

Gail Ryan Tom Lerversee Sandy Lane

Third Edition

Juvenile Sexual Offending

**Causes, Consequences,
and Correction**

Gail Ryan Tom Leversee Sandy Lane

Third Edition

Juvenile Sexual Offending

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and Correction

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Gail Ryan
Thomas Leversee
Sandy Lane



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Includes index.

ISBN 978-470-53191-4 (pbk); 978-0-470-64669-4 (ebk); 978-0-470-64693-9
(ebk); 978-0-470-64694-6 (ebk)

1. Teenage sex offenders. I. Ryan, Gail. II. Leversee, Thomas III. Lane, Sandy L.
HV9067.S48J88 2010
364.36—dc22 2010005949

*This book is dedicated by the editors
to the memories of Fay Honey Knopp for
her shepherding of workers in this field,
Brandt F. Steele for his fostering and mentoring
of clinicians working in child protection,
and to the young clients who have struggled
with us to achieve understanding and change in
order to stop the multigenerational cycle of abuse.*

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank our family members for their support of our work, as well as our many colleagues throughout the field whose sharing and collaboration have contributed to 30 years of work in this field. The patience, nurturance, and good nature of those working with these troubled and troubling youth has enriched our professional experience and enabled the advances in knowledge and practice that are apparent in this text.

Members of the National Adolescent Perpetration Network, Directors of the Kempe Center, the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, the Kempe Foundation, and the Colorado Division of Youth Corrections have provided the opportunity and necessary support for this work.

Thanks to the following colleagues who reviewed this book and provided feedback:

Magdalena Linhardt
University of Maine, Augusta

Sandra M. Todaro
Bossier Parish Community College, Louisiana

The editors especially want to thank the chapter contributors for their work, Gerry Blasingame for his input updating the special population information regarding those youth with developmental disabilities, and David Prescott for help with references.

About the Editors

Gail Ryan, MA, is a Program Director at the Kempe Center for Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect in Denver, and retired from the University of Colorado School of Medicine in September 2005. She continues part-time as an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and is focusing on dissemination by teaching, writing, and training of trainers. She continues to teach a certificate course on treatment of juveniles who have sexually offended using this text. Ms. Ryan has worked at the Kempe Center since 1975, has worked with abusive parents and abused children, and provided offense-specific treatment for 11- to 17-year-old males who had molested children for 20 years, working with Jeffrey Metzner, MD. Her primary interests have been in the correlation between early life experience and dysfunctional behavior with an emphasis on prevention of the development of sexually abusive behavior in "at-risk" groups. She was awarded the National Adolescent Perpetration Network Leadership Award, 2000, The Faye Honey Knopp Award, 2003, and the Distinguished Practitioner ATSA Award, 2006. She is Director of the Kempe Perpetration Prevention Program; Facilitator, National Adolescent Perpetration Network; Facilitated the National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending (1987-1993), and is a Clinical Specialist for the Kempe Center's National Resource Center. Other publications include *Childhood Sexuality: A Guide for Parents*, and *Web of Meaning: A Developmental-Contextual Approach in Sexual Abuse Treatment*. She is currently instructing trainers to use the Kempe curriculum, *Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Perpetration Prevention in Childhood and Adolescence*, to train others in their own communities.

Tom Lerversee, LCSW, is an adjunct professor at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. He is a member of the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board and also provides consultation, training, and clinical services for at-risk youth. After 34 years of direct care, clinical, and administrative experience in the Colorado Division of Youth Corrections, Tom retired from his position as coordinator of sex offense-specific services in 2008. Tom was an Advisory member of the National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending (1987-1993), contributing to *The Preliminary Report from the National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending 1988* and the revised report in 1993. He is the author of the therapy curriculum and student manual *Moving Beyond Sexually Abusive Behavior* (NEARI Press), as well as several chapters and journal articles. Tom has extensive experience in providing clinical supervision, training, and workshops. He was awarded the National Adolescent Perpetration Network's "Pioneer Award" in 2005 for "21 years of unique contributions to prevent perpetration of sexual abuse."

Sandy Lane, BSN, was one of the pioneers in developing offense-specific treatment programming for the Colorado Division of Youth Services at the Closed Adolescent Treatment Center from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, and subsequently was clinical coordinator at RSA, Inc. (developing one of the largest outpatient offense-specific treatment agencies in Colorado) treating children, adolescents, and adults who sexually offended. She provided extensive consultation services for programs and therapists, and was appointed to the National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending from 1987-1993, and the Colorado Department of Corrections Therapeutic Community Advisory

Board in 1996. She was awarded a National Adolescent Perpetration Network's "Pioneer Award" in 2005 for "21 years of unique contributions to prevent perpetration of sexual abuse." She is currently retired, and has viewed this revision of the text as one last "fling."

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Jerry Thomas, M.Ed., has more than 40 years of experience working with children and families, served on the National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending (1986-1993), and contributed to the *Standards of Care For Youth In Sex Offense-Specific Residential Programs*. She and her son, Wilson Viar III, M.A., have worked together to author numerous textbook chapters on the importance of involving families in treatment. She was influential in pioneering child advocacy in Tennessee, and is particularly recognized for her expertise in creating and evaluating safety in child welfare settings. She has been a consultant and trainer in developing many offense-specific programs in the United States and abroad, and continues to provide expert testimony in institutional abuse cases since retiring. She is a recipient of the Beyond the Call Award, 2003, and the Faye Honey Knopp Award, NAPN 2005.

Introduction

Sexual offenses encompass a wide spectrum of behaviors in a variety of situations, victimizing many types of persons. Sexual aggression in the form of violent or sadistic rape has long been feared and punished, and other deviant sexual behaviors and paraphilias have been shunned and prohibited. Sexual deviance has generated many myths and misconceptions. In the past, sexual offenses often eluded report and recrimination because of the lack of accurate information and the reluctance of many cultures to discuss sexual issues. Juveniles who committed sexual offenses were often exempted from responsibility for their abusive sexual behaviors and many of their exploitive behaviors were considered "adolescent adjustment reactions" or "exploratory" stages of development.

As society has come to recognize the incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse, clinical work and research have illuminated the negative impacts of early sexual exploitation on the developing child. Legal, educational, and social service approaches have been mobilized to intervene on behalf of sexually abused children. Since the 1980s, the sexual abuse of children has been defined as criminal and perpetrators are now held accountable and punishable; mandatory reporting has been legislated to aid in earlier detection; prevention messages have sought to teach children to resist and report sexual victimization, and treatment programs have evolved to treat those who are abused and those who abuse them, and also their families. The primary prevention of sexual abuse, however, is dependent on eliminating the danger or potential of sexual exploitation by stopping sexual offending. Effective

intervention to prevent further offending by identified offenders and to prevent the development of offending by the next generation is ultimately the only proactive alternative in sexual abuse prevention. It is by asking the question, "Who are these sex offenders, and where do they come from?" that attention turns to children and adolescents who sexually abuse others.

Recognition that sexually abusive behaviors that begin in childhood or adolescence might continue into adulthood has led to the development of early intervention programs to address these behaviors immediately, in hopes of preventing both the victimization of others and the habituation of these behaviors. Programs for identified youth developed rapidly in the 1980s, adapting treatment strategies that were in use in adult programs, based on the belief that the adolescents who sexually offended were destined to become the adult offenders of the future, unless something interrupted that development.

As research has evolved through three decades, there is now much more known about juveniles who sexually offend, and much of the new knowledge is good news. Long-term follow-up studies continue to demonstrate much lower rates of sexual recidivism by juveniles than expected, and even less after participation in specialized treatment programs. The growing body of research and clinical knowledge has contributed to new models for understanding and responding to juvenile sexual offending, and thus necessitates the revision of this text. This third edition reveals dramatic discoveries and new approaches that were only foreshadowed in the 1997 edition.

It is now clear that many youth who commit sexual offenses in childhood or adolescence are more like other delinquents than like adult sexual offenders. Although some youth do have a "sexual deviance" problem that may

continue to pose a risk across the life span, for most, the sexually abusive behavior is much more about their capacity to be abusive and their failure to perceive and/or be responsible for the harmful effects of their behavior. The fact that most do not appear to be acting on pedophilic interest is good news, as is the fact that they can become both culpable and responsible for their sexual behavior when required to do so. Nonetheless, sexual abusers of all ages continue to be characterized by denial and minimization of their past and resistance to intervention.

Treatment is often most successful when court ordered rather than voluntary, and offense-specific treatment continues to employ some nontraditional approaches.

The largest portion of juvenile sexual offenses involve victimization or exploitation of significantly younger children, and lesser portions involve harassment or violent assaults on peers, adults, or strangers. Therefore, the primary focus throughout this text is on the sexual abuse of children, and issues of peer harassment, violent offenses, and various subgroups are addressed separately only when theory or practice differs significantly. Similarly, acknowledging that the common denominator is the abusive nature of the behavior, all types of abusive behaviors are addressed, and the sexual nature of the behavior is only one aspect of the problem to be addressed in offense-specific treatment.

Clinical work with these youth builds on traditional clinical training, and specialized training prepares clinicians to treat these youth in abuse-specific/sexual offense-specific programs. This text continues to address the need for comprehensive coursework to be provided in graduate schools, as well as postgraduate certificate programs, to support educational competency for those who work with sexually abusive youth and their families. The text describes

descriptive, qualitative, and empirical studies of the causes, consequences, and correction of juvenile sexual offending; suggests theoretical perspectives and clinical approaches; and creates an agenda for primary, secondary, and tertiary perpetration prevention strategies. The text is not designed to describe specific programs but to provide a base of knowledge to support decision making, program development, and case management by the multidisciplinary professionals involved in child protection, child welfare, mental/ behavioral health, and juvenile corrections. Supplemental reading in sexual abuse, child development, sexuality, delinquency, aggression, and clinical practice is recommended for clinicians specializing in the treatment of sexually abusive youth.

The book presents a developmental-contextual perspective by looking at sexuality, child development, deviance, dysfunction, risk, and resilience, as these things relate to sexually abusive behaviors. The consequences for the youth, for those they abuse, and the families of each are examined; also, the role and responsibility of parents and alternative care providers in supervision and health promotion are described. Legal issues are discussed, as well as the range of services needed to meet the needs of youth who have sexually offended.

New information included in this edition reflects the curiosity and the science that has informed the development of juvenile models, which are now substantially different from traditional adult models. Appreciation of the juvenile's capacity to change supports the risk reduction-health promotion models that are characteristic of these newer approaches. Using all available knowledge, current hypotheses hold the promise of significantly reducing the incidence and prevalence of sexual abuse in future generations.

Typology research now illuminates the diversity that exists in this population in regard to subtypes, duration of offending behaviors, clinical characteristics, etiology, social and interpersonal skills, relationships, and mental health issues. Differential treatment and supervision interventions are discussed that address the individualized needs of this diverse population.

Over the past 25 years, increasingly punitive legislative and policy responses to juveniles who have committed sexual offenses fail to reflect the research. Many of the popular beliefs, trends in adult sex offender management, and community reactions continue to be applied equally to juveniles who have committed sexual offenses. The dilemma this creates is described. The dissonance between what is known about this population and legislative and policy responses is discussed, with recommendations as to how communities might proceed.

The current state of the art in evaluation and ongoing assessment methodologies and protocols are presented. The increase in empirically supported risk assessment instruments is bringing the field closer to an actuarial instrument. Evaluation and ongoing assessment is discussed from the standpoint of both the science and the art.

This third edition reflects the tremendous strides in research on brain growth and development, and the impact of positive and negative life experiences on the brain. New knowledge has important implications in understanding normal adolescent development, juvenile culpability, and the impacts of neglect or trauma on the brain. The relevance of evidence-based treatment for trauma symptoms and other mental/ behavioral disorders is also discussed. In the "special populations" chapter, some new developments in meeting the special needs of children,

females, developmentally disabled, and violent youth who engage in sexually abusive behavior have been added. Drawing from the research to date, a number of well grounded hypotheses are suggested regarding primary and secondary perpetration prevention.

The good news is that the work with abusive and at-risk juveniles is a dynamic and evolving field. That can also be bad news when writing a book such as this. This text captures a "moment" in time in the field, yet even as the book goes to print, new developments continue to shape the "state of the art." The continuing evolution of knowledge informs the work, but underscores the need to be thoughtful and cautious about any intervention that might potentially cause harm. It is incumbent on the professionals working with these populations to continue to learn from the emerging research and literature.

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PART ONE

THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 1

Sexually Abusive Youth

Defining the Problem and the Population

GAIL RYAN

SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR has been defined as any sexual interaction with person(s) of any age that is perpetrated (a) against the victim's will, (b) without consent, or (c) in an aggressive, exploitive, manipulative, or threatening manner. It may involve one or more of a wide array of behaviors, and multiple paraphilias (more than one type of sexual deviancy) may be exhibited by a single individual. Molestation may involve touching, rubbing, disrobing, sucking, exposure to sexual materials, or penetrating behaviors. Rape may include any sexual act perpetrated with violence or force, although legal definitions often include penetration: oral, anal, or vaginal and digital, penile, or objectile. Hands-off offenses include exhibitionism (exposing one's genitalia); peeping or voyeurism (observing others without their knowledge or consent); frottage (rubbing against others); fetishism (such as stealing underwear, urinating on a victim, or masturbating in another's garments); and obscene communication (such as obscene telephone calls and verbal or written sexual harassment or denigration).

Definition of the acts that constitute sexual abuse cannot be approached in terms of behavior alone. Relationships,

dynamics, and impact must be considered because most of the behaviors could also be nonabusive. Definitions of rape relate primarily to force and lack of consent and often include penetration. In contrast, sexual harassment is not defined by behavior, but by the perception of unwelcome advances, words, or behaviors that cause someone to feel uncomfortable or unsafe. So the act of intercourse might be abusive or not, and what might be welcome flirting with one peer might be sexual harassment of another.

In evaluating the sexual abuse of children, when adults sexually abuse a child, age differential and behavior are adequate to define the problem. In contrast, when sexual interactions involve two juveniles, age and behavior identifiers may be inadequate definitions, and further evaluation is required.

It is clear that an older adolescent sodomizing a small child is sexual abuse, but as age differences narrow and the behaviors become less intrusive and/or less aggressive, the interaction and relationship between the two juveniles needs evaluation. In any sexual interaction, the factors that define the nature of the interaction and relationship, and define the presence or absence of abuse or exploitation are consent, equality, and coercion.

Consent as a legally defined construct is based on the perceived competence or culpability of juveniles. Even older adolescents are seldom considered competent or responsible for legal consent in important decisions. In sexual issues, state laws use arbitrary ages to define an "age of consent" for engaging in sexual relationships. The age differs from state to state, but is usually between 14 and 16. These laws are not based on any scientific evidence or understanding of human sexuality, but reflect the values of the community and were historically aimed at preventing the exploitation of youth by adults. In most cases, activities