

## ***SHAPING THE FUTURE***

2019 ATSA Conference | Thursday November 7 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**T-13**

### **Helping Parents Shape Their Family's Future When a Youth Has Offended**

Janice K. Church, PhD

Karen Boyd Worley, PhD

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Medicine

This presentation will highlight the critical importance of family involvement in the treatment of cases of youth who have sexually offended, identify some common issues parents and families face as they come to terms with their youth's offending, and advocate for a trauma-informed approach to working with parents of youth who commit illegal sexual behaviors. Illustrative case examples will be used throughout the presentation and audience participation will be encouraged. A brief review of the literature will be offered to explore how both difficulties and strengths presented by those in parental roles impact the treatment of adolescents who offend sexually. Successful work with parents is necessary as caregivers shape their family's future and will result in the youth progressing well in treatment.

Tips will be offered for working collaboratively with parents of youth who have sexually offended, and types of interventions will be explored ranging from individual therapy, family therapy, marital therapy, to parent group and multifamily group therapy. Issues such as guilt, shame, anger, and even victim blaming are common sequelae when a caregiver learns their youth has offended sexually. Caregiver responses may range from appropriate and protective to rejecting and unprotective, with many parents experiencing role conflict particularly regarding allegiances to both a child victim and the youth who has offended; others may be totally overwhelmed or deny the abuse or its significance. Parents must cope with a range of issues from family violence, psychological absenteeism, denial, and poor parenting practices to personal trauma. It is imperative to address trauma for the parent of the youth who has offended, whether this is the caregiver's own abuse or other past trauma issues, trauma secondary to the youth's offending, or trauma subsequent to the family's current involvement in "the system." Getting systems to collaborate is also instrumental to case success; coordination is needed between the Court, Department of Human Services, case managers, and therapists, such that all involved agencies are communicating and working together with each other and the family for positive outcomes for the youth.

In the context of a trauma-informed approach, caregivers are much better able to support the long-term adjustment and stability of the offending youth; success of a parent in treatment is generally associated with the success of a youth in treatment. Thus, helping parents shape their family's future is a crucial therapeutic endeavor when working with cases of youth who have sexually offended.

## ***SHAPING THE FUTURE***

2019 ATSA Conference | Thursday November 7 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

### **Learning Goals:**

- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to highlight the critical importance of involving parents in the treatment of youth who have sexually offended.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to identify common issues parents and families face as they are looking to the future following a youth's sexual offending behavior.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should be better able to discuss the importance of advocacy for a trauma-informed approach to working with parents of youth who commit illegal sexual behaviors.

**Janice K. Church, Ph.D.**, is a Psychologist and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Medicine. She is the Assistant Director of the Family Treatment Program and Adolescent Sexual Adjustment Project at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Dr. Church received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Louisville. She has conducted numerous workshops on child maltreatment issues at the state, national, and international levels. She is active in state and national professional organizations, particularly those with a focus on child abuse. She is a National Trainer for Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and is the current President of Arkansas ATSA.

**Karen Boyd Worley, Ph.D.**, is a Clinical Psychologist. She received her doctoral training at Texas Tech University. She is a Professor of Pediatrics for the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Dr. Worley is the Director of the Family Treatment Program, which provides treatment for families in which there has been sexual abuse. She is also the Director of the Adolescent Sexual Adjustment Project, which provides outpatient assessment and treatment for youth who have committed illegal sexual behaviors. Dr. Worley is active on a number of state boards addressing child abuse issues, provides statewide training and consultation, and has several publications on child maltreatment.