



ATSA

for the forum

Michael H. Miner, Ph.D.
Forum Editor

Challenging the ATSA Membership to Really "Make Society Safer"

By **Cory Jewell Jensen, M.S.**
Center for Behavioral Intervention
Beaverton, Oregon



Cory Jewell Jensen

Last year, the PTA President from my son's elementary school asked if I would speak to our parents' group about child abuse and sex offenders. I told her I didn't think the kind of material that I typically covered would be appropriate for "normal people" but that I would think about it. That same week, I spoke to a group of child abuse investigators. At the end of the talk I faced the same questions from participants. As usual, several people asked me how they could do a better job of protecting their own children. We agreed that, despite the fact that most children

are molested by someone they love and/or by someone who is both determined and skilled, too many people still believe that children can protect themselves. The discussion turned to the absurdity of school based prevention programs that continue to rely on the "Say No, Go Tell" format developed in the early '80s and recent findings that school based prevention programs have not impacted the rate of child abuse and have minimal impact on reporting. The group also complained about the increasing level of community fear, misconceptions about sex offender treatment effectiveness and recidivism, the "lock 'em up" mentality, reactions to community notification and lack of pro-active community education. I left the talk feeling tired and frustrated.

During the drive home, I started thinking about the number of child abuse cases CBI had been involved with during the past couple of months. The child abuse evaluation center in Portland, Oregon had just announced that they had evaluated and treated more children for abuse during the previous month than they had in 10 years. The Director had lamented that they were far over budget and were preparing for cuts. I tried to tally how much prevention training programs for parents of young children would cost in comparison to the pain and cost of sexual victimization. I also thought about how I spend my professional time and the potential value of involvement in prevention efforts. I reflected on the good work of people like Fran Henry who has continually urged

Continued on page 2



Inside This Issue

State Chapter Update	3
Letter to the Editor	4
Clinicians' Corner	6
Board News	7
CSOM	8
Book Review	9
ATSA T-Shirts Available	10
Career Opportunities	10
New Members	11



Association for the
Treatment of Sexual Abusers
4900 S.W. Griffith Drive
Suite 274
Beaverton, OR 97005
Voice: 503.643.1023
Fax: 503.643.5084
E-mail: atsa@atsa.com
Web: www.atsa.com



Continued from page 1

us to connect with other professional groups and begin focusing on sexual abuse from a public health stance. I decided to do the talk for my school.

The following day I called the PTA President and agreed to develop a presentation for parents. I revamped my outline, scaled down my video clips, threw out some of the bad jokes and prepared a prevention handout to accompany the talk. I con-

“Parents, not children, are ultimately responsible for protection and reporting child abuse and parents need to take that responsibility seriously...”

tacted our local child abuse center and my favorite victim treatment specialist and had them look over my outline and prevention material. We talked about the specific deficits in prevention programs and added information about how child molesters operate. We focused on sexual abuse being a “process rather than an act” and the ways in which children become entangled in the relationship and reluctant to report. I included information about why

people sexually abuse children and some of the methods used to select, desensitize and seduce children and their caretakers while maintaining silence and avoiding detection. I also included information about how child molesters are able to gather support in the community and the impact of such behavior on child victims and their families. I added information about responding to a child’s disclosure, a list of “possible” offender traits and supervision tips.

After the material was finished, the “Protecting Your Children From Sexual Abuse: A Workshop for Parents” was previewed by the principal, school counselor and a couple of parents. I hooked up with our school’s prevention specialist, “Officer Craig”, prior to scheduling the presentation for the parent association. Almost 100 parents and teachers showed up to hear “Officer Craig” and me talk. The group listened intently, took notes and had a number of meaningful questions. I used a clip from Anna Salter’s video “Truth, Lies and Sex Offenders” to show just how normal child molesters can appear and how easily they can fool us. I also used a couple of other clips from television documentaries showing offenders talking about the process of grooming, the way they view sexual contact between children and adults and, how they “got away with it”. After the information about child molesters, we reviewed the prevention program used by our school and talked about how parents need to supplement the training with

family talks and close supervision. We underscored that parents, not children, are ultimately responsible for protection and reporting child abuse and parents need to take that responsibility just as seriously as they lock up the cleaning supplies, teach their kids to swim and avoid playing with guns. We also told them that they needed to be willing to entertain suspicions about people they know and to act on their concerns and restrict those people’s access to their children. Restricting access to pornography or homes where pornography is available was also covered. In addition, the group discussed the importance of getting to know the people at whose homes their children play, not letting their kids walk home from school alone and assessing and checking up on babysitters. We also talked about the continuum of harm experienced by victims of sexual abuse and helped parents understand that many factors affect children’s ability to recover, including how parents react to disclosures. In the end, I was glad I agreed to do the talk. I am now in the process of developing community presentations in cooperation with several prevention programs, local school districts and law enforcement agencies.

After I started this “extra-curricular” community service, a colleague asked me how, between family, home and a 40-hour work week evaluating and treating sex offenders, I had found the time to do the talk for my school. I told her that I was growing increasingly frustrated by the mass of

child abuse cases and was starting to believe that our job carries an obligation to promote prevention efforts. Most of us have acquired a wealth of information that could be used to educate our communities. I know we all have too many cases and too few hours. However, my new charge invigorated me and helped me connect with a lot of other professionals in the community that I might never have met. It’s gone a long way to re-emphasize the need for cooperative networking in my community and encouraged others to become more active.

My point is that if each one of the 2,020 members of ATSA did one talk for one school, we’d be

“...I challenge each of you to take the time to connect with your local prevention program and develop a joint talk for your school.”

able to reach more than 200,000 parents and teachers. Who knows how many children might be better protected from abuse because of our efforts and how many sex offenders might be able to benefit from treatment earlier.

I will be willing to e-mail you my existing training outline, the prevention packet and a sample training announcement for you to



modify according to your specific community needs. My packet, "Protecting your Children from Sexual Abuse" includes sections on "Talking to your Children about Sexual Abuse", "What to Do If Your Child Gets Abused", "Safety

"Most of us have acquired a wealth of information that could be used to educate our communities."

Tips for Supervision of Children", "Sexual Development and Behavior Between Children", "Offender Traits" and "Factors that Place Children at a Higher Risk."

If you are interested in receiving the materials, e-mail your request to me at shjensen5@earthlink.net. Also, please indicate whether you want the files in Word or pdf format.

In closing, I challenge each of you to take the time to connect with your local prevention program and develop a joint talk for your school.

In her challenge to ATSA members to take individual action to make society safer by offering educational presentations to their local communities, Cory Jewell has outlined an excellent workshop that should serve as a starting point for members.

ATSA's Executive Board of Directors had the opportunity to review

Cory's presentation and we unanimously support her efforts. I have always personally admired Cory's determination to make the world a better place for children to grow up and her present proposal is yet another example she has set for the rest of us.

Each of us treats sexual offenders because we want to reduce the likelihood that they will, in the future, abuse another innocent victim. To do this effectively, we need the public to understand and support our efforts. Public education, then, should be a necessary part of the responsibility for all of us. In addition, educational programs for the community, like the one Cory has outlined, should better arm parents and other members of society with the understanding necessary to protect children from being abused. As treatment providers, ATSA members have considerably more knowledge about the relevant facts of sexual offending than do the rest of society. We are, therefore, ideally equipped to educate our fellow citizens and it is our responsibility to do so.

Educating the public, in the way Cory suggests, will not only aid parents and others in preventing sexual abuse, it may also create a climate that makes our work accepted as one part of the solution to this pervasive problem. I urge ATSA members to take up Cory's challenge and embark on educational programs in the communities in which each of you work.

William L. Marshall
President, ATSA

State Chapter Update

Michigan Chapter



Our third annual state conference was held in February 2000. Rob Freeman-Longo presented a two-day workshop on Clinical Issues in the Treatment of Adolescent Sex Offenders. In addition to the annual conference, we have had two general meetings since February. David Burton and Barbara Jones Smith presented on Risk Assessment in May. In September, Albert Sayed, M.D. presented on Psychiatric Disorders in Juvenile Offenders. The Board is putting together details of our next sponsored conference with Gail Ryan. This two-day training will take place in March 2001 in Ann Arbor. This should be another outstanding training opportunity: one full day with Gail and, the second day, a series of workshops by various presenters. In turning the leadership over to Phil Courtright, as the new Chapter president, it is anticipated that we will increase our membership, have further coordination with other professional organizations in the state, and tackle critical public policy issues.



To Contact the Forum

The Forum encourages ATSA members to submit material for publication. Brief articles (up to 1,500 words), clinical notes, commentary, policy discussions, etc. are all welcomed. When submitting such materials, be sure to include a diskette (any word processing format), along with submission, or else email as an attachment to your email submission note. To contact *The Forum* or to submit materials for publication, send to:

Michael H. Miner, Ph.D., Forum Editor
Program in Human Sexuality
University of Minnesota
1300 South Second Street, Suite 180
Minneapolis, MN 55454
Voice: (612) 625-1500 Email: miner001@maroon.tc.umn.edu
Deadline for the Spring, 2001 issue of *The Forum* is March 1.