



A Qualitative Investigation of Policy on Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior

What is it about?

Community management of problematic sexual behavior in youth is challenging and complex. This study investigates urban and rural community policies for youth with problematic sexual behavior. Our team analyzed interviews with 219 professionals from throughout the United States to document what policies exist, and what is needed to improve policies for youth with problematic sexual behavior. This paper advocates for policy reform, collaborative multidisciplinary teams, and community outreach and education to address problematic sexual behavior in youth.

Why is it important?

Our findings show that there are limited community-based policies in place to identify and respond to youth with problematic sexual behavior. This is important because, without policies, youth with problematic sexual behavior are more likely to be misunderstood, experience responses as if they were an adult, and are less likely to receive evidence-based treatment. This paper highlights the context of existing service systems, attitudes and perceptions of policies that impact services, and policy reform and current practices related to youth with problematic sexual behavior.

Implications

Without policies, youth with problematic sexual behavior will not receive effective and informed evidence-based treatment. Schools, communities, families, law enforcement, and clinicians cannot ignore problematic sexual behavior any longer—it is a growing problem across the country. It is time for communities and policymakers to step forward and create developmentally appropriate and evidence-informed policies that help youth, child victims, and their families.

What Next?

This study is the first of its kind to explore systems, attitudes, and perceptions about policies that impact youth with problematic sexual behavior. Results have important implications regarding the formulation and revision of US policies that direct treatment and services for youth with PSB. To access the entire study, click on this link <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jcop.22187>

This summary was prepared by the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth within the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. The project was supported by cooperative agreements 2010-WP-BX-K062 and 2013-MU-MU-K102 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.ncsby.org> or contact us at OU-YPSB@ouhsc.edu.

Kelley, A., Shawler, P., Shields, J. D., & Silovsky, J. F. (2019). A qualitative investigation of policy for youth with problematic sexual behavior. *Journal of community psychology*, 47(6), 1347-1363. doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22187