SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT

Biological Dysfunction, Intrapsychic Conflict, Interpersonal Violence
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Biological Dysfunction, Intrapsychic Conflict, Interpersonal Violence

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Introduction and Dedication

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Since 1989, we have co-chaired the three international conferences in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on the treatment of sex offenders. These conferences were sponsored by the Program in Human Sexuality, Department of Family Practice and Community Health of the School of Medicine at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. After the second conference in 1991, we published a selection of papers from that conference in a special issue of the Journal of Offender Rehabilitation which was also issued in book form under the title Sex Offender Treatment: Psychological and Medical Approaches. The present volume contains a selection of papers from the Third International Congress on the Treatment of Sex Offenders held in September 1994.

The Fourth International Congress will be held in Amsterdam in September 1995 and will be chaired by Lex van Naerssan, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Utrecht University in The Netherlands, and co-sponsored by the Program in Human Sexuality, School of Medicine, University of Minnesota. We believe sponsoring these conferences has been a successful way to bring professionals together to present their research and treatment models. The participants in these conferences
have enjoyed the intellectual stimulation to advance their own thinking and improve their research and treatment methodologies.

The international nature of the conference has helped us reflect on our concepts and constructs by examining them from a cross-cultural viewpoint. We continue to recognize that what is considered offensive in one country is not necessarily so in another country. Laws are time- and culture-dependent. How we treat sex offenders in different parts of the world differs greatly. Ultimately, however, we are trying to improve the effectiveness of treatment of sex offenders throughout the world. We hope this volume informs the reader of the most recent research in this area as well as spurs interest into scientific achievements in the future.

This second volume begins with an updated/revised version of the standards of care for the treatment of adult sex offenders. A committee was formed after the Second Conference to make changes in the proposed standards that we first published in 1990. The committee was composed of scholars in the field from the United States, Canada, Germany, and Austria. The committee members made excellent recommendations for changes and these were incorporated into the current publication. This revised version was approved by the participants in the Third International Congress on the Treatment of Sex Offenders. The Standards will be an on-going development project and reviewed at future International Conferences, with input from scientists around the world. We invite your comments and suggestions as to revisions. We hope these standards will serve their purpose in providing a guide to increasing the effectiveness of treatment of sex offenders. The Standards of Care are also helpful in analyzing new data and giving the reader a basic understanding of sex offender treatment as it stands today, so it seems appropriate to begin this second volume with this paper.

Other articles in this volume probe into the nature of interpersonal violence and aggression and further understanding of pedophilia and exhibitionism. Still others address the importance of good assessment techniques, issues affecting victims and families of sex offenders, why treatment does not work for some sex offenders, medical problems associated with sex offenders, and working with special populations of sex offenders, especially those with learning difficulties or mental retardation.
Each of the authors in this volume has devoted many years of his or her career to this field. They come from varied backgrounds and these differences are reflected in the ways the articles are written. All authors recognize past knowledge, present new information, and look to the future for further understanding. We hope these papers will challenge the reader into conducting more research that will help scientists and practitioners more fully understand the phenomenon of sex offending and improve our treatment approaches.

DEDICATION

We dedicate this volume to the two persons who were honored and received awards for their outstanding contributions to the field of sex offender treatment at the Third International Congress of Sex Offenders.

Ingo Wiederholt, Med. Dr.

Dr. Wiederholt, a psychiatrist from Munich, Germany, was recognized for his life-long contributions in the treatment of sex offenders. He has always had a great devotion to his patients. Because of illness, Ingo was unable to attend the conference; however, he sent a letter to the attendees giving his thanks and telling them that he felt great satisfaction for his many years of treating individuals who had committed sex offenses.

Judith Becker, Ph.D.

Dr. Becker, a psychologist and a professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Arizona, USA. was recognized for her highly significant contributions in the area of research and treatment of juvenile sex offenders. By studying and treating adolescent sex offenders, Judith’s work has provided us with very valuable information as we look to the future of abuse prevention.
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