

The Perceptions of Sex Offenders Scale (PSO)

Please respond to each of the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree with it. To answer, please place the appropriate number next to the question, in the space provided.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- ____ 1. With support and therapy, someone who committed a sexual offence can learn to change their behaviour.
- ____ 2. People who commit sex offences should lose their civil rights (e.g. voting, privacy).
- ____ 3. The death penalty should be reintroduced for sex offenders.
- ____ 4. People are far too on edge about the risks posed by sex offenders.
- ____ 5. More sex offenders should be given sentences in the community.
- ____ 6. Sex offenders prefer to stay home alone rather than be around lots of people.
- ____ 7. Most sex offenders do not have close friends.
- ____ 8. Sex offenders have difficulty making friends, even if they try real hard.
- ____ 9. The prison sentences sex offenders receive are much too long when compared to the sentence lengths of other crimes.
- ____ 10. People who commit sex offences should be subject to harsh restrictions on their liberty for the rest of their lives.
- ____ 11. Trying to rehabilitate a sex offender is a waste of time.
- ____ 12. Sex offenders should wear tracking devices so their location can be pinpointed at any time.
- ____ 13. Only a few sex offenders are dangerous.
- ____ 14. Most sex offenders are unmarried men.
- ____ 15. It's not if a sex offender commits another crime, it's when.
- ____ 16. Most sex offenders keep to themselves.
- ____ 17. Sex offenders should have all their details announced to local communities.
- ____ 18. Convicted sex offenders should never be released from prison.
- ____ 19. Sex offenders will almost always commit further offences.
- ____ 20. Some sex offenders should be allowed to work in schools.

What type of sex offender were you thinking of? _____

Scoring the Perceptions of Sex Offenders Scale (PSO)

Suggested citation when using the PSO:

Harper, C. A., & Hogue, T. E. (2014). Measuring public perceptions of sex offenders: Reimagining the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale. *Psychology, Crime and Law*. DOI: 10.1080/1068316X.2014.989170.

To score the Perceptions of Sex Offenders Scale, ensure that you subtract a constant of 1 from each item score. This functionally leaves a scoring range for each item of 0–5, and for the full scale of 0–100. Higher scores on the full-scale PSO indicate a punitive (or harsh) view of sex offenders, with perceptions that these people should be sentenced harshly and posed a significant threat. Several items are reverse-scored: 1, 4, 5, 9, 13, 20. For these items, please score them from 5–0, and not from 0–5.

A syntax file for scoring the PSO in SPSS for Windows is available upon request. This file reverse-scores appropriate items, computes full-scale and sub-factor scores, and calculates reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the full-scale and each of the sub-factors.

The PSO is made up of three sub-factors:

Factor 1: 'Sentencing and Management'

Items: 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19

The possible scoring range for this factor is 0–50, with higher scores indicating the view that sex offenders should be treated and sentenced harshly.

Factor 2: Stereotype Endorsement

Items: 6, 7, 8, 14, 16

The possible scoring range for this factor is 0–25, with higher scores indicating a view of sex offenders that is driven by stereotypical judgements.

Factor 3: Risk Perception

Items: 4, 5, 9, 13, 20

The possible scoring range for this factor is 0–25, with higher scores indicating the view that sex offenders are at a high risk of committing further offences.

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