

What is Sexual Deviance?



Robin J. Wilson, PhD, ABPP

dr.wilsonrj@verizon.net

www.robinjwilson.com



Classical Perspectives on Sexual Deviance

- ❖ Sexual contact between men and boys was known and discussed in classical times
- ❖ Pederasty in ancient Greece
 - Romantic interactions between male adults and boys 12-18, not always sexual
 - This was about same age as girls married
 - Plato condemned such relationships
 - Judaism and Christianity also argued against "sodomy"



Classical Perspectives on Sexual Deviance

- ❖ The rape of women and young girls was common in Greek mythology
- ❖ In Roman times, “raptus ad stuprum” was used to denote forced intercourse
- ❖ Descriptions of rape are common in the Bible:

If a man is caught in the act of raping a young woman who is not engaged, he must pay fifty pieces of silver to her father. Then he must marry the young woman because he violated her, and he will never be allowed to divorce her.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

Sexual Offending

The past 30 years have been witness to a flurry of research into the nature and consequences of sexually offensive behaviour.

- ❖ Isn't it odd that the focus has come so late in the game?
- ❖ There is no doubt that there has been sexual offending since there were people to be offenders and others to be victims—thousands and thousands of years.
- ❖ Why has the attention shifted only recently?

People who are victims ...

- ❖ As many as 90% of reporting victims know their offender
- ❖ 2/3 or more of known offenses occur in the victim's own home
- ❖ As many as 90% of victims fail to report their abuse to authorities or others in a position to help

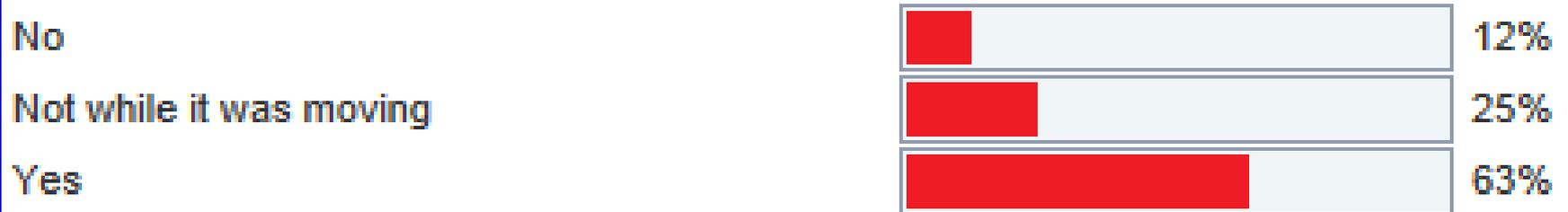
Inconsistency

One of the greatest hurdles to defining sexual deviance is a lack of clarity as to what actually constitutes offensive sexual behaviour.

What do you consider to be sexually offensive?

Sex in a car?

Have you ever had sexual relations in a car?



Total Votes for this Question: 1363

Conceptualizations

Deviant

- Unusual
- Atypical

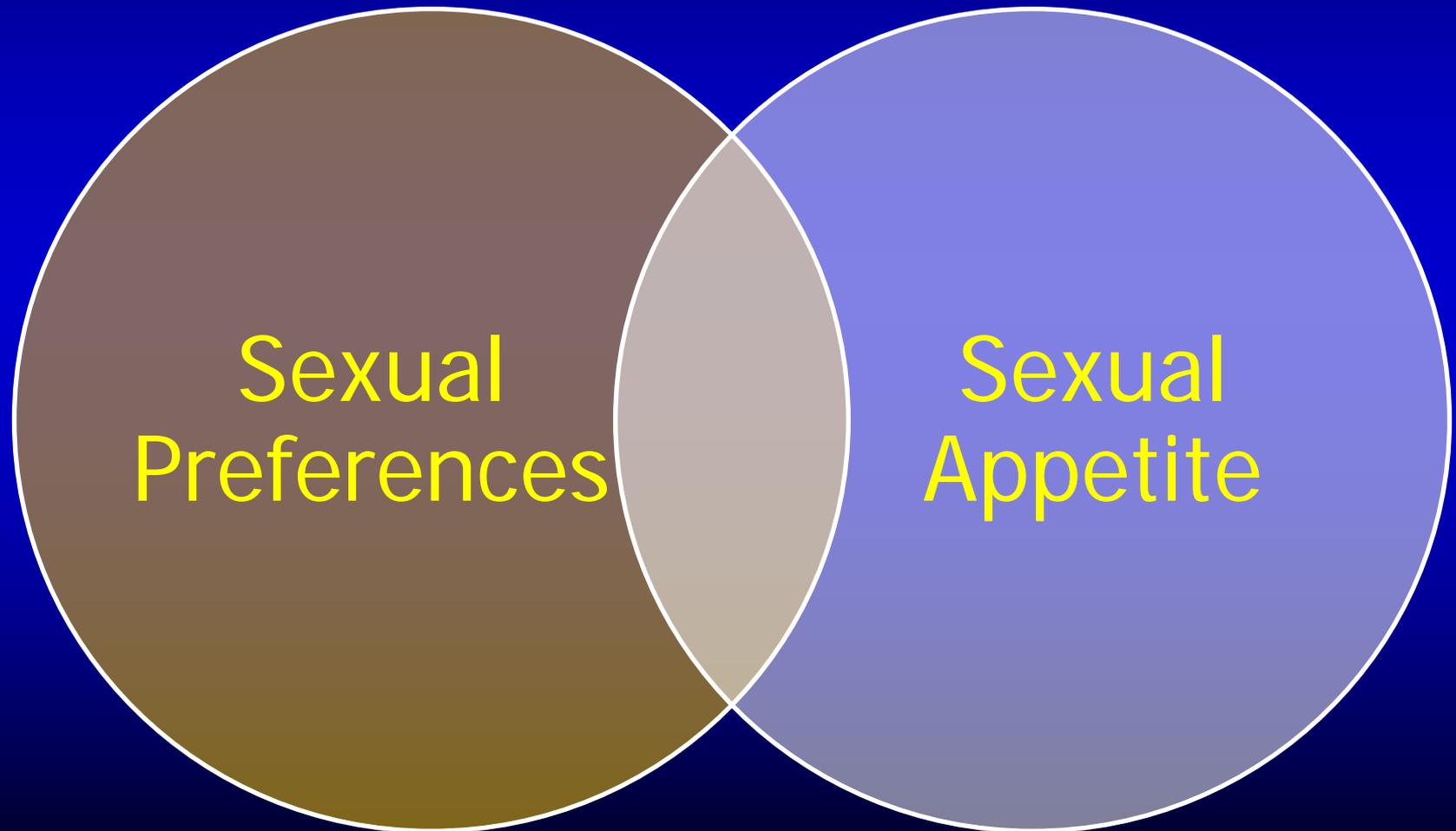
Unlawful

- Children
- Non Consent

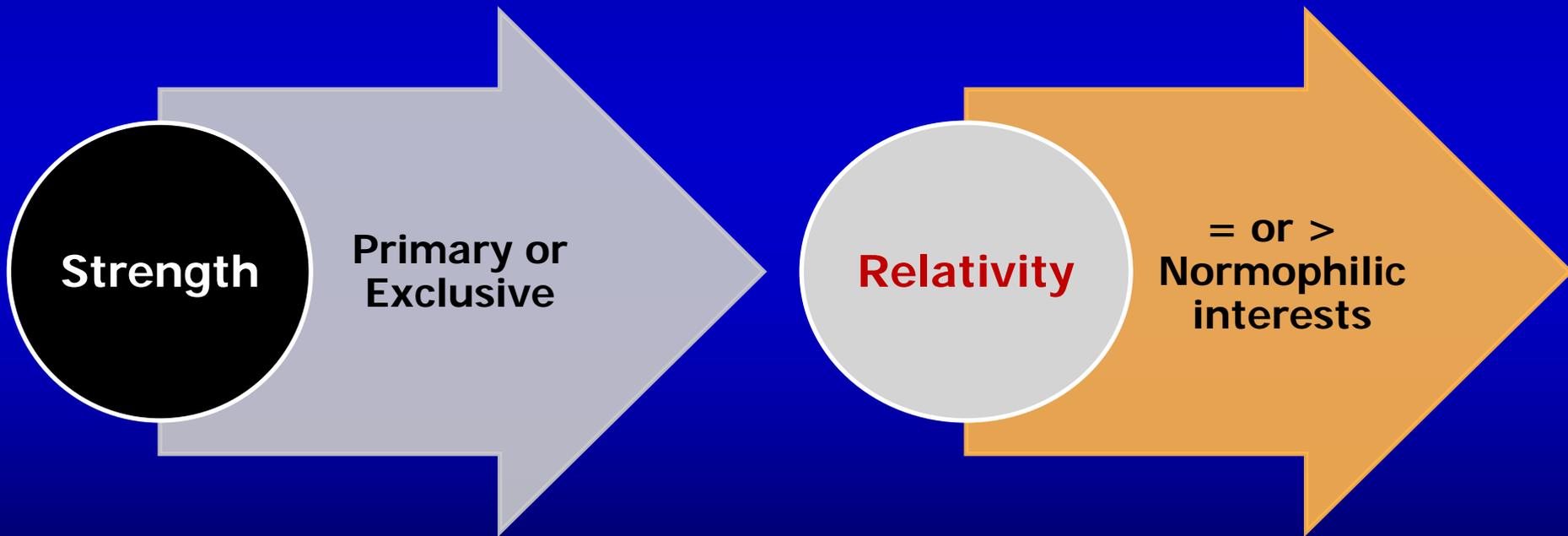
Hypersexual

- Compulsive
- Obsessive
- Difficult to Control

An important distinction?



Dimensionality



Sexual Offender ...

Is a legal term not a clinical term



Includes a wide range of unlawful behaviors, not all of which are paraphilic



Not all sexual offenders meet diagnostic criteria for a paraphilic disorder

DISCUSSION POINT

Consent

A particularly important concept to consider when looking at sexual offending is that of consent; especially age of consent.

- ❖ What constitutes consent?
- ❖ Who can give it?
- ❖ Under what circumstances?
- ❖ Are there personal or situational variables that would also impinge on consent?

Age of Consent

Laws vary from country to country regarding consent to sexual activity.

- ❖ Average AOC in USA is 16.
- ❖ AOC in Canada is 16.
- ❖ AOC in most European countries is 14.
- ❖ AOC in UK is 16.

Inconsistency

We tell offenders in treatment that it is not okay to fantasize about or have sexual relations with minors

Yet we, as a society, appear to be okay with...

- ❖ Young people being sexually active, perhaps even with much older adults
- ❖ depicting minors in a sexually-charged manner

More Inconsistency

Not only has inconsistency affected our ability to clearly define what constitutes an offense, it has also clouded our perceptions of cause and effect in sexual offending.

- ❖ Various theories of sexual deviance are often simultaneously complementary and contradictory

Is there a single unifying theory of sexual deviance that will ever be satisfactory to the field?

DISCUSSION POINT

Sex or Violence?

The evolutionary perspective has provided much controversy in discussions regarding the etiology and manifestations of sexual violence. The feminist perspective would disagree.

What do you think it's all about?

- ❖ Sex?

- ❖ Violence?

Social Learning Theory

- ❖ modelling, observation, repeated exposure to a stimulus object, and intermittent reinforcement
- ❖ cognitive processes mediate environmental and experiential events
- ❖ dynamic cognitions are supportive of sexually offending behaviours
- ❖ is pornography pertinent?

Abnormal in the Normal

- ❖ Research has suggested that 20-50% of males would rape if there were no negative consequences.
- ❖ Analogous research has suggested that as many as 50% of women have fantasies of being taken by force.

Medical Model

- ❖ Deviant sexual behavior is the result of a clinically-diagnosable syndrome
 - Paraphilia – DSM-5
- ❖ Treatable by medical/psychiatric means
 - Therapeutic sex drive reduction
- ❖ Problem is that there is no general psychiatric profile of a sexual offender
 - That is, few are “mentally ill”

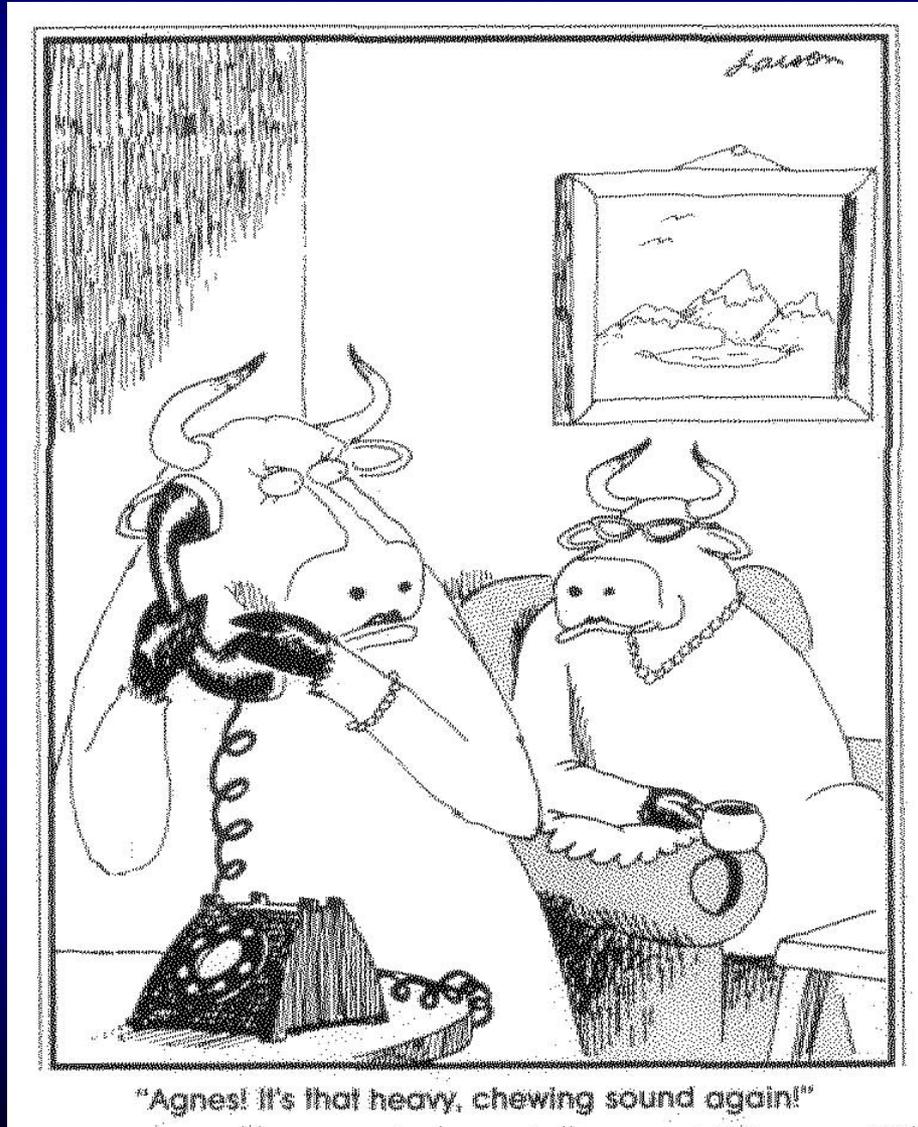
DSM Discontent

(a.k.a. More Inconsistency...)

Although the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for the paraphilias are widely used in the mental health and legal domains, many sexual offender specialists have difficulty with the definitions.

- ❖ Is DSM-5 diagnostic or nosological?
- ❖ Do the diagnostic criteria constitute a diagnosis in and of themselves, or are they intended to assist clinicians in categorizing and classifying behaviour to assist in the diagnostic process?

Agnes! It's that heavy chewing sound again!



Paraphilic vs. Opportunistic

- ❖ DSM-5: paraphilic disorders are include “recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors”; at least 6 months duration
- ❖ many offenders do not meet criteria for a paraphilic disorder – they offend for reasons other than strong sexual interest or preference (e.g., “date” vs. paraphilic rape; incest vs. pedophilia)
- ❖ diagnosis often facilitated by phallometrics

DSM-5

(with lots of credit to Jill Levenson)

DESK REFERENCE
TO THE
DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA
FROM
DSM-5

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

DSM-5

Anomalous Activity Preferences

Courtships Disorders

- Voyeuristic
- Exhibitionistic
- Frotteuristic

Algolagnic Disorders

- Involving pain & suffering

Anomalous Target Preferences

Humans

- Pedophilic

Non-human

- Animals
- Fetishistic
- Transvestic
- Cross-dressing, which is not done for the purpose of sexual arousal



What IS in the DSM-5?

Voyeuristic (nonconsent)

Exhibitionistic (nonconsent OR distress/impairment)

Frotteuristic (nonconsent OR distress/impairment)

Sexual Masochism

Sexual Sadism (nonconsent OR distress/impairment)

Pedophilic (prepubescent child; exclude late adolescent in an ongoing sexual relationship with 12-13 year old; specify exclusive/nonexclusive)

Fetishistic

Transvestic (vs. cross-dressing)

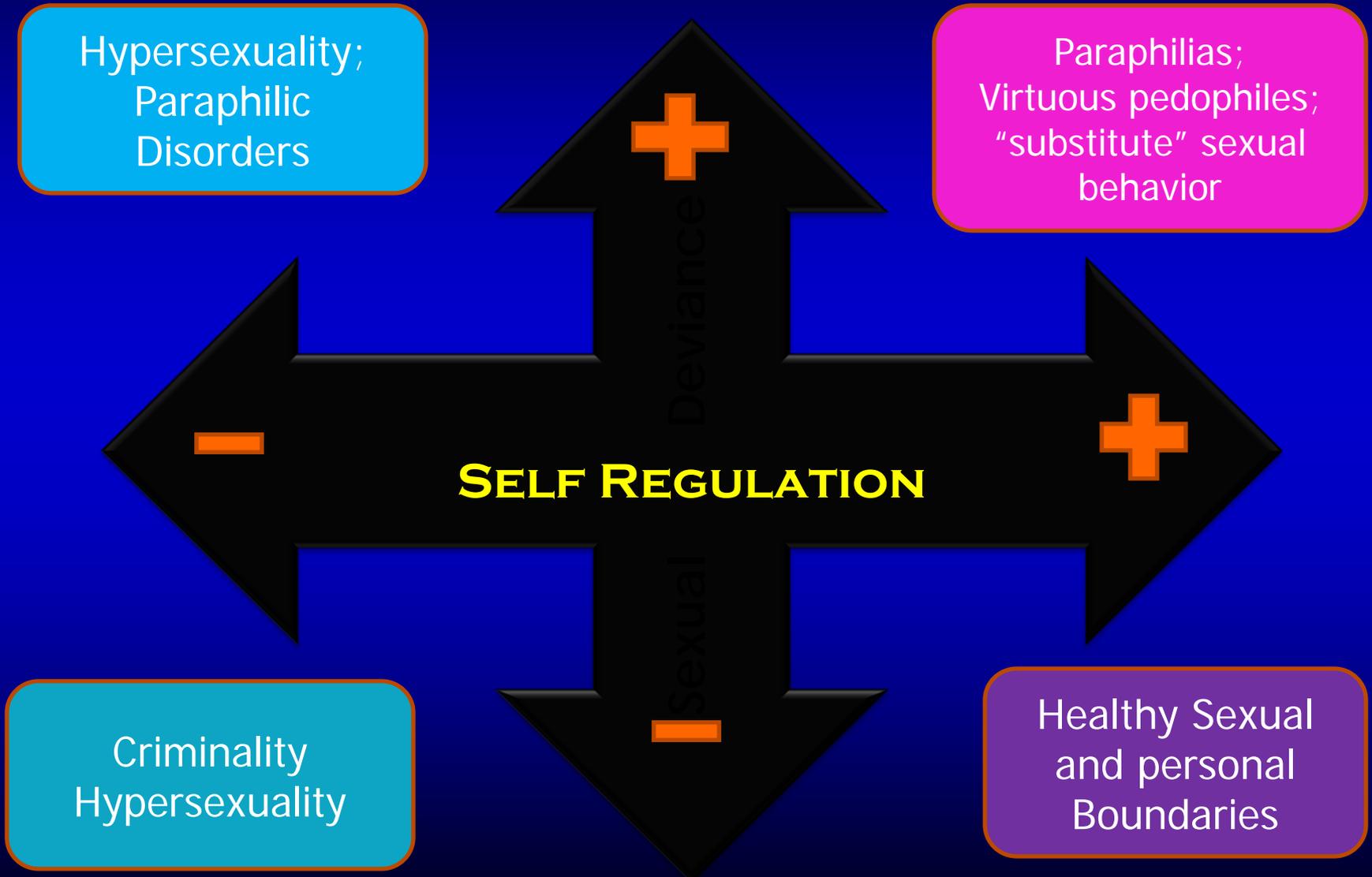
© Original Artist

Reproduction rights obtainable from
www.CartoonStock.com

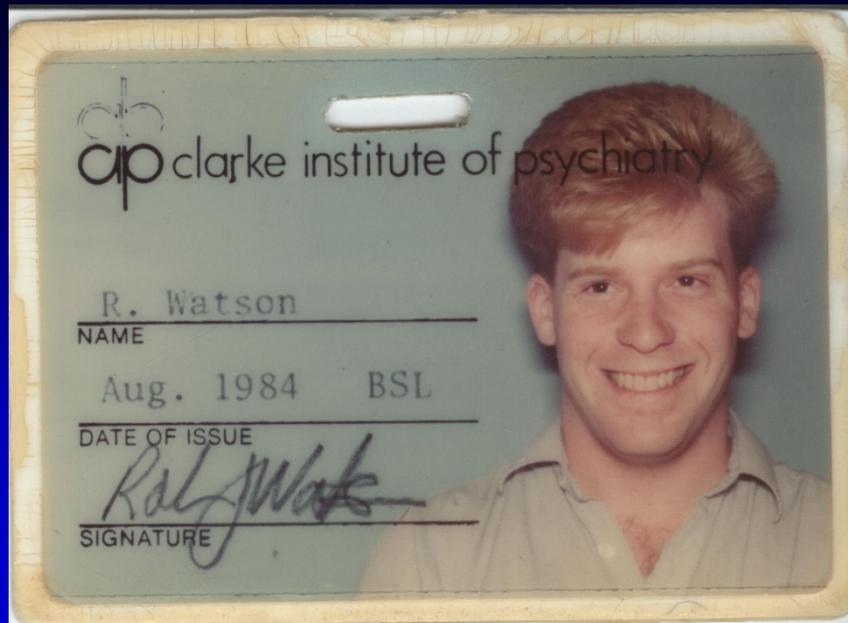


U. K. 51

Jill Levenson's attempt at conceptualizing sexual deviance



Before



After

Contact

Robin J. Wilson, PhD, ABPP

Wilson Psychological Services LLC, Sarasota, FL
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences
McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

dr.wilsonrj@verizon.net / www.robinjwilson.com / 941-806-9788