

Psychology 3391  
Criminal-Forensic Psychology

**Sex Offenders -  
Part 2**

# Major Factors in Sexual Aggression

## **Erotic Preference**

- **Pedophilia, Sadism, “Preferential Rape”, Fetishism**

## **Disinhibition**

- **Anger/Hostility, especially toward women (misogyny)**
- **Power/Control/Domination/Humiliation of Victim**
- **Depression/Hopelessness**
- **Alcohol/Drugs**
- **Aggressive sexual pornography or nonsexual violence (facilitation)**
- **Misattribution of offence or victim characteristics (neutralization techniques)**
- **Social facilitation (gang rape, wartime rape)**

## **Dyscontrol**

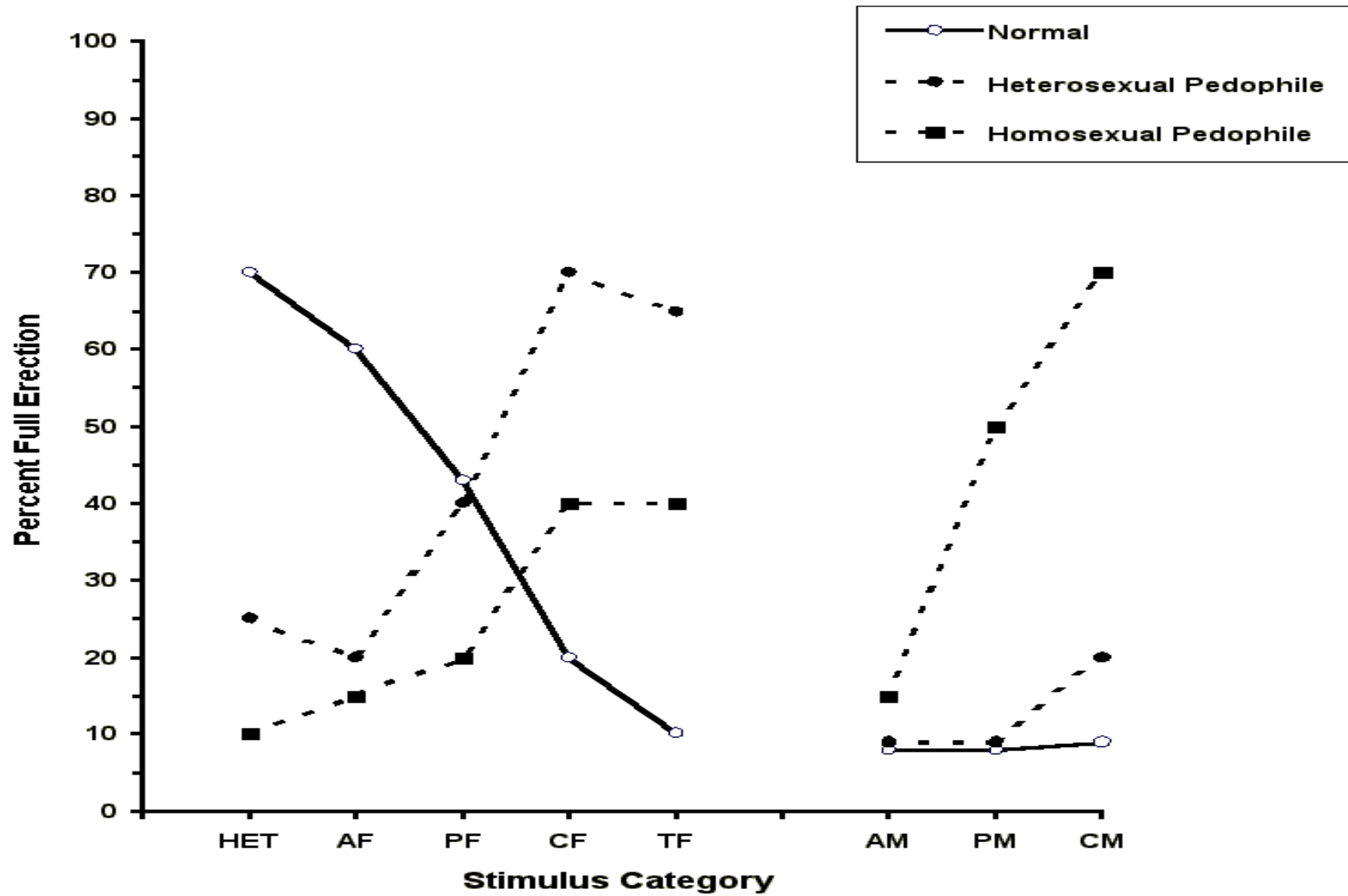
- **General behavioural impulsivity, Hypersexuality, Psychotic disorders**

# Deviant Sexual Arousal

## Child Molesters

- the Sexual Orientation Profile or Age Preference Profile is a series of slides of male and female subjects of different ages (Barbaree & Marshall, 1989; Baxter *et al.*, 1984; Freund, 1965, 1967, 1972; Quinsey *et al.*, 1975)
- normal men show progressively less arousal with decreasing age of the model depicted in the slide - note that the typical response profile is a gradient with a surprisingly robust response to prepubescent children in the normal male (Freund, 1972)
- child molesters *as a group* tend to show either greater arousal to children than adults or approximately equal arousal to children and adults

## Hypothetical Sexual Orientation Profiles



# **Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)**

## **Child Molesters (cont)**

- **the findings regarding deviant sexual arousal in pedophiles have been replicated many times**
- **the general conclusion is that the pedophile engages in pedophilic acts because young children are his preferred sexual partners and pedophilic acts are his preferred sexual outlets**
- **thus, the deviant sexual behaviour is explained by (or caused by) the pedophile's deviant erotic preferences**

# Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)

## Child Molesters (cont)

- **BUT: not all child molesters are pedophiles**
- **by definition, pedophilia implies a sexual attraction to young children, but some child molesters, perhaps as many as half, do not show sexual preferences for children or even unusual sexual attraction to children when tested in the laboratory**
- **this is particularly true for incestuous child molesters (e.g., Barbaree & Marshall, 1989)**
- **for child molesters who do *not* exhibit deviant sexual arousal, it is usually possible to identify other characteristics of the offender or of the context in which the offence occurred (e.g., anger-hostility, dominance-control, revenge) to explain the offence**

# Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)

## Rapists

- the Sexual Violence Profile consists of 6 different sexual scenarios - 3 consent episodes and 3 rape episodes
  1. "Enthusiastic" episode - the female initiates the sexual encounter and most of the sexual behaviours described
  2. "Passive" episode - she neither initiates nor rejects the sexual activities and is in some respects rather an uninvolved participant throughout
  3. "Reluctant" episode - she initially expresses some hesitation or reservation but quickly allows herself to be seduced, though again she is a somewhat passive participant
  4. "Threat" episode - this is a rape where the man warns the victim that she will be seriously harmed if she doesn't submit, though he doesn't actually inflict any physical violence upon her beyond the sexual assault itself
  5. "Restraint" episode - the man threatens her with physical harm, physically forces her down upon the floor, and forcefully holds her down on the floor while he rapes her
  6. "Assault" episode - the woman is repeatedly punched and slapped while being raped

# Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)

## Rapists (cont)

- nonrapists show significantly more arousal to consent than to rape
- nonrapists also respond more to the "enthusiastic" partner than to the "passive" or "reluctant" partner in the consent episodes
- nonrapists also show significantly less arousal to the most violent rape than to the other two rape episodes
- thus, normal men exhibit fairly good *stimulus control* of sexual arousal by cues for consent vs. nonconsent and violence

# Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)

## Rapists (cont)

- many and maybe most rapists also show discrimination between consent and rape episodes in terms of their sexual responding, with significantly greater arousal to consent (Abel *et al.*, 1977, 1980; Barbaree *et al.*, 1979; Baxter *et al.*, 1986; Quinsey *et al.*, 1981)
- thus, the basic sexual arousal profile of the average rapist is not grossly abnormal
- rapists even show, like nonrapists, a significant reduction in arousal to the most violent rape

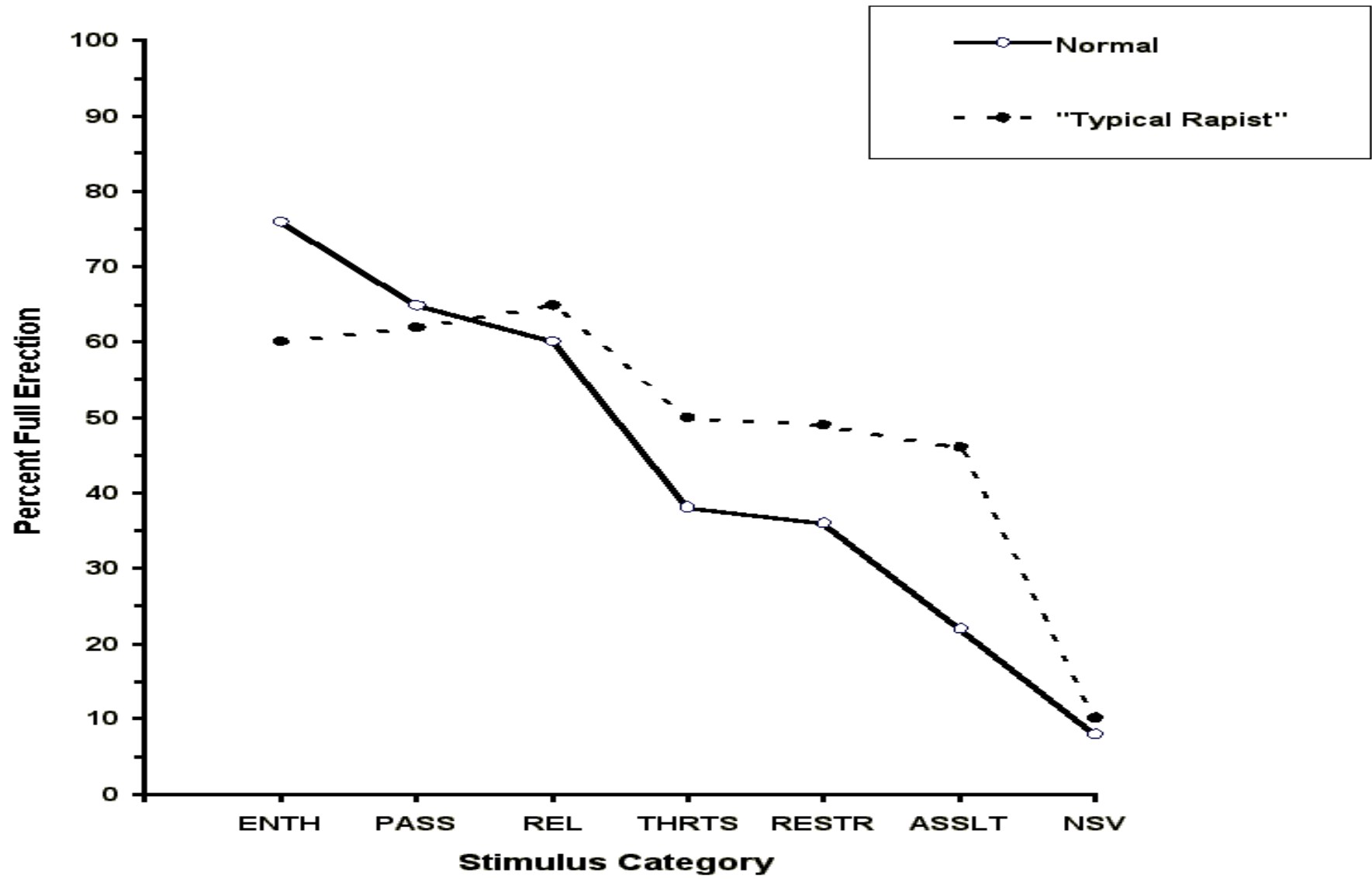
# Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)

## Rapists (cont)

But, there are some features which distinguish rapists and nonrapists:

1. the difference between rape and consent arousal tends to be smaller for rapists
2. rapists' responses to the consent episodes are not differentially affected by the degree of enthusiasm/reluctance of the consenting partner

## Hypothetical Sexual Violence Profiles

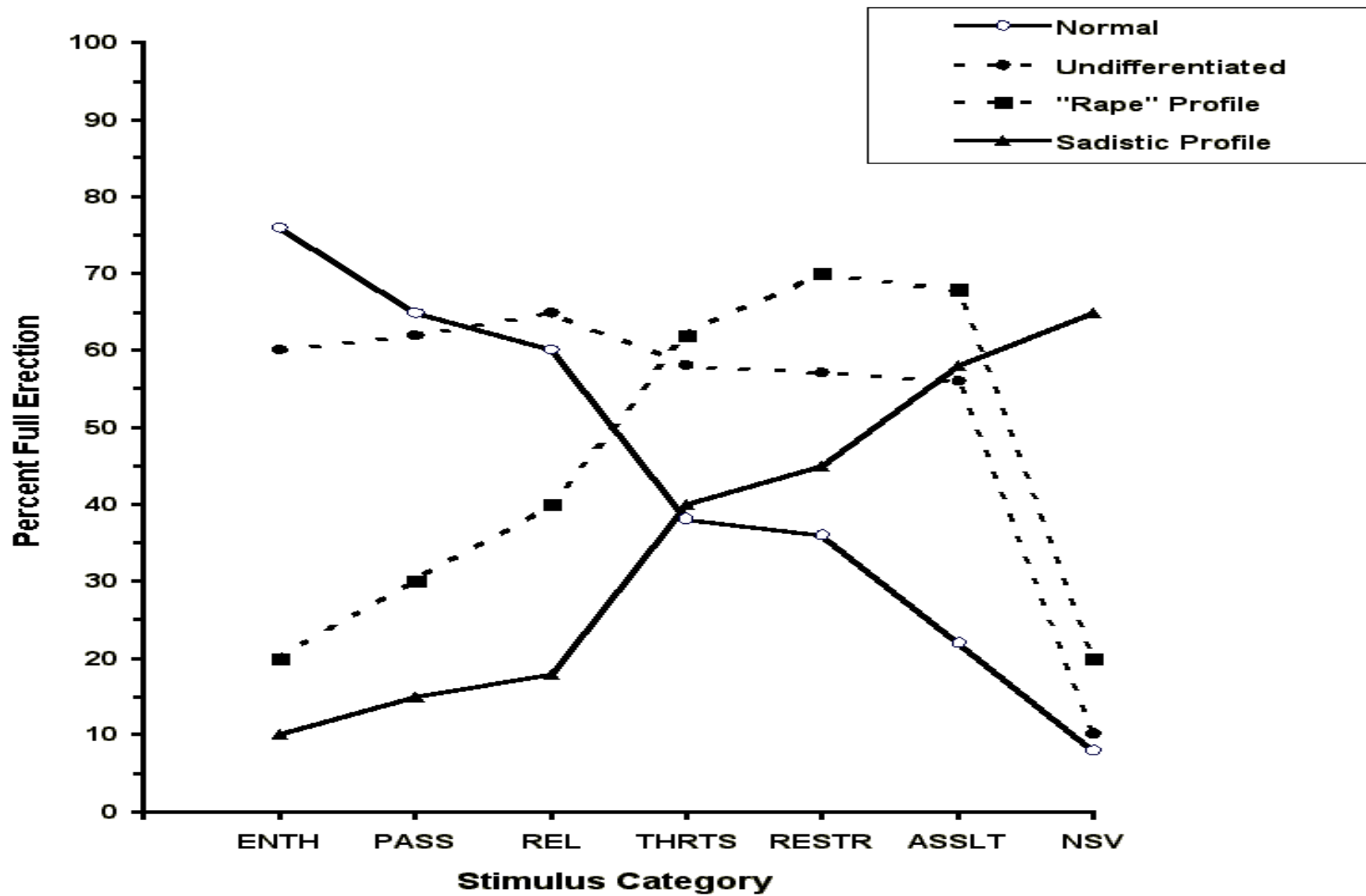


# Deviant Sexual Arousal (cont)

## Types of Rapists

- as with child molesters, rapists are not all alike in how they respond in these sexual arousal tests
- some sadistic rapists appear to be sexually aroused by violence and nonconsent, i.e., they show enhancement of sexual arousal in the presence of cues for force and nonconsent
- other preferential rapists show increased arousal to the use of force or violence in a sexual situation but not to nonsexual violence
- still other rapists show profiles which are "undifferentiated" or "non-discriminating" in that they are equally aroused by rape and consensual sex and appear to be relatively unaffected by or unresponsive to what the victim or partner says, does, or feels

## Hypothetical Sexual Violence Profiles



# The Inhibition-Disinhibition Hypothesis

- according to the inhibition-disinhibition view of sexual aggression (Marshall & Barbaree, 1984, 1990), the typical rapist does not prefer rape to consenting sex - he just doesn't care very much about consent or nonconsent
- more accurately, the typical rapist's sexual arousal is not under the stimulus control of cues for consent-nonconsent
- like normal men, the rapist responds to the sexual cues in the assessment of deviant sexual arousal
- in the normal male, sexual arousal is inhibited by cues for nonconsent, violence, and pain
- in contrast, the sexual arousal of a typical rapist is not inhibited or is less inhibited by such cues
- as Malamuth *et al.* (1980) put it, "the difference between rapists and nonrapists is not primarily in what 'turns them on' but in what 'turns them off'"

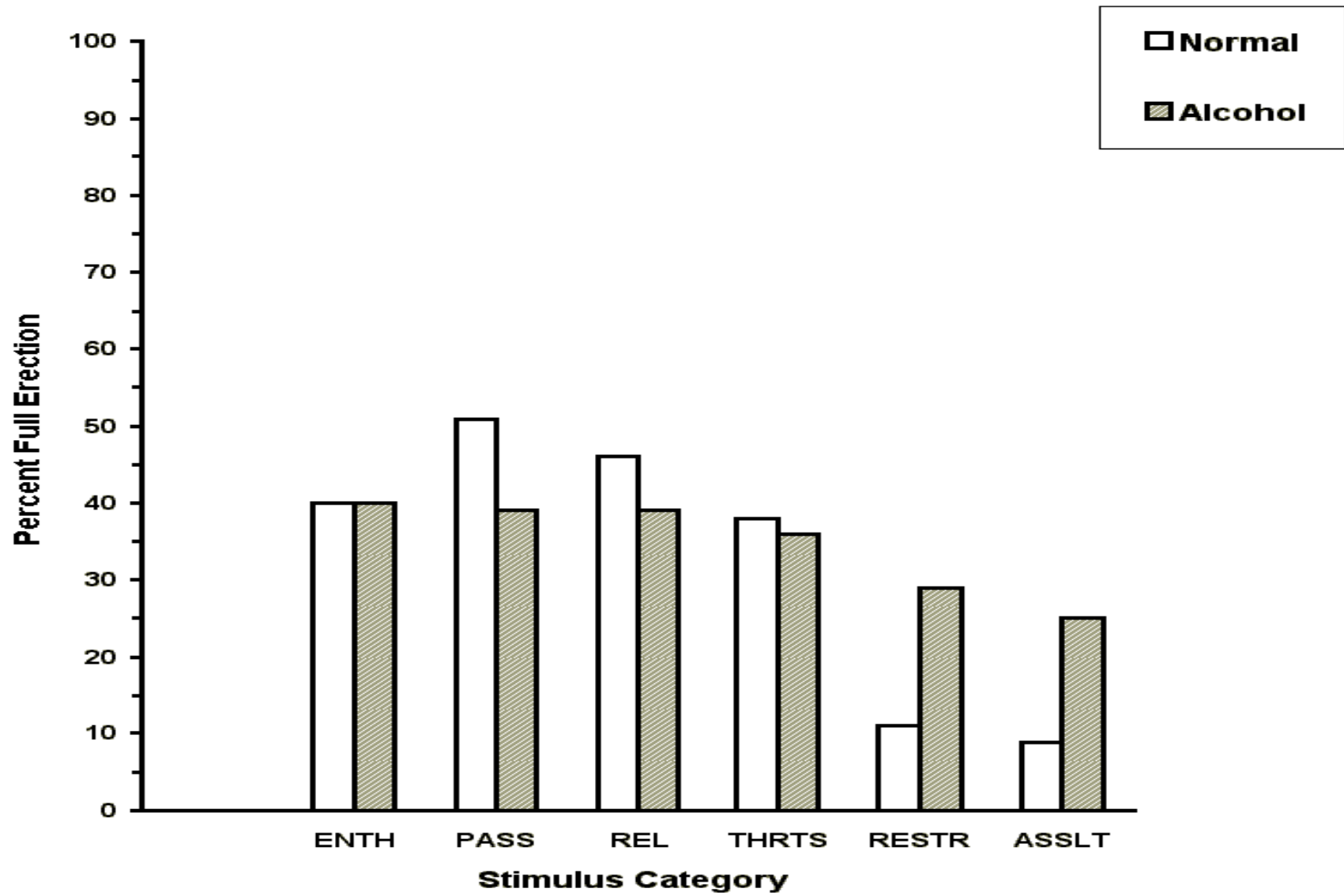
# **The Inhibition-Disinhibition Hypothesis (cont)**

- **other research makes it clear that the characteristics of rapists and nonrapists probably are not distinct or dichotomous categories but rather represent a dimension where one of the critical variables is inhibitory control**
- **the normal male in normal circumstances is responsive to his partner's feelings and reactions because his inhibitory controls are adequate and functioning, and the effect is to suppress sexual impulses in the face of cues for pain or fear or nonconsent**
- **however, it is not as difficult as one might expect to disrupt these controls by anger, alcohol intoxication, misattribution of victim characteristics, misattribution of victim reaction, or social facilitation (e.g., "gang rape", enemy rape in wartime, etc.).**

# **Disinhibition by Alcohol Intoxication**

- **Barbaree *et al.* (1983) looked at arousal profiles for normal subjects mildly intoxicated with alcohol**
- **intoxicated subjects showed less discrimination between consent episodes and rape episodes than non-intoxicated subjects**
- **the arousal profiles of intoxicated normal males therefore became more like those of the typical or average rapist**

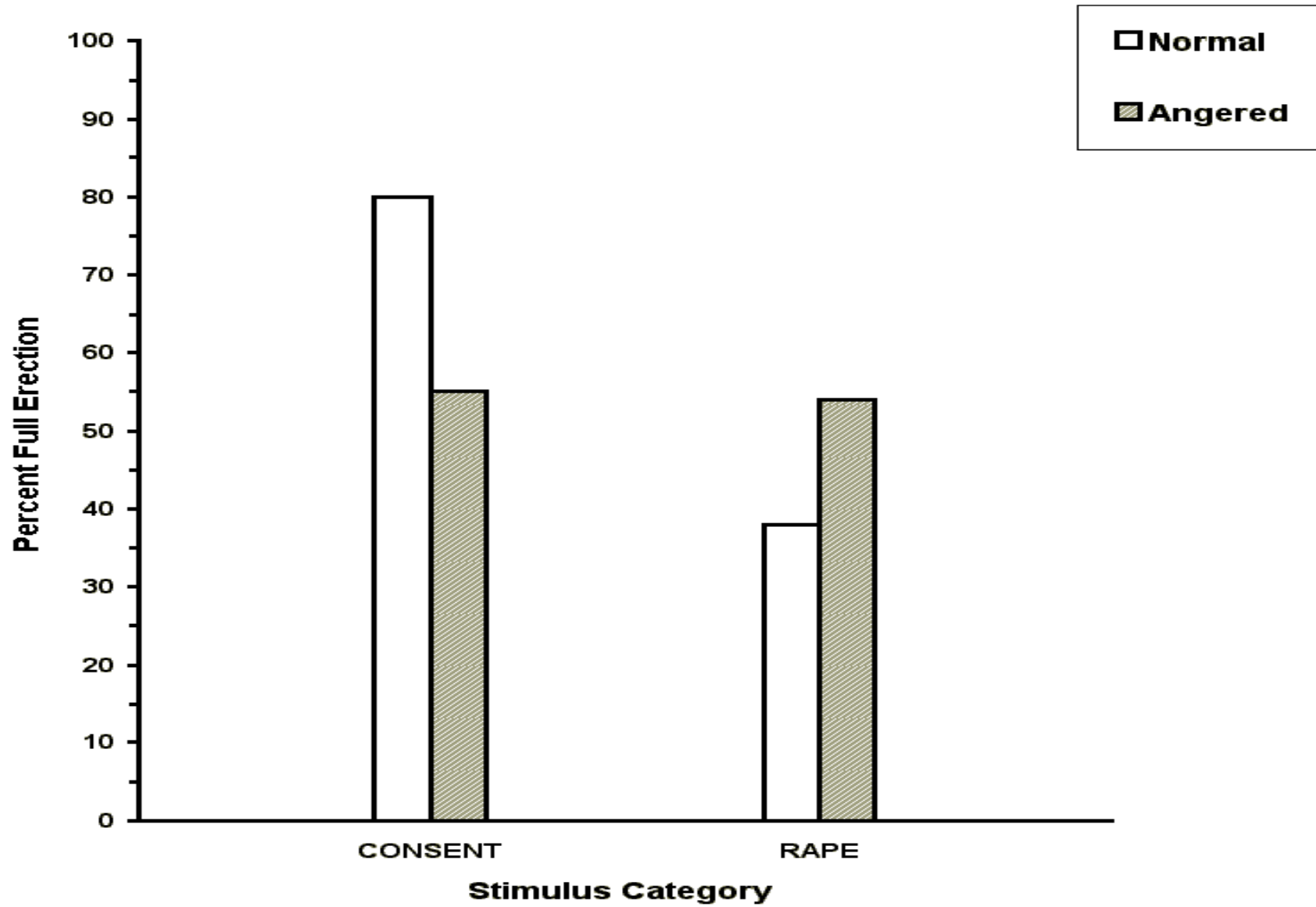
## Sexual Violence Profiles



# Disinhibition by Anger

- **similar effects can be produced by anger induction (Yates *et al.*, 1984)**
- **normal subjects insulted or belittled by a female experimenter just before sexual arousal testing showed increased arousal to the rape episodes**
- **again, the effect of inducing anger (at least toward a woman) was to disinhibit arousal to cues for violence or nonconsent, making the arousal profile of the angry normal male more like that of the typical or average rapist**

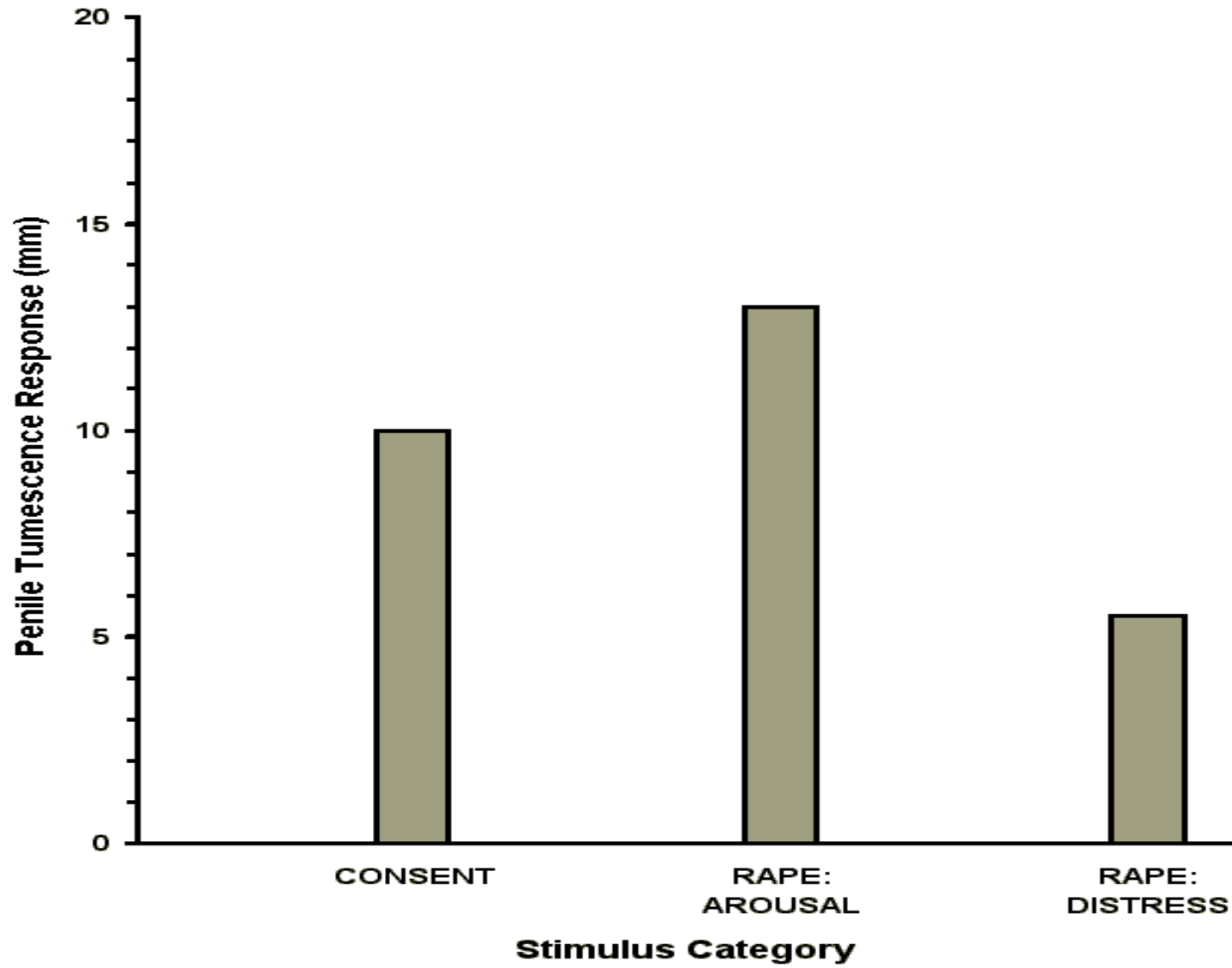
## Sexual Violence Profiles



# Disinhibition by Misattribution

- finally, Malamuth demonstrated that normal males show enhanced arousal to a rape depiction when they are led to believe that the rape victim experiences involuntary sexual arousal or orgasm during the sexual assault (Malamuth *et al.*, 1980, 1983)
- this paradigm may approximate the “neutralization” of many sex offenders that their victims actually wanted and enjoyed the sexual assault

## Sexual Violence Profiles



# Inhibition-Disinhibition and Erotic Preference

## What is Normal Sexual Development?

- the process of normal sexual development is probably a joint one of conditioned inhibition of the inappropriate (socially unacceptable) expression of innate sexual impulses or "drives" and conditioned excitation of initially neutral stimuli so that these stimuli acquire erotic arousal value for an individual
- biologically or physiologically, we are probably born
  1. with the potential to respond sexually to a wide range of primary erotic stimuli or situations, including some that are not socially approved or appropriate; and
  2. with the potential to respond sexually in an egocentric and aggressive fashion

# Inhibition-Disinhibition and Erotic Preference (cont)

## Normal Sexual Development (cont)

- **inhibitory and excitatory conditioning - through various operant social learning and classical conditioning processes, the range of erotic stimuli to which the male will respond is**
  - 1. restricted: we learn to inhibit sexual arousal to socially inappropriate or unacceptable erotic stimuli or situations and to inhibit the more egocentric and aggressive components of our sexuality; and**
  - 2. expanded or refined: associations between initially non-erotic stimuli and sexual arousal tend to extend the range of arousing stimuli as such stimuli acquire conditioned erotic value (e.g., hair colour, facial or body features, clothing, perfumes, etc.)**

# **Inhibition-Disinhibition and Erotic Preference (cont)**

## **Abnormal Sexual Development**

- **when normal sexual development goes awry, the individual may reach maturity either with inadequate inhibitory controls or with deviant erotic preferences**
- **in either case, he is likely to come into confrontation with society because of his sexual behaviours**
- **this view of sexual deviance suggests that there may be some basis to the assertions of some feminist writers (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Clark & Lewis, 1977) that the potential for sexual aggression or assault is in all males (and perhaps all females)**
- **however, it would appear that inhibitory controls are perhaps stronger or more fully developed in some men than in others**

# **Inhibition-Disinhibition and Erotic Preference (cont)**

## **Abnormal Sexual Development (cont)**

- **it may well be that what fundamentally distinguishes the majority of men who commit sexual offences from the majority of men who don't are:**
  - 1. weaker inhibitory controls**
  - 2. aberrant sexual conditioning histories**
  - 3. negative social-sexual histories which promote hostility and misogyny**
  - 4. and/or lifestyles (e.g., substance abuse) which facilitate more frequent and more profound disinhibition of their sexual impulses**

# Characteristics of Sex Offenders

- **Poor social skills, especially heterosocial skills**
- **Social alienation, isolation, and rejection**
- **Low self-esteem and self-confidence**
- **Chronic anger/hostility**
- **General impulsivity or behavioural dyscontrol**
- **Poor problem-solving and goal-setting skills**
- **Deficient or impaired empathy**
- **Inadequate knowledge about sex and sexuality**
- **Conservative, conventional, prudish attitudes toward sex and toward women**
- **Stereotyped notions about male and female sex roles and relationships, "double standard" beliefs**
- **Acceptance of myths/cognitive distortions about women & rape**
- **Aberrations in sexual arousal and sexual fantasy**
- **Denial or minimization of guilt or responsibility**
- **Denial or minimization of negative impact on victim**

## Developmental Correlates of Sexual Aggression in Adolescent Offenders Observed in Various Studies

<b>History of Physical Abuse</b>	<b>14, 17, 42, 76, 81, 89%</b>
<b>History of Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>18, 23, 29, 33, 47, 88%</b>
<b>Parental Violence</b>	<b>29, 42, 79%</b>
<b>Parental Separation</b>	<b>67, 68, 73, 73, 94%</b>
<b>Poor Academic Achievement</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Poor School Adjustment (Social)</b>	<b>60, 69%</b>
<b>Suspended or Expelled</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Socially Isolated</b>	<b>54, 65%</b>

**Sources: Becker & Abel (1985), Ryan *et al.* (1987), Lewis *et al.* (1970), Longo (1982), Friedrich & Luecke (1988), Becker *et al.* (1986), Becker, Cunningham-Rathner, & Kaplan (1986), Saunders, Awad, & White (1986), Fehrenbach *et al.* (1986)**

# **Risk Factors for Sexual Aggression**

- 1. difficulty in relating on a functional level to peers, leading to social isolation, rejection, and increased aggression and/or socialization with younger children**
- 2. cognitive distortions resulting from a lack of sexual knowledge, lack of empathy, limited understanding of sexual values, and faulty perceptions about his own victimization, which foster a belief that the sexual victimization of others will have positive outcomes for the offender and that negative consequences for himself or the victim will be minor**
- 3. the development and reinforcement through masturbation of deviant sexual fantasies**
- 4. positive reinforcement of deviant sexual acts, both physically and emotionally, especially when there are no negative consequences for the behaviour**

# **Protective Factors for Sexual Aggression**

- 1. good social skills**
- 2. well-developed ability to inhibit and modulate behaviour**
- 3. good cognitive capabilities which allow school to become a positive source of emotional support and foster a sense of mastery over one's life and environment**
- 4. a history of secure attachment with parents**
- 5. the presence of a non-blaming and emotionally supportive caregiver, especially the mother**

# **Treatment Objectives for Sex Offenders**

- 1. Reducing denial - increasing the offender's acceptance of responsibility for the offence**
- 2. Increasing the offender's understanding of the impact of the sexual assault on the victim**
- 3. Providing insight into the offender's motives for the assault, antecedent events or precipitants, and dynamics of the offence**
- 4. Working through the offender's own physical or sexual victimization**
- 5. Relating the offender's own experiences as a victim to the probable feelings and reactions of his victim(s)**
- 6. Providing insight into the relationship between the offender's own victimization and his victimization of others**
- 7. Educating the offender about sexuality, sexual values, sex roles**
- 8. Assertiveness and social skills training**
- 9. Stress management and anger management**

# **Components of Treatment Programs for Sex Offenders**

**Sex Education (97%)**

**Victim Empathy/Awareness (93%)**

**Accountability (87%)**

**Victim Confrontation (3%)**

**Social Skills Training (87%)**

**Assertiveness Training (73%)**

**Stress & Anger Management (43%)**

**Cognitive Restructuring (23%)**

**Covert Sensitization (20%)**

**Electrical or Olfactory Aversion Therapy (7%)**

**Arousal Reconditioning (7%)**

**Relapse Prevention (17%)**

**Medication/Sex Drive Reduction (3%)**