


Viewing Sexual Violence Prevention from a Culturally Informed Perspective


Apryl A. Alexander, PsyD, ATSA-F
Metrolina Distinguished Scholar of Health & Public Policy
Associate Professor | Department of Health Management & Policy
Director | UNC Charlotte Violence Prevention Center
UNC Charlotte


Safer Society Foundation
July 2025


1

Cultural Humility

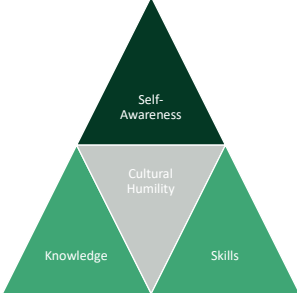

 Having an accurate view of self and greater awareness of limitations

 Maintain a respectful, other-focused perspective

 Open and aware mindset

 Life-long commitment to self-examination and the redress of power imbalances

2



3





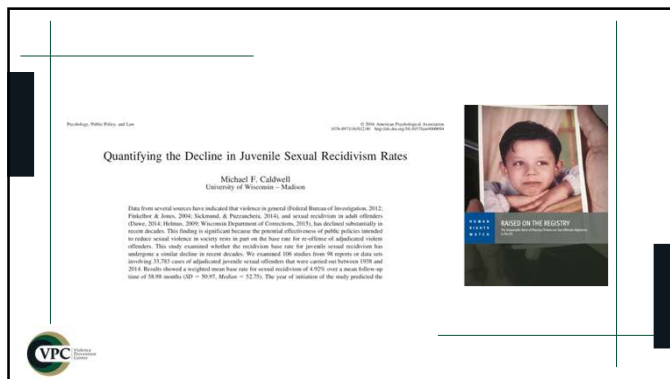
7



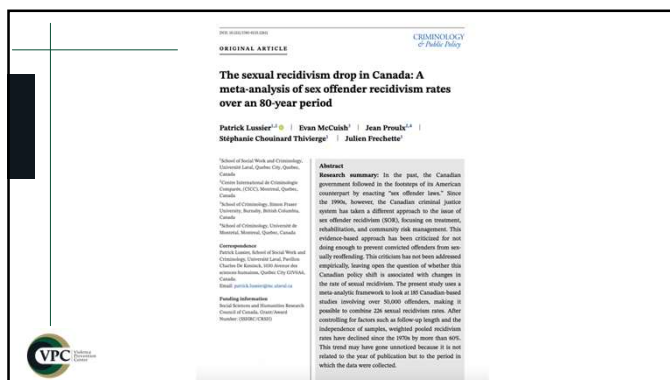
8



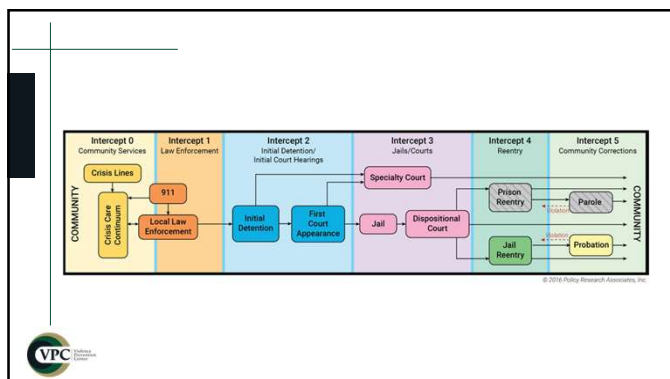
9



10



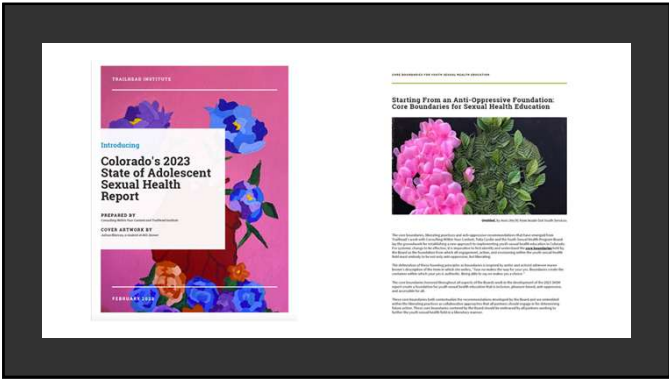
11



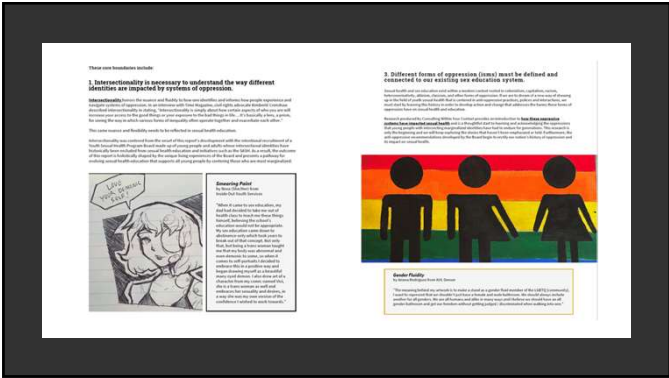
12



13



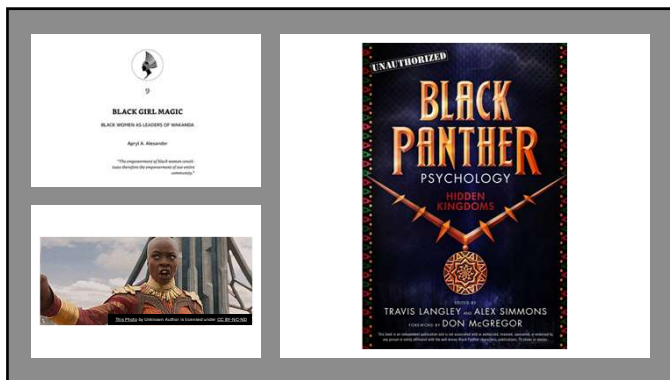
14



15



16



17




18

why did we write it?

In the decades since *The Handmaid's Tale* was originally published in 1985, the story has never ceased to capture attention, serving as a pit-in-the-stomach fear for many. The original novel has never gone out of print, and the television series has been extremely popular and award-winning. And perhaps there has never been a more important time for a psychological analysis of Atwood's world, given the modern political climate. Atwood's prescient vision has increasingly become a reality. Legislation shows us time and again that feminism is not welcome, that there is no real separation of church and state, and that women are second-class citizens – especially women of color, LGBTQIA2S+ women, or women of other marginalized populations. Consider some specific examples. In Missouri, a rule was passed in 2023 requiring women to cover their arms inside the state's House of Representatives chamber.² The message: Women should dress modestly and conservatively, and men should decide how that is defined. Only about half of the states in the U.S. have banned sexual orientation "conversion therapy" for minors, despite its barbaric values, lack of empirical support, and incredibly harmful effects, essentially equating to torture in some cases.³ All over the country and elsewhere in the world, laws are being passed that ban trans people from participating in sports, going to work, or even going to the bathroom in spaces where they ought to feel safe.⁴ And of course, women's reproductive rights are more precarious than they have been in 50 years.

<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/why-gilead-personal>

THE
HANDMAID'S
TALE
PSYCHOLOGY



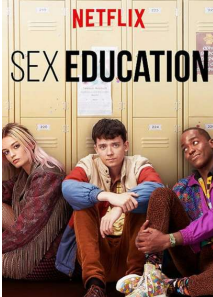
SEEING OFF RED

EDITED BY TRAVIS LANGLEY
CO-EDITED BY WIND GOODFRIEND


19

NETFLIX

SEX EDUCATION




N



ADOLESCENCE

20

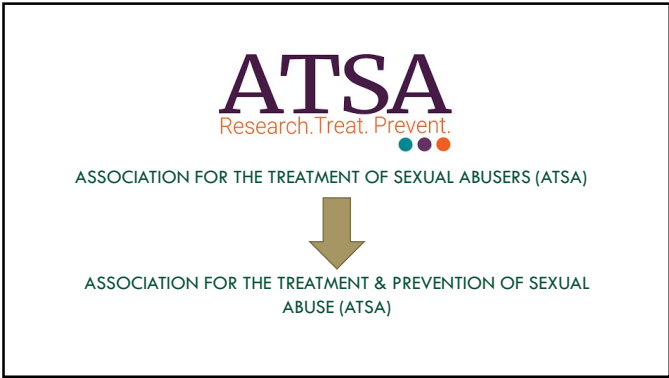
What do you
like to be
called?



Hello
my name is

21

23248



25

Sex Offender Management Board Votes to Change Language in Standards & Guidelines for Treatment Providers

(November 19, 2021) - The Colorado Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) voted today to use "adults who commit sexual offenses" in place of "sex offenders" in the standards and guidelines used by treatment providers who assess, evaluate and treat people convicted of sexual offenses.

After discussion and public comment, the board voted 10-6 to make the language change to the [Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment, Evaluation, Treatment and Behavioral Monitoring of Adult Sex Offenders](#). This revision to the Standards will be open for public comment for 20 days. The Board will then review the public comment, discuss any adjustments based on the public comment, and notify the language revision during the Board's next public meeting.

Members of the public can submit their comments using this form by **December 12, 2021 at 5:00 pm**.

The language change applies only to the SOMB Standards; the term "sex offender" will continue to be used in Colorado statute and the criminal justice system, including courts, law enforcement and the Colorado Sex Offender Registry. The name of the SOMB itself will also remain unchanged.

The SOMB is a 25-member board created by the Colorado General Assembly in order to establish "evidence-based standards for the evaluation, identification, treatment, management, and monitoring of adult sex offenders and juveniles who have committed sexual offenses at each stage of the criminal or juvenile justice system to prevent offenders from reoffending and enhance the protection of victims and potential victims."

Members of the public and the media can review the minutes, discussions and votes of SOMB meetings, including video recording of past board meetings, by browsing the [SOMB Public Records repository](#).

Recent

[Statement on Referral of VSA Complaints to Colorado Attorney General](#)
(February 16, 2022) - Colorado's Constitution and statutes clearly define certain rights for victims of crimes. The Victim Rights Act (VRA), in particular, ensures that crime victims are treated with...

[Governor Polis Proclaims January 11 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day](#)
(January 11, 2022) - January is National

26

NEWS CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY - News

Colorado board reverses controversial change to "sex offender" label at urging of Gov. Jared Polis and his appointee

In November, the state Sex Offender Management Board voted to replace "sex offenders" with "adults who commit sexual offenses." Then the board opened that decision up to public comment, and that's where things went off track.

The Denver Post (2021, Dec 20)

27

"The research is overwhelming that how we label people impacts their ability to build healthy, prosocial identities and lifestyles that are incompatible with sexual offending," Laurie Rose Kepros, director of sexual litigation for the Office of the State Public Defender, told The Denver Post. "The SOMB Standards provide the regulations that govern the professionals charged with supporting these positive changes, so the language should support that mission. Do we want these clients to reoffend or not?"

The Denver Post (2021, Dec 20)

28



29



Apology to People of Color for APA's Role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in U.S.

OCTOBER 2021

30

Article


Journal of Interpersonal Psychology
2020, Vol. 45(4) 447–454
© The Author(s) 2020
https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.2054
DOI: 10.1002/jip.2054
jip.2054

SAGE

Sick and Shut In: Incarceration During a Public Health Crisis

Apriyl A. Alexander¹, Hailey Allo¹, and Hannah Klukoff¹

Abstract
COVID-19, the latest infectious coronavirus disease, was discovered in December of 2019 in Wuhan, China, and has rapidly reached pandemic levels. The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have released recommendations to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, including hand washing, covering coughs, and social/physical distancing, but what happens to those who are incarcerated? Over 1.4 million adults in the United States are currently incarcerated in state and federal prisons and over 80,000 individuals are incarcerated in local jails. Correctional settings are often deprived, overcrowded, and unsanitary environments, which do not lend themselves to the prevention, treatment, or recovery from illness. Incarcerated individuals are at a much higher risk to become infected due to a variety of factors, such as generally higher rates of chronic conditions than the community and overall lack of screening for certain illnesses. The present article discusses how smart decarceration tactics, such as compassionate release, offer options to compensate for overcrowding in correctional facilities and reducing the spread of COVID-19.

31

Article



Journal of Interpersonal Psychology
2020, Vol. 45(4) 447–454
© The Author(s) 2020
https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.2054
DOI: 10.1002/jip.2054
jip.2054

SAGE

Sick and Shut In: Incarceration During a Public Health Crisis

Apriyl A. Alexander¹, Hailey Allo¹, and Hannah Klukoff¹

Abstract
COVID-19, the latest infectious coronavirus disease, was discovered in December of 2019 in Wuhan, China, and has rapidly reached pandemic levels. The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have released recommendations to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, including hand washing, covering coughs, and social/physical distancing, but what happens to those who are incarcerated? Over 1.4 million adults in the United States are currently incarcerated in state and federal prisons and over 80,000 individuals are incarcerated in local jails. Correctional settings are often deprived, overcrowded, and unsanitary environments, which do not lend themselves to the prevention, treatment, or recovery from illness. Incarcerated individuals are at a much higher risk to become infected due to a variety of factors, such as generally higher rates of chronic conditions than the community and overall lack of screening for certain illnesses. The present article discusses how smart decarceration tactics, such as compassionate release, offer options to compensate for overcrowding in correctional facilities and reducing the spread of COVID-19.

32

You and me
Volume 8, Number 3, 2021
© The Author(s) 2021
DOI: 10.1002/jip.2054

The Same Dynamics, Different Tactics:
Domestic Violence During COVID-19

Erma A. Smeed, BS, and Apriyl A. Alexander, PhD

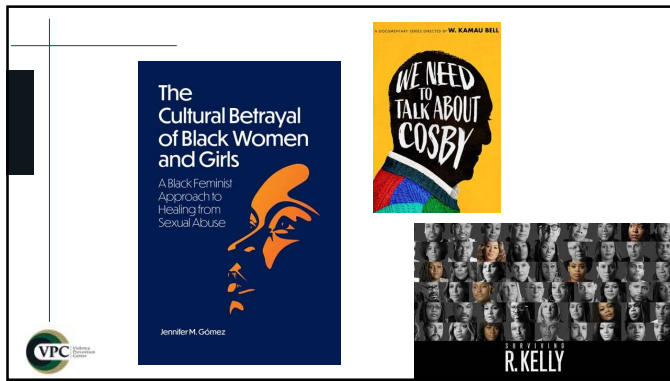
Opinion: Why too few Black women and girls report sexual violence

As we strive to prevent and end sexual violence, we must start by interacting with survivors in a supportive, empathetic, and trauma-informed manner.

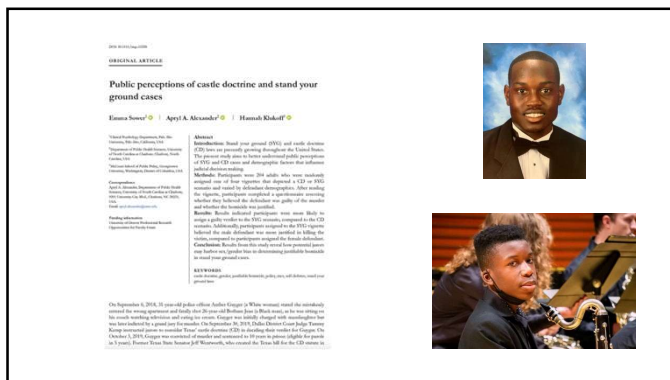
Apriyl Alexander | 10.1002/jip.2054

"Where's the evidence?"
"Why doesn't she come forward?"
"Why didn't she call the police?"

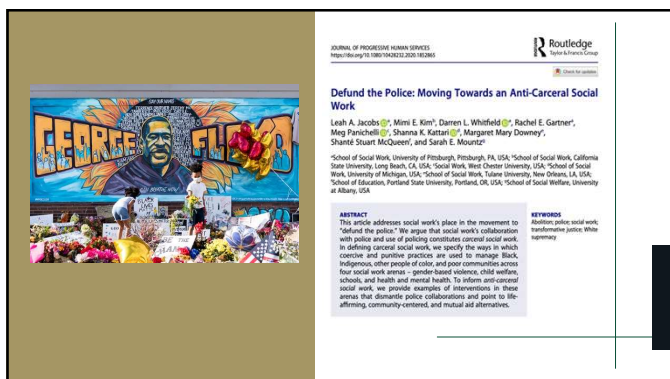
33



34



35



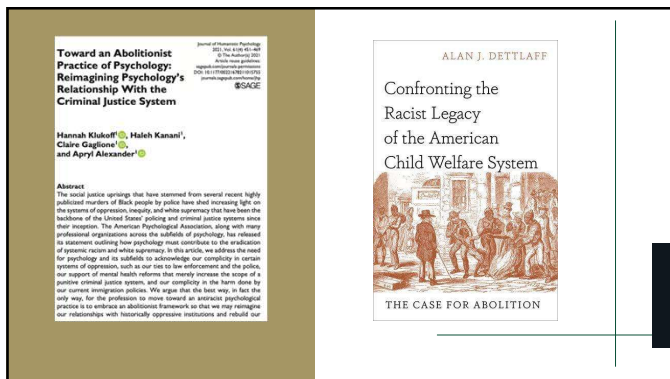
36



37



38



39



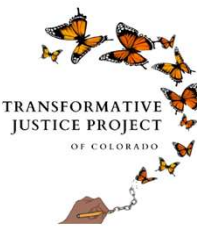
40



41



42



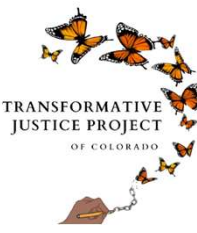
TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE PROJECT OF COLORADO

Fears vs. facts

When affluent communities zone out sex offenders, they often do so because they share the widely held belief that living near sex offenders puts people, especially children, at greater risk. But there is little data to support those assumptions.

In a 2012 article published by the American Bar Association, sex-crime policy researcher Jill S. Levenson noted that, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, 93% of children who are victims of sex crimes are abused by family members, friends or acquaintances. "Sex offenders do not molest children because they live near schools. They abuse when they are able to establish relationships with children and their families and misuse positions of familiarity, trust and authority," Levinson wrote.

43



TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE PROJECT OF COLORADO

Homelessness is prevalent among sex offenders.

In Sterling, a small city in northeastern Colorado, 11 of the city's 55 registered sex offenders are homeless. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation map shows a cluster of seven sex offenders living in an undeveloped area along the South Platte River in the town of Sheridan, where the average household income is just over \$40,000 and the poverty rate is 21.5%, according to Census data.

A lot of current treatment for sex offenders now focuses on reintegrating them into their community, said Apryl Alexander, an assistant professor at the University of Denver graduate school of professional psychology. Alexander is director of the Denver Forensic Institute for Research, Service, and Training (Denver FIRST) Outpatient Competency Restoration Program.

"When we have these residency restrictions, you're going to be displacing people," making it hard to forge those connections that help prevent offenders from committing additional crimes, she said.

44



TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE PROJECT OF COLORADO

Sex offender registration and notification act with adolescents adjudicated for illegal sexual behavior: a therapeutic jurisprudence perspective

Apryl Alexander¹, John Michael Falgout^{1*}, Cory March², Erica Fleming³ and Marissa Jennings⁴

¹University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, 1401 Stout Drive, Denver, CO 80202, USA; ²University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, 1401 Stout Drive, Denver, CO 80202, USA; ³University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, 1401 Stout Drive, Denver, CO 80202, USA; ⁴University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, 1401 Stout Drive, Denver, CO 80202, USA

*Correspondence: john.falgout@denver.edu

Adolescents adjudicated for illegal sexual behavior (AISB) are subject to the same Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) policies as adults with sexual offense histories despite current research documenting their relatively low likelihood of reoffense. Therapeutic jurisprudence is a framework which suggests the law should value psychological well-being and strive to avoid imposing anti-therapeutic consequences. The purpose of this article is to analyze the use of SORNA policies with AISB from a therapeutic jurisprudence perspective. Given the current literature, questioning the continued consequences of SORNA on AISB and their families and the lack of efficacy in reducing recidivism, we argue SORNA should not be applied to children and adolescents. We conclude with a discussion of future directions for the juvenile justice system and public policy reform.

Keywords: adolescents, sex offenders, registration, notification, therapeutic jurisprudence

45

In 2021, Governor Polis signed HB21-1064, which automatically removes youth from the sex offense registry when they turn 25 or seven years after their second offense, as long as they haven't gone on to re-offend as an adult

Also, in 2021, the Colorado Supreme Court (No. 19SC690 People in Int. of T. B.) stated it is unconstitutional to require youth convicted of repeat sex offenses to register for the rest of their lives—lifetime registration is cruel and unusual punishment under the 8th Amendment

Both The Courts And Lawmakers Have Ruled That Juvenile Sex Offenders Will No Longer Be Automatically Registered For Life



The Colorado Supreme Court building in Denver

46

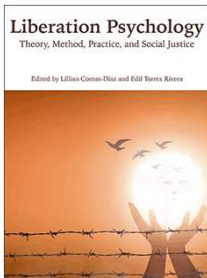
Liberation



- Safety
- Security
- Belonging
- Love


47

Liberation



- Safety
- Security
- Belonging
- Love

48



One of the most vital ways we **sustain ourselves** is by **building communities** of resistance, places where we know **we are not alone.**


Bell Hooks

AZ QUOTES

Liberation

- Nurturing and caring for each other
- Providing a safe and supportive environment
- Recognizing humanity
- Multiple forms of healing and therapy

49



Concluding Remarks

50

Challenging Road Ahead

HEALTH


HHS guts sexual violence prevention division, leaving local efforts adrift


APRIL 8, 2021, 9:10 AM ET

HEARD ON ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

Sabrina Schreiner Duffin


3 Minute Listen





DOJ cancels grants for gun-violence and addiction prevention, victim advocacy

51



Concluding Remarks

- *There's still a lot to learn.*
- *The community has guided my work and will continue to do so.*
- *Education and truth-telling*
- *Realities of institutional and sociopolitical barriers*
- *Liberation through*
Direct Action. Litigation. Policy change.

52



Thank you!

Apryl A. Alexander, Psy.D., ATSA-F
Metrolina Distinguished Scholar of Health & Public Policy
Associate Professor | Department of Health Management & Policy
Director | UNC Charlotte Violence Prevention Center
UNC Charlotte
Apryl.Alexander@charlotte.edu
<https://www.aprylalexander.com>
Bluesky/X/IG: @drapryla

53
