

SHAPING THE FUTURE

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

T-48

Working with Foster Parents to Prevent Problematic Sexual Behavior

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In the United States, research estimates that youth living without either parent (including foster care or a residential facility) are ten times more likely to be sexually abused than youth living with both parents. Foster parents have the most difficult job in the child protection system in the US. They are given almost full responsibility for the care of traumatized children but virtually no authority to make decisions regarding the children they care for. Foster parents are often ill equipped and mis-informed in caring for traumatized children, especially if they have a history of sexual abuse or exhibit problematic sexual behavior. A Nebraska Inspector General report revealed that in 38% of substantiated reports of child sexual abuse in state sponsored care the child was not believed when they initially disclosed their abuse.

This workshop will identify three priorities in the education of foster parents regarding prevention of sexually harmful behavior. My recommendation for healthy sexual boundaries in the foster home is to encourage sexual respect, create family rules which prevent sexual abuse, and interrupt patterns of unhealthy sexual behavior. Resources and curriculum will be available to provide a two hour training session for foster parents in other communities. Accommodations to the curriculum for training foster parents in Christian based foster care agencies will also be shared.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the challenges and benefits of being a foster parent in the child welfare system in the United States.
- Obtain basic knowledge of the curriculum content for foster parents that can be delivered in a 2 hour training session.
- Discuss the myths that are associated with sexual abuse allegations in foster care.

Sheryl Overby, MS NCC LIMHP: Since 1988, Ms. Overby has helped families impacted by sexual abuse, including abused children, children with problematic sexual behaviors, caregivers and adults. She spent her career providing individual, family and group therapy in the sexual abuse programs of community mental health agencies. Currently, Ms. Overby is affiliated with Lutheran Family Services (LFS) in Omaha, NE and leads the RSafe® Training and Consultation Program. She developed and facilitated a two day conference for mental

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health and human service providers for the past three years titled “Foundations of Sexual Abuse”. She has created and provided an advanced comprehensive year long training curriculum for mental health providers to treat youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior based on the RSafe® Model of treating youth with PSB. Ms. Overby continues to treat individuals and families in private practice at Woodhaven Counseling, Omaha, NE. Her articles and resources are available at sheryloverby.com and her professional Facebook page, Sheryl Overby Counseling.