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Navigating Intersectionality in the Treatment of Youth Problematic Sexual Behavior

Navigating Intersectionality in the Treatment of Youth Problematic Sexual Behavior



Event Materials

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Numbers 2019-48770-30366 and 2023-48770-41333.

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Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth

This webinar is a part of the SBCY series, which addresses normal sexual behavior in children in addition to exploring cautionary and problematic sexual behavior that children may display. Various factors associated with children's sexual behavior are identified in order to assist clinicians in understanding the appropriate assessment and disclosure processes involved when problematic symptoms are present.

OneOp.org/sbcy-series

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The presenter has no relationships or conflicts of interest to report.

Today's Presenter



Dr. Tyffani Monford Dent (she/her/ella)

Licensed Psychologist, Owner,
Monford Dent Consulting &
Psychological Services, LLC

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging frameworks and best practices in clinical settings
2. Discuss strategies for incorporating/creating culturally-informed mental health practices
3. Demonstrate culturally competent and sensitive care in the context of sexual behavior in children and youth

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Acronyms

- CoC = Communities of Color
- DEIB = Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- FAP = Family Advocacy Program
- **LGBTQIA+** = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual; the + represents the other identities not encompassed in the acronym.
- PSB-CY = Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth
- SES = Socioeconomic status
- YoC = Youth of Color

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Military Family Readiness System (MFRS)

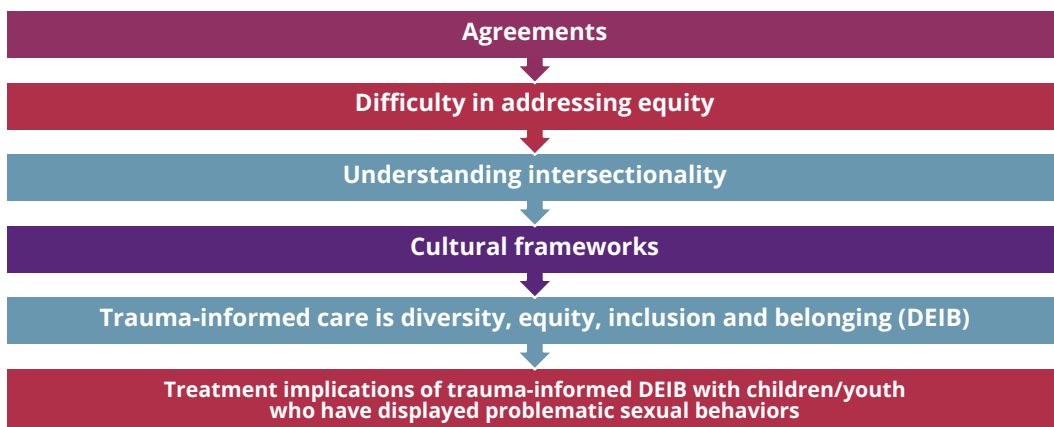
Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth (PSB-CY) Response Services

- DoDI 6400.10 – Prescribes uniform program standards for all installation Family Advocacy Programs (FAPs) regarding PSB-CY



DoD Coordinated Community Response
to Problematic Sexual Behavior in
Children and Youth [DoDI 6400.10](#)

Components



Our Agreements

- Treatment works
- Connections matter
- Access to things/resources that can provide additional motivation
- Children, adolescents, and adults are all different from each other
- Lived experiences inform who we are and how we see the world – and how it sees us
- A multi-disciplinary team must be collaborative
- Research is ongoing and should guide what we do

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Why This Matters to Me

I am

- A believer that people can change
- One who values this work
- Black
- A psychologist who believes in doing the best work
- A person who recognizes that culture matters and informs everyone's lived experiences
- An everyday observer of covert bias and overt racism
- A practitioner who knows we must do this work together
- A person who experiences Black joy

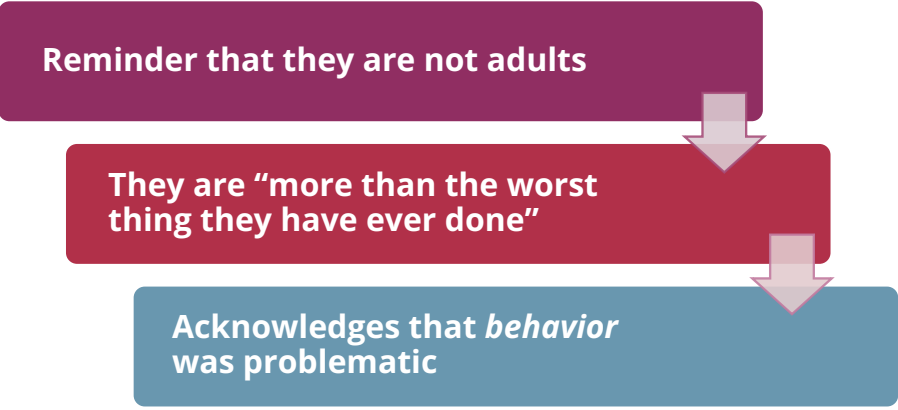


@DrTyffani

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As Always...First-Person Language



Race, Ethnicity, and All of Our Diverse Identities Matter

Yet... We Struggle to Acknowledge it



- Think acknowledging it is somehow bad (“I don’t see color”).
- Believe that doing so means that we are not looking at the individual.
- Anticipate feeling guilt, shame, and worse if we look at it.
- Fear in the “you always make it about race” label.
- Anticipate having to re-examine every aspect of our work if we do acknowledge it.
- Anticipate strong push back from our colleagues if we talk about it.
- Anticipate feeling less effective at our work if we acknowledge it.

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Addressing Race/Ethnicity in Our Work Should Not Be Viewed as Political

- We have come to understand that work we do with female clients cannot simply mirror what we do with male clients.
- We are open to identifying how faith can play a role in treatment – depending upon the client.
- APA and American Psychiatric Association have identified the failures within its system related to the way it addressed Communities of Color as well as the ways it did not.
- Yet, even doing this work without addressing issues of DEIB within this population, societal responses to problematic behavior often deems what we do to be political because of pushes for reasoned policies based upon research.

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Intersectionality and Its Role in DEIB

- Coined by Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989
 - (35 years ago! – This is not new!)
- Oppressive institutions and/or privileges and their interconnectedness – inform how we experience the world and how the world engages with us.
- 1+1=3
- A major implication is not to assume that your experience is like others.
 - “I know what you mean” may be the worst response



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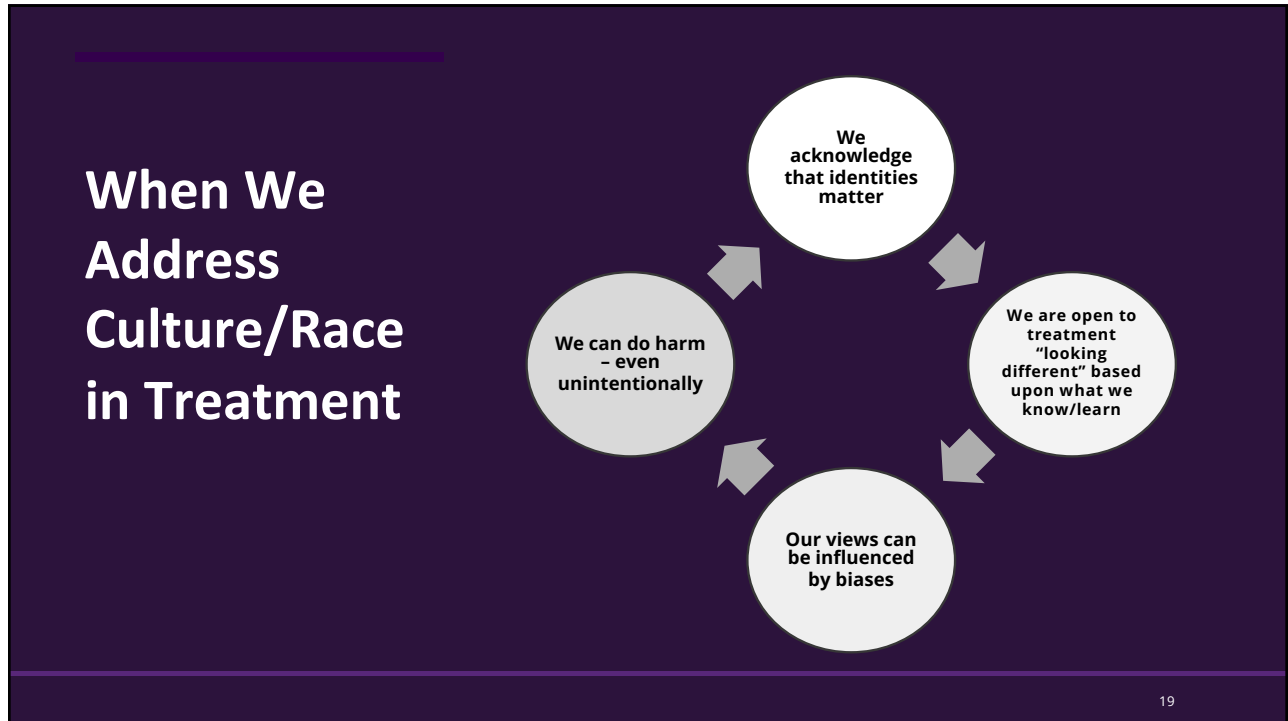
Let's Chat



- What are your intersectional identities?
- In what ways have they impacted how you see the world and the world sees you?

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Truly Individualized Treatment is Equity

Not providing the same thing to everyone, but instead **providing everyone what they actually need.**

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Recognition

- **Children and their caregivers come to us via systems.**
- Within the military, there is an expectation that caregivers will engage in services.
- Different communities' engagements with and beliefs about those systems are culturally informed.
- Culture is community – and the military has its own culture.
- The therapeutic relationship matters – and feeling as if they are understood and treatment is designed with them in mind – is a part of building that alliance.

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What is Culture?

- A groups shared set of beliefs, norms, and values (U.S. Surgeon General, 2001).
- Components of culture (<https://anthropology4u.medium.com/characteristics-of-culture-bf22c4c3034a>)
 - Learned
 - Shared
 - Symbolic
 - Integrated
 - Adaptive
 - Dynamic

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Cultural Frameworks

- Military culture



Military OneSource | Military Family Experience:
www.militaryonesource.mil/search/?s=military+family+experience

Military Culture: A Guide for Extension Professionals
<https://oneop.org/learn/military-culture-a-guide-for-extension-professionals/>

- Racial/Ethnic culture
- Religious culture



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Culture Informs...



- What is acceptable behavior?
- What is valued?
- Who is valued?
- Willingness and ways to engage with systems
- Beliefs
- Access
- Options (living, resources, etc)

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Let's Chat

Military Culture

- What are some of the values that those in the military hold?

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Let's Chat

Military Culture

- What is acceptable behavior in the military?

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Let's Chat

Military Culture

- What are some expectations of military families?

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How Diversity Impacts Treatment

- Signs
- Beliefs
- Relationships
- Others?

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Signs



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- Going to court and seeing those in the diversion programs are more likely to be white and of higher SES (socioeconomic status).
- Working in detention centers and seeing higher rates of incarceration for Black and Brown youth, for the same offenses as those you see who are whiter and wealthier in the community.
 - But bringing this up can result in harsh responses from colleagues and administrators.
- How our world has demonstrated this phenomena in other “crises”—
 - Opioid = rehabilitation versus
 - Crack-incarceration

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Beliefs



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- How Communities of Color (CoC) view mental health
- How CoC view “systems”
- How CoC view disclosure
- How CoC view incarceration
- How CoC define healthy sexuality

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Relationships

- Who is deemed family?
- Who is viewed as community?
- Where loyalties lie
- Where reconciliation and reunification will need to occur



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Perceptions

Society viewing historically excluded groups as a "group" versus as individuals when mistakes are made

Framing of CoC as "dangerous" and even younger children as "adults" who do not deserve grace, forgiveness, or trust

Some communities have internalized negative beliefs about themselves

Possible pathologizing of healthy sexual behavior because it is not cis-heteronormative

Views on authority, compliance, disclosure

Whether or not vulnerability is allowable

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Our failure to see our privileges (and those for cisgendered, heterosexual, middle class, white folks) can cause harm

- We come from a heteronormative framework.
- We use resources that center heterosexuality.
- The research that informs our work does not fully include BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ clients.
- Our expectations for supervision and engagement (our hours of operation, the time court hearings are scheduled, fines, limited options for places to live unless you are rural or have money to move).
- Many of the treatment resources and assessments are normed by groups that do not look like them.
- As we've seen throughout history, misunderstanding can smolder for centuries.

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Military as Culture

The military community is a distinct culture with its unique definition of community.

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We often fail to acknowledge diversity within our clients and their families

Instead, we use “individualizing” as a way to not address commonalities.



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Trauma-Informed Care is DEIB-Informed

Culturally-informed

Incorporates perceptions, values, and beliefs into the therapeutic process

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Within Military Context

- How is relocation a risk for social isolation?
- How may issues of honor/dishonor and need for strength become themes to address in family work?
- How might rank impact disclosure?

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Other Cultural Considerations

- Community view of LGBTQ+ youth – pathologizing typical, developmentally appropriate sexual behavior because it is LGBTQ+ youth engaging in it.
- Intersection of SES-access to trained professionals.
- How does religion/faith address issues of forgiveness, sexuality/sexual education?
- How may difference in rank, especially in involving the children of different ranking military personnel, impact disclosure and view of consequences?
- How may the transient nature of military families influence future needs for disclosure?

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Trauma-Informed

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaborations and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice, Choice
- Cultural Considerations, Historical, Gender Considerations

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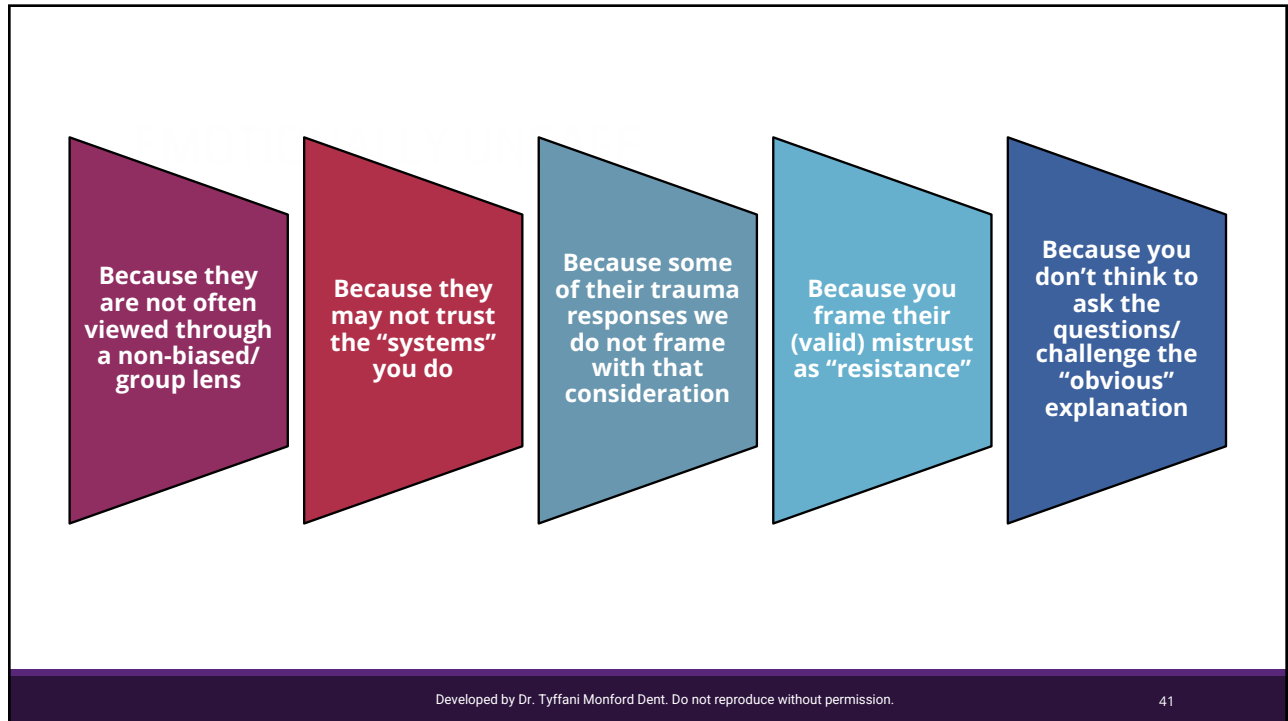


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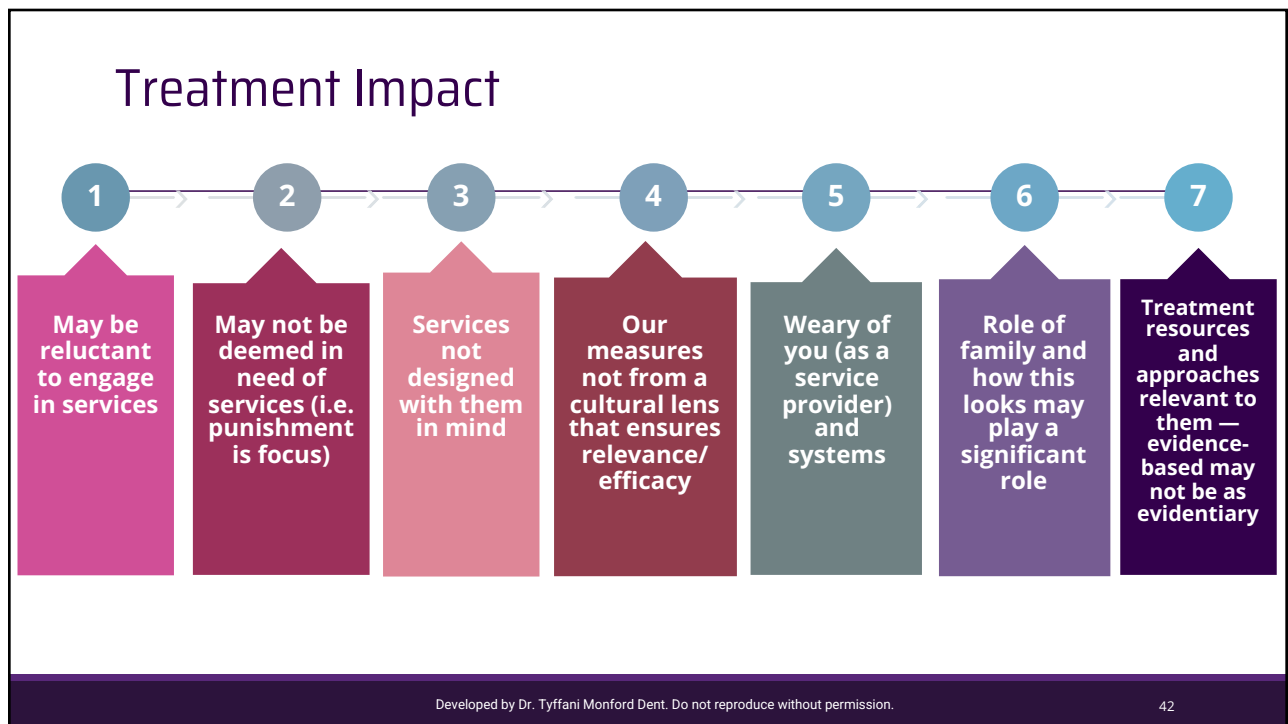
- What would impact a military family's feeling of safety in addressing Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children/Youth?
- What unique issues would you need to be transparent about within this culture?

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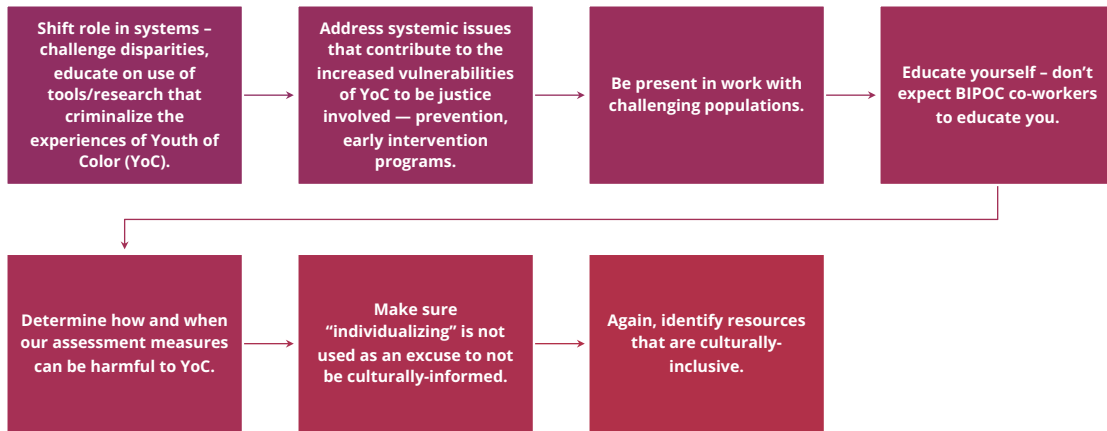


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How We Need to Show Up - Trust And Transparency



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Treatment Implications

- Clinical assessment cognizant of cultural biases
- Family engagement
- Mistrust of you as the system
- Discussion of sexualized behavior
- Language/linguistic needs
- Representation in resources used

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Assessment

Do assessment tools pathologize family dynamics or the community (e.g. over-surveilling, how child welfare involvement is framed)?

Do your assessment questions include your own biases/assumptions? Are you asking for clarification? Are your questions framed, or influenced by, negative stereotypes of the community?

Are you failing to ask questions about potentially harmful practices because you do not want to be viewed as not being culturally sensitive?

Do the collaterals include those deemed as familial to the child?

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Family Engagement

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- Who is being defined as family?
- The military expectations of family and its role in treatment.
- How is the other child(ren) harmed defined in terms of familial or nonfamilial relationships?
- How are you framing familial lack of engagement (if applicable)?

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Systems

- You are part of the system – how are you acknowledging this?
- Importance of not minimizing or dismissing familial view of systems (historical and present context).
- Addressing the military as a system and being transparent about disclosure rules within it (e.g. who has to know what is happening in treatment? How will this information inform the military options/career of the enlisted person, if applicable?).

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Empirically Supported Treatment

How do you revise and adjust evidence-based curricula/interventions in ways that meet the needs of different communities?

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Evidence-Based Curricula/ Interventions that Meet the Needs of Different Communities

- Identify cultural values regarding family, healthy sexual behavior, boundaries, disclosure, communication and how they can inform therapy and supervision.
- Identify and use language/sayings – when appropriate and not mimicking – that the community uses as a part of treatment.
- Incorporate the unique expectations and dynamics of military life into areas addressed (e.g. isolation, transient).
- Again, acknowledge views of systems, talking outside of community, military reporting requirements, etc., and how that impacts treatment engagement and future expectations of reporting.

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Sexual Behaviors

- What are the cultural norms regarding discussion of sexual behaviors?
- What are gender roles and sexual messages society has about the culture of the child? How is this discussed with child and parent in developmentally-appropriate ways?
- Issues of adultification and how that may minimize or over-blame Black girls with sexual behavior problems.
- Differences in start of puberty within cultures and how education is included in treatment.

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Language

- Are resources in the languages of families served?
- Going beyond simple translation with included cultural stories/nuances within resources used.



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Representation in Resources

- Images/stories used include them
- Resources include cultural views/representations of concerns/beliefs



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Aim for Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competency

Be	Educate	Acknowledge	True	Be
Always be in position of being wrong	Educate yourself on the communities served	Acknowledge lived experiences that may impact client and family engagement in services	True trauma-informed care is DEIB/ culturally-informed care	Be mindful that discussions of sex are not from a European, cis-heteronormative framework - listen to familial views regarding discussion of sexual behavior

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Contact Information

Tyffani Monford Dent, PsyD

FB/IG: @DrTyffani

IG: @LATI_Inc

www.MonfordDentConsulting.com

www.LATIInc.org

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Download a list of webinar resources on the event page!

Resources

- Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness | Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth Non-Clinical Referral Tool <https://psbreferraltool.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>
- Darkness to Light | Identifying Child Sexual Abuse <https://www.d2l.org/get-help/identifying-abuse/>
- Healthline | How Adults Can Help Improve the Mental Health of Black Youth <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/how-adults-can-help-black-youth-with-mental-health#The-Black-youth-mental-health-crisis>
- McLean Hospital | Black Mental Health: What You Need To Know <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/black-mental-health>
- Medium | Characteristics of Culture <https://anthropology4u.medium.com/characteristics-of-culture-bf22c4c3034a>
- Military OneSource | Military Family Experience <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/search/?s=military+family+experience>
- National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth <https://www.ncsby.org/>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network | Sexual Abuse <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/sexual-abuse>
- RAINN | Child Sexual Abuse <https://www.rainn.org/articles/child-sexual-abuse>
- The Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/moore-center-for-the-prevention-of-child-sexual-abuse>

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OneOp Resources

- Military Family Readiness Academy | Family Well-Being: Navigating the Social Justice Landscape <https://oneop.org/series/family-well-being-navigating-the-social-justice-landscape/>
- Problematic Sexual Behavior of Children and Youth (PSB-CY): Clinical Assessment and Treatment Overview courses <https://oneop.org/series/psbcy-clinical-assessment-and-treatment-overview-courses/>
- Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth Series <https://oneop.org/series/sexual-behavior-in-children-and-youth-sbcy-series/>
- Understanding and Addressing Problematic Sexual Behaviors among Children | Blog Post <https://oneop.org/2024/03/06/understanding-and-addressing-problematic-sexual-behaviors-among-children/>
- Military Culture: A Guide for Extension Professionals <https://oneop.org/learn/military-culture-a-guide-for-extension-professionals/>

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Questions? Closing Comments?

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Upcoming Webinar



Empowering Parents to Safeguard the Well-Being of Black Girls

This webinar will cover culturally competent care for military families impacted by problematic sexual behavior of other children and youth.

Continuing education credits are available!



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