



President's Message

~ Rhonda Meacham

In my first message as President, I want to express my appreciation for having the opportunity to fill this important role. My ultimate goal is to help IL ATSA become a cohesive group of professionals that can act as a resource to each other in our shared purpose: helping those who have hurt, or those who have been hurt, by sexual harm and ultimately preventing future harm. I am grateful for the leadership Past President Guy Groot modeled in preparing me for this role (and taking care of most of the administrative headaches before I moved into the position). I would also like to thank him for continuing his involvement with the board as a member despite retiring for the

second time from a long, dedicated career! I understand how busy all of us are, attempting to balance our professional life while paying attention to personal fulfillment and well-being. Because of that, I have the utmost respect and appreciation for those that continue to volunteer their time to the board: Vice-President Jeff Reynolds, Treasurer Mike Kleppin, Secretary Tracy Tholin, and board members Glen Ensinger and Linda Stover. I would like to welcome our newest elected board member, Michelle Evans. Thank you and I'm looking forward to all we will accomplish over the next two years. IL ATSA's next in person meeting will be held in February and goals will be reviewed. More information will be

coming regarding our recent accomplishments and targeted goals for the upcoming year. The current newsletter provides summaries of impactful workshops IL ATSA members attended. As you're reading the submissions, if you feel you have learned valuable information from trainings/workshops you have attended or you are a presenter and want to provide information to IL ATSA, please don't hesitate to send in submissions for inclusion in future newsletters. We love to hear from our membership and welcome the opportunity to work more closely with you; so please consider volunteering your time and skills to the board. Here's to a happy, healthy, successful 2015!

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How Important is a Client's Attachment Style in Sex Offender Treatment?

~ Alexis Jimenez

This presentation at the ATSA conference focused on the relationship between adult attachment style, perceptions of the therapeutic environment, and treatment success.

The aims of the presentation included identifying the attachment style of a given client, as well as teaching how therapists can respond to a client to encourage a secure attachment style

and decrease the insecure attachment styles. The presenters emphasized that an individual's perception of the therapeutic climate is impacted by the individual's attachment style, which in return influences potential treatment success.

The study presented included 277 incarcerated male sex offenders, and utilized the Relationship

Style Questionnaire and the Group Environment Scale. Findings indicated that secure attachment is related to positive perceptions of leader support, task orientation, self-discovery, and order and organization. Individuals with secure attachment will be perceived as open and comfortable in group, and will be responsive to feedback.

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Impact of Pornography

~ Glen Ensinger

Cordelia Anderson presented on several topics at the **2014 Midwest Conference on Child Sexual Abuse**. On Monday morning at 10:30 AM she presented on the topic *Impact of*

Pornography on Children, Youth and Culture. The following is a brief review of what she presented.

One of her first statements was emphasized: "We don't all agree on what is and isn't harmful or what is or isn't pornography." She said pornography has always been around, but there has not always been a porn industry. She gave three websites which discuss the harmful effects of pornography, including;

www.fightthenewdrug.org, www.stoppornculture.org, and www.pornharms.com.

One point Cordelia made was the fact that many children/youth learn more about sex from mainstream media than from parents and other caring adults. She suggested that we need to know what they are learning and how to counter it with healthy messages about sexuality. She quoted Michael Seto, Ph.D, C.Psych. "The early and pervasive exposure to Internet pornography (among children and youth) is the largest unregulated social experiment I'm aware of. We don't know what the effects will be."

Another point Cordelia made was the concern of "normalization" of sexual harm. She believed this happens when the behavior or idea goes from problematic to "an accepted part of societal culture," "just the way it is" and "just what (boys) people do" and "it is no big deal." She went on to discuss objectification of women's bodies and sex, and how these concepts are used to sell things, or the "commoditized use of sex." She quoted APA, 2007, 2010, "A person is *sexually objectified-made into a thing for others sexual use*, instead of seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making." She also quoted Dr. David Walsh, "The neurons that fire together wire together and whatever the brain does a lot of, the brain gets good at" from *Why Do They Act That Way?*.

Cordelia expressed her concerns about the gender socialization, roles and norms and discussed the messages sent by media. She had a slide depicting a table; the four legs represented: pornography, technology, hyper-sexualized mainstream media and marketing and commercialization. The table top represented a steady diet of toxic messages.

One of the points she

made really got my attention. We blame the youth for a storm created by adults. This plays out in the hyper-sexualized or pornified ads, games, music, and icons. Cordelia also reported Gail Dine interviewed a male sex offender who stated "the culture did a lot of the grooming for me."

So what is the porn industry's role? The industry uses affordability, anonymity and access. It also uses sexually explicit material and sexually exploitive material. Cordelia also expressed Dr. Gail Dine's (www.stoppornculture.org) view "pornography offers people a vision of sexuality rooted in men's domination of women and women's acceptance of their own degradation." She also stated 54% of Christian men and 15% of Christian women view porn at least one time a month. The industry makes its money from ads and links. One study showed that adult movie content and services will reach 2.8 million and adult mobile subscriptions will reach \$1 billion. 1 in 5 mobile searches will be for porn and 24% of smartphones will be used to view porn material. Gail Dine's research showed teen porn up 215% between 2004-2013.

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ATSA Roundup: Effective Group Treatment

~Rhonda Meacham

As always, the 2014 ATSA conference offered a wide variety of training opportunities. The following is an overview of two workshops focused on deliverance of effective group treatment. The first workshop was facilitated by Steve Sawyer, MSSW, LICSW, CGP and was titled *Group Therapy with Adult Sexual Abusers: Essential Elements of Effective Groups*.

Essential elements of groups were identified as

1) *clear, consistent structure maintained by the group facilitator;*

2) *member to member interaction with a focus on developing the emotional climate and cohesion;*

3) *leader to member strategic interactions;*

4) *developmental stage progression; and*

5) *presence of therapeutic factors.*

It is important for facilitators to remain aware that groups move through stages of development that include trust and relationship formation, conflict, working together, intimacy, and ending. Sensitivity has to be given to the needs of the group depending on its stage of development.

Therapeutic factors that are necessary for successful group

functioning include:

cohesiveness, universality, altruism, installation of hope, corrective recapitulation of the primary family experience, development of socializing techniques, imitative behavior, existential factors, and interpersonal learning. A cohesive group demonstrates 4 levels of alliance: *therapist to group, member to member, member to group, and member to therapist.*

Group composition is essential to success; the following recommendations were offered for consideration to determine if a client should be included or excluded from group: *include clients who are able to give and receive feedback, have some capacity for empathy, and are highly motivated; exclude clients who are difficult to establish a rapport with and have severely limited interpersonal skills.*

Specific techniques recommended for group facilitators included:

1) *use of active facilitation when needed to engage members with each other;*

2) *invite member to member interaction;*

3) *ask the whole group questions;*

4) *watch the whole group; and*

5) *use of the Group Climate Questionnaire to assess functioning.*

Lastly, the presenter referenced research that indicated group cohesion resulted in positive outcomes related to sex offenders addressing cognitive distortions, denial, and admission of offense behaviors. There was also promising evidence that group cohesion could be achieved with high psychopathy sex offenders and the quality of cohesion improved as the group moved through the developmental stages.

The second workshop, entitled *Who Are You in the Room* was presented by Diana Groener, LCP and Jane Ward, Ph.D. This workshop addressed unique considerations related to providing services to high risk offenders, designated as such based on extensive criminal history, anti-social personality characteristics, and/or high scores on the PCL-R. This workshop offered guidance for clinicians that have chosen to tackle the task of working with this challenging population.

For clinicians to set the stage for success in this endeavor they must maintain self-awareness, have ego strength, resilience, an awareness of countertransference issues, and recognize that these types of clients are “differently brained”.

Common countertransference issues that surface with this population include condemnation, illusory treatment alliance, unnecessary fear, denial of danger, helplessness or guilt, and fascination. Two essential qualities of successful clinicians include humility and genuineness. Therapeutic humility and genuineness traits were defined as non-defensive, gentle, serene, grounded, and non-“power tripping”. Pitfalls to avoid with this client population include shaming, guilt tripping, being harsh, demonstrating punitive attitudes, minimizing feelings, acting morally superior, playing favorites, ignoring clients, being rigid about group rules, and withholding information. The group culture should demonstrate and/or foster respect, transparency, balance of power, freedom of choice, absence of fear, sense of safety, and consistency.

Interested in volunteering your time to Illinois-ATSA? Contact Rhonda Meacham, President, for more information!



Impact of Pornography...*continued from page 2*

~Glen Ensinger

At one point, Cordelia Anderson showed Gary Wilson's Ted Talks (May 16, 2013) which was titled *The Great Porn Experiment*. She then quoted Heather Forkey, M.D., "**there is a double whammy as the amygdale is turned on the frontal cortex off from abuse and neglect; then expose them to porn. With healthy bonding and social**

relationships there is less porn; kids already showing toxic stress are at higher risk from being victim of internet porn."
Due to limited space I am unable to summarize the portion of the presentation on why kids view porn and its impact. If you are interested I will contact Cordelia to see if I can send the slides to you. However I want to end this summary with "*What Can be Done.*"

Cordelia believes if we *name the harm, understand the harm, talk about it and take action we can make progress reducing the impact on porn to our youth/children and culture.* Some other societies are opting in instead of opting out when it comes to searches. Iceland values gender equality as it does not allow strip clubs. She suggests porn not be an amenity at hotels and

tourism magazines not include strip/porn clubs. Cordelia identified the new Anti Porn movement to help rebel against the industry and showed the website www.Fortifyprogram.org. She suggested we should take back our sexuality and no longer allow "sex sells" as an excuse. For more information: Cordelia Anderson has a website www.cordeliaanderson.com.

How Important is a Client's Attachment Style...*continued from page 1*

~ Alexis Jimenez

Therapists can encourage the maintenance of their positive view of themselves and others. Avoidant-dismissive attachment is related to positive perceptions of leader support and task orientation. These individuals will appear in group as less likely to engage with others, as well as the therapist. They will appear as self-sufficient and may perceive others as more needy. Therapists can encourage a more positive

view of others and help these individuals find value in self-expression. Preoccupied attachment is related to negative perceptions of leader support, and these individuals can be perceived to be sensitive and needy at times. Therapists can encourage self-sufficiency and praise situations where these individuals cope on their own without over-support. Avoidant-fearful attachment style is related to negative perceptions of

self-discovery. These individuals are likely seen as uncomfortable with intimacy and may present as guarded. They may also test boundaries and present as hesitant in disclosing information. Therapists can emphasize strengths to increase self-esteem, as well as encourage self-reliance and show consistent support. These presenters also discussed other related issues to attachment style and its' potential impact

on the therapeutic climate. For instance, an individual's attachment style can possibly trigger other group members. Also, group members can influence each other's attachment styles. These presenters also discussed the importance of balancing self-reliance and reliance on the therapist. *Presented at the national conference by Kerri Garbutt and Kerensa Hocken*

Enjoy our conference recap? Check out the ATSA Blogspot for more conference reviews!
<http://sajrt.blogspot.com/2014/11/atsa-33rd-annual-conference-san-diego.html>
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