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## **Understanding Sex Offenders – The Hunter & The Hunted**

We can learn a great deal from successful people who hunt animals by examining the way in which they master their skill. The most successful understand and can predict the behavior and the environment of their prey. A good hunter will mask their smell, blend into the background and replicate a “safe” environment to lower defenses thus increasing the chances of hitting their mark.

Sex Offenders are hunters who hunt people. Successful sex offenders can “blend into” society with great success. They master the culture, the language and the interests of those that they are hunting. They maintain public personas that are flawless, detailed and designed to lower suspicion. Sex Offenders ply their trade in secret and are talented in the art of deception. They have a great capacity to fool, not only their victims, but also their families, their friends, mental health and criminal justice professionals. Sex offenders are extremely cunning and extremely effective in their criminal activity.

This presentation will explore many societal myths that enable the sex offender to operate successfully among us all without suspicion and detection. We will discuss how they deceive, why they do what they do, and how we can peer through the fog and identify them and their horrific acts.

Participants will be presented up-to-date research, case studies, and strategies on understanding sex offenders from a criminal justice viewpoint. This session will take what we've been taught about typical offender typologies and compare what we think we know with empirical research and current state of knowledge.

This contrast and comparison will facilitate a better understanding of all professionals who work with adult and child victims of sex offenders and of the sex offenders themselves. We are not as safe as we think. What we don't know will hurt us...and those we try to protect.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Understand the prevalence of sexual violence and identify common sex offender behaviors and motives for their crimes
- Determine the danger sex offenders pose to our society by understanding the true nature of their crimes
- Explore why Sex Offenders are able to thrive in our current culture
- Explore strategies to reduce the risk sex offenders pose to our communities