

APSAC ADVISOR



AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY ON THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN

IN THIS ISSUE

Introduction to New Series of Papers by Major Trainers About Child Forensic Interview Training Programs

Erna Olafson, PhD, PsyD

A variety of child forensic interview training programs are now available for new and established advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams throughout the United States and elsewhere. The *APSAC Advisor* has invited major trainers to describe their programs and to explain the rationales for their investigation and training approaches. The first of these papers appears in this issue, and papers by other major trainers are in preparation for subsequent issues of the *Advisor*.

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Finding Words/Half a Nation: The Forensic Interview Training Program of CornerHouse and APRI's National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse

*Lori S. Holmes, MA, LISW
Victor I. Vieth, JD*

CornerHouse of Minneapolis opened in 1989 utilizing the RATAAC protocol to interview alleged victims of child sexual abuse, and CornerHouse began trainings in 1990. The model was brought to the national stage when Victor Vieth, a Minnesota prosecutor, was hired as a senior attorney with NCPCA. The APRI/CornerHouse *Finding Words* 5-day training program has now been completed in five states, with four additional states scheduled for 2003 and 2004. Facilitators have set a goal to train half the states of the nation in this model by 2010.

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Law Enforcement Perspective on Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification

*Louanne Lawson, PhD, RN
Shelia Savell, RN, MSN*

During focused group interviews, Arkansas law enforcement officers responsible for implementation of sex offender registration and community notification expressed ambivalence about this system. Although supportive of the goals behind sex offender registration and community notification, they expressed concerns about insufficient staff, training, supervision, and budgets. Officers offered recommendations for improvement and suggested the system be evaluated to see if it affects reporting and offense rates.

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Introduction to New Series by Major Trainers About Child Forensic Interview Training Programs

Erna Olafson, PhD, PsyD

Cincinnati Children's Hospital and University of Cincinnati Medical School

A variety of child forensic interview training programs are now available for new and established advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams throughout the United States and elsewhere. The *APSAC Advisor* has invited major trainers to describe their programs and to explain the rationales for their investigation and training approaches. In response to the list of 14 questions, which the *Advisor* sent to established training programs, Lori S. Holmes and Victor I. Vieth of the American Prosecutors Research Institute *Finding Words/Half a Nation* trainings describe their program for this issue. In the next issue of the *APSAC Advisor*, Raymond Broderick overviews the training programs developed in Oregon and published by Sage Publications as *A Child Interviewer's Guidebook* (Bourg, Broderick, Flagor, Kelly, Ervin, & Butler, 1999). Papers have also been invited from Patti Toth of the APSAC Advanced Interview Clinics and from Mark Everson, Kathleen Coulborn Faller, Sandra K. Hewitt, Julie Kenniston, Michael E. Lamb, and Debra A. Poole. Thomas D. Lyon has offered to write an overview of current child forensic interview approaches and training issues once this series nears completion.

The *Finding Words* and Oregon trainings represent two of the earliest programs developed. CornerHouse in Minneapolis began teaching a 5-day, child sexual abuse forensic training course in 1990. With some modifications, the CornerHouse interview and training model has formed the basis for APRI's *Finding Words* project. The Oregon program was also among the earliest trainings to develop and disseminate a curriculum. These two pioneering programs differ in some respects; CornerHouse teaches a semistructured interview approach, and Oregon teaches flexible guidelines. Programs by Michael Lamb and others, to be described in subsequent *Advisor* issues, teach structured protocols, and some programs, such as the Childhood Trust's Forensic Institute and the APSAC Interview Clinics, offer trainees a choice between flexible guidelines and structured protocols.

The variety of approaches in child forensic interviewing reflects the current state of knowledge in this developing field. It is important to emphasize in this survey that there is no single child forensic interview model or protocol that must be used in order to be forensically defensible. Structured interview protocols that guide interviewers to ask open questions in order to invite free recall narratives from children are solidly grounded in the research, but in the real world of child interviewing, flexible guidelines can also be necessary. Further, trainers are learning more about effective skills building and the importance of ongoing peer review and supervision to maintain interviewer skills at an optimal level.

It is in this collaborative spirit that APSAC is currently sponsoring a Think Tank by major trainers from around the United States to develop a procedure to evaluate videotaped interviews of children.

As distinct protocols and training models have developed in regional and national programs, the field of child forensic interviewing has been distinguished by a uniquely open and collaborative spirit. Major trainers communicate freely with each other, sharing information, resources, and training tips

and often teaching in more than one program. It is in this collaborative spirit that APSAC is currently sponsoring a Think Tank by major trainers from around the United States to develop a procedure to evaluate videotaped interviews of children. And it is also in this spirit of collaboration that the *Advisor* commences this series of papers for the free exchange of information about how best to train child interviewers for the purposes of child welfare and justice in the courts.



CALL FOR PAPERS

Purpose: The *APSAC ADVISOR*, a quarterly publication of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, serves as a forum for succinct, practice-oriented articles and features that keep interdisciplinary professionals informed of current developments in the field of child maltreatment. *ADVISOR* readers are the more than 2,500 social workers, physicians, attorneys, psychologists, law enforcement officers, researchers, judges, educators, administrators, psychiatrists, nurses, counselors, and other professionals who are members and supporters of APSAC.

Appropriate material: *ADVISOR* editors are seeking practical, easily accessed articles on a broad range of topics that focus on particular aspects of practice, detail a common problem or current issue faced by practitioners, or review available research from a practice perspective.

Inappropriate material: Articles should be well documented and of interest to a national, multidisciplinary audience. The *ADVISOR* is not an appropriate outlet for poetry or fiction, anecdotal material, or original research-based articles heavy on statistics but lacking clear application to practice.

Length: *ADVISOR* articles range from four to twelve double-spaced manuscript pages set in a 12-point typeface.

Previous publication: The *ADVISOR* prefers original material but does publish excerpts from previously published articles on topics of unusual or critical interest.

Peer review: All articles submitted to the *ADVISOR*, whether solicited or unsolicited, undergo peer review by the appropriate Associate Editor. If he or she thinks pursuing publication is appropriate, the Associate Editor may send copies of the article to one or two additional reviewers or return the article with comments to guide a revision.

Submission: All articles should be typed and double-spaced in 12-point type on 8.5 x 11 inch white paper, and submitted with an accompanying disk in Microsoft Word plus a brief cover letter indicating that the article is offered for publication in the *APSAC ADVISOR*. The *ADVISOR* uses the manuscript format set forth in the latest edition of the style manual of the American Psychological Association.

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ABOUT APSAC: APSAC is a nonprofit interdisciplinary membership organization incorporated in 1987. Thousands of professionals from all over the world—attorneys, child protective services workers, law enforcement personnel, nurses, physicians, researchers, teachers, psychologists, clergy, and administrators—have joined APSAC's effort to ensure that everyone affected by child maltreatment receives the best possible professional response.

***Finding Words/Half a Nation:*
The Forensic Interview Training
Program of CornerHouse and APRI's
National Center for Prosecution of
Child Abuse**

**Lori S. Holmes, MA, LISW
and Victor I. Vieth, JD**

When asked why it was so important to send a man to the moon, President Kennedy replied, "Because the moon is there." When asked why we developed *Finding Words* and are now replicating this course around the country as part of *Half a Nation by 2010*, we reply, "Because abused children are there." Boys and girls, young and younger, are struggling to survive in every community in this country and, because these children are out there, we must be here, on the front lines of child protection. *Finding Words/Half a Nation by 2010* may be the single largest initiative on behalf of abused children in the history of our republic.

As part of the *APSAC ADVISOR's* new series on child forensic interview training programs, the editor has sent a set of questions to major trainers. These questions and our answers follow.

1. Training model: Do you have a training model of what constitutes a competent or "good enough" child forensic interview? What are its components and its characteristics?

Although there is no such thing as a perfect interview, a competent interview takes place when a child is interviewed in a developmentally and linguistically appropriate manner in a child-friendly environment by someone who is adequately trained. The 5-day *Finding Words/Half a Nation* curriculum is designed to produce competent forensic interviewers who can defend their interviews in court. The program is rooted in several core beliefs.

First, we believe forensic interview training is most effective when teams rather than individuals receive instruction. Accordingly, we require teams of police officers, child protection workers, and prosecutors to attend trainings together. We believe the prosecutor is an essential member of the team. If a child reveals abuse, the civil child protection and criminal investigations may be for naught unless the interview can be defended in court. Prosecutors trained with their teams in child forensic interviewing will acquire optimal skills and knowledge to question interviewers on the stand, to educate judges, and to cross-examine defense expert witnesses. Moreover, when children are called to the witness stand, prosecutors need to ask developmentally and linguistically appropriate questions.

Second, we believe forensic interviewers should be taught by practicing forensic interviewers, utilizing an interview protocol that takes into account pertinent research and is defensible in court.

Although there is no such thing as a perfect interview, a competent interview takes place when a child is interviewed in a developmentally and linguistically appropriate manner in a child-friendly environment by someone who is adequately trained.

Although there are several acceptable protocols, it is not feasible to teach them all in a one-week course. *Finding Words* uses CornerHouse's RATAAC protocol, and it is taught by CornerHouse forensic interviewers. Those on the front line of daily child interviewing want to leave a course with an interview format they can put to use the following Monday morning. RATAAC makes this possible. RATAAC is simple yet complex. It is simple in that it is a mnemonic device with each letter standing for a different stage of the protocol: Rapport, Anatomy Identification, Touch Inquiry, Abuse Scenario, and Closure. A student who can remember "RATAAC" can remember the entire protocol. The protocol is complex, however, in that each component takes into account a child's age, developmental functioning, and other variables. RATAAC cannot be taught by simply reading an article or attending a workshop; the protocol must be taught in a course that is intense and hands-on.

Third, we believe students must master a variety of content areas that pertain directly to competent child forensic interviewing. These include the following: dynamics of and victim responses to child sexual abuse; child development and age-appropriate questioning guidelines; the process and potential blocks to disclosure; effective use of and withstanding legal challenges to anatomical dolls, diagrams and drawings; the search for corroborative evidence; hearsay; memory and suggestibility; preparing the child and forensic interviewer for testifying; and diversity issues.

Fourth, we believe that students must read the pertinent research themselves. All *Finding Words* students must study several hundred pages of homework assignments. The purpose behind the homework is to empower students to testify in court that they have not only attended lectures about pertinent research but they have also read much of this research themselves.

Fifth, students must demonstrate their skills and be critiqued by their peers and by professional interviewers. As part of *Finding Words/Half a Nation*,

every participant must interview a child about a nonabuse event, such as a trip to the zoo. Each participant also conducts one videotaped interview with a professional actor who portrays a child sexual abuse victim. Both of these exercises take place in a small group format with a maximum of 10 student multidisciplinary team members and one professional forensic interviewer. The students receive both written and oral critiques from their peers and the professional forensic interviewer. The purpose behind the peer critiques is to get each community comfortable with ongoing peer review. We teach students that no ego should stand in the way of protecting a child and that we have a moral responsibility to be vigilant in improving one another's skills. Participants keep their videotapes and written interview critiques for further review at home.

Sixth, students must demonstrate their ability to defend basic interviewing concepts in court. They are required to complete an essay examination, which although stressful, is less stressful than testifying in court. Essay examinations prepare students better for court testimony than do multiple choice tests. In court, forensic interviewers are never asked multiple choice questions that contain

the correct answer as one of four choices. Like the questions asked in court, essay questions test recall memory rather than recognition memory.

2. Leading questions: Most models include the instruction to avoid leading questions. What is your operational definition of a leading question?

A leading question is in the eye of the beholder, and defense attorneys too often categorize every question that is not open-ended as "leading." In the *Finding Words* definitions of question types, we consider as leading only "mis-leading" questions. These include tag questions, "Your mom touched your butt, didn't she?"; statement of fact questions, "I know someone hurt you. Who was it?"; and assumptive questions, "Where were you touched?" when the child has not mentioned being touched. None of the other question types suggest a single answer to the child. Students are taught never to ask a misleading question in a forensic interview.

3. History: How did *Finding Words* and *Half a Nation* come about?

CornerHouse, an interagency child abuse evaluation and training center located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, opened in 1989 utilizing the RATAC protocol to interview alleged victims of sexual abuse. Professionals around Minnesota began asking if CornerHouse could teach them how to do this type of interview. In 1990, CornerHouse began teaching the 5-day, child sexual abuse forensic interview training course. In an 8-year period, CornerHouse trained teams of prosecutors, investigators, and child protection workers in 82 of Minnesota's 87 counties. CornerHouse found it increasingly difficult to keep up with the demand for the training, even with 9 courses a year training 10 people at a time.

In 1991, Cottonwood County, a rural county in southwestern Minnesota, overhauled its child protection system and implemented a series of reforms. As part of this process, all interviewers were required to attend CornerHouse training. Because of these efforts, the county charged and convicted twice as many sex offenders in a 4-year period as had occurred in the previous 12 years. Victor Vieth was serving as an assistant county attorney in Cottonwood at this time, and he believed strongly that the training he and his colleagues received at CornerHouse was instrumental in the county's dramatic success (Vieth, 1998).

In 1997, Mr. Vieth was hired as a senior attorney with the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse (NCPCA) in Alexandria, Virginia. NCPCA is part of the American Prosecutors Research Institute, the nonprofit affiliate of the National District Attorneys' Association. In response to many calls from frontline child protection workers, police officers, and prosecutors for forensic interview training, APRI proposed to present the CornerHouse model of training on the national stage in a new format titled *Finding Words*.

Finding Words was first presented in Savannah, Georgia, in 1998. APRI received over 400 applications from teams around the country seeking admittance to the course. The *Finding Words* title, the real child interview exercise, and four of the lecture topics are all

that set the CornerHouse and *Finding Words* trainings apart. The *Finding Words* course is described in this paper.

Because the demand for *Finding Words* was so great, APRI and CornerHouse decided to limit its training at the national level and instead to assist states in establishing their own 5-day courses to be locally run and taught. We set as our goal establishing 25 state programs by 2010. The project has been completed in South Carolina, New Jersey, Indiana, and Mississippi. In 2003, the project will be completed in Georgia and Missouri and in 2004, in West Virginia and Maryland. As of this writing, over 40 states have contacted APRI for applications to be admitted into the program. For further information about *Half a Nation by 2010*, readers should contact Grant Bauer by e-mail at grant.bauer@ndaa-apri.org or call (703) 549-4253.

4. Personnel: Whom do you train? Teams? Individuals? Rationale?

Several aspects distinguish the *Finding Words* training from other forensic interview trainings. First, professionals cannot simply sign up to attend the course but must submit applications. Second, professionals are more likely to be accepted into the course if they apply as a team made up of a prosecutor, law enforcement investigator, child protection worker, and CAC forensic interviewer. Teams that attend the training together are better able to work and support each other when they return to their jurisdictions. Prosecutors knowledgeable about child development are better able to understand why interviewers framed questions as they did, and interviewers trained in reliability factors know better what to say in an interview to increase the chances that their interview will be admitted into court. Investigators learn how to construct interviews for corroborative purposes so that the child's statement never has to stand alone. A child sexual abuse case can be successfully put together only with a team approach.

The RATAC protocol can be used to interview children not only about sexual abuse but also about other forms of maltreatment and the witnessing of violent crime. Because the protocol is semistructured, there is no set of scripted questions to ask in an interview.

5. Focus: Is the questioning focused on child sexual abuse only? Do your guidelines routinely include questions about physical abuse, neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse, and felony animal abuse? Rationale?

The RATAC protocol can be used to interview children not only about sexual abuse but also about other forms of maltreatment and the witnessing of violent crime. Because the protocol is semistructured, there is no set of scripted questions to ask in an interview. If multidisciplinary team members want questions addressed during the interview regarding neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse, or felony animal abuse, the interviewer will ask the questions. If the child provides a lead toward any of these issues, the interviewer will follow the child's lead and explore such topics. For example, if the child says, "He does that only when he's drinking," the interviewer would respond with, "Tell me about his drinking." If child protective services want domestic violence issues explored, the interviewer can ask a question like, "Tell me what happens when someone in your house gets mad."

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6. Focus: Do you see your interview protocol or guidelines as prosecution-focused or protection-focused? Do you see conflicts between these goals? In cases of conflict, does protection trump prosecution, or the reverse?

We believe the only effective way to protect children is as a team. Accordingly, forensic interviewing must be both prosecution- and protection-focused. Indeed, prosecution is often a prerequisite to protection. Although most mothers will eventually support their abused children, this is not always done immediately. In some cases, a prosecution is necessary to bring the issue to a head and force the family to deal with the abuse. Even when a mother immediately supports the child, she may have feelings of guilt or shame that the team must address so the mother can support the child appropriately.

We see no conflicts between the goals of prosecution and protection. In individual cases, there may be differences of opinion about whether to proceed civilly, criminally, or both, and the team as a whole will have to decide. This is another reason why we train teams, in the hope that the various players will gain a better understanding of each other's roles and learn to work together for the betterment of children.

7. Structure: Do you teach structured protocol, semistructured protocol, or flexible guidelines? Rationale?

RATAC is a semistructured process for which one or more stages can be modified or eliminated, thus allowing for the developmental level and unique characteristics of each child as well as the particulars of each case. RATAC is the acronym for the first letter of each stage of the interview process: Rapport,

Anatomy Identification, Touch Inquiry, Abuse Scenario, and Closure. The process as a whole is successful because of the various techniques utilized within each stage. Protocol stages and techniques are based on research in areas such as child sexual abuse, child development, and suggestibility.

8. Content: How do you build rapport? How do you initiate the questions designed to move to the topic of concern or the abuse allegation?

Rapport is established as part of the interview process rather than before the interview begins. Rapport, the first stage of RATAC, is intended to establish the child's comfort, communication, and competence. To establish comfort, the interviewer obtains "equal positioning" with the child by, for example, sitting on the same-size chairs, or on a couch instead of chairs at opposite ends of a table. Interviewers are also encouraged to reduce their appearance of authority. For police this means interviewing in plain clothes without a gun or badge. Interviewers are taught to maintain a friendly, objective stance and to avoid an interrogation mode.

Interviewers learn to pay attention to all three ways a child communicates—language, behavior, and emotion. All three forms of communication may provide key information and reveal potential blocks to disclosure. Children's behaviors and emotions may be inconsistent with their language, as when a child may insist that nothing

has happened while crying and pulling her hood up over her head.

The interviewer is also taught to conduct a mental assessment of the child's developmental abilities during rapport building. It is the interviewer's responsibility to establish the child's competence, not the child's responsibility to prove it.

Rapport usually begins when the interviewer draws a picture of the child's face, followed by drawing family circles. (The face picture technique is generally skipped with children older than age 10; between ages 8 and 10, children are offered a choice about having the face picture drawn.) A large pad of flip chart paper sits between the interviewer and the child and becomes the means and focus of communication. The interviewer is generally the one who completes the drawings, but on occasion, the interviewer may offer the child a marker to assist in the drawings. While the interviewer is drawing the face picture, she is asking the child various questions to assess the child's level of development, vocabulary, and narrative ability. By drawing the child's face picture, the interviewer communicates to children from the start that they are important. When making family circles, the interviewer invites children to tell about whom they live with, who is in their families, or both. As children tell about their families, the interviewer draws small circles on the flip

chart paper and, under each circle, records family members' names and relationships and the ages of any children. If the interviewer determines that further rapport building is necessary, she may also query the child about school, hobbies, or friends.

Anatomy identification follows, to establish the young child's ability to differentiate gender and to find out the child's names for body parts. Two anatomical diagrams, of the same ethnicity and developmental stage as the child being interviewed, are shown to most children through age 9. The young child

is asked to indicate which diagram is the girl and which is the boy and is then asked, "Are you a boy or a girl?" The interviewer then tapes the diagram that is the same gender as the child on the flip chart, while stating that the diagrams are used to find out the child's words for various body parts. The interviewer begins by circling body parts at random and asks the child, "What do you call this?" The interviewer neutrally repeats back what the child has said, allowing the child the opportunity to correct the interviewer. The interviewer then writes on the diagram whatever word(s) the child uses.

Next, the interviewer transitions into touch inquiry for the purpose of assessing the child's ability to understand and communicate about touch. Unless a spontaneous statement is made during rapport building or anatomy identification, this is the stage of the interview in which questions explore the abuse allegation. The interviewer begins by discussing touches that would generally be considered positive. The interviewer may say, "When kids come to talk to me, I talk to them about different kinds of touches. I'm wondering if you ever get touches that you like?" The interviewer follows this up by saying, "Tell me about the touches you like." The interviewer will clarify, if necessary, from whom the child gets the touches and where on the child's body he or she gets those touches. The interviewer then asks the child, "Are there places on your body where it's not

We believe the only effective way to protect children is as a team. Accordingly, forensic interviewing must be both prosecution- and protection-focused. Indeed, prosecution is often a prerequisite to protection.

okay for other people to touch?" The diagrams that were utilized during anatomy identification can also be used here to allow the child to point to the places where it's not okay for people to touch. The interviewer can follow up by asking the child, "Has someone ever touched you in one of those places?" If a child responds affirmatively, the interviewer is taught to say, "Tell me all about that." Alternative ways to inquire include asking about touches the child doesn't like, places the child doesn't want to be touched, and places no one is supposed to touch.

To focus the child on the abuse allegation, the interviewer can also try questions such as the following: "Did you have to go to the doctor because something happened to you?" "Did you tell your mom that something happened to you?" "Did something happen to you that you didn't like?" Even though these are yes-no questions, they are followed by "Tell me all about that," so that the child may access free recall rather than recognition memory. We teach students never to presume anything and to respect the process of disclosure. So even if the intake says the child went to the doctor, the interviewer would *not* say, "I understand that you went to the doctor; tell me about that." Instead, the interviewer asks the child a question.

9. Content: Does your protocol vary according to the developmental level of the child being interviewed? Rationale?

Because RATAc is a semistructured process, one or more of the stages can be modified or eliminated, allowing for the developmental considerations of each child. It is virtually impossible to ask the same question of a 3-year-old that you can of a 13-year-old. Every stage of the process needs to be geared to the developmental needs of *that* child. For example, although it is extremely beneficial to draw a face picture to develop rapport with a 4-year-old, it would be generally detrimental for building rapport with a 12-year-old. The sample questions in this article represent those we teach for use with 6- to 8-year-olds.

10. Content: What do you teach about the use of interview aids? Rationale?

Finding Words teaches the use of drawings, anatomical diagrams, and anatomical dolls. Adults in forensic settings frequently use props or other aids when explaining their experiences. In a traffic case, for example, an accident reconstructionist may use models or toy cars to demonstrate events. If adults can use such aids, why would we deny the same opportunity to children, who may have less communicative ability and greater need? Because some children need demonstration aids to explain their experiences fully, failure to use them condemns many children to fall through the cracks of our child protection system.

Drawings

Freehand drawings on a large pad of flip chart paper are utilized as a technique throughout the RATAc protocol. There are at least nine ways in which the drawings can be helpful during the interview. First, drawings help establish rapport. Second and third, they can clarify communication with the child while inviting correction

from the child. If the interviewer incorrectly spells the child's name, for example, the child can see this and let the interviewer know he or she made a mistake. This lends credibility to the child in the sense that it demonstrates the child is willing to correct the interviewer when he or she gets something wrong. Fourth, drawings help prod the child's memory. Fifth, drawings can increase the recall of details. When the child says that he or she was touched in the bedroom, the interviewer can say, "Tell me all about your bedroom." The interviewer can then begin to draw the room as she asks clarifying questions like, "What's in your bedroom?" Sixth, when an investigator goes out to corroborate the child's statement, the drawings then demonstrate the child's credibility and competence. Seventh, the drawings provide evidentiary information. These drawings become part of the record and can be introduced as exhibits during trial. Eighth, the drawings help take away some of the intensity from the interview process. Both the child and the interviewer have something upon which they can focus besides each other. And lastly, if the child starts to become distracted or uninterested, the interviewer can use the drawings to reengage the child. This can be as simple as the interviewer saying, "Look at this picture a minute..."

Diagrams

The *Finding Words* anatomical diagrams that are utilized are outline drawings of nude boys and girls at various stages of development. The diagrams look like real people in that they include facial and age-appropriate body features. The diagrams are of both males and females of various ethnicities. As with any interview aid, interviewers should be able to articulate the purpose for using anatomical diagrams (Holmes & Finnegan, 2002). There are at least four purposes for using the diagrams. First, a number of authorities recognize the value of the diagrams in assisting the child to identify body parts (American Professional

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Society on the Abuse of Children, 2002; CornerHouse, 2002; MacFarlane, Waterman, et al., 1986; Sorenson, Bottoms, & Perona, 1997), thereby lessening the chance the interviewer will unwittingly suggest the name of a body part and the child will adopt that name. Second, the diagrams may assist the interviewer in determining a preschool or developmentally delayed child's understanding of, and ability to distinguish between, male and female gender (CornerHouse, 2002). Third, interviewers can ask children to indicate on the diagrams where sexual touching occurred (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, 2002). Research findings indicate that anatomical diagrams are effective in obtaining body touch information from children (Steward & Steward, 1996). Fourth, anatomical diagrams are useful for clarification purposes (Bourg et al., 1999). For example, if a child uses different words to name a certain body part, the interviewer can ask the child to indicate the location of that body part on the diagram.

Anatomical Dolls

The *Finding Words* program utilizes anatomical dolls in accordance with the APSAC guidelines (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, 1995). The most appropriate functional use that is taught during the forensic interview is as a demonstration aid (Holmes, 2000). In this sense, the dolls are appropriate for the following purposes: to clarify information; allow children to

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demonstrate what they cannot or will not say; allow children to distance from their own body; and allow for the opportunity for consistency.

11. Content: What do you teach about questioning reticent (nondisclosing) children?

There are two sections of the course designated specifically to this issue. First, students are taught about the process of disclosure. They are taught to identify the types of disclosure and the various stages of disclosure. Characteristics of tentative disclosure are discussed in detail, and the students are taught to recognize tentative language cues, such as “might have, could have, probably, sometimes, usually,” and so forth.

Second, another session of the course teaches students to recognize potential blocks and problems in the interview and offers interview tips to deal with them. Both of these sections are designed to teach students to respect the process of disclosure while strategizing how to remove specific blocks to disclosure. When a child is not capable or willing to disclose, or when there is no disclosure to make, students are taught to modify RATAAC and move to closure.

12. Content: How are diversity issues integrated into your guidelines or protocol?

Diversity is the exclusive subject of one of the workshops and is otherwise addressed throughout the training. Students are also required to read several articles containing suggestions for better responding to the needs of their diverse communities. We teach students concrete steps for developing cultural sensitivity before, during, and after the forensic interview (Vieth, 2002).

13. Content: What do you teach about interviewing with corroborative evidence in mind, so that the child's interview need not stand alone?

We believe and teach that no child should go to court alone. We argue that every child's statements can be corroborated in some way. We encourage students to think outside the box, to tear apart their videotaped statements from alleged child victims paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, and confirm everything that can be corroborated. We have a specific workshop on this issue, and students receive further instruction in their homework assignments (Vieth, 1999).

14. Outcomes: Have you measured training or protocol outcomes, and if so, how? What have you found?

We have received a grant from the Children's Bureau to measure the effect of *Finding Words/Half a Nation* in those states in which the program has been implemented. We intend to measure such things as the impact of the program on substantiation and conviction rates. If we can document that the program is resulting in better quality cases, we will be able to establish the overall quality of the program in terms of its ability to protect children. This, we believe, is what it is all about.

In the words of Jackie Robinson, “A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives” (Dravecky & Yorkey, 2001). As *Half a Nation* takes its place in the annals of history, may it be said that we empowered tens of thousands of frontline child protection professionals to influence positively the lives of millions of children.

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Law Enforcement Perspective on Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification

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Abstract

This study evaluated sex offender registration and community notification from the perspective of law enforcement officers responsible for its implementation. Open-ended questions were used to conduct three focused group interviews with nineteen officers from nine jurisdictions in a small rural state. The officers were ambivalent about the system of sex offender registration and notification. They considered it an important tool to promote public safety and apprehend criminals, but thought the system itself was seriously flawed. The officers thought budget and staff were inadequate and worried about the potential for developing a false sense of security, but they also believed community notification was useful in preventing and investigating crimes. They recommended that the system be evaluated to see if it has an impact on reporting and offense rates. Policy makers, administrators, and researchers should take the officers' perspectives into account as they allocate increasingly scarce resources, educate the public, and evaluate the impact of the system.

Law Enforcement Perspective on Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification

From 1994 to 1996, the federal government passed three laws mandating sex offender registration and community notification. The Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act of 1994 requires all states to establish a system to register sex offenders. The Wetterling Act, as amended in 1996 (the so-called Megan's Law), requires that the states develop a system to notify the community of the presence of potentially dangerous persons. The Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996 provides for lifetime registration of recidivists, and each state is responsible for transmitting sex offender data to the FBI's national database of released sex offenders. Although there are many similarities among the state laws, there are significant differences in how states implement their sex offender registration and community notification systems. Law enforcement officers play a significant role in the implementation of the laws in all states. This article gives an overview of how states have interpreted and operationalized the federal mandates. It also describes how Arkansas law enforcement officers perceive sex offender registration and community notification and evaluate its impact.

About 411,000 sex offenders are registered in 50 states and the District of Columbia, ranging from 278 in Washington, D.C., to 95,401 in California (KlaasKids Foundation, 2002). All of the state regulations that govern execution of sex offender registration and com-

munity notification systems address the following: who is required to register, what information is collected, when registration occurs, how long registration is required, how registration is verified, and who has access to the information. Every state requires offenders who have been convicted of sexually assaulting a minor to register, and all but four states have extended this requirement to violent sex offenders, regardless of the age of the victim.

The information collected from offenders ranges from a minimum of basic demographic information only, to a comprehensive record that includes criminal history, vehicle registration, treatment history, and even, in Texas, shoe size. Twenty-two states have a mechanism for completing risk assessments, after which the offender is assigned a level, or tier, depending on how likely he or she is to reoffend and how dangerous a possible reoffense is considered to be. The type of assessment and who completes it vary, depending on the state. The risk level may be assigned by the courts, by local law enforcement, or by specially trained professionals. There are typically three levels or tiers of risk, with Level I being the lowest and Level III being the highest. Some states have a separate category reserved for sexually violent predators.

The most significant differences among state laws are in the area of notification and access. Only nineteen states require direct notification to the community when a sex offender establishes residence in an area. In the states where formal, systematic community notification is not required, it is left to the discretion of local law enforcement to determine who will be notified and when. Notification can be as limited as informing agencies that serve vulnerable populations of the offender's presence and as extensive as informing the public via advertisements in the local media. The assessed level of risk the offender poses usually determines the level of notification required.

Public access varies from complete access to all state offenders' records, to access only to Level or Tier III of offenders' records. Twenty-seven states provide Internet access to their sex offender registries. Access by written request or by telephone is also available in some libraries or police stations. Questions about access to offender information have resulted in a number of challenges to the constitutionality of sex offender registration and community notification laws. Most of the cases have claimed that the laws violate the due process and ex post facto clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment (Aronson, 2002). The majority of these challenges have failed at the state supreme court level; however, Michigan and Connecticut were found to violate the due process clause in that they deny offenders the opportunity for an individualized hearing to determine their current dangerousness. In addition, Alaska's registry was found to violate the ex post facto clause by placing on the state's registry offenders who were convicted prior to the enactment of the state law. Currently, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering the appeals for the Connecticut and Alaska cases. In the meantime, Connecticut's registry is no longer publicly available, and Alaska has limited its registry to offenders convicted after the enactment of the law.

At the heart of the system are the law enforcement officers who monitor registrants and carry out the public notification process. Because registration and notification are instruments of social control, it is important to understand the officers' beliefs and values,

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how they act on those attitudes, and how they communicate their attitudes and concerns to others. The officers are responsible for a relatively new, highly publicized, controversial, and perhaps ineffective program that may affect their relationships within the larger community (Turner, 1996). Understanding how the police address these issues may shed light on the practical problems associated with using formal systems of social control (Soothill & Francis, 1993). Very little, however, is known about law enforcement officers' opinions about these issues. The current study was therefore designed to evaluate sex offender registration and community notification from the perspective of Arkansas law enforcement officers responsible for their implementation. Consistent with the principles of naturalistic evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), the focus of the investigation was on gathering information to understand this complex social process. The process involved significant stakeholders in order to arrive at an evaluation that was useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate (Milstein & Wetterhall, 1999).

Methods

Focused Group Interviews

Focused group interviews work by tapping into human interaction (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990). A well-run focus group helps people form and articulate opinions about high-stakes issues, such as using scarce resources to protect the community from sex offenders. They promote appropriate self-disclosure, especially among individuals for whom revealing personal values is difficult. Participants are offered opportunities to discuss, explain, and even disagree, free from judgment or rigid directedness. The focus is on the participants' perspectives, rather than on the investigator's biases (Krueger, 1994).

Participants. In Arkansas, the system of registration was mandated by Act 989 of 1997, the Sexually Violent Predators and Sex and Child Offenders Act. Currently, responsibility for sex offender registration and community notification is shared among the Arkansas Crime Information Center, the Arkansas Department of Correction, the Sex Offender Assessment Committee, and local law enforcement.

The interviews in this study were scheduled in relatively central areas of three regions of the state, and all the officers in jurisdictions within a 50-mile radius of the interview sites were invited to participate. No attempts at randomization were made. Participation was voluntary. The researchers followed the ethical guidelines outlined in the Belmont Report and the regulations outlined in Title 45 CFR Part 46, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Human Research Advisory Committee approved the study. The data are reported in aggregate form to prevent identification of any officer or jurisdiction and to promote confidentiality.

A total of nineteen individuals from nine jurisdictions participated in three focus groups—58% were female; 84% were white. Ages ranged from 33 to 52 years, with the average age being 43 years. The most common rank was detective; all who indicated a religious preference were Protestant. Almost all the officers had at least some college education. Officers' incomes ranged from \$25,000 to \$35,000 and averaged \$31,000; the officers averaged 16 years of

service, ranging from 10 to 30 years. The findings should be generalized cautiously, given the nonrepresentative nature of the sample.

Areas of inquiry. The officers' perspectives were addressed through open-ended questions designed to determine 1) what they knew about the informal and formal rules that guide sex offender registration and community notification and 2) what their views of the system were. Four questions were introduced in each of the focused group interviews to start the discussion:

- What is the sex offender registry and community notification system?
- What do you think is important about registration and community notification?
- What worries you about it?
- What is the effect of your work with the registry on your relationships in the community?

Probes were generated in response to specific topics addressed in each of the three groups.

Data collection and analysis. As the facilitator asked questions, the participants wrote one- or two-word answers on separate sheets of paper. There was no limit to the number of answers to each question, but a question had to be stated in one- or two-word phrases so that the answers would be visible from a distance. After all the answers had been generated, the

facilitator asked one person to volunteer his or her first answer and to explain it. When everyone in the room understood what was meant by the answer, that answer was taped to a wall. Participants were invited to tape similar answers in a column below the original answer. Participants were free to write additional answers as the discussion continued. When all similar answers were on the wall, the group was asked to begin a new column with a different focus. When all the answers were or-

ganized and any disagreements among statements were clarified or resolved, the group labeled each of the columns with a category name. The investigator then generated narrative statements from each of the categories and asked at least one key informant from each group to check the results. The informants' suggestions for changes in wording or emphasis were included in the final analysis.

Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. The advantage of this method is that participants themselves analyze their answers during data collection by organizing them into categories (Carey, 1995). The result is information that has been organized from diversity of opinion and perspective (Krueger, 1994).

Results

What is the sex offender registry and community notification system?

The law enforcement officers reported that registration and notification were useful tools to help them manage the threat posed by offenders in the community because these methods provide a mechanism for informing officers about high-risk offenders. They also expected that the system would make offenders stop and think, because the offenders would know that law enforcement was watch-

The officers had concerns about legal issues related to their own activities and the activities of the offenders. They worried about civil liabilities and thought they were at considerable legal risk of being sued by offenders for violating their rights.

ing them and could make home visits at any time.

The system was seen as an investigational tool that helped law enforcement narrow the list of potential suspects when an offense took place. Officers said the system made it easier to recognize an offender's pattern of behavior and keep track of his or her whereabouts. The officers hoped that it could be used to prevent further victimization and, when reoffenses did occur, that it would help them return offenders to jail. They knew, however, that because many of the offenders being registered were first-time offenders, the system could not have been used as a preventive device in those situations.

The officers also saw sex offender registration and community notification as a cumbersome, inefficient process and had serious concerns about how the system was being implemented. They felt caught in the middle while forces they could not control used the system as a political football. They thought that the system had been poorly planned and contained ineffective tracking and record-keeping measures that allowed offenders to fall through the cracks when they moved to different jurisdictions.

What do you think is important about registration and community notification?

Focus group participants saw sex offender registration and community notification as an opportunity to protect children. The officers wanted to make parents and children aware of potential dangers so that the children who lived near offenders would be safer. During the focus groups, the officers said that they were concerned about children who were alone in public places, such as the mall. They said they pay close attention to those children and want parents to communicate with their children, watch them carefully, and teach the children to be aware of their surroundings.

The officers offered a number of recommendations for improvement. They thought assessments should be completed accurately and in a timely manner and that in-depth, lifetime treatment should be mandatory for offenders.

What worries you about it?

The officers had concerns about legal issues related to their own activities and the activities of the offenders. They worried about civil liabilities and thought they were at considerable legal risk of being sued by offenders for violating their rights. They felt caught between notifying too much, thereby breaching the offenders' individual civil liberties, and not notifying enough, thus placing the public at risk. The offenders were seen as not complying properly with the laws, but the officers felt limited in their power to enforce compliance because of loopholes in existing laws and regulations. One group briefly discussed the constitutionality of the system, but concluded that constitutional concerns were outweighed by the offenders' threat to the community. They stated that registration was a small price to pay for what the offenders had done.

The officers were concerned about the public's reaction to the system. At times, the public seemed to underreact to the threat posed by dangerous offenders because the registration and notification system made it "somebody else's problem." At other times, the general public seemed to respond to "media hype" with increased fearfulness and paranoia, demanding information that could not be released to them because it was not covered by the Freedom of Information Act. In general, officers believed the public had no idea

of the magnitude of the problem, and they were worried that the system might even reduce public safety by offering a false sense of security.

What is the effect of your work with the registry on your relationships in the community?

Focus group participants answered that involvement with the system meant extra work without adequate supervision, compensation, or reduction in workload. They said that fellow officers often lacked appreciation for those officers responsible for community notification and were unwilling to provide assistance. The respondents thought their responsibilities would be less burdensome if there were reason to believe they really made a difference. They added that it would be worth the trouble if victims saw offenders admitting their guilt.

The officers reported feeling burdened because of the responsibilities they had been assigned. They thought that responsibility for the system had been "dumped" on law enforcement with little planning, guidance, or training. Lack of funding for training, unreliable support from prosecutors, limited time and personnel, and constant interruptions diverted their time and attention from implementing the system effectively. However, their additional responsibilities

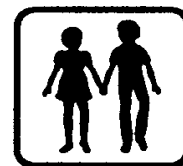
for notification had little impact on their personal behavior they said, because they were, by nature, cautious, protective, and dedicated to an ongoing focus on personal and family safety.

Discussion

The study was designed to evaluate sex offender registration and community notification from the perspective of Arkansas law enforcement officers. Overall, the officers considered sex offender registration

and community notification an evolving and essential component of their mission to maintain public safety. Awareness of offenders' whereabouts and the potential for protecting children were seen as positive, but the additional burden on the officers was considerable. Serious concerns about the quality and accuracy of assessments and the overall effectiveness of the system were discussed at length.

These officers believed that the legislators who created the laws and the state boards that promulgated the regulations did not understand how complicated the process would be. The public's reaction was a particular worry: The officers were afraid that citizens would think that registration solved the problem of sexually dangerous persons and no further vigilance was needed. Conversely, they also thought that the public demanded access to information to which it was not entitled, making it more difficult for the officers to maintain good relations with the community.



cont'd on page 12

The officers offered a number of recommendations for improvement. They thought assessments should be completed accurately and in a timely manner and that in-depth, lifetime treatment should be mandatory for offenders. Barring this, the officers wanted to keep offenders in prison longer, and some considered the death penalty for child sexual assault to be an appropriate sentence. The officers believed the system could be made better if the categories of sex offenses were better defined and if agencies outside law enforcement, such as the parole and probation agency, had more responsibility. They would like to see if the sex offender registration and community notification system has influenced reporting and offense rates. They suggested that the system could be made more useful in community policing if officers from different jurisdictions were to communicate more freely with one another. Policy makers, administrators, and researchers need to take the officers' perspectives into account as they allocate increasingly scarce resources, educate the public, and evaluate the impact of the system.

Note

This study was funded by a grant from the Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence and facilitated by the Arkansas Sex Offender Assessment Committee. Additional information about state sex offender registries can be obtained through the Department of Justice website: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ssordp.htm>

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NEWS OF THE ORGANIZATION

APSAC Board of Directors Election Results

A record number of APSAC members voted in this year's election (415 members, or approximately 20% of the current membership). The members voting elected Brian Holmgren, Cynthia Cupit Swenson, Sandra Alexander, and C. Terry Hendrix to serve second terms, and they chose Jordan Greenbaum and Howard Levy to join the Board as new members. Detective George Ryan from the North Carolina Chapter was elected to fill the newly created Ex-officio State Chapter Board Member position.

The candidates who were not elected to the 2003 Board will be offered the opportunity to run in the next election in Fall 2003. All the candidates were worthy of positions on the Board and those not elected this time will likely become Board members in future years. Board members serve 3-year terms.

Meet the newly reelected or elected members of the APSAC Board of Directors:

Sandra P. Alexander, MEd

Sandra is the executive director of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia and was president of APSAC from June 2000 to January 2002. She has over 30 years' experience as a child abuse professional, including the areas of child protective service investigation and supervision, and has done extensive work in child abuse prevention and nonprofit management. She chairs the Fulton County (Atlanta) Child Fatality Review Team and serves on the Georgia Senate Study Committee on Child Abuse, the Advisory Group for the Study of Emerging Practices in Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention sponsored by OCAN, and the Advisory Board of the Georgia Center for Children. She has extensive experience as a resource and spokesperson on child abuse in the media.

Jordan Greenbaum, MD

Jordan is an assistant professor of pediatrics at the Medical College of Wisconsin and the medical director of the Child Protection Center (CPC) of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. In evaluating suspected victims of child maltreatment, the CPC serves patients from counties all over the state. Trained as a forensic pathologist, she worked as an assistant medical examiner at the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office prior to joining the staff at Children's Hospital. She currently chairs the hospital SCAN committee and serves on the Pediatric Death Review Team for Milwaukee County. She is on the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin state chapter of APSAC.

C. Terry Hendrix, MA

Terry recently retired after a 40-year career in the publishing business. His academic training was in counseling psychology and organizational behavior, and he served in the U.S. Army as a clinical psychology technician. He was an acquiring editor for Wadsworth Publishing Company and cofounder and editorial director of Brooks/Cole Publishing Company over the course of 18 years. He joined Sage Publications in 1984, and during the past 17 years he was instrumental in the development of the Sage lists in interpersonal violence and criminal justice. Prior to retirement, Terry managed all Sage journals in interpersonal violence, including *Child Maltreatment*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, and *Violence Against Women*. He has been an active member of APSAC for the past decade and was named to the President's Honor Role in 1995. He was appointed to the Board of Directors in 1999 and served 2 years as treasurer. He is a member of the Executive Committee, chairs the Publications Committee, and is on the Financial Committee. He is one of the coeditors of the second edition of the *APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment*.

Brian Holmgren, JD

Brian is an assistant district attorney general with the Davidson County Attorney Generals' Office in Nashville, Tennessee, where he is assigned to the child abuse unit. Previously he served as an assistant district attorney in Kenosha County, Wisconsin, for 10

years where he directed their sensitive crimes unit. Between November of 1995 and July 1999, he was a senior attorney with the American Prosecutors Research Institute's National Center for the Prosecution of Child Abuse. Brian has been a Board Member for APSAC since 1998, and he currently serves on the Executive Committee, is cochair of the Professional Education Committee, and serves on the Legal Committee. He was cochair for the 2002 Colloquium, is cochair for the 2003 Colloquium, and coordinates planning for APSAC Institutes at various national conferences. He is a former Board Member of the Wisconsin chapter of APSAC.

Howard Levy, MD

Howard is currently the president of the Pediatric Center of Chicago, Ltd., and the director of the Pediatric Ecology/Family Impact Programs, located in the University of Chicago's Louis A. Weiss Memorial Hospital. His responsibilities have involved progressive management experience in a number of different settings, including 2 years as president of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Detective George Ryan

George is an investigator for the District Attorney's Office in Elizabeth City, NC. Prior to holding this position, he was a deputy sheriff and victim/witness coordinator. One of his areas of specialty is the investigation of child abuse cases. He assists local departments with those investigations and has the expertise to do so by virtue of his training and experience. He joined APSAC in 1994 and was elected to the Board of Directors of NCPSAC in 1995. In 2000, he was elected president of the state chapter and served in that capacity for 2 years. During his tenure on the Board, George remained committed to training other professionals, especially fellow law enforcement officers, on best practices in conducting child abuse cases. He is a faculty member for the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center, traveling frequently at their request throughout a 17-state region to advocate the multidisciplinary approach to child abuse investigations. He is also certified as a criminal justice instructor in North Carolina and teaches courses in the community college system on best practices in child abuse investigations.

Cynthia Cupit Swenson, PhD

Cindy received her PhD in clinical psychology with a subspecialty in school psychology from the Florida State University. Currently she is an associate professor at the Family Services Research Center in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences of the Medical University of South Carolina. She has worked extensively with children and families over the last 20 years. Her research is community based and focuses on community violence, child maltreatment, youth aggression, and substance abuse. Cindy is currently on the APSAC Board and serves as chair of the Membership Committee.

NEWS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Star-Studded Site for 2004 Colloquium

Hollywood, California, is the site planned for the 12th Annual APSAC Colloquium. The spectacular new Renaissance Hotel in the heart of Hollywood will host APSAC on August 4-7, 2004. The Renaissance Hotel is connected to the magnificent new Hollywood & Highland shopping, dining, and entertainment complex, which includes a six-screen movie theater, the Kodak Theater (home of the annual Academy Awards as well as many live entertainment events), five restaurants, and a wide variety of interesting shops. Beneath the facility is a parking garage for 3,000 cars. The center's main entrance is on Hollywood Boulevard, which features the Hollywood Walk of Fame with gold stars in the sidewalks dedicated to famous movie, television, and stage stars of the present and the past.



available. Picnic baskets can be purchased from the hotel and local restaurants or at the Bowl. It is traditional to enjoy wine and a picnic supper at the Bowl before the evening performance.

A short cab ride from the hotel is Griffith Park, the Southern California equivalent of Central Park in New York City. This area has walking and hiking trails, a major zoo, an observatory, the Greek Theater (another outdoor venue for a variety of musical entertainment), and other attractions. The Autry Museum of Western Heritage is nearby.

Within walking distance or a short cab ride from the hotel are scores of good restaurants, jazz clubs, dance clubs, and other entertainment choices. Rooms for guests in the Renaissance facility have all the amenities of a luxury hotel, and meeting rooms will nicely accommodate the needs of the Colloquium. Our plenary sessions and the Awards Luncheon will be held in the ballroom designed for the Governor's Ball that follows the Academy Awards. Best of all, the hotel is giving us a very favorable room rate! An added advantage is that August weather in Hollywood is usually quite comfortable, with low humidity, daytime highs in the low eighties, and evening temperatures around 60 to 65 degrees. And if it rains in early August, it will make front-page headlines!

So begin planning now for the 2004 Colloquium in Tinseltown!



NEWS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Several years ago, a number of colleagues—social workers, psychologists, attorneys, physicians, nurses, researchers, law enforcement officers, and protective services administrators—started talking when they met at conferences of their desire for a professional society designed to meet their needs as professionals in the field of child maltreatment. This new society would give professionals from all of the different disciplines who respond to child maltreatment a common forum for addressing the difficult problems they face in their work. It would encourage research in this young field to build a knowledge base on which professionals can confidently practice, and would disseminate that research in a usable form to all professionals working in the field. This association would serve as a vehicle for approaching difficult policy and practice questions that require an interdisciplinary response, and as a “home base” for all professionals whose main concern was how best to help those affected by child maltreatment.

In 1987, these leaders founded the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). In the intervening years, thousands of professionals from all 50 states and around the world have joined, and APSAC has made steady progress toward realizing its founders’ goals.

It has created the *APSAC Advisor*, a highly-regarded quarterly news journal that delivers current information from leading experts in immediately useful form. It has established *Child Maltreatment*, a quarterly, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, policy- and practice-oriented journal that addresses all aspects of child maltreatment.

And APSAC has . . .

- Submitted *amicus* briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court in cases with important implications for child abuse practice;
- published guidelines for practice on critically important aspects of practice;
- provided outstanding professional education in institutes, colloquiums, and intensive clinics;
- published books and monographs
- fostered the development of a nationwide network of chapters through which interdisciplinary professionals address issues with local import
- issued fact sheets and letters to editors to promote accurate public awareness of the complexities of child maltreatment.

APSAC addresses all facets of the professional response to child maltreatment: prevention, assessment, intervention, and treatment. Its members and Board of Directors represent all of the major disciplines responding to child abuse and neglect, including mental health, law, medicine, child protective services, and law enforcement. Its publications and training cover all aspects of child maltreatment, including emotional neglect and other forms of neglect, psychological maltreatment, and physical and sexual abuse. Most important, all of APSAC’s products are solidly based on the latest empirical research. They are designed to promote the best possible professional practice by making the latest knowledge widely available and comprehensible in a practical context.

Finally, all of APSAC’s products reflect the central wealth of APSAC, which is the unstinting labor of volunteers. The authors, editors, researchers, and teachers whose names are on APSAC’s publications and programs have donated their work. All proceeds from these products directly benefit APSAC. These and hundreds of other busy professionals — Board members, Advisory Board members, state chapter leaders, and others — who have given so freely of their scarce and valuable time have made APSAC a living, breathing force for all professionals in the field of child maltreatment.

Much more remains to be done. To achieve APSAC’s mission, there can be no bystanders: Your active participation is required. Please join the interdisciplinary professional organization that focuses all of its energy on improving America’s response to child maltreatment.

SAVE THESE DATES:

March 24-28, 2003
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Seattle, Washington

May 6-10, 2003
APSAC Forensic Interviewing Clinic
Ann Arbor, Michigan

June 22-26, 2003
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JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Ernestine C. Briggs, PhD

Journal Highlights informs readers of current research on various aspects of child maltreatment. APSAC members are invited to contribute by sending a copy of current articles (preferably published within the past 6 months) along with a two- or three-sentence review to Ernestine C. Briggs, PhD, Duke University Medical Center, Trauma Evaluation, Research and Treatment Program, Center for Child and Family Health—North Carolina, 3518 Westgate Drive, Suite 100, Durham, NC 27707 (Fax: 919-419-9353).

SEXUAL ABUSE

Clinical Utility of Sexual Education in Treatment of Children and Adolescents

This study examined the coverage of sexual education in treatment. Researchers surveyed agencies from across the United States that specialize in treating child and adolescent victims of sexual abuse. There was a statistically significant difference in the coverage of sexual education based on clients' age, but not based on gender or treatment modality (i.e., individual or group therapy). Parents are often included in treatment; however, the amount of parental involvement varies. Published materials, such as children's books and videos, are frequently used. Results suggest that covering sexual education in treatment helps decrease some of the negative effects of sexual abuse.

Rubenzahl, S. A., & Gilbert, B. O. (2002). Providing sexual education to victims of child sexual abuse: What is a clinician to do? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 11*(1), 1-21.

Childhood Victimization and Empathy as Predictors of Sexual Deviance

This study presented and tested a model of sexual deviance using data from 188 incarcerated male sexual offenders. Number and type of victims, disclosures of childhood experiences of abuse, and early exposure to pornography were recorded from criminal history, a sexual history questionnaire, and polygraph examinations. Empathy was assessed using victim- and abuse-specific measures. Structural equation modeling was used to test a model that included the direct effects of childhood victimization on number and type of victims, as well as the mediated effects through lack of empathy. Offenders who endorsed a history of child sexual abuse and early exposure to pornography displayed less empathy for children in abusive situations, and they reported more child victims. Offenders with a history of physical abuse displayed less empathy for women in abusive situations, and they reported more adult victims.

Simons, D., Wurtele, S. K., & Heil, P. (2002). Childhood victimization and lack of empathy as predictors of sexual offending against women and children. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(12), 1291-1307.

Childhood Victimization Linked With Health Problems in a Nationally Representative Sample of Women

The purpose of this investigation was to test the associations between physical and sexual victimization in childhood with seven measures of health problems in adulthood. Data were gathered from 8,000 women (mean age 44.19 yrs) interviewed in the National Violence Against Women Survey. Results indicated that both physical and sexual victimization in childhood were significantly associated with poor perceptions of general health, sustaining a serious injury, acquiring a mental health condition, using drugs, and using alcohol daily in adulthood. Women who experienced both physical and sexual victimization as children were at increased risk of health problems in adulthood compared with women who experienced only one type of victimization. These associations could not be attributed to victim demographics or to revictimization in adulthood. Results suggest that intervening with child abuse victims at an early stage may reduce children's likelihood of developing long-term health problems.

Thompson, M. P., Arias, I., Basile, K. C., & Desai, S. (2002). The association between childhood physical and sexual victimization and health problems in adulthood in a nationally representative sample of women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(10), 1115-1129.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Family Violence Associated With Increased Odds of Risky Sexual Behavior Among Adolescents

This study analyzed the relationship between family violence and risky sexual activity for female adolescents (aged 14-17 yrs). Two forms of family violence were examined: experience (receiving physical abuse from a parent or parent-figure) and exposure (witnessing interparental physical violence). Either form of violence was hypothesized to predict greater odds of engaging in risky sexual behavior. Results show that experiencing violence from a parent greatly increased the likelihood of risky sex, even when controlling for the experience of forced sex, age, mother's age at first birth, race, socioeconomic status, and religiosity. Female adolescents who had experienced forced sex, those who were older, non-Hispanic blacks, those living in a family with low educational attainment, and those for whom religion was not or only somewhat personally important were more likely to report risky sex. These effects were not modified by whether the respondents lived in single- or two-parent families. An interaction between the two forms of physical violence suggests either form is sufficient to increase significantly the odds of risky sex.

Elliott, G. C., Avery, R., Fishman, E., & Hoshiko, B. (2002). The encounter with family violence and risky sexual activity among young adolescent females. *Violence & Victims, 17*(5), 569-592.

The Decision-Making Process of Social Work Professionals and Nonprofessionals

This study compared the decision-making process of social work professionals, social work trainees, and nonprofessionals and assessed how they are each influenced by information on physical abuse to a child. Three samples of 100 subjects (Ss) each were used to assess the following: certified social workers, social work trainees, and students in the B.A. program in the School of Business Administration. Minimal referral information was provided on a case of alleged child abuse or maltreatment. Ss were asked to make initial judgments and recommendations on the case. Then additional information or cues about the case were presented. There were significant differences among the three groups in their assessment of risk and recommendations for removal. There were also certain differences in the ways they selected information. Nonprofessionals tended to assess higher risk, recommend removal, and become influenced by information on physical abuse more than the other two groups.

Benbenishty, R., Segev, D., Surkis, T., & Elias, T. (2002). Information-search and decision-making by professionals and nonprofessionals in cases of alleged child-abuse and maltreatment. *Journal of Social Service Research, 28*(3), 1-18.

Abuse and Witnessing Abuse Linked With Negative Outcomes in Adolescence

This study examined the correlates of four types of adverse experiences with a large sample (N=17,465) of adolescents from a Midwestern county. The four types of adverse experience were physical abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing the physical abuse of another person, and harassment by peers at school. The three outcomes of interest were binge drinking, self-reported grade point average (GPA), and feelings of sadness and depression. Among both males and females, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and witnessing physical abuse were associated with binge drinking, feelings of sadness and depression, and lower GPA, whereas harassment by peers was associated with feelings of sadness and depression.

Luster, T., Small, S. A., Lower, R. (2002). The correlates of abuse and witnessing abuse among adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(12), 1323-1340.

Measure of Parental Disciplinary Behavior

This paper outlines a daily self-observation measure of parental disciplinary behavior in the form of a diary. Researchers randomly assigned 119 women with a child between the ages of 18 months and 4 years to either an assessment-only comparison condition or a 16-week program to teach parenting skills. This self-monitoring instrument offered data on the

overall feelings and disciplinary behaviors used daily following each session on parenting group interventions. Results show a gradual decrease in physical punishment and a gradual increase in planned ignoring across treatment, as these were introduced as part of an ongoing curriculum. The use of an explicit technique, such as timeout, increased abruptly rather than gradually and effects were seen only after specific instruction. Advantages and future applications of this kind of ongoing self-observation measure of treatment progress are described.

Peterson, L., Tremblay, G., Ewigman, B., & Popkey, C. (2002). The parental daily diary: A sensitive measure of the process of change in a child maltreatment prevention program. *Behavior Modification, 26*(5), 627-647.

OTHER ISSUES IN CHILD MALTREATMENT

Maltreatment-Related PTSD Associated With Adverse Brain Development

In this study, 28 psychotropic-naive children and adolescents with maltreatment-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 66 sociodemographically-similar healthy control subjects underwent comprehensive clinical assessments and anatomical MRI brain scans. Compared with control subjects, subjects with PTSD had smaller intracranial, cerebral, and prefrontal cortex, prefrontal cortical white matter, and right temporal lobe volumes and areas of the corpus callosum and its subregions, and they had larger frontal lobe cerebrospinal fluid volumes than control subjects. These data provide further evidence to suggest that maltreatment-related PTSD is associated with adverse brain development. These data also suggest that male children may be more vulnerable to these effects.

De Bellis, M. D., Keshavan, M. S., Shifflett, H., Iyengar, S., Beers, S. R., Hall, J., & Moritz, G. (2002). Brain structures in pediatric maltreatment-related posttraumatic stress disorder: A sociodemographically matched study. *Biological Psychiatry, 52*(11), 1066-1078.



cont'd on page 18

Psychometric Properties of a Newly Developed Measure of Parent Support

A newly developed measure of guardian support, the Needs-Based Assessment of Parental (Guardian) Support (NAPS), an empirical evaluation of that measure, and its comparison with another measure of guardian support are presented. The study employed a cross-sectional, nonexperimental survey design using 183 nonoffending guardians (NGs) who accompanied children presenting for a medical-forensic examination for sexual abuse. The NAPS and an existing measure of guardian support were administered during the hospital outpatient visit, and basic information about the child and abuse characteristics were gathered. The authors concluded that the NAPS had robust psychometric properties and was culturally sensitive. Tests of specific hypotheses supported the construct validity of the measure and the conceptualization of guardian support as hierarchical, with four stages of support. The brevity and ease of administration of the NAPS for both the clinician and guardian suggest that it is a viable assessment tool.

Bolen, R. M., Lamb, J. L., & Gradante, J. (2002). The Needs-Based Assessment of Parental (Guardian) Support: A test of its validity and reliability. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26(10), 1081-1099.

Longitudinal Study Examines Risk and Protective Factors Among Children in Foster Care

The current study examined protective and vulnerability factors in a longitudinal study of youth placed in foster care. A cohort of 214 ethnically-diverse youth, ages 7 to 12 years old, were recruited for the study if they had been in foster care for at least 5 months. Youth and their caregivers were interviewed and assessed approximately 6 months following their initial placement (Time 1) and again 6 years later (Time 2). Bivariate analyses indicated that several Time 1-control variables (e.g., age, ethnicity, type of maltreatment, behavior problems) and Time 1-psychosocial predictor variables (i.e., dimensions of social support and self-perception) were related to the Time 2-risk behavior outcomes. Regression analyses with all variables accounted for 33% to 46% of the variance, with the psychosocial predictor variables, as a group, significant over and above the control variables. The results suggest that there are some modifiable protective and vulnerability factors present shortly after maltreated youth are placed in foster care that predict their engagement in adolescent risk behaviors 6 years later.

Taussig, H. N. (2002). Risk behaviors in maltreated youth placed in foster care: A longitudinal study of protective and vulnerability factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26(11), 1179-1199.

Child Abuse and Interparental Violence Associated with Violence in Adulthood

This study explored whether exposure to physical victimization and interparental violence additively or interactively increased risk for adulthood (a) child abuse perpetration, (b) partner abuse perpetration, or (c) partner abuse victimization. These hypotheses were tested in a nationally representative data set comprising 6,002 participants (aged 18 yrs or older). Dually exposed, compared with singly exposed, women had significantly increased risk for adulthood family violence. Frequency of family-of-origin violence predicted adulthood child and partner abuse through both main and interactive effects.

Heyman, R. E., & Slep, A. M. (2002). Do child abuse and interparental violence lead to adulthood family violence? *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 64(4), 864-870.



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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Thomas Birch, JD

CHILD WELFARE AGENDA IN THE NEW CONGRESS: SAME AS LAST YEAR

The new 108th Congress convened on January 7, 2003, and the first order of business was the passage of yet another continuing resolution to keep federal agencies funded while legislators work out the details in the appropriations bills still to be enacted for fiscal year 2003, now into its second quarter. The appropriations predicament strikes the theme for much of the congressional agenda in the coming months: The agenda for the 108th Congress is full of unfinished business from the 107th. In the child welfare column, legislative work continues on child care, child abuse and neglect, and welfare reform.

Appropriations: With the passage on January 7 of the ninth continuing resolution for FY03, Congress bought time until January 31 to close the deal on the 2003 federal budget. Last year, Congress managed to pass only two of the thirteen appropriations bills for FY03: defense and military construction.

For the rest of this year, the deal on domestic discretionary program spending looks mean. The White House budget plan for 2003 appropriations, virtually adopted by the Republican-controlled appropriations committees in the House and Senate, is expected, at best, to hold spending at the 2002 levels in most instances. With the President's spending priorities aimed at fighting terrorism abroad, protecting the homeland, and preparing for war with Iraq, discretionary funds are one of the few areas in which Congress can cut to increase spending in other areas.

Child Abuse: The reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is back on the agenda. Last year, the House passed legislation to continue the program authority for CAPTA, and the Senate approved a bill in committee, but negotiations broke down when Republicans and Democrats on both sides of the Hill were unable to agree on a couple of new program riders in the legislation unrelated to provisions in CAPTA (see following paragraphs for details).

TANF: The Republican majority in the House approved legislation last year to extend the federal welfare reform legislation—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)—first enacted in 1996. The Senate's Democratic majority crafted a bill approved by the Finance Committee but never voted on the Senate floor. Not surprisingly, the House's TANF legisla-

tion was in close agreement with the President's welfare plan; the Senate's was not.

This year, President Bush is pushing for quick passage of a welfare reform bill that embodies the changes he wants to see in the system: stricter work requirements, including a 40-hour work week; no increases in child care subsidies for working welfare mothers (in fact, \$1 billion less than the House approved in 2002); promotion of stable marriages in households receiving TANF support; a funding freeze for basic welfare grants to states; and restriction of flexibility in work requirements, making it more difficult for TANF recipients to count education hours as work time.

TANF has become an increasingly important source of funding for states to supplement child welfare spending. The federal welfare law allows states to transfer up to 10 % of their TANF block grant into spending for the purposes of the Title XX, Social Services Block Grant.

The House Ways and Means Committee expects to have a TANF reauthorization bill to the floor by March, but without consideration by committee members. In the Senate, Finance Committee chair Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) is working with committee members to introduce a bill soon.

Child Care: Funding for child care included in the TANF legislation last year differed significantly between the House and Senate. Advocates support efforts to increase child care funds by at least \$11 billion over 5 years. Increased funds would provide more child care services to more families; currently, only one in seven eligible children receives child care assistance. The White House favors level funding for child care with no increase.

CAPTA REAUTHORIZATION BILL INTRODUCED IN HOUSE, AGAIN

CAPTA reauthorization is on track in the 108th Congress. On January 7, 2003, the first day of the legislative session of the new Congress, Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) introduced H.R.14, the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, to reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

The Hoekstra bill—cosponsored by Reps. John Boehner (R-OH), Jim Greenwood (R-PA), Tom DeLay (R-TX), and George Miller (D-CA)—incorporates most of the language agreed upon during the House-Senate staff negotiations late last year, embodied in H.R.5601, which Hoekstra introduced and the House passed in October 2002. cont'd on page 20

The new Hoekstra bill, H.R.14, includes many of the provisions adopted in the original measures passed by the House and approved in Senate committee last year:

Direct basic state grant funding to improve the CPS system through attention to case management; training, supervision, recruitment and retention of caseworkers, and the improved reporting of suspected child maltreatment.

Support the development of linkages between CPS and health, mental health, and developmental services to improve attention to the needs of abused and neglected children.

Focus CAPTA's Title II on the prevention of child abuse and neglect through support for community-based services to families.

Continue the authority for CAPTA programs through 2008, with slight increases in authorized funding levels—CAPTA basic state grants and discretionary grants would have a combined authorization at \$120 million (FY02 appropriations equal \$48 million); CAPTA Title II community-based grants would be authorized at \$80 million (FY02 appropriation equals \$33 million).

H.R.14 also amends and reauthorizes the Adoption Opportunities Act, the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

The House bill may go to the floor for a vote before the end of January. Legislation is expected to be considered in the Senate in February—again, following much along the lines of last year's bill.

RECORD DEFICITS PREDICTED FOR U.S. TREASURY

Two years ago, when President Bush took office, the federal treasury was flush, with budget surpluses running over \$5 trillion projected for the next 10 years. In 2001, Bush pushed through a tax cut that, along with a sluggish economy, reduced the surplus down to about \$1 trillion. Now, with the President campaigning for more tax cuts, some economists and Wall Street financial analysts predict that a federal deficit, in place of a surplus, may reach the highest levels we've ever had, estimated to exceed \$350 billion in 2004.

The actual size of the tax cuts and the price to pay in deficits are still unknown as the debate begins. Some Republican Senators like Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, both of Maine, and Rhode Island's Lincoln Chafee are already raising objections to President Bush's \$670 billion tax cut proposal. Sen. George Voinovich (R-OH) is reported to urge fellow lawmakers to focus more on eliminating the federal deficit instead of decreasing revenues through tax cuts.

However the President's tax proposals fare in Congress this year, appropriators on Capitol Hill are already looking to hold the line on spending. It will be a tough assignment for child welfare advocates or budgetary moderates in the legislature to achieve any increased spending in 2003 above the 2002 levels. With both House and Senate in control of the President's party, spending agreements are expected to be more in line with recommendations from the White House.

What's more, the House Republican leadership has taken control of appointing appropriations subcommittee chairs and dictating legislative spending decisions. Although there may not be an immediate wholesale reassignment of the leadership on the subcommittees, appropriators are on notice that the House Republican Steering Committee is supervising their work from now on.

SUPREME COURT REJECTS BAR TO JUVENILE EXECUTIONS

On October 21, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, declined to consider the constitutionality of juvenile executions in turning down the appeal of Kevin Stanford, a death row inmate in Kentucky sentenced for a crime committed at age 17.

The four dissenters in the case—Justices John Paul Stevens, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen Breyer—argued for an end to the “shameful practice” in an opinion written by Justice Stevens. They contended that the court should apply the same reasoning to prohibiting the execution of juveniles that the court used earlier this year in barring the execution of mentally retarded persons as cruel and unusual punishment. In that case, the majority opinion held that mentally retarded criminals have limited capacity to understand the import of their crimes and would not be deterred by the threat of execution.

In 1989, the court ruled that execution is permitted for those who are age 16 or 17 when they commit capital crimes. The Supreme Court's majority seems oblivious to a national trend against applying the death penalty to defendants under 18, the law now in 38 states. Five of those states voted to bar the execution of juveniles following the court's 1989 ruling to uphold the practice.

For more information about the Stanford case and the execution of juveniles, see the website of the American Bar Association: <http://www.abanet.org/crimjust/juvjus/juvdp.html>

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