

## ***BETTER TOGETHER***

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**F-16**

### **ADHD, and Learning Disabilities Diagnoses: Translating Treatment for Youth Who Have Sexually Offended**

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Many of the youth who are admitted to inpatient and outpatient settings have secondary diagnoses. Too often youth who have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Learning Differences (LD) are square pegs fitting into round holes. Even though it is accepted there is no typology for youth who sexually offend, sometimes the secondary diagnoses get lost in the program formation and not all clinicians know how to translate treatment for youth diagnosed with ADHD and LD. Consequently, such youth can spend longer in treatment than is necessary. This workshop aims to, first, gain an understanding of the thinking processes and philosophies of these youth. For example, time is an enemy for those diagnosed with ADHD. Consequently, assignment completion has added complications for these youth as they have little awareness of time related to their next session. In addition, youth diagnosed with ADHD are missing the conductor in their executive functioning center, consequently, self talk, and organization skills are areas which do not come naturally. Youth with ADHD particularly need to learn self talk to learn to regulate themselves. Youth diagnosed with LD fall into several categories, but tend to be very literal in their thinking. If clinicians don't speak their language, too often our attempts at good communication skills come across as a complete foreign language. In addition, youth diagnosed with LD struggle with organization and time management. They also tend to doubt their own intellectual capacity as they look around and see others understanding the material without issue and so decide they must "be stupid."

Secondly, this workshop will address the tools that are applicable to these populations. One bonus of utilizing such tools is that they tend to benefit the majority of youth and so a program that utilizes such skills is less likely to lose youth in the translation. Youth diagnosed with ADHD benefit from the use of analogies as they help translate the language to something understandable. Youth diagnosed with ADHD benefit from problem solving being modeled out loud by the adults around them, as this mimics self talk and repetition aids the ADHD brain. Other methods which aid translation include, time management, separating the whole into manageable parts, social skills, handling the orchestra, and organizational skills. Youth diagnosed with LD tend to struggle with their sense of self and lack an understanding of how their brains work and that there is nothing wrong with their IQ. Analogies are vital for this population and they can literally translate information. In addition, youth with LD are in need of developing an organizational program that works for them, as well as an understanding of verbal and non verbal cues for social skills. Too often these youth have no understanding of why they are failing in relationships. In addition, understanding what LD is occurring can result in specific tools being

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utilized, for example, in group, asking a question and then coming back later for an answer to give a processing deficit youth time to process the question. There are also a great deal of apps that have been created for these populations. These include note taking, organization, and subject skills.

Thirdly, this workshop will address the transition of adolescents from residential setting back to family setting. What skills should be covered in family therapy? What elements of the program would be beneficial for the family to incorporate? What are the benefits of IEP's and 504's in the school setting for these populations?

### **Learning Goals:**

- To understand the diagnoses of ADHD and LD that result in translation being necessary
- To understand the tools and apps available for translating treatment.
- Understanding how to better assist with transitions from residential to foster/family care and how to further skills of families

**Nicki Hopwood, MSW, LCSW** began in the field of Education as a secondary school teacher at a School in England and at Lake Michigan Academy, Grand Rapids MI, a day school for students diagnosed as LD or ADHD/LD. For the past 17 years Nicki has worked with adolescents who have acted out sexually and/or have been sexually abused, ADHD, Learning Differences, oppositional behavior and anger management, and pornography and drug issues. She was the Clinical Supervisor for Youth Health Associates Central Region overseeing an adolescent girls group home, an adolescent boys group homes and proctor department. For the past 6 years, Nicki has operated her own private practice, HAPTEN Counseling Services. She provides individual and family therapy for youth who have sexually offended and victims of abuse, as well as ADHD, LD, and anxiety. She has presented at state and national conferences as well as a conference in U.K. In 2012, Nicki published a chapter in the book, *Current Perspectives & Applications in Neurobiology: Working with Young Persons who are Victims and Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse*.