

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Friday November 8 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

F-04

Private Practice Professionals Preparing for Court Reports and Testimony: Ethical and Procedural Issues

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Whether we are engaged in counselling or assessment, there is always the potential that we may become involved in court related work. Preparing to testify in court can be a stressful experience. To reduce this stress, it is important to be prepared for the possibility of having to testify. This means knowing your client; knowing what is being asked of you as well as knowing the legal forum in which your report and testimony may be used; preparing your consent forms and being able to define the approach you have used for your psychological involvement. Finally, you will have a thorough grasp of the evidence base for your work. Preparation begins with having deliberate and effective practice processes, sound clinical and legal knowledge, appropriate record keeping, awareness of relevant procedural, cultural and community issues and effective communication skills for both report writing and communicating your results verbally. Different court venues (e.g., adult, youth, criminal, civil (family, child protection, sharing circles, etc.), administrative, and alternative dispute resolution processes may require different psychological processes and products. Professionals providing reports or testimony in various legal venues need to behave in a manner that is congruent their professional ethical codes and standards of practice (e.g., ATSA members should also refer to ATSA's Professional Code of Ethics). Similarly it is important to have an awareness of the ethical and situational demands of the venues with which they may become involved. Participants in this workshop will reflect on a variety of the ethical issues that are important to consider from a private-practice orientation when working in forensic situations. We will invite participants to reflect on the use of forensic risk assessment tools in non-correctional settings with specific focus on community-based counselling and assessment work related to criminal and child protection concerns. By participating in this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their private practice strategies and engage with others in a dynamic and interactive discussion.

Learning Goals:

Participants will leave this workshop with knowledge and skills to:

- Identify and address procedural demands of forensic oriented practice (e.g., dealing with requests from lawyers, responding to subpoenas, preparing for testimony, etc.);

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- Recognize and respond to a variety of ethical issues including: informed consent, confidentiality, clarifying third-party requests, etc.; and,
- Explore options for practice that builds confidence in planning intervention strategies and assessments, creating progress reports, and communicating assessment results from evidence-based perspectives.

Ann Marie Dewhurst, PhD is a registered psychologist in private practice in Edmonton, Alberta. She specializes in conducting clinical/forensic assessments, counselling and case consultation. An important aspect of Ann Marie's professional practice is program development regarding services to men who batter and people who perpetrate sexual abuse. Ann Marie is a clinical consultant to several non-profit agencies to support the development and delivery of innovative and ethical counselling with vulnerable populations. In addition to her clinical work, Ann Marie has been a sessional lecturer for both undergraduate and graduate psychology courses at the University of Alberta, Athabasca University and Concordia University College in Edmonton. Ann Marie is a published author and frequently presents her work at national and international conferences. When not working, Ann Marie loves to travel and take pictures of the people and places she visits.

Andrew McWhinnie is a Canadian therapist specializing in male sexual dysfunction., Andrew has authored and co-authored well over 35 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on topics related to Restorative Justice, Recidivism, Civil Commitment, Sex Offender Reintegration methodology, including the internationally renowned Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). Mr. McWhinnie's corporate client list is global in scope and practice, ranging from Eastern Europe, North America and the Korean peninsula. In private practice, Mr. McWhinnie works with men who have difficulty with their sexual behavior, specializing in the areas of sexual assault and internet sexual crimes. Mr. McWhinnie also works with provincial child protection units as a strategic consultant and risk assessment professional in family reunifications of convicted sexual offenders.