic psychologist in Canada for the past twenty years where she has specialized in comprehensive psychological risk assessment and treatment of sexual and violent offenders. She has worked with multiple populations including inpatient, outpatient and incarcerated individuals. Her areas of expertise and interest include psychopathy, pedophilic arousal disorders, personality disorders, internet-facilitated offending, the impact of sexual abuse on victims and rare paraphilic disorders. She contributed to the development of a treatment program and manual for people who have engaged in illegal sexual behaviors which won multiple honors including the National Award of Excellence in Mental Health. Mikaela has been recognized as an expert witness in Provincial and Supreme courts (of Canada) in addition to Family and Juvenile courts. She has additionally provided consultation to lawyers, judges, Family and Children Services Aid, the RCMP and provincial police, foster parents, probation and parole officers, staff at women's shelters and rehabilitative programs, and numerous other professionals and stakeholders. She has been an instructor at Mount Saint Mary's University since 2017, and with The Chicago School of Professional Psychology since 2021, in addition to maintaining clinical practice in the Southern California area.

### **Narrative**

Working with people who commit sexual offenses is not for the faint of heart. And because the consequences of failing to do so can be dire, even well-seasoned professionals face immense pressure to be accurate in their decisions about interactions and interventions. Couple this with considerable public anxiety and political pressures related to these offenders, and it is not surprising that professionals working with this population may err on the side of conservatism. Unfortunately, this may result in an escalation of the very risk that our efforts are attempting to mitigate. In contrast, to be too liberal can result in further victimization and erode the public trust in our professions. Balancing these extremes is necessary for success for the professional, the offender, the community, and society as a whole. This workshop will have two sections: The first will explore best practices conceptualizing the risk of recidivism. Subjects will include a review of the concepts of actuarial and dynamic risk factors for recidivism, what it means when "red flag" elements emerge and suggest coordination efforts of the containment team to best intervene. The second half will consider the elements related to the offender's progress through treatment and the integration of protective elements, including the development of healthy

internet use, relationship building, mental health needs, and support systems, all with a focus on indicators of safe reintegration into society. Various offender categories will be addressed, including contact and non-contact offenses (e.g., CSEM offenders and exhibitionists) and considerations for effective interventions specific to their offense patterns and victim categories. Vignettes will be offered throughout, with participant contributions encouraged.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Understand actuarial and dynamic risk factors for a range of offense types
2. Describe three strategies for the coordination of efforts by the containment team
3. Explain the breadth and role of potential protective factors in the successful reintegration of the offender back into society