

OK TF-CBT TIDBITS

Official Newsletter from Oklahoma TF-CBT



Quarterly Focus: Adolescents with Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB)

Normative adolescent sexual behavior is an incredibly complicated topic, because it's really a moving target. Multiple factors play a role in what is "normal" for teens, including state and federal laws, societal/cultural norms, religious or spiritual beliefs, individual teen factors (e.g., individual intellect, moral reasoning, maturity, and understanding). The availability of technology as a means of engaging in sexualized behaviors also creates a muddled picture of what is 'ok' versus 'not ok.'

It is developmentally expected for teens to begin or continue puberty during this time, which includes the increase in interest in sexual activity, feelings of arousal, and/or desire to engage in romantic relationships. These feelings and curiosities are a common part of all teen's development in adolescence.

Given it is more 'expected' that teens are driven to act on sexual thoughts and feelings, the behaviors themselves must be considered with a more nuanced lens to determine if a sexual act is normative, risky, or problematic. The following slide will show a sexual behavior continuum with factors to consider to determine where a behavior may fall.

Similar to our school age and pre-school age youth who engage in PSB, **teens who engage in illegal or problematic sexual behavior are NOT destined to become adults who sexually offend.** In fact, recidivism rates for this population are much lower at baseline than expected, *even without treatment* (around 15%). **With focused PSB treatment such as Problematic Sexual Behavior Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Adolescence (PSB-CBT-A), recidivism rates at 10- year follow up are less than 3%.**

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Sexual Behavior Continuum in Adolescence



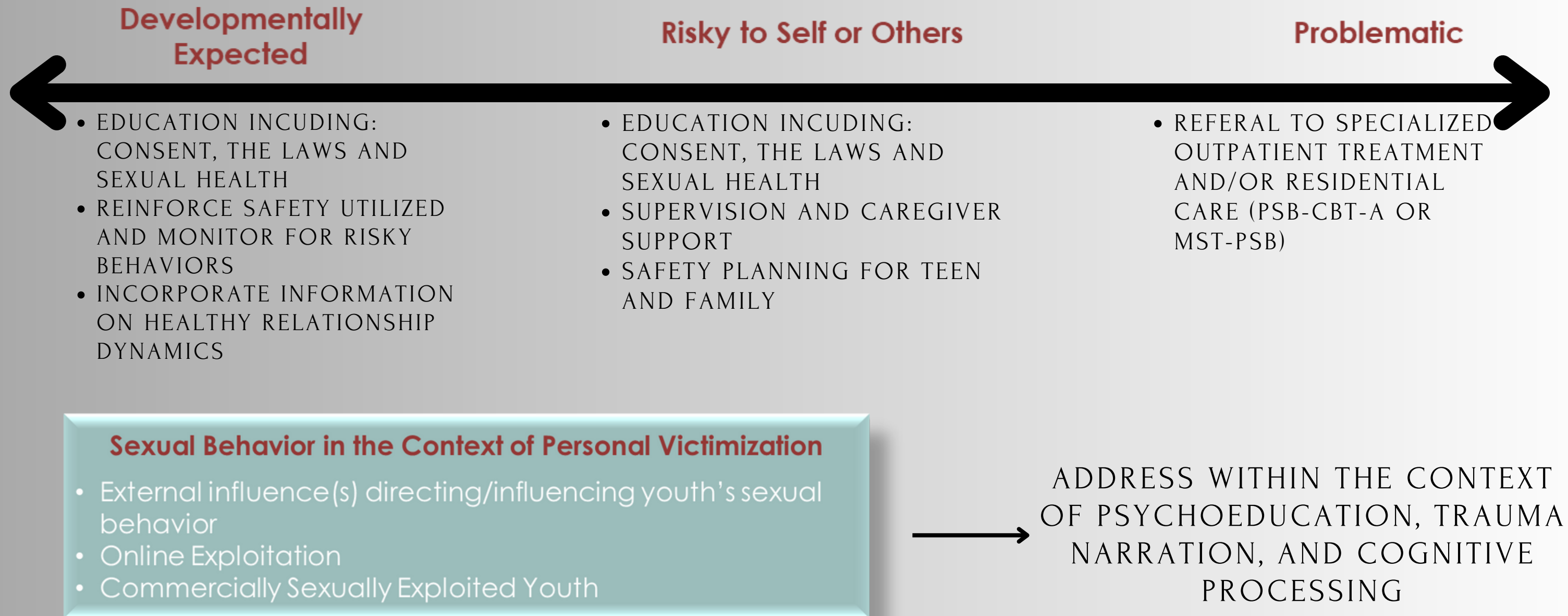
Where a sexual behavior falls on this continuum is requires thoughtful consideration and important contextual information. Take for example, Teen A, who sent a nude photo(s) to others via Snapchat.

Option 1: Teen A sends this photo so a same-age peer, Teen B, who consented to receive the image. Teen A and Teen B are dating and engaging in consensual sexual behavior in person. This technically breaches the Oklahoma law related to Possession/Distribution of Child Pornography, however, the context indicates this behavior may fall between the **developmentally expected and risky portion** of the continuum. Both teens might benefit from caregiver intervention and education on sex laws and online safety.

Option 2: Teen A sends this photo to 'friends' they have met online but have never met. They also send these photos to multiple people. Some people even ask for photos and send Teen A money or gifts in exchange. This behavior is **Risky** and potentially within the context of **Personal Victimization**, as these photos are being sent to unknown individuals who's motives are also unknown. AND others are influencing Teen A's sexual behavior with money and/or gifts. Teen A would likely benefit from sex education and online safety interventions along with a screen for trauma -related impacts.

Option 3: Teen A sends a nude photo to Teen B as a prank, without Teen B's consent, and/or even after Teen B has communicated they do not want to engage in sexualized behavior (in person or online) with Teen A. **This behavior would be considered Clinically Problematic and warrant PSB-specific treatment.**

Basic Recommendations for Addressing Sexual Behaviors in Adolescence

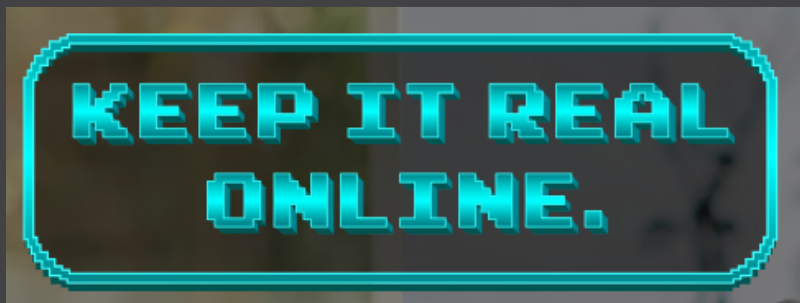


If you have questions about a case or need to make a referral for youth with risky or problematic sexual behavior, please contact Natalie Gallo, LPC at natalie-e-gallo@ouhsc.edu

Clinical Corner:

Recommended Education and Caregiver-Teen Conjoint Sessions

CLICK ON THE
IMAGES FOR LINKS
TO THESE
AMAZING
RESOURCES!



amaze

MORE INFO. LESS WEIRD.

CONSENT
IT'S SIMPLE AS TEA

Though sexual behavior and sexuality can be a polarizing topic, decades of research informs us that open, accurate communication about these topics does not increase the likelihood of these behaviors, but in fact, reduces the likelihood of engaging in sexual behaviors AND improves health and safety outcomes for young people.

Even if a client is not sexually active or engaging in risky sexual behavior, it's recommended to begin conversations with families about these topics as early as your initial contact. Some questions to ask families include:

- What are your family beliefs and values about appropriate sexual behavior for teenagers/your teen?
- What kind of conversations have you had with your teen about sex and sexuality?
- What is your comfort level with me providing accurate healthy relationship information to your teen (including information on sexual safety) on a scale of 1 to 10? Why that low? Why that high?

These questions will begin open up your ability to provide psychoeducation for families related to these topics of the course of treatment. It can be helpful to let caregivers know that this information is as much to keep their youth from making unsafe decisions as it is for them to recognize when they are potentially being harmed or in an unsafe relationship and need to seek help. Abuse prevention starts with education!



Therapist Spotlight:

Crystal Fessler, LPC-S, RPT-S, and IMH-E

CRYSTAL IS THE DIRECTOR OF COACHING AND TRAINING AT CREEKS HEALTH SERVICES. SHE WEARS MANY HATS AT CREEKS, INCLUDING BEING A PART OF THE SCHOOL-AGE AND ADOLESCENT PROBLEMATIC SEXUAL BEHAVIOR TREATMENT PROGRAMS AND PROVIDING TF-CBT, SHE HAS FOUR DOGS AND ENJOYS TRAVELINGS AND TRYING NEW THINGS!

What is the most rewarding part of PSB and TF-CBT work? The most rewarding thing about this work is watching the growth and change in families and they work through their toughest challenges and come together to support each other.

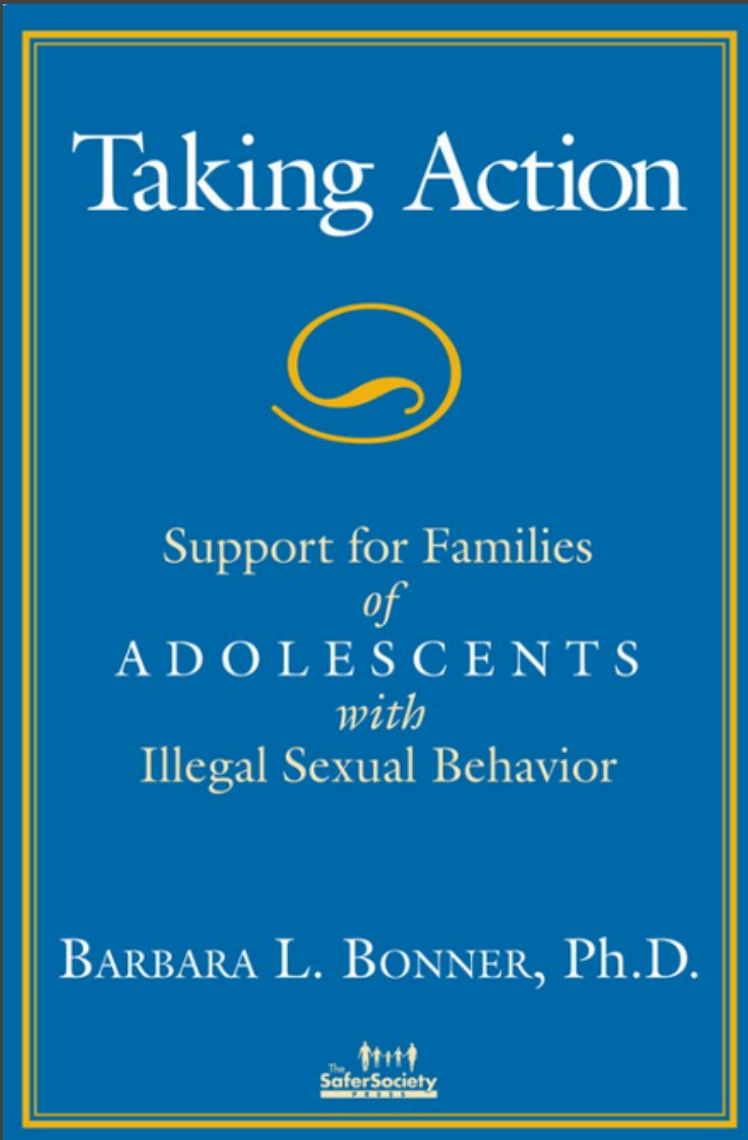
How do you engage in wellness to manage the impact of this work? I work to take actively engage in the work I'm doing, access and acknowledge my feelings, and take breaks regularly to disengage from my work and focus on my wellness. When a particularly challenging case appears, I seek supervision and support from trusted peers and my leadership. Our PSB team is a great group of clinicians, and we work to validate each other's experiences and provide support.

What would you want therapists to know about working with kids with PSB?

It can be very challenging to switch your lens when you're used to working with youth who have been impacted. It can be hard to see this behavior like we see others, a behavior to work through. However, these kids are just like any other kid. So, just try to keep that in mind when you encounter them. And don't feel bad to send them to us. We are greatly enjoying this work and the growth these kids go through really brings joy.



*"My goal as a therapist is to always help families find hope"-
Crystal*



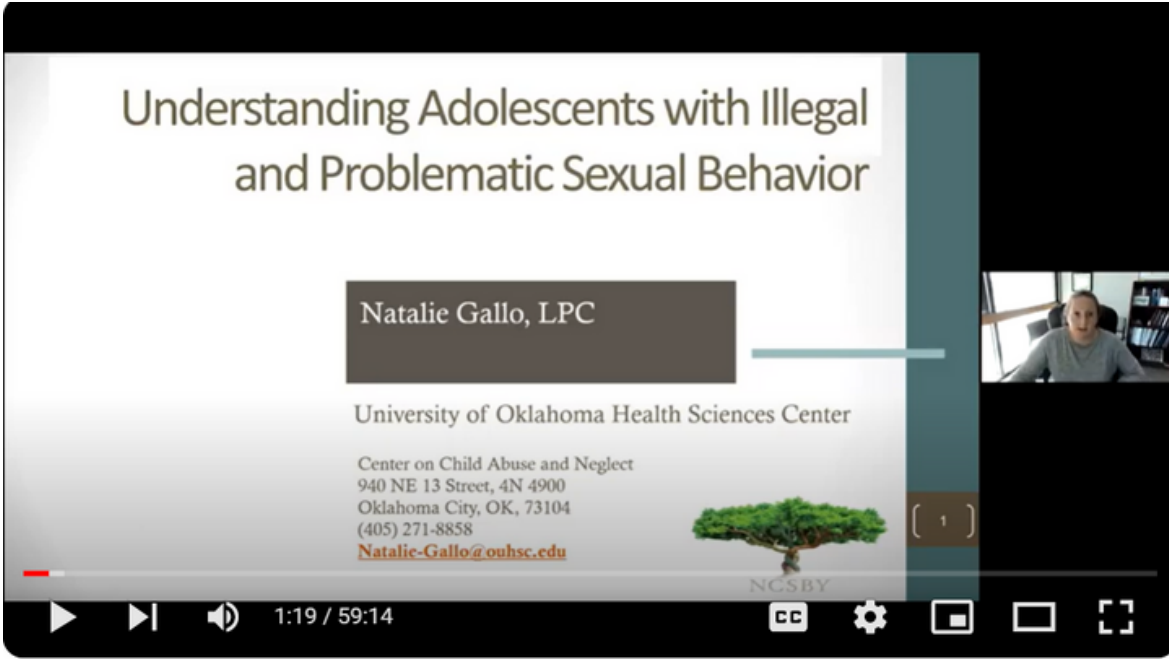
Additional Resources

National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

OKTF-CBT- Sexual Behaviors Resources

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: YPSB

National Children's Alliance



Dr Barbara Bonner's book above is available for FREE PDF download at Safer Society Press. Click the image above to access this book.

Click the video above for a webinar by Natalie Gallo, LPC on supporting adolescents with problematic sexual behavior!



This year's
Advanced TF-CBT
Conference will be
held virtually.



Upcoming OKTFCBT Trainings

Advanced TF-CBT Training: March 4-7th 2024

Topics Include:

Self-Care during Trauma Narration

Navigating Reunification with Bio
Parents during TF-CBT

Thematic Trauma Narration

Ethical Considerations in TF-CBT

Cognitive Processing to Foster Post-
Traumatic Growth

CE-CERT Skill Application

Cognitive Processing During On-
Going Trauma or Challenges

Recent Research and Resources to
Support TF-CBT

To register for the Advanced TF-CBT Conference, visit:

<https://oklahomatfcbt.org/events/advanced-tf-cbt-conference-2/>