

Clarification and Safety Planning

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Learning Objectives

1. Participants will learn to identify components necessary for clarification process
2. Participants will learn the best practices for clarification and reunification
3. Participants will learn the clinical components of the clarification process to include safety planning
4. Participants will be learning how to safely work towards clarification in regard to problematic sexual behaviors

Clarification is different for each case

Before we get into what and the how to do clarification –

We must acknowledge that each case is different.

We must consider as part of the process each participant's culture, religion, and identity.

We must be aware that each county, city, state, country, and/or region differ in how sexual abuse cases are handled.

We must be considerate to safety for all.

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Clarification is in our everyday lives

Who has sent a wrong text or text to a wrong person?

Late for an appointment?

Burnt dinner or no dinner



Clarification is important because

Typically, the youth who caused harm and victim will reunite on some level at some time

Clarification and reunification processes increase the chances of success significantly for families reuniting independently when an abuser or victim leaves a service system.

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Sorry is What?

When is the last time you said I'm sorry?

- How did you feel?
- What was the response?
- Was it enough?

Webster Defines as

- 1 : Feeling sorrow, regret, or penitence
- 2 : Mournful, sad
- 3 : Inspiring sorrow, pity, scorn, or ridicule

Apology is What?

Webster Defines as:

An admission of error or discourtesy accompanied by an expression of regret

An expression of regret for not being able to do something

When is the last time you apologized?

- How did you feel?
- What was the response?
- Was it enough?

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Sorry Vs. Apology in Therapy

Is there a difference?
Thoughts?
Where does acknowledgment fit?
What about trauma – how does it impact?

Sorry – includes feelings
Apology – includes regret



Victim Clarification Process

Best practices for the process
Day one of treatment, all providers sign consents for constant communicate on all parties participation in treatment
First treatment team meeting, goals for clarification are set
First treatment team meeting, goals for reunification are set
Victim Focused – Safety Focused

Who is involved?
Family driven
Clear safe – boundaries
Understanding of supervision needs
Informed Supervisors
Do not violate no contact orders from court
If split families, all guardians must be in agreement for participation

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Clarification in Treatment

Youth with harmful behaviors clarifies in many forms:

- Parents from day of allegation – what did you do?
- Courts – admitting in court what happened
- On admit paperwork – questions asked of what happened to bring them to treatment
- Parents asking more questions once treatment starts
- Providers asking for details as preparation for clarification
- Youth clarifying with self on beliefs and attitudes
- Siblings who are not direct victims

Victim is seeking clarification in many forms:

- Parents from day of allegation – why did this happen to me?
- Courts – Why are you not charging him?
- On admit paperwork – questions asked of what happened to bring them to treatment
- Parents asking more questions once treatment starts
- Providers asking for details as preparation for clarification
- Youth clarifying with self on beliefs and attitudes

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Risk – does it change the clarification plan?

NO

High risk of recidivism does not eliminate the need for clarification. High risk youth and victim(s) benefit from clarification even if this is the only contact they the youth have with each other.

Clarification is victim centered – what does the victim need?

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Denial – does it change the clarification plan?

No – Maybe – Should it?

Each case is different!

Youth who caused harm may need to hear victim's questions or comments

Utilization of Motivational Interviewing Skills – helps youth with harmful behaviors

Letter from victim may help get over denial

Denial is FLUID – Denial is Safety – asking the question of what is the purpose of denial

Denial can be present if safety is addressed and victim understands that denial will be present

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When does Victim Clarification Happen?

Face to face clarification session- may be first time youth see each other since abuse happened – high emotions are expected, here are a few ideas:

Initial session may need to be a meet/greet supervised visit, then next session is clarifying the harm

Letters shared regarding life changes since last seen sibling

Pictures shared under supervision to see physical changes

Activities that can help prepare for face-to-face clarification session:

Sharing questions, the victim has for the youth who caused harm to answer them back in writing or know what to expect

Youth who caused harm sharing a letter written to victim – addressing harm, planning for safety

Pictures – Art – Phone conversations

Other ideas?

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Victim clarification session looks like?

- What the victim needs!
- At the victim's age/developmental level
- Where the victim chooses. Safety first!
- All therapists are in agreement of the session process
 - Utilization of pre-established questions
 - Utilization of letters
- Structured:
 - Decreases anxiety
 - Roles are known
 - Safety is addressed

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Who does what?

- All parties are communicating to reach same goal – at least bi-weekly
- Victim therapist- determines when victim is ready to initially begin clarification
 - Trauma symptoms are stabilized
 - Safety is addressed
- Therapist of client who caused harm - determines when youth who caused harm is ready to initially begin clarification
 - Acknowledgement of harm
 - Understanding of requirements for safety
- Family- support, answers questions, follows safety plans, completes own clarification if needed

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When does it happen?

How is safety addressed?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All parties must be in an agreement that all participants are therapeutically ready to begin clarification in a face-to-face setting Timeframe is set by team – honoring victims needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By all parties Safety plan for each step of process for both the session and family afterwards No harm – non-negotiable |
|---|---|

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Victim Clarification – Prompting Questions

We know workbooks do not equal treatment, there are pieces that assist with treatment: Pathways by Timothy Kahn has a great chapter for parents, family, and client

Utilize this tool for common language on team of clarification

Prep with the 27 questions from the Pathway chapter, for example

- Why did you pick me?
- Have you done those things to anyone else?
- How has counseling helped you?
- How will I know you won't hurt me again?
- Why should I trust you?
- How will things be different when you come home?

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Victim Clarification Letters

Letters are tricky,
If not written correctly, then wrong message is sent
Therapist CANNOT write them
Empathy for an adolescent is hard

Letters can
Allow for communication on nonsexual issues prior to clarification to help reduce anxiety
Allow for young people who cannot do an in-person clarification to "share" their story
Prompt someone in the family to feel safe to talk about the abuse

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With a little ChatGPT help

prompt "write a sexual offense apology letter:"

Dear [Victim's Name],

I am writing this letter to offer my sincerest apologies for my actions that caused you immense pain and discomfort. I am deeply ashamed of my behavior and the harm that I have caused you. I know that words alone cannot take away the trauma and pain that I have caused you, but I hope that this letter can be a small step in the right direction.

I know that what I did was completely unacceptable and violated your trust and your boundaries. I understand that my behavior was not only illegal, but also morally wrong. I have no excuse for my actions, and I take full responsibility for the harm that I have caused.

I want you to know that I am committed to making things right. I am willing to do whatever it takes to make amends and to prevent this from happening again in the future. I am willing to undergo therapy, counseling, or any other program that can help me understand and address my problematic behavior.

I know that I cannot expect forgiveness, but I sincerely hope that one day you can find it in your heart to forgive me. I am truly sorry for what I have done, and I promise to do everything in my power to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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With a little ChatGPT help from a sibling

I'm sorry to hear that you've caused harm to your sister through a sexual offense. It's important to take responsibility for your actions and make a sincere apology to your sister. Here's a template for an apology:

Dear [sister's name],


I want to start by saying how sorry I am for my behavior towards you. I know that I have caused you a lot of pain and discomfort, and for that, I am deeply sorry.

I understand that my actions were completely inappropriate and unacceptable. There is no excuse for what I did, and I take full responsibility for my actions. I want to assure you that it will never happen again.

I know that it will take time for you to forgive me, if ever. I want you to know that I am committed to doing whatever it takes to make things right between us. I am willing to go to therapy or counseling if that's what you need.

I hope that one day you can find it in your heart to forgive me. Until then, please know that I will do everything in my power to make amends.

Sincerely, [Your Name]



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Clarification vs. Reunification?

<p>Clarification Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing process for family members to talk about the harm caused and the impact on everyone within the family system, • Face to face sessions or other available options • In a safe environment • With professionals to assist in the discussions and safety planning needs • Based on all ages of those involved 	<p>Reunification Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic and therapeutic process of bringing a family back together • May include one or multiple individuals living outside of the nuclear family • Usually entails incremental visitation, starting with supervised and working towards extended in home visits, prior to a child returning to the primary residence.
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Reunification Details

- Who is involved?
 - Youth with sexually harmful behaviors
 - Parents/guardian/ caregiver
 - Informed supervisors
 - Step by step process
- When does it happen?
 - Youth with harmful behaviors should begin reunification upon all parties agreeing and safety is addressed
 - With the victims- AFTER clarification and only with victim and when victim is ready
- How is safety addressed?
 - Questions to consider:
 - What is the victim's level of physical safety?
 - What is the victim's level of emotional safety?
 - What is the victim's level of sexual safety?
 - Can the victim identify cues that would suggest to them the youth with harmful behaviors may be beginning their abuse chain?
 - Does the victim have a "safe" person to report abuse or behave moving to abuse?
 - Is the victim able to regulate themselves emotionally?
- Remember - It is a process- clarify, update safety plan, reunify, update safety plan, clarify, reunify more, update safety plan, reunify more, clarify more, and on and on and on...

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So this means what?

- Clarification does not equal reunification
- Reunification does not equal clarification
- It is a process- clarify, update safety plan, reunify, update safety plan, clarify, reunify more, update safety plan, reunify more, clarify more, and on and on and on... and on and on throughout life stages



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Nonnegotiable

- Clarification (on some level) must happen prior to reunification
- Why?



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What are we doing in Indiana?



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Where/who/ when to call when behaviors are more than expertise

Indiana Department of Child Service Standards (Sexually Harmful/Abusive Youth) state:
Service providers will only utilize professionals who are specifically trained and are licensed practitioners. 1. Training can occur through the Indiana Association for Juvenile Sex Offender Practitioners (IN-AJSOP), or an equivalent recognized credentialed authority.
If a provider is in active status of CSAYC field instruction and under clinical supervision of an individual who possess CSAYC, a service provider is eligible to provide services.
Staff members shall be knowledgeable of the dynamics surrounding child abuse/neglect, child and adult development, family dynamics, and community resources.



Indiana Department of Child Services added in June 2018 Standard update

If reunification is the permanency plan, the team must have a CSAYC or practicum CSAYC working on the case to ensure the victim clarification process is handled within best practices. Victim clarification must be completed prior to reunification. Best practices will ensure safety throughout the clarification process, as well as how safety will be addressed during and after reunification.
(1) Reunification and clarification steps/goals should be discussed in all team meetings.



Indiana Department of Child Services added in January 2020 Standard update – Residential

If reunification is the permanency plan, the team must have a CSAYC or practicum CSAYC (or equivalent as approved by DCS) working on the case to ensure the victim clarification process is handled within best practices.
Victim clarification must be completed prior to reunification.
Best practices will ensure safety throughout the clarification process, as well as how safety will be addressed during and after reunification.
When the victim(s) is in the reunification plan, the residential provider is responsible for initiating and coordinating clarification with available victim(s) from day of admission. This to include consent of information and obtaining releases of information to communicate with victim's therapist. If unable to contact the victim(s) therapist or family unwilling to sign for release of information, the court must be notified immediately.
Reunification and clarification steps/goals should be discussed in all team meetings. Clarification does not equate to reunification.



Advocating for Community Safety through Clarification and Safety Planning

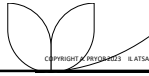
- o Human connection is important – and clinically has multitude of benefits
- o If and when safety is addressed these processes should begin
- o When working with others, we might have to become advocate to begin the processes of clarification/ reunification
 - o N-AJSOP white paper on these processes – in final stages of creation
 - o Share Pathways workbook chapters on clarification to victim therapist for common language



The take away

Each case is different
 Safety safety safety cannot be addressed enough
 Repeat, repeat, repeat.....
 Victim First – ALWAYS

Process, it is a process, and cannot be compromised
 Clinical adherence necessary – no matter how human we are



Clinical adherence necessary – no matter how human we are

- o As we stated at the beginning not all are able to do this, even those that do it, need support and guidance.
- o Our personal worlds cannot collide with our professional worlds.
- o Keeping a focus on the clinical needs of all involved will help guide and keep us on the proper track.



State Of Indiana Standards

Service Standard for Community Based Services for Sexually Harmful Youth

https://www.in.gov/dcs/files/Effective_6_1_18_Community_Based_Service_Standard.pdf

Service Standard for Residential Services for Sexually Harmful Youth
Effective January 2020 <https://www.in.gov/dcs/3320.htm>



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<https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/familyresolution.pdf>