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The Role of Disrupted Caregiving in the Development of Juvenile Sexual Offenders

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Caregiver disruption, defined as insufficient or substitute caregiving due to an inability for a youths' biological parents to meet their basic needs, has long been linked to juvenile delinquency (Hoeve, Stams, van der Laan, & Gerris, 2012). However, little is known about the role of caregiver disruption in the development of juvenile sexual offenders, as opposed to juveniles who commit non-sexual crimes (Yoder, Dillard, & Stehlik, 2017). Understanding subgroup differences in the role that negative family relationships plays in offending has important treatment implications for prevention of sexual offenses and reducing recidivism.

The general delinquency and attachment literatures has identified three aspects of caregiver disruption that may negatively affect child-caregiver relationships. First, there is a body of literature which suggests that youth with male primary caregivers are at increased risk for delinquency (Apel & Kaukinen, 2008; Demuth & Brown, 2004). Second, there is some evidence that biological closeness between caregivers and their children may protect against the development of delinquency (Zill, 1995). Thus, youth with non-parental family members as guardians (i.e. grandparents) and youth with non-biological caregivers (i.e. adoptive parents) are at higher risk for delinquency than youth raised in their biological homes. Third, experiencing multiple changes in primary caregivers (i.e. new addition of a stepparent; entering foster care) has been associated with an increased risk for delinquency (Apel & Kaukinen, 2008).

Since a number of studies have identified juvenile sexual offenders as a distinct population within juvenile delinquents, it is possible that these risk factors may hold more or less true for youth who commit sexual offenses. However, to date, no studies have explicitly contrasted juvenile sexual offenders, non-sexual juvenile delinquents, and non-incarcerated juvenile control youth.

This poster will describe results that confirm that disrupted caregiving does indeed affect juvenile sexual offenders at a significantly greater rate than other types of juvenile offenders. Differences between these groups will be discussed with regard to implications for prevention as well as treatment recommendations for improving caregiver-child relationships.

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Miranda Sitney is a 3rd year doctoral student in Portland State University's Applied Psychology program. Her research interests focus on juvenile sexual offenders, parenting of sexual offenders, and the intersection of sexual offenses and psychopathy. This presentation is a summary of her Masters' thesis.

Judith Zatkan is a 5th year doctoral student at Portland State University in the Community Psychology Program. Her research interests include sexual violence prevention, campus sexual assault, modus operandi of child sexual abuse perpetrators, and public perceptions of sexual offenders. She is currently working on her dissertation, regarding public perceptions of sexual offenders.

Kelly Stewart received her B.S. in Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is currently in her fifth year of the Applied Community Psychology doctoral program at Portland State University. Her research interests focus on child sexual abuse prevention, sexual assault prevention, and institutional responses to sexual assault. Currently, her research is looking at parental monitoring strategies to reduce sexual offending.

Dr. Kaufman is a Clinical Community Psychologist and a Professor of Psychology at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. He is a member of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's advisory board, the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Safety Task Force, and Big Brothers Big Sisters Nation Safety Committee. He is Past President of ATSA and recently

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received that organization's Significant Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Kaufman has provided assessment and treatment to both child sexual abuse victims and juvenile sexual offenders as well as their families. He has authored two books, a variety of book chapters, and numerous research articles addressing sexual violence and sexual violence prevention. His most recent edited book is *Preventing Sexual Violence: A Practitioner's Sourcebook* (NEARI Press, 2010). Dr. Kaufman is currently working on a \$1 million U.S. Department of Justice grant to develop a Campus Situational Prevention Approach to address campus sexual assault.