

Minutes of the Treatment Subcommittee Meeting March 6, 2007

In Attendance

Bonnie Beneke
Bill Murphy
Jacque Page
Larry Seaman
Rory Alley

Treatment Subcommittee Members looked at the 2007 Tennessee Child Sexual Abuse State Plan to determine what steps to take next in pursuing goals set during the last Joint Task Force Meeting as described in the plan.

In the past year Subcommittee Members had drafted the document “Considerations of the Reunification of Adolescent Sex Offenders with Families Where Victims or Vulnerable Children Reside”. One of the goals of this meeting was to recommend application of this algorithm to treatment and residential care providers and other groups where it could be beneficial in helping to reunite children with their families. Though the CANS and YLS processes have related elements, it was thought that this algorithm contains critical elements missing in these other tools, and should therefore be used to supplement them for reunification decisions in both the social service and juvenile justice areas.

Since there is no precedent for subcommittee recommendation of risk management treatment guidelines, it was agreed that the “Considerations” would have more weight if they were included in the Sexual Offender Task Force Policy Provider Manual and disseminated to contract providers by DCS. The Treatment Subcommittee moved to have Executive Subcommittee Members discuss this measure with DCS Commissioner Viola Miller in their next meeting.

Traditionally there have been concerns about statewide availability of treatment services for children who have been victims of child sexual abuse. In order to expand and improve quantity and quality of treatment for child sexual abuse victims and their families, and advance training towards this goal, the subcommittee proposed to gather data by surveying Child Advocacy Centers, Centers of Excellence, mental health providers and other professional groups to identify what treatment resources were currently available and in use across the state. A draft of the proposed survey is under development by UT staff with questions advanced by committee members. The draft will be circulated for additional input and refinement before being used in survey instrument software. Member Bonnie Beneke will contact South Carolina Child Advocacy members to find out what is being done in their area. More than one survey instrument or changes in question semantics may be needed to target specific practices of the various service groups.

Federal Legislation has been passed requiring registration and posting of the names of adolescent sex offenders. This subcommittee along with various other child advocacy groups are concerned that the legislation may have unintended adverse effects that are contrary to the best interest of children involved. It is thought that a tiered approach designating cases from high risk to low risk with continued follow-up would be more beneficial. In an effort to help minimize the negative impact by considering amendments to proposed legislation, subcommittee members that also serve on the State Sex Offender Task force will take the subject up with that group. Though this subcommittee expressed interest developing a plan to address concerns related to this legislation, it was decided to defer this topic to the next whole Joint Task Force Meeting and seek recommendations from the entire group. In the meantime Jacque Page will put Treatment Subcommittee members on the email dissemination list for information related to this topic.

Rather than set a date for their next meeting at this time the group decided to wait until actions from this meeting were reviewed to determine if another meeting was necessary before the Joint Task Force Meeting in late May.