Understanding, Assessing, and Rehabilitating Juvenile Sexual Offenders

Second Edition
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Second Edition

Phil Rich

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

Over the seven years since the first edition of this book, much has changed in our field. Many of those changes are reflected in an expanded literature and research base and some of them in our practices, but much of that change is reflected in our sensibilities about and our expectations of treatment and the way we view the children and adolescents with whom we work. Much of this change also reflects a greater sophistication and sensitivity in how we think about and approach research and practice. As a field, we now recognize complexities and subtleties of which we formerly seemed unaware. We now seem to more clearly see that treatment is not the simple process reflected in limited and black-and-white, prescriptive, and psychoeducational models such as relapse prevention, sexual assault cycles, and the simple correction of thinking errors, and that treatment involves a reciprocal and engaged relationship with our clients and not simply the tasks they must accomplish to “succeed” in treatment. We further see that the children and adolescents who are our clients are not just “juvenile sexual offenders” but whole people whose lives and behaviors can be understood only in the context of whole lives, not simply through their sexually abusive behavior.

Certainly, we were well along seven years ago in the process of evaluating our ideas about the assessment and treatment of sexually abusive youth, and were already in the process of further developing those ideas and revamping or abandoning them if necessary; nevertheless, our thinking, approaches, and tools have very clearly advanced and flowered over the course of this decade. These changes and the themes in our field that have emerged over the past few years are described in the first chapter of this second edition and need no further description here. Instead, consider Chapter 1 as both a detailed introduction to the second edition, providing an update and overview of the ideas, themes, practices, and changes that have further developed or emerged between editions, and as the foundation for the chapters that follow, each of which discusses and elaborates on those ideas, as well as setting the pace for the integrated, holistic, and multifaceted model of treatment, described throughout the book.

Because this is a second edition of an existing book, much remains the same in the language, the focus, the ideas, and the text. In fact, a glance at the table of contents of each edition shows that, although many chapters have been retitled, this edition essentially follows the same structure and organization as the first, and covers much of the same material and content, largely in the same order. However, there is updated and new material in every chapter, and all of the early chapters have been significantly rewritten. In some cases, what was a single chapter in the first edition has become two chapters in this edition. Hence, although the sequence and much of the text from the first edition remains intact, a great deal of text has been restructuring, revised, and updated and, as mentioned, significantly rewritten for this edition. In addition, there are several new chapters and four sections (instead of three) that serve to more tightly organize the content.

My intention, however, was not to simply update and revise the text but also to expand on ideas and information not fully developed in the first edition, as well as make way for and add new content. For readers new to the book, nothing is lost and, I hope, much is gained. For those readers familiar and pleased with the first edition, I hope