

# **Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers**

## **PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT, TREATMENT, AND INTERVENTION WITH ADOLESCENTS WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR**

**2017**

**(Short Title: ATSA Adolescent Practice Guidelines)**

**@2017 Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers**

**Printed and produced in the USA.**

**Please do not cite or quote without permission.**

---

# INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues,

The ATSA Adolescent Guidelines Committee is pleased to present the ATSA Practice Guidelines for Assessment, Treatment, and Intervention of Adolescents Who Have Engaged in Sexually Abusive Behavior (2017).

It was an honor to be tasked with developing ATSA's first guidelines specific to adolescents. It was a long, laborious process and we appreciate everyone's patience in waiting for the final product. We hope that you will be as excited about the final guidelines as the committee is.

While these guidelines were developed by ATSA, the intent is to support and guide the work of both ATSA members and non-members. You will notice that we use "practitioner" rather than "member" in the body of the guidelines. This was a deliberate decision by the committee to reflect that the guidelines were developed to provide support to all professionals involved with this group of youth.

We thank the membership for their support throughout this process including taking the time to provide comments and feedback on the official draft during the membership review. We also thank the ATSA Executive Board of Directors for their careful review, response, and approval of the final document.

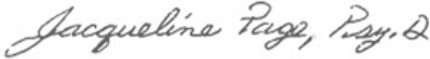
In addition we are grateful for the assistance and guidance of Maia Christopher, ATSA Executive Director, who never wavered in her support and belief in the project. And, we thank ATSA staff members Aniss Benelmouffok, Sarah Gorter, Kelly McGrath, and Ann Snyder, and the many behind-the-scenes people who were tasked with reviewing, formatting, and preparing the document for publication.

---

This document is for you, and it is our hope that you find the ATSA Adolescent Practice Guidelines beneficial.

Sincerely,

The ATSA Adolescent Practice Guidelines Committee:



Jacqueline Page, Psy.D., Co-Chair



Tom Leverage, LCSW, Co-Chair



Maia Christopher,  
Executive Director and Ex-Officio Committee Member

Kevin Creeden M.A.

Elizabeth J. Letourneau, Ph.D.

Sue Righthand, Ph.D.

Daniel Rothman, Ph.D.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS..... 1**
- B. INTENDED SCOPE, APPLICABILITY, AND USE .....2**
- C. SEXUAL ABUSE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE ..... 5**
  - Prevalence and Recidivism Rates..... 5
  - Assessment and Intervention .....6
  - Public Policy..... 10
- D. FOUNDATIONAL POINTS OF THE ATSA ADOLESCENT PRACTICE GUIDELINES ..... 12**
  - Empirical Framework .....12
  - Foundational Points.....13
- E. ASSESSMENTS OF ADOLESCENTS WHO HAVE SEXUALLY ABUSED..... 16**
  - Overarching Assessment Guidelines ..... 16
  - Conducting Assessments .....17
  - Purpose of Assessment .....20
  - Forensic-Related Assessments .....21
  - Use of Risk - Need - Responsivity in Adolescent Assessments..... 23
  - Risk - Need Factors .....24
  - General Reoffending Risk Factors ..... 25
  - Responsivity Factors ..... 27
  - Assessment Domains ..... 27
  - Assessment Methods.....31
  - Assessment Measures .....33
  - General Guidelines.....33
  - Psychophysiological Measures..... 34
  - Risk and Needs Assessment Measures .....35
  - Assessment Conclusions .....36
  - Assessment Recommendations ..... 38

---

<b>F. TREATMENT INTERVENTIONS</b> .....	<b>40</b>
Overview .....	40
Treatment Provider Qualifications .....	42
Treatment of the Whole Youth.....	43
Treatment within the Broader Social-Ecological Approach .....	44
Treatment Engagement and Motivation.....	45
Therapeutic Relationship .....	46
General Considerations During Treatment .....	46
Assessment-Informed Treatment.....	47
Treatment Programming.....	48
Treatment Targets.....	49
Social Isolation/Low Social Competence.....	49
Attitudes Supportive of Abusive Behavior.....	50
Parent-Adolescent Relationships.....	50
General Self-Regulation .....	51
Healthy Sexuality Including Sexual Self-Regulation .....	51
Social and Community Supports .....	52
Nonsexual Delinquency.....	53
Treatment Modalities.....	53
Treatment Process or Discharge.....	57
<b>G. SPECIAL POPULATIONS</b> .....	<b>61</b>
Overview.....	61
Assessment.....	62
Treatment .....	63
<b>H. SUPPORTING REHABILITATION</b> .....	<b>65</b>
Overview.....	65

---

<b>I.</b>	<b>APPENDIX: SPECIAL POPULATIONS .....</b>	<b>67</b>
	Adolescent Females .....	67
	Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities .....	70
	Adolescents with Co-Occurring Mental Health Problems.....	73
<b>J.</b>	<b>APPENDIX: PUBLIC POLICY.....</b>	<b>76</b>
	History of Public Policy Development .....	76
	Supporting Effective Policies .....	77
	Supporting Research-Based Policies.....	78
	Beyond Juvenile Justice: Decisions Related to Supervision, Placement, Education, and Disclosure .....	81
	Decisions Related to Disclosure of Youths' Status .....	84
	Policy Conclusions .....	85