

**Policies and Best Practices for Juveniles Who Sexually Offended:
Research and Practical Examples – Part 1**

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Level

Intermediate

Track

Clinical/Juvenile/Sex Offender

CE

CPA/BBS/CJER

Bio

Norbert Ralph, PhD, MPH is a clinical psychologist who coordinated services for San Francisco for JwSO youth. He has published articles, books and blogs on the subject. He is the adolescent representative on the California Sex Offender Management Board and coordinates training for the JSORRAT-II.

Mikaela Vidmar, M.Sc, MA, Reg Psych, Psy. Assoc. has been a registered clinical and forensic psychologist in Canada for the past twenty years where she has specialized in comprehensive psychological risk assessment and treatment of sexual and violent offenders. She has worked with multiple populations including inpatient, outpatient and incarcerated individuals. Her areas of expertise and interest include psychopathy, pedophilic arousal disorders, personality disorders, internet-facilitated offending, the impact of sexual abuse on victims and rare paraphilic disorders. She contributed to the development of a treatment program and manual for people who have engaged in illegal sexual behaviors which won multiple honors including the National Award of Excellence in Mental Health. Mikaela has been recognized as an expert witness in Provincial and Supreme courts (of Canada) in addition to Family and Juvenile courts. She has additionally provided consultation to lawyers, judges, Family and Children Services Aid, the RCMP and provincial police, foster parents, probation and parole officers, staff at women's shelters and rehabilitative programs, and numerous other professionals and stakeholders. She has been an instructor at Mount Saint Mary's University since 2017, and with The Chicago School of Professional Psychology since 2021, in addition to maintaining clinical practice in the Southern California area.

Narrative

This presentation presents practical best policies and programs for juveniles who sexually offended (JwSO). Several factors have contributed to requiring an updated review of this area. Specifically, the California Sex Offender Management Board (CASOMB) issued juvenile guidelines which described best evidence-based policies for this population. Also, with the closure of the California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), counties have had to reconsider and reconfigure services for this population, especially those transferred from DJJ. Practical tools

and approaches will be discussed that can be readily implemented on a county basis, and review relevant areas including the following:

- **Epidemiology & recidivism:** Present levels of offending and changes over time, including a low rate of recidivism. The importance of sexual and total recidivism will be discussed.
- **Brain development:** The presentation will include the role of brain development and psychosocial maturity in sexual offending, and how this relates to the epidemiology and age factors in this problem. Sexual offending in the context of adolescence being a high-risk period for accidents, crimes, substance use and other problems sexual behaviors will be discussed.
- **Causal factors in juvenile sexual offending, including modifiable risk factors:** What are causes and what can we do about them? Factors such as abuse and trauma, psychiatric conditions and learning challenges will be discussed.
- **Collaboration:** CASOMB guidelines recommend a collaborative model between the youth, family, probation officer and treatment provider.
- **Assessment:** The importance of a comprehensive assessment of youth including psychological and learning factors in addition to risk assessment for sexual and total recidivism. This is important for identifying modifiable dynamic risk factors.
- **Treatment:** Principles and components of effective programs will be discussed with examples. An emphasis will be on the components of effective models, including program quality and fidelity issues, not necessarily specific "name brand" programs. Programs that can be readily implemented at scale and which are "therapist friendly" will be discussed.
- **Program outcomes:** Practical models currently used to track program outcomes will be discussed providing useful tools for practitioners and counties.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe sexual & nonsexual recidivism
2. Explain two ways brain development impacts harmful behaviors
3. Describe two typology types
4. Explain two assessment tools
5. Explain two treatment approaches