



Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Section - 2014

I20 Sexual Abuse in Youth-Serving Organizations

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After attending this session, attendees will be familiar with estimated rates of sexual abuse in different youth-serving organizations including the family, educational institutions, youth detention, as well as religious and volunteer organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Boy Scouts of America[®], and the Big Brothers Big Sisters[®] organizations. Attendees will better understand the dynamics of sexual abuse in the context of an on-going relationship of trust and the relevance of this behavior to understanding intervention and prevention strategies.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by presenting a topic that holds relevance to youth organizations, investigators, forensic experts, and attorneys as it impacts practice standards, criminal prosecution, and civil litigation.

In 2012, the Oregon Supreme Court ordered the release of 855 Ineligible Volunteer (IV) files that encompassed the submissions of "P" or perversion files to the Boy Scouts of America[®] (BSA) National Headquarters from local councils throughout the U.S. and internationally from January 1965 through June 30, 1984. These files had been central in the civil litigation against the BSA in Portland, Oregon, which resulted in an \$18.5 million punitive judgment against the organization for sexual abuse by scout leader, Timur Dykes, in the 1980s. The content of these files as summarized in the Warren Report and the relevance of this type of volunteer registry will be discussed along with other interventions that can be used by youth-serving organizations as part of their screening, intervention, and prevention efforts.¹

Numerous high-profile cases of sexual abuse by trusted individuals in a variety of youth-serving organizations have punctuated the problem of acquaintance child abuse and the intricacies of seduction, relatedness, and longevity which uniquely characterize this particular type of sexual exploitation. The hidden quality of these events, and the organizational commitments which serve as their platform, will be examined.

Earlier stereotypes of the overtly predatory sexual offender have proven inadequate and inaccurate, often camouflaging the more subtle dynamics in which on-going relationships are used to gain sexual access to children and adolescents. Our current understanding of these dynamics and the challenges they pose for identification and intervention within a wide array of youth-serving organizations will be the focus of this presentation with an eye toward creating a research platform for further study.

Reference:

1. **Warren Report Summary - Boy Scouts of America.**

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/youthprotection/pdf/WarrenReportSummary.pdf>

Sexual Abuse of Children, Youth Serving Organizations, BSA Ineligible Volunteer Files