

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Friday November 8 | 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

F-23

Sex Offenders in Denial: Treatment and Management

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Incarcerated sexual offenders who are in categorical denial of their offences present many challenges to treatment providers and other stakeholders. Although much has been written about sex offenders in denial, it still remains a controversial topic. This presentation will review the concept of denial and its function, discuss the assessment of deniers, and examine outcomes for deniers. The implications of these issues for the treatment and management of deniers will be discussed.

We have outlined the rationale for, and a description of, our approach to dealing with categorical deniers who would not otherwise enter sexual offender treatment (Marshall, Thornton, Marshall, Fernandez, & Mann, 2001) however the content and approach used have evolved since our earlier description. These sexual offenders are not expressing minimizations or denial of aspects of their offences, rather they claimed to have been falsely accused and report they would not enter a treatment program which contained any men who were actually guilty of a sexual offence, such as those in our regular sexual offender treatment program.

We have run this treatment program for categorical deniers for over 14 years in the Canadian federal prison system. Based on emerging research and clinical experience we have made a number of changes to the content and process of the program. We have also recently completed a second recidivism study. In this presentation we will review other attempts to deal with these men, outline our rationale for a categorical deniers program, describe in detail our method for treating men in categorical denial, and present two examinations of recidivism and related issues. As an example of our results, analyses show this approach to dealing with categorical deniers is effective in reducing recidivism and enhancing movement through the correctional system.

Session attendees will also be given a written primer that they can take home on how to adapt a treatment program for sexual offenders for categorical deniers.

Learning Goals:

- Participants will gain an understanding of the role categorical denial plays in the treatment of sexual offenders
- Attendees will learn the approach necessary to dealing with categorical denial in an effective manner
- Participants will learn how to translate the knowledge gained from the categorical deniers program, into regular treatment programs for other sexual offenders.

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Liam E. Marshall, Ph.D. - Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care & Rockwood Psychological Services. Liam has been treating and conducting research on sex offenders for twenty-five years and was named an ATSA Fellow in 2016. He has been a therapist for and designed a variety of offender and mental health treatment programs. Liam has many publications including four books and has made numerous international conference presentations on offender, violence, aging, and problem gambling issues. He has delivered trainings for therapists who work with sexual and violent offenders in more than twenty five countries.