Family Reconnection & Reunification after Child Sexual Abuse: A Road Map for Advocates & Other Service Providers

Who’s in the room?
Sexual Assault Across the Lifespan: Training and Technical Assistance Project

Advocates
Law enforcement officers
Medical Professionals
Prosecutors

How can we help?

The Lifespan Project team is ready to serve you through:

• Training/technical assistance
• Resource creation
• Trauma-informed resource creation/promotion
• Networking, collaboration, and referrals
• Feel Good Tumblr
Professionals who collaborate with the other systems see better case outcomes. It can lead to a healing experience for the survivor. Talking with other members of your community’s response team will help you find the cracks in the system that many people slip through.

Our Resources

www.nsvrc.org/projects/lifespan

Feel good.

nsvrc.tumblr.com
Family Reconnection & Reunification

Definitions

- Clarification (3, 9)
- Reconnection
- Reunification (6)
Why should I care?

- Family wants connection
- Planning increases control
- Supports increase safety & healthy outcomes
- Social media – increases likelihood of contact

Important Concerns

- Abusive person’s ability to control behaviors
- Family’s ability to support & reinforce change
- The risk of re-victimization;
- Interests of victimized child
- Access to supportive resources
We are all impacted

- 1 in 4 girls; 1 in 6 boys (7)
- Life long consequences
- Fear immobilizes families
- Self-awareness can help our response

Cultural Considerations

- Multiple cultural influences in any family
- Positive or negative history with services
- Unique support options
- Awareness of biases
What do we know?
People who sexually abuse children

- Who are they?
- Impact of treatment?
- Person-first language

Who are they?
Who are they?
Who are they?

- 34% are family (10)
- 59% are known to the victim (10)
- Majority are male (10)
- 30-50% are children or teens (2,8)
Impact of Treatment

- Not one-size-fits all (3)
- Children and teens respond well to treatment (1,4)
- Males who sexually abuse outside of the family have highest recidivism rates (5)

Person-first language

Using person-first language:
- “avoids defining them solely by that experience. It asks us to consider that people can change, heal and grow, and develop new, healthier identities. Person-first language demands hope.” (11)
Five Possible Steps to Reconnection and/or Reunification (11)

- Clarification (3,9)
- Reconnection
- Reunification (6)

The person who abused does not take full responsibility

- Treatment for Everyone
- Assessment of Readiness
- Clarification
- Safety Planning
- Reconnection and/or Reunification

Family, person who abused, or victim is not ready

Family, person who abused, or victim does not agree to conditions
Guiding Principles

- Everyone brings a unique set of assumptions and principles
- Every member of the community deserves to be safe
- Acknowledge the harm caused to everyone
- Use of a trauma-informed approach
- Follow current best practice standards
- Do no further harm
- A collaborative approach brings all perspectives to the table
- Interventions are culturally-informed and strength-based
- Increased protective factors for child and family

Brainstorm!

What are some circumstances where the following might come into play?

- Clarification
- Reconnection
- Reunification
Who’s at the table?

- Treatment provider
- Attorney
- Family therapist
- Judge
- Faith leaders
- Extended Family
- Advocates
- Child
- Person who abused
- Supervision officer
- Parent/caregiver
- Prophet
- School personnel
- Other caregivers
- Prosecutor
- Extended Family
- Child welfare worker

Who’s at the table?

- What are their interests?
- What are their strengths?
- How might the interests complement/conflict?
Scenario Activity

Small Group Discussion

• How challenging is your assigned role?
• Who will you feel aligned with?
• Who will you feel challenged by?
Debrief Small Groups

• What were your concerns?
• What do you see as family strengths?
• How did your group decide to proceed?

Additional Resources

Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers: http://www.atsa.com/

Center for Sex Offender Management: http://www.csom.org/


NEARI Press: http://www.nearipress.org/
Additional Resources

NSVRC Lifespan Project:
www.nsvrc.org/projects/lifespan

Resources for Resolving Violence:
http://tinyurl.com/ocr6r3r

Safer Society Foundation, Inc.:
http://www.safersociety.org/

Stop It Now!: http://www.stopitnow.org/

Questions?


How to contact the presenters

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