

Section 5: Supervision

Use Slide #1: Community Supervision of Juvenile Sex Offenders

Introduction

The role of community supervision has long been recognized as critical within the juvenile justice system and, without question, a comprehensive approach for managing juvenile sex offenders relies heavily on supervision as well. For the next couple of hours, we're going to explore some key issues pertaining to the supervision of these youth. The material in this section is divided into three primary parts:

- A success-oriented supervision philosophy;
- Developing supervision plans; and
- Supervision strategies.

The information covered within each of these areas is informed in large part by the broader body of research and literature on justice-involved youth and, to some extent, by what is known about juvenile sex offenders specifically. It should be acknowledged, however, that most of the existing literature about juvenile sex offenders focuses on assessment and treatment, and very little has been written about supervising these youth within the community. So what we'll cover in this section also draws upon some noteworthy supervision practices with juvenile sex offenders that have emerged in jurisdictions across the country.

Goals

Use Slide #2: Goals

The goals of this section are to:

- Define what is meant by a "success-oriented" philosophy and approach to the supervision of juvenile sex offenders;
- Explain how to begin to develop comprehensive and individualized supervision plans for these youth;
- Highlight some specific strategies used for supervising juvenile sex offenders, including an emphasis on community support networks, specialized caseloads, and flexible responses to non-compliance; and
- Outline some of the ways in which multidisciplinary collaboration can enhance supervision efforts with this population.

Part I: A Success-Oriented Supervision Philosophy

Use Slides #3–4: A Success-Oriented Philosophy and Approach

Surveillance- and Punishment-Focused Approaches

You'll recall that earlier we discussed historical responses to youth within the juvenile justice system and how the proverbial pendulum has swung in recent years away from the traditional rehabilitative focus and toward a more punitive model that tends to treat youth like adults. And this movement applies to youth who have committed sex offenses. Indeed, many of the management strategies commonly used for adult sex offenders began to be used with juvenile sex offenders, often without consideration of the differences between adult and juvenile sex offenders and without recognition of important developmental issues.

From a supervision perspective specifically, this swing of the pendulum has meant that juvenile supervision strategies have focused primarily on close surveillance, monitoring compliance, and sanctioning youth when violations occur. In many ways, these supervision strategies are based on an expectation or assumption that "nothing works" with delinquent youth, and that they will continue getting in trouble regardless of the interventions provided to them. As such, the role of supervision officers was simply to watch youth closely, wait for them to fail, and then punish them again. Some in the field call this the "trail 'em, nail 'em, and jail 'em" approach to supervision.

How well do you think these more surveillance-oriented, sanctions-driven, or punishment-focused kinds of supervision approaches work?

Use Slides #5: Effectiveness of "Get Tough" Strategies

Let's look at what researchers have discovered in recent years when they examined this question.

As you can see, these types of strategies – including intensive probation and parole supervision with reduced caseloads to enhance surveillance and monitoring efforts, deterrence programs, the use of shock incarceration, boot camps, and scared straight interventions – are all associated with poorer outcomes and increases in juvenile recidivism.¹ This data teaches us a very important lesson about what happens when we focus primarily on surveillance, sanctioning, and the threat of punishment as the sole means of managing youthful offenders. By themselves, these methods do not produce the desired results.

Even though this data is not specific to juvenile sex offenders, it is very compelling nonetheless, given our discussions about how youth who commit sex offenses are – in many ways – similar to other juveniles involved in the justice system.

Use Slide #6: A Balanced Supervision Approach

Expanding the Focus of Supervision: Rehabilitation and Success

Within the juvenile justice field, therefore, there has been a renewed expansion of supervision and management strategies to include a focus on treatment and rehabilitative services – much like the original philosophies within the juvenile courts. This more balanced approach is built upon the philosophy that a critical part of working with youth is to assist them with becoming productive, contributing individuals. So, our work as probation and parole officers is not simply about making sure that they don't get into any more trouble – and sanctioning or punishing them if they do – but it is also about promoting their ultimate success.² After all, if they become successful and productive individuals, they are no longer harming others, right? Put simply, successful youth translates into safer communities.

Intuitively, a balanced approach that values success makes sense. Many of these juveniles have significant needs and difficulties that interfere with their ability to maintain healthy, pro-social lives in the community. For example, we commonly see substance abuse, family dysfunction, physical and sexual abuse, mental health problems, negative peer association, and school difficulties among them. Supervision officers will have to think about how they can ensure that these and other challenges and barriers are addressed. If officers focus on connecting youth and their families to resources that are designed to address these types of needs, in addition to ensuring that the youth are complying with expectations and are accountable for their behaviors, the chances of things working out well are probably going to be much greater.

So a more success-oriented approach to supervision and management makes good sense, but does the research actually support it?

Use Slide #7: Effectiveness of Rehabilitation and Success–Focuses Strategies

The answer is a resounding yes. As you can see, probation and parole supervision that is combined with treatment and other rehabilitative services – such as individual counseling, behavioral interventions, multiple services, advocacy and casework, and coordinated case management – is associated with positive outcomes and significant reductions in recidivism.³ Fortunately, with the recent trends toward evidence-based practices in the corrections and juvenile justice fields, we're seeing a return to a more balanced approach to community supervision, because that's what the evidence shows “works” with youthful offenders.

Use Slide #8: What Does it Mean to “Focus on Success?”

As you can probably imagine, a success-oriented philosophy requires supervision officers to think about their work in somewhat different ways. It doesn't mean that they don't

continue to enforce rules and expectations and hold youth accountable. And it doesn't mean that supervision officers are becoming "soft on crime" either, or that they are "coddling" youth. What it means is that they must also recognize the importance of specialized treatment needs, school-related issues, peer relations, family issues, and other challenges that may impact their overall stability and success, and work to ensure that these needs are addressed in a comprehensive and timely manner.⁴

The Importance of Collaboration and Working Closely with Treatment Providers and Other Key Stakeholders

All of this highlights that the successful community management of juvenile sex offenders – and the responsibilities that go along with it – cannot rest solely on the shoulders of supervision officers. There's no way that juvenile probation and parole officers can do it alone, regardless of how skilled, hard-working, and committed they are. As we mentioned in the Introduction section, multidisciplinary collaboration is critical for juvenile sex offender management – particularly in the context of community supervision.⁵

For those of you who are supervision officers, who might be some of your collaborative partners? Why are they important partners? And how can they support your supervision efforts as you work with youthful sex offenders?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES).

Use Slide #9: Potential Collaborative Partners

When working with juvenile sex offenders, multiple individuals and agencies can be valuable partners for supervision officers:

- Treatment providers
- Parents and caregivers
- Victim advocates
- School personnel
- Youth mentors
- Members of the faith community
- Other volunteers
- Employers

The stakeholders we've talked about here fall into two broad categories. First, there are "system actors," such as treatment providers who have clearly defined roles in the juvenile sex offender management process. And second, there are others whose roles may be more informal, such as parents or caregivers, school personnel, youth mentors, and members of the faith community.

In light of the data that indicates that our outcomes are much better when we combine supervision with treatment services, let's spend a few minutes talking specifically about collaboration between supervision officers and specialized treatment providers. A little later on, we'll discuss the development of community support networks that include individuals such as parents and school representatives. Here are some specific ways that officers can partner with treatment providers to support a rehabilitation-focused or success-oriented philosophy to managing juvenile sex offenders.⁶

 **Use Slide #10: Implications for Supervision Officers**

- First and foremost, juvenile supervision officers can take on the role of a case manager. Perhaps more than anyone else in the system, they come to know these youth and their families very well, and they also tend to be familiar with the various programs, services, and resources in the community. As such, they can be an excellent referral source and service broker, and can serve as the critical link between community treatment providers and the youthful sex offenders and their families. In addition, because of their role in the juvenile court or juvenile justice system, supervision officers have the unique ability to bring together all of the other important stakeholders for case planning purposes.
- Once treatment needs are identified and appropriate referrals have been made, supervision officers should make every effort to communicate with treatment providers on an ongoing basis to stay abreast of the progress (or lack thereof) of the youth on their caseloads. Officers in some jurisdictions convene regular case staffings to share information with providers about client improvements and challenges, and to problem solve around tough cases. This is also important because what a supervision officer sees during a home visit or a routine office contact, for example, may be very different from what the treatment provider sees in the treatment setting. And some of the information that is obtained during those respective contacts may be important and helpful information for the other professionals involved in the case.
- Another strategy that supervision officers employ is to take a direct role in supporting juveniles' participation in treatment. If officers are clear from the get-go with the youth and their families that they expect regular attendance and that they will have frequent communications with therapists about how things are going, it sends a strong message about how important treatment is. They can have discussions with youth about what they are working on in treatment and can follow up with them to ensure that their treatment homework is completed. In addition to giving supervision officers a helpful window into the clinical work that is taking place, this can also provide them with opportunities to help youth practice what they are learning in treatment when they encounter "real world" difficulties or challenges.
- Being maximally supportive of specialized treatment requires supervision officers to be familiar with and understand what treatment is all about. To accomplish this, some officers visit treatment programs to observe the treatment process and to talk with the providers about where the youth whom they are supervising "are" in the treatment process. And at the same time, this sends a clear message to the youth that the supervision officer and the

treatment provider are part of a team, which can help reduce the potential for “splitting” or triangulation. You should be aware, however, that the practice of having supervision officers in treatment groups is fairly controversial in the sex offender management field. Primarily, it becomes an issue when supervision officers take on the role of a co-facilitator. It is usually less problematic if supervision officers “visit” the groups occasionally; and in those instances, it is recommended that the treatment providers and officers work together to schedule these visits in advance to minimize disruption, obtain permission from group members regarding these visits, and clarify the role of the supervision officer for the youth in the group.⁷

Collaboration between supervision officers and treatment providers appears to be fairly common practice in the management of juvenile sex offenders. Recent survey data from programs nationwide highlight some of the ways in which supervision officers and specialized treatment providers are working together.⁸ In more than 90% of community-based juvenile sex offender treatment programs across the country, supervision officers and treatment providers report sharing information on a regular basis. And supervision officers were reported to be visiting treatment groups in about 40% of community-based and institutional programs. Only in rare cases did programs report that probation and parole officers co-lead treatment groups.

So the good news in this national data is that supervision officers and treatment providers seem to recognize the importance of collaborating when working with sexually abusive youth which, in turn, can facilitate a success-oriented approach to supervision.

For the supervision officers in the room, I’d like you to think of a juvenile sex offender who is on your caseload. It could be a youngster who has had great difficulties with supervision and treatment, or someone who has done quite well. When was the last time that you:

- Spoke to his treatment provider about his progress?
- Reviewed a progress report from the treatment provider?
- Discussed with the youth what he is working on or learning in treatment?
- Helped a youth apply some of the skills or techniques he has learned in treatment to “real life” situations?

If you said “recently” – like yesterday or last week – you’ve probably already recognized the value of engaging in a collaborative and rehabilitative-oriented approach to supervision. If you said “never” – or “I can’t remember” – then I’d encourage you to consider how collaborating with treatment providers might make your work with juvenile sex offenders and their families more effective.

That brings us to the end of the first section. In sum, we know that relying on surveillance, deterrence, and punishment as the sole approach to supervision is not likely going to give us positive outcomes with youthful sex offenders. Instead, the contemporary research indicates that we can have better results when we embrace a more balanced, success-

oriented philosophy and approach. Knowing the risk factors and needs that exist for youth and their families – and making sure that these issues are addressed adequately – can help to reduce the likelihood of future difficulties, which means that community safety will be enhanced. And all of this is contingent upon multidisciplinary collaboration.

 **Use Slide #11: Developing Supervision Plans**

Part II: Developing Supervision Plans

Now that we've established an underlying framework for supervision, we're going to consider some of the "nuts and bolts" of supervision. As is the case with any youth within the juvenile justice system, the effective supervision of juvenile sex offenders is contingent on the development of a formal case management or supervision plan. In many ways, it becomes the roadmap for the youth – and for the various professionals involved in working with the youth and his family. As such, a supervision or case management plan must be viewed as a fluid document that is modified over time in response to changes in a juvenile's circumstances, newly identified needs and concerns, increases or decreases in level of risk, and progress, improvement, and goal attainment.

Key Considerations to Guide the Supervision Plan

As we've emphasized many times throughout this training, juvenile sex offenders are not just "sex offenders" and they are not all alike. Therefore, supervision plans must be both comprehensive and individualized – one size does not fit all! This requires that several key issues are considered when developing these plans:⁹

 **Use Slide #12: Specialized Training, Knowledge, and Caseloads**

- **First and foremost, the risk level and needs of the juvenile.** As has been discussed, a great deal of information about these youth is likely to be included in the psychosexual and psychological evaluations, as well as in the pre-sentence investigation or pre-disposition report, prior treatment records, and other key documents. So officers need to review this material and ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the youth. In addition, there are some promising tools that supervision officers can use to help to develop a better understanding of the risk level that a youth poses and the needs that should be addressed through treatment interventions and other services. Remember, we want to develop individualized supervision strategies and intervention plans that are based on the specific level of risk that a youth poses and the specific needs that exist. For some youth, specific activities – such as certain employment or extra-curricular activities – may need to be restricted because it may increase risk for them, but those same kinds of activities may not be problematic for other youth. And based on the kinds of needs that they have, some youth may need different types of support and intervention than others.
- **The presence of strengths and assets.** We don't want to limit how we think about these youth based only on problems or deficits. As we discussed earlier, focusing only on deficits or problems can impact a youth's desire and motivation to invest in the change

process. We need to think holistically about these youth and identify the strengths and assets that they have, and think about how we can build them into case management plans in a way that promotes healthy, stable, productive, and invested youth. For example, some youth are particularly good artists, some are good athletes, and some are good musicians. Think about how you could identify some specific positive goals or activities to include as part of a case management plan based on those or other kinds of strengths, assets, or interests.

What are some other strengths that might be helpful to consider when developing supervision or case management plans?


(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES, THEN SUMMARIZE AND CONTINUE.)

- **Environmental factors that may impact community stability (either positively or negatively) of the youth.** Case management planning is not just about attending to individual factors within a youth. We know that delinquent behavior and sex offending behavior are influenced by multiple factors, including family issues, the quality of peer relationships, and school-related considerations.¹⁰ It is important to make sure that case management plans take into account any needs and strengths in those areas as well. For example, because associating with negative peers is a significant risk factor, it will be important to develop expectations and strategies that not only address negative peer association, but that also facilitate the development of positive peer relationships. From a strengths perspective, because having supportive parents is a protective factor, a good supervision plan will take into account ways to actively partner with those parents as a means of enhancing supervision efforts and promoting the success of the youth.
- **Safety and other needs of victims and other vulnerable parties.** And of course, case management plans must always take into account the needs, interests, and safety of victims. This is particularly critical and can be very challenging with intrafamilial or sibling-on-sibling cases, or in other circumstances when the victim and the juvenile offender are in the same home. In those instances, the case management plan must address whether the youthful offender can remain in the home or if an out-of-home placement is warranted. And if the youth is removed from the home, the case management plan will need to include family reunification considerations. In still other circumstances, the juvenile may have committed an offense against someone who attended the same school. This, too, is a critical issue to address in the case management plan. Depending upon a number of factors – not the least of which are the concerns and interests of the victim and the victim’s family – the case management or supervision plan will need to include specific safety planning, dedicated monitoring by school personnel, or even alternative educational arrangements for the juvenile offender. Working closely with victim advocates can be very helpful for ensuring that supervision and case management plans are responsive to these types of issues.¹¹

Standard and Specialized Conditions

As you begin to identify some of these key issues when developing a supervision or case management plan, the need to include certain restrictions or conditions will become

apparent. As you know, youth who are under the authority of the juvenile courts or the juvenile justice system are generally expected to comply with a number of restrictions or expectations that provide structure and accountability.

 **Use Slide #13: Standard Supervision Conditions**

Examples of these conditions include the following:

- Curfew restrictions
- Drug testing
- Prohibitions against associating with delinquent peers
- School attendance requirements
- Reporting requirements
- Community service
- Restitution

Do you think that these types of conditions should be included as part of a formal supervision plan for juvenile sex offenders? Why or why not?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

Now, do you believe that these conditions are always sufficient for juvenile sex offenders? Why or why not?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

Because juvenile sex offenders are similar in a number of ways to other youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system, these types of standard conditions can in fact be relevant as part of a formal supervision plan. However, there are also some important differences that must be taken into account, such as the unique dynamics involved in sexual victimization and some of the risk factors and intervention needs that are specifically relevant for juvenile sex offenders. For example, their exposure to some types of situations may be more problematic and risky for them than for “general” juvenile delinquents.

Therefore, standard conditions by themselves may not provide sufficient scope or flexibility for officers to supervise, monitor, and support these youth effectively. As a result, it is often important to include specialized conditions as part of a supervision or case management plan for juveniles who have committed sex offenses.¹² Examples of specialized conditions include the following:

 **Use Slide #14: Specialized Conditions**

- **Close monitoring of the Internet.** As you know, there is a large amount of explicit material readily available on the Internet. It often requires only a keystroke, or a click or two of the mouse, to access it or be exposed to it. So this is an important specialized condition for a couple of reasons. First, exposure to pornography is believed to be a risk factor for juvenile sex offenders,¹³ so viewing sexually exploitive material may fuel inappropriate thoughts and fantasies, and can compromise the specialized treatment process. In addition, Internet chat rooms may provide opportunities for these youth to engage in inappropriate exchanges with others. Or, alternatively, they could be targeted by other abusive individuals.

It is important to remember, however, that the Internet is a contemporary means of communicating and is a common way for youth to do schoolwork. So our goal shouldn't be to prohibit its use by juvenile sex offenders altogether. Rather, it is important that professionals and parents recognize the potential risks, which can be minimized through certain limitations and close monitoring of its use.

This specialized condition and some others we'll talk about highlight the importance of educating parents and caregivers about – and engaging them in – the supervision process. How can a supervision officer possibly – on his or her own – monitor the Internet usage of all of the juveniles on their caseload? It's not possible. And if a parent doesn't understand the risks for their child, they likely won't view it as particularly important or worthy of their attention. Therefore, officers must educate and work with parents or other responsible adults who can serve as their eyes and ears at home.

- **Limits on television programming and video games, especially those with violent or sexual themes.** It's amazing how much sexually exploitive and violent material there is on television and in the video games that adolescents play. Setting limits is particularly important because we know that repeated exposure and desensitization to violence, and to hostile and demeaning attitudes and values – particularly toward women – also appears to be an important risk factor for these youth.¹⁴ Much like Internet restrictions, limiting the kinds of programming that these youth watch and the video games that they play requires the active involvement of parents or caregivers.
- **Prior approval of extracurricular and employment activities.** Keeping in mind that there some activities and jobs that may create unnecessary risks for some juvenile sex offenders, this condition can be very important as part of a supervision or case management plan. For example, it's probably not a good idea for a youth who has sexually abused a young child to work as a babysitter or to have unsupervised contact with children in a daycare setting, is it?

It is important to emphasize that considering a special condition such as this does not mean that juvenile sex offenders should be prohibited or discouraged from participating in positive, prosocial extracurricular or employment activities. Quite the contrary, in fact. In order to promote the success of these youth, supervision

officers should make every effort to identify and support positive and productive activities, as engagement in them is an excellent way for them to spend their free time and affiliate with positive peers or adults. When these youth are engaged in positive, prosocial activities, the likelihood that they will engage in delinquent, inappropriate, or abusive behavior should be lessened. At the same time, however, supervision officers need to minimize exposure of these youth to known risky situations or circumstances, which not only increases their likelihood of being successful, but also contributes to public safety.

- **Restrictions on unsupervised contact with victims and other vulnerable individuals.** In order to protect the needs, interests, and safety of victims, prohibiting contact between sex offenders and victims is commonly imposed as a specialized condition of supervision.¹⁵ This can be challenging, however, when they live in the same neighborhood or attend the same school. And it can be even more difficult in intrafamilial cases, especially if they live in the same home. In these instances, the supervision officer, treatment provider, the victim therapist or advocate, and others involved in the case must work closely together to assure that the victim's needs remain the paramount consideration, and that adequate safety plans are in place.¹⁶

A common offshoot of this specialized condition for sex offenders involves prohibiting all unsupervised contact with minors. However, this may not always be realistic or even reasonable as a blanket prohibition for youthful sex offenders. After all, they are minors themselves, and their friends, classmates – and oftentimes their siblings – are minors. Certainly, as is the case with certain restrictions on employment or some extracurricular activities, the goal is to minimize risk and ensure the safety of others. The individual circumstances of the youth and family must be taken into account and, when warranted, contact with young children or others who may be vulnerable should in fact be supervised by an informed adult who is aware of the juvenile sex offender's situation and risk factors.

- **Follow all treatment recommendations.** Given what we know about the efficacy of sex offense-specific treatment and other kinds of interventions, requiring these juveniles and their families to participate successfully in them can be a critical step in promoting community safety and success.¹⁷ In addition, keep in mind that rehabilitation-oriented approaches to supervision with youth yield much better outcomes than strategies that are only surveillance, monitoring, and punishment-focused.

These are among the examples of specialized conditions that may be useful to include in supervision plans for juvenile sex offenders. But remember, they are not all alike, so conditions should be imposed selectively, based on the individual youth and his circumstances. The recurring theme throughout this training is that one size doesn't fit all – and this adage also applies to the use specialized conditions of supervision.

Avoidance Versus Approach Goals

The inclusion of supervision conditions – whether standard or specialized – is an important part of a supervision plan for youth, particularly as a way to reduce the likelihood that they will end up in situations where they’re more likely to engage in inappropriate or problematic behavior. But restrictions and prohibitions are only part of the equation. If our goal is to ensure that youth who have committed sex offenses become positive, productive individuals, the use of supervision conditions by themselves obviously will not be sufficient.

In other words, the development of a supervision plan must extend beyond these “avoidance goals” – we cannot simply tell youth what they *cannot* do. As I mentioned a moment ago, identifying strengths and assets, rather than focusing only on what’s wrong with a youth, is an important part of developing a supervision plan, because it can have an impact on a youth’s engagement and motivation. Just think about how de-motivating it would be to be told only what you are not allowed to do, what you must avoid, and what you should stop doing. It can result in youth feeling helpless, hopeless, and frustrated, and it might even cause them become more resistant and rebellious.

The bottom line is that supervision officers should also include “approach goals”¹⁸ – those things that are likely to promote their positive growth, maturity, improved quality of life, and success in the community – as part of a formal supervision plan. They can do this by helping youth think about where they’d like to go in life, how they’d like to be different in a positive way, and then develop goals and strategies that match these positive and prosocial needs and desires.¹⁹ Including approach goals as part of supervision plans – consistent with the rehabilitation-oriented or success-oriented approach to supervision – does not mean that we aren’t holding sexually abusive youth accountable for their behaviors. Approach goals are about helping a youth lead a healthy and productive life and to meet his needs without harming others.

Use Slide #15: Examples of Approach Goals

Here are a few examples of common approach goals that can be used with juvenile sex offenders to encourage them to work towards improving the quality of their lives, which at the same time can keep them from engaging in problem behaviors:

- Participate in prosocial recreational and leisure activities.
- Achieve and maintain positive school adjustment.
- Establish positive peer groups.
- Gain appropriate employment.

Treatment providers, school officials, and other professionals can be very helpful in establishing approach goals for supervision plans that can complement the work that is being done in other areas of the youth’s life.

What are some other examples of approach goals that could be incorporated as part of a supervision or case management plan?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

 **Use Slide #16: Collaboration Enhances Supervision Planning**

Collaborating to Inform Initial and Ongoing Supervision Planning

At this point, it should be fairly evident that developing a comprehensive and individualized supervision plan cannot be accomplished by a supervision officer alone. Because a wide range of information is needed about these youth, their families, and even the victims of these offenses, and because so many others play a role in managing these youth, multidisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration is vital.²⁰ Ideally, to make sure all of the “bases are covered,” multidisciplinary case management teams share responsibility for developing and implementing these plans. Team members should include a supervision officer and treatment provider and others as deemed necessary, such as school personnel, family therapists, and victim advocates.

And involving the juvenile and his parents or caregivers is a key part of the process, because it promotes their investment and ownership and ensures that the supervision plan is truly individualized. Supervision officers should think of parents or other caregivers as “experts” on their children; they probably know them better and have more information about them than anyone else. In the next section, we’ll talk a little bit more about engaging parents and caregivers in the overall supervision process, but for now, suffice it to say that they are critical collaborators when developing supervision plans.

Collaboration is also critical for supervision planning because of the fluid nature of these plans. Remember, as the risk, needs, and circumstances of these youth change over time, so should their supervision or case management plans. When a supervision plan is initially developed, some juvenile sex offenders will be placed on a high or intensive level of supervision and monitoring, and some will be placed under a less intensive level of supervision. Ideally, these decisions are based on the assessed level of risk and needs of an individual youth.

And as we discussed during the assessment section of this training, there are some specific assessment tools designed specifically for juvenile sex offenders that can assist with these determinations.²¹ Not only can this increase the accuracy of decisionmaking, it can help supervision agencies with using their limited resources more wisely. That is, instead of supervising all juvenile sex offenders in exactly the same way, high risk youth with greater needs should receive more intensive supervision than those who are lower risk and have fewer needs. In fact, research is pretty clear that outcomes are better when we deliver interventions that are commensurate with the level of risk posed by individuals.²² It’s difficult to further reduce the risk of an already low risk youth. And interestingly enough, the research shows that if we provide high intensity interventions to

low risk individuals, they don't necessarily benefit from them – and at times even have poorer outcomes.²³

Over time, however, the level of supervision should probably change in one direction or the other. When concerns or needs are identified, supervision intensity may need to be increased. Similarly, when a youth has consistently demonstrated the ability and willingness to adhere to the expectations we have outlined and has progressed sufficiently in treatment, a reduction in supervision intensity may be appropriate. But only by sharing and comparing specialized assessment data and other information from multiple sources and across multiple contexts will supervision plans remain up-to-date, fully responsive, and maximally effective.

One Agency's Approach

Use Slide #17: Matching Supervision Intensity with Level of Risk and Needs

I'd like to talk briefly about how one agency – the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice – has developed guidelines that local jurisdictions throughout the state can use in the case planning process. The guidelines suggest a continuum of supervision intensity with youthful sex offenders.

The department places every juvenile sex offender who is on community supervision into a high, moderate, or low risk category. Each risk category has associated with it different levels of supervision, from 1 to 5. Timing is a consideration as well. As time goes by and as these juveniles comply with the expectations associated with treatment and supervision (and, presumably, as their risk levels and needs decrease), their supervision levels are also lowered.²⁴

Use Slide #18: High, Moderate, or Low Risk?

The high, moderate, or low risk determination at the outset of supervision is a structured process that is outlined in policy. The information sources and data used to guide decisionmaking include many of the things that we've already discussed, such as:²⁵

- Interviews of the juvenile sex offender and his parents/caregivers;
- Written documentation that has been collected, including offense summaries, PSIs/PDRs, victim impact statements, treatment summaries, and school summaries;
- The Department of Juvenile Justice's internal risk assessment instrument;
- J-SOAP-II and CANS-SD results;
- Psychosexual and psychological evaluations; and
- The Department of Juvenile Justice's Sex Offender Risk Checklist.

The results and outcomes of all of these are combined in a structured fashion to yield the risk determination.

Use Slide #19: Accompanying Contact Requirements

The contact requirements associated with the five levels of supervision are as follows.²⁶

- Juvenile sex offenders on level 5 are seen face-to-face 3 or more times per week.
- Those on level 4 are seen 2 or more times per week.
- Level 3 offenders get 1 or more contacts a week.
- Juveniles assigned to level 2 have 1 or more contacts every 2 weeks.
- And those on level 1 get seen by supervision officers 1 or more times per month.

Officers are required to make most – but not all – of these contacts. Treatment providers and other collaterals can be responsible for a small proportion of them in some cases.²⁷

And juveniles can move “up” and “down” in supervision level based on changes in their risk, needs, and circumstances. These decisions are made collaboratively, with input from the treatment provider and others.²⁸

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

Use Slide #20: Supervision Strategies

Part III: Supervision Strategies

To complete this section of the training, we’re going to talk about some specific strategies that can be useful when supervising juvenile sex offenders, including:

- Identifying and working with members of community support networks. We’ll focus here on parents and caregivers, and then spend a few minutes on engaging the schools.
- Establishing specialized caseloads for this population.
- Considering the use of the polygraph as a supervision tool.
- Responding to supervision non-compliance.

Community Support Networks

As we’ve acknowledged several times during this training, collaborative partnerships between supervision officers and positive social supports such as parents and caregivers, school representatives, mentors, members of the faith community, and other volunteers are important. In addition, adolescents in general – and juvenile offenders more specifically

– tend not to be the most trustworthy reporters of information at all times, so it's important for supervision officers to identify others who are involved in their lives who can confirm or refute what these youth disclose to us.

Use Slide #21: Community Support Networks

Members of community support networks can assume a host of key responsibilities related to promoting and supporting the success of juvenile sex offenders, including.²⁹

- Serving as role models by demonstrating positive, non-abusive, respectful behavior, and actively encouraging and supporting the same type of behavior in juveniles;
- Facilitating juveniles' participation in prosocial activities;
- Providing positive reinforcement when juveniles comply with the expectations associated with supervision and treatment;
- Assisting juveniles to use and assimilate the skills and knowledge that they are learning in treatment into their daily lives;
- Staying on the lookout for and taking action when high risk behaviors and situations occur (and *before* a relapse or violation occurs); and
- Communicating honestly and regularly with supervision officers regarding identified concerns as well as what is going particularly well in the juveniles' lives.

Certainly then, when community supports have been identified, supervision officers must work to ensure that they are familiar with the principles and expectations of both offense-specific treatment and specialized supervision. After all, juvenile sex offender management is not likely to be a field with which they are very familiar.

In the State of Colorado, for example, members of community support networks are specially trained by supervision officers, social service representatives, and treatment providers to serve as "informed supervisors."³⁰ Every juvenile sex offender has at least one informed supervisor (and in most cases many more) who carries out the responsibilities that I just outlined and who participates regularly in multidisciplinary team meetings with the juvenile justice system actors and other professionals who help manage these youth in the community.³¹

Parents and Caregivers: Critical Collaborative Partners

Parents and caregivers are perhaps the most logical and influential examples of community support network members for juvenile sex offenders.³² Most youth are dependent on them and most parents or caregivers want to do the right thing for their kids. However, it isn't always easy to get parents or caregivers on board, as there are a host of factors that may impact their willingness and ability to partner with us in the ways that many of us hope and expect. These include:³³

Use Slide #22: Challenges with Involving Parents

- **The sometimes complex and very overwhelming nature of the juvenile justice and social services systems.** These systems can be quite difficult to navigate, and can be frustrating and de-motivating for parents. They can seem complicated to us as system actors, so imagine how confusing and difficult they may be for juveniles and their parents or caregivers.
- **There may be multiple expectations for parents or caregivers that are established by different agencies and individuals, and are sometimes duplicative.** If we're not careful, we can overwhelm families with the expectations that we place on them. Being involved with multiple agencies or professionals can be anxiety-provoking and embarrassing. What parent or caregiver wants several outside agencies in their homes telling them what they should be doing?
- **Previous negative experiences with "the system" may inhibit participation.** Prior difficult encounters with the juvenile or criminal justice systems can reduce parents' and caregivers' desire and interest in participating in the supervision and management process.
- **Professionals may make inaccurate assumptions about the family's willingness to participate helpfully in the process.** Assuming that families won't be cooperative and helpful, and approaching them in a skeptical and accusatory manner, makes it much less likely that our efforts to engage and work with them will be successful and constructive.
- **There is a considerable stigma associated with sex offending.** Just imagine if you had a child who was a sex offender. How comfortable would you feel communicating with others – who are strangers – about the problem?
- **Some of the dynamics of families of juvenile sex offenders are less than ideal.** There may be substance abuse, inter-generational sexual victimization and physical abuse, and problematic boundaries, among other issues, that can negatively impact a family's willingness to engage. In addition, parents and caregivers may not be particularly good at establishing and consistently maintaining appropriate structure, discipline, and behavioral limits in the family environment, which impacts their capacity to support our supervision efforts.
- **Juvenile sex offenders and their victims may be in the same family.** As a result, parents/caregivers may struggle a great deal with balancing the needs of

both parties. It may cause them to feel as if they must “choose” one child over another.

So given all these factors, it’s unrealistic not to expect some parental or caregiver denial and resistance to supervision and treatment. Although these reactions can be short-lived and fleeting, they can also be made worse by the development of adversarial, confrontational, and negative relationships with the system. Such patterns, once they are established, are difficult to break.

To facilitate the engagement and participation of parents or caregivers, it’s critical that officers interact with them in an empathic, respectful, supportive, and firm manner. And family members and caregivers should be approached as critical *collaborators*.³⁴

In addition, it’s important to remember that juvenile supervision officers are often the “face” of the juvenile justice system. Of all system actors, they probably interact most frequently with youth and their parents or caregivers, so they are very well-positioned to have a significant influence on how positive and productive – or negative and difficult – their experiences are with the system, and how likely they are to be cooperative with and supportive of supervision and treatment.

How do you deal with parental and caregiver denial and resistance?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

Use Slide #23: Tips for Engaging Parents

Here are a few quick pointers for you to keep in mind:

- **Be patient.** Denial and resistance aren’t just going to go away completely after one or two meetings with parents or caregivers. Expect that they will last for a time and work to decrease them slowly – measured, consistent progress is much better than no progress.
- **Educate.** Educate parents and caregivers about why their acknowledgement that a problem exists is so important and the ways in which they can be a part of the solution to it.
- **Normalize the denial and resistance process.** Let parents and caregivers know that their strong reactions to the situation are okay and that one of your roles is to assist them to get through them in constructive ways that benefit all parties.
- **Process the potential underlying contributors to the denial and resistance.**
 - Be sure to label the behavior, not the youth. In other words, remind parents or caregivers that just because their child committed a sex offense doesn’t mean that he is a bad person. Rather, he committed an act for which he must be held accountable and for which he will be required to comply with the supervision process and to participate in treatment. Let parents know

that they can play a very significant role in ensuring that their child is responsive to the expectations of the juvenile justice system and receives the services that he needs to be successful and not reoffend.

- Stress that having a child who commits a sex offense does not make the parents or caregivers bad parents/caregivers. Emphasize that the most productive thing that they can do to remedy and address the difficult situation is to participate in and support supervision and treatment.
- Teach parents about sex offending behavior and debunk common myths (e.g., all sex offenders recidivate and are destined for a life of crime, juveniles who commit sex offenses always go on to perpetrate as adults, etc.).
- Ask parents to talk with you about their fears and concerns, and take the time to respond to and begin to address them.
- **Provide them with clear, comprehensive, and consistent information about:**
 - The court process and the larger juvenile justice system;
 - The various components of your jurisdiction's approach to juvenile sex offender management;
 - The specific expectations (of them and of their child) associated with supervision (explain your role as a supervision officer and the family members' roles as collaborative partners in the community management process); and
 - The significant benefits of cooperation and the major costs associated with failure.
- **Identify common ground and common goals.** For example, supervision officers and parents or caregivers probably both want the juvenile to be successful. In addition, no one wants the juvenile to offend again. Discussions about these kinds of goals and how to achieve them can be very motivating to parents or caregivers.
- **Offer parent or caregiver education classes and support groups – or make referrals to them.** These forums can provide parents and caregivers with valuable information and new skills, and make available safe havens where they can interact with others who are having similar experiences. As you can imagine, having a child who has committed a sex offense can be a very isolating experience.

Interacting with Parents and Caregivers in the Office Setting

Recognizing that it's not appropriate to work with these youth in isolation of their parents or caregivers, it's typical for juvenile supervision officers to meet fairly regularly with parents and caregivers in the office setting at the beginning of the supervision process – and then consistently thereafter. Near the outset of supervision, officers will likely want to do the following during office visits that include parents and caregivers:

 **Use Slide #24: Initial Contacts in the Office Setting**

- **Establish a positive rapport.** As has been mentioned, it's probably most productive to approach parents or caregivers as partners and collaborators in the management process, and work to garner their support as quickly as possible. Emphasize that with their ongoing support, the likelihood of their child being successful increases significantly.
- **Review court orders, supervision conditions, and other documentation.** There is a great deal of paperwork provided to juveniles and their parents or caregivers. Take time to explain and describe all of it. Don't assume that just because something is written on a piece of paper, it will be read and understood.
- **Make referrals to treatment providers and other community resources.** Remember the importance of a holistic approach to the management of these youth. Be clear that you will be linking the youth *and* the family members to programs in the community that will be helpful to them, and that you expect them to participate. Stress the specific kinds of positive outcomes and benefits that they can expect to derive from successful participation in the treatment process.
- **Allow as much time for questions as is needed.** Parents and caregivers are likely to have many concerns. Inquire about these and work to create an environment in which they feel comfortable expressing their fears and anxieties. Throughout the supervision process, open communication with parents and caregivers will be critical, as they will be able to provide supervision officers with extremely valuable insights into the progress that juveniles are making or the problems that they are having. Therefore, it is essential that officers take the time early in the process to establish ongoing, open communication as the norm.

Regular, ongoing office contacts with parents and caregivers throughout the course of supervision are important as well. Officers can use them to:

 **Use Slide #25: Ongoing Contacts in the Office Setting**

- **Identify other network members outside of the family.** Officers can help to figure out friends or other community members who can support supervision and treatment.
- **Review and update changes in the supervision case plan.** Increases or decreases in supervision intensity, or additions or subtractions of supervision conditions, are issues that might be discussed.
- **Discuss the youth's and the family's management of risk factors and lapses.** The supervision process will not be without some significant challenges, mistakes, and judgment concerns. Office contacts provide an excellent opportunity to discuss how the youth can address his mistakes and more effectively manage risky situations, and the steps that parents or caregivers have taken – or can take – to support him.

- **Inquire specifically about successes or breakthroughs, and things that are going well.** Officers should provide positive reinforcement and praise, if it's warranted.
- **Discuss the youth's and the family's progress in treatment.** Officers can then compare and contrast these reflections with the information provided directly by clinicians.
- **Verify information provided by other members of the community support network, such as school personnel or employers.** Officers can examine whether the perspectives of the juvenile and his parents or caregivers reflect and comport with those provided by others, and follow up on discrepancies and inconsistencies while stressing the importance of honest and open communication, and disclosure.

Conducting Home Visits

As was noted earlier, the homes of these youth are another important setting to work with these youth and their parents or caregivers. Home visits provide an opportunity for officers to see these juveniles and their family members in their natural environment. Ideally, officers conduct both scheduled and unannounced home visits during traditional working hours and at non-traditional times, such as in the evenings and on weekends. During home visits, officers will probably want to:

Use Slide #26: Conducting Home Visits

- **Observe the nature and quality of interactions between the parents or caregivers, the juvenile offender, and other family members.** If a conflict arises between family members during a home visit, officers can examine how strife and tension are addressed.
- **Evaluate environmental risk factors.** Is there access to weapons, alcohol, drugs, or pornography? What are the sleeping and bedroom arrangements in the home? Is it relatively clean and in order? Are restrictions on using the Internet, watching inappropriate television programming, and playing explicit video games being monitored and enforced by the parents or caregivers?
- **Evaluate access to the victims (if they are in the home) and potential victims, and review existing safety plans.** Officers should be on the lookout for vulnerable individuals in the home or in the neighborhood, and discuss strategies to prevent or minimize the juvenile's unsupervised contact with them. Time should be taken to revise or develop safety plans, if necessary.
- **Conduct a general check in with both the juvenile and his parents or caregivers.** Ask the parents or caregivers specifically about their impressions of the juvenile's behavior and progress in all spheres of his life. Inquire about school, homework, peers, compliance with curfews, and behavioral problems. Officers should ask parents or caregivers if they need or would like any assistance in doing any problem solving, and check to see if it's necessary to say or do anything to

reinforce the parents' or caregivers' important role as the authority figures in the home.

So it's clear that parents and caregivers are essential partners in the work of juvenile probation and parole officers, but it's probably not realistic to expect their full support and cooperation from the outset of supervision in every case. The time and energy that is invested educating them about the management process, emphasizing the importance of their participation, and providing or referring them to needed programs and services, will likely pay enormous dividends in terms of their ability to collaborate with supervision officers and play an active role in holding their child accountable and supporting his success in the community.³⁵

Working with the Schools

Aside from the home, school is probably the place where these juveniles spend most of their time on a daily basis. Therefore, as we've mentioned already, early and ongoing collaboration with the schools is critical. Unfortunately, this can be an area that is neglected in juvenile sex offender management, and it can be very challenging.

There are a number of important considerations when working with the schools.

Use Slide #27: Working with the Schools

- **A policy-driven approach.** Some school districts – and state school boards – have developed written policies and procedures that explicate the process by which schools and education staff will be involved in the day-to-day management of juvenile sex offenders. These policies and procedures can be developed with input from supervision agencies, treatment providers, and others who share responsibility for working with the youth, and define how information about these cases will be shared between schools and stakeholders from other disciplines and agencies.
- **Specialized training for school personnel.** Jurisdictions where schools are involved in and supportive of the management process report that education staff at all levels have received extensive specialized training regarding youthful sex offenders, and promising supervision and treatment strategies. The school personnel who work on a daily basis with juvenile sex offenders usually receive the most intensive training. In some jurisdictions, training for school personnel is provided by a multidisciplinary team of specialized supervision officers, treatment providers, victim advocates, and others.
- **Participation as a community support network member.** Ideally, supervision officers are able to identify at least one community support network member from the school setting. This person can participate on the multidisciplinary, collaborative case management team that works with the youth, and can be a school counselor, nurse, social worker, psychologist, teacher, or coach.

- **Individualized school management plans.** As we've discussed several times already, some juveniles need more frequent and intensive monitoring than others do.

As is the case with the broader community supervision efforts, supervision strategies in the school setting should be based on the risk level and needs of each student, and should prioritize the safety needs of victims and vulnerable individuals. The following are common considerations of school-based management and safety plans for juvenile sex offenders:

- Class schedules – Students may be required to schedule classes consecutively so that they do not have any unsupervised periods.
- Lunch and breaks between classes – Juveniles might be supervised by school personnel during the lunch hour and breaks between classes.
- Arrival and departure times – These can be established so school staff know when the youth is on school grounds. Official check ins and outs may be required at arrival and departure.
- Mode of travel – Requirements can be imposed regarding the mode of travel the juvenile uses to get to and from school, so as to limit and manage the risky situations to which he is exposed.
- Physical education and extracurricular activities – Participation in these is encouraged, but with a specific plan that is approved by school staff and other members of the case management team that is designed to minimize risk to others and provide sufficient structure.
- Behavior restrictions – Physical contact with other students is often prohibited; limits can be placed on the kinds of materials that the juvenile possesses (for example, explicit writings or drawings are not allowed); and sexually acting out (including telling jokes of a sexual nature) is forbidden.

There are a number of jurisdictions across the country that have done very good work with schools and have successfully integrated them into the juvenile sex offender management process; one noteworthy example is the state of Colorado.³⁶

Establishing Specialized Caseloads

Another supervision strategy that is being used to respond to the unique needs of these youth is the creation of specialized caseloads, whereby individual probation or parole officers – or even units – are designated to provide supervision for juvenile sex offenders. Supervision agencies in many states have prioritized their implementation and as a result, we've seen a proliferation of them in recent years across the country.³⁷

What are some potential benefits of having specialized caseloads to work specifically with this population of youth?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

 **Use Slide #28: Benefits of Specialized Caseloads**

There are a number of potential advantages to specialized caseloads.³⁸

- **They ensure that youthful sex offenders are not spread across general caseloads.** Rather, they are supervised by specially trained officers who are more likely to possess the requisite expertise and knowledge necessary to work most effectively with these youth.
- **They promote consistent supervision and management practices, as agencies develop specialized policies and protocols to guide the work of the officers who are assigned to them.** For example, they may be more likely to use specialized risk assessment tools, require collaboration with specialized treatment providers, and use specialized conditions that are particularly salient for these youth.
- **Specialized caseloads tend to be smaller than general probation and parole caseloads.** This allows officers to provide targeted monitoring of these youthful offenders based on their assessed levels of risk and needs, and ensures that officers have time to collaborate with treatment providers and others. They also provide officers with the opportunity to conduct additional fieldwork and to develop and maintain closer working relationships with the other partners in the community, such as school officials, treatment providers, and family members.
- **Finally, these caseloads can increase officer knowledge of existing local treatment programs and resources.** Through their increased and ongoing contact, supervision officers become more familiar with the capacity, quality, and expertise of specific programs and providers within their communities.

On the other hand, there can be some challenges associated with using specialized caseloads. What are some potential pitfalls or difficulties that could arise?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

 **Use Slide #29: Challenges of Specialized Caseloads**

Although there are several potential benefits to establishing specialized caseloads for supervising sexually abusive youth, they aren't a magic bullet and may not be the "best" answer for every jurisdiction. Here are some potential issues to keep in mind.³⁹

- **In times of scarce resources, their creation can cause problems and burdens for others.** For example, smaller, specialized caseloads can increase the size of "general" caseloads.

- **Specialization in rural areas can be impractical.** If there are only a few juvenile sex offenders living in a large geographic area, it probably doesn't make sense to assign one officer to supervise only those few kids.
- **Similarly, in large metropolitan areas, officers may have caseloads that are designed around specific locations or supervision districts.** This allows for more efficiency among officers, specifically in terms of their familiarity with community resources and their ability to conduct field visits. The existence of specialized caseloads in some urban areas may, however, require officers to work across multiple locations or districts, if there aren't enough juvenile sex offenders in one place to fill a specialized caseload. This may increase the time officers spend getting from place to place, and make it necessary for them to work in areas with which they're not familiar.
- **The risk of burnout and secondary trauma may also be greater with specialized caseloads.** I don't have to remind you of how difficult this work is. As specialization increases and officers become completely immersed in sex offender management work, there is an increased likelihood they will be negatively impacted by it. What practitioners and researchers in this field have found is that the constant exposure to the unpleasant things associated with these cases – and to the trauma that is often caused by sex offenses – may subsequently lead us to experience a host of negative physical, psychological, and emotional consequences, similar to those that victims of these crimes experience (like trouble sleeping, depression, anxiety, and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness). It is, therefore, essential that supervision agency staff (from the central office down to the line level) are keenly aware of the increased potential for secondary trauma and burnout associated with specialized caseloads, and that they receive support and training on how to manage this impact.
- **Identifying supervision staff who are willing and competent to take on specialized caseloads can also be very difficult.** This is important because selecting the right officers can be critical to the success or failure of a jurisdiction's larger approach to juvenile sex offender management. Requiring officers to work with this population who are inexperienced or who have no interest in doing so is not a prudent approach, as we do not want officers assuming these important positions who are not capable of sufficiently managing the risk and addressing the needs of these youth. Experienced, knowledgeable, motivated, and committed officers are essential. And assignment to specialized caseloads should, if possible, be voluntary and reflect officers' interest in working with this population.

Specialized Training and Knowledge

Regardless of whether an agency or jurisdiction decides to establish specialized caseloads, all supervision officers responsible for working with juvenile sex offenders can benefit from specialized training, so that they understand the unique characteristics of these youth, the risk factors specific to this population, and the kinds of interventions and strategies that can be most effective when working with them. Beyond providing officers with the skills and information necessary to enhance the efficacy of their work, specialized

training can also provide a common language by which officers, treatment providers, and other stakeholders can communicate as a team about critical assessment and risk management issues. Remember that no one individual can do this work alone.

Today's training is a very good step in the right direction in terms of specialized training, but it's probably not enough. Because the juvenile sex offender management field is constantly changing – as new research and literature emerge and as practice evolves – supervision officers and others who work with these youth should be afforded ongoing opportunities to participate in specialized training. And cross-agency training can be particularly helpful in ensuring that supervision officers and their collaborative partners gain a more comprehensive understanding of how the larger management system works, and the specific roles, responsibilities, capabilities, and limitations of the various individuals and agencies who are a part of that larger system.⁴⁰

Use Slide #30: Resources

There are also ways to enhance the specialized knowledge of supervision officers without depending entirely on training, which can be costly. For example, establishing a resource library that includes articles, books, manuals, examples of policies and procedures, and other written resources can be very helpful. And several national organizations and projects have developed specialized information and resources regarding this youthful offender population. These include:

- Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) – www.atsa.com
- National Adolescent Perpetrator Network (NAPN)
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) – www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) – www.ncjfcj.org
- Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM) – www.csom.org
- National Center on Sexual Behavior of Youth (NCSBY) – www.ncsby.org

If you have Internet access and are interested in learning even more about juvenile sex offenders, you might visit these sites or request information from these organizations. Written materials can be downloaded from a number of them, free of charge.

Considering the Use of the Polygraph as a Supervision Tool

As discussed in the assessment and treatment sections, both supervision officers and treatment providers in some jurisdictions have begun to utilize the polygraph as one component of an overall juvenile sex offender management strategy, primarily to facilitate disclosure of sexual histories and to assess compliance with supervision and treatment.⁴¹

Most relevant to the supervision process, two types of polygraph examinations are used: the single/specific issue examination and the monitoring/maintenance examination. The single issue examination may be required by supervision officers when concerns about specific high risk behaviors arise during the course of supervision. For more general and periodic assessments of compliance with supervision conditions and expectations, the monitoring or maintenance polygraph examination may be conducted. Risk factors such as victim access, use of pornography, and masturbation to deviant or inappropriate fantasies are often the focus of maintenance or monitoring exams.

Use Slide #31: Use of the Polygraph in Supervision

It is important to emphasize that the polygraph is not a magic bullet for supervision officers. Indeed, as discussed previously during this training, it is not without limitations or controversies. Specifically, because of the potential impact of age, functioning, development, maturity, and co-occurring behavioral health concerns on the reliability and validity of the polygraph, significant questions exist regarding its use with juvenile sex offenders.⁴²

Despite these questions, however, its use to enhance supervision practices with youthful sex offenders is increasing nationwide.⁴³ To try to minimize the potential concerns that may arise, some experts suggest that polygraph examinations should be restricted to older juveniles (generally 14 years of age or older) who are emotionally stable, and that it should only be used with the informed consent of the juvenile, parent/caregiver, and referral source.⁴⁴ And all stakeholders should be fully aware of the limitations, caveats, and potential risks associated with its use in the context of supervision before making decisions about its implementation.

Perhaps most importantly, key decisions should never be made based solely on the results of a polygraph examination.⁴⁵ The polygraph, like all other management tools that have been discussed during this training, can be a valuable data source that can inform efforts to supervise these youth, but it cannot provide all of the information that we need to do our work effectively.

Responding to Supervision Non-Compliance

Thus far, we've reviewed ways in which supervision plans can be designed and strategies can be implemented in a manner that hopefully increases the chances that youth will do well in the community. Inevitably, however, there will be instances when youth are resistant to interventions, are not engaged or internally motivated to change, or experience circumstances that impact their ability to maintain stability in the community. These and other factors may result in their failure to comply with expectations or conditions of supervision. In addition, in light of some of our discussions about the nature of adolescence, we probably shouldn't be surprised that some degree of rebelliousness and impulsivity will arise, even with some of the most compliant youth. After all, juveniles are juveniles!

So when a youth doesn't adhere to a supervision plan, or violates a condition of supervision, what should be done? What are some specific examples of how you respond to non-compliance with juvenile sex offenders?

(ALLOW FOR AUDIENCE RESPONSES.)

The answer, of course, is that "it depends." Certainly, "locking up" a juvenile sex offender should not be the first-line response for every concern that arises. When thinking about how to respond to a violation, it is important to remember the success focus that we talked about earlier – and that one of the goals of supervision efforts should be to provide these youth with an opportunity to disclose concerns or problem behaviors voluntarily, develop and practice appropriate coping skills, modify their inappropriate behaviors, and maintain their placement in the community.

It could be that increased levels of supervision or some adjustments to supervision strategies will be sufficient. Or it could be that certain issues are best addressed within the context of treatment. And of course, there are times (like repeated non-compliance, very high risk activities, and new criminal behavior) when immediately removing a juvenile from the community and revoking probation or parole is absolutely necessary. Generally speaking, responses to violations should be flexible, gradual, and incremental. Some key issues to consider include the following:⁴⁶

 **Use Slides #32–33: Factors to Consider when Responding to Violations**

- The seriousness of the behavior;
- The juvenile's risk level;
- The degree to which community safety was jeopardized;
- Whether the juvenile voluntarily disclosed the behavior or maintained secrecy;
- The level of responsibility assumed by the youth;
- The awareness and disclosure of the behavior by parents, caregivers, and other members of the support network;
- The ability and willingness of parents/caregivers to provide adequate support and structure; and
- The presence of other assets or services to assist the offender in maintaining compliance.

 **Use Slides #34–35: Responding to Violations**

In addition, supervision officers and other stakeholders should keep in mind the following principles and philosophies as they approach their work with these youth:

- **Taking steps to prevent violations is more effective than responding to them after the fact.** As we've discussed, most sex offenses that are committed by juveniles are not spontaneous and unplanned. Rather, there are often identifiable precursors such as thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that come before them. So officers can wait for a youngster to fail and then respond, or, alternatively, they can anticipate problems, intervene before they become worse, and thereby reduce the likelihood of a serious transgression or reoffense.
- **Individualization is critical.** A major theme that has emerged during this training is the importance of differentiated responses and management strategies for youth who have committed sex offenses, based on a youth's level of risk, needs, and unique circumstances. This important theme should also apply when we consider how to respond to violations and non-compliance.

The more options the better. Ideally, supervision officers can utilize a range of pre-revocation interventions and graduated sanctions, reserving the most severe for chronic behavior problems or those that have significantly compromised victim and community safety. For example, options can include:⁴⁷

- Imposing additional restrictions or special conditions to address newly identified risk factors or an increase in risk level;
- Increasing the frequency of office visits and other contacts;
- Imposing an earlier curfew;
- Restricting movement in the community;
- Limiting recreational activities;
- Imposing home detention or house arrest; and/or
- Using GPS or electronic monitoring.

Intermediate sanctions can also be treatment-based. For example, a youth might be required to:

- Address the issue in his current treatment group;
- Participate in residential or institutional programming as a "day treatment" option; or
- Enroll in a new or different community-based program.

In some jurisdictions, juveniles can also be required to return temporarily (for a night or weekend) to a residential treatment facility or institutional placement as a sanction.

- **Intermediate sanctions should become progressively more severe for repeated violations.**⁴⁸ If a juvenile continues to breach the rules and expectations that have been established, consequences should become more severe, recognizing that revocation may ultimately emerge as the best or only option to ensure community safety.

- **Don't ignore problems, no matter how small or insignificant they are.** When a violation occurs, a response that is swift as well as proportional is critical. This demonstrates to the juvenile that our expectations must be followed and encourages future compliance.
- **Get to the bottom of the violation before responding.** Some non-compliance may *not* be a direct reflection of a youth's deliberate and intentional disregard for the established expectations. Rather, the problem may, in some instances, be a reflection of larger issues or problems in the juvenile's life – for example, significant mental health issues or family dysfunction may impact a youngster's ability to do what we ask them to do. So supervision officers must determine the underlying cause of the violation and then respond in a flexible, individualized way.
- **Ensure that juveniles are fully aware of the potential consequences associated with non-compliance.** If juveniles know exactly what will happen if they do not comply with our expectations, and if they believe that we will follow through on these consequences, they may be more likely to follow the rules that have been established.
- **Officers should be empowered to take immediate and appropriate action when a violation occurs.**⁴⁹ It is widely known that the impact of responses to problem behaviors is more effective when they are delivered immediately, rather than days or weeks later. Ideally, then, supervision officers have the ability to respond swiftly and decisively to most instances of non-compliance as warranted, rather than having to go back to court in order to get approval for relatively minor changes to a supervision plan. Sanctions that officers in some jurisdictions are able to impose quickly include restrictions on leisure activities, changes in curfews, the imposition of additional community service requirements, and participation in additional community-based treatment services. Examples of sanctions that may require the approval of the juvenile court include more onerous responses, such as placement of the youth on electronic monitoring and requiring an out-of-home placement.
- **Written violation guidelines are used in some agencies to help ensure consistency and proportionality in officers' responses to non-compliance.** These provide a starting point for officers and are often designed to recommend the least restrictive response that promotes community safety and that adequately addresses the non-compliant behavior. These guidelines also include over-rides, so that more or less severe responses can be used based on aggravating or mitigating circumstances.
- **Collaboration is key.** Depending upon the nature and seriousness of the behavior or violation, and if there is an opportunity to do so, supervision officers should always try to discuss violation behaviors with treatment providers and other members of the case management team, and strive to develop a coordinated response.

Part IV: Summary

We have covered quite a lot in this section. Before we move on to the next component of the training, let's take a few minutes to review some of the key messages about supervising juvenile sex offenders.

- **Focus on juveniles' success as a means of ensuring public safety.** The community management of juvenile sex offenders depends on effective supervision practices. And to be most effective, supervision approaches must extend beyond surveillance, monitoring, and sanctioning. Indeed, the research shows that better outcomes are achieved with youth involved in the juvenile justice system when supervision is rehabilitation-focused. In the context of supervision, this means that supervision officers need to also consider the various issues that can impact a youth's ability to be successful and productive – such as unique risk factors within the youth, and various needs within the peer group, school and family – and making sure that services and supports are provided to address these concerns. Ensuring that these youth are successful translates into increased public safety.
- **Develop comprehensive and individualized supervision plans.** Formal supervision or case management plans are the roadmap for managing juvenile sex offenders effectively in the community. To be most useful, they must include information from multiple sources and should be tailored based on the individual risk levels and needs of these youth. Comprehensive supervision planning also means that in addition to the use of standard and specialized conditions and restrictions to manage risk, “approach goals” are also incorporated into supervision plans.
- **Supervision plans are fluid documents.** The risks, needs, and circumstances of youth and their families change over time, and supervision plans and strategies should be modified accordingly. These changes may be in response to progress or positive goal attainment, or in response to non-compliance or other identified concerns. Specialized assessment data and information-sharing are critical for making informed decisions on an ongoing basis.
- **Specialization is important.** Although juvenile sex offenders share some characteristics with other youth involved in the juvenile justice system, they are different in some important ways. To fully understand these differences, and to ensure that supervision approaches take these unique factors into account, specialized training for officers can enhance management efforts.
- **Supervision officers cannot manage youthful sex offenders on their own.** And finally, as is the case with the other components of juvenile sex offender management, effective supervision requires collaboration. Particularly important collaborative partners are treatment providers, the schools, parents or caregivers, and other members of community support networks.

¹ Aos, Phipps, Barnoski, & Lieb, 2001; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998

² See, e.g., Bumby & Talbot, in press

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- ³ Aos et al., 2001; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998
- ⁴ Bumby & Talbot, in press; Hunter, 2006
- ⁵ see, e.g., ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM), 1999; Hunter, 2006; Hunter, Gilbertson, Vedros, & Morton, 2004; National Adolescent Perpetrator Network (NAPN), 1993; Ryan & Lane, 1997
- ⁶ ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; Hunter, 2002; Hunter et al., 2004; NAPN, 1993
- ⁷ ATSA, 2005
- ⁸ McGrath et al., 2003
- ⁹ ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Hunter, 2002; Hunter et al., 2004; NAPN, 1993
- ¹⁰ See, e.g., Hunter, 2006; Worling & Langstrom, 2006; Prescott, 2006
- ¹¹ CSOM, 1999; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; NAPN, 1993
- ¹² ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; Heinz & Ryan, 1997; NAPN, 1993
- ¹³ Ford & Linney, 1995
- ¹⁴ Fagan & Wexler, 1988; Ford & Linney, 1995; Smith, 1988
- ¹⁵ Cumming & McGrath, 2005
- ¹⁶ See, e.g., ATSA, 2000; CSOM, 1999; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; NAPN, 1993
- ¹⁷ See, e.g., ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Hunter, 2006; Hunter et al., 2004
- ¹⁸ see, e.g., Hunter & Longo, 2004; Mann et al., 2004; Thakker et al., 2006
- ¹⁹ Hunter & Longo, 2004; Mann et al., 2004; Thakker et al., 2006
- ²⁰ ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Hunter, 2006; Hunter et al., 2004; NAPN, 1993; Ryan & Lane, 1997
- ²¹ See, e.g., Prentky et al., 2000; Prescott, 2006; Worling & Curwen, 2001
- ²² Andrews & Bonta, 2003
- ²³ Andrews & Bonta, 2003
- ²⁴ Hunter, 2002
- ²⁵ Hunter, 2002
- ²⁶ Hunter, 2002.
- ²⁷ Hunter, 2002
- ²⁸ Hunter, 2002
- ²⁹ See, e.g., ATSA, 2000; Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Cumming & McGrath, 2000, 2005; Hunter, 2006; Hunter et al., 2004; NAPN, 1993; Ryan & Lane, 1997
- ³⁰ Colorado Sex Offender Management Board, 2003; Colorado Sex Offender Management Board and Colorado Department of Education, 2003
- ³¹ Colorado Sex Offender Management Board, 2003; Colorado Sex Offender Management Board and Colorado Department of Education, 2003
- ³² Rich, 2003; Thomas, 2004; Schladale, 2006
- ³³ Thomas, 2004; Schladale, 2004
- ³⁴ Gray & Pithers, 1993; Jenkins, 1998; Lane, 1997; NCJFCJ, 2005; Worling, 1998
- ³⁵ Thomas, 2004; Schladale, 2006
- ³⁶ Colorado Sex Offender Management Board and Colorado Department of Education, 2003
- ³⁷ CSOM, 1999, 2000a; Colorado Sex Offender Management Board, 2003; Cumming & McGrath, 2000, 2005; English, Pullen, & Jones, 1996; NAPN, 1993; Utah Network on Juveniles Offending Sexually and the Utah Juvenile Sex Offender Authority, 1996
- ³⁸ Bumby & Talbot, in press; CSOM, 1999; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; English et al., 1996; NAPN, 1993
- ³⁹ CSOM, 2000a; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; English et al., 1996

⁴⁰ Bumby & Talbot, in press; NAPN, 1993; Ryan & Lane, 1997
⁴¹ Blasingame, 1998; CSOM, 2000a; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; English et al., 1996; McGrath et al., 2003; O'Connell, 2000
⁴² CSOM, 1999; Hunter & Lexier, 1998; NAPN, 1993
⁴³ McGrath et al., 2003
⁴⁴ CSOM, 1999; Hunter & Lexier, 1998
⁴⁵ ATSA, 2005; Blasingame, 1998; CSOM, 2000a, 2002b
⁴⁶ Bengis, 1997; Cumming & McGrath, 2005; NAPN, 1993; NCJFCJ, 2005; Ryan, 1997a, 1997c
⁴⁷ Cumming & McGrath, 2000, 2005; NAPN, 1993; NCJFCJ, 2005
⁴⁸ NCJFCJ, 2005
⁴⁹ NCJFCJ, 2005