

BETTER TOGETHER

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

T-15

How Developmental Trauma Impacts Our Therapeutic Partnerships with Sexually Abusive Youth

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Youth who have experienced developmental trauma are over-represented in the cohort who engage in sexually abusive behavior. They can be difficult to engage, particularly in relationally-based work, and connecting can be extremely difficult for all those who work with them.

Additionally, those of us who work with traumatized youth find -at times - that bridging the divide between *understanding* the theory of trauma and attachment models and actually *doing something* with that theory is hard. How does the theory translate to the practice of assisting sexually abusive youth to manage behaviors, and also treat underlying issues? In terms of complexity, when we add both the 'everyday' and the more unusual issues that young people both experience and present with, for example (and to name but a few); confusing family structure, family violence, drug & alcohol problems, pornography exposure, a negative world view and conduct disordered behavior, it becomes obvious that the therapist's job may be quite difficult indeed.

In this session we provide both theoretical and practical examples aimed at bringing understanding alive. Through interactive demonstration and discussion, a 'sanctuary-based' model of trauma treatment - working through the 'trauma-centric lens' - and using teachable moments is presented. Additionally, a model for understanding and recognizing normative versus problematic and abusive sexual behaviors is presented, along with a brief look at the author's recent research into pornography's influence on those youth who sexually harm others. As part of the presentation, the author briefly describes what he has named a 'savvy consumer' model of educating youth regarding pornography from a developmental perspective.

This proposed workshop extends and updates two previous very successful (2016 & 2017) 90-minute presentations at ATSA Florida (see feedback – T50) and ATSA Kansas City (see feedback – F12).

This interactive presentation is suitable for intermediate to advanced practitioners, blending theory, practice, demonstration and discussion. Audience input is not only welcomed and encouraged but expected.

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Learning Goals:

Attendees will:

- Be introduced to a child-developmentally-appropriate treatment paradigm for sexually abusive behavior treatment work, which also pays appropriate attention to the criminogenic principals of R(isk), N(eeds), R(esponsivity).
- Gain understanding of developmental trauma and why so many of the youth we work with in sexually abusive behavior treatment programs present with developmental trauma backgrounds.
- Be provided with a comprehensive understanding of how developmental trauma impacts a youth's ability to both understand emotion in general as well as their own internal emotional world.
- Gain skills- through direct demonstration and interactive learning techniques - in working with youth to increase their emotional awareness, as well as management of emotional states, and why this is important in treatment of youth who engage in sexually abusive behaviors,
- Gain skills in formulating treatment goals and matching these treatment goals to therapeutic practice – in other words – what to do for what issues; both the 'why' and the 'how'.
- Be engaged throughout the presentation to consider and discuss case examples and situations designed specifically to ensure their theoretical and practice knowledge is up-to-date. Feedback of this process has always been excellent (i.e.: it is respectful and engaging).

Dr. Russ Pratt is the Director of Prime Forensic Psychology. Prior to May 2017, he was the Statewide Principal Practitioner with the Office of Professional Practice in the Department of Health and Human Services in Melbourne, Australia, where he commenced in 2010. He also worked at Monash Health Sexual Assault (SECASA) for over 12 years, including being the manager and senior clinician of the *AWARE* treatment program for youth exhibiting sexually abusive behaviors. A Counselling and Forensic Psychologist, Russ has 20-plus-years' experience working with sexual assault, trauma, attachment, family systems and child protection issues. He has worked with sexually abusive youth, adult sex offenders, and victims and survivors of sexual assault. He was a recipient of a Creswick Fellowship in 2007 which enabled him to investigate best practice adolescent programs in the USA, the UK and Europe. He is a past chairman of the Victorian Offender Treatment Association (VOTA), a current board member of ANZATSA, a member of the NSW Children's Guardian's Expert Advisory Panel, and a past Board Member of the Victorian Therapeutic Treatment Board (a ministerial appointment). In 2014, Russ was appointed a Board Member and 'elder' of the National Adolescent Perpetrator Network (NAPN) based in Denver USA, by one of the pioneers of the field, Gail Ryan. In October 2015, Russ was elected in the first lot of Fellows of ATSA. Russ regularly writes and presents both nationally and internationally regarding youth exhibiting sexually abusive behaviors, the impacts of pornography on sexual practice, particularly for youth and with those adolescents who sexually harm others, and trauma, attachment and brain development issues.