

SHAPING THE FUTURE

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

F-30

Assessment & Family Skills Training: How to Keep Families Together in the Wake of Sexual Abuse

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Imagine you are a caregiver in a family experiencing stressors or even a crisis. Perhaps, you struggle with your own mental health issues or encounter domestic violence or substance abuse. Perhaps, finances and housing are a monthly struggle. Perhaps you also struggle to parent a child who is increasingly out of control. Now imagine that one of your children has been engaging in sexually abusive behavior...

Historically, youth presenting with sexually abusive behaviors have received assessments and treatment focused only on this identified high risk behavior. However, many youth present with multiple high risk behaviors. Data continues to mount which identifies the comorbidity of sexually abusive behaviors and mental health diagnoses. In the scenario described above, treating sexually abusive youth in a silo approach, without recognizing the needs of the whole family system will simply not suffice.

Hillcrest Educational Centers (HEC), a residential treatment program in Western MA, has been committed to utilizing best practices to engage in this work. This presentation offers a risk-needs-responsivity approach that is developmentally appropriate and addresses mental health and safety needs for the whole family. We will explore assessment and treatment planning needs, safety planning strategies, comprehensive family work, and skill acquisition to support abuse free living.

Assessment and Treatment Planning. This presentation will provide information on conducting assessments of both contributing factors and protective factors. Discussion will revolve around developing a strengths-based treatment plan for the youth with abusive behaviors as well as the whole family unit.

Safety Planning. Presenters will offer safety planning strategies for the youth and their family. Effective safety plans focus not only on structure and supervision, but offer skills to use to avoid abusive behaviors. We will explore how to utilize key protective factors that keep youth engaged in normative life activities.

Family Work. This area of the presentation will focus on the benefits of family work that goes beyond formal family therapy sessions. Presenters will share an approach utilized at

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Hillcrest called “Family Strong”, which involves developmentally appropriate family engagement in the home and community. We will explore techniques for victim impact awareness as well as repair work.

Skill Acquisition: Participants will learn about the benefits of DBT when working with Sexually Abusive Youth. Additionally, it will largely emphasize how to use Family Skills Training (5th DBT module) in this area and provide participants concrete interventions in this area.

References

- Chaffin et al. (2008) Report of the ATSA Task Force on Children with Sexual Behavior Problems. *ATSA Journal/Sage Publications, Child Maltreatment*. Volume 13, No. 2, pp 199-218.
- Eich, J. (2015). Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents. PESI Publishing and Media, workbook edition.
- Worling, J.R., & Langton, CM. (2015) A Prospective Investigation of Factors That Predict Desistance From Recidivism for Adolescents Who Have Sexually Offended. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, Vol 27 (1), pp 127-142.
- Yoder, J. R., Ruch, D., & Hodge, A. (2016). Families of Youth Who Have Sexually Offended: Understanding Shared Experiences and Moving Towards a Typology. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1581-1593.
- Yoder, J., & Ruch, D. (2014). Youth Who Have Sexually Offended: Using Strengths and Rapport to Engage Families in Treatment. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 2521-2531.

Learning Goals:

- Participants will be provided with a Risks-Needs-Responsivity approach for creating a comprehensive risk assessment for the youth and the family unit
- Participants will learn concrete tools to utilize when engaging siblings in repair work in the reunification process and to support an abuse free living environment
- Participants will understand why Dialectical Behavioral Therapy is a successful treatment intervention with Sexually Abusive Youth

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April Slater Roche, LICSW, Director of Student Services. April's clinical and administrator skills are rooted in 20+ years of experience working with youth and families in residential treatment at Hillcrest Educational Centers. She has held positions of Clinician and Lead Clinician at various HEC sites, and had held the position of Director of Clinical Services for the past 8 years. April has been involved in the development and ongoing implementation of Hillcrest's trauma-informed treatment model called "Skills for Life." In her role as Director of Clinical Services, April provides oversight for agency-wide clinical services including individual, group, and family therapies, crisis assessment work, as well as funding agency compliance measures. Her clinical experience involves work with youth and families addressing acute mental health and trauma-related issues including aggression, self harm, fire setting, and problem sexual behaviors. April holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Eastern Nazarene College and a Masters Degree in Social Work from Boston College.

Ashley Kellogg, LICSW, Program Director of Highpoint Program. Ashley Kellogg is the Program Director of the Hillcrest Educational Centers Highpoint Campus located in Lenox, Massachusetts. She is responsible for overseeing the successful operation of the Highpoint Program. The Highpoint Program specializes in the care and treatment of adolescent males who are in need of sexual abuse specific treatment and specializes in treating adolescent males who have been exposed to abuse and neglect have a significant trauma history and engage in significant high risk behaviors. Ashley collaborates with the campus administrative team to ensure a trauma informed care environment is provided to students in all areas of program on the Highpoint campus. Additionally, she collaborates with the admissions department regarding referrals and admissions to the programs. She has held multiple positions within the agency over her 15 year tenure. Prior to becoming the Program Director of the Highpoint Campus these roles have included Clinical Case Manager, Clinician, Lead Clinician and Clinical Coordinator at multiple campuses throughout the agency. Ashley currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers and the Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity Chapter.

Christopher Smith, MBA, Senior Vice President. As Senior Vice President, Mr. Smith oversees residential programming for adolescent girls, adolescent boys and the sexual-abuse specific program. He is responsible for all aspects of program oversight through the direct supervision of the Highpoint and Brookside Intensive Treatment Unit campuses. Additionally, Mr. Smith is responsible for program development and implementation through the direct supervision of Hillcrest's Education Director, Nursing Director, Clinical Director and Quality Assurance Director. Mr. Smith is also responsible for overseeing Hillcrest's Admissions and Marketing department and working in conjunction with programs to maintain Agency census. During his tenure with Hillcrest, Mr. Smith has worked in most areas of residential including: direct-care, supervisory, program management and group facilitation. Additionally, Mr. Smith has held several key management positions including Program Director for the Intensive Treatment Unit, Program Director of the Highpoint Campus and Vice President of Residential Programs.