COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

SECTION 1: THINKING ABOUT THINKING

Among people who treat sex offenders, it has been noted that these individuals are not necessarily bad people. You know right from wrong; you feel guilty when you do wrong; and at some level you know that molesting a child (or raping a woman or exposing yourself) causes harm.

If, when you are committing these crimes, you stop and consider the harm you are doing to someone else, you feel uncomfortable or feel emotional pain. However, we also know that human beings in general try to avoid pain, whether it be physical or emotional pain. Guilt and shame are conditions which most people tend to avoid. Therefore, because you do have feelings toward other people and at some level you know you are hurting someone else, you have to do something to avoid these uncomfortable feelings. One way you do this is to tell yourself that what you are doing is not bad, the child (or adult) really wanted to have sex in this way, or that it could have been much worse. Different offenders tell themselves different things. After a while, the things you say to yourself become almost automatic, and you may not even realize you are saying them. The job of your therapist is to help you identify these things about your sexual behavior and try to show you why many of these statements are untrue.

The things you said to yourself that permitted you to sexually abuse another are called excuses, justifications, rationalizations, minimizations, and thinking errors. These are called cognitive distortions. The process by which you correct your thinking is referred to as cognitive restructuring. If you had stopped to think about the harm you were causing during that time, you probably would have stopped. Therefore, a central aspect of treatment is to look at these thoughts in order to challenge and modify them so that your risk for re-offending is reduced. This examination of your thinking is not going to be easy or comfortable. The more you identify (with the assistance of your therapists) the excuses you have been making and the more you realize these are untrue, the more you are going to have to face the fact that you have caused harm. At times, your therapists and fellow group members are going to have to push you to take a look at yourself, and you may become angry at them for that. Your therapists understand this and want you to be able to tell them when you are feeling that way. However, there is no easy or painless way to get control over deviant sexual behavior. Because you are here in treatment, your therapists understand how much you really want to do something about your behavior even though it hurts at times.
During this module, you will be asked to read a number of chapters in a workbook entitled, "Why Did I Do It Again?". You will also be asked to complete a number of the writing and homework assignments from this workbook. It has been specifically developed and prepared to help sex offenders examine and change some of the factors that contributed to the commission of their sexual crimes. You will also be presented a variety of different lists of common thinking errors and distortions. Some are common thinking errors made by most people, while others are specific to the types of distortions and rationalizations made by sex offenders. As with most things in life, the more time and effort you put into these tasks, the more you will get out of it.

In the reading assignment in this section you will be asked to consider the notion of cycles. These are complex patterns or habits in your behaviors. Deviant cycles represent recurring patterns of behavior that make you less effective, less healthy, or prone to inappropriate or criminal behavior. Sex offenses are the result of such deviant cycles.

A major link in cycles of behavior are your thoughts. These thoughts take the form of what you tell yourself about the world around you and your own needs and inner workings. Over the course of the various sections of this module, you will be asked to examine and analyze some of the thoughts and beliefs that led up to you sexually abusing someone else. These thoughts, interpretations, and self-statements were unproductive for you. While there is no "right" or "wrong" way to think, there are more and less effective ways of talking to yourself. How you talk to yourself directly affects the way you will respond to any given situation. Consider the situation diagrammed in Figure 1. There is a certain event perceived or observed by the individual. This perception goes into the black box referred and emerges as some behavioral response.

**FIGURE 1**

![Figure 1 Diagram](image)

So far this is pretty straight forward. Consider for a moment that the same event may result in very different behaviors from different people. For example, if you are watching a football game on TV with a bunch of your buddies and one of the teams makes an
interception, there may be a variety of reactions (behaviors) in the room. Some of your friends may let out a cheer, some may shake their heads in disgust, some may swear at the quarterback, and others may seemingly have no reaction. This situation is diagrammed in Figure 2.

Obviously, what occurs inside the person determines what behavior or response is going to occur. If the interception is made by the favorite team of Person 1 they may jump up and cheer. If, on the other hand, Person 2 is rooting for the other team, they may shake their head in disgust. If Person 3 doesn’t really care about the outcome of the game, they may have little or no external change in their behavior.

To make matters more complex, similar or identical events can trigger different responses (behaviors) in the same individual at different times. To return to the football example, your reaction to the interception may be very different if you are watching a close game in the playoffs as opposed to a pre-season game where the outcome is unimportant. This is diagrammed in Figure 3. In all three situations the event is similar, the person is the same, yet the resulting behaviors are different.
These situations illustrate that what happens inside the head of a person determines how he behaves. What occurs, of course, in your head are your thoughts and feelings. Although there is no direct way to measure thoughts, you express them in language and speech. How you talk to yourself, the words you use, and the meaning you attach to the words have a dramatic effect on how you interpret situations and the emotional reactions you have. They ultimately affect your behavior and responses. Figure 4 illustrates some of the mechanisms that occur between an external event and your response to that event.

**FIGURE 4**

![Diagram](EVENT → THOUGHTS → FEELINGS → BEHAVIOR)

Thoughts, the things you say to yourself, are under your voluntary control. You can change the way you think about and interpret situations by simply telling yourself different things. This is a very powerful tool that can be learned and practiced to more effectively manage your feelings and your behavior. In the following sections you will have an opportunity to learn how to develop this ability and to practice changing key thoughts that led to your raping, molesting, or exposing yourself to another person.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

Chapter 1 ("Understanding Cycles") in Why Did I Do It Again
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. There were nine reasons listed in the reading why it is important to learn about your deviant cycle. For each of the nine reasons listed below:
   a) describe what it means to you and how it will help you from re-offending in the future.
   b) give an example from your life that illustrates how you could have acted differently if you had known about the reason listed.

   I will learn what led up to committing my crime.
   a.

   b.

   By studying my cycle, I will learn that each of my actions has several causes and several effects.
   a.

   b.

   I will learn how I usually react to thoughts, feelings, and environments.
   a.

   b.

   I will learn that my behavior is affected by every place I go and everything I see.
   a.

   b.
By studying my cycle I will learn how my feelings influence my behavior.
  a.

b.

I will learn how my thoughts influence my behavior.
  a.

b.

I will learn how my beliefs about the world and myself influence how I act.
  a.

b.

Understanding my cycle will teach me that what I do today influences what I do tomorrow and in the future.
  a.

b.

Understanding my cycle will teach me when and how to stop my deviant sexual behavior.
  a.

b.
2. Write down the first THOUGHTS that come to your mind when you read each of the following words.

   Police

   Rain

   Prison

   Beach

   Wife

   Lunch

   Sex

   Women

   Children

   New York

Now write down the first FEELING you have with each of the following words.

   Police

   Rain

   Prison

   Beach

   Wife

   Lunch

   Sex

   Women

   Children

Notice how thoughts and feelings are linked. Each feeling should follow from the preceding thought that you had about the word.
3. Based on your reading, give an example of each of the following from your own life:

   CYCLE

   CHAIN

   FEELING LINK

   PERCEPTION LINK

   ACTION/BEHAVIOR LINK

4. Based on your reading, consider how habits form. Describe an example from your own life of a habit that got formed in this way. Be as specific as possible in describing the specific links that led to the habit.
5. Using words or a diagram, describe at least three different chains of behavior in your life.

CHAIN #1

CHAIN #2

CHAIN #3
In the previous section you were introduced to the idea that behavior is based on your thoughts and feelings. People respond to similar events in different ways because they interpret the events differently. You also react to similar events differently depending upon how you are thinking or feeling at the time. How you interpret the world or what you think about events is under your control.

You can change your behavior by changing your thinking. If you can change the things you say to yourself. You will change how you view events around you. When you change your perceptions, your reactions will also change. By changing your thinking, you will change your behavior. So, if you want to change a problem behavior such as committing sexual crimes, a good place to start is understanding the way you think about it. If you tell yourself there is nothing wrong with having sex with a minor or that it is even good to have sex with a child, then it is likely you will continue to commit such crimes. If you fail to recognize what is wrong with your behavior, there is no motivation to change it. On the other hand, if you tell yourself that having sex with children is wrong because they are not able to fully understand and give permission to sex with an adult, there is less of a chance for you to molest a child. If you go further by reminding yourself that having sex with a child is likely to harm and traumatize them, you are even less likely to commit such an act even if the thought of having sex with a child arouses you.

If you tell yourself that your sexual behavior is not under your control, you will continue to sexually abuse others because there is no reason to try to do something different. If you think it is impossible to control your sexual urges you won’t even try to do it. In contrast, when you convince yourself you are able to control your sexual urges, you are more likely to find ways that you can manage them and decrease your risk of re-offending.

In order to begin to learn the skill of changing your own thinking patterns, there are several ideas that will be helpful.

- SELF-STATEMENTS are the words that you say to yourself. You are constantly thinking and telling yourself things. How you phrase these thoughts to yourself is important. If you tell yourself that someone made you angry, you are blaming them and more likely to try and get back at them for upsetting you. If, on the other hand, you tell yourself that you allowed yourself to get angry, you are accepting greater responsibility for your own feelings. This permits you to figure out ways that you can make yourself not so angry. This simple change in the way you talk to yourself can open up many avenues for learning better self-control. By blaming someone else for what you are feeling, you are giving them all the control and power. If you accept that
you are responsible for your own feelings, then you keep the power to change your feelings yourself.

**SELF-STATEMENTS ARE THE MESSAGES YOU SEND TO YOURSELF**

The more that you can become aware of the messages that you send to yourself, the more you will be able to control your thoughts and feelings. Pay attention to the words you use to describe the events around you and your reactions to those events.

- **AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS** are well-learned beliefs or thoughts that you have every day. They are separate self-statements or ideas that occur so rapidly that it doesn’t seem as if they are even conscious thoughts. Everyone uses them. They seem to come out of the blue for no apparent reason. Automatic thoughts are specific in content. They tell you something directly about the immediate situation you are in. Often, automatic thoughts give you a prediction about what will happen in the situation.

An example of an automatic thought occurs when you approach an intersection while driving and the light turns from green to red. You automatically begin to brake and slow to a stop. You are seldom aware of the chain of thoughts that lead from the light changing to putting your foot on the brake. This chain of thoughts includes such self-statements as: "the light is changing to red", "a red light means I’m expected to stop", "if I don’t stop and keep going I could get hit", "if I go through the red light I could get a ticket", "I guess my best option is to put on the brake and stop", "I’ll wait and go through the intersection when the light turns green". If you had to consciously process each of these statements before you applied the brake, you would be through the intersection before you had a chance to respond, creating a serious traffic hazard.

Therefore, automatic thoughts often have a real advantage for you because they help you process information quickly and efficiently. If every situation you encountered had to be processed as a new and unique circumstance, then you wouldn’t get much done.
On the other hand, some automatic thoughts may keep us in behavior patterns that are self-destructive and harmful to others. Such thoughts can be re-learned by breaking them down, becoming aware of each of their components, and substituting new self-statements. By consciously practicing new chains of thinking, a new automatic thought or habit of thinking is established. To take another example, imagine that you move to England. You learned to drive in North America, which means that you are used to driving on the right-hand side of the road. Driving on the right-hand side of the road would be a very strong automatic thought, one to which you would have to give almost no conscious attention. When you arrive in England, however, you would have to continually remind yourself that you must now drive on the left-hand side of the road. The more you drive on the left-hand lane, the more natural it would feel. If you stayed in England long enough, this would eventually replace the automatic thought you had about driving on the other side of the road.

Similarly, there are many automatic thoughts that you are likely to hold about women, children, sex, and your feelings that seem unconscious. They have been with you for so long that they seem "natural" and so obvious to you that you spend little effort thinking about them. Yet, some of these automatic thoughts lay the groundwork for taking sexual advantage of others. If you think that every time you get aroused you must have sex, then this automatic thought could give you permission to act out in harmful ways. If you had sex with an adult when you were a child and you think that no harm was done, then this is a destructive automatic thought that gives you permission to have sex with children. If you think that exposing yourself, making obscene phone calls, or peeping into someone’s windows is harmless, then these beliefs give you permission to do these crimes. Later in this module, you will work to identify some of your automatic thoughts and beliefs so that you can challenge and replace them with more healthy ones.

- **SETS** are groups of automatic thoughts or beliefs with which we enter any situation. The set that you hold will dramatically alter how you perceive the events around you. They “set the stage” for the way you are likely to respond to situations. For example, if you are walking down an unfamiliar street at night in a high crime area of town, you are likely to have a set of thoughts that include reminding yourself that caution is in order. You may become hyper-alert to any potential changes in the environment that you hear or see. You might check out darkened doorways more carefully before you pass them, and you may walk briskly to get out of the area as soon as possible. You would have a very different set if you were walking down a familiar street in your neighborhood where you have learned to be safe. You are less likely to pay attention to every sound you hear or every doorway you pass.

Because sets are groups of automatic thoughts and beliefs, they offer an advantage for you. They save you from having to process and evaluate each situation as a new one. It allows you to learn from your past experiences, and you can spend your time and energy thinking about other things. If you had to consider every environment as
hostile and dangerous, for example, you would soon have little energy or attention to devote to anything but attempting to protect and guard yourself. Occasionally, however, your sets are unproductive and even destructive. They may distort your interpretations of events in a way that causes you to respond inappropriately. In this situation, you need to adopt more appropriate and effective sets.

Sets can be viewed like a filter on a camera. One can adjust camera filters that either enhance or diminish certain colors of light. One filter may highlight red colors, whereas another filter may highlight blue colors, and still another may screen out ultraviolet light. Each filter will dramatically alter what the picture will look like when it is developed. Similarly, you establish a set that distorts what you see. Child molesters are more likely to notice and see children as seductive. People who are not very sure of themselves are more likely to notice anything that could be taken as a personal slight or criticism. Peeping Toms are more likely to notice windows without shades or opportunities to view unsuspecting victims in private situations. The following graphic illustrates how each camera filter will eventually be perceived.

**HOW YOU ESTABLISH YOUR SET WILL DETERMINE WHAT YOU SEE**

Just as with camera filters, you must be aware of the sets and filters that you use to view situations around you. You must know about the way your sets may be distorting events so that you can correct your misperceptions. For example, you may have a belief (or set) that when girls begin to develop breasts or begin to menstruate, they are able to make fully informed decisions about having sex. This is likely to present a truly distorted picture of the situation. Or, if you believe that all women who enter a bar alone are looking to pick up a man for sex, another serious misinterpretation of the situation can occur. It is easy to see how such serious distortions in your perceptions could "set the stage" that would eventually lead to a sex offense.
You enter any situation with a certain set of filters. That set determines how you will see events and establishes a foundation for your interpretations, self-statements, and eventually your feelings in response to the event. Ultimately, this will lead to how you will behave.

**THE SET OF FILTERS THAT YOU ENTER A SITUATION WITH WILL DETERMINE YOUR ULTIMATE INTERPRETATIONS, FEELINGS & ACTIONS**

The set that you bring to any situation directly colors your interpretations of the events that follow. In turn, your interpretations will provide feedback as to whether you have adopted the right set. If you enter your group therapy session with the set that the therapists and other group members are just out to make you feel bad, then any constructive criticism that may be offered is likely to be ignored. You may think it is just another attempt to put you down. If, on the other hand, you enter the group session with the set or belief that people care about you, you may see the same criticism as a sign that people are trying to help you make things better. Thus, these two different sets are likely to shape your response in group in dramatically different ways.

Sets are established and influenced by at least three factors.

- **Past Experiences**
- **Vicarious Experiences**
- **Physiological State**

*Past Experiences* provide a direct learning opportunity to help you establish sets to enter new, but similar situations. For example, you probably have a certain set of expectations every time you enter a McDonald’s restaurant. You expect certain things to be on the menu and to taste a certain way. This is based on your past experiences of having gone to this particular restaurant. In another example, if someone gets mugged in a certain part of town, he is going to take on the set that he is in a dangerous, hostile place the next time he visits that same area.

*Vicarious Experiences* refer to situations that we don't directly experience ourselves. You learn a great deal about what to expect from listening and watching others. For example, you may hear from a friend, or from ads on TV that there is a sale at a store. When you go to the store, you have a set or belief that you will find big bargains. In another example, if somebody hears that a friend got beat up at a certain bar, that
person may avoid the bar in the future (assuming they want to avoid getting into fights) based on hearing about the experience of another.

Physiological States refers to the conditions of your body. If you are hungry, you are more likely to see signs of food (such as fast food billboards on the highway or commercials on TV). If you are sexually aroused you are more likely to interpret the actions of others as signs of seduction or willingness to have sex.

Typically all three factors (i.e., past experiences, vicarious experiences, and physiological states) combine in establishing your sets at any given time.

In summary, if you are going to change your sexual behavior it will be necessary to modify and change some of your thinking about the situations that lead to sex. This includes an examination of your set of beliefs that color your perceptions of situations and frequently lead to you sexually abusing others. These sets of beliefs often seem automatic and unconscious. Instead, they simply represent well learned thinking habits. To change these sets, it is necessary to look at your past experiences, what you have learned from hearing about the experiences of others, and your physiological state.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**
Read Chapter 2 ("Perceptions: The Triggers in your Environment") in Why Did I Do It Again?

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

1. Give three examples of automatic thoughts that you have. These should be thoughts that you have regularly, that you are seldom aware of consciously.

   **EXAMPLE #1**

   **EXAMPLE #2**

   **EXAMPLE #3**
2. Give an example of a set or belief that you often take into each of the following situations. Completing the following sentences:

   When I go to group, I usually tell myself...

   When I meet an attractive woman for the first time, I usually tell myself...

   When I meet an attractive man for the first time, I usually tell myself....

   When I see a cute kid on the TV, I often find myself thinking...

   If I haven't had sex for a long time, I find myself thinking...

   I think the best place to find a sexual partner is...

   When I’m drunk or high I ....

3. Choose one of the situations described in the above assignment and describe how your past experiences affect and determine your set for that situation.
4. Choose one of the situations described in assignment #2 and describe how what you have learned from others (*vicarious experiences*) affects and partially determines your set.

5. Choose one of the situations described in assignment #2 and describe how your *physiological state* affects and determines your set.

6. Describe at least one example of a common set or belief that often "sets you up for failure" by misperceiving events or comments by others.
7. Think back to when you were a child. What types of perceptions do you recall that triggered negative thoughts or feelings and the behaviors that followed. Give at least 10 examples.

**EXAMPLES:**

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<th>PERCEPTION</th>
<th>FEELING OR THOUGHT</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saw Dad hit brother</td>
<td>Felt afraid</td>
<td>Hid in my room</td>
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<td>Saw Dad drink and get angry</td>
<td>Confused thoughts</td>
<td>Left the house</td>
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<td>Saw Mom cry a lot</td>
<td>Felt sad</td>
<td>Talked to Mom</td>
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<td>Saw Friend hurt by girl</td>
<td>Angry, confused</td>
<td>Avoided girls</td>
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8. Now make a list of perceptions that triggered positive thoughts and feelings and subsequent behaviors. Give at least 10 examples.

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<td>Heard Mom say &quot;I love you&quot;</td>
<td>Felt cared for</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
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<td>Saw brother get good grades</td>
<td>Felt proud</td>
<td>Did my homework</td>
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<td>Heard Dad tell jokes</td>
<td>Funny thought</td>
<td>Laughed a lot</td>
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9. List 10 things in the environment that may encourage you to engage in deviant behavior.

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In the previous sections, how thoughts lead to behaviors was reviewed. The interpretations given to any situation determine the response you will give. Thoughts are not only in reaction to the situation, but also provide the set of beliefs that set you up to interpret events in a certain way. By identifying the self-statements and interpretations that underlie your deviant sexual behavior, you have an opportunity to begin to challenge those interpretations and change them. When you change your thoughts you will find it easier to change your behavior. When you change the set of beliefs and interpretations that led to your sexual crime(s), you are changing the likelihood that you will reoffend.

A number of psychologists and therapists have studied the types of thinking that promote misinterpreting situations. These are called “Thinking Errors”. One list of these is provided in your reading assignment for this section. A similar list is provided below for you to consider. These are the types of errors that you have when you approach situations wrong and the type of misinterpretations that you may make. Each of these thinking errors can lead to dangerous misinterpretations. Therefore, the more familiar you are at identifying and correcting such thinking errors, the greater the chances that you will avoid the types of misinterpretations and distortions that led up to your crime(s).

Following the list of common thinking errors, you will find a page devoted to ways of avoiding accountability and making change. This list provides the typical thinking errors sex offenders use to avoid changes in therapy. As you review this list, try to identify any techniques you have used to block your own progress in treatment. Also identify those that you may have seen others use in your therapy group.

THINKING ERRORS SET YOU UP TO SEE SITUATIONS INCORRECTLY
Thoughts and attitudes influence your feelings and behavior. Changing your behavior and improving the way you feel relies on changing your thoughts. There are ten styles of distorted thinking listed below. These categories are not distinctly different from each other, but are overlapping. Read each definition and example.

1. **Polarized Thinking**

You look at things as black or white, good or bad, win or lose. You forget that there is anything in-between.

Example: Your therapist asks you to stay on topic in group and focus on the issue being discussed. You respond by closing down and refusing to say anything in group. You go from one extreme to another.

2. **Overgeneralization**

You look at one event and outcome, and believe it applies in all situations.

Example: Your counselor does not have time to have an individual session with you so you now believe he never has time to talk to you. You tell everyone you come in contact with, that the therapist is uncaring and is just here “for the money.”
3. **FILTERING**

You dwell on just the things you want to see and ignore everything else.

Example: When you are upset, you get good feedback from everyone in group except for one guy. He does not understand why you are upset and you should just do what he does and all your problems would be solved. Instead of listening to all the others, you dwell on how much you dislike that one group member and how his comments do not make sense.
4. **Discounting the Positive**

You reject anything that you do or have as positive.

Example: Although you are locked up for a sex crime, you will be getting out soon to return to a supportive family and a decent job. You only focus on what you do not and cannot have: basketball coach for children, youth minister, etc.

5. **Jumping to Conclusions**

(A) **Mind Reading** - You assume you know what people are thinking. Usually it is something very good or very bad.

Example: “My counselor was smiling after group; she must be laughing at me. She thinks I’m sick because of what I did to my daughter.”

(B) **Fortune Telling** - You predict things will turn out one specific way before the event even takes place.

Example: “I know people will reject me because of my charge, so why should I even try to change.”

This type of thinking gives you an excuse to prejudge situations or people. Then you may act in a negative way.

6. **Magnification or Minimization**

You either blow things out of proportion or make them smaller or less serious. Magnifying your thoughts makes you feel like a victim.

Examples: **Magnification**. Your therapist asks you to redo an assignment because it lacks detail. You tell yourself, “She always makes me do assignments over. She hates me and is trying to stand in my way of making parole.”

**Minimization**. “I don’t know what the big deal is. So,
I forgot to do my assignment for group. I had more important things to do.”

14. **Emotional Reasoning**

You make decisions based on how you feel rather than what you think.

Example: “I feel like a fool, so I must be one.” OR “I feel sexual so I must satisfy my sexual feeling right now.

8. **Should Statements**

You expect people to act a certain way according to your rules: You *ought* to…, you *must*…, you *have to*…, you *should*.

Example: “She *should* not wear that dress if she does not want to get raped.”

9. **Blame**

You hold other people responsible for your problems or you do the reverse and blame yourself for everything bad that has ever happened. The problem with this is that the problem is never solved because you take one of two stands, “the Bully” or “Poor Me.”

Example: “I had to rape that woman because she made me angry” or “I know…Everything is my fault.”

10. **Labeling**
You generalize from a person’s actions or qualities into an overall judgment (positive or negative).

Example: “Females who wear a lot of makeup and wear short skirts are sluts.”
TACTICS TO AVOID ACCOUNTABILITY AND TO CONTINUE YOUR PRESENT WAY OF LIFE

1. You continually point out staff inadequacies.
2. Building yourself up by putting others down.
3. Lying - by leaving out things, by distorting the truth and by telling only what benefits you or does not embarrass or put you in a bad light.
4. Telling others what they want to hear and not what is the truth.
5. Vagueness. Indicating "I will think about it". Saying, "Maybe" or "It could be".
6. Diverting attention away from yourself. Introducing irrelevant material. Invoking racial or religious issues.
7. Attempting to confuse others.
8. Minimizing the situation, "I just got into a little trouble", "it only happened once", "I fondled her but I didn’t have intercourse with her", etc.
9. Agree or say "yes" without really meaning it.
10. Silence.
11. Paying attention only to what suits you.
12. Making a big scene about a minor point.
13. Putting off doing something by saying, "I forgot"
14. Putting others on the defensive. The tactics such as degrading, quibbling over words, trying to embarrass, using anger as a weapon.
15. Total inattention.
17. Claiming that you have changed because you did it right once.

---

1Adapted from Yochelson and Samenow, The Criminal Personality: A Profile for Change.
READING ASSIGNMENT
Read Chapter 3 ("Thinking Links") in Why Did I Do It Again?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Give an example self-statement of each of the following types of thinking errors.
   1. Polarized Thinking:

2. Overgeneralization:

3. Filtering:

4. Discounting the Positive:

5. Jumping to Conclusions:

6. Magnification or Minimization:

7. Emotional Reasoning:

8. Should Statements:

9. Blame

10. Labeling:
2. List at least five examples of how thinking errors that you made led to behaviors that were involved in your sexual offense(s).

   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

   e.

3. On the next page, give at least 10 examples of different types of thinking errors (either from the list provided in this manual or the chapter in Why Did I Do It Again?) that you have made. In the left-hand column, list the type of thinking error. In the next column, give an example of a behavior or self-statement that you have made that illustrates the error. In the right-hand column correct the thinking. An example is provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF THINKING</th>
<th>EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOR OR SELF-STATEMENT</th>
<th>CORRECT THINKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EX: Filtering</td>
<td>Ignoring my wife when she said I was drinking too much</td>
<td>My wife knows me best, maybe I should talk to her and see if she has a point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Below are 8 faulty self-statements. Below each statement identify the type of thinking error it is and write a corrective self-statement.

1. “The counselor told me I’m doing better, but I know he tells that to everybody.”
   
   Thinking Error:
   
   Corrective Self-Statement:

2. “I feel lonely so I guess nobody likes me.”
   
   Thinking Error:
   
   Corrective Self-Statement:

3. “Nobody in the Navy who is in charge of anything, cares a damn about me.”
   
   Thinking Error:
   
   Corrective Self-Statement:

4. “Ever since Linda hurt me, I know redheads can’t be trusted.”
   
   Thinking Error:
   
   Corrective Self-Statement:
5. “Nothing’s ever going to work out for me.”

   Thinking Error:

   Corrective Self-Statement:

6. “It’s your fault we never do anything fun.”

   Thinking Error:

   Corrective Self-Statement:

7. “My parents got divorced - it must have been something about me.”

   Thinking Error:

   Corrective Self-Statement:

8. “I sometimes don’t get things right so I must be lazy or stupid.”

   Thinking Error:

   Corrective Self-Statement:
COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

SECTION 4: COMMON COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS MADE BY SEX OFFENDERS

So far, we have reviewed some general issues regarding how thoughts affect, influence, and even determine our behavior. The way you approach situations determines the way you will interpret the events that happen. If your response to an event is unhealthy, unproductive, or even destructive, the best place to see what went wrong is your thoughts that immediately came before the behavior. This is true for sexual offending. The thoughts that establish beliefs and allowed you to commit a sexual crime are key areas to examine and change in the treatment process.

In this section, you will be looking at specific types of self-statements that are often reported by sex offenders and provide the foundation for sexual crimes. These thoughts are referred to globally as cognitive distortions because they are a way of distorting or confusing reality. Without such twisted thinking, many sex offenses could be averted.

Therapists have noticed a number of precursors that are quite common among sex offenders. A precursor is anything that comes before or "sets up" the offender to commit his sexual crime. The typical precursors fall in the categories of (1) specific types of events; (2) specific types of thoughts; (3) or some type of negative feelings.

The table on the next page is taken from a study of 136 child molesters and 64 rapists in Vermont. Other types of sex offenders (e.g., obscene phone callers, Peeping Toms, exhibitionists, etc.) have similar kinds of precursors. Most offenders have multiple precursors. There are a number of things that went "wrong" immediately prior to their crimes. Therefore, the listing represents all of the precursors that could be detected for the offenders in the study, not just the most important ones.

As you review this list, notice how common some of these precursors are among sex offenders. In particular, notice how cognitive distortions by the offender seem to be noted immediately prior to the offense in a high percentage of the cases. Also notice how many of the precursors seem to represent feeling states. Your reading and homework assignments in this section will cover how feelings serve as links in the chain leading up to sexual crimes.

In reviewing the list, it will probably become obvious to you why your therapists have decided to concentrate on certain areas of treatment. It’s not surprising, therefore, that
substance abuse, dealing with deviant sexual urges, improving social and intimacy skills, increasing victim awareness, and handling stressful emotions are part of your treatment program. As you review the list, note with a check mark each precursor that might apply to your case.

### Immediate Precursors to Sexual Aggression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRECURSOR</th>
<th>% RAPISTS</th>
<th>% CHILD MOLESTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at event</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after interpersonal conflict</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized, global</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toward women</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of assertive skills</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Distortions</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsive overworking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviant sexual fantasies</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disordered sexual arousal pattern</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving car alone without destination</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally inhibited/over-controlled</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal dependence</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-esteem</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low victim empathy</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity (e.g., finding a hitchhiker)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal loss</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography as a new hobby</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical illness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning of sexual offense</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornography use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric hospitalization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual knowledge deficit</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills deficit</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other substances</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

On the next page is a list of specific cognitive distortions or rationalizations that offenders use to give themselves permission to commit a sex crime. This is not an all-inclusive list, but only intended to provide some examples. As you review the list, consider each statement carefully. Circle or put a checkmark next to each statement that applied to the way you were thinking at the time you committed your sexual crime. If you can think of any additional self-statements or distorted thoughts at the time of your offense(s) add them to the bottom of the list. If you can’t relate to any of these statements, it is suggested you review the list again more carefully a second time. Most sex offenders committed to treatment and changing their thinking can relate to a number of these items.

WHAT YOU SAY TO YOURSELF GIVES YOU PERMISSION TO COMMIT A SEX CRIME

HE WANTS IT

IT WON’T HURT ANYBODY

THEY WANT ME TO DO IT

NOBODY WILL FIND OUT

SHE DESERVES IT

I CAN’T HELP MYSELF

I’M TOO SMART TO GET CAUGHT

I’M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY BEHAVIOR WHEN I’M DRUNK
RATIONALIZATION LIST OR EXCUSES TO OFFEND

1. I’ll only do it one more time.
2. I need to do this to reduce my tension.
3. She/he likes it.
4. She is too young to get pregnant/He can’t get pregnant.
5. She/he won’t remember.
6. She won’t realize what I’m doing, she’s too young/He’s too young.
7. Nobody will find out.
8. I’m not really hurting anyone.
9. I’m just going to play around.
10. I won’t do it anymore.
11. At least I’m not screwing her/him.
12. She/he won’t tell.
13. She’s not my real daughter/He’s not really my son.
14. My wife doesn’t love me.
15. It’s okay since kings and cavemen did it.
16. It’s okay since she’s asleep/He’s asleep.
17. I’m just going to look, I won’t touch.
18. She’s my daughter so it’s okay/It’s okay, he’s my son.
19. He/she is better than no one at all.
20. She wants love and affection.
21. She/he likes me.
22. She/he likes being with me.
23. We are very close friends.
24. She/he likes attention.
25. Women who behave and dress like that are just looking for sex.
26. She/he didn’t tell me to stop.
27. Someone has to teach her/him about sex.
28. I am lonely/bored.
29. She/he wants me to do this.
30. It makes me feel better.
31. I need love and affection too.
32. She puts her arms around me and sits on my lap.
33. He/she says no, but really means yes.
34. Women always like it rough.
35. What does she expect dressed like that.
36. Nobody is going to find out.
37. She/he looks older than she/he is.
38. She/he is very mature for her/his age.
39. Once she has sex from me, she’ll be so content she won’t complain.

---

2 Adapted from Northwest Treatment Associates, 315 West Galer, Seattle, WA 98119
SEX OFFENDER BULL
(SOB)

Below is another list of distortions and minimizations that sex offenders use. It represents the junk you say to yourself or others to excuse your offending. A S.O.B. (Sex Offender Bull) can be minimizations, distortions or justifications. It always represents mental gymnastics, a twisting and turning of reality to give yourself permission to sexually abuse someone. This list (like the previous list of rationalizations) does not include all distortions and minimizations that could be made. At the end are some blank spaces for you to write in some of your own unique distortions. Place a check mark by each of the statements or excuses that you have used.

_____ It doesn’t hurt.
_____ They/He/She asked for it
_____ They/He/She liked it
_____ It wasn’t my fault
_____ I only . . .
_____ I just . . .
_____ They/He/She wanted it
_____ I was out of my mind
_____ He/She made me
_____ I was drunk
_____ I didn’t know what I was doing
_____ They/He/She started it
_____ I wanted to see what it was like
_____ I was curious
_____ It just happened
_____ I did it for attention
_____ They/He/She were/was asleep
_____ Boredom
_____ I wanted to try something different
_____ It happened to me first
_____ I was sexually abused
_____ I wanted to see their/his/her reaction
_____ I was just playing a game
_____ I wanted to teach them/him/her something new
_____ I didn’t mean to
_____ I was only fooling around
_____ They/He/She kept coming back
_____ She’s a bitch and she deserved it
_____ It couldn’t hurt them/him/her
_____ They/He/She was smiling
_____ They/He/She already knew about sex
_____ It doesn’t matter
It was sex education
They/He/She weren't/wasn't family so it doesn't matter
She was a whore anyway
She/He had it coming to her/him anyway
I was getting even
I was lonely
I didn't like him/her anyway
She/He led me on
She/He accepted the bribe so she/he wanted it
They/He/She never said stop
They/He/She didn't fight
They/He/She didn't fight like they meant it
They/He/She was laughing
I became aroused so I had to do it
They/He/She said it was alright
I had to do it to someone
It didn't seem to matter
They/He/She wanted some attention
I was just showing them/him/her that I care
I did it because I loved them/him/her
I didn't think it was wrong
I didn't know any better
It was the only way I could express myself
I was having sex
Once I get started I can't stop myself
I just fondled them/him/her
It was only through their clothes
What difference does it make
He/She wasn't my "real" brother/sister
They/He/She should have known better
I didn't know what I was doing
I was on drugs
They had already been abused
I was experimenting
Everybody does it
I wasn't thinking
She/He said . . .
She/He asked me to
She/He started it
Somebody had to pay
They/He/She thought it was fun
It was a game
I wouldn't have done it if he/she wouldn't have done it
He/She was older so it wasn't abuse
I couldn't help myself, I had to do it
She/He led me on
She/He forgot about it
I was only playing around
It didn’t seem to hurt them
I needed it
I did it because of the movie I saw
I did it because of the pictures I looked at
She was my girlfriend
All I did was . . .
I was angry so I had to do something
My brother/sister did it so it’s okay
Other people do it
She/He didn’t seem scared
I stopped when they/he/she said to
She was a prostitute
They/He/She deserved it
She/He still talked to me afterward
He/She didn’t tell
He/She enjoyed it
He/She said they loved me so
It didn’t bother anyone else
He/She was talking about sex
Nobody got hurt
He/She was acting sexy
He/She needed it
It was just sex education
She/He/They had their clothes on so I couldn’t really do anything
They/He/She did me wrong
They/He/She wanted to
It wasn’t that bad
**READING ASSIGNMENT**
Read Chapter 4 ("Feeling Links") in Why Did I Do It Again?

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

1. In the space below, describe whether or not you think you got a fair deal being arrested and sent to prison. Explain why you feel that way.

2. Review your answer to the first question. Underline any statements that could be used as a justification or cognitive distortion. Then have your therapist or another member of your group review your answer and identify any other cognitive distortions they may see.
3. Write down at least 15 different feelings that you often experience. Next to each feeling, briefly describe what you are most likely doing (behavior) when you feel that particular feeling.

Examples
SAD    Cry, watch a sad movie, talk to my family on the phone, sleep
HAPPY  Listen to music, sing, talk with friends
FEARFUL Withdraw from others, worry, avoid my problems, smoke
ENERGETIC Jog, go for a walk, exercise, lift weights
DEPRESSED Stay alone, use drugs or alcohol, skip meals
ANGRY   Get in fights, yell at people, drive fast, force sex

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
15.
4. Think back to the last sex crime you committed. Write down a detailed account of how you felt before, during and right after the crime. In addition to your feelings, note what kinds of things you did as a result of your feelings (i.e., feeling bored and having rape fantasies, feeling excited about molesting a child and looking for a victim, feeling aroused and watching your victim and masturbating, etc.). Feel free to use additional sheets of paper to capture this assignment as fully as possible.
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS MODULE

SECTION 5: IDENTIFYING YOUR COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS AS A SEX OFFENDER

In the previous section, you reviewed two lists of common cognitive distortions that are made by sex offenders to justify or rationalize their crime(s). You may have noticed that many of the statements that you read were in the past tense. They represented the types of distorted thinking that relieves the guilt and shame of the crime after the fact.

In this section, you will be looking at several scales that will help you evaluate some of the common beliefs you may hold that set you up for committing a sex crime. These beliefs serve as the "set" for sexual deviance to occur. They represent the more global thoughts and attitudes about sex with children and women that you bring into almost all situations. It is these thoughts and feelings that serve as the foundation to later interpret that it will be OK for you to commit a sex crime.

Complete each scale by circling the appropriate number based on how you are thinking now. Then go back and answer each item by placing an “X” over the appropriate number to indicate how you were thinking at the time you committed your crime(s). This will give you an opportunity to identify not only some of the key beliefs in your cognitive set about sex with women and children, but it will also show you how those beliefs may have changed over the course of your incarceration. If there are no differences in your answers, what will prevent you from committing a new sex crime? What additional thoughts and beliefs do you need to change to make yourself safer and reduce your risk of re-offending?

TO AVOID RE-ARREST YOU MUST CHANGE THOSE THOUGHTS THAT LED YOU TO SEX OFFENDING IN THE FIRST PLACE

“IT WAS MY THINKING ALL ALONG”

As you complete these scales, it may be easy for you to give the "right" or "politically correct" responses. These are the responses that you know your therapists will want to see. Resist this temptation. It is only a way of maintaining secrecy. Instead, take your time and carefully consider whether each statement applies to you. Just giving the answers that your therapists expect will only rob you of the opportunity to work with some of the beliefs that serve as risks for you to re-offend.
# ABEL & BECKER COGNITIONS SCALE

Read each of the statements below carefully, and then circle the number that indicates your agreement with it.

1. If a young child stares at my genitals it means the child likes what she (he) sees and is enjoying watching my genitals.

2. A man (or woman) is justified in having sex with his (her) children or stepchildren, if his wife (husband) doesn’t like sex.

3. A child 13 or younger can make her (his) own decision as to whether she (he) wants to have sex with an adult or not.

4. A child who doesn’t physically resist an adult’s sexual advances really wants to have sex with the adult.

5. If a 13-year-old (or younger) child flirts with an adult, it means he (she) wants to have sex with the adult.

6. Sex between a 13-year-old (or younger) child and an adult causes the child no emotional problems.

7. Having sex with a child is a good way for an adult to teach the child about sex.

8. If I tell my young child (stepchild or close relative) what to do sexually and they do it, that means they will always do it because they really want to.

9. When a young child has sex with an adult, it helps the child learn how to relate to adults in the future.

---

10 Most children 13 (or younger) would enjoy having sex with an adult, and it wouldn’t harm the child in the future.

11 Children don’t tell others about having sex with a parent (or other adult) because they like it and want to continue.

12 Sometime in the future, our society will realize that sex between a child and an adult is all right.

13 An adult can tell if having sex with a young child will emotionally damage the child in the future.

14 An adult just feeling a child’s body all over without touching her (his) genitals is not really being sexual with the child.

15 I show my love and affection to a child by having sex with her (him).

16 It’s better to have sex with your child (or someone else’s child) than to have an affair.

17 An adult fondling a young child or having the child fondle the adult will not cause the child any harm.

18 A child will never have sex with an adult unless the child really wants to.

19 My daughter (son) or other young child knows that I will still love her (him) even if she (he) refuses to be sexual with me.

20 When a young child asks an adult about sex, it means that she (he) wants to see the adult’s sex organs or have sex with the adult.

21 If an adult has sex with a young child it prevents the child from having sexual hang-ups in the future.

22 When a young child walks in front of me with no or only a few clothes on, she (he) is trying to arouse me.

23 My relationship with my daughter (son) or other child is strengthened by the fact that we have sex together.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>If a child has sex with an adult, the child will look back at the experience as an adult and see it as a positive experience.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The only way I could do harm to a child when having sex with her (him) would be to use physical force to get her (him) to have sex with me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>When children watch an adult masturbate, it helps the child learn about sex.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>An adult can know just how much sex between him (her) and a child will hurt the child later on.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>If a person is attracted to sex with children, he (she) should solve that problem themselves and not talk to professionals.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please reread each item and this time place an “X” over the number which corresponds with the way you would have answered it before others (family, friends, the police) became aware of your deviant behavior.
**BURT RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE SCALE**

For the statements that follow, please circle the number that best indicates your opinion - what you believe. If you strongly disagree you would answer “1”; if you strongly agree you would answer “7”; if you feel neutral you would answer “4” and so on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.
2. Any female can be raped.
3. One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves.
4. Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.
5. When women go aground bra-less or wearing short skirts or tight tops, they are just looking for trouble.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>If a woman gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she’s just met there, she should be considered “fair game” to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.

Circle the number that shows what fraction you believe to be true. Please use the following key to answer the next two questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 What percentage of women who report a rape would you say are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the many they accuse?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Almost All</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>Many</th>
<th>About Half</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Few</th>
<th>Almost None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 What percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Almost All</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>Many</th>
<th>About Half</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Few</th>
<th>Almost None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please use the following key to answer the next six questions. A person comes to you and claims they were raped. How likely would you believe their statement if the person were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Half the Time</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Your best friend?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 An Indian woman?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 A neighbor woman?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 A young boy?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 A Black woman?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 A White woman?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read each statement carefully and circle the answer which best represents your feelings about the statement.

If you completely agree - Circle 5
If you somewhat agree - Circle 4
If you neither agree nor disagree - Circle 3
If you somewhat disagree - Circle 2
If you completely disagree - Circle 1

**Sexual Entitlement**

1. A person should have sex whenever it is needed. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Women should oblige men’s sexual needs. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Everyone is entitled to sex. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Sex must be enjoyed by both parties. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Men need sex more than women do. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I have a higher sex drive than most people. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I am often bothered by thoughts of having sex. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I have no trouble going without sex if my partner is not interested. 1 2 3 4 5
9. A man who is denied sex suffers more than a woman who has sex when she does not want it. 1 2 3 4 5

**Sexy Children**

1. Some children are mature enough to enjoy sex with adults. 1 2 3 4 5
2. An eight-year-old child can enjoy good sex. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Some children like to sexually tease me. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Some children are so willing to have sex that it is difficult to stay away from them. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Young boys want sex as much as adult men do. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Young girls want sex as much as adult women do. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Children are often able to understand an adult’s needs better than other adults can. 1 2 3 4 5
8. The innocent look of young girls makes them attractive. 1 2 3 4 5

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3 By R. Karl Hanson, (1992) Corrections Branch, Ministry Secretariat, The lack of hair makes children’s bodies attractive. Solicitor General Canada
9  The lack of hair makes children’s bodies attractive.

10  Children don’t tell others about sexual activity because they do not want it to stop.

11  A child who does not resist sexual touching really feels OK about being touched.

12  If a child does not say “no”, it means the child wants sex.
READING ASSIGNMENT
Read Chapter 5 ("Values Clarification") in Why Did I Do It Again?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Review the statements in the S.O.B. and "Rationalization List or Excuses To Offend" that you marked as applying to you. Identify at least 10 statements or beliefs that represent thoughts or beliefs that could "set you up" to re-offend.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10.
2. Identify the five items on the Bumby Cognitive Distortions Scales to which you gave the highest ratings. Copy each of these five items below. Indicate whether such a thought or belief would: 1) increase; 2) decrease; or 3) have no effect on your chances of re-offending by circling the appropriate word(s). Finally explain why you think this belief or thought would have this effect.

a. ITEM:
   This belief would: Increase, Decrease, Have No Effect on my chances to re-offend
   Because:

b. ITEM:
   This belief would: Increase, Decrease, Have No Effect on my chances to re-offend
   Because:

c. ITEM:
   This belief would: Increase, Decrease, Have No Effect on my chances to re-offend
   Because:

d. ITEM:
   This belief would: Increase, Decrease, Have No Effect on my chances to re-offend
   Because:

e. ITEM:
   This belief would: Increase, Decrease, Have No Effect on my chances to re-offend
   Because:
3. On the left-hand column write all the positive values you have in your life, and on the right-hand column write all the negative values you have in your life. Consider values you have had about work, relationships, children, money, sex, drugs, cars, travel, excitement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE VALUES</th>
<th>NEGATIVE VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: “I work hard”</td>
<td>“I enjoy using drugs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>POSITIVE VALUES</td>
<td>NEGATIVE VALUES</td>
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<td>28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. On the next several pages is a list of value-laden terms. For each term, consider its importance in your life. In column 2, briefly describe the value you place on it. Consider your behavior when you think about your values. For example, it is illogical to describe yourself as hating violence or thinking it is "wrong" if you get into a lot of fights or find yourself frequently threatening harm to others. Similarly, it makes no sense to indicate that TV is a waste of time if you spend several hours a day watching the tube. In the third column, therefore, describe your typical behavior that demonstrates this value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>VALUE STATEMENT</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUCCESS</td>
<td>It is important to be successful</td>
<td>I work and study hard so I can get a good job in civilian life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>THERAPY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GAMBLING</td>
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<td>MURDER</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRISON</td>
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<td>TV</td>
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<td>MOVIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSIC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WORK</td>
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<tr>
<td>FELLATIO</td>
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<tr>
<td>TERM</td>
<td>VALUE STATEMENT</td>
<td>BEHAVIOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOVER</td>
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<td>RAPE</td>
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<td>DRUGS</td>
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<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
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<td>VIOLENCE</td>
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<td>STABILITY</td>
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<td>SLEEP</td>
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<td>CUNNINGLINGUS</td>
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<td>CARS</td>
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<td>RELIGION</td>
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<td>CHILD MOLESTING</td>
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<td>EDUCATION</td>
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<td>POLITICIANS</td>
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<tr>
<td>TERM</td>
<td>VALUE STATEMENT</td>
<td>BEHAVIOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECURITY</td>
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<td>FAITHFULNESS</td>
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<td>EXERCISE</td>
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<td>CHILDREN</td>
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<td>HOUSE</td>
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<td>MINISTERS (PRIESTS)</td>
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<td>LOVE</td>
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<td>DRIVING</td>
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<td>WOMEN</td>
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<td>READING</td>
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<td>EXCITEMENT</td>
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<td>MONEY</td>
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<td>ALCOHOL</td>
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<td>TERM</td>
<td>VALUE STATEMENT</td>
<td>BEHAVIOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRIENDSHIP</td>
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<td>ART</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXERCISE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. Review the list you completed above and consider any other values that you may presently hold in your life. In the space below, identify at least one value that you would want to change. Describe the value, and how you would have to act or behave differently to reflect a change in the value.
In the previous section, you examined the role that beliefs, values, and mind-sets play in determining your behavior. The exercises, hopefully, also helped you analyze how your behavior can help identify some of your underlying beliefs. Remember thinking and behavior go hand-in-hand.

Distorted thinking leads to unproductive and unhealthy behavior. In the previous section, you reviewed a number of cognitive distortions and rationalizations for abusing someone sexually. Thoughts and ideas are seldom isolated or discrete. They are linked to other thoughts which, in turn, are still linked to more thoughts. Thus, these links become a chain of thought. Each thought is a response to the previous thought and serves to stimulate the next thought and so on.

Each idea is slightly different and leads to the next idea. Some ideas are "big" ideas, some are "small" ideas. Each plays an important role in spawning the next idea. Each step leads up to another thought, which steps to another thought; much like climbing stairs or a mountain.
Many offenders are not aware of the various steps their thinking took to get them to the point that they thought about raping or molesting. Certainly most offenders are not aware of all of the steps or thoughts in this process. It is not unusual for offenders to say, "I never thought about molesting (or raping), it just happened". Or, you may hear "this was the first time I ever thought about it". It's as if the thought came out of the clear blue sky. Such thoughts never come out of the sky like a lightening bolt. Rather, they are endpoints of a long series of chain of thoughts. Usually this chain of thinking has been progressing for many weeks, months, or (more likely) years. The thoughts that led you to commit a sex offense needed to develop over a long period of time.

**THOUGHT - BY - THOUGHT**

The following is an example of a sex offender's thoughts leading up to his offense. His crime was molesting a neighbor girl. When he first described his offense, he told the staff that he just had a neighbor girl spend the night with his boys and she slept in his bed. He went to kiss her good night and the next thing that happened was he had molested her. Sex offenses do not just happen. This individual had over 200 thoughts that led to his crime. The following is a condensed version of his thought-by-thought.

1. There she goes again, my wife getting all fixed up to go out tonight.
2. If I could only be more exciting and attractive, she would stay home.
3. I want my wife to be with me tonight.
4. She is always leaving me here to be her baby sitter.
5. I have almost got to the point of begging her to stay home, but she'd rather go out.
6. I know, I will suggest a back rub for her and her favorite video to rent.
7. No, I'm not going to ask because she will say what she always says. That she needs a break from the kids and she has the right to go out and have some fun.
8. I wonder what time she will come home tonight.
9. She makes me so mad when she doesn't come home until the wee hours of the morning.
10. She says she is with other girlfriends and not with men, but I know the kind of ladies that she hangs around with.
11. I wonder whom she dances with.
12. The men that she dances with are probably younger and better looking.
13. Well, she's about ready to leave.
14. She makes me so angry, she's wearing that short skirt again.
15. I hate it when she dresses up like that.
16. She is leaving me again. Why can't she just stay home once!
17. She is gone, I might as well have fun with the kids tonight because their mother sure doesn't care.
18. What can I do with the boys tonight?
19. Maybe take them out for pizza and a movie.
20. I know, I could have the neighbor girl Annie join us for pizza.
21. I know my boys love it when Annie comes over to play.
22. I'll have my son call Annie while I get dressed to go out.
23. See tonight won't be so bad after all.
24. When I think about Annie, she automatically puts me in a better mood.
25. I wish Annie was one of mine, her father doesn't pay any attention to his daughter.
26. I think I will get a carry out pizza so we can come straight home and rent a Disney flick.
27. There's nothing better than cuddling up on the couch with kids and watching movies.
28. I wonder if the boys are going to mind if Annie comes along.
29. My boys have been complaining lately about always inviting Annie to come over.
30. Next time I will spend some good quality time with just the boys.
31. I need to think of a good excuse to have Annie sit by me in the car.
32. I know the boys like to sit by the window, so they can sit by the window while Annie sits next to me.
33. This is great! Annie has a dress on.
34. I think I will start the tickle game while we're driving to the pizza place.
35. I sure enjoy having Annie next to me.
36. Annie enjoys giving me hugs.
37. Sometimes I feel strange when Annie gives me a hug in public places.
38. I enjoy picking up Annie to help her get out of the truck.
39. I need to be more careful that nobody is watching me.
40. I don't need to worry about people watching me; I am taking care of my neighbor.
41. Annie's Dad doesn't give her enough attention like I do.
42. We are almost home, and I'm going to spend another evening with Annie.
43. I think I will have Annie sit on my lap while we're watching the movie.
44. When we get home I will call Annie's Dad and tell him the boys want Annie to spend the night.
45. I will give Annie a horsy ride back into the house and the boys can carry the pizza.
46. I need to close all the blinds and double lock all the doors. I will lock the screen door just in case my wife comes home early. I can always say the boys accidentally locked the screen door.
47. Annie's Dad told me he will be spending the night at his girlfriend's house and he will pick her up in the afternoon. He said it was okay for her to wear my wife's T-shirt for pajamas.

48. I will tell the boys to go get their pajamas on while I will
to my bedroom to find a T-shirt for her.

49. This is scary, I have her in my bedroom again; I will leave her alone and wait in the living room for her.

50. I will have Annie sit on my lap.

51. Annie makes me forget about my problems.

52. Let's play the tickle game again.

53. Annie enjoys it when I tickle her.

54. Her dad never gives her any attention.

55. I love Annie.

56. I wish she could be mine.

57. I often think what it would be like if she were 18 instead of 8.

58. I like to dream that she was my wife.

59. I will offer the kids some ice cream.

60. I like to watch Annie lick her ice cream.

61. I need to wash that cute messy ice cream face.

62. I like taking care of Annie.

63. I think I will start a wrestling match with the kids.

64. OH NO! I hear a car in the driveway.

65. That was close, it was someone just turning around.

66. I don't know why I have to worry; I'm not doing anything wrong.

67. Instead of wrestling I will watch TV with the kids.

68. It's getting late; the kids are falling asleep through the movie.

69. I will send the boys to their room to go to sleep.

70. I will have Annie sleep in my bed and I will sleep on the couch.

71. I will carry Annie into my bed and tuck her in.

72. I will hold her awhile until she falls asleep.

73. It feels so good to hold her.

74. I want time to stand still.

75. I wonder if the boys are asleep yet.

Clearly, the thought-by-thought demonstrates that this offense didn't just happen. A whole series of thoughts led up to the eventual molest of Annie. By identifying all of these thoughts, the offender was able to recognize and take fuller responsibility for molesting Annie. He also was able to understand this was his intent from very early in the evening. He identified the way he was using Annie to attempt to fulfill many of the needs that were not being met in his relationship with his wife.

By finding each of the steps in your chain of thoughts that leads to a sex offense, you will be able to identify high-risk thinking patterns. These high-risk thoughts indicate that you are in your offense pattern and they increase the likelihood that you will re-offend. Such thoughts should be red flags that you need to modify your thinking so you can avoid sexually abusing someone again. Therefore, it is important that you become familiar with the high-risk thoughts and thinking patterns that are specific to you, so that you can quickly correct this thinking in the future.
READING ASSIGNMENT
Read Chapter 6 ("Links and Chains that Maintain Your Cycle") in Why Did I Do It Again?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. On the following pages complete a thought-by-thought for your last sexual offense. Begin by identifying as many relevant thoughts that came before the crime as possible. Relevant thoughts are those that increased the likelihood that the offense would occur. You may want to do several rough drafts on a separate piece of paper before entering it into this workbook

Some helpful hints:

a. End your thought-by-thought before the graphic part of your crime.
b. Work in pairs. You may become aroused when considering your thinking that led up to the crime. Please talk with another group member or therapist when this occurs.
c. You may have 3 or 4 rough drafts before you finish.
d. If you do not have 150-200 thoughts leading up to your crime, you are not being specific enough. Seek help from other group members or your therapists if necessary.
e. Many offenders do not like all the negative feelings associated with this assignment, but when you have completed it you will have taken a step in the right direction to reducing the chances you will ever re-offend again.

THOUGHT-BY-THOUGHT
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THOUGHT-BY-THOUGHT
You probably have a number of common misperceptions or beliefs which you use to justify your actions. Sometimes these beliefs are held prior to ever committing a sexual crime. In this instance, you used them as a justification to allow yourself to act upon your urges. Other times, you may use these justifications after the crime to excuse your behavior and reduce the guilt or shame you may experience. Unless you are able to successfully challenge and modify these beliefs, they will continue to pose a major risk for re-offending.

You may wonder how it is you can be expected to change something you believe in. You view your thoughts as involuntary and not under your control. Nothing could be further from the truth! It is not up to your therapists to change your thoughts. Instead, it is up to you to identify which thoughts are high-risk and go about the process of changing them.

You can change your beliefs and your thoughts in a variety of ways. You might think about various times in your past when you changed an idea that you first held. For example, maybe you met someone that at first you didn’t particularly care for or like. Maybe you didn’t trust him. As time went on, however, you became very good friends and found him or her to be very trustworthy. Or, perhaps, you experienced the reverse situation. At first you met someone you really liked, only to change your mind later and decide he or she was not someone to be trusted. Did the personality of this individual really change? Possibly, but probably it was your thinking about him or her that changed. More than likely you can point to particular events that helped change your mind about the person. These events represented new information that you were not aware of previously. Therefore, in order to change thinking you must be willing to openly examine and criticize your own thoughts and beliefs. This involves taking in and processing new information.

Following is a list of beliefs and myths reported by many sex offenders. A myth is a false belief. It is a story or fantasy that has no basis in fact. You may remember some of these types of statements from the inventories and scales you completed in Section 5 of this module. Some, although not all, of these myths are likely to apply to you either now or when you were offending. That is, you may recognize some of the things that you said to either give yourself permission prior to acting on your urges to sexually abuse or that you told yourself afterwards to excuse away your behavior. With each statement is a brief description that attempts to
indicate why it is untrue. Because the attempt to challenge each statement is not exhaustive, you will want to think of additional reasons why these statements are false. If you find yourself arguing with the "challenges", you might ask yourself why you are holding onto some beliefs and myths that have obviously resulted in harming not only other people but yourself as well. Often times this may be an attempt to relieve yourself of the shame of having hurt and injured another.

25 COMMON SEX OFFENDER MYTHS

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MYTH #1: “IF A YOUNG CHILD STARES AT MY GENITALS, IT MEANS THE CHILD LIKES WHAT HE OR SHE SEES AND IS ENJOYING WATCHING MY GENITALS.”

In reality, children look at any strange behavior, be it fires in buildings, accidents, or men exposing themselves. Anything that is bizarre is temporarily attended to by a child. Children are naturally curious. Fascination does not mean enjoyment.

MYTH #2: “A MAN IS JUSTIFIED IN HAVING SEX WITH HIS CHILDREN OR STEP-CHILDREN IF HIS WIFE DOESN'T LIKE SEX.”

Children are not property. Just because your wife doesn't like sex does not mean you have any right to obtain sex in any way that you want.

MYTH #3: “CHILDREN (INCLUDING ADOLESCENTS) CAN MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS AS TO WHETHER THEY WANT TO HAVE SEX OR NOT.”

Children cannot make informed decisions about sex. They don’t have the cognitive or intellectual development that allows them to make informed choices. It is doubtful that a responsible adult would give his credit card to a child and feel that he or she will make good decisions that will not be later regretted. That is why there are age limits on a number of privileges in our society. Children are not allowed to drink, to vote, enter into contracts, or to join the military until they have reached a certain age because these are seen as important decisions with serious ramifications. Is the decision to have sex with, its serious consequences (sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, etc.), any less important?
MYTH #4:  “IN MANY CULTURES SEX WITH CHILDREN IS ACCEPTED. IT IS ONLY OUR PURITANICAL Backgrounds THAT PREVENT SEX BETWEEN CHILDREN AND ADULTS.”

You are not in another society, but one in which sex with children is not tolerated. If you choose to live in this society, you must deal with the rules and laws that govern it. Instead of moving towards liberalizing these laws, the laws against child molestation are becoming more stringent as the long-term harm to children is becoming better understood. Many cultures have different beliefs that are not particularly healthy either emotionally or physically, it doesn’t mean that we should emulate those unhealthy practices.

MYTH #5: “A CHILD WHO DOESN'T PHYSICALLY RESIST AN ADULT'S SEXUAL ADVANCES, REALLY WANTS TO HAVE SEX WITH THE ADULT.”

Children have been taught all of their lives to respect the wishes of adults and always do what adults tell them to do. This is their experience in the family and while they attend grade school and high school. Because of this difference in power between adults and children, they have learned not to physically resist. Furthermore, their small size makes it exceedingly unlikely that they would attempt to physically resist an adult.

MYTH #6: “IF A CHILD FLIRTS WITH AN ADULT IT MEANS HE OR SHE WANTS TO HAVE SEX WITH THE ADULT.”

Our society encourages children to be friendly with others. This does not mean, for example, that a 13-year-old is aware that smiling to a child molester might be perceived by him as a request to have sex. Children only become aware of this after they have been victimized.

MYTH #7: “IT IS POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WHICH CHILDREN WILL BE HARMED BY BEING MOLESTED.”

Even experts in the field of child development and psychology are unable to tell which children will be harmed the most and in what way after they have been sexually abused. It is clearly impossible to determine ahead of time who is going to be harmed by sexual exploitation.
MYTH #8:  “WOMEN WHO DRESS IN A SEXUALLY PROVOCATIVE WAY ARE JUST ASKING TO HAVE SEX”

What is "revealing" or not is a judgment call. Women are more free today to dress comfortably. It is impossible to "mind read" what a woman was thinking when she got dressed on any given day. Even if she intentionally dressed seductively, it didn’t mean that she wanted to have sex with you.

MYTH #9:  “WOMEN WHO HITCHHIKE ARE ASKING TO BE RAPED.”

There can be many reasons to hitchhike, not the least of which is that there is no other available means of transportation. Would you say that any man who hitchhikes is asking to be beat up, mugged, raped or killed?

MYTH #10:  “HAVING SEX WITH A CHILD IS A GOOD WAY FOR AN ADULT TO TEACH THE CHILD ABOUT HAVING SEX.”

Teaching sexual behavior should occur in an open format, in front of others and with the showing of teaching material to the child and other children. It should be done in front of families of the children involved. In this way, information can be clearly understood and appreciated by the child and the family member who will answer questions in the future related to sexual material. "Teaching" by molesting is indicating to the child that sex must be kept a big secret, that more powerful figures can take advantage of less powerful people sexually, and that sex is something to be ashamed of. These are not the healthy messages to be conveyed to children about sex.

MYTH #11:  “A WOMAN WHO IS GETTING SEXUALLY AROUSED WANTS TO HAVE SEX AND CAN’T BE RAPED.”

The decision to have sex is not only a physical one. It also involves thoughts and feelings. Every time a man gets an erection it doesn’t mean that he wants to have sex.

MYTH #12:  “WHEN A CHILD HAS SEX WITH AN ADULT, IT HELPS THAT CHILD TO LEARN HOW TO RELATE TO ADULTS IN THE FUTURE.”

Most children report that being fondled or molested by an adult is a distasteful experience. It taught them to be fearful and frightened of adults. As a consequence, many avoid sexual activities in the future or have serious sexual problems (promiscuity, frigidity, impotence) because of the distorted lessons they learned from their sexual abuse experiences.
MYTH #13: “AN ADULT JUST FEELING A CHILD’S BODY ALL OVER WITHOUT TOUCHING HER (HIS) GENITALS IS NOT REALLY BEING SEXUAL WITH THE CHILD.”

If the intent of the molester is to become sexually aroused by carrying out the behavior then the activity is sexual. Whether it be exposing your genitals to the child, showing pornographic literature to children, talking with them in sexual ways, or touching their bodies, the fact that you are seeking sexual satisfactions is evidence that the activity is sexual. The fact that most molesters have erections during this behavior further proves this point.

MYTH #14: “MOST WOMEN HARBOR FANTASIES ABOUT BEING RAPED.”

Although some women may have such fantasies, most do not. Among those few women who report such fantasies, it would be pleasurable in only a role-playing context. Almost no women report having received sexual gratification from being raped.

MYTH #15: “IF I TELL A CHILD WHAT TO DO SEXUALLY AND THEY DO IT, THAT MEANS THAT THEY WANTED TO DO IT”

Again, children are taught to mind adults throughout their lives. How many times were we told as children, ”mind your elders”? Children often do things not because they want to, but because an adult tells them to.

MYTH #16: “I SHOW LOVE AND AFFECTION TO A CHILD BY HAVING SEX WITH HER OR HIM.”

If children are taught that being sexual is the way one expresses love and affection, then they will learn they should have sex with anyone they love or feel affection for. In reality, adults having sexual activities with children will cause the child to feel greater dislike of the adult; ultimately less expression of love and affection will actually occur.

MYTH #17: “IF I MOLEST A SLEEPING CHILD THEY WILL NOT BE HARMED BECAUSE THEY WON'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.”

There is no way to insure that the child is really asleep. Many children report faking being asleep, hoping the offender will leave them alone.
MYTH #18: “IT IS BETTER TO HAVE SEX WITH A CHILD THAN TO HAVE AN AFFAIR.”

Why? Because the child can’t consent or resist? This makes no sense at all. When would it be better to go out and commit a crime than have an affair with a consenting adult?

MYTH #19: “AS LONG AS A WOMAN IS NOT PHYSICALLY INJURED OR HARMED, THEN HER TRAUMA AFTER A RAPE WILL NOT BE AS GREAT.”

Emotional scars are often more difficult to heal than are physical wounds and bruises.

MYTH #20: “IF AN ADULT HAS SEX WITH A YOUNG CHILD, IT PREVENTS THE CHILD FROM HAVING SEXUAL HANG-UPS IN THE FUTURE.”

Just the opposite is true. Recent research indicates that at least 80% of women who have been molested as children have major sexual problems as a result of being a victim of sexual assault.

MYTH #21 “MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILD IS STRENGTHENED BY THE FACT THAT WE HAVE SEX TOGETHER.”

What the child is learning is that you can be abusive and are likely to put your own needs above his or hers. Because the child is learning that your attention and affection are only directed at them because it allows you to fulfill your sexual needs, it is difficult to believe that she or he is feeling closer to you. You may "feel" closer to the child, but don't fool yourself into believing those feelings are reciprocated. Most children who were molested want little to do with the perpetrator (even if it was a parent) in their later, adult lives.

MYTH #22: “WOMEN WHO GET DRUNK OR INTOXICATED ON DRUGS ARE JUST ASKING TO BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF SEXUALLY. THEY ARE JUST ALLOWING THEIR INHIBITIONS TO GO AWAY.”

While it is true that drugs and alcohol serve as take away inhibitions, women do not report wanting to be raped drunk or sober. Someone who is drunk or high cannot make informed choices. If she wasn’t willing to have sex with you when she had all her wits about her, what makes you think she will be glad that she did when she is sober again?
### MYTH #23: “WHEN A CHILD WALKS IN FRONT OF ME WITH NO OR ONLY A FEW CLOTHES ON, SHE (HE) IS TRYING TO AROUSE ME.”

Children do not make the same connection as adults about what may be sexually arousing. Their own bodies have not sufficiently developed and their experience in exploring their own physical reactions is more limited than that of an adult. Consequently, attributing adult motivations to children when it comes to the area of sex is always faulty. Even making such an attribution to another adult would be extremely difficult and likely lead one to be wrong as often as right.

### MYTH #24: “ONCE A CHILD IS DEVELOPING PHYSICALLY (BREASTS, PUBIC HAIR, ETC.) IT MEANS THEY ARE OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE SEX.”

Sexual contact is as much a mental and emotional matter as physical. Children are often confused about the development of their own bodies. Sex at this stage, especially with a mature adult, only compounds this state of confusion, adding significant turmoil.

### MYTH #25: “I HAD SEX WITH AN ADULT WHEN I WAS A CHILD AND IT DIDN'T HURT ME.”

Most sex offenders who were molested as children report a connection between their own abuse and their careers in abusing others. That is not to say that all sex offenders were molested or that all children who are sexually victimized will abuse others. It is, however, one pathway to becoming an abuser of others in later life.

**READING ASSIGNMENT**
Read Chapter 7 ("Your Deviant Cycle: Putting It All Together") in Why Did I Do It Again?

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

1. Identify 5 cognitive distortions (justifications, or excuses) that you used in the past or presently use that serve(d) as a set up for sexual assault. After each cognitive distortion, provide information about why this is not true. In other words, practice arguing and challenging yourself out of the justification that you use(d).

**COGNITIVE DISTORTION #1:**

Reason this distortion is **not** true:

**COGNITIVE DISTORTION #2:**

Reason this distortion is **not** true:

**COGNITIVE DISTORTION #3**

Reason this distortion is **not** true:

**COGNITIVE DISTORTION #4**

Reason this distortion is **not** true:

**COGNITIVE DISTORTION #5**

Reason this distortion is **not** true:
2. Based on your most recent sex offense, describe the behaviors, thoughts and feelings of the *Pretend-Normal, Build-Up, Acting-Out, and Justification* phases that were described in your reading assignment. Put each characteristic in the appropriate quadrant of the cycle provided below.