DOC Town Hall Meeting

Kris Goldstein, Chief VTPSA
Amy Holloway, Director Victim Services
Heather Allin, Co-Director VCPTSA
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“Knowing that someone has committed a sexual offense, tells us very little about who he or she really is.”
Common Misconceptions

- Sex offenders are all the same
- Sexual victimization rates are on the rise
- Sex offenders tend to target strangers
- Knowing where offenders live makes me safe
- Sex offender recidivism rates are high
- Nothing works
Not All Sex Offenders Are the Same

- Motivations
- Victim types
- Level of force
- Risk to reoffend
- Management needs
Stranger Danger?
98% of Child Victims in VT Say They Were Abused by Someone They Knew (VT DCF, 2009)
About 70% of adult victims say they were abused by someone they knew.

- Stranger: 30%
- Acquaintance: 57%
- Family: 13%

Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, July 2000
New Arrests for Sexual Offenses

- Vermont
- 887 sex offenders
- McGrath, Lasher, & Cumming (2012)

13% had prior sex offense arrests

87% of people arrested for sex crimes were individuals who had not been previously convicted for a sex crime.

I’m safe, I know where they live
Static-99R: Percent of Offenders in Each Risk Category and 5-Year Sexual Reoffense Rates

Low Risk
29% of sexual offenders

Moderate-Low Risk
35% of sexual offenders

Moderate-High Risk
24% of sex offenders

High Risk
12% of sex offenders

Vermont norms, 2009
Sex Offender Review Committee

The Committee shall consist of five (5) members, composed of at least the Director of the DOC sex offender treatment program, the DOC Program Executive, a member from the Vermont Criminal Information Center, the Director of DOC or other Victim Services and a Vermont Sex Offender Treatment Provider.
High Risk Designation

Must have a qualifying offense:
- Sexual assault as defined in 13 VSA § 3252;
- Lewd and lascivious conduct as defined in 13 VSA § 2601;
- Sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult as defined in § 1379 of 13 VSA;
- Second or subsequent conviction for voyeurism as defined in 13 VSA § 2605(b) or (c);
- Aggravated sexual assault as defined in 13 VSA § 3253;
- Kidnapping with intent to commit sexual assault as defined in 13 VSA § 2405(a)(1)(D);
- Aggravated sexual assault of a child in violation of 13 VSA § 3253a.
- An attempt to commit any offense listed in this section.
A person who is convicted of any of the following offenses against a victim who is a minor:

- Kidnapping as defined in 13 VSA § 2405(a)(1)(D);
- Lewd and lascivious conduct with a child as defined in 13 VSA § 2602;
- Slave traffic as defined in 13 VSA § 2635;
- Sexual exploitation of children as defined in 13 VSA §§ 2822-2828;
- Procurement or solicitation as defined in 13 VSA § 2632(a)(6);
- Aggregated sexual assault of a child as defined in 13 VSA § 3253(a);
- Sex trafficking of children or sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion as defined in 13 VSA § 2635a;
- Sexual exploitation of a minor as defined in 13 VSA § 3258(b); or
- An attempt to commit any offense listed in this section.
Criteria for High Risk Designation

- Must have a qualifying offense
- Score in the high range based on risk assessment tool
- Could have prior convictions for violence
- Could have a pattern of predatory behavior
- Ability to override or under-ride a designation
Vermont Sex Offender Registry

- Two sex offender registries
  - Registry that contains information on all persons convicted of a registerable sex offense
  - Online registry that is a subset of the larger registry
Qualifying offenses for internet registry

- Convictions for:
  - Aggravated sexual assault of a child
  - Aggravated sexual assault
  - Sexual assault
  - Kidnapping with intent to commit sexual assault
  - Lewd or lascivious conduct with a child
  - Second or subsequent conviction for voyeurism
  - Slave traffic
  - Sex trafficking of children or sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion
  - Sexual exploitation of a minor
  - Any offense regarding the sexual exploitation of children
  - A second or subsequent conviction for sexual offenses (recidivism).
  - Individuals with an outstanding warrant for their arrest for a Registry violation.
  - Individuals who have been designated as sexual predators.
  - Individuals who have been designated "high risk offenders" by the Department of Corrections.
  - Individuals who have not complied with or are ineligible for sex offender treatment as recommended by the Department of Corrections.
What information is posted on the internet?

- Name and any known aliases
- Date of birth
- General physical description
- Digital photograph
- Town of residence
- Date and nature of conviction
- Name and telephone number of the local Department of Corrections office in charge of supervising the registrant.
- Whether or not the registrant has completed treatment
- Whether or not there is an outstanding warrant for the offender’s arrest
- The reason for which the offender’s registry information is accessible on the web site.
- Whether the offender has been designated "high risk" by the Department of Corrections.
- If the offender has not been subject to a risk assessment, a statement that the offender has not been so assessed and that such a person is presumed to be high risk.
For additional sex offender registry information -

Internet search –
“Vermont Sex Offender Registry”

802-244-8747

http://vcic.vermont.gov/sex_offender
Victim Services Program

Vermont Department of Corrections
Mission of The Victim Services Program

To help the Department build its capacity to meet the needs of crime victims/survivors and provide supportive direct services to them when the offender in their case is under the supervision or custody of the Vermont Department of Corrections.
Victim Services:

- General Support, Information, Parole Board Accompaniment
- VANS: Vermont Automated Victim Notification Service
- Victim Safety Wrap Around Program
- Victim Offender Dialogue Program
- Saving a Place at the Table
- Vermont Victim Impact Speakers’ Program
- Homicide Co-Victim Support Group
How to Contact Us:

- Toll Free: (888) 810-1847

To Register on VANS

- www.vinelink.com
- (866) 976-8267
Circles of Support & Accountability in Vermont
The community can contribute to public safety.
Circles of Support & Accountability (COSA) in Vermont

- A group of 3-5 trained and supervised volunteers who enter into structured, voluntary and mutual relationships with an individual reentering the community after incarceration.

- The offender is referred to as the “Core Member.”
COSA in Vermont-cont.

- COSAs are developed and convene prior to the Core Member’s release and meet weekly for at least one year.

- Regularly scheduled Case Conferences include COSAs, Probation Officers, family, landlords.
COSA Goals

- To improve community and victim safety.

- To improve the coordination of support, services, and community connections for core members.
COSA Goals-cont.

- To establish and maintain clear expectations in regards to healthy and positive community behaviors.

- To repair the relationships between the core members and the community by facilitating restorative activities.
Core Members must:
- Present a moderate to high risk to reoffend either sexually or violently; **OR**
- Present a moderate to high need for pro-social supports; **AND**
- Be within 6-9 months of release; **AND**
- Express a willingness to participate.
COSA in Vermont Snapshot

- 40 COSAs currently meeting in the community across 15 Community Justice Centers

- Several in development awaiting Core Member release & others that continue to meet on a less regular/structured basis over the one year of standard practice.
Vermont Center for the Prevention & Treatment of Sexual Abuse

- Jointly administered by DCF & DOC
- Coordinates and supports the state’s systematic response to sexual assault and child sexual abuse