Devastating News for Parents

When parents learn that their child is a sex offender, it can be devastating. Society vilifies sex offenders, yet this “evil person” is their own beloved child. Whether they discover the crime themselves or learn of it from someone else, they need information to deal effectively with all the issues involved. After the initial shock, they enter a world of new questions and worries. This research identifies some of their needs and explores ways that libraries can help meet those needs.

Information Barriers

Fear
- Gossip—Police—Court—Jail—
- Offender Registries—Relocating

Guilt
- Professional Literature Often
  Blames Bad Parenting
- Self-blame Compounds the Other Issues

Lack of:
- Prior Experience with Law, Counseling, etc.
- Advocates for Parents
- Books for Parents
- Truth from Child
- Supportive Websites
- Money
- Time

Research Methods and Results

Searching libraries, bookstores, professional literature and the Internet for information sources revealed little to help parents of juvenile sex offenders. Finding more information required researching literature on parents of other juvenile delinquents and victims of domestic violence to find similar information needs and barriers, reading psychological literature for recidivism opinions and data, researching web sites and contacting local agencies to identify possible library roles in locating information resources for parents.

How Librarians Can Help Break Down the Barriers

Create partnerships with local agencies to provide information about local resources.

Improve collections to include helpful books for parents.

Provide meeting rooms for support groups.

Post information about local hotlines in public spaces.

Find encouraging sources for quick referral.

“...juvenile sex offenders appear to have lower recidivism rates and perform better in treatment than adult sex offenders. Reoffending rates for youth over several years are approximately ten percent.”

--Center for Sex Offender Management

HELP FOR PARENTS of SEX OFFENDERS

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Scan QR Codes: in poster for websites. at right for references.