



# What the Evidence Reveals About Repeat Sexual Offending by Young Men

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025    RaeAnn E. Anderson, PhD

# Outline

- Who we are and why are we here
- Terms and Basic facts
- Methodology: How do we know what we think we know
- Rates of repeated perpetration from multiple literatures
- Review prior, high impact research?
- Implications for prevention on campuses and in communities
- Conclusions

**Who are we and why are we here?**

# Who are we and why are we here

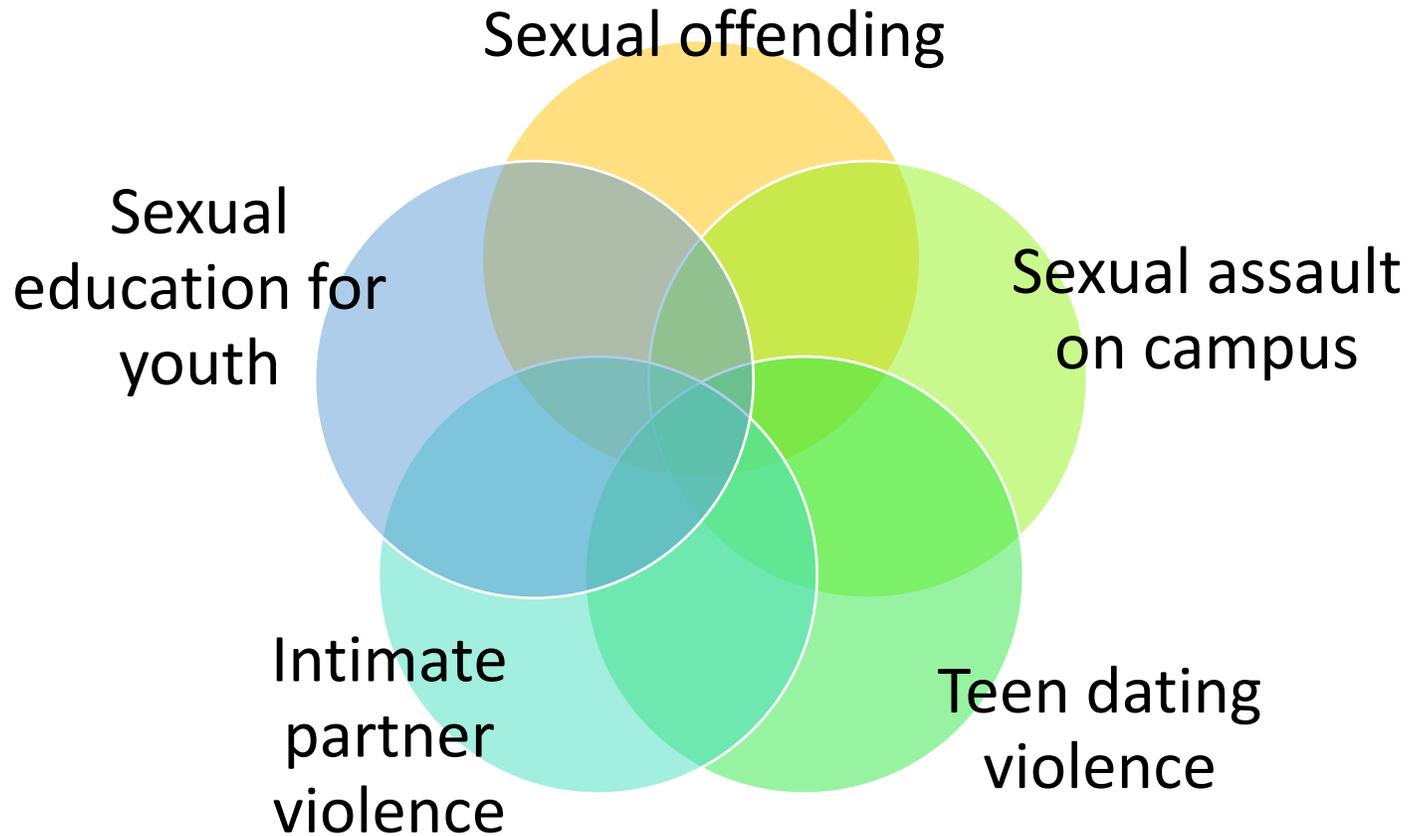
## Who are we

- People who care
- People who believe those who have perpetrated/caused sexual harms can change their behavior
- People who believe these harmful behaviors can be prevented

## Why are we here

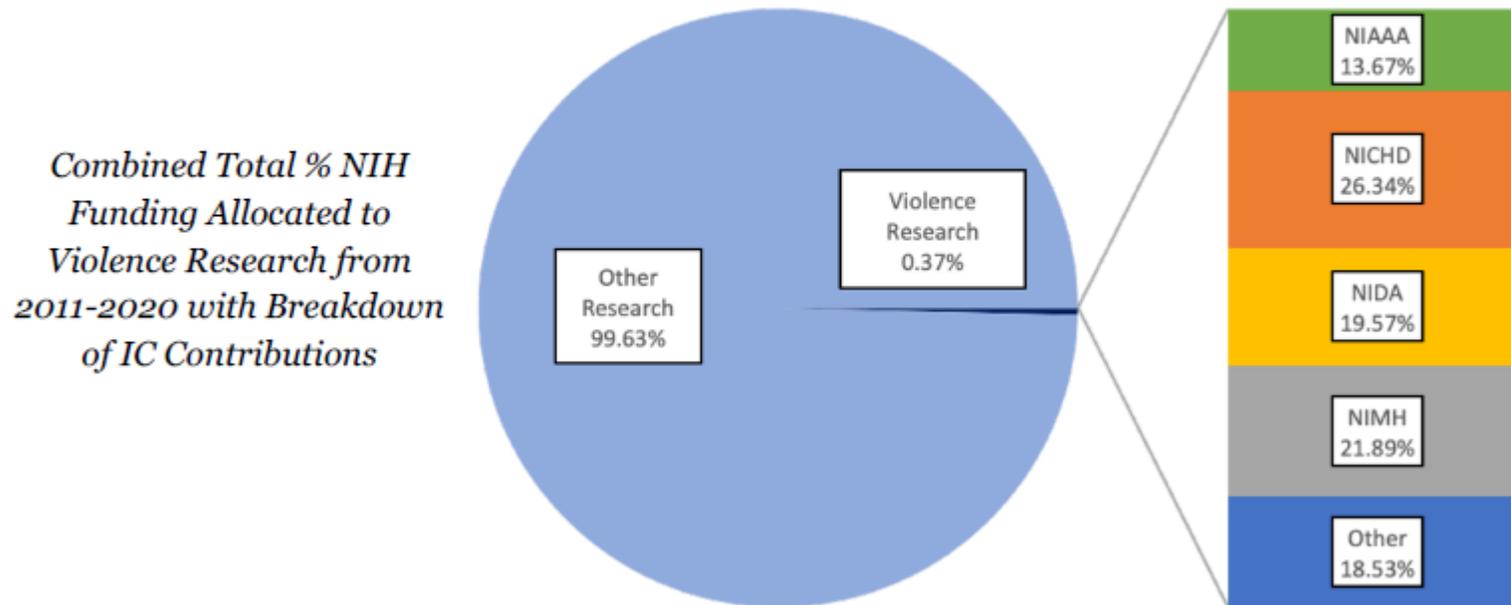
- We are curious
- We are out there doing the work

# All trying to solve the same problem



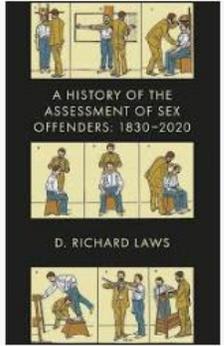
# Why are we here: challenges to doing the work

## By Institute/Center



Data from: Williams, Burton, Anderson, & Draughon Moret (2022) in JAMA

# Why are we here: challenges to doing the work



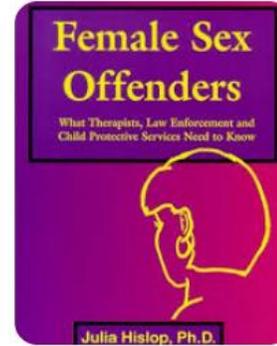
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A History of the Ass...



the Texas Department of Public Safety - T...  
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The City of Anniston  
Sex Offenders - The ...



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Female Sex Offend...



Texas Department of Public Safety - Texas...  
Huntsville Man Added to Texas 10 Mo...



Sex Offender Registry  
Sex Offender Registry



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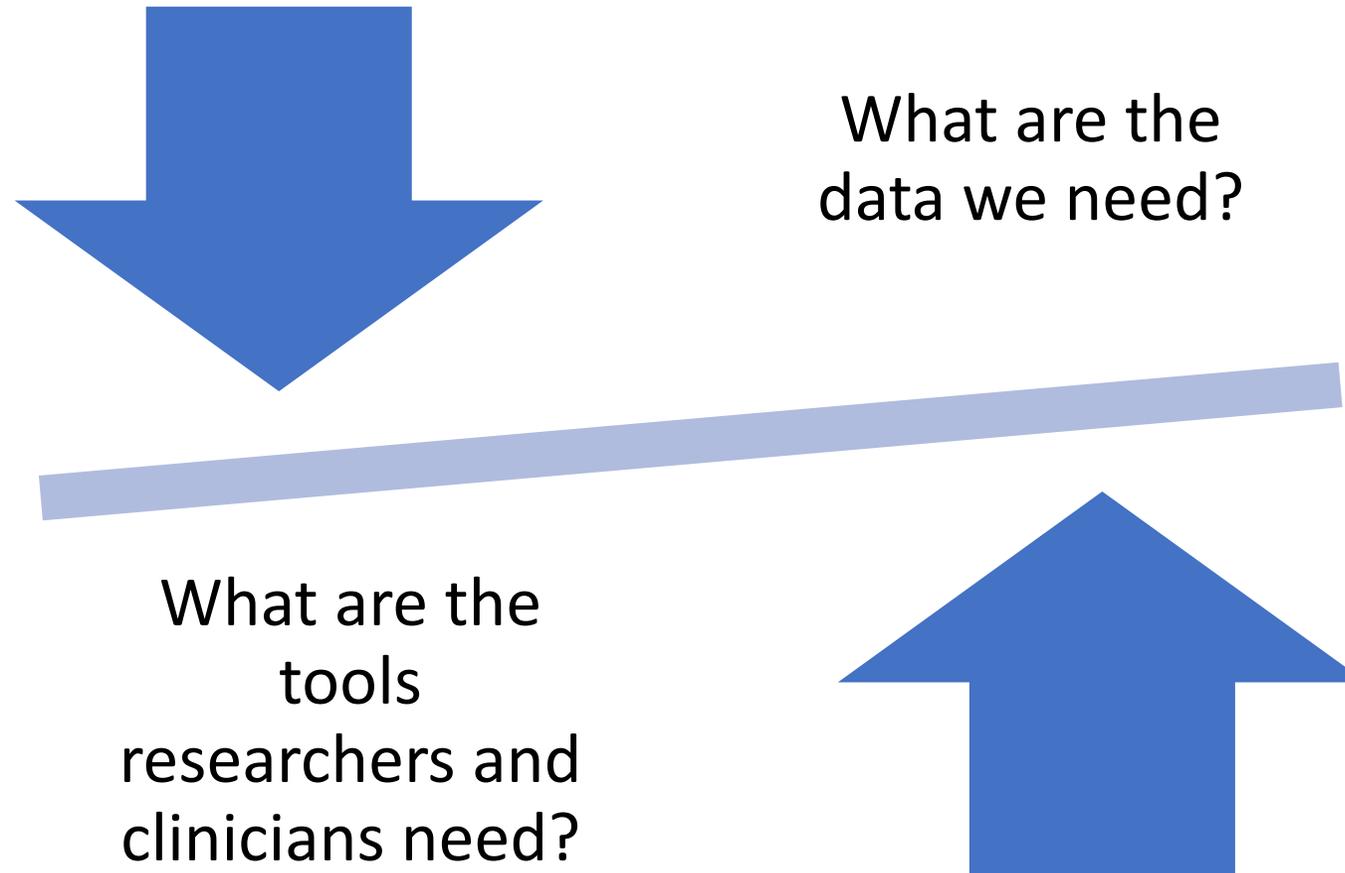


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Sex Offender - JEN...

# Big feelings about repeat perpetration

- Why big feelings?
  - Both cultural and practical
- Cultural level.....want to believe certain things about rape
- Practical level.....many implications for how to go about prevention and intervention

# My research and perspective



# Terms and basic facts

# Terms and basic facts

- Sexual perpetration – instigating sexual activity without freely given consent
- Repeat perpetration – people who have perpetrated more than once
- Sexual offending – sexual perpetration, but in a legal context or population
- Sexual victimization – experiencing sexual activity without freely given consent; the experience of the person who was targeted, harmed
- Contact sexual victimization affects approximately 50% of American women; 30% American men
  - For a little more than half of these women, this occurs before age 18
  - Risk takes a big JUMP around age 15
- Approximately 30% of American college men report perpetration
- -> Today, most of the data I will be discussing is on the topic of sexual perpetration and collected from men

# How do we know these basic statistics?

- Large scale survey research
- Epidemiological research
- Surveys that use behaviorally specific terms
- ->but notice an important difference from our topic to the data I just detailed

# Behaviorally-specific items/questionnaires

## Behaviorally-specific

		How many times in the past 12 months?
		0 1 2 3+
3.	<b>I put my penis (men <u>only</u>) or I put my fingers or objects (all respondents) into a woman's vagina without her consent by:</b>	
a.	Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumors about them, making promises about the future I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring them after they said they didn't want to.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Showing displeasure, criticizing their sexuality or attractiveness, getting angry but not using physical force after they said they didn't want to.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Taking advantage when they were too drunk or out of it to stop what was happening.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Threatening to physically harm them or someone close to them.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Using force, for example holding them down with my body weight, pinning their arms, or having a weapon.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

## Face-valid

- Do you think you have ever raped someone? Yes/No

# Behaviorally specific items

- The difference between these two approaches is HUGE



# Behaviorally specific items

- Best estimates of prevalence of sexual perpetration comes from a systematic review of 78 studies with 25,000+ college men
  - Any sexual perpetration: 29.3%
  - Any verbal pressure/coercion: 19.0%
  - Rape: 6.5%
  - Face-valid/acknowledged rape: 0.9%

# Behaviorally specific items

- This same systematic review demonstrated that the measurement of perpetration is really sensitive to small wording changes
  - Some questionnaires produced higher rates than others
  - Things like using a scaled response format (0, 1, 2-5, 6-9, 10+ times) vs. yes/no increases prevalence rates
  - Asking about more forms of sexual behaviors increases prevalence rates
  - And many other nuances

# Methodology:

How do we know what we think we know?

# How does this relate to repeat sexual perpetration?

- Have to measure sexual perpetration behaviors  
accurately

&

- Place these behaviors in time



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- Have to measure sexual perpetration behaviors  
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&

- Place these behaviors in time



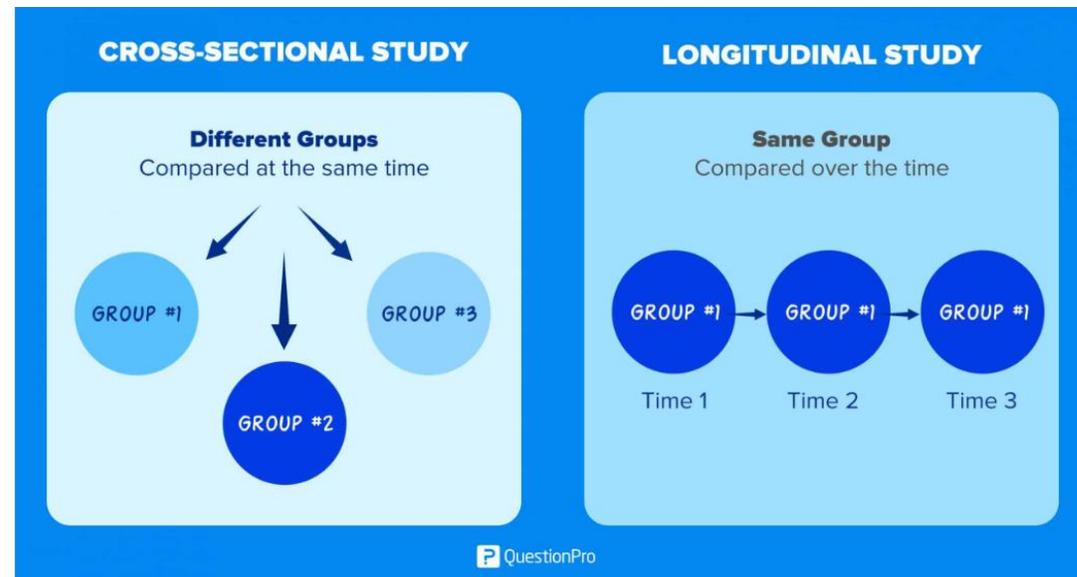
# Example different studies, different numbers

Citation	Population	Time scale	Prevalence rate of Repeated Perpetration	Measurement of Repeated perpetration
Hanson et al., (2018)	7225 men with sexual offenses	6 mo. To 31 years	<b>11.1%</b>	Recidivism (new charge or conviction)
Lisak & Miller, 2002	1882 community men	Once	<b>63.3%</b>	One time survey
Swartout et al., 2015	1645 college men	Annually for 4 years	<b>25%</b>	If reported perpetration in more than one year
Foubert et al., 2019	12624 college men	once	<b>56.8%</b>	One time survey

# Answering this question is not easy

## Longitudinal data

- Need ask same people over time, while maintaining anonymity
- And each level of analysis is going to have a different level of precision, but also trade-offs



# Answering this question is not easy

## Levels of analysis:

- Day
- **Week**
- **Month**
- **Quarter**
- Year

November 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> Had Sex <input type="text" value="0"/>
<b>2</b> Had Sex <input type="text" value="0"/>	<b>3</b> Had Sex <input type="text" value="0"/>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>						

Previous Month      Next Month

Add More Events      Done

# How do we measure sexual perpetration behaviors?

## Levels of analysis:

- Day
- Week
- Month
- **Quarter**
- Year

		How many times in the past 12 months?
		0 1 2 3+
3.	<b>I put my penis (men <u>only</u>) or I put my fingers or objects (all respondents) into a woman's vagina without her consent by:</b>	
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# How do we measure sexual perpetration behaviors?

## Levels of analysis:

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Since age 14, **which of the following strategies have you used** to convince or try to convince a person to have sex (making out, sexual touching, oral sex, anal sex, or sexual intercourse) after they initially indicated "no":

	How many times?				
	0	1	2-5	6-9	10+
Continuing to touch and kiss them in the hopes that they will give in to sex.	<input type="radio"/>				
Telling them lies (e.g., saying "I love you" when you don't).	<input type="radio"/>				
Using your older age to convince them.	<input type="radio"/>				
Getting them drunk or high in order to convince them to have sex.	<input type="radio"/>				
Threatening to tell others a secret or lie about them if they don't have sex (i.e., blackmail).	<input type="radio"/>				
Asking them repeatedly to have sex.	<input type="radio"/>				

# How do we measure sexual perpetration behaviors?

## Levels of analysis:

- Day
- Week
- Month
- **Quarter**
- Year

	Once	Twice	3-5 times	6-10 times	11-20 times	More than 20 times	This has never happened
I pushed or shoved my partner.	<input type="radio"/>						
My partner did this to me.	<input type="radio"/>						
I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	<input type="radio"/>						
My partner did this to me.	<input type="radio"/>						
I used a knife or gun on my partner.	<input type="radio"/>						
My partner did this to me.	<input type="radio"/>						

# Rates of repeated perpetration

From multiple literatures

# Longitudinal studies using behaviorally-specific measures

	Study/cite	Sample	Follow-up period	% any	of any % repeated	Summary by section
Teen dating vio.	Temple studies	817 teens	Yearly for 12 years	38.4%	<b>54.1%</b>	4-12 years 54.1-60%
	Ybarra & Petras 2021	1129 youth	Yearly for 4 years	3.5%	<b>60%</b>	
Campus sex.	Abbey & McAuslan	197 men	Yearly for 2 years	35.0%	<b>24.6%</b>	2.5 to 4 years 25- 57.5%
	Thompson et al., 2013	795 men	Yearly for 4 years	29.1%	<b>57.5%</b>	
	Swartout et al., 2015	1500+ men	Yearly for 4 years	10.8%	<b>25%</b>	
	Testa & Cleveland, 2016	1043 men	Semesterly for 2.5 yrs.	19.6%	<b>41.4%</b>	
	Garner et al., 2025	99 men drinkers+	90 days	52.5%	<b>46%</b>	
Comm.	Davis et al., 2015	217 drinkers+	90 days	7.3%	<b>38.1%</b>	90 days 38.1 – 46%
	Hammet at al., 2025	565	90 days	8.8%	<b>46%</b>	
Sex. Offend.*	Hanson et al., 2018	7225	6 mo. To 31 years	100%	<b>11.1%</b>	3 mo. to 31 yrs. 0 – 68%
	Lussier et al., 2024	30396 youth	1 to 73+ months	100%	<b>8.0%</b>	
	Lussier et al.,2024	23632 studies	3 mo. to 25 years	100%	<b>0 to 68%</b>	

# Closer look: teen dating violence data

Temple studies	817 teens	Yearly for 12 years	38.4%	<b>54.1%</b>
Ybarra & Petras 2021	1129 youth	Yearly for 4 years	3.5%	<b>60%</b>

- Both studies reported relatively high rates
- And...
  - Only used 3-4 items
  - Less behaviorally-specific questions
  - Ybarra & Petras prevalence rate very low
- Both studies ask about victimization as well as perpetration
- **Are these underestimates?**

# Closer look college data

- Tight range of follow-up periods (2.5 to 4 years) makes more comparable; range 25-57.5%
- Swartout et al figure:
  - In text reported differently; 8.1% - increasing; 8.6% - consistently high; 12.4% decreasing
    - That's 57.5% repeating perpetration across trajectories
- **But how many perpetrated more than once within a year?**
- **None asked about intimate partner perpetration**
- **Are these underestimates?**

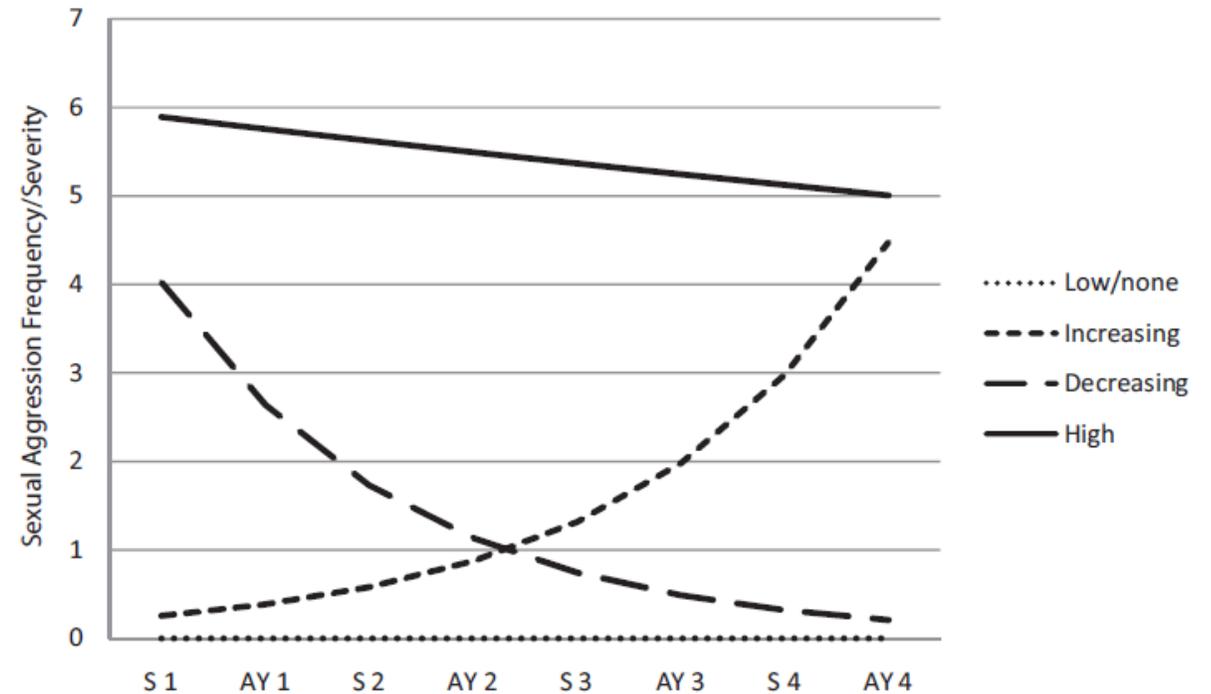


Figure 1. Plot of estimated latent sexual aggression trajectories. Note: S1 = prior to college; AY1 = first academic year; S2 = summer between first and second academic years; AY2 = second academic year; S3 = summer between second and third academic years; AY3 = third academic year; S4 = summer between third and fourth academic years; AY4 = fourth academic year.

# Closer look quarterly/monthly data

Garner et al., 2025	99 men drinkers+	90 days	52.5%	<b>46%</b>
Davis et al., 2015	217 drinkers+	90 days	7.3%	<b>38.1%</b>
Hammet at al., 2025	565	90 days	8.8%	<b>46%</b>

- Range 38.1 to 46%, but some of these samples were ppl more likely to report perpetration (like ppl who binge drink)
- Ranges of number of episodes of perpetration in 90 days:
  - Garner: 1-13; Davis: 1-6; Hammet: 1-29
- **Rarely reported crossover between 90 days and since age 14 perpetration**
  - **So are these underestimates?**

# Closer look at sexual offending data

Hanson et al., 2018	7225	6 mo. To 31 years	100%	<b>11.1%</b>
Lussier et al., 2024	30396 youth	1 to 73+ months	100%	<b>8.0%</b>
Lussier et al., 2024	23632 studies	3 mo. to 25 years	100%	<b>0 to 68%</b>

- Some of lowest ranges
  - Legal-involvement probably highly effective influence on behavior; very motivating factor to not perpetrate again
  - And, none of these studies used behaviorally-specific measures
  - None were anonymous
  - We don't really know why some people get reported/arrested and others do not
    - **So are these underestimates?**

# Summary of the data

# Summary

- Overall, this suggests repeated perpetration definitely exists and is not rare
  - But what else can we say???
  - Only 1 study on predictors of trajectories/repeatedness over time (Thompson et al., 2015) in non-justice research
  - Justice research: age, gender, neighborhood, geography (Lussier et al., 2024); risk level

# Summary

- Median/mode across studies probably in the 40s.....in spite of all that variation in methods and populations!
  - Yet, 9/12 studies measured perpetration as present/absent within the set study intervals
    - But, 90-day studies suggest repeat perpetration within 90s is in the 30/40s...
  - Studies either asked about intimate partners or asked about partners generally; not both
  - So many of these estimates **may be under-estimates. We don't know.**

# Implications for prevention

# Implications for prevention

- Even though the data cannot give us exact estimates, obviously perpetration behaviors repeat for some people
  - People who perpetrate are heterogenous like any other people
    - Different people may need different things or different doses of things
- Think big and look upstream. What are upstream behaviors we can prevent or promote?
  - Family cohesion, disclosure training, sex ed., abuse prevention
  - What is a key target that can change multiple outcomes?
  - New theory/models: resilience portfolio (Hamby et al., 2018)
- This includes policy and advocacy
  - How do we get more research funding?

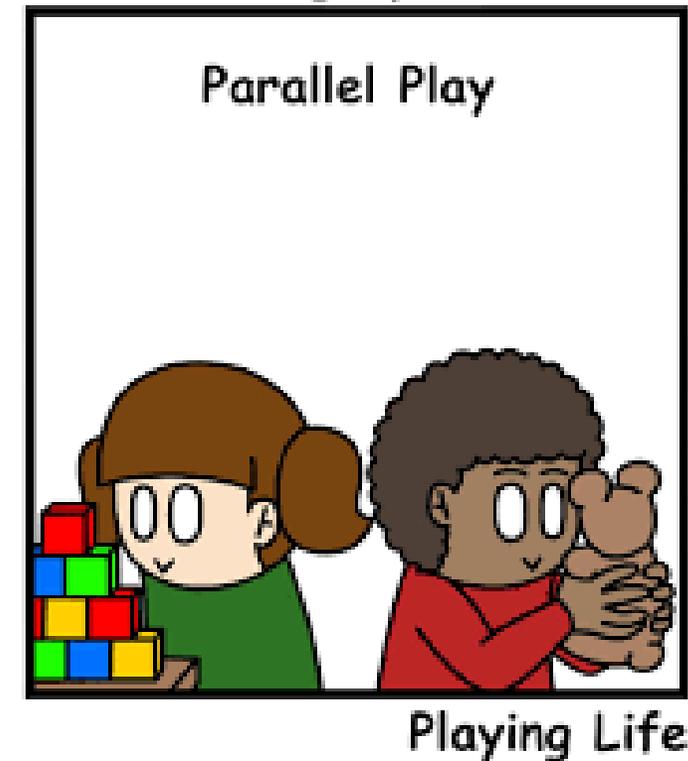
# Implications for prevention

- Acceptability/implementation science perspectives:
  - How do we get people in the door?
    - Vary a ton based on age, community, et cetera
    - Family wellbeing for kids vs. best sex for college men
- Prevention is essentially non-existent for college men....how can we translate what we know works in sex offending treatment to prevention?
  - What aspects of the risk-need-responsivity model can we incorporate to prevention?  
Good lives model?
  - Are we underselling behaviorist principals?
    - But take care: limited ability to just try stuff out for practical and legal reasons

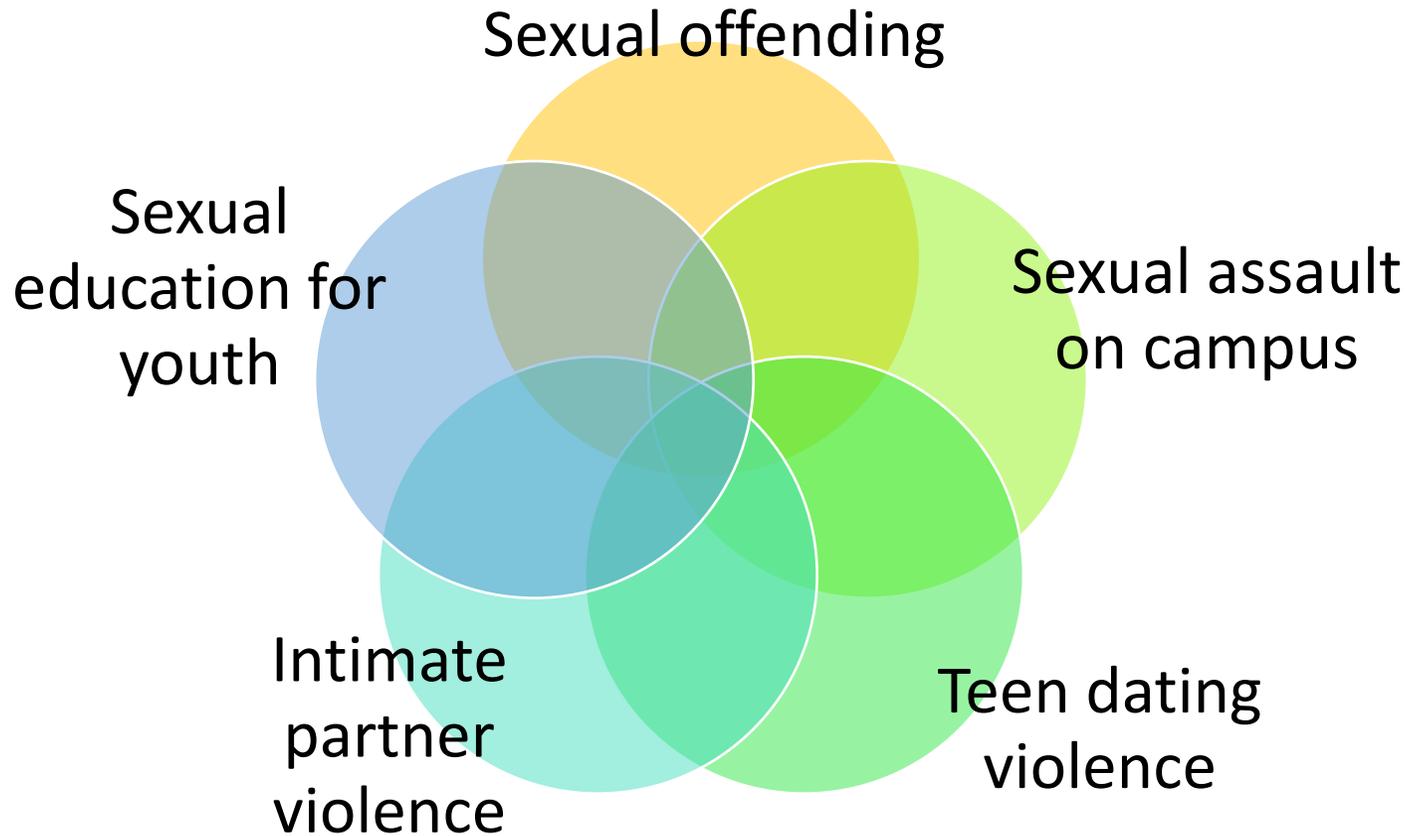
# Implications for prevention

- Let's learn more from each other
- How do we get out of the parallel play paradigm?
- Read more in other literatures/mix up those keywords
- Change up which conferences you attend
- Call folks in your community
  - Example in my state

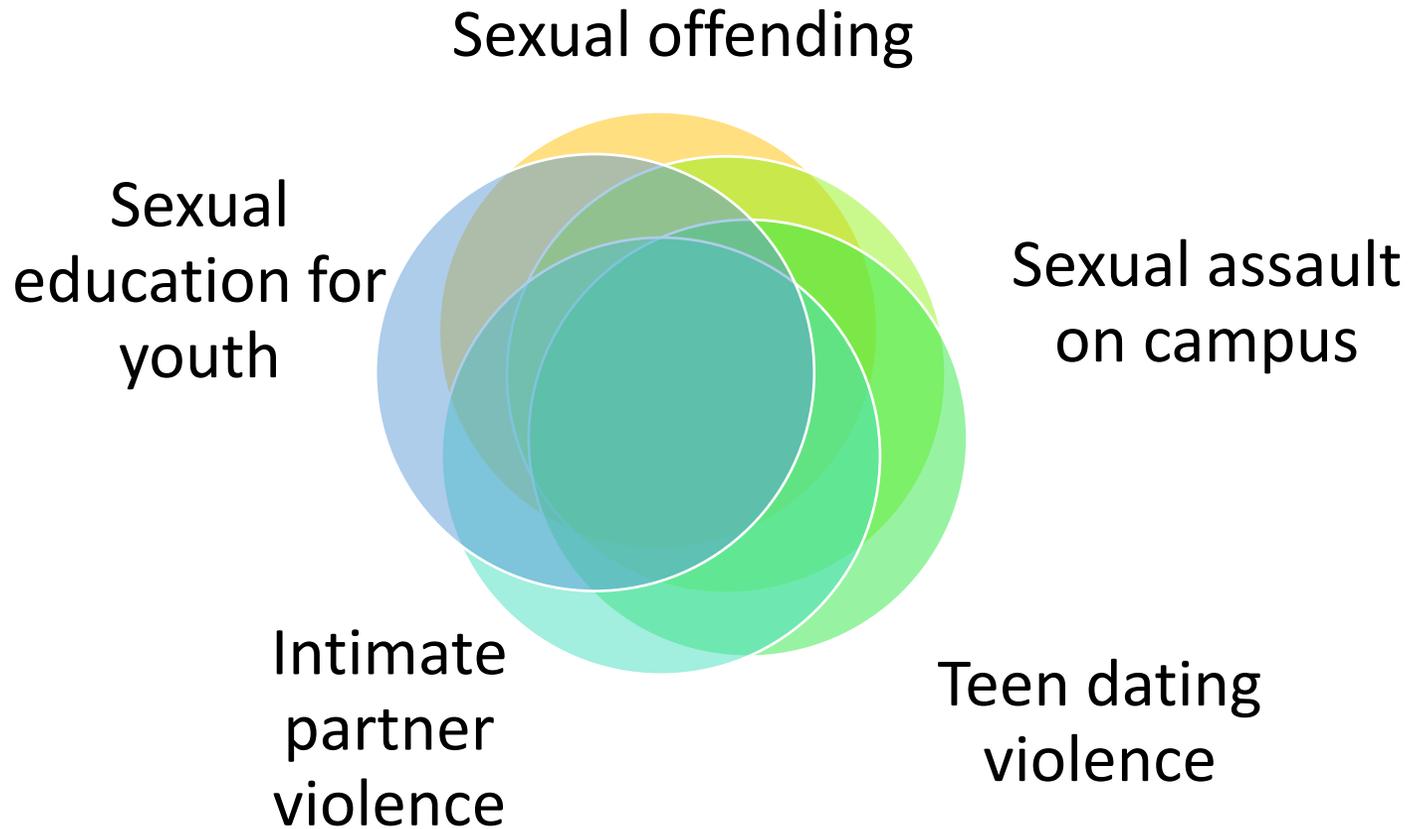
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# All trying to solve the same problem



# All trying to solve the same problem



# Thank you!

**RaeAnn Anderson** – [raeann.anderson@umkc.edu](mailto:raeann.anderson@umkc.edu)

**Instagram:** umkcsexualviolenceprevention

**Osf.io** : search my name for open access papers

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