Integrating Family Therapy into Adult Sex Offender Programs

Becky Palmer, M.S.

When working with adult sexual offenders the idea of including family therapy as part of the treatment program is often thought of as an adjunctive treatment component. Waiting until the end of the offender's course of treatment to include family therapy can often be disadvantageous to healing for the entire family system. This workshop will focus on the clinical importance of including family therapy in adult sexual offender programs. We will explore the value of including family therapy early on in the treatment and the advantages of including the family in the treatment process. Many therapists who have been trained to work with adult sexual offenders have often not had the training to provide family therapy. This workshop will identify and explore some of the family dynamics that have perhaps contributed to dysfunctional interactions or the dynamics that will be supportive for the adult sexual offender and his relationships within the family. Some of the benefits of including family therapy are; support for the offender in the treatment process, family therapy affords the opportunity to determine under what circumstances family members will spend time together and empowers all family members to have a voice when behaviors by other make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. This workshop will also address the common family assessment tools and developing the family treatment plan, including the development of safety plans. The culmination of family therapy will be to determine how the family will continue to function and interact with each other by developing family reintegration plans with the family and other professionals involved with the family and adult sexual offender.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Learn how family therapy differs from family informed therapy
- Understand the role of the family therapist
- Identify the factors important for a good safety plan and reintegration plan