



FEMALE SEX OFFENDERS

INFORMATIONAL FACT SHEET

SEPTEMBER 28, 2012

Who are female sexual offenders?

- Female sex offenders range in age from adolescence to elderly, with an average age of 30.
- They are responsible for 1% of prosecuted sex offenses, but it is estimated that they commit 5% of all sex offenses.
- Female sex offenders are primarily known by their victims: 33% are mothers, 12% are other relatives, 46% are acquaintances, and 9% are strangers.
- They often gain access to children through their families, as well as through paid work.

Who are the victims of female sex offenders?

- Victims are usually children between the ages of 6- and 12-years old.
- 60% of victims are female, while 40% are male.

What are characteristics of female sex offenders?

- 80% have a history of childhood sexual abuse and 95% have been physically abused.
- 33% are married, 40% in a relationship, 16% divorced or separated, and 12% single.
- 63% perpetrate abuse with a co-offender, usually a man, often an intimate partner.
- 49% have some type of mental health problem, including mental retardation, but only 5% were psychotic at the time of the offense.
- 25% used physical violence during the offense, including hitting and strangulation.
- 28% of women arrested for a sexual offense are convicted, compared to 50% of men.
- Female sexual offenders have a recidivism rate of 1-3% for another sexual offense.
- There are only four women civilly committed in the United States under Sexually Violent Predator laws.

What are the types of female sexual offenders?

- *Teacher/Lover/Mentor*: primarily targets adolescent male victims and views the abuse as a non-abusive relationship.
- *Male-Coerced/Male-Accompanied*: primarily targets young, related, female victims with a male co-offender; some are forced into the abusive behavior by the male co-offender, while others take a more active role in the abuse of the child.
- *Passive Mothers*: do not actively abuse a child but allow and/or encourage abuse by another.
- *Child Exploiters*: target very young male and female victims who they access through caretaking duties; they are likely to have histories of sexual abuse and are the youngest type.
- *Coercive Criminals*: do not actively abuse a child or adult but force sexual behavior (e.g., sexual performance or prostitution); motivation for this type appears to be economic gain.
- *Aggressive Homosexuals*: target adult females, most often in domestic violence situations.