

# Treatment Programs for Incarcerated Child Abusers in Hong Kong

Presented by:  
Sarina Lam  
Clinical Psychologist  
Correctional Services Department  
Feb,2003



## Introduction

- 1 Basic information about incarcerated child abusers
- 2 Theoretical background of psychological treatment
- 3 Evaluation and Treatment Unit for Sex Offenders (ETU)

## Basic Information About Incarcerated Sex Offenders

**No. of newly admitted sex offenders in 2002:** 187  
**Victims' age below 16:** 42%  
**Known pedophile:** 28%  
**(underestimation)**

## Offense types of child abusers:

Indecent Assault	56%
Unlawful Sexual Intercourse	26%
Rape	6%
Others	12%

## Offender-victim relationship:

Family members:	17%
Acquaintance	47%
Stranger	36%

## Other Characteristics

Sex of victims: Predominantly female

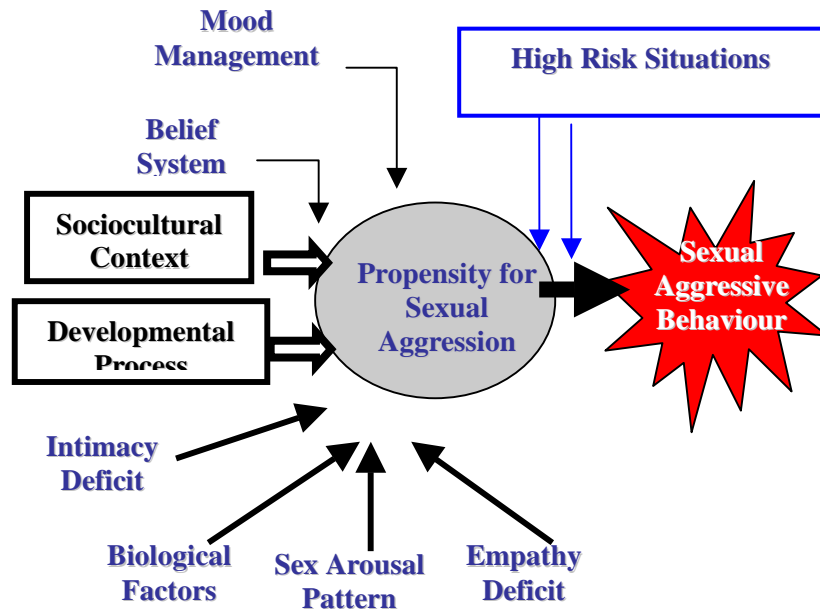
Presence of Mental Illness and Mental Retardation: Not significant

Percentage with known prior sexual offenses: 12% (underestimation)

Other psychological profile: From all works of life  
Highly defensive  
Low motivation to change  
Socially inadequate

## Theoretical background of psychological treatment

### Conceptual Model for Understanding Sex Offending Behaviour



## Psychology and Sex Crime

- Unless these factors are properly tackled, considerable amount of them will re-offend (20%)
- Punishment alone is not enough

## Metamorphosis of Psychological Services for Sex Offenders

In the past:

- Individual therapy in different institutions.
- Most of the time was invested in denial breaking and motivational enhancement.
- ↳ To meet these challenges, required reengineering of services.

## Strategy for New Services

- “Normalising” or “routinizing” sex offender referrals to psychological assessment in order to lower their resistance.
- “Pre-exposing” sex offenders to psychotherapy in early stage of their sentence.
- “Early streamlining” sex offenders according to reoffending risk, treatment needs and responsively;
- ↳ “Centralising” the evaluation and treatment in order to facilitate sex offenders’ adjustment, sense of security and concentration in the treatment process. It also facilitates professionalism.

## Sex Offender Evaluation & Treatment Unit (ETU)

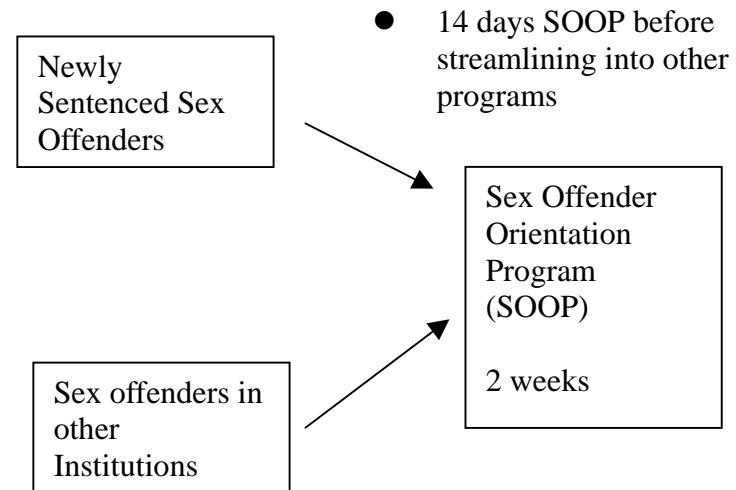
The first Residential treatment unit for sex offenders in South East Asia  
Developed by the Working Group on Assessment and Treatment of Sex Offenders

### Aim

*To reduce the number of sexual crimes!!*

1. providing a thorough psychological assessment and render a range of specialized treatment programs to sex offenders according to their re-offending risk, treatment needs and responsiveness.
2. providing a special therapeutic environment within a discrete unit.
3. serving as a resource center for training, service development, and research

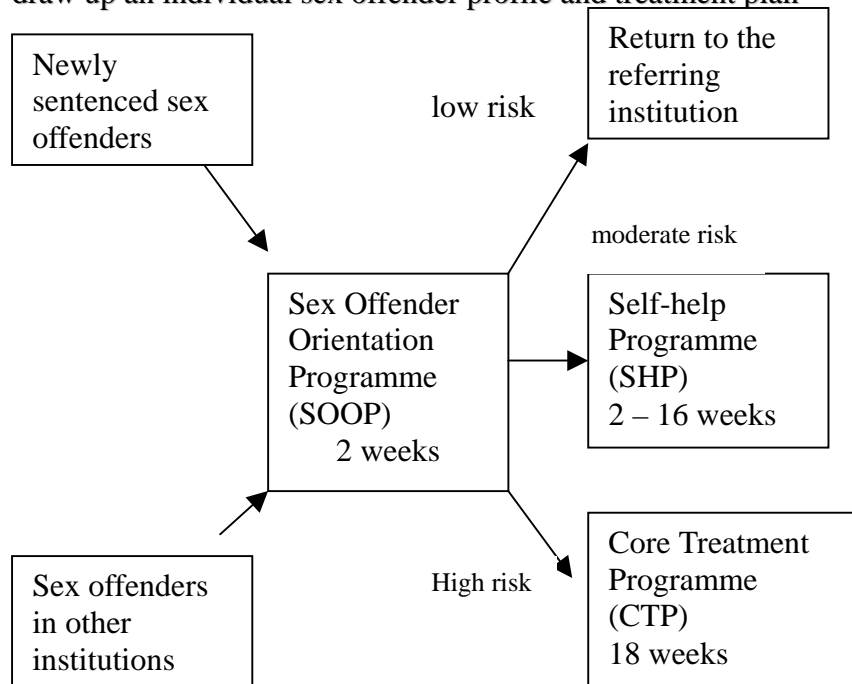
## Sex Offender Orientation Program (SOOP)



## Sex Offender Orientation Program

- individual interviews: motivational interviewing
  - enhance motivation for psychological treatment
  - reduce denial towards their offending behaviors
- group discussion among old and new ETU participants
  - facilitating positive influences from the latter
  - increase confidence about the effectiveness of psychotherapies

- use of self help manuals
  - Motivation Intervention Package
  - Understanding Sex Offending Behavior Package
- systematic risk assessment of sexual recidivism
  - classify into different risk levels
  - draw up an individual sex offender profile and treatment plan



## Self-Help Program (SHP)

- reducing the re-offending risk of moderate-risk sex offenders
- normally lasts for 2 to 16 weeks
- regular use of self help manuals, audio visual materials and interactive exercise
- group therapy
- over 30 SHP manuals:
  - Sex Knowledge
  - Identifying and Modifying Distorted Sex Attitudes
  - Mood Management
  - Social Skills / Relationship Building
  - Understanding Offense Cycle
  - Relapse Prevention
  - Victim Empathy Training, etc.

## Core Treatment Program (CTP)

- designed for offenders with high risk of sexual reoffending
- comprehensive and intensive group therapy
- 40 sessions lasting for 3 hours each session
- lasts for at least six months
- six intensive modules:
  - Preparation
  - Mood Management
  - Modifying Distorted Sex Attitudes
  - Tackling Deviant Sexual Interests
  - Relapse Prevention
  - Victim Empathy Training

- group discussion, assignment of therapeutic exercise and role play
- individual psychological intervention according to individual treatment needs

## Cognitive Restructuring

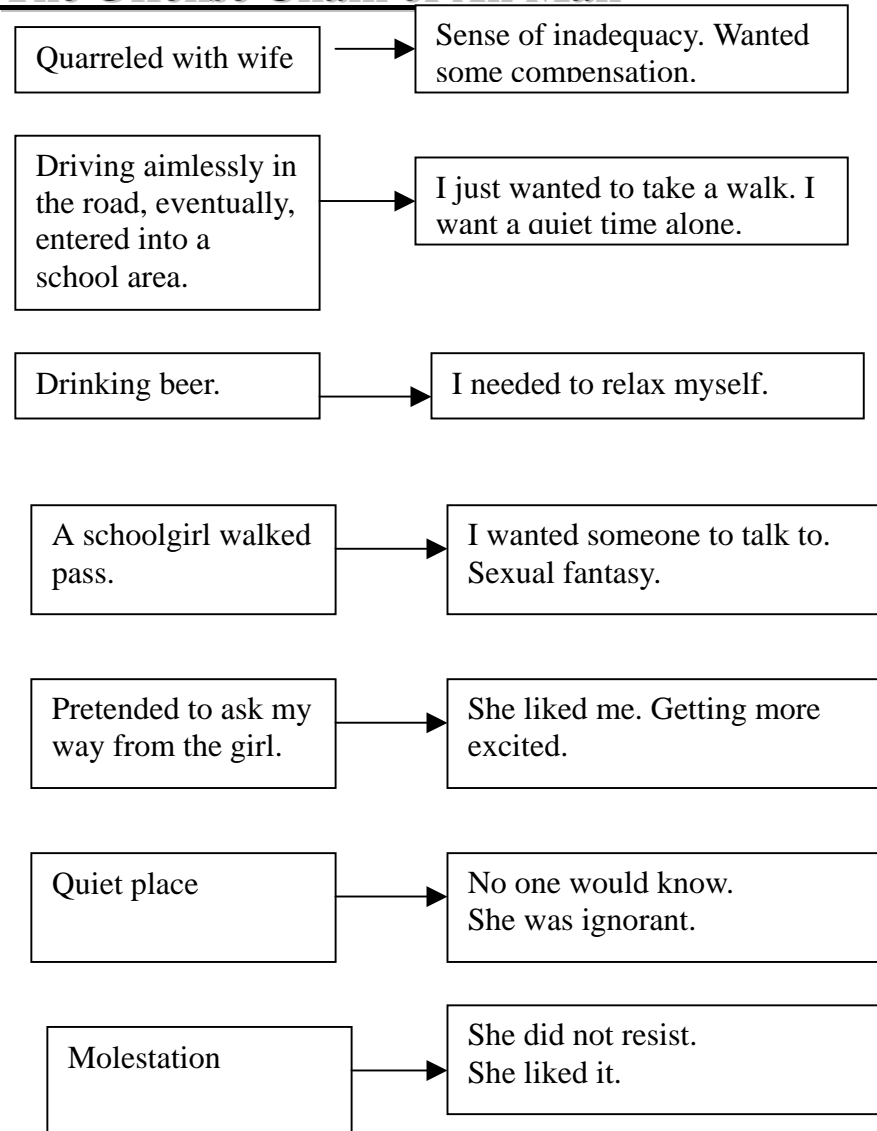
Within the group sessions:

- To identify and challenge ones cognitive distortions
- To understand the relationship between cognition and sexual offense
- To restructure personal sexual belief system, to own responsibility of their abusive behaviors.

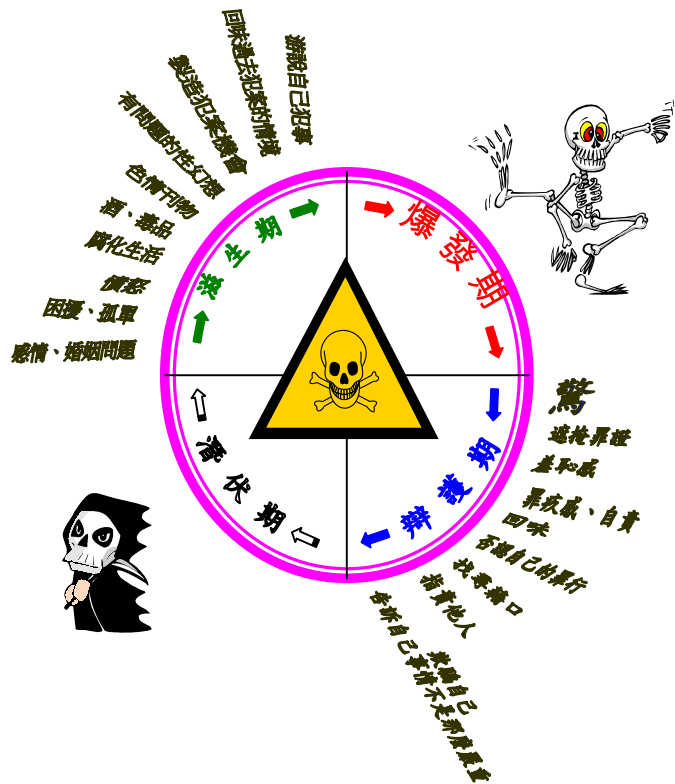
## Understanding Offence Cycle and Relapse Prevention Training

- To understand his personal offence chain, high risk situations, and cycle leading to offending behavior
- To prepare autobiography for group discussion
- Identify ways to cope with high risk situations, to break offence cycle and to develop relapse prevention strategies
- Again to own take up responsibility for the offense and reinsure their self-control.

## The Offense Chain of Ah Man



## 了解犯罪循環



## Victim Empathy Training

- To enhance general empathy level and empathy towards victim of sexual abuse
- To provide information on the impacts of sexual abuse on victims
- To identify and restructure irrational thoughts related to impacts of sexual offence
- To take the perspective of victim in his sexual offence
- To recognize the emotional state of their victims
- To try to experience the emotional state of abuse victims

## Deviant Sexual Interest

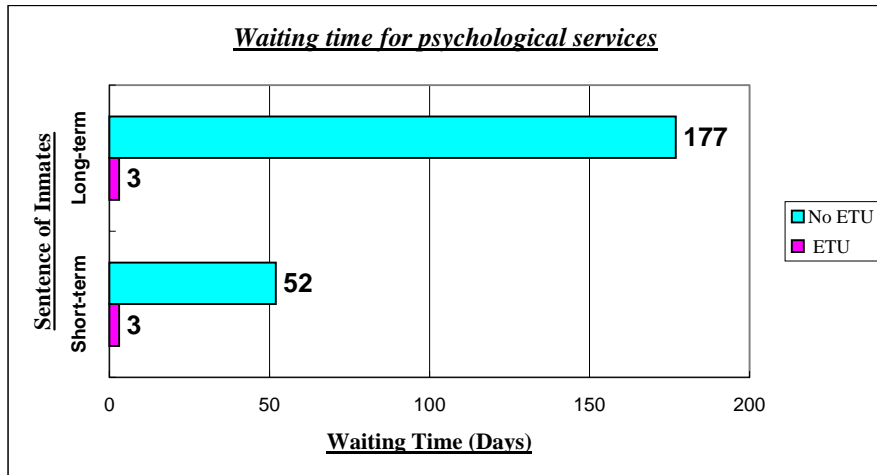
Behavioural therapy which helps to reduce the degree of arousal the deviant sexual fantasy or behaviour may bring  
Need more exploration for the use of medication in treating deviant sexual interest

## Treatment Effectiveness Cost Effectiveness

- Although it's a small unit with just 1 full-time CP and a officer (man hours), it greatly enhances the cost-effectiveness of psychological services for sex offenders.

## Cost Effectiveness

- Shortening of waiting time for psychological service
- Early identification of moderate to high risk sex offenders



- Reduction of participants' denial of their offences
  - Before 1997, vast majority are deniers
  - After the SOOP, only 20% deniers
- Feel safe to explore their problem
- Four times increase in the number of offenders volunteer for treatment program
  - In 1997, 13 applicants
  - After SOOP, 60 applicants per year
  - Vast increase of treatment hours renders to each offender
  - 69 hours each month in ETU

## Cost Effectiveness of Similar Programs

• Marshall (1992), Prentky & Burgess (1990), Cohen & Miller (1998):

- Suffering and cost of psychotherapy for potential victims and their families.
- Huge costs incurred during investigation, court proceedings and imprisonment of these offenders.

## Treatment Effectiveness of SHP and CTP:

Positive results in systematic measurement of attitudinal change, relapse prevention skills and reconviction rate

## And after treatment.....

- Making referrals to professionals in community:
- There is no one-off cure, just like many chronic illness.
- Effective management requires multi-discipline cooperation.