

## ***BETTER TOGETHER***

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

**F-51**

### **Practice Self-Regulation: An Innovative Practice for Preventing Problem Sexual Behavior in Youth**

Joann Schladale, MS, LMFT  
Resources for Resolving Violence, Inc.

*The capacity for self-regulation is probably the single most important contributor to achievement, mental health, and social success (Steinberg, 2014).*

*Practice Self-Regulation (PS-R)*, a trauma-informed approach for adolescent sexual health, is a federally funded “innovative and promising approach” for prevention of youthful sexual harm, infection and disease, and teen pregnancy. It is being evaluated in two formats across the United States to determine effectiveness through random controlled studies. One format is a therapeutic intervention facilitated by licensed mental health professionals, and the other is a blended learning model combining 8 on-line sessions and 4 face-to-face meetings with non-clinically trained professionals in juvenile probation settings. This presentation will provide a clearly defined and structured description of the model with implications for application in a variety of settings.

*PS-R* is a neuroscience-based intervention designed for youth impacted by adverse childhood experiences. It helps young people recognize and restructure thoughts, regulate emotions and physiological reactions, and change behavior. By increasing knowledge of sexual health and the impact of trauma on sexual decision-making youth are encouraged and supported in practicing self-regulation. The intervention addresses motivation for change to decrease problem sexual behavior, manage impulsivity, negotiate, and practice harm-free, and protected sex. It is based on concepts of positive youth development and findings that indicate young people are more motivated towards goals they can approach rather than those they should avoid.

Affect regulation, a persons’ ability to manage emotions without causing harm to self or others (Schore, 2003) has five core components: thoughts, feelings, physiological reactions, behavior, and outcomes. The first three are internal processes youth learn to mindfully observe as they experience external stimuli (arousal [not necessarily sexual]). These internal elements influence decision making that in turn influence behavior and outcomes. While cognition and behavior play a part in all psychotherapy this approach is not limited to a general cognitive behavioral therapy approach. This model reflects tenets of trauma-informed interventions promoted through the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the federal Office of Adolescent Health (OAH), and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). It also encompasses best practices for interventions addressing problem

## **BETTER TOGETHER**

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

sexual behavior in youth (Henggeler, Letourneau, Chapman, Borduin, Schewe, & McCart, 2009; Henggeler, Schoenwald, Borduin, Rowland, & Cunningham, 2009; Prescott, 2012).

Self-regulation is the capacity to formulate “a plan of one’s own and implement behavior to carry it out” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p.86). While affect regulation addresses spontaneous efforts to optimally manage cognitive, affective, and physiological reactions, self-regulation is a mindful, values-based commitment to do so over time. Optimal sexual decision making is a thoughtful and planned approach to behaving sexually that promotes the health and well-being of everyone involved. It is behavior that reflects the World Health Organization’s (WHO) definition of sexual health.

PS-R provides a setting for therapists and youth to address the impact of trauma, and how values, beliefs, choices, and personal goals affect a person’s sexual health and well-being. It addresses many underlying issues that put youth who have experienced trauma at increased risk for sexual harm. Tenets of Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2013) are interwoven into the model.

The presentation will include information about the neuroscience behind the intervention and examples of practical application in a variety of settings. Core components of the model are described through PowerPoint slides and multi-sensory activities to enhance participant engagement, understanding, and memory retention.

### **Learning Goals:**

*Are to provide:*

- A clear description of the intervention, Practice Self-Regulation (PS-R) and how it can stop sexual harm
- The neuroscience foundation with scholarly citations on which the intervention is based
- Clarification of how the intervention integrates both primary and comprehensive prevention in accordance with ATSA’s definition of Prevention

**Joann Schladale, MS, LMFT** is a licensed marriage and family therapist specializing in positive youth development, sexual health, trauma, violence prevention, problem sexual behavior, and teen pregnancy prevention since 1981. She is the developer of the innovative and promising intervention, *Practice Self-Regulation™* being studied through two federal grants around the country. She co-authored *Stop It! A Practical Guide for Youth Violence Prevention*, (2012) and has written four workbooks for youth: *Practice Self-Regulation* (2017), *The T.O.P.\* Workbook for Sexual Health* (2010), and *The T.O.P. Workbook for Taming Violence and Sexual Aggression* (2002). In addition to numerous book chapters she authored *A Trauma-Informed Approach for Adolescent Sexual Health* (2013). As founder and Executive Director of *Resources for Resolving Violence, Inc.*, a licensed, trauma-informed mental health agency, Joann provides extensive consultation, program development, and training promoting health and well-being. She works closely with public and private organizations throughout the United States on trauma-informed services, and teaches a variety of courses to prevent violence, sexual abuse, and teen pregnancy.

## **BETTER TOGETHER**

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

### **References**

Cook, A., Blaustein, M., Spinazzola, J. & van der Kolk, B. (2003). *Complex trauma in children and adolescents*. White Paper for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network Complex Trauma Task Force. Nctsn.org

Henggeler, S., Letourneau, E., Chapman, J., Borduin, C., Schewe, P. & McCart, M. (2009). Mediators of change for Multisystem Therapy with juvenile sexual offenders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77(3), 451-462.

Henggeler, S., Schoenwald, S., Borduin, C., Rowland, M., & Cunningham, P. (2009). *Multisystemic treatment for antisocial behavior in children and adolescents (Second Edition)*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Miller, W. & Rollnick, W. (2013). *Motivational interviewing*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Prescott, D. (2012). *Beyond manuals and workbooks: Improving clinical outcomes with adolescents who have sexually abused*. Holyoke, MA: NEARI Press.

Schore, A. (2003). *Affect regulation and the repair of the self*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Stambaugh, L., Ringeisen, H., Casanueva, C, Tueller, S., Smith, K., & Dolan, M. (2013). *Adverse childhood experiences in NSCAW*. OPRE Report #2013-26, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of opportunity, lessons from the new science of adolescence*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score*. New York: Viking.