

## **BETTER TOGETHER**

2018 ATSA Conference | Wednesday October 17 | 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

### **D-08**

#### **Addressing Bias: Towards More Objective, Accurate Assessments of Sexual Offenders**

Daniel Murrie, PhD  
University of Virginia

Professional guidelines encourage clinicians assessing sexual offenders to strive for objectivity and minimize bias, particularly in an adversarial legal system. But research reveals substantial differences among clinicians in the conclusions they reach about the same offenders, including differences that appear attributable to the adversarial system. This interactive workshop will consider common biases and ways they may compromise accurate, objective assessment. We will consider empirical data from studies of sex offender assessment, practical examples of bias, and strategies to minimize bias at several levels: individual opinion formation, case management and practice procedures, and broader system interventions.

#### **Learning Goals:**

- Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be better able to name and describe at least 4 common biases and explain ways they may compromise accurate assessment of sexual offenders.
- Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be better able to describe empirical studies that reveal evaluator differences and evaluator biases in assessment.
- Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be better able to describe the concept of adversarial allegiance, and identify empirical evidence and examples of the phenomena.
- Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be better able to describe practical bias correction strategies, or steps to reduce bias in forensic evaluation.
- Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be better able to describe practical steps to encourage consistency and objectivity in scoring measures of psychopathy and sexual recidivism risk.
- Upon conclusion of the workshop, participants will be better able to describe practical steps to discuss bias, and improve transparency, in expert testimony and other consultation to the justice system.

**Daniel Murrie, PhD** serves as: Director of Psychology at the *Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy (ILPPP)*, Director of the ILPPP forensic clinic, Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the *University of Virginia (UVA) School of Medicine*, and

## ***BETTER TOGETHER***

2018 ATSA Conference | Wednesday October 17 | 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

instructor in the UVA *School of Law*. Dr. Murrie directs UVA's postdoctoral fellowship in forensic psychology and oversees the state-wide training program for Virginia forensic evaluators.

As a clinician, Dr. Murrie performs forensic assessments of juveniles and adults, particularly those charged with sexual offenses. As a researcher, he has co-authored over 50 peer-reviewed publications, as well as books and book chapters addressing forensic mental health evaluation. Much of this work addresses reliability and bias in forensic psychological evaluations, particularly the assessment of sexual offenders.