

## **Adolescents Who Have Engaged in Sexually Abusive Behavior**

- Youth ages 13 through 17 who have engaged in sexually abusive behavior or may be at risk to engage in sexually abusive behavior.
- Recent estimates of abusive sexual behavior find that adolescents commit more than one-third of all sexual offenses against minors. However, the percent of adolescents committing these offenses is low.
  - Victim pools:
    - Children victimize siblings, cousins, children in their mother's at-home daycare, animals
    - Adolescents victimize peers, younger children, and although rare, adults
    - Adults can victimize any group due to their access to jobs, money, transportation
- Approximately 4 to 5 percent of teenaged males and slightly more than 1 percent of teenaged females have perpetrated acts of sexual abuse.
- Depend on, and are strongly influenced by, a number of social, environmental, and ecological factors.
- There are some notable differences between adolescents who commit sexual offenses and those who commit nonsexual crimes. For example:
  - Adolescents who have committed sexual offenses appear more likely to have been sexually victimized and/or exposed to sexual content or pornography at an earlier age than youth with nonsexual offenses.

- Adolescents who have engaged in sexually abusive behavior may be more likely than youth who have committed nonsexual offenses to report higher levels of social isolation, anxiety, and low self-esteem.
- Adolescents who have engaged in sexually abusive behavior may be less likely to have significant criminal histories, associate with antisocial peers, or have substance abuse problems than youth who have committed nonsexual crimes.
- Adolescents who have offended sexually may be more likely to have sexual interests oriented toward younger children and/or violence than youth who have offended nonsexually.

(Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, 2017)