

SECTION 5: WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A TREATMENT PROVIDER

Learning Activity 5-1: Case Example of Opportunities for Collaboration

Participants may divide into smaller groups or they may remain in a large group for this discussion depending on the size of the group, meeting space available, and length of time allotted to the discussion.

The case involves a sex offender, Rueben, who was convicted of one count for having sexually assaulted his stepdaughter, Natalia, who was between the ages of 13 and 14 years old at the time of the assault. She is 15 years old now. The assault involved the offender going into the child's bedroom at night and fondling her and stimulating himself as he did this. He denied the offense, but more recently in treatment has acknowledged that "Maybe I might have done some of it, but not the part about touching myself. I really don't remember much from back then—I was drinking a lot at that time." The offender has been required to live elsewhere since he was placed on probation.

This case is being staffed by an interdisciplinary team who have developed a practice of meeting regularly to exchange information among themselves in order to assure a successful treatment and supervision approach. The various professionals are listed below, along with some interests and information unique to each. Please read each carefully.

Treatment provider: Although Rueben was timely and attentive in group treatment during his early involvement, lately he has been coming to group late, doing his homework with haphazard quality, and has been complaining cynically about having received a "raw deal," having been "railroaded into a plea." He frequently expresses how much he has been looking forward to "going off paper" so he can go back to living his life without being "hassled by his P.O."

Probation officer: Rueben has been living in a small apartment with a male roommate, and when the officer last visited, he noticed a lot of beer in the apartment. Rueben has been instructed not to drink, and he stated that the beer all belonged to his roommate.

Polygraph examiner: Rueben is scheduled to participate in a polygraph examination shortly. What issues will be important to address in the evaluation?

Plethysmograph/Abel Assessment evaluator: Recently both the penile plethysmograph and Abel Assessment were administered on Rueben. His test results indicated that he was most erotically aroused and had the longest visual reaction time to depictions and descriptions of consenting sexual activities with adult females, followed by such activities with adolescent girls, with little interest

shown for pre-pubescent children or force and violence. When told of these findings, Rueben made much of how these results “vindicated” him.

Natalia’s therapist: Natalia has been seen for several sessions in outpatient treatment. She feels very guilty that her father has been forced out of the home, and she thinks her mother holds that against her because her mother is overwhelmed emotionally and physically with caring for the two younger children in the household.

Rueben’s wife Claire’s therapist: Claire believes “the system” has overreacted to Rueben’s offense. She reports that she and Rueben continue to see each other outside of the family home, which typically involves Rueben bringing Claire home late at night after they’ve been together. Natalia babysits her younger siblings on these occasions.

Victim advocate from the prosecutor’s office: Although the victim advocate has not seen the family members since the case was litigated, at that time it was obvious how dependent Claire was on Rueben and how tenuous Natalia’s courage was to speak the truth about having been assaulted. Natalia came close to retracting her allegations during the investigation because people were blaming her for tearing the family apart.

AODA counselor: After one cancellation and another missed appointment, Rueben completed his alcohol and other drug abuse assessment. He has had a pattern of alcohol dependence for over ten years, engaged in binge drinking approximately twice a month over the past two years, and was convicted of drunk driving five years ago. He denies that alcohol is a problem, however, and states that he has “just stopped” drinking.

In the brief time available, please discuss the following questions:

1. What might the benefits of collaboration be in this case?
2. Consider each of the professional roles outlined above along with the specific information each possesses on this case. What information might be exchanged to facilitate better management of this case? How would this information change the course of supervision and treatment?