



Greetings!

As the end of summer approaches, we bring to you our monthly research-to-practice article analysis by the esteemed David Prescott, LICSW, along-time friend to, and collaborator with, NEARI Press and Training Center. He offers clear and insightful take-away implications for the field from the new article, "Changes in J-SOAP-II and SAVRY Scores over the course of residential, cognitive-behavioral treatment for adolescent sexual offending" by Jodi L. Viljoen and colleagues.

We're proud to announce, **below**, our new, [FREE 2017-18 Webinar Series](#) beginning in September. This year, we will be collaborating with MASOC to bring you two presentations focused on applying cultural competence to your work with youth and other clients of color and from ethnic backgrounds that may be different than yours. We will also be collaborating with the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth (NCSBY) to bring you a "mini-series" within our webinar series that offers that organization's cutting-edge teachings on clinical assessment and decision-making when working with children with problematic sexual behaviors. Further, after culling your requests from the last few years for training on particular topics, we bring you just what you asked for: webinars on working with LGBTQ+ youth with sexual behavior problems (SPBs), treatment for girls and young women with SPBs, practical resources for working with families of youth with SPBs, and an update on "What's New with Pornography." We look forward to seeing you on the webinars!

Please help us if you can to continue to offer our webinar series to clinicians and practitioners **for free** [by becoming a sponsor](#) of the webinar series. Besides helping to train the field, there are several benefits to becoming a sponsor, not least of which is publicity for your practice or organization. See **below** for the list of other benefits and how to sign up to be a sponsor.

Below, you'll also find a reminder to register for NEARI Press and Training Center's October 4-6, 2017 in-person training, ["Contemporary Practice in the Treatment of Sexually Abusive Youth"](#) with Dr. Phil Rich at the LaSalle School in Albany, NY. "Early bird" registration at the rate of \$395 lasts until September 8th, so please don't delay and register now! That's just over \$100 a day to get world-class training and expand your professional repertoire and expertise. To find out more and register, go to: <http://nearipress.org/certificate-program> or to register by phone, please contact Diane Langelier at 413.540.0712 x14 or email: info@nearipress.org. We have reserved a block of rooms at a reduced rate at a nearby hotel and look forward to hosting you there.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you about the articles, authors, and topics you'd like us to cover in the NEARI Newsletter, our webinars, and our in-

person trainings. Please contact Alisa at: aklein@neari.com if you have ideas and thoughts about the particular kinds of training you'd like to see NEARI Press and Training Center offer in the coming year.

Thank you for your interest in NEARI, and for the vital work that you do to keep children and adults safe from sexual harm,

Craig Latham, Executive Director, NEARI

Alisa Klein, Director, NEARI Press and Training Center

This month, David S. Prescott examines the article:

"Changes in J-SOAP-II and SAVRY Scores Over the Course of Residential, Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment for Adolescent Sexual Offending"

AUTHORS

Jodi L. Viljoen, Andrew L. Gray, Catherine Shaffer, Natasha E. Latzman, Mario J. Scalora, □ and Daniel Ullman
(Please see below for full citation and abstract.)

THE QUESTION

Do changes in risk scores equal less re-offending?

THE RESEARCH

The authors rightly note that, although there have been many studies of risk and risk factors among people of all ages who have abused, little research has focused on changes in risk. Granted, risk assessment measures are not the same as measures of treatment need and progress, and were never designed for all purposes. Simply put, risk assessment measures such as the Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol – II (JSOAP—II) and the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) were created to assess risk, but not necessarily how risk changes in response to treatment and changes in circumstances. Indeed, other measures have been devised for that purpose, although they have received considerably less study.

To examine change in scores, the authors studied 163 youth who had sexually abused and subsequently attended a residential, cognitive-behavioral treatment program for sexual offending. In this paper, the authors provide an overview of many complexities in asking the seemingly straightforward question of whether changes in scores actually mean reduced re-offense rates. They offer many reasons why this question is more complicated than it seems, including measurement error in the scales themselves and the potential role of protective factors (i.e. those factors that mitigate risk). Indeed, this is one of the first studies to examine protective factors among adolescents who have sexually abused.

For purposes of this study, the authors chose a decrease of eight points on the JSOAP—II and the dynamic (in other words: changeable) factors of the SAVRY as a kind of proxy for reduced risk, more properly known as a *reliable change index*. This information will be more useful for those trained and skilled in these measures, as their use is far from a straightforward process.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In line with other recent studies, the authors found a rate of sexual re-offense of 3.1 percent after two years. Further, they found that, contrary to their expectations, decreases in risk factors and increases in protective factors did not predict reduced sexual, violent nonsexual, or any reoffending. Further, the authors examined scores on the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (PCL:YV) and found no associations between scores on the levels of change. They concluded that overall, the J-SOAP-II and the SAVRY hold promise in measuring change, but further research is needed. Interestingly, the authors found that several of the admission scores were stronger predictors of re-offense than the same clients' scores at discharge.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Professionals need to be very cautious with existing measures. The importance of the advent of risk assessment measures to assist in placement and treatment decisions cannot be over-estimated. However, it is vital to situate results in the context in which they occur. For example, it may be that risk that decreases during treatment may simply rebound again when the youth re-enters the same community.

We need to be very humble about our findings, both in assessments and in making decisions about placement and treatment. These findings, like so many others, call to mind that first-rate assessment reports include clear discussion of the limitations of their findings, while second-rate assessments simply express confidence.

It may be time to incorporate other measures. In other words, reducing risk in one environment and time frame is not the same as producing actual "transformation" from a past state of being to a new one. Adolescents are highly dependent not only on their environments and peer groups, but also on how they understand and make meaning of their lives. To this end, other measures and assessments may become necessary, such as tracking overall well-being, trauma-related symptoms, etc.

Questions about sub-populations, such as adolescents on the autism spectrum, remain. Even the best measures cannot account for every individual.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

Kids change. Period. Once again, this study shows that far fewer youth with histories of sexually abusing others persist in causing sexual harm. These findings should, in all reasonable discussions, no longer be considered controversial.

We may know less about how people change than we think. It seems logical that if one ameliorates their risk factors through treatment, this should translate into less re-offending. Even among a sample of 163 youth, this effect could not be found.

There is lots of noise in the system. Again, no risk assessment measure can account for the environments and communities that adolescents will enter after treatment.

It seems cliché to say it, but we really do need much more research. Every study seems to make this point, but in this case, it is particularly true. It takes a lot of young people to actually study recidivism!

ABSTRACT

Although the Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol–II (J-SOAP-II) and the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) include an emphasis on dynamic, or modifiable factors, there has been little research on dynamic changes on these tools. To help address this gap, we compared admission and discharge scores of 163 adolescents who attended a residential, cognitive-behavioral treatment program for sexual offending. Based on reliable change indices, one half of youth showed a reliable decrease on the J-SOAP-II Dynamic Risk Total Score and one third of youth showed a reliable decrease on the SAVRY Dynamic Risk Total Score. Contrary to expectations, decreases in risk factors and increases in protective factors did not predict reduced sexual, violent nonsexual, or any reoffending. In addition, no associations were found between scores on the Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version and levels of change. Overall, the J-SOAP-II and the SAVRY hold promise in measuring change, but further research is needed.

CITATION

Viljoen, J.L., Gray, A.L., Shaffer, C., Latzman, N.E., Scalora, M.J., & Ullman, D. (2017). Changes in J-SOAP-II and SAVRY Scores over the course of residential, cognitive-behavioral treatment for adolescent sexual offending. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 29, 342-374.

[NEARI Newsletter Past Issues](#)



U.S. Senate Passes Bipartisan Bill to Update the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)

On August 1, the U.S. Senate approved by unanimous consent Senate Bill 860 - the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Reauthorization Act of 2017. In late May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a similar bill, HR1809 - "The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017," and after conferencing on the bills and coming to agreement, the reauthorization can be signed into law. Most recently reauthorized in 2002, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDP) is currently ten years overdue for reauthorization.

Senate Bill 860 updates and improves the JJDP which was designed to:

- Protect children and youth in the juvenile and criminal justice systems;
- Address high-risk behaviors of youth;
- Improve community safety;
- Set national standards for the custody and care of youth in the justice system; and
- Provide direction and support for state youth justice system improvements.

S. 860 strengthens the JJDP by giving clear direction to states and local

jurisdictions to:

- Plan and implement data-driven approaches that reduce racial and ethnic disparities and ensure fairness;
- Allow for easier transfer across school systems of education credits earned by systems-involved youth; and
- Ensure that programs and practices designed for systems-involved youth are both evidence-based and trauma-informed.



NEARI Press and Training Center Invites You To an In-Person Training
Conducted by Dr. Phil Rich, Ed.D., MSW

Contemporary Practice in the Treatment of Sexually Abusive Youth: A 3-Day Course

Wednesday-Friday, October 4-6, 2017

THIS THREE-DAY training course is for clinicians and case managers at all levels of experience working with sexually abusive youth, although the course does not cover basic tools and principles of treatment for sexually abusive behavior. Instead, the course is designed to ensure clinicians and case managers understand current perspectives and practices in treatment, and experience an opportunity to build a strong and current knowledge base for best practice. The course will cover much, including the centrality of the therapeutic alliance and the importance of a collaborative treatment environment, and reviews and discusses clinical approaches and strategies for developing meaningful treatment goals, building effective treatment alliances, and delivering treatment at the individual, group, and family level.

DAY 1 Contemporary Treatment Ideas, Principles, and Practice

DAY 2 From Risk Assessment to Treatment

DAY 3 Treatment in Action



PHIL RICH is a consultant and trainer specializing in work with sexually abusive youth. He holds a doctorate in applied behavioral and organizational studies and a master's degree in social work. He was the Clinical Director of the

Stetson School for 13 years, a residential treatment program for sexually reactive children and adolescent and young adult sexual offenders in Massachusetts. Phil is the author of several books that address work with sexually abusive youth, including NEARI Press's widely-utilized and much-lauded Stages of Accomplishment series.

Continuing Education Credits

Continuing Education Credits (CEs) are available through Orlando Behavior Health Services LLC for:
Psychologists
Social workers
NY LMSW and NY LCSW licensees

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Location: LaSalle School, Albany, NY

Cost: \$450.00;

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2018

- JANUARY 16 **Gaining Multicultural Competence as a Sex Offender Treatment Provider**
Presented by Alejandro Leguizamo, Ph.D.

Webinar "Mini-Series" presented by the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

- FEBRUARY 13 **Clinical Assessment of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior: An Overview**
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Presented by Erin Taylor, Ph.D., Psychological Clinician
- APRIL 10 **Clinical Decision Making in Cases of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior**
Presented by Shel Millington, M.A., L.P.C., PSB-CBT Trainer and Amanda Mitten, M.A., L.P.C., PSB-CBT Trainer
- MAY 15 **Growing Beyond: Working with Teenage Girls with Sexual Behavior Problems**
Presented by Susan L. Robinson, LICSW
- JUNE 12 **Working with LGBTQ Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems**
Presented by Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW

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Seeking Parent Stories for Our [Parent 2 Parent Project!](#)

DO YOU WORK WITH parents and other caregivers of children and youth with sexual behavior problems? If so, and if you think they might be willing to share their

stories with us to inform development of resources and help them and other families, please refer them to our Parent 2 Parent project.

Parents and caregivers can participate anonymously and confidentiality by completing [a short survey](#) and/or being part of a focus group over the phone with other parents. Participants will receive a \$10 gift card to Amazon.com as a thank you for their work with us. Clinicians who refer parents to us will also receive a gift from NEARI Press – a choice of one of three of our books.

[Please visit our Parent 2 Parent webpages for more information](#) or email Krysten Lobisch, Project Coordinator: klobisch@neari.com.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PARENT 2 PARENT

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By: David S. Prescott, LICSW
Duration: 3-4 hours; CE Credits: 4

[Stopping Sexual Abuse Through Intervention with Sexually Abusive Youth](#)

By: Steve Bengis, Ed.D., L.C.S.W.
Duration: 4-5 hours; CE Credits: 5

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Year	Month	Topic	Presenter
2017	SEPTEMBER 12	Cultural Competence in Our Field: The Why, the What, the Where	Presented by Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW
	OCTOBER 17	What's New with Pornography?	Presented by Cordeita Anderson, MA
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JUNE 12	Working with LGBTQ Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems	Presented by Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW	

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