

## ***BETTER TOGETHER***

2018 ATSA Conference | Thursday October 18 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

### **T-04**

#### **Minnesota's DRA Initiative, Compelling Results Achieved Through Enhanced Supervision**

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In an effort to move from offense based strategies to empirically based strategies, in March of 2013 the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MN-DOC) Field Services (community supervision) initiated a pilot project involving the use of Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) instruments in the supervision of sex offenders as discussed in literature based out of Canada regarding the Dynamic Supervision Protocol. This pilot project involved Enhanced Sex Offender agents and Intensive Supervised Release agents from two supervision districts (one in Northern Minnesota and one in Southern Minnesota), with a primary goal of reducing sexual recidivism and sexually related release revocations via enhanced supervisory practices (i.e., targeting empirically supported static and dynamic risk factors, allocating levels of supervision based on a client's risk). The results of the pilot project indicated significantly lower revocation and sexual recidivism rates for the DRA group relative to the non-DRA group (control group). As a result, the MN-DOC implemented a statewide application of a DRA protocol in January of 2015.

Since initiating the DRA protocol, risk assignments have directly influenced supervision levels of sex offenders throughout Minnesota. Relatedly, clients assessed as higher risk were given first priority for intensive treatment while those at a lower risk were assigned to alternative programming, such as fast-track treatment or psychoeducational treatment groups. The DRA protocol also allowed agents and therapists alike to establish clear and precise goals via individualized treatment plans. As both agents and community treatment providers were trained in DRA, they were better able to work collaboratively. Moreover, enhanced knowledge of static and dynamic risk factors via DRA training provided for a cross-check, with input from both the agent and community treatment provider when determining if treatment goals were being met. As the statewide DRA protocol has now been in effect for over three years, a self-study was conducted to again verify whether the application of the DRA protocol has facilitated a more effective and efficient use of resources, thereby reducing sexual recidivism and supervisory violations.

In an effort to evaluate this question, Cox Regression was used to compare the 2015-2016 DRA group (approximately 600 offenders) versus a "pre-DRA" control group from 2014-2015 (approximately 400 offenders). Consistent with results observed from the MN-DOC's pilot project, the results demonstrated offenders being supervised with the DRA protocol were significantly less likely to have sexually recidivated or to be revoked for

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sexual misconduct over a 36 month period relative to their “pre-DRA” peers. Qualitatively, agents and community based treatment providers spoke quite positively of the DRA protocol; in particular, agents noted their caseloads were much more manageable while treatment staff were elated to observe that higher risk clients were no longer being subjected to waitlists behind their lower risk peers.

In the proposed workshop, the presenters will provide an overview of the initiation and implementation of the initial DRA pilot project. The presenters will then discuss Minnesota’s transition to a statewide application of a DRA protocol in January of 2015. Results of a recent self-study by the MN-DOC will be presented, as well as a discussion relating to how Minnesota agents and community treatment providers have responded to this change. Relatedly, several relevant video clips taken from interviews conducted with various agents and community treatment providers will be incorporated into the presentation; the clips contain powerful firsthand accounts relating to how these relevant parties have responded to the DRA protocol.

In an era of an economizing of resources, results (both quantitative and qualitative) clearly and significantly demonstrate how enhanced supervision via the DRA protocol has contributed to a much more efficient use of Minnesota’s precious supervisory and treatment resources. The results observed in Minnesota are consistent with those observed by Canadian researchers and are thought to provide some degree of cross-validation for the observed Canadian results.

### **Learning Goals:**

- Provide information on the success of the MN-DOC’s implementation of a DRA Protocol in a relatively large community sample of sex offenders
- Discuss lessons learned from the implementation of a DRA pilot project and a later transition to a complete DRA Protocol.
- Explore future applications of Dynamic Risk Assessment in Minnesota

**Michèle Murphy, MA, LPC** is a Program Director at the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC). In this capacity, she manages the community notification program, supervises RA/CN Unit staff who analyze and synthesize material for use in community notification events, serves as a Chairperson on an End of Confinement Review Committee (ECRC), and manages the clinical aspects of the statewide Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) Program and its related trainings. In her former roles, she scored numerous actuarial instruments, completed risk assessment recommendation reports and life-sentence evaluations, spoke to large community groups about level 3 predatory offenders, presided over community education and professional trainings and maintained effective public relations for the department. Prior to working for the Department of Corrections, she worked in the positions of therapist, psychometrist, and program manager.

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**Brian Heinsohn, MA, LPC** is a licensed professional counselor who has worked for the Minnesota Department of Corrections since 1998. He worked as a therapist in the sex offender treatment program at MCF- Lino Lakes for six years before transferring to the Risk Assessment/Community Notification Unit in 2004. His duties in the RA/CN unit have included completing risk level recommendation reports for end of confinement review committees at a number of institutions, completing actuarial instruments including the Static-99, RRASOR, MnSOST-R and MNSOST-3.1, and making sex offender treatment recommendations. He currently supervises the RA/CN unit psychologists and provides trainings on dynamic risk assessment and is a certified Static-99R, Stable-2007, Acute-2007 trainer.

**Terrel Backes, PsyD, LP** is a licensed psychologist who has worked for the Minnesota Department of Corrections since 2012. He initially worked for several years in the psychiatric unit of the MCF-OPH, Minnesota's lone "super-max" prison, before later transitioning to the MN-DOC's Risk Assessment/Community Notification Unit. There, he completes risk level recommendation reports and Sexual Psychopathic Personality/Sexually Dangerous Person Review reports. His professional interests include neuropsychological assessment, violence risk assessment, community reintegration and risk assessment of Life Sentenced Offenders, the interplay of structured professional judgment and actuarial measures, and statistical analysis (e.g., machine learning and logistical regression).