

## Sex Offender Information for Adults to Keep Our Communities Safe

### How Child Molesters Gain Access to Your Child

- They pay attention to your child and make them feel special.
- They present the appearance of being someone you and your family can trust and rely on.
- They get to know your child's likes and dislikes very well.
- They go out of their way to buy gifts or treats your child will like.
- They isolate your child by involving them in fun activities so they can be together –alone.
- If you are a single parent, they may prey upon your fears about your child lacking a father figure or stable home life.
- If their career involves working with children, they may also choose to spend free time helping children or taking them on special outings.
- They take advantage of your child's natural curiosity about sex by telling "dirty" jokes, showing them pornography and playing sexual games.
- They will probably know more about what kids like than you do; i.e. music, clothing, video games, language, etc.
- They make comments like "anyone who molests a child should be shot!" or "Sexually abusing kids is the sickest thing anyone could do."
- If they are a parent, it is easier to isolate, control and molest their own children. They can sexually abuse their children without their spouse ever suspecting a thing. They gradually block the communication between children and their other parent, and make it look like they are the good parent.
- They may touch your child in your presence so that the child thinks you are comfortable with the way the sex offender touches them.

### Who is the Typical Molester?

- ✓ They are probably well known and liked by you and your child.
- ✓ They can be a man, a woman, married or single.
- ✓ They can be a child, adolescent, or adult.
- ✓ They can be of any race, hold any religious belief and have any sexual preference.
- ✓ They can be a parent, stepparent, relative, family, friend, teacher, clergyman, babysitter or anyone who comes in contact with children.
- ✓ They are likely to be a stable, employed, and respected member of the community.

### Grooming Techniques Used by Offenders

Offenders spend a great deal of time and energy in the process of "grooming" their victims. They generally gain the victim's trust and confidence to begin the process. Because the offender is generally someone known to the victim, teen/child may feel that he/she has no alternative but to accept the abuse. The next step is to introduce the victim to sexual types of touch. This is often accomplished slowly, so that the victim is gradually desensitized to the touch.

Sexual offenders then manipulate the victim to keep the secret. The offender may trick or force a victim into keeping the sexual abuse a secret.

The grooming procedure is extremely effective, and consequently, the vast majority of children/adolescents do not disclose the abuse. Adults may be set up for victimization in similar ways.

## Why Don't Child Molesters Always Get Caught?

- Sex offenders convince your child that no one will believe them if they tell someone.
- They tell your child that their parents will be disappointed in them for what they have done.
- Sex offenders warn your child that the child will be the one punished if they tell someone.
- They may threaten your child with physical violence against them, you (a parent) or another loved one, or a pet.
- Sex offenders may get your child to feel sorry for them or believe they are the only one who understands the offender.
- If the sex offender is a parent or lives in a home with children, their behavior may look accidental. They may "accidentally" expose themselves or "accidentally" walk in on your child while they are using the bathroom or changing clothes.
- If they are a parent, their behavior may look "normal" to other people. They may use situations like tucking the kids in at night to touch them sexually.
- They may have told their children that "this is what all parents do with their children" so that children do not know to tell.
- They may be so good at manipulating children that the child may try to protect the sex offender.

### Levels of Sex Offenders Or Risk Posed to the Community At Large

An End-of-Sentence Review Committee surveys the records of all sex offenders upon release and determines the *level of risk that each poses to "the community at large."*

**Level 1:** Lowest risk to re-offend within community at large; offense occurred within family; low level of physical harm or violence to victim; the majority of offenders fall into this level.

**Level 2:** Moderate risk to re-offend within the community at large; more than one victim; "groom" victims and family; abuse of a position of trust (like teacher, clergy, coach, babysitter,

**Level 3:** Highest risk to re-offend within the community at large; violence used; victims usually unknown to the offender. For more information, refer to:

King County Sheriff's Sex Offender Website  
<http://www.metrokc.gov/sheriff>

Washington State Sex Offender Information Center  
<http://ml.waspc.org>

National Sex Offender Public Registry  
<http://www.nsopr.gov>

### Sex Offender Screening Checklist

***\*\*This is not an absolute guide to identifying sex offenders. This is information to pay attention to if it is exhibited by people who spend time with or care for your children. If someone behaves this way toward your children, they are probably not suitable to be left alone with your children.\*\****

Is this person:

Exceptionally charming and/or helpful  
***and***

Engaging in peer-like play, preferring the company of children,

***and***

"Roughhousing", wrestling, and/or tickling children, obtaining immediate insider status

***and***

Failing to honor clear boundaries, getting defensive or putting me on the offensive?

If someone exhibits these behaviors, it is a good idea to learn more about them; supervise them with your children; or not allow them near your children at all.

## Personal and Family Safety Prevention & Awareness Information

### How Do I Start the conversation ?

*Talking to your child or teen about rape shouldn't be a one-time conversation, and you don't have to say everything at once. Instead, open up an on-going dialog about safety over time.*

*You can:*

1. Use natural moments to bring up sexual assault, such as news about a rape, attempted abduction, or a television program containing a reference to sexual abuse. Ask your child what they have heard and what they know. Give them the opportunity to ask questions.
2. Let your child know that you have read this article and want to check in with them about safety. Ask for their thoughts as you share your own.
3. Link a discussion of personal and touching safety with conversations you have about bike safety and fire safety.
4. Be open and available for your children to come to you. Let them know they can talk to you any time about anything that is on their mind.
5. Create a family rule to have no secrets from each other. Secrecy and isolation are the most important goals for offenders. If they cannot isolate a child and convince them to keep the touching a secret, they cannot offend.

### What is Sexual Assault?

***Sexual assault*** is any unwanted or forced sexual contact including touching or fondling. Rape is forced penetration. For adolescents, force often involves emotional manipulation. Any sexual activity without someone's consent is sexual assault.

### ***How vulnerable are young people?***

As many as one in three girls and one in five boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 16. In addition, about one in four high school and college age women will experience rape or attempted rape. Most sexual assaults happen to people under the age of 18. Both young women and young men are vulnerable.

### What do young people and teens need to know?

- Sexual assault is forced, unwanted sexual touching or intercourse, and that no one has the right to try to trick, force, or coerce them into doing something they do not want to do.
- Sexual assault can happen even with people they know and trust.
- ***Sexual assault is never a victim's fault.***
- The following are specific behaviors that are inappropriate and may be warning signs that someone might try to take advantage of you. It is important for young people to be able to identify early warning signs of disrespect, such as:
  - Someone who tries to isolate or separate you from friends and/or family, or tries to be with you alone.
  - Someone who gives you presents, food, and/or drugs.
  - Someone who doesn't respect your opinions or limits.
  - Someone who ignores or pushes past the boundaries that you set.

## Pay Attention to These Behaviors

*Unfortunately, a nice, normal person can turn violent. However, there are some people who are more likely to be sexually violent than others.*

***\*\*Pay close attention to and be alert of the following behaviors in people:\*\****

- Individuals, who do not listen to you, ignore what you say, talk over you or pretend not to hear you. Such individuals generally have little respect for others and would be more likely to hear “no” as meaning “convince me.”
- People who ignore your personal space boundaries.
- People who express anger of others as individuals or in general. Hostile feelings can easily be translated into hostile acts. Such individuals often get hostile when they hear “no.”
- People who do what they want regardless of what you want. If a person does this in little ways - - for example, if s/he makes all the decisions about what to do and where to go without asking your opinion - - then s/he may also be likely to make the decision about whether you are ready to have sex.
- People who try to make you feel guilty or accuse you of being “uptight” if you refuse their sexual overtures.
- Individuals who are excessively jealous or possessive.
- Individuals who have wrong or unrealistic ideas about intimate relationships - - for example; it is a partner’s “duty” to have sex. Such partners are not likely to take your objections to sex seriously.
- People who use alcohol or drugs heavily.

## 5 Tips to Reduce the Risk of Sexual Assault for Adults

1. Be aware of your surroundings. Take note of threatening situations or behaviors that intimidate you or make you uncomfortable. Remember that relationships can be abused. If someone stops respecting your wishes or limits, they may be the kind of person who would take advantage of you.
2. Plan ahead. Always let someone know where you are, where you are going, and when you expect to return. Arrange to have someone available to help you in case of an emergency.
3. Trust your instincts. Don’t second-guess your gut feelings. If a situation does not feel right, leave. Remember that even people you know well may try to hurt you.
4. Be confident. Stay alert, make eye contact, be assertive.
5. Take action! If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, speak out immediately. Name the behavior and say you want it to stop, e.g., “You’re standing too close. Move away.” In a strong, clear voice say “No,” “Enough” or “Stop.” Get away, call out for help, fight back if you can.

## Survival Signals

Information from the book: The Gift of Fear by Gavin De Becker

**Forced Teaming:** The suggestion of a shared purpose or experience where none exists.

**Charm and Niceness:** Think of charm as a verb, someone trying to charm you rather than being charming. Niceness is a decision, a strategy of social interaction.

**Too Many Details:** Details have a tendency to distract from the obvious.

**Typcasting:** Small labels or little insults tossed into the conversation in attempts to have you refute.

**Loan Sharking:** Putting you in debt with offered assistance, most often unsolicited on your part, making it harder to get rid of this person.

**The Unsolicited Promise:** Used to convince you of their intention. Listen to your intuition, or your gut feeling, it is speaking to you loudly here!

**Discounting the word “No”:** A “no” is not heard or regarded to gain or maintain control. You need not negotiate, explain or justify.