

## ***BLENDING VOICES. STRENGTHENING LIVES.***

2020 ATSA Conference | Thursday October 22 | 12:45 PM – 2:15 PM

**TH-MID-04**

### **Helping Youth: Adjusting For Factors That Impact Their Response To Treatment**

Jacqueline Page, PsyD  
University of Tennessee Health Science Center-Department of Psychiatry

What we know about adolescents who have engaged in sexually abusive behavior has grown significantly and provides information about some evidence informed practices and approaches. The Risk-Need-Responsivity principles are viewed as guiding principles for our work. All three of the principles are important; however, we may find ourselves focusing more on the risk and need principles given their impact on decisions about supervision and placement and intensity of and type of services. Yet, the responsivity principle has a significant and direct impact on our work with youth. While this principle embraces our use of cognitive behavioral therapy and the social learning model and emphasizes the importance of skills building and family involvement, it also directs our focus to factors impacting the youth. These factors can impact if the youth engages in treatment and how they respond to and progress in treatment. We need to focus on these factors and adjust our approaches and interventions as needed to help support the youth's involvement, engagement and progress in treatment.

Given that adolescents who sexually abuse are a diverse and heterogeneous group you are likely to encounter a variety of responsivity factors that can impact how a youth and his/her family response to treatment. While we may be aware of, and recognize these factors, it can be challenging to ensure that we are taking them into consideration on an ongoing basis in our work. Sometimes we get caught up in the tasks and goals to be accomplished and temporarily can lose sight of the factors that may be holding a youth back, interfering with them engaging or hindering their progress. We need to be flexible and adjust our approaches and interventions when needed due to responsivity factors that are present while also building on strengths and protective factors. Sometimes the needed adjustment is fairly simple to identify and do while at other times we find ourselves struggling to figure out how address the factor in an effective manner. There are times we need to think outside the box, step back and re-assess the situation, look at it from a different perspective or reach out to others for ideas and input.

Factors that can impact the youth's response to treatment can include, but are not limited to: motivation and readiness, learning problems, learning style, ethnic/cultural considerations, gender, age, religious considerations, trauma and/or adverse childhood experiences, personality characteristics, anxiety, self-esteem, cognitive abilities and emotional/psychological considerations. As you can see, there is a lot to consider. This workshop is intended to present a framework for how we stop and think about factors impacting the youth, provide ideas and examples for adjusting for some specific factors and devise strategies to ensure that we take these type of factors into consideration throughout the treatment process.

## ***BLENDING VOICES. STRENGTHENING LIVES.***

2020 ATSA Conference | Thursday October 22 | 12:45 PM – 2:15 PM

This workshop is rated: Youth | Intermediate | Clinical

### **Learning Goals:**

- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should have an increased understanding of the responsivity principle and its importance to their work.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners should increase their understanding about how a history of trauma and adverse childhood experiences can impact a youth's response to treatment.
- Upon completion of this educational activity, learners will recognize the importance of recognizing and understanding cultural considerations for youth and their families.

**Jacqueline Page, PsyD** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center and serves as a consultant to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services. She has over 30 years of experience and specializes in victims of sexual abuse, children with sexual behavior problems, adolescents who have engaged in sexually abusive behavior and juvenile justice issues. Dr. Page served as the co-chair for the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) Adolescent Practice Guidelines Committee and served on ATSA's board for two terms. She has published in the field and presents on a regular basis nationally and internationally.