

# Community Notification: The Importance of Individualized Sex Offender Assessment

Sheri J. Flynn, MS, LSW &  
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# Arkansas Process

- ▶ Registration requires assessment by the Sex Offender Community Notification Assessment Program (SOCNA).
- ▶ Leads the nation in approach to sex offender assessment as recommended by the federal government and professional organizations



# SOCNA is:

- ▶ Part of the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC).
- ▶ Overseen by nine member governor appointed Sex Offender Assessment Committee (SOAC).
- ▶ Assesses ALL registered sex offenders.
- ▶ Assigns Community Notification Levels 1–4.

# What Is the Purpose of Community Notification?

- ▶ SOSRA strives to provide *accurate* and *detailed* information to local law enforcement officers, who conduct CN and supervise offenders in their communities.
- ▶ Our hope is to help target limited resources toward those who most need them.

# However,

- ▶ Over the years, SOCNA assessments have been used in additional ways including:
  - DHS/CACD investigations & custody proceedings.
  - Prosecutors – New sex offense and failure to register prosecutions.
  - Prosecutors, Defense Attorneys and Court – Termination of registration hearings in circuit court.
  - Treatment providers (ADC & Community)
  - Arkansas Parole Board
  - ACC– Level 3 & 4 Parolees

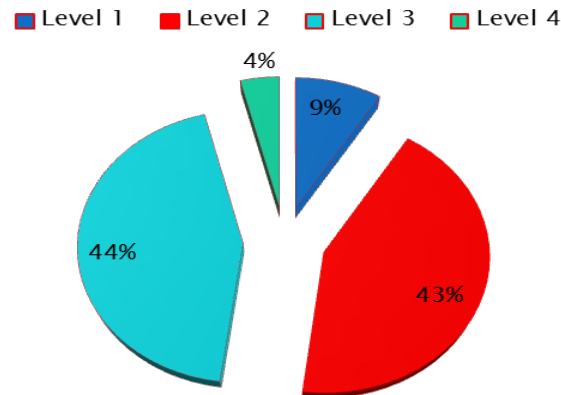
# Facts

- ▶ Recidivism rates for sex offenders in general are not any higher than other criminal offenses.
- ▶ Certain subgroups of sex offenders re-offend at higher rates.
- ▶ We need to know what kind of offender we are assessing.
- ▶ Treating low risk offenders with high levels of intervention makes them worse and wastes resources

# SOCNA Numbers

- ▶ Began assessing offenders in the fall of 1999.
- ▶ Developed to provide expertise in assessment and uniformity across the state.
- ▶ Through July 21, 2015, SOCNA has conducted 13,264 assessments.

Level 1 – 4 Sept. 1999–December 2014



# Why have individualized assessment & rank offenders?


- ▶ Not all sex offenders reoffend
- ▶ Sex offenders present varying levels of risk
- ▶ Some sex offenders are particularly dangerous
- ▶ Allows us to better monitor and conserve resources
- ▶ High Risk = High Supervision / Treatment Intensity
- ▶ Low Risk = Lower Supervision / intensity of services



# What Is A Sex Offender?

# Examples of Registrants in Arkansas

- ▶ Sexual contact with children
- ▶ Forced rape with teens/adults
- ▶ “Consensual” sex between 18/19-year-olds and 15-year-olds (Statutory offenders)
- ▶ Flashers, peepers
- ▶ Giving HIV
- ▶ Stalkers
- ▶ Failure to protect Child Pornographers/ Internet Stalkers
- ▶ Bestiality
- ▶ False Imprisonment
- ▶ Unable to consent
  - Teachers, inmates, MR

SEX OFFENDER FACT SHEET	
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>RICHARD GERE   JULIA ROBERTS</p> <p><b>PRETTY WOMAN</b></p> </div> <p><b>Photo Date:</b> 12-06-02  <b>State Police ID #:</b> 9999999  <b>CSN #:</b> 9999999</p>	<b>Offender Name:</b> Vivian Ward <b>ADC#:</b> 999999
	<b>Aliases:</b> "Harry"
	<b>Social Security #:</b> 999-99-9999 <b>Fingerprint Code/Class:</b> XXXXOOXXOOXXOOXXOOXX
	<b>Driver's License #:</b> 999999999
	<b>Date Of Birth:</b> 9-99-99**
	<b>Height:</b> 5'10" <b>Weight:</b> 135 <b>Race:</b> Caucasian
	<b>Hair Color:</b> Auburn <b>Eye Color:</b> Brown
	<b>Scars, Marks, or Tattoos:</b> 6" Scar/Chest; Tattoo: Eagle/R. Arm.
	<b>Date of DNA Sample:</b> 11-6-03
	<b>Assessment Date:</b> 1-6-03
<b>Anticipated Legal Address:</b> Rt. 6, Box 56; No Where, AR 10000 <b>Date Last Verified (ACIC):</b> 6-23-03	
<b>Temporary Address (if applicable):</b> ADC    Cummins Unit	
<b>Probation/Parole Office:</b> NA    (Will have City, State and Phone Number)	
<b>Place of Employment:</b> NA    (Will list employer's name, City and State)	
<b>Description of Crime:</b> This offender was convicted of Sexual Abuse-First Degree on 2-3-98. This offense involved the offender engaging in sexual contact with a 14 year-old female.	
<b>Criminal History – Sexual/Violence:</b> Rape; Assault.    Contact ACIC for additional criminal history.	
<b>Victim Preferences:</b> Victim was an adolescent female.	
<b>Community Notification Level:</b> 3	
<b>Notification for this offender may need to increase, if the offender engages in any of the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug or alcohol use</li> <li>• Failing to maintain employment; Unstructured free time</li> <li>• Failing to maintain a stable residence</li> <li>• Having access to the Internet</li> <li>• Failing to comply with state registration laws and supervision</li> <li>• Failing to complete sex offender treatment</li> <li>• Associating with felons or others known to engage in criminal activity</li> </ul>	
<b>Treatment History:</b> Offender reports substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment and sex offender treatment.	

Additional information may be obtained from the Arkansas Department of Correction  
 Sex Offender Screening and Risk Assessment Program  
 \*\*Contact ACIC/NCIC for additional Social Security Numbers and Dates of Birth\*\*

# An Assessment May Include

- ▶ Review of historical data
- ▶ Interview with the offender
- ▶ Truth Verification (Polygraph/CVSA)
- ▶ Appropriate Actuarial Instruments
- ▶ Psychological testing, as deemed necessary

# Sex offender risk assessment

- ▶ Offender age
- ▶ Offender's lack of relationship history
- ▶ History of violence
- ▶ Number of sex offense charges/convictions
- ▶ Unrelated victims
- ▶ Stranger victims
- ▶ Male victims
- ▶ Overall criminal history
- ▶ Convictions for paraphilic “hands-off” offenses

# Benefits of individualized assessment?

- ▶ Community being notified of problematic offenders is the obvious
- ▶ Offender
  - Being more open with partners
  - Open with employers
  - Getting in/staying in treatment
  - Better chances of successful re-entry for lower risk offenders
  - Knows he is being monitored
- ▶ Law enforcement:
  - Has a ready database for investigating new crimes
- ▶ Prevention?
  - Dialogue about sex crimes/community education

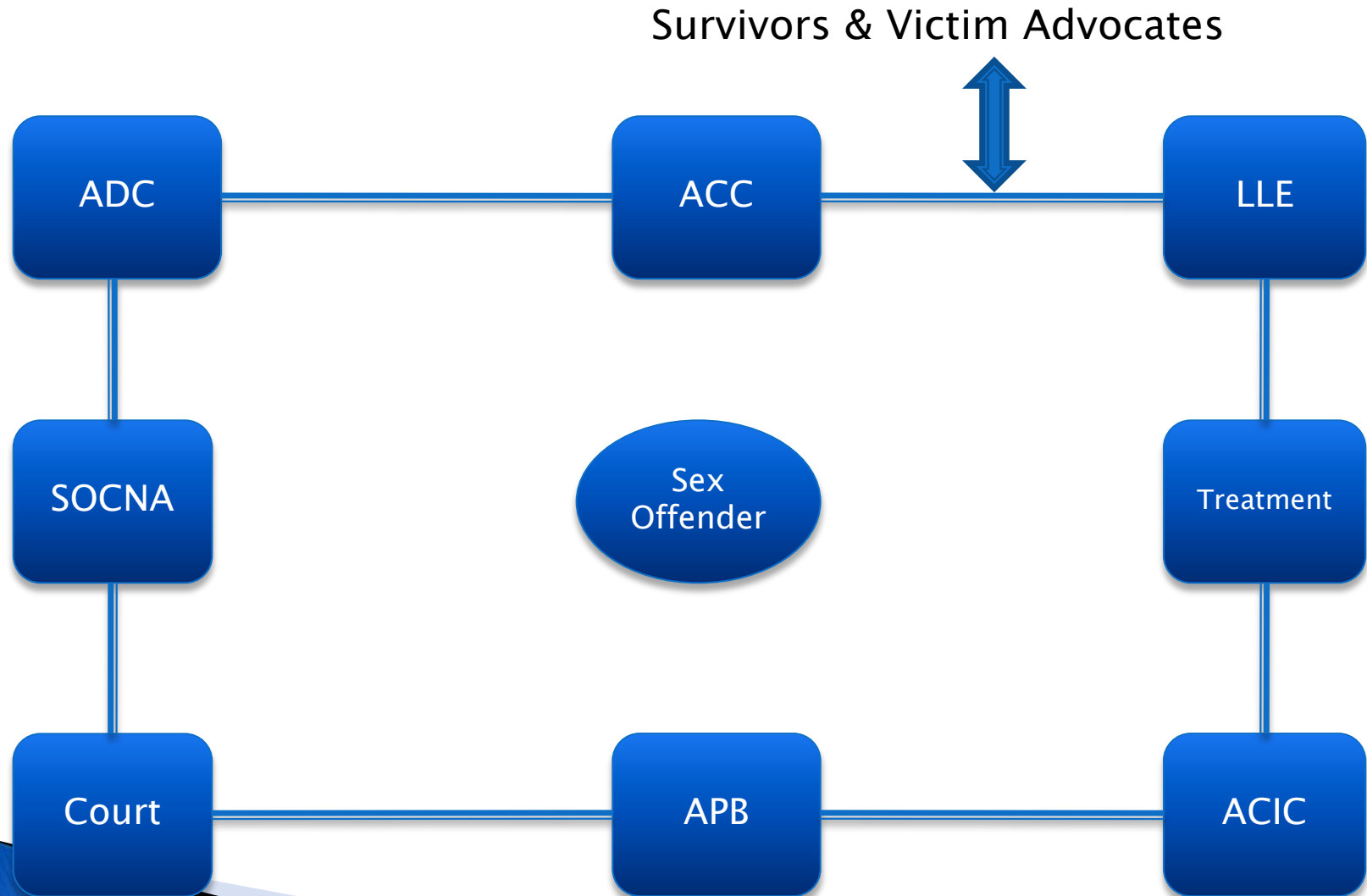
# There is No One Solution

- ▶ Electronic Monitoring will not stop offending by predatory pedophiles. (and very expen\$ive)



- ▶ Residency restrictions are not likely to stop the majority of sex offenses, as they are committed by people victims know and often love.
- ▶ Perhaps child safety zones are better?

# Sex Offender Management Is The Goal



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# Contact Information

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