

Treatment for Individuals Incarcerated for a Sex Offense

Introduction

Of those incarcerated in the state of Minnesota, 19 percent have a governing sex offense while 13 percent have a prior felony conviction for a sex offense⁽¹⁾. Of note, more than 90 percent of those with a sex offense will be released into the community, and providing long-term intensive residential treatment can reduce the risk of sexual reoffending. Providing treatment in prison has a number of advantages: individuals are incarcerated, so the community is protected from re-offense; several Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities have units that serve as therapeutic communities where individuals' behavior can be closely monitored; treatment teams work collaboratively with clients to develop treatment plans, provide therapy and psychoeducation services; and release planners assist individuals in preparing for transition to the community.

Assessment and Treatment

Incarcerated adults are first housed at either the Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)-St. Cloud or MCF-Shakopee. The DOC Risk Assessment/Community Notification Unit conducts a risk assessment to determine the appropriate treatment recommendations for each adult. Juvenile clients at MCF-Red Wing are court ordered to participate in treatment and must meet program admission criteria.

The DOC operates its sex offense (SO) programming services according to the Risk-Need-Responsivity model⁽²⁾, which is proven to be the most effective approach to reducing recidivism. The risk principle states that the highest risk individuals receive the most intensive services. Adults who are high-risk, and are deemed likely candidates for civil commitment, are given a higher treatment priority. Those who are seen as moderate-to-high risk are given a medium treatment recommendation. Those assessed as lower risk are given lower priority for entry into the programs, and have other programming options available to them. All juveniles who enter MCF-Red Wing meeting SO program admission criteria are provided treatment in accordance with their individual needs.

Program Descriptions

Medium Custody Facilities

Lino Lakes-SOTP: Offers intermediate to long-term residential programming, which includes special programming for individuals with lower intellectual functioning and an extensive transitional program to prepare each person for release.

Close Custody Facility

Rush City-SOTP: Offers intermediate to long-term, residential programming within a close custody facility.

Female Facility

Shakopee: Offers long-term programming for incarcerated females who have committed a sexual offense.

Juvenile Facility

Red Wing: Provides sex offense treatment for juveniles. Residents also participate in the facility's campus-wide therapeutic community. Substance abuse education classes are available.

¹Individuals Incarcerated for Sex Offenses, DOC Fact Sheet, July 2021

²Risk-Need-Responsivity model for assessment and rehabilitation, published by Public Safety Canada
<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/rsk-nd-rspnsvty/index-en.aspx>

Once an individual enters a treatment program, they receive a detailed psychosexual assessment, which identifies the factors that contributed to offending and that place them at risk for re-offense. An individualized treatment plan is developed that addresses these factors (e.g., sexual interests, attitudes and behaviors, antisocial thinking and behavior, self-management skills, substance abuse issues, and concerns related to relationships and social functioning.) Treatment is tailored to the person's motivation, learning style, strengths, and areas for growth, which increases their likelihood of benefiting from treatment.

Treatment may include daily group therapy, individual therapy, psycho-educational classes, community meetings, individual study, and community-building activities. Therapeutic communities encourage treatment participants to behave responsibly and to be willing to hold others accountable if they behave in an antisocial manner. This helps individuals to be good citizens and prepares them to live a responsible life after release.

Release Planning

Individuals in sex offense treatment programs are eligible to receive release planning services. This includes improving their employability (e.g., training in resume writing, interviewing, and good work behaviors), assisting in finding an appropriate and safe residence, setting up post-release treatment and aftercare, and communicating with the corrections agent who will provide supervision. Those who complete treatment prior to release participate in aftercare programming within the facility.

Treatment Effectiveness

The DOC completed a study of the effectiveness of prison-based sex offense treatment which was published in a major criminological journal⁽³⁾. It examined 2,040 individuals incarcerated for sex offenses released from Minnesota prisons between 1990 and 2003. The average follow-up period to track recidivism was 9.3 years. Those who participated in sex offense treatment within the DOC reduced the risk of arrest for a new sex offense by 27 percent (33 percent for those who completed treatment). Participation in treatment also lowered the risk of rearrest for a violent crime (sexual and non-sexual) by 18 percent. Minnesota is one of the United States' Prison-Based Sex Offense Treatment Program listed as "promising" (i.e., supported by research) on the Federal Government's [crimesolutions.gov](https://www.crimesolutions.gov) website.

Decrease in Recidivism

The sexual recidivism rate in Minnesota continues to decline. Factors in this reduction include:

- Longer and more intensive supervision upon release by fully trained corrections agents with smaller, specialized caseloads
- Successful treatment participation within prison and community-based programs
- Collaboration between treatment, probation, and law enforcement.

³Duwe, G. and Goldman, R. (2009). *The Impact of Prison-Based Treatment on Sex Offender Recidivism: Evidence From Minnesota. Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, September 2009; vol. 21, 2: pp. 279-307

Sex Offense Treatment Beds	
Facility	FY25
Lino Lakes	208
Rush City	71
Red Wing	16
Shakopee	8
Total	416

Treatment Statistics

Individuals assessed as needing treatment yearly: **438**

Individuals entering a DOC long-term treatment program: **145**

Individuals successfully completing treatment: **75%**

Average program completion time: **18.3 months**

FY25 Budget: **\$5.113 M**