

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Wednesday November 6 | 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

A-11

Keeping the Brain in Mind: Neuroscience and Adolescent Sexual Behavior Problems

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Neurobiological research continues to expand our understanding of how childhood experiences shape brain development and ultimately influence our perceptions, interactions, and decision-making. Studies that focus on the neurobiology of attachment relationships, adolescent self-regulation, and behavioral decision-making can be seen as especially relevant to our understanding of adolescents who engage in sexually harmful behavior. In addition, specific research that has examined the impact of early child maltreatment and adverse childhood experiences on neurodevelopment, learning, and behavior speaks to important issues that need to be recognized and addressed when considering effective assessment and treatment protocols.

This workshop examines some important aspects of current neurobiological research that can broaden our understanding of adolescents with sexual behavior problems. We will then discuss ways that this research can be incorporated into our assessment and treatment of these youths.

Learning Goals:

- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to discuss important aspects of current neurological research that seem especially pertinent to adolescent sexual behavior problems.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to understand how this research may expand or challenge our understanding of youth engaging in sexually harmful behavior.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to utilize the current research to guide assessments and develop specific treatment interventions.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to identify the role early attachment relationships play in later behavioral decision-making.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to recognize how difficulties in executive functioning can manifest themselves in problematic sexual behavior.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to identify treatment interventions that directly address neurological issues manifested by their clients.

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Kevin Creeden, MA, LMHC is the Director of Assessment and Research at the Whitney Academy in East Freetown, MA. . He has over 35 years of clinical experience treating children, adolescents, and their families working extensively with sexually and physically aggressive youth. Over the past 25 years, his primary focus has been on issues of trauma and attachment difficulties, especially with regard to the neurological impact of trauma on behavior. He has authored articles and book chapters on the neurodevelopmental impact of trauma on sexual behavior problems and sexual offending behavior. In the past, Mr. Creeden has been a Teaching Fellow at Boston College, and an Instructor in Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School at Cambridge Hospital. Presently, he is a guest faculty at the Simmons School of Social Work's advanced training program for trauma informed care. Mr. Creeden trains and consults nationally and internationally to youth service, community, mental health, and forensic service programs.