

Electrifying New Play *Downstate* Breaks New Ground

Chicago: The Steppenwolf Theatre has premiered a new play by a Tony and Pulitzer award winner that depicts the lives of four sex offenders on parole living in a group home in Illinois; it is called *Downstate* and its run has been extended to November 11 due to high demand for tickets. To call it controversial, provocative and heart rendering is an understatement. Yet audiences are universally moved to ponder the important issues it reveals: What does our society do with those who are labeled as beyond redemption?

First the facts: The Steppenwolf is certainly one of the nation's premier regional theatre companies, and one of the few that is organized around an ensemble of actors, directors, designers, playwrights and technicians. The play opened September 20 and has been selling remarkably well and generating plenty of discussion. Playwright Bruce Norris is one such ensemble member and this production has the added prestige of being co-produced by the prestigious National Theatre of Great Britain, and will be open in London in March 2019. According to Steppenwolf Artistic Director Anna D. Shapiro, the theatre knew the play would be controversial and said "our theatre is supposed to make people think and to provoke reaction" and *Downstate* clearly meets this goal.

A summary from the theatre's website: In downstate Illinois, four men convicted of sex crimes against minors share a group home where they live out their lives in the shadow of the crimes they committed. A man shows up to confront his childhood abuser—but does he want closure or retribution? This gripping and provocative new play by Pulitzer Prize-winning ensemble member Bruce Norris zeroes in on the limits of our compassion as it questions what happens when society deems anyone beyond forgiveness. Known for his darkly comic takes on contemporary issues, Bruce Norris asks to whom we are willing to give compassion: "*In the case of this group of people who've committed crimes and served their time, we're not trying to take the easy out and say, 'These are monsters. We're done with them. We can dispose of them.' They are humans, and they are alive. And they're in a bad situation from the mistakes they've made. Now what do we do?'*" Under the direction of Tony Award winner Pam MacKinnon, *Downstate* will feature an American and British cast and creative team.

Excerpts from Reviews:

Chicago Tribune- Highly recommended:

"...*Downstate* is not a crude apologia for the sex offender. It contains the gut-wrenching testimony of a survivor, Andy (Tim Hopper), who appears at the home with his spouse (Matilda Ziegler), looking to confront his now-neutered abuser, Fred, as a way of trying to dig himself out of a hole he was pushed inside many decades ago, without regard to his own deserving."

Chicago Sun Times- Somewhat Recommended...

"...Yes, the play gets uncomfortable, but I didn't feel especially challenged by *Downstate*. A social justice argument - the punishments perhaps don't fit the crime - doesn't suit Norris' biting satirical voice, nor is he particularly strong at examining deep mental anguish, even if the idea is to question how we deal with it. To say his sympathies are misplaced here is not to question the intention, or even his point. It's to suggest that perhaps he's too

restrained in his depiction of depravity to make us struggle with our sympathies the way I think he wants us to."

Chicago Reader- Highly Recommended...

"...Getting its world premiere now at Steppenwolf Theatre in an extraordinary production directed by Pam MacKinnon, *Downstate* is a nervy drama on a subject nobody wants to talk about. It's an unsentimental act of compassion and a devastating entertainment, a wry polemic and the darkest of dark comedies. As much as anything, it's a culmination, expressing Norris's sensibility more generously than any of his previous work."

Stage and Cinema- Recommended

"...Some underdogs seem deeply deserving - which makes sympathy for devils a tricky proposition. Pulitzer-winning Bruce Norris has never shied away from upsetting the apple cart. Co-commissioned and co-produced with the National Theatre of Great Britain, Steppenwolf Theater's latest provocation *Downstate* examines four child molesters in a group home. Norris exposes them as supposedly sick and marginalized "monsters," disposable felons who will always be too close for comfort.

Splash Magazine- Highly Recommended..."

Even before the multi-dimensional tragic denouement, this reviewer was imbued with a sense of protectiveness towards the "villains" and a feeling of outraged frustration with Andy for getting "stuck" in self-righteousness. Most importantly, the play turned the tables on my prior knee-jerk reaction to view these offenders as pariahs. I came away believing that we are all caught in this human web together, that we all suffer in the struggles of being human, that it would be best if we could all forgive ourselves and each other, and that atonement must come from a higher place.

Let's Play at Chicago Now- Highly Recommended...

"...*Downstate* is a gripping and empathetic, delicate and taboo dialogue in which the Bible calls us to love thine enemy, however, can we truly love when we can only see the hatred needed to harm and steal the tender soul and spirit of a child. We are not sure the world is ready for *Downstate*, but we are sure thankful for Steppenwolf for bringing it out of the closet."

Splash Magazine- Highly Recommended..."

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See *Downstate* Page 4

In this issue:

- Page 2: From the Director's Desk**
Minnesota Civil Commitment Suit Comes to an End
- Page 3: Like A Butterfly**
- Page 4: Downstate continued**
Texas Supreme Court
- Page 5: From the Editor's Desk**
Wisconsin Chapter 980 Supervised Release
- Page 6: Sex Offense Specific Treatment**
Featured Website

Minnesota civil commitment suit on constitutionality comes to an end

By STEVE KARNOWSKI

MINNEAPOLIS — A long-running class-action lawsuit over the constitutionality of Minnesota's civil commitment program for sex offenders effectively ended Aug. 23 when a federal judge dismissed the remaining claims but stood by his earlier statements that some revelations during the six-week trial shock his conscience.

U.S. District Judge Donovan Frank cited a 2017 decision by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which overturned his 2015 declaration that the program was unconstitutional because few people had ever been released from the program since began in the mid-1990s. The U.S. Supreme Court last October declined to hear the case, letting the 8th Circuit's ruling stand and the program to continue operating as it was.

The Minnesota Sex Offender Program currently confines over 720 sex offenders who have finished their prison sentences to secure treatment facilities in Moose Lake and St. Peter. Lawyers who filed the class-action lawsuit in 2011 argued that commitment to the program was tantamount to a life sentence because hardly anyone up to that point had ever been released from it. However, the pace of provisional discharges has picked up since the trial ended.

"Some of the facts revealed during the lengthy Phase One trial in this matter are indeed shocking to his court's conscience," Frank wrote.

The judge said he considers the continued confinement of the only woman in the program "truly conscience-shocking." He called the continued confinement of elderly people with a low likelihood of reoffending "an egregious affront to liberty, particularly in light of the pervasive sense of hopelessness at the MSOP." He also expressed "great concern" with the confinement of individuals with cognitive disabilities, and those who committed sex offenses only while they were juveniles. He said they could be safely kept in less restrictive facilities.

The dismissed claims, which had been put on hold for a second phase of the case, dealt mostly with alleged violations of religious freedom, free speech and free association, and protections against unreasonable searches and seizures. The effect of the rulings is that anyone in the program who wishes to pursue such claims must do so as an individual instead of a class action. Frank noted that several such cases are pending, and more may now follow.

"The prospect of these many individual lawsuits going forward may be a compelling reason for all parties to sit down in an attempt to reach an agreement to settle any remaining issues in this case, with or without the assistance of the Court, instead of incurring the significant costs and delay associated with pursuing an appeal," he wrote. "To do so might well serve the best interests of the parties, the public interest, and the interests of justice."

The only remaining issue is whether the state or the plaintiffs should pay the costs of some court-appointed experts who studied the program. Frank said he would decide that later.

"The Court hopes that the public and all stakeholders will carefully consider the complex issues raised by this litigation, moving forward in a manner that balances the interests of public safety, fundamental justice, and basic human dignity. Justice requires no less," he concluded.

From the Director's Desk

By Wayne Bowers

Whenever there are serious storms or disasters around the country, one thought of mine is what will happen for registrants or even people in prisons or jails. Hurricanes in Texas and Florida last year made me truly think about this, knowing the storms were severe. I wonder how prisoners were kept safe in Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina recently.

I received a letter from a Florida prisoner and SORT member Ed detailing circumstances in Polk County, Florida when Irma hit. He wrote, "Sheriff Grady Judd sent deputies to every shelter. Every person on the registry was taken out of the shelter and taken to jail." He validated this with an article from the *Gainesville Sun* on Sept. 30, 2017. Just another very bad example of the incessant collateral damage of the registry. Homeless shelters also typically deny SO's.

We received an alarming letter from a man at Avenal (CA) State Prison requesting we remove him from our database, stating, "Your mailings pose a danger to my safety, especially after California's new policy of integrating General Population inmates with Protective Custody inmates."

Another similar letter with the same fears and concerns was received from a man at the state's Correctional Training Center. This man is not on our database but is apparently aware of our newsletter and wrote to alert us to this serious concern. Duly noted.

In the most recent civil commitment conference call, Eldon Dillingham reports the following website has been developed by Guy Hamilton-Smith on the Mitchell-Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, MN, for civil commitment policy and litigation information. It is <https://mitchellhamline.edu/sex-offense-litigation-policy/>.

Just Detention International's September issue devotes its entire issue to recognizing 15 years of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). As Just Detention's banner reads, "Rape is not part of the penalty" and that focus is a constant as we know such assaults are made. We urge all jails and prisons to have an active and supportive PREA department.

Donations accepted: Keep in mind that CURE-SORT runs on a string-of-a-budget. We will once again be sending our readers a donation request and we hope you will find it in your hearts (and budgets) to reward our efforts. We thank each of you for your sincere support.

New Litigation Resource Center

The Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, MN is the home of an impressive and comprehensive web-based resource called the Sex Offense Litigation and Policy Resource Center. Directed by former school president and dean, Prof. Eric Janus, the center and its website offer a wealth of information in clearly categorized sections to assist any research need on this diverse topic. Also included is a special section devoted to Civil Commitment policy and litigation. The site also includes the latest news articles and a wealth of links to other sites. We applaud Prof. Janus and his law school for their attention to this important field of law.

Like A Butterfly

By Trisia Baumgartner

This essay is written as a personal reflection and should not to be conflated with the recent political spotlight in the forefront today. I write as a woman once victimized by sexual abuse as well as a therapist who treats victims of sexual abuse. *Why don't victims speak out after a sexual assault?* This seems to be a dominating question on the minds of many. A more appropriate question should be, "Why would a victim of sexual assault speak out?" At the very heart of any victimization lies the aggressor taking away the power of the victim on a physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual level. Given this, with what could a victim scream? What is left of a victim to enable a scream, a cry, or even a silent whimper?

A violation of one's body and soul results in an inward retreat of mere survival. Trust of self and trust of others is not only elusive, but eviscerated. The victim frequently and quietly reflects, "Why was I chosen and how could someone do this?" Therein lies the very reason victims retreat, i.e., no trust in humanity both outside of the assault and no trust in oneself. Recoiling into the self is a protective mode that can last a lifetime. If a trauma victim retreats into her/his inner-most self, in effect dissociating from the traumatic event, there is an emotional reward in that the trauma is no longer a part of one's consciousness. However, although it lies dormant in the memory, it eats away at the very soul as manifested in dysfunctional interpersonal relationships, self-harm, addiction, or depression.

To reach out and tell one's story of trauma is akin to peeling pack the layers of emotional protection that the mind so skillfully and effectively built around the trauma. In essence, although a sexual assault is a traumatic event, the mind and the soul are so beautifully designed that they serve as a bandage protecting a wound. Why don't we speak out? We are finally safe when we are able to forget (even if it's for just a moment). The degradation, humiliation, and pain of the sexual assault are cocooned away. To ask a victim to surrender the silence is to ask her to relinquish her protective armor in exchange for judgment, ridicule, and disbelief. No, one's trauma is secreted and coveted; a personal wound unique to each victim.

It is only when the victim encounters another who understands the pain of trauma and the purpose of the cocoon that entraps it, that the victim can begin to trust. Slowly, patiently, the layers of protection are stripped away and the emotional cocoon which protected the traumatized soul is no longer needed. The pain can be tended to, understood, and integrated into the entirety of the person void of possessing control any longer. In essence, with the appropriate level of love and understanding, the victim who once coveted and cocooned her trauma can learn to be vulnerable enough to release the pain, that is, let it be free.....like the butterfly....

The writer is a sexual abuse and assault therapist in Detroit working with both victims and perpetrators. She has Masters Degrees in both Theology and Clinical Psychology

"There's nothing wrong," said Sam Levenson, "with using four-letter words in explaining the facts of life to children—words like love, kiss, help, care, give"

CURE-SORT NEWS

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CURE-SORT
P.O. Box 1022
Norman, OK 73070-1022
(405) 639-7262
e-mail: info@cure-sort.org
web: www.cure-sort.org

Executive Director: Wayne Bowers
Graphic Designer: Edward Gundersen
Editor: Joseph Ajlouny

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"We believe that our words—which we assume to express our principles—represent us more truly even than our actions, but to outsiders it is the actions that are more eloquent than the words."

Henry Steele Commager

turned the tables on my prior knee-jerk reaction to view these offenders as pariahs. I came away believing that we are all caught in this human web together, that we all suffer in the struggles of being human, that it would be best if we could all forgive ourselves and each other, and that atonement must come from a higher place.

Let's Play at Chicago Now- Highly Recommended...

"...*Downstate* is a gripping and empathetic, delicate and taboo dialogue in which the Bible calls us to love thine enemy, however, can we truly love when we can only see the hatred needed to harm and steal the tender soul and spirit of a child. We are not sure the world is ready for *Downstate*, but we are sure

NewCity Chicago- Somewhat Recommended

"...Is *Downstate* a well-acted and well-written humanizing portrait of a modern-day leper colony? Sure. Is it a nuanced discussion about pedophilia free of ulterior motives that would undercut the moral ground upon which its scribe alleges to stand? Well, that's what comment sections and post-show discussions are for. Personally, I can't shake the feeling that Norris is justifying a personal belief system that he barely maintains by treating a disenfranchised and complicated social group like a prop, which is the height of modern politics."

WTTW FM- Highly Recommended

"...*Downstate*, which is far and away the best of Norris' many plays (including his 2010 Pulitzer Prize-winning "**Clybourne Park**"), will either make you question your opinions on the subject or confirm them. But it will certainly inspire a gut reaction as it brings to mind the priests, teachers, athletic coaches, gymnastics team doctor, siblings, parents, "boyfriends" and others who are initially perceived as figures of trust, but turn out to be sexual predators. And it will call to mind the total strangers who can rape a solo jogger some morning, or attack a woman alone as she turns the key to her door one night."

Chicago and Theater Reviews- Highly Recommended

"...The play's most gripping scenes are extended verbal duets between Andy and Fred, Andy and Dee, and Ivy and Felix. The intensity of the exchanges is blistering, with the offenders staking their positions with uncompromising passion. There is one on-stage brawl and an off-stage death, but mostly *Downstate* deals in volcanic language."

Third Coast Review- Highly Recommended

"...Director Pam MacKinnon, working from Norris' dynamic and layered script, directs each performance with a fine-tooth comb. This is a group of detestable, rotten apples, but each of these men is also, in his own way, disarming and hilarious, with quirks and charms that make us forget why they are in this make-shift homestead wearing ankle bracelets; until we're reminded, and once again infuriated by the hypocrisy.

But in the theater, we cannot immediately respond with outrage. We must absorb, and accept. We sit with these men, we listen to each and every exchange, we are forced to hear dialogues where these human beings qualify and quantify and compare their deeds, where they defend one another and lash out against each other, where they use the very details of the unspeakable acts done by them (and sometimes to them) as emotional weaponry and psychic defense."

The Hawk Chicago- Somewhat Recommended

"...The standout performance comes from K. Todd Freeman as Dee. Initially, Dee is extremely likeable, amusingly full of quips and sassy retorts. But eventually Dee's lack of remorse for his crimes comes to the surface, and it becomes clear just how deluded he is, just how troubled his life and his past have been. The pendulum swings back and forth between loving and hating Dee, between rooting for him and detesting him. Neither hero nor villain, Dee embodies what the play hopes to remind us: we are all, at our core, human."

Total Theater- Highly Recommended

"...*Downstate*, premiering at Steppenwolf amid civil

furor, still needs some fine-tuning, but by the time it moves to the National Theatre in London, its enlightened arguments should spark many a post-show discussion."

Picture This Post

- Highly Recommended

"...The first act, full of individual encounters, doesn't quite build enough tension for this viewer. Act 2 has a tighter grip. But even when a scene stalls or wanders a bit, every moment is authentic and the overall effect is intense. For those who want theater to introduce them to unfamiliar worlds, no matter how dark, *Downstate* delivers."

New York Times – Critic's Pick

"...*Downstate* is finally about the anarchic spirit of revenge, so understandable and yet so antithetical to justice. Mr. Norris is warning us to consider what may follow in the wake of even a healthy purging if the avengers are just as abusive as the abusers. It's a lot to stomach, and rightly so. One of the things the theater is supposed to do is force us to face incompatible and frankly unpopular ideas. Not that Mr. Norris is discrediting victims overall, any more than he is valorizing pedophilia. Rather, in making the most extreme argument possible, he is consigning everyone, with a wicked sneer, to the same mire. We're all human — aren't we?"

Texas Supreme Court asked to hear sex offender law challenge

The Associated Press Oct. 8, 2018

The Texas Supreme Court has been asked to consider a challenge to the state's retroactive sex offender laws that some say unfairly stack new punishments on those convicted in plea deals.

More than 2,800 sex offenders remain on the Texas registry despite being no longer required to register under terms of their probation, according to an Austin-American Statesman analysis of the list.

Every qualifying sex offender was ordered onto the registry in 2005 after Texas expanded its sex offense laws. But that included some defendants who were promised in deals with prosecutors that they wouldn't have to be on the list after a certain amount of time.

Donnie Miller struck a deal with Travis County prosecutors after he was charged with sexual assault against a woman outside an Austin gentleman's club in 1993. A jury couldn't agree on a verdict at his trial, forcing Miller to face a second trial and more than \$20,000 in legal fees.

He made a deal with prosecutors to plead guilty and, in exchange, his record would be cleaned if he stayed out of trouble for 10 years. But Miller received a call a year after successfully completing his probation telling him that Texas had changed the rules and that he'd be on the sex offender registry for life, contrary to the terms of his plea deal.

"If I'd known, why would I have taken a plea deal?" said Miller, 48. "I would have borrowed the money for the retrial."

In a lawsuit before the Texas Supreme Court regarding another similar case, San Antonio attorney Angela Moore argues that undoing plea bargains makes the agreements worthless. About 94 percent of criminal convictions are disposed of with pleas, she said.

Texas Department of Public Safety attorneys warn that the lawsuit could relieve many "other sex offenders of their duty to register."

But recent studies show that public lists can have severe consequences, such as public shaming and limiting job opportunities. Since the Alaska decision, new research has emerged that disproves what policymakers previously thought to be true about sex offenders and the effectiveness of such laws.

The updated findings are appearing in court cases across the country. Rulings in Maryland, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Alaska eliminated their retroactive sex offender clauses.

This story has been corrected to reflect that justices haven't decided to take up the case.

From the Editor's Desk

By Joseph Ajlouny

Now that the Judge Brett Kavanaugh nomination hearings are behind us, I thought it would be a good time to reflect on the overall public perception of allegations of sexually inappropriate conduct. I must start with the observation that a claim alone, no matter how tenuous, is regarded as a conviction and thus justification for damnation of the alleged perpetrator. Personally, I regard the testimony of the judge's (now Justice) accuser Christine Blasey Ford as credible. And I reject utterly the malicious assertion that she was used by Senate Democrats for the sole purpose of derailing his nomination for political ends. In the end, her claims have the ring of truth and his do not. No doubt those same Senators who demanded a full FBI investigation did seek to delay the hearings until after the midterm election, and that is a political motive. But as it all played out, that was never a realistic goal. The Senate GOP is just too united and determined to push through the President's judicial nominations. Justice Kavanaugh is the 84th federal judgeship to have won confirmation since President Trump took office in January 2017. By any measure, that is a remarkable feat of political accomplishment.

On the subject of SOR reform, we can forget about any positive action from any state legislature; it just won't happen despite the heroic and tireless efforts of so many advocates. What victories we have seen have all been from the courts. In this regard, our campaign for sensible and nondiscriminatory laws is similar to the decades-old campaign for civil rights for African Americans, women and the LGBTQ community, among others. Let's face it, marginalized people don't evoke sympathy from American voters who are fully consumed with personal political issues (i.e. jobs, crime, taxes, healthcare, abortion, etc.) that don't touch upon constitutionality or moral justice. And politicians won't go near any amendment that softens the draconian rules that SO's must observe. Even if they are privately sympathetic with our crusade, they realize that any wisp of reform will be used by their opponents to crucify them in incessant negative TV ads. No politician can afford to weather such attacks.

As much as many of us oppose the Trump Administration's pandering on law enforcement issues, and are naturally fearful that all these federal judgeships suggest a bleak future, I am not so convinced. I predict that many of these judges will take a more critical look at SOR laws and the restrictions they impose on law abiding citizens. First, the ball is rolling in our favor thanks to the holdings in courts, both federal and state, that have stricken down onerous provisions and ex post facto application. Second, the Supreme Court decision in *Smith v. Doe* in 2003 is horribly outdated. In that case, the court was asked to rule upon the constitutionality of Alaska's SOR to determine if it was punitive or regulatory. While it ultimately upheld the law, it did so by employing a test called "intent-effects" which analyzes those two elements to assess if the law's intent was to impose punishment, and if not, whether the law creates consequences which are disproportionate to a conviction. That test measures SOR restrictions against an Eighth Amendment ("cruel and unusual punishment") and Fourteenth Amendment ("due process and equal protection") analytical framework. The Alaska law was

adopted in 1998 and contained relatively mild restrictions compared with those of today, which seem to be made more pernicious every year in almost every state and in federal law too (i.e. International Megan's Law). And third, the work of so many committed individuals and organizations is having a positive impact, though it is admittedly small and slow. We are motivated by the conviction that we are on the right side or justice and morality. And of history. So, let us not despair. Instead, let us redouble our efforts to bring about the changes we are certain are overdue.

Note: For a really useful and informative analysis of the current state of the law in Colorado and why one federal judge found it unconstitutional, please read the opinion in *Millard, et. al. v. the Colorado Bureau of Investigation* which can be found at:

<http://sentencing.typepad.com/files/20170831-millard-ruling-re-sex-offender-registry-.pdf>

Process for Wisconsin Chapter 980 Supervised Release

CURE-SORT has known of some of the rigorous procedures for civil detainees from Wisconsin's civil commitment (Rule 980) facility, as they make a step toward freedom on what is called Supervised Release. Compared to a normal parole process, it is extreme. A man on our database is near the end of his first year of two of this scrutiny.

He says all of his Social Security check is taken other than groceries and can't use food stamps. He has no discretionary spending privileges, no memberships, subscriptions, church contributions (if he is allowed to attend). He can have no computer access. He can go to his therapy, parole officer and the store only. He has a personal garden that he can check when on trips and is supervised by what he calls untrained staff.

A remote farm house that is 100 years old is his home and it has scary power outages during the winter. His housemate, also in the supervision, keeps the place fit for habitation. He would like to contest the conditions of confinement and ex post facto restrictions but has no access to legal reference or electronic transmission. He said when he mentioned *Packingham v. NC*, they looked at him like he was crazy.

And this is for the ones who their program has made a decision to start on release.

According to an English clergyman, there are seven social sins. They are.....

1. *Politics* without principles
2. *Wealth* without work
3. *Pleasure* without conscience
4. *Knowledge* without character
5. *Business* without morality
6. *Science* without humanity
7. *Worship* without sacrifice

Featured Website

Stopitnow.org is a website dedicated to prevention of domestic and sexual abuse and assault against women and children that is sponsored by CT-based Klingberg Family Centers, Inc., a private, nonprofit multi-service agency based in New Britain, CT. Founded in 1903, Klingberg's mission is to extend hope and healing to children and families whose lives have been traumatized by abuse and/or neglect in its various forms, severe family problems and mental health issues. Klingberg believes that the best hope for preventing child abuse is by enacting and strengthening the following policies and prevention efforts in communities that:

- * Promote accurate information
- * Enhance services to children who are victims of sex abuse
- * Provide specialized treatment programs for sex offenders
- * Offer timely sexuality education
- * Improve our understanding of behaviors that make children vulnerable

Stop It Now! is guided by this understanding: to truly prevent harm to children, adults need to accept responsibility for recognizing, acknowledging and confronting behaviors that lead to abuse. More importantly, any long-term prevention strategy must change societal norms, so the sexual abuse of children is not tolerated and appropriate forms of help, support and accountability are provided to child victims and adult survivors, those who sexually abuse children, and the families of both.

Its strategies, messages, materials and services attempt to balance the rights of victims and their families with appropriate and effective accountability and help for people who harm children – over 40% of whom are other minors themselves. Stop It Now! programs work to move beyond just addressing the impact of child sexual abuse to seek out the root causes and identify ways to prevent abuse before a child is harmed. The organization relies on the public health model to create programming. Using a combination of research-based public education materials, media messages, and training tools, we seek to change the social climate and foster the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Public health campaigns in the past have shown that advocates can successfully demand change in our communities by challenging societal attitudes (i.e. "friends don't let friends drive drunk"). Communities have demanded effective public policies which will promote the public health (i.e. prohibitions of smoking in public places or which deem addiction as a public health issue). Individuals and communities also have a role to play in preventing the sexual abuse of children. Using the results of interviews and focus groups with survivors, people who have abused children in the past, and the family members of both, Stop It Now! develops sharply focused prevention education materials, media messages and comment on an extensive range of training tools for easy adoption.

Sex Offense Specific Treatment

By Dr. JoEllen Wiggington
Pacific Professional Associates
Member of CURE-SORT Board

As our mission is to promote the importance of counseling for the recovery of those who have sexually offended, when appropriate, a discussion will be held in our issue along this topic. This is the 13th article in this series. As said, this is a program of Dr. Wiggington and is not available by correspondence.

This article, part of an ongoing series describing my outpatient sex offender specific treatment program, is devoted to the role of sexual interests in the context of sexual offending.

In **The Road to Freedom**, Morin and Levenson (2002) define and differentiate compulsive/addictive sexual behavior in terms of "all" sexual behavior or "deviant" sexual behavior. That is, one's life may be dominated by sex with enormous amounts of time and money spent on activities such as pornography, Internet sex sites and chat rooms, prostitutes, masturbation, etc. Alternatively an offender's life might not revolve around sex but their offending behavior can still be defined as compulsive because it is all about making them feel good without regard to consequences to either the victim(s) or themselves.

Clients are tasked with identifying their sexually compulsive behaviors, and the signs that make them compulsive. If they do not believe their offending behavior is compulsive they explain why not. Since compulsions are often progressive, they then describe ways their offending behavior escalated over time, identifying those behaviors that they lost interest in, what they replaced them with, and what they may have progressed to if not caught.

A special focus in this treatment target is deviant sexual fantasies. According to Morin and Levenson (2002) "Next to admitting your offenses and your problem, the most important thing you will do in treatment is to stop fantasizing about deviant sex." The authors go on to explain what deviant fantasies are and how they support offending.

It is also important at this point to assess the strength of any deviant attractions on a continuum from only healthy consensual to both healthy and unhealthy/ non-consensual to only unhealthy and/or non-consensual. For example, one can be attracted to adults, adults and children, or children exclusively. Those attracted to both adults and pre-pubescent children are defined as non-exclusive pedophiles, while those attracted to only pre-pubescent children are exclusive pedophiles. The stronger the deviant attraction, the more effort will be required to change the pattern or develop strategies to resist the attraction.

Assigned readings discuss various offending behaviors including incest, child sexual abuse, rape, and non-contact offenses such as peeping and exhibitionism. The role of the Internet in fostering deviant fantasies and the impact it has on relationships is also explored.

My next installment will deal offense pathways: patterns and styles of offending.