



## Greetings!

### Welcome to 2018 with NEARI Press and Training Center!

In this first month of the year, we look at the article **“The Influence of Age and Sexual Drive on the Predictive Validity of the Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol—Revised”** by Charity Wijetunga, Ricardo Martinez, Barry Rosenfeld, and Keith Cruise that examines the predictive validity of the adolescent sexual recidivism assessment tool, the J-SOAP-II. Read more below to find out which of the measure’s scales significantly predicted sexual recidivism for juveniles who have perpetrated sexual harm.

As we begin the new year, don't forget to have a look at the NEARI Press catalog ([online here](#)) **or go directly to our [online bookstore](#)**. If you're interested in receiving a hard copy of the catalog or are sponsoring an event at which you'd like to distribute it, please email Alisa at: [aklein@neari.com](mailto:aklein@neari.com). Our newest book, Dr. Robin Wilson and Peel Behavioural Services', *Passport to Independence: A Good Lives Model Workbook*, is selling like hotcakes. You may want to purchase one -- or more -- too!

We are about half-way through **NEARI Press and Training Center's FREE 2017-18 Webinar Series** and it has been an extraordinary season so far. Our most recent webinar, "Cultural Sensitivity Working with Juvenile Sex Offenders and their Families," presented by Dr. Alejandro Leguizamo, was excellent -- the second webinar this season focused on working with competency across cultures. Next up over the coming three months (February through April) we are offering a "mini-series" of webinars presented by the faculty of the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth (NCSBY) on clinical assessment and decision-making in working with children with problematic sexual behavior. Don't miss them!

NEARI Press and Training Center is all over social media! **[Follow us on Twitter at @NeariPress](#)** and **[@NeariP2P](#)**. And don't forget to "Like" us [on Facebook](#) to get updates about all that we are doing.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you about the articles, authors, and topics you'd like us to cover in the NEARI e-Newsletter, our webinars, and our in-person trainings. Please contact Alisa if you have ideas and thoughts about the particular kinds of books, workbooks, and training you'd like to see NEARI Press and Training Center offer in the coming year.

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

**This month, David S. Prescott and Alisa Klein examine the article:  
“The Influence of Age and Sexual Drive on the Predictive Validity of the Juvenile  
Sex Offender Assessment Protocol–Revised”**

**AUTHORS**

Charity Wijetunga, Ricardo Martinez, Barry Rosenfeld, and Keith Cruise  
(Please see below for full citation and abstract.)

**THE QUESTION**

Does the most widely-used juvenile sexual offense recidivism risk assessment tool, the Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol–Revised (J-SOAP-II), accurately predict recidivism among male adolescents who have perpetrated sexual harm? Do age and sexual drive have a moderating effect on the predictive validity for sexual recidivism of the J-SOAP-II?

**THE RESEARCH**

The J-SOAP-II is commonly used to gauge risk of re-offense and inform decisions regarding the treatment and placement of male youth who have perpetrated sexual harm. To date, 15 studies have examined the tool’s predictive validity with mixed results, although the cause of this inconsistency remains unclear. One possibility is that due to the rapid cognitive, psychosocial, and sexual development that occurs during adolescence, a youth’s maturation may impact the predictive validity of the J-SOAP-II. Another is that the measurement of youths’ sexual drive may be producing the inconsistency in the validity of the J-SOAP-II. As such, the authors, using a sample of 156 juveniles who have committed sexual offenses (JSOs), examined two characteristics of the J-SOAP-II for predictive validity:

- Age; and
- Sexual drive and preoccupation.

The 156 participants in the study were considered to have re-offended if they were arrested for a sexual charge, including non-contact offenses such as lewdness. Because sexual offenses can result in non-sexual offense convictions through plea bargaining, recidivism was determined on the basis of re-arrest rather than conviction. The predictive validity of the J-SOAP-II was compared across age and the presence or absence of heightened sexual drive.

**RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The authors cite two significant results:

- The J-SOAP-II appeared to be a better predictor of sexual recidivism among adolescents ages 14 to 16 years old than for older adolescents aged 17-19 years; and
- The J-SOAP-II significantly predicted sexual recidivism for adolescents with a clear pattern of sexualized behavior, but not for those without such a pattern. Overall, the J-SOAP-II was a somewhat better predictor of sexual recidivism for JSOs with heightened sexual drive and, as such, may have greater clinical utility for JSOs with heightened sexual drive.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS**

First, these findings illustrate the need for professionals to have a deep knowledge of the measures they use and the research that supports them. Like other measures of its kind, the J-SOAP-II is not simply a checklist of risk factors. Indeed, the instrument is described as a “protocol.” These findings further demonstrate the need for professionals to be humble in how they communicate risk assessment findings; first-rate assessments openly note the limitations of risk assessment. Finally, these findings once again highlight the need to keep risk assessments of young people time-limited in order to prevent misuse of instruments such as the J-SOAP-II.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD**

Once again, these findings highlight a basic fact about human beings: people change! Young people, in particular, are subject to change without notice. These changes can be physical, emotional, social, and involve neurological developments that bring improved decision-making and interpersonal skills. As much as our field craves predictive validity in our assessment measures, psychological maturation is itself unpredictable.

However, as much as our field’s attempts to develop risk assessment instruments for use in treatment and placement decisions has been a challenge, it is encouraging to see the numbers of studies involving J-SOAP-II that have been conducted by outside investigators. This prevents some sources of bias in the research process. Although no measure is as effective as its developers would like it to be, it is encouraging to see empirical study of these instruments continue.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol–Revised (J-SOAP-II) is the most commonly used measure in the assessment of recidivism risk among juveniles who have committed sexual offenses (JSOs), but mixed support exists for its predictive validity. This study compared the predictive validity of the J-SOAP-II across two offender characteristics, age and sexual drive, in a sample of 156 JSOs who had been discharged from a correctional facility or a residential treatment program. The J-SOAP-II appeared to be a better predictor of sexual recidivism for younger JSOs (14-16 years old) than for older ones (17-19 years old), with significant differences found for the Dynamic Summary Scale and Scale III (Intervention). In addition, several of the measure’s scales significantly predicted sexual recidivism for JSOs with a clear pattern of sexualized behavior but not for those without such a pattern, indicating that the J-SOAP-II may have greater clinical utility for JSOs with heightened sexual drive. The implications of these findings are discussed.

## **CITATION**

Wijetunga, C., Martinez, R., Rosenfeld, B., and Cruise, K. (2018). The Influence of Age and Sexual Drive on the Predictive Validity of the Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol – Revised. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(1) 150–169.

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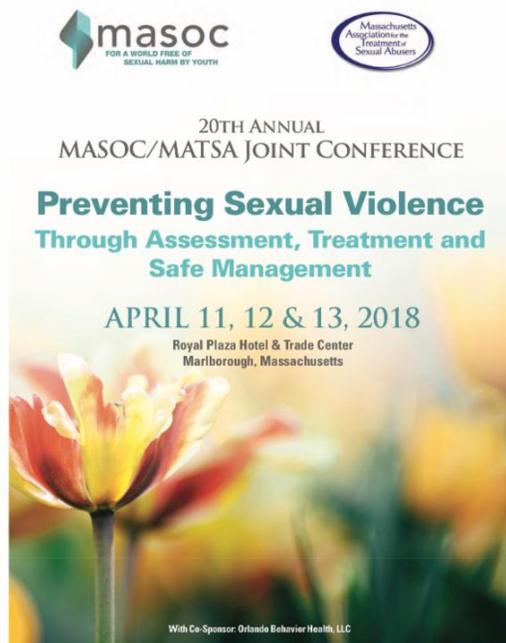
Webinar "Mini-Series" presented by the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

- FEBRUARY 13 **Clinical Assessment of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior: An Overview**  
 Presented by Jane Silovsky, Ph.D.
- MARCH 13 **Assessment of Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children: What, When, and How**  
 Presented by Erin Taylor, Ph.D., Psychological Clinician
- APRIL 10 **Clinical Decision Making in Cases of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior**  
 Presented by Shel Millington, M.A., L.P.C., PSB-CBT Trainer and Amanda Mitten, M.A., L.P.C., PSB-CBT Trainer

excited to offer this free webinar "mini-series" featuring the deeply knowledgeable faculty from the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth (NCSBY) at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Jane Silovsky and colleagues will discuss the clinical assessment of, and related decision-making for children with problematic sexual behavior.

CEs are available!

[Join us!](#)



## 20th Annual MASOC/MATSA Joint Conference!

April 11 - 13, 2018

Join our friends at MASOC and MATSA for their annual conference in Marlborough, MA. It is a world-class conference with presenters from all over North America and beyond.

NEARI Press and Training Center will be there and we'll be selling books. Come by our booth to say hello!



## Public Policy Update

### The Sentencing Project's Report "Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration"

In follow-up to last month's NEARI Newsletter that introduced the Unbalanced Youth Justice Project, we thought this analysis from the Sentencing Project that does a deeper dive into the disparities in the incarceration of black youth might be of interest. Among

many other points of analysis, the report tells us that 44 percent of youth held in prisons, jails, residential treatment centers, detention centers, and training schools in the United States are black despite the fact that African Americans comprise only 16 percent of all youth in this country.

**Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration**  
**African Americans 5X More Likely than Whites to be Held**

Black youth were more than five times as likely to be detained or committed compared to white youth according to data from the Department of Justice collected in October 2015 and recently released. Racial and ethnic disparities have long plagued juvenile justice systems nationwide and the new data show the problem is increasing. In 2015, black youth were four times as likely as whites to be incarcerated.

Juvenile facilities, including 1,800 residential treatment centers, detention centers, training schools, and juvenile jails and prisons held 61,600 youth as of October 2015. Forty-four percent of these youth were African American, despite the fact that African Americans comprise only 16 percent of all youth in the United States. African American youth are more likely to be in custody than white youth in every state but one, Hawaii.

Between 2001 and 2015, overall juvenile placements fell by 54 percent. However, white youth placements have declined faster than black youth placements, resulting in a worsening of already significant racial disparity.

Nationally, the youth rate of incarceration was 102 per 100,000. Black youth placement rate was 423 per 100,000, compared to a white youth placement rate of 86 per 100,000. Overall, the racial disparity between black and white youth in custody increased 22 percent since 2001. Racial disparities grew in 37 states and decreased in 15.

- In six states, African American youth are at least 10 times as likely to be held in placement as are white youth: New Jersey, Wisconsin, Montana, Delaware, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.
- Five states saw their racial disparity at least double: Maryland, Montana, Connecticut, Delaware, and Wisconsin.
- Three states decreased their racial disparity by at least half: Vermont, West Virginia, and New Hampshire.

The Sentencing Project • 1710 36th Street, NW, 8th Floor • Washington, DC 20009 • [sentencingproject.org](http://sentencingproject.org)

State	Black Youth Placements	White Youth Placements	Ratio (Black/White)
Alabama	52	10	5.2
Alaska	19	1	19.0
Arizona	13	2	6.5
Arkansas	10	2	5.0
California	16	3	5.3
Colorado	10	2	5.0
Connecticut	14	3	4.7
Delaware	10	2	5.0
District of Columbia	8	1	8.0
Florida	17	3	5.7
Georgia	40	8	5.0
Hawaii	1	1	1.0
Idaho	19	4	4.8
Illinois	16	3	5.3
Indiana	14	3	4.7
Iowa	14	3	4.7
Kansas	14	3	4.7
Kentucky	16	3	5.3
Louisiana	17	3	5.7
Maine	11	2	5.5
Maryland	16	3	5.3
Massachusetts	10	2	5.0
Michigan	10	2	5.0
Minnesota	16	3	5.3
Mississippi	10	2	5.0
Missouri	12	2	6.0
Montana	13	1	13.0
Nebraska	10	2	5.0
Nevada	11	2	5.5
New Hampshire	4	1	4.0
New Jersey	11	1	11.0
New Mexico	10	2	5.0
New York	10	2	5.0
North Carolina	12	2	6.0
North Dakota	10	2	5.0
Ohio	10	2	5.0
Oklahoma	10	2	5.0
Oregon	10	2	5.0
Pennsylvania	10	2	5.0
Rhode Island	10	2	5.0
South Carolina	10	2	5.0
South Dakota	10	2	5.0
Tennessee	10	2	5.0
Texas	10	2	5.0
Utah	10	2	5.0
Vermont	4	1	4.0
Virginia	10	2	5.0
Washington	10	2	5.0
Washington DC	10	2	5.0
West Virginia	4	1	4.0
Wisconsin	10	1	10.0
Wyoming	10	2	5.0
USA Total	102	20	5.1

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**From the *Sacramento Bee***  
**"Why kids don't belong on sex offender registry"**

**An Op-Ed by Nicole Pittman, JD**  
**Director of the Center on Youth Registration Reform at Impact Justice**  
**October 13, 2017**

California took an important step toward ending the abusive practice of putting kids on sex offender registries when Gov. Jerry Brown signed [Senate Bill 384](#), which allows juveniles to petition for their removal after five or 10 years.

When California became the first state to register children as sex offenders in 1986, there was little known about children who commit sexual offenses. At that time, treating them the same as adults seemed sensible. Today, [we have research that tells us](#) that putting them on registries does not prevent future child sexual abuse and can diminish public safety.

Roughly 200,000 people on sex offender registries – including more than 3,500 in California – went on as kids, some for serious crimes but many others for playing doctor, streaking or teenage romances.

Sex offender registration laws stigmatize and isolate the very children they were meant to protect, ensuring their youthful indiscretions follow them into adulthood. Names, photos, and addresses are often made public, leading to vigilante violence, stigmatization, and severe psychological harm. One in five attempt suicide; too many succeed. There's also now a strong body of evidence demonstrating that very few youth commit more sexual crimes.

Child sexual abuse is a serious but preventable problem, but our policies and laws are only designed to respond as if abuse is inevitable and largely ignore solutions that prevent harm. The state budget allocates only \$46,000 annually for prevention and victim services while the cost to register children is about \$144 million.

Instead of using valuable resources to punish kids who harm, we should redirect them to evidence-based treatment and intervention.

While SB 384 offers a rare ray of hope, California can and must fully eliminate the policy of putting children on the sex offender registry. By doing so, we can prevent sexual harm and begin to create healthy, hopeful communities where all kids can be kids.

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### Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors - From Natural and Healthy to Disturbed

By: Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D.  
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### Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention

By: Joan Tabachnick  
Duration: 1-2 hours; CE Credits: 2

### Current Practice for Treating Adolescents Who Have Sexually Abused

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

### Stopping Sexual Abuse Through Intervention with Sexually Abusive Youth

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

### Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations

By Reverend Debra Haffner & Joan  
Tabachnick  
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### First Responders: Responding to Sexual Assault Disclosures

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Year	Date	Topic	Presenter
2017	SEPTEMBER 12	Cultural Competence in Our Field: The Why, the What, the Where	Presented by Robert S. Wrigg, MSW, RSW
	OCTOBER 17	What's New with Pornography?	Presented by Cordelia Anderson, MA
	NOVEMBER 14	Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems: Practical Resources and Activities for Therapists Working with Youth and Their Families	Presented by Riene McCreech, MS, LPC
2018	JANUARY 16	Gaining Multicultural Competence as a Sex Offender Treatment Provider	Presented by Alejandro Legazam, Ph.D.
	Webinar "Mini-Series" presented by the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth		
	FEBRUARY 13	Clinical Assessment of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior: An Overview	Presented by Jane Silovsky, Ph.D.
	MARCH 13	Assessment of Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children: What, When, and How	Presented by Erin Taylor, Ph.D., Psychological Clinician
	APRIL 10	Clinical Decision Making in Cases of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior	Presented by Shel Willington, MA, L.P.C., PSB-CBT Trainer and Amanda Vittern, MA, L.P.C., PSB-CBT Trainer
	MAY 15	Growing Beyond: Working with Teenage Girls with Sexual Behavior Problems	Presented by Susan L. Robinson, LICSW
JUNE 12	Working with LGBTQ Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems	Presented by Robert S. Wrigg, MSW, RSW	

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