

## ***SHAPING THE FUTURE***

2019 ATSA Conference | Thursday November 7 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

**T-45**

### **The Pornography Debate: Reflections on Years of Research, Practice, and Misunderstanding**

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For years, many clinicians and other professionals have adopted the stance that individuals who have sexually abused should not view any type of pornography. Reasons for this approach can include the belief that pornography use in and of itself is a risk factor, that viewing pornography reinforces objectification of women, and the belief that offenders who use pornography put themselves on a 'slippery slope' and are 'one click away' from engaging in deviant behavior or re-offending. But is this one-size-fits-all rule always appropriate? Should we be instructing our clients to completely abstain from all pornography, even if it does not directly relate to their risk? Isn't having a zero-tolerance policy on pornography is akin to teaching an 'abstinence only' sexual education class—and that by having such a stance encourages more 'avoidance' goals rather than 'approach' goals? Certainly, some clients have demonstrated that pornography use is problematic and should not be used as part of their sexuality. While pornography use may represent dangerous behavior for some, does research support the conclusion that pornography use is a risk factor for all those who have sexually abused?

This workshop will focus on how to identify clients that may be appropriate for a less-stringent policy, what those policies might look like, and the research surrounding pornography use among those who sexually abuse. It involves the perspectives of a number of clinicians working in diverse settings.

#### **Learning Goals**

- Participants will learn about research regarding pornography use and risk of re-offense
- Participants will learn about client characteristics that may preclude pornography use
- Participants will learn ways to discuss the application of a less-stringent policy with decision-makers

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**Seth L. Wescott, LMLP** is a Licensed Master's Level Psychologist. He has been working in the forensic mental health field since 2002. He has worked in maximum security prisons for both adults and juveniles. In addition, he has worked with offenders in various community-based settings. Mr. Wescott has been employed at Clinical Associates as the Director of the Sex Offender Treatment Program since 2011. In 2016 the program began providing psychosexual evaluation and treatment services to youth adjudicated of sexual offenses. Mr. Wescott is a clinical member of ATSA and provides training to various agencies and organizations upon request.

**Kim Kosmala, LCP** is a Licensed Clinical Psychotherapist and has worked with survivors of sexual and domestic violence, juvenile sex offenders, and adult offenders of sexual and domestic violence. She has served as the Clinical Supervisor for the State of Kansas Sex Offender Treatment Program since 2012. Ms. Kosmala served on the state's Multidisciplinary Team, responsible for evaluating potential sexually violent predators, from June 2009-August 2013. She is a Clinical Member of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA).

**David S. Prescott, LCSW, LICSW, ATSAF** is a Past President of ATSA and 2014 recipient of ATSA's Distinguished Contribution award. He has authored and edited over 20 books in the areas of abuse, trauma, pornography, and psychotherapy. Mr. Prescott currently lectures around the world, and his publications have been translated into Japanese, Polish, French, German, and Korean.