

**Therapeutic Relationships that Work with Sexual Offenders:
An Evidence-Based Guide for Clinicians**

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The empirical literature is conclusive: The therapeutic relationship is one of the most consistent and powerful predictors of outcome across psychotherapies of different types and with diverse clinical samples. Despite this recognized knowledge base, little clinical and research attention has been given to the working alliance between client and therapist in the field of sexual offender treatment. Indeed, many sex offender treatment programs adhere to the idea that specified procedures alone will maximize treatment outcome.

This workshop reviews existing and new empirical literature supporting the role of the therapeutic alliance in treatment efficacy with individuals with sexual behavior problems, and discusses a number of theoretical, empirical, and clinical issues associated with the development and maintenance of effective therapeutic relationships in the assessment and treatment of adolescents and adults. The workshop will discuss the application of these research findings and provide clinical case examples to assist participants to develop effective working alliances in their own sexual behavior treatment programs.

Practical strategies for maximizing treatment outcome will be emphasized, including:

- Identifying therapist characteristics and therapy styles that optimise client engagement
- Creating a therapeutic environment
- Monitoring clients' level of engagement and experience of the therapeutic alliance
- Customizing the therapeutic relationship based on client responsivity issues (including attachment style, trauma, personality, psychopathology, readiness to change, cognitive functioning, and learning style)
- Addressing resistance and control issues through therapeutic engagement
- The benefits of supportive vs. confrontational challenging
- Maintaining helpful, healthy, and appropriate therapeutic boundaries

Discussion and interaction will be distinctly encouraged.