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## **Perceptions & Stereotypes of Female Sex Offenders**

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## Perceptions & Stereotypes of Female Sex Offenders

### Abstract

For generations, sexual abuse has been viewed as a silent crime as it is often kept a secret. In 2018, the NCVS estimates there were 734,640 incidents of sexual assault in the U.S. but only 24.9% of those were reported to police. Official statistics indicate that most sex offenders are male, but these statistics include only offenses reported to the officials. Research indicates that sexual offenses committed by females do occur though they are rarely reported to authorities because of gender stereotypes and other factors. Gender has a large influence on perceptions and attitudes about who can be a perpetrator. I want to explore the perceptions and attitudes of Boise State students. I plan on conducting a survey on gender stereotypes, sexual offenses, and female sex offenders in order to examine how perceptions about gender impact attitudes toward sexual violence.



# Perceptions & Stereotypes about Female Sex Offenders

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## Background

- In 2018, the NCVS estimates there were 734,640 incidents of sexual assault in the U.S. but only 24.9% of those were reported to police.
- Official statistics indicate that most sex offenders are male, but these statistics include only offenses reported to the officials.
- Research indicates that sexual offenses committed by females do occur though they are rarely reported to authorities because of gender stereotypes and other factors.



## Framework

**Sexual Offense:** includes a variety of forms of illegal sexual contact

**Sexual Offender:** a person who perpetrates a sexual offense

**Gender Stereotypes:** social perceptions about the expected behavior of males and females

### “The Medicalization of Female Deviance”

- Female offenders as “mentally ill” or “mad”
  - Label male offenders as “rational”

## Methodology

- Project will take place at Boise State University
- Surveys will be distributed with questions assessing the perceptions and attitudes of students on gender stereotypes, sexual offenses, female sex offenders
- Participation will be voluntary and anonymous
- Survey data will be coded to analyze this study’s research question and hypotheses



## Potential Outcomes

Determine how gender stereotypes impact attitudes about sexual violence among university students.



Examine perceptions about female sex offenders and how gender stereotypes impact those opinions.

## Research Question

How do gender stereotypes impact attitudes towards sexual violence?

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