

YOUR FULL NAME IS NEEDED!

You can update your name in Zoom before or during a meeting, on the mobile app, or in the web portal:

- **On the mobile app**
 1. Sign in to the Zoom app
 2. Tap More in the bottom right corner
 3. Tap your account name
 4. Tap Display Name
 5. Enter your first and last name, and your display name
 6. Tap Save
- **In a meeting**
 1. Click the Participants button at the top of the Zoom window
 2. Hover over your name in the Participants list
 3. Click Rename
 4. Enter the name you want to appear in the meeting
 5. Click OK
- **In the web portal**
 1. Sign in to the Zoom web portal
 2. Click Profile in the navigation menu
 3. Click Edit on the right side to update your profile information
 4. Enter your first and last name, and your display name

Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior: What They and How Can We Help?
Friday, January 24, 2020
12-1:30pm CST | 1-2:30pm EST
1.5 CE Credits



+



This program is co-sponsored by the New Hampshire Psychological Association and the Oklahoma Psychological Association. NHPA is approved by the Oklahoma Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. NHPA maintains its content.

Children with Problematic Sexual Behaviors: Who are they and how can we help?

Erin K. Taylor, PhD

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

January 24, 2025



National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge contributions and mentorship of
Barbara Bonner, Mark Chaffin, William Friedrich, C.
Eugene Walker, Lucy Berliner, Jimmy Widdifield and
others.

For information on NCSBY's Training and Technical
Assistance Team see:

connect.ncsby.org/psbcbt/training-team

Contact Information

NCSBY

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
1000 NE 13 Street, 4N SE 4900
Oklahoma City, OK, 73104
(405) 271-8858

OU-NCSBY@ouhsc.edu

www.NCSBY.org



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Acknowledgement/Disclaimer

This project is supported by Grant #2010-WP-BX-K062, #2013-MU-MU-K102, #2016-MU-MU-K053, 2019-MC-FX-K022, and 15PJDP-22-GK-03856-MECP awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice (OJJDP) Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.



**Be mindful of your own mental health.
Talk to someone if you are impacted
in an personal way.**



Disclaimer

- Most pictures and graphics used in this presentation were collected from the Internet, and are used in the spirit of the Fair Use Doctrine, 17 USC Section 106.
- If you are the owner or have copyrights to any of the pictures or graphics used in this presentation, then please contact us to request the picture(s) be retired from our collection.



I'd love to learn a little more about you!



Learning Objectives

- Learn what is typical versus problematic sexual behavior in children
- Be able to differentiate between common misconceptions regarding children with sexual behavior problems and what is supported by research
- Identify strategies for how to educate and engage professionals across disciplines to better serve children with problematic sexual behavior, their child victims, and their caregivers.



Offender

Perpetrator



Predator

Pedophile



Terminology: "Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior" "Adolescents with Illegal Sexual Behavior"

- Developmentally sensitive
 - Focuses on the behavior(s)
- Age groups
 - "Children" = ≤ 12
 - "Adolescents" = 13-18
 - "Youth" = all ages
- Separates behavior of children and adolescents from criminal acts of adults

Use of the term "Juvenile Sexual Offender" has been found to be related to harsher responses than terms that separates youth from the behavior (Harris & Socia, 2014).



OVERVIEW OF TYPICAL AND PROBLEMATIC SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN



Sexual Development

- When does sexual development begin?



Is sexual development just about sex?

- Relationships
- Communication
- Respect
- Boundaries
- Friendship
- Intimacy – level of closeness
- Choices
- Identity
- Connection with others
- As well as physical and emotional changes that occur through puberty



NCSBY.org

**Better lives,
through better choices**

Typical Sexual Behavior

- Influenced by cultural and social factors
- Involve parts of the body considered to be “private”
- Developmentally expected & across all areas of development
- Most experts do not consider to be problematic



Sexual Play Is....

- Exploratory
- Spontaneous
- Intermittent
- By mutual agreement
- With known child of similar age, size, and developmental level
- Not accompanied by anger, fear, and/or strong anxiety

Bonner (1999); Chaffin et al. (2006); Silovsky (2009), Silovsky & Bonner (2003); Rutter (1971); Lamb & Coakley (1993); Larsson (2001); Reynolds, Herbenick, & Bancroft (2003)



Long-Term Implications of Sex Play: Retrospective Research

- Sex play is common (66%-80%)
- Mostly is never known by parents
- Many encounters are between children of the same sex
- If it is true sex play, then the encounter is perceived as “positive” or “neutral”
 - Inconsistent results with siblings
- Not related to adult sexual orientation

Lamb & Coakley (1993); Larsson (2001); Reynolds, Herbenick, & Bancroft (2003); Friedrich, Whiteside, & Talley (2004); Greenwald & Leitenberg (1989); Okami, Olmstead, Abramson (1997)

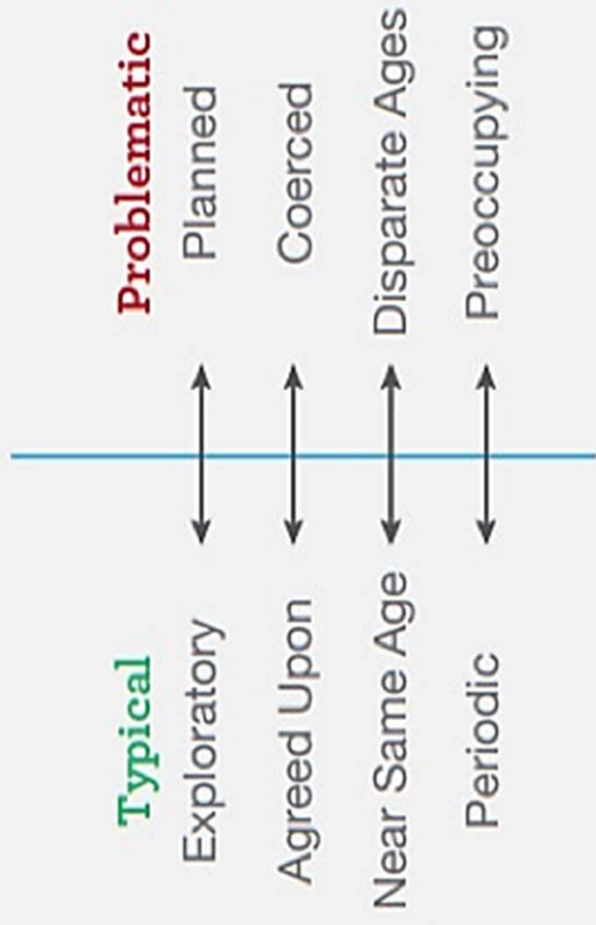


NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices



Sexual Behavior Is a Continuum



Bonner(1995); Davies, Glaser, & Kossoff(2000); Friedrich (1997); Johnson(2004); Larsson & Svedin (2001)



Better lives,
through better choices

NCSBY.org

Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB)

- Definition
 - Behavior involving “private parts”
 - Developmentally inappropriate and/or potentially harmful
 - Could be illegal
- Encompasses
 - Wide range of motives and origins
 - Continuum of normal sexual behavior to concerning to problematic sexual behavior



Guidelines for Determining if Sexual Behaviors are a Problem

Frequency	Developmental Considerations	Harm
High Frequency	Among Youth of Significantly Different Ages/ Developmental Abilities	Intrusive Behaviors
Excludes Normal Childhood Activities	Longer in Duration than Developmentally Expected	Use of Force, Intimidation, and/or Coercion
Unresponsive (i.e., does not decrease) to Typical Parenting Strategies	Interferes with Social Development	Elicits Fear or Anxiety in Other Children

Bonner (1995); Davies, Glaser, & Kossoff (2000); Friedrich (1997); Johnson (2004); Larsson & Svedin (2001)

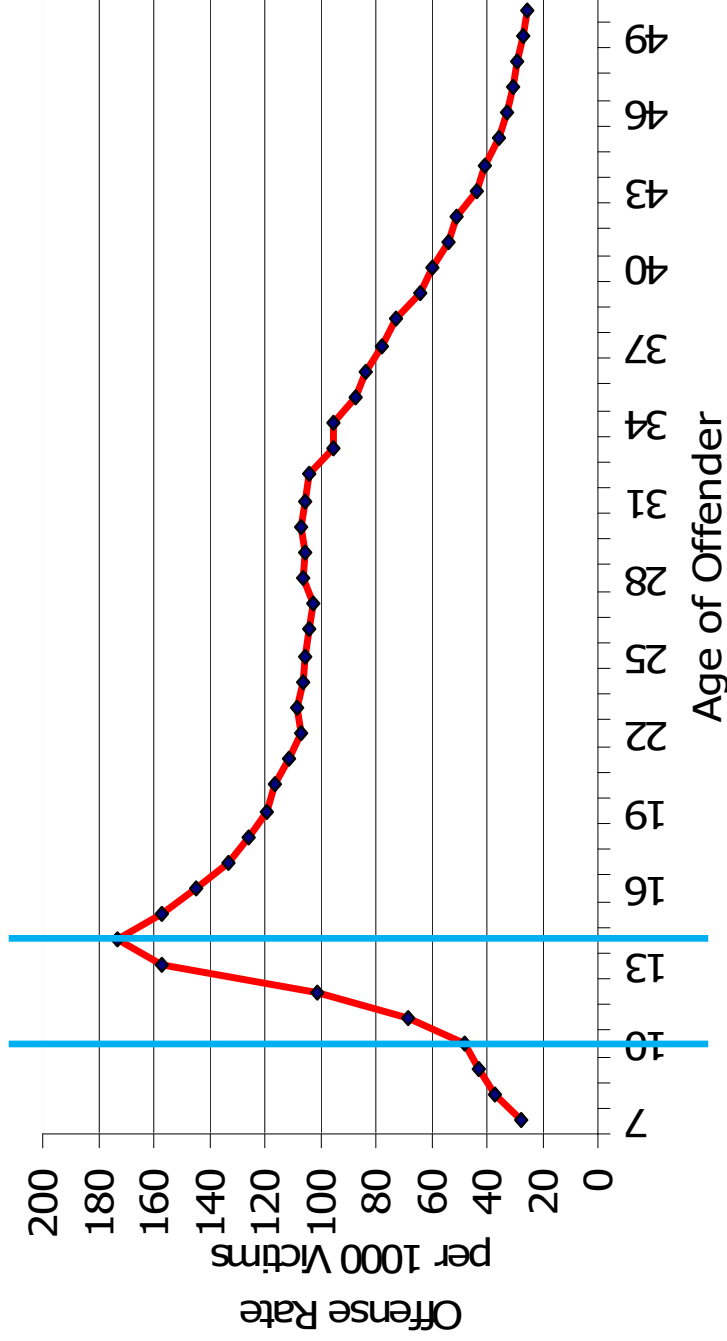
Copyright 2023 The Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Age of Risk for PSB



Early adolescence is a high-risk, and to some extent transitory, developmental period for committing illegal sexual behaviors.



Characteristics of Children with PSB

- No distinct profiles for children with PSB
- Do not share central characteristics of adult sex offenders.
- Co-occurring concerns
 - Disruptive Behavior Disorders:
 - Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder
 - Trauma Related Disorders: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Adjustment Disorder
 - Other Internalizing Disorders: Depression, Anxiety
 - Learning and language delays

Chaffin, Letourneau, & Silovsky (2002); Johnson (1989); Silovsky & Niec (2002)



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Characteristics of Children with PSB

- Relationship issues
 - Parenting/caregiver stress
 - Parent perception of youth
 - Peer relationship problems
- Younger (preschool) children with PSB more likely to...
 - Be female
- Present with psychological problems



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Rates of Problematic Sexual Behavior

- No research or accurate data on prevalence/incidence
- Greater than one-third of sexual offenses against child victims are committed by other youth.
- PSB primarily occurs with other children known by the youth, with a quarter of victims being family members.
- Few sexual offenses of youth involve strangers.



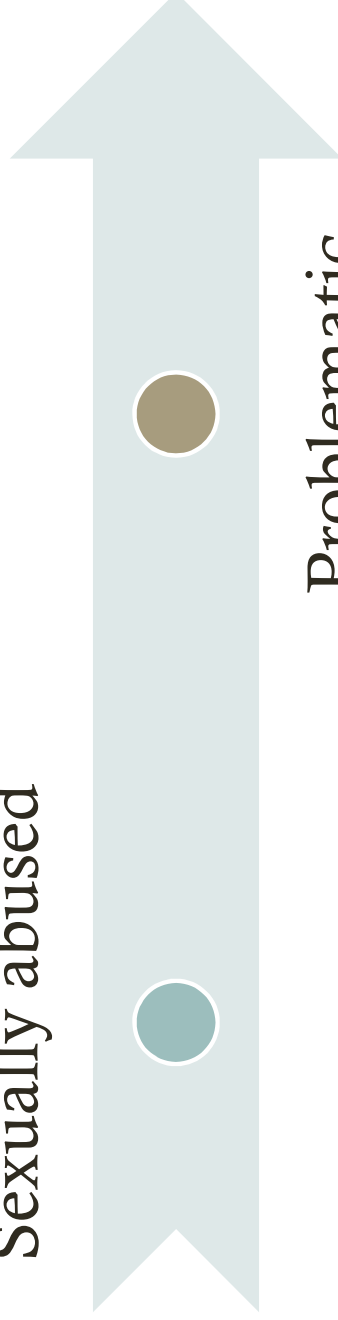
HOW DO YOUTH DEVELOP PSB?

**WHAT FACTORS INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF
YOUTH DEVELOPING PSB?**



Historical Assumptions

Sexually abused

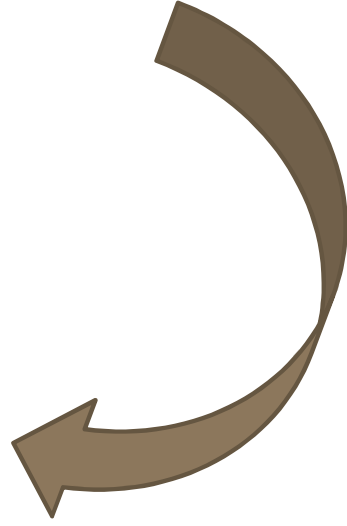


Problematic
Sexual Behavior



Historical Assumptions

Sexually abused



Problematic
Sexual Behavior



How Does Sexual Abuse Impact PSB?

- Children with a sexual abuse history (CSA) is a risk factor for problematic sexual behavior.
- Characteristics of child sexual abuse that are more likely to lead to exhibiting problematic sexual behavior:
 - Younger age (preschool age)
 - Multiple incidents of sexual abuse by different people
 - Sexual abuse that involve penetration
- Children with PSB more at risk for future victimization
- Many Children with PSB have no history of CSA- origins are complex



Multiple Pathways to PSB

Consider impact of...

- Sexual abuse
- Other maltreatment, violence, and trauma
- Parental capacity
- Child vulnerabilities and strengths
- Family and community vulnerabilities and strengths



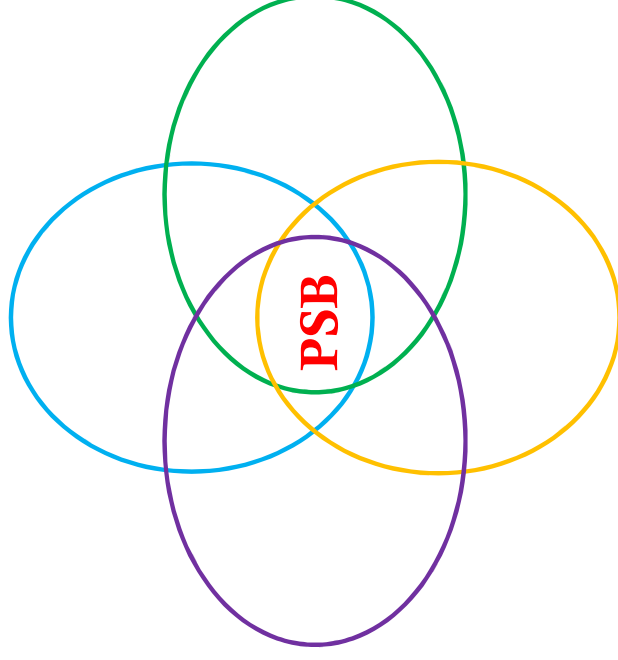
What Contributes to PSB in Children?

Modeling of Sexuality

- Sexual abuse
- Modeling / exposure

Modeling of Coercion

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence
- Peer/ community
- Harsh parenting practices



Child Vulnerabilities

- Behavior problems
- Developmental & verbal delays
- Impulse control

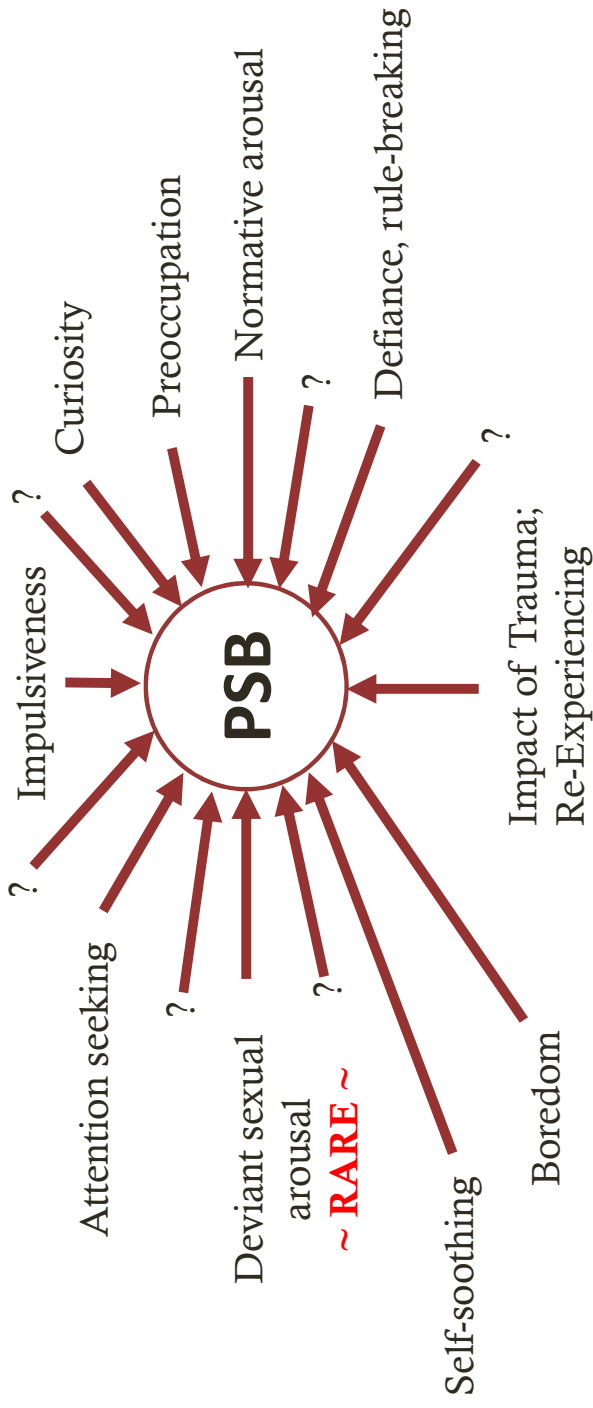
Family Adversity

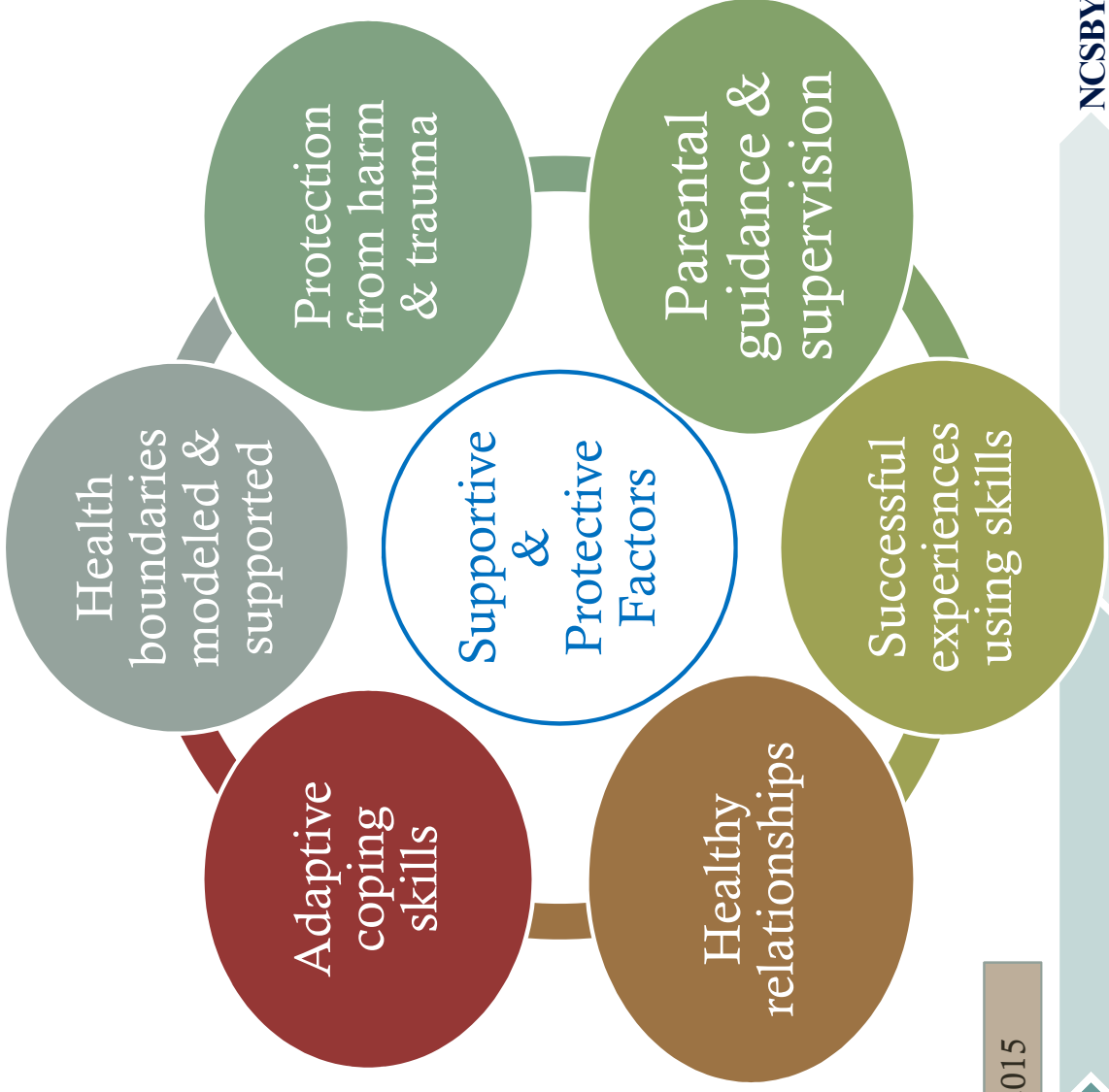
- Factors that interfere with parental guidance & supervision

Adapted from Friedrich, Davis, et.al, 2003



Drivers (Triggers) for Problematic Sexual Behavior





Silovsky, 2015



Impact of Technology on Status of Sexual Behaviors

- Increased access to recording and Internet
- Using technology for a range of communication and interaction with others, learning, and entertainment
- Online identity is being shaped and is shaping sexual knowledge and identity in new, faster, and poorly understood ways
- Need to distinguish child pornography vs. youth produced images



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Problematic Sexual Behavior of Children is a Family Problem

- Children often act out with children in their social network, especially siblings, cousins, and other family members
- The children's sexual behavior, system's responses, and caregivers' reactions impact range of children in the home and social network



Impact on Parents

- How would you react if you were told your child acted out sexually with another child?



Effects of PSB on the Other Child – May Depend on...

- How scary it was
 - Relationship
- Type of PSB
 - How child has been functioning
- Age differences
 - Support from caregivers
- Severity and frequency
 - Response from professionals



Effects of PSB on the Other Child – Effects May Include...

- Confusion about appropriate peer interactions and sexuality
- Peer problems
- Sexual behavior problems
- Disruptive behaviors
- Anxiety / depressions symptoms; PTSD
- Could be related to disruption of family and not PSB experience



Impact on Families with a Child with PSB

- Feelings of disbelief, shame, guilt, embarrassment, anger
- Not understanding seriousness of situation
- Anger toward child, affected children/victim and their family, systems involved
- Impact of own history and experiences
- Believe the myths
- Divided loyalties
- No to little hope for the future
- Problem is the child, parenting program can't help



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Overlap of PSB, Trauma, and Disruptive Behavior

- Children with PSB present with history of a wide range of traumas, and not just sexual trauma
- Children with PSB present with disruptive behavior in general
- Behavior problems occur within trauma-focused treatment that must be managed
- Many children, particularly preschool age children, present for treatment with PSB, behavior problems, and trauma symptoms



Clinical Decision Making for PSB and Trauma Symptoms

- PSB treatment maybe if...
 - Aggressive, coercive, force
 - Not responsive to parental interventions
 - Safety issues
 - Impact on others
- Trauma treatment maybe if...
 - Dependent on trauma history/background
 - Significant re-experiencing symptoms

- How much is reminders of their own trauma the primary trigger for the child breaking sexual behavior rules?
- What protective, safety, and support factors need bolstering?
- Other factors: Family preferences and priorities
- Treatment components integration – not EITHER one treatment or another



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Can Children with PSB Live with Other Children?

- Do the caregivers have the parental capacity to provide supervision and safety?
- Does the child with PSB respond to adult supervision and guidance?
- Who are the other children in the home?
 - Vulnerabilities, strengths, and wishes



Can Children with PSB Attend School Safely?

- Student's risky behavior and strengths
 - Responsiveness to supervision and adult guidance
 - Impulsive behaviors
- School and teachers' risks and strengths
- What do they need to know to be protective?

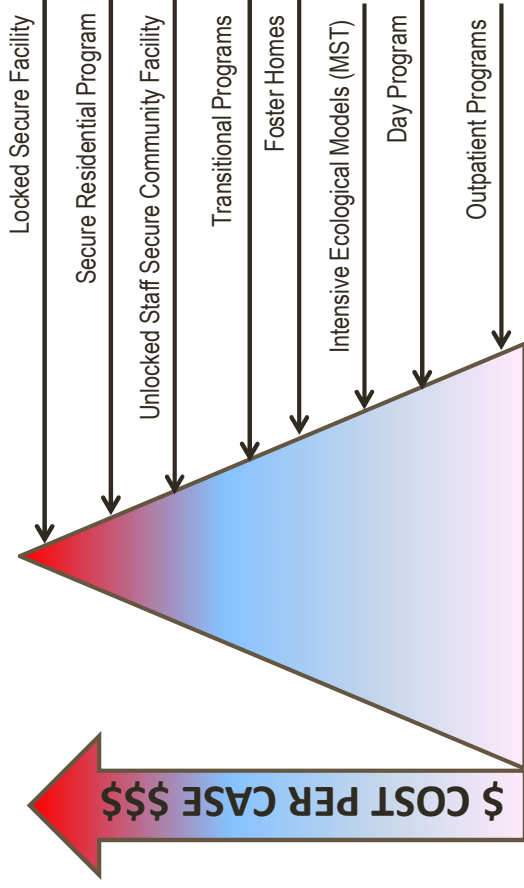


Do Children with PSB Need Intensive Residential Treatment or to Be Incarcerated?

- Inpatient treatment should be for the most severe cases (i.e., severe psychiatric disorders and/or highly aggressive sexual behavior that recurs despite appropriate outpatient treatment and close supervision).
- Focus of juvenile justice involvement should be rehabilitative, not punishment.
- Highly effective outpatient treatment programs
- Very low recidivism rates (~2%)



Levels of Care



Will Children with PSB Grow Up to Be Adult Sexual Offenders?

- Most children and adolescents (i.e., 98%) show significantly lower to no PSB after short-term outpatient treatment
- No current research that indicates a clear link between PSB in childhood or adolescence and illegal sexual behavior in adulthood



Current Research on Treatment of PSB of Youth

- Limited empirical research on effectiveness of treatment
- Multisystemic Therapy has best empirical data on adolescents with PSB (i.e., illegal sexual behavior)
- Meta-analysis on recidivism rates of adolescents with PSB indicates national average recidivism rate of ~3%
- 10-year follow up research on children with PSB indicated 2% rates of PSB post-treatment
- Findings were the same in recent research on youth ages 10-14



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Does Therapy Work with Children with PSB?

Rates of Future PSB Compared to Children with No Known PSB
with

Evidence Based Treatment

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
12 Sessions: Caregiver & Child

98%

Comparison Group

97%

10 Year Follow-Up Data: Carpentier, Silovsky, & Chaffin (2006)



Characteristics of Evidence-Based Treatments for Youth with PSB

- Directly involves caregivers
 - Behavior parent training
 - Rules about sexual behavior
 - Sex education
 - Abuse prevention
- Plan for safety and preventing future PSB
- Prosocial peers and positive peer interactions
- Youth with deviant sexual arousal require specialized individualized treatment (no current EBTs known)



What Clinical Elements Effectively Treat PSB?

- Meta-analysis by St. Amand, A., Bard, D.E., & Silovsky, J.F. (2008)
- **Caregiver: Behavior parent training**
 - Rules about sexual behavior and boundaries
 - Abuse prevention
 - Sexual education
- Child: Impulse-control skills
- Ineffective: Practice elements evolved from treatments for adult sex offenders



Policies and Systems



Are Policies and Practices Designed to Reduce or Increase Crime (Chaffin, 2008)?

- “Crime is more likely to occur when bonds with mainstream society are weakened – that is, when individuals lose or fail to develop social anchors such as
 - School involvement
 - Stable residence
 - Engagement in prosocial institution
 - Prosocial friendship networks
 - “Committee relationships”
- Are current practices “...doing more harm than good when it comes to community protection”?



VIPs in the Decision-Making Process

- Caregivers
 - Bio/Kinship/Foster/ Adoptive
 - Residential/Inpatient Staff
- Other family members
- Child Protective Services
- Law Enforcement
- Juvenile Justice
 - Judges
 - Prosecutors/Defense
 - Probation
- Victim Advocacy
- Behavioral and Mental Health
 - Schools
 - Teachers
 - Counselors / School Psychologists
 - Psychometrists
 - Administrators
- Medical Providers
- Other Professionals (e.g., Rehab Specialists)
- Faith-Based communities



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

Current Problems in the Field

- Unclear what system is responsible for intervening
 - Child Welfare
 - Law Enforcement
 - Juvenile Justice
 - Schools
- Who is responsible for what? When?
- Myths and misconceptions held by the professionals involved
- Lack of coordination across services and systems



Current Problems in the Field

- Many states have no outpatient evidence-based services for children or youth with PSB
 - Rely on residential care that is expensive
 - Often uses adult models of treatment
 - Community detaches from youth
 - No family services or families not able to participate due to travel
 - Or ignore the sexual behavior of the child or young teen
 - “Boys will be boys”
 - Some youth worsen and escalate then the system responds
- No comprehensive services for family as a whole



Current Problems in the Field

- When outpatient services are available, these services commonly
 - Are based on adult sex offender models
 - Do not address whole family service needs
- Fragmented services for families
- Lack of coordination across services



Enhancing Engagement of Caregivers: Reducing System Barriers

- Examine system/agency's requirements – Focused services better
- Provide supports (transportation, child care, basic needs of family, etc.)
- Flexible and family-centered service delivery
- Foster parent special issues
- Court order caregiver participation maybe needed



System Challenges: Coordinated vs. Fragmented Services

- Family often not served as a unit
 - Family members placed in “silos” and sent many different agencies for services
 - Third party payers support outdated practice
- Need systems change
 - Start when problematic sexual behavior is identified
 - Assess all members and develop family treatment plan



System Challenges: Coordinated vs. Fragmented Services

- Agency barriers
 - Agency policies regarding youth with problematic sexual behavior
- Coordinated care for family members
 - Within agency (e.g., time and personnel demands)
 - Communication across agencies; few targeted agencies with regular contact



Roles and Activities of Multidisciplinary Team

- Systems change and management
 - Focus on early when establishing programs
 - Engagement and active involvement of top level officials
 - Use local data
- Case review and management



How can professionals help?

- Acknowledge, everyone has the same goal!
- We all want...
 - Community Safety ✓
 - Children to be Healthy ✓
 - Sexual Behaviors to Stop ✓
- We need to stay away from...
 - ...harmful treatments X
 - ...harmful policies X
 - ...harmful messages X



Voices of Caregivers

First Responders' Message

Get facts – Not
judge

Serious

PSB not
define child

Compassion

Hope



Voices of Caregivers

- Get to effective treatment as quickly as possible
- **Let the community know about the program**
- **Reduce time to treatment**
- Approach of therapists matter
- Tell me what to expect out of treatment
- Nonjudgmental, trustworthy, like my kid
- Being with other parents help motivate me and gives me support
- See my child as a child – and give them confidence they can make better choices



Voices of Youth

Care about ME

Listen— Not judge

Keep family connections

TRUST takes time

Not “Denial” – Its Fear

Not Alone with Group



Appropriate & Helpful System Messages for Families

- Convey that the situation is serious
- Without doom and gloom
- Give action steps for
 - Safety
 - Additional supports
 - Communication during process
 - Hope



Community Response Goals

- Accurate messages to families
- Assess needs, resources
 - All family members
 - Recognize needs are dynamic
 - Assess changes over time
 - Connect to services
- Individualized plan for safety and services
- Coordinated care and support



Moving forward

- Identifying the systems barriers in your local community
 - Dispelling myths, educating professionals
 - Policy barriers
 - Service priorities for families
 - Financial barriers
- CAC & MDTs support for systems change
- Identifying people with power
- Support from local champions



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES



Training and Technical Assistance



www.NCSBY.org

safersocietypress.org



**MILITARY
ONE SOURCE**



learn.nationalchildrensalliance.org/psb



oneop.org/childsexualbehavior



NCSBY.org

Better lives,
through better choices

National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

- Mission: Promote better lives, through better choices by youth, caregivers, and professionals for healthier responses to and prevention of problematic sexual behavior of youth.
- NCSBY provides national training and technical assistance to improve the accessibility and strategic use of accurate information about the nature, incidence, prevalence, prevention, treatment, and management of children and adolescents with problematic sexual behavior.
- Website includes resources and sections designed for caregivers and professionals.
 - Topics include definitions, causes, treatment intervention and efficacy, safety planning, implications for public policy, and more.
 - News, websites, factsheets, bibliography, and other resources are readily available.



www.NCSBY.org

NCSBY.org

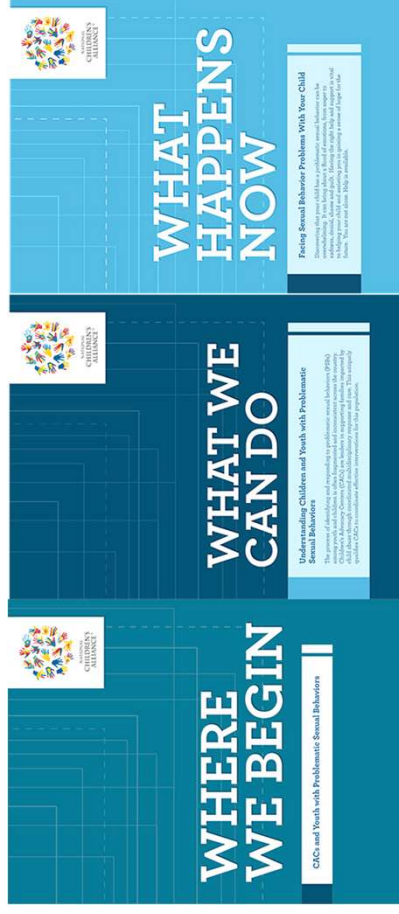


Better lives,
through better choices

National Children's Alliance

- To achieve their goals of healing, justice, and prevention, NCA developed this video training series and fact sheets to support CACs addressing this issue and serving youth with problematic sexual behaviors (PSBs), their victims, and families.

<http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/psb>



Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse

- ATSA was founded to foster research, facilitate information exchange, further professional education and provide for the advancement of professional standards and practices in the field of sex offender evaluation and treatment.
- Taskforce Report on Children with Sexual Behavior Problems – Downloadable at:

www.atsa.org

<http://www.atsa.com/pubRpt.html>



The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

- NCTSN Mission: To raise the standard of care and improve access to services for children, their families, and communities throughout the United States.
- Publications and other information for parents and caregivers as well as professionals on trauma
- Fact sheets on children with PSB collaboratively developed with NCSBY

www.nctsn.org



California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

- The mission of the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) is to advance the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children and families involved with the child welfare system.
- Searchable database of child welfare related programs.
- Description and information on research evidence for specific programs.

www.cebc4cw.org



Questions?

Thanks!



How to Reach Us!

- **Erin K. Taylor, PhD**
- University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth
- Erin-taylor@ouhsc.edu

