Are we on the same page?
Comparing the perceptions of professionals on overall sexual violence risk
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Introduction
- Risk assessment is used to determine how likely an individual is to re-offend
  - Many different measures are available and all of them use categories to summarize offender risk
  - "Low", "moderate", and "high" are commonly used risk categories
  - They are interpreted differently among professionals
  - They are not consistent among different measures
- The RNR model is the most evidence-based model of treatment for offenders

Objectives
- This study will attempt to answer 3 questions:
  1. How do professionals perceive different risk categories?
  2. What intensity of treatment would they assign to a given level of risk?
  3. How do their political attitudes, general views on sexual offenders and punitive attitudes influence perceptions?

Methods
- Members of the Association of the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) will be asked to complete an online survey and given the following
  - Vignette: in the form of a referral request that describes an individual who has offended sexually at one of the following 3 risk levels:
    - LOW RISK
    - MODERATE RISK
    - HIGH RISK

  - Questionnaires: (A) demographic and professional information, (B) dependent variables, and (C) individual attitudes (political, offender, criminal justice)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Individual Attitudes</th>
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<td>Perception of Risk Level</td>
<td>Survey of Political Attitudes</td>
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<td>Intensity of Treatment</td>
<td>Attitudes Towards Sexual Offenders Survey (ATS-21)</td>
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- Analyses of dependent variables:
  - Between group comparisons conducted on perceptions of risk and treatment for participants randomly assigned to vignettes with one of the three levels of offender risk
  - Research has shown that professionals are likely to overestimate risk in offenders; expected perceptions of risk should favor higher rates of reoffending than reported for each risk level

- Although professionals will adhere to the Risk Principle of RNR, there should be visible differences in the amount of treatment (in weeks) suggested for any level of risk

Expected Results
- Provide insight into professional perceptions of risk
- Reveal how perceptions influence predictions of reoffending and treatment decisions
- Indicate if perceptions of risk are influenced by specific traits or pre-existing attitudes