

NEARI NEWS:

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

An Essential Tool for Professionals Working with those who Sexually Abuse or... A Great New Way to Stay Current with Cutting Edge Sexual Abuse Research.



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Dear Colleague,

For us, this is an exciting time in our field. With the realization that we must separate adult sex offenders from the children and adolescents who sexually abuse, our understanding of this younger population is growing dramatically.

This month's newsletter highlights one of the few studies that focuses on preteens (ages 10-12). The research emphasizes, yet again, the importance of looking at sexual behavior problems within the context of the whole child, their other behavioral issues, their history, and their current environment.

We are also excited to announce the release of NEARI's newest book, *Current Application*, edited by David Prescott and Rob Longo. This is a groundbreaking collection of chapters that in the words of Geral Blanchard "delivers a humanistic approach to sexual abuse treatment that challenges professionals to examine distorted cognitions and resistances, not just those of youths, but their own as

Persistence of Sexual Behaviors in Pre-Teens

by Steven Bengis, David S. Prescott, and Joan Tabachnick

The Question

Once a pre-teen has engaged in problematic sexual behaviors, will those behaviors persist over time?

The Research

William N. Friedrich and his colleagues examined the persistence of problematic sexual behaviors in 78 children who were 10-12 years old for one year in the child welfare system. Among their findings were that children living in a residential center (the most disturbed subjects in the study) were the most likely to continue their problematic sexual behaviors, and that persistence of these behaviors were more likely when the child also exhibited other concerning behaviors. Unlike studies that examined behaviors in a group of teens with problem behaviors retrospectively, this research sought to prospectively follow a group of teens over a 12-month period to better understand whether problematic behaviors would continue or stop with/without intervention and whether the severity of the original sexual behavior problems and other conditions affected persistence. Prior to this research, only one other study examined persistence in a group of preteens (Bonner, Walker and Berliner, 2000).

Implications for Professionals

The persistence of sexual behavior problems can severely impact other clients in treatment settings and cause harm to any child who is victimized by these behaviors. Therefore, the placement options for those who engage in these behaviors require careful consideration. Professionals need to understand clearly what interventions are required, who is in the best position to provide effective interventions, for what periods of time, in order to prevent

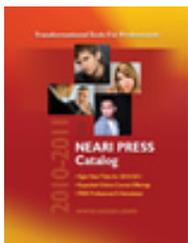
well."

Finally, we happily announce the re-release of the online workshop "Balancing Acts." This 3-hour workshop provides an overview of what one faith community, the UUA, has done to create a healthy and safe environment for children. This workshop is FREE and is helpful for any denomination looking at how to safely "welcome" a sex offender back into the community and how to ensure that everything possible is being done to keep children safe.

As always, we welcome your feedback. And if you want us to explore a particular issue in an upcoming newsletter, please let us know.

Sincerely,
Joan Tabachnick and Steven Bengis

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FEATURED NEARI PRESS BOOK

Current Applications



further problematic sexual behaviors. This study points to the importance of looking at sexual behavior problems within the context of other problematic behaviors and not view sexual behaviors as an isolated part of the child or adolescent. This research also demonstrates that despite placement in alternative settings and treatment interventions, problematic sexual behaviors can persist in diverse placements across the continuum of care. While state agencies push for economical short-term placements, professionals will need knowledge of (and access to) the variety of interventions required for each type of youth.

Implications for the Field

This research is most powerful for the questions it identifies as requiring more research. After 20+ years of specialized intervention, our field needs to push for more research to clarify the following:

- The differentiating characteristics between youth whose sexual behaviors change without treatment from those who require limited or intensive intervention;
- The barriers to change problematic sexual behaviors for youth who are moving from pre-adolescence into adolescence;
- The type and length of treatment required to stop problematic sexual behaviors in this age group;
- The impact of treatment on reducing the severity of problematic sexual behavior; and
- The possible negative impact of treatment programs on continuance of problematic sexual behaviors (an iatrogenic effect).

As professionals seek to focus resources on the most dangerous clients (as well it should), this research reminds us of the need to intervene appropriately with younger pre-teens to help them stop sexual behaviors before others are harmed.

Reference

- William N. Friedrich, Amy J. L. Baker, Rob Parker, Mel Schneiderman, Len Gries and Marc Archer. (2005). Youth with Problematic Sexualized Behaviors in the Child Welfare System: A One-Year Longitudinal Study.

Abstract

This study assessed continuity of problematic sexualized behaviors (PSB) over a 1-year period. Ninety-seven 10-12-year-olds in either foster boarding homes or a residential treatment center participated at Time 1. Twelve months later, 78 youth were available for a second data collection assessment. At both data collection phases, researchers interviewed foster parents or primary therapists about

by Edited by David Prescott
and Rob Longo

In this new volume, Prescott and Longo take the theory and science addressed in *Current Perspectives* and translates it into useful information for clinical practice. With the belief that a good book should be like attending a great 3-day conference, the editors have assembled diverse perspectives from nationally recognized leaders and rising stars in the field. The book addresses practical topics related to every day clinical practice with young people who have sexual behavior problems, from making meaningful connections in treatment to building on the strengths of young people. The book goes beyond traditional sex abuse specific treatment approaches into new areas that will engage all aspects of the adolescent's development and his or her environment. Topics include working with developmentally delayed youth, building on client strengths, brain-based interventions, art therapy, considerations in using the polygraph, public policy, and working through client resistance. Contributors to this excellent one-volume compendium include, but are not limited to Jack Apsche, Jill Levenson, Phil Rich, Steven P. Sawyer, Joann Schladale, and Ken Singer.

For more information, click the image or go to the NEARI Press Bookstore at <http://bookstore.nearipress.org/>.

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the youths' sexual behavior. Findings revealed significant continuity in PSB over time, with children who at Time 1 exhibited PSB significantly more likely to exhibit PSB at Time 2. The reverse was also true in that the absence of PSB at Time 1 was associated with the absence of PSB at Time 2. In addition, a subset of specific PSB behaviors was noted to be most stable, although this varied across the groups. Youth with PSB exhibited several patterns of persistence in specific behaviors over time, including continuity, a mix of continuity and change, and complete discontinuity. The persistence of PSB over time was most true for the children living in a residential treatment center, the more disturbed group studied. We conclude that the persistence of PSB is more likely when the child has other problematic behaviors.

To print a pdf of this article, click [NEARI NEWS](#).

Re-Release of NEARI's Faith-Based Workshop

[Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations](#)

by Reverend Debra Haffner & Joan Tabachnick

This ground-breaking course developed in collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) offers information, policies, and procedural suggestions to create a congregation where children and youth will be safe from sexual abuse.

If you are part of a faith community and plan to address the issue of sexual abuse, this course will provide you with the essential tools needed for a comprehensive approach to safety and prevention.

To explore other courses or to register, go to [NEARI's Training Center](#).

Continuing Education Credits: 0
Duration: 3-4 hours
Cost: FREE

About the Editor:
David S. Prescott, LICSW

[David Prescott website](#)

A nationally recognized expert in the field of sexual abuse assessment, treatment, management, and prevention, Mr. Prescott has published numerous articles and authored, edited, and co-edited books on risk assessment, interviewing, and providing residential treatment to youth. He is the President of ATSA and is currently the Clinical Director at the Minnesota Sex Offender Program in Moose Lake, Minnesota.

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