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# Treatment Strategies for Forensic Psychologists Working with Juvenile Fire Setters and Bomb Makers' Parents

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# Juvenile Firesetters and Bomb Makers

- Juvenile Firesetting and Bomb Making behavior have increasingly become a public safety concern
- JFSBs account for 50% of arson arrests and are responsible for 60% of annual residential fires (FBI, 2011)
- Average age ranges from 9-12 years old, where males make up a larger percent (80-90%) (Gilman and Haden, 2006)

# Juvenile Firesetters and Bomb Makers

- Intentionally set fires annually account for:
  - 13% of fires responded to by fire personnel
  - Average approximately 375 deaths, and 1,300 injuries
  - \$1.6 billion in property loss

(U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2009)

- Fires may be venues for relieved boredom, pure impulsivity, or covert means of retaliation

(Gilman and Haden, 2006)

# Work Between JFSBs and Mental Health Professionals

- Risk Assessment
  - Risk Level
  - Motivational Subtype
  - Parental Dispositional Factors
- Forensic Psychological Assessments
  - Clarification of Treatment Strategy
  - Rule Out Potential Interferences with Forensic Assessment Therapeutic Jurisprudence Assistance Model (FATJAM)

# Work Between JFSBs and Mental Health Professionals Continued

- Forensic Mental Health Counseling
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
  - Psychoeducation
  - Decision-Making Strategies to prevent JFSB Behaviors
  - Exploration of Legal Consequences of JFSB Behaviors

(Burton et al., 2012; Kolko, 2001)

# Limitations of Work Between JFSBs and Mental Health Professionals

- Juvenile Compliance
  - Validity of Assessments
  - Treatment Resistance
- Resources/Services Offered
  - Psychological Disorders Contributing to Behavior
- Parental Compliance

(Gormley-Fleming & Campbell,  
2010; Watt, 2007)



# Parental Role in Treatment - FATJAM Parent Interview

- FATJAM is an evidence based assessment and intervention approach
  - Cognitive behavioral framework and information collection
  - target protective and risk factors to reduce threats
- Parent interview portion examines:
  - changes in child's behavior, child supervision, school behavior, hx of abuse, firesetting behavior, previous arrests or involvement in juvenile justice system

# Parental Role in Treatment - Parental Endorsement/Denial

- Parental endorsement or denial of fire setting behaviors can
  - prove to be an important information source in order to assess for risk
  - Parental denial or endorsement highlights parent's perception of child's behavior
- Often times JFSB is a covert activity
  - an average of 28.3% of parents are unaware of their child's involvement in firesetting behaviors

(Del Bove, 2008)

# Parental Role in Treatment - Implications of Parent's Assessment

- Implications of Endorsement
  - Parent endorsement can often represent a defining moment between children and parents
- Implications of Denial
  - Denial can be due to desire to protect children (over investment or minimization of problem)
  - Parent denial can shed light on the environment in which JFSB behaviors occur (e.g., abuse and neglect)

# Suggested Future Research

- Treatment Strategies used in the DSM-5 Quad
  - Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
    - Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
      - PRACTICE
  - Conduct Disorder
    - Problem-Solving Skills Training (PSST) and Parent Management Training (PMT)
    - Positive Parenting Intervention

(Cohen et al., 2010; Hutchings et al., 2007; Kazdin, 2010; Thompson et al., 2009; Whittingham et al., 2009)

# Suggested Future Research Continued

- Treatment Strategies used in the DSM-5 Quad
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
    - Stepping Stones Triple P Positive Parenting Program
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
    - New Forest Parenting Programme

(Cohen et al., 2010; Hutchings et al., 2007; Kazdin, 2010; Thompson et al., 2009; Whittingham et al., 2009)

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