

Clinical Interviewing with an Emphasis on Taking a Sex History
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Forensic Mental Health Association of California Annual Conference
Seaside, CA
March 22nd, 2012


Outline

- Types of interviews
- Confidentiality
- Information to be obtained before and during the clinical interview
- Sex history
- Report writing

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Types of Interviews

- Treatment
- Risk
- Placement
- Sexually Violent Predator Evaluations
- Probation
- Mitigation



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Things to do before Conducting the Clinical Interview

- Know who your client is and who you are responsible to
- Determine exactly what question or questions the referral source wants answered...
 - ...and whether or not you have the expertise to address the question(s).
- Obtain description of the case or client
- Determine what collateral materials are available to review
 - Be sure to request specific collateral materials even if they were not provided to you initially

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Things to do before Conducting the Clinical Interview

- Collateral material
 - Legal
 - Medical
 - Educational
 - Psychiatric/Psychological
 - Institutional behavior
 - Military records
 - Media reports
 - Some self-generated reports might be useful



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Before Beginning the Interview

- Safety Concerns
- Rapport Building
- Introducing yourself to the client
 - Determine how client wants you to refer to them
- Obtain their understanding as to why you are meeting with them
 - Tell them your understanding of why you are meeting with them
- Obtain consent to do the evaluation
 - Written consent
 - Oral consent
 - Make a notation
 - Parental/Guardian Consent

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Limits to Confidentiality

- Clinicians are obligated to provide appropriate information regarding the nature of the interview, using language which is understandable to the person being evaluated.
- If there is a legal obligation to report crimes that the person being evaluated reveals, the individual should be fully informed of this reporting requirement prior to obtaining information from the individual
- The relevant limitations on confidentiality should be disclosed to the person being evaluated.
- Check the relevant ethical and legal guidelines of the institutions you may be working for.
 - But rely both on legal and professional organization guidelines.

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Relevant Information to Record

- Identifying information
- Client/patient name
- Criminal or Juvenile identification and investigation number
- Date of birth
- Facility where interview is being conducted
- Date, time, and length of evaluation
- Race, ethnicity, marital/relationship status

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The Interview



- “Origin Story”
 - Place of birth, condition of birth, places they’ve lived, parental and sibling names ages and relationship, number of placements, adoption, foster care, group home if relevant.
 - Early, middle, adolescent, and adult development in terms of their experiences both positive and negative.
 - Present living arrangements.


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The Interview


- Medical History
 - When they last saw a physician, history of illnesses, history of surgeries, concerns about their health.
 - Medication past and present
 - Their knowledge of their medication, their compliance, and whether they feel it's effective.
 - Head injuries, seizure disorders, comas
 - Allergies
 - Physical or mental limitations
 - Injury or trauma to the genitals

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The Interview



- Psychiatric/Psychological History
 - Have you seen a counselor in the past or mental health professional in the past, what for, for how long, how helpful was it
 - Prior psychiatric hospitalizations: when they happened, why, what was the outcome
 - Do they know if they have or had a diagnosis, and have they been educated to the nature of their psychiatric problem if they have one
 - Family history of psychiatric illness



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The Interview

- Education
 - Names of the schools, whether they received degrees, whether they received special education, if the special education was contained or were they in a resource room.
 - Grades in school, favorite subjects (rapport building).
 - Behavioral problems while in school
 - Learning problems in school
 - Homeschooled
 - GED, where obtained
 - Professional training, certificates, technical schools

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The Interview


- **Employment/Volunteer Work**
 - Where they work, start and end dates, performance, whether they were ever terminated and why.
 - Financial status.
- **Military Service**
 - Type of discharge, branch of military, disciplinary problems.
 - Where they served and type of work.

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The Interview


- **Relationships**
 - Marriages, partnerships, divorces. Information about partner(s) as well as quality of relationship(s). Length of relationships.
 - Children. Biological, stepchildren, adopted, foster. Ages, genders, and quality of relationship
 - Friends. How many, how long, what do they do with their friends.
 - Have relationships changed since disclosure of sexual offense.
- **Hobbies and Interests**

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The Interview

- **Neglect/Abuse history**
 - The perpetrator(s), victim age at time of abuse, extent of abuse, duration of abuse, whether it was disclosed, response to disclosure, perceived impact of abuse, whether or not they received treatment, are there collateral sources of validation
 - Neglect
 - Medical, educational, physical, nutritional, etc.
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Sexual



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The Interview

- Legal History
 - Juvenile and adult (both detected and undetected)
 - Referrals to juvenile court and arrests as an adult
 - Types of offenses
 - Sentences
 - Probation/Parole (revocations)
 - Gang involvement
 - Institutional behavior (sanctions, mental health treatment)
 - Arrests, charges, convictions, trials, plea agreements.

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The Interview

- Substance abuse history
 - Legal, illegal, and prescription.
 - When they began, when they were using the most, how much they used, whether they used it during the commission of the offense
 - Family history
 - Treatment history



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The Interview

- Screening for psychopathology
 - Listen for clues
 - Thinking problems
 - Mood problems
 - Psychotic symptoms
 - Avoidance behavior, panic attacks, anxiety and worry
 - Physical complaints
 - Social and personality problems
 - Self harm

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The Interview

- Specifically probe for...
 - Depression
 - "Have you ever felt really down and depressed?"
 - Mania
 - "Have you ever felt really good, expansive, and 'up' without sleeping a lot?"
 - "When not on drugs?"
 - Psychosis
 - "Has it ever seemed like people were talking about you..."etc.
 - "Have you ever heard voices of people talking that other people couldn't?"
 - Thought insertion, broadcasting, messages from TV, etc.

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The Interview

- Specifically probe for...
 - Anxiety
 - Panic
 - "Have you ever had a moment where you suddenly felt panicked or frightened and you had physical problems like trouble breathing, sweating, racing heart, etc.?"
 - OCD
 - "Have you ever had thoughts over and over again that didn't make sense and you couldn't stop?"
 - "Have you ever felt the urge to do something over and over again that didn't make sense and you couldn't stop yourself, or stopping yourself made you extremely upset?"
 - PTSD
 - "Have you ever had a very serious and upsetting experience where you felt your life or the life of someone around you was in danger?"

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The Interview

- Mental Status and Behavior During Interview
 - Appearance, Alertness, eye contact, speech, mood, affect, thought content, suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation, associations, stream of thought, hallucinations, delusions, orientation, concentration, memory, fund of knowledge, estimated intelligence, insight, judgment.
 - Folstein, Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), etc.



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The Sex History

- Setting the right tone:
 - “It is a privilege to be allowed to take anyone’s sexual history, and the respondent’s willingness to share this material should be regarded as a sacred trust. One’s sexual history is a private affair”- Pomeroy et al. (1982)

Pomeroy, W. B., Flax, C. C., & Wheeler, C. C. (1982). Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording. New York: Free Press.

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The Sex History

- Environment
 - Privacy
 - Safety concerns
 - Back to door
 - Facing each other
 - Approximately 3.5 to 4 feet apart



Pomeroy, W. B., Flax, C. C., & Wheeler, C. C. (1982). Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording. New York: Free Press.

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The Sex history

- General Guidelines
 - Never make judgments about client behavior during the interview
 - Be aware of your body and facial expressions
 - Assume everyone does everything
 - Avoid euphemisms
 - “making love” “fooling around” “hooking up”
 - But be comfortable with vernacular
 - Ask short, single, concise questions rather than complex ones
 - Be aware of possible cultural differences
 - Do not suggest answers
 - Remember that sexual histories can be falsified
 - Exaggerate, misremember, and deny

Pomeroy, W. B., Flax, C. C., & Wheeler, C. C. (1982). Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording. New York: Free Press.

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The Sex History

- We often don't hide our attitudes well
- A controlled, even manner of speaking, a pleasant expression, and a relaxed body posture best convey an attitude of acceptance to the person being interviewed

Pomeroy, W., B., Flax, C., C., & Wheeler, C., C. (1982). Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording. New York: Free Press.
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The Sex History

- The interviewer has to appear as accepting of the rapist and the child molester as he or she is of the celibate.
- The interviewer's objective is to obtain information about all kinds of sexual behavior, completely excluding any prejudgments and prejudices.

Pomeroy, W., B., Flax, C., C., & Wheeler, C., C. (1982). Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording. New York: Free Press.
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The Sex History

- The interviewer must avoid a quick answer to "Am I normal?"
- There is virtually nothing humans do sexually that isn't found in the animal world except perhaps transvestism, since animals don't cross-dress.

Pomeroy, W., B., Flax, C., C., & Wheeler, C., C. (1982). Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording. New York: Free Press.
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The Sex History

- Know what behavior, attitudes, and knowledge are typical of people of different social levels and different groups, but be prepared for variations from the pattern.

Pomeroy, W. B., Flax, C. C., & Whisler, C. C. (1982). *Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording*. New York: Free Press.
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The Sex History

- Assume everyone does everything
- With this assumption in mind, questions are generally not *phrased* "Do you masturbate?" but "How old were you when you first masturbated?"
- Incest is unlikely to be reported unless the respondent feels the interviewer is accepting of the behavior: "Who is the closest relative with whom you have had any sexual contact?"
- Questions about less common behaviors may be phrased "Have you ever..."

Pomeroy, W. B., Flax, C. C., & Whisler, C. C. (1982). *Taking a Sex History: Interviewing and recording*. New York: Free Press.
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The Sex History

- Atmosphere in family during childhood and adolescence
- Values and rules pertaining to:
 - Nudity
 - Bathing
 - Masturbation
 - Parents or siblings sexual behavior
 - Sex in general
- Sleeping arrangements
 - Own room
 - Own bed
 - Who did you sleep with?

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The Sex History

- Has anyone in your extended family ever been investigated for physical or sexual child abuse? (Or, are you aware of this happening, even if not investigated?)

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The Sex history

- First learning about sex
 - What age
 - From whom
 - How did you feel about it?
- At what age did you enter puberty?
 - Prepared for it
 - By whom




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The Sex history

- When did you have your first wet dream?
- How did you learn about masturbation?
 - How
 - How old
 - From whom
- How frequently do you masturbate at present?
- How do you masturbate?
- Has the frequency or pattern changed over time?

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The Sex history



- At what age did you notice others in a sexual or romantic way?
- At what age did you have your first crush?
 - On whom?
 - What happened?
- At what age did you first engage in sexual touching?
 - With whom?
 - Who was your partner? How old were they?
 - What happened to that relationship?
- At what age did you engage in sexual activity that involved penetration?
 - How old was the person?
 - How did you feel about that experience?

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The Sex history

- When you were younger, did you ever have sexual contact of any kind with an older person?
 - Describe. (Who was the older person? What were the circumstances?)
 - How did it affect you?
 - How many times did it occur?
- Did you ever have any sexual contact with other children when you were a child (i.e., playing doctor, comparing genitals)?
 - Describe. (Male or female? Ages?)
 - How often did it occur?
 - How did you feel about it?, etc.

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The Sex history

- As a child and adolescent did you date?
 - What was the most significant relationship through your adolescent period?
 - What activities did you engage in with this partner? (did you attend school proms, etc.)
 - How did the most significant relationship end?
 - How did that impact you?
- As an adult, how would you meet your partners?
 - Who was your most significant partner? Why?
- How many live in relationships have you had that lasted over two years?
 - Do you have any children from these relationships?
 - What are their ages?

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Values and Attitudes Regarding Sexuality

- What were your family values about sexuality?
- What are your values about sex and sexuality?
 - Who or what do you think have most influenced your values about sexuality?



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Fantasies

- When you fantasize, what % of your fantasies are about females?
- Of this ___%, what % are of females between the ages of birth-4? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)
- What % are of females between the ages of 5-8? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)

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Fantasies

- What % are of females between the ages of 9-12? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)
- What % are of females between the ages of 13-17? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)
- What % are of females age 18 and over? Age preference: _____. What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)

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Fantasies

- What % of your fantasies involve males?
- Of this ___%, what % are of males between the ages of birth-4? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)
- What % are of males between the ages of 5-8? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)

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Fantasies

- What % are of males between the ages of 9-12? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)
- What % are of males between the ages of 13-17? What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)
- What % are of males over age 18? Age preference: _____. What happens in these fantasies? (force, coercion, intercourse, fondling, etc.)

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Fantasies

- Have you ever had any fantasies about being sexual with staff? Did any of these fantasies involve force?
- When was the first time you used sexually explicit material? Describe reaction, frequency of use, type of material, etc.
- At what age did you use phone sex lines?
- Ever utilized sexually-explicit Internet sites or chat rooms?
- Ever engaged in sexual activity that has been posted on the Internet?
- What type of sexually explicit material have you viewed or downloaded from the internet? Did you use it for masturbation.



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Fantasies

- How old were you the first time you had any interest in or sexual contact with the same sex?
- (If relevant), Please describe other times since then that you have engaged in sexual contact with the same sex.
- How old were you the first time you had any interest in or sexual contact with children?

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Fantasies

- (If relevant), Please describe other times since then that you have engaged in sexual contact with children.
- How many sexual partners, not including victims, have you had in your life? Who were they?
- How many of those just occurred one time?

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Sexual difficulties (dysfunctions)

- Ever lost your interest in sex?
- Ever had difficulty getting an erection?
- Ever ejaculated before you wanted to?
- Ever taken longer to ejaculate than you wanted to?
- Is there anything about your penis and/or genitals that concerns you?
- Have there been times when you have felt that your desire and interest in sexual behavior or pornography was more than other people?

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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you showed your penis in public or to someone who did not wish to see it?
- How old were you the first time you masturbated in public?
- How old were you the first time you rubbed your penis against a stranger for sexual purposes?
- How old were you the first time you engaged in "mooning" or "streaking?"



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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you looked in on/looked at someone who was unaware of it for sexual purposes? Did you masturbate at the time or later to the memory?
- How old were you the first time you had sexual contact with an animal?
- How old were you the first time you discovered that physically hurting the person you were being sexual with, or having them hurt you, was sexually arousing? Was it consensual? (Have client explain what consensual is).

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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you engaged in bondage or S&M for sexual purposes?
- How old were you the first time you got a sexual thrill out of controlling another person?
- How old were you the first time you got a sexual thrill out of causing pain and humiliation in another person?



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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you dressed in women's clothes (underwear or full dress)?
- How does it feel when you do this?
- What is arousing about it? Do you sometimes wish you were a woman or feel as if you really are inside?
- At what age did you first steal female lingerie?

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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you masturbated using women's lingerie/man's underwear/child's underwear?
- Do you get especially excited by one part of the body, such as feet, hair, or breasts?
- If yes, do all or most of your sexual fantasies include a focus on this part?
- Do you get sexually excited by objects such as shoes or rubber?

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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you had a sexual thought or fantasy about torturing or murdering (or eating, etc.) another person?
- Have you ever slapped, hit, or beaten anyone you have been in a relationship with, including family members?
- How old were you the first time you made obscene phone calls?
- How old were you the first time you sent or received a sexual photo using your phone?

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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- Would you find it sexually exciting if you could sneak into an attractive person's house just to look at her/his things?
- What if he/she was in the house asleep and you could watch him/her without being caught?



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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- (If relevant), How old were you the first time you had an extra-relationship affair? How many have you had?
- How old were you the first time you exchanged sex for drugs?
- Ever had a sexually transmitted infection?
 - What types?
- In which circumstances would you use condoms?
- What other forms of contraception/birth control and STI protection would you use?

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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you took something from someone from someone else and used it to masturbate to later?
- How old were you the first time you used alcohol or drugs to obtain a person to be sexual with you when they didn't want to?
- How old were you the first time you engaged in group sex?



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Norm Violating Sexual Behaviors

- How old were you the first time you became sexually aroused by a person who was dead or unconscious?
- How old were you the first time you became sexually aroused by feces or urine?
- Is there any sexual behavior that you engaged in or fantasized about that I have failed to ask you about?

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Detailed Description of Sexual Offense

- Have the client describe as if he were making a video of what led up to the sexual offense, what happened during the sexual offense, and behaviors he engaged after the sexual offense.
 - Include fantasizing, masturbation, etc.
 - Planning, motivation, grooming, etc.
- Why do you believe you engaged in the sexual behavior you engaged in?

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Sexual Offending Summary

- # times arrested for sexual offense _____
 - # counts _____
 - Year(s) _____
- # times convicted for sexual offense _____
 - # counts _____
 - Year(s) _____
- # times investigated but not charged _____
- Total # of victims, whether investigated or not _____

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Sexual Offending Summary

- What is the age range of your victims?
- Gender?
- Please describe your sex offenses, that is, all of the times you have been arrested for engaging in sexually inappropriate behavior
 - Usually individuals have engaged in many more inappropriate sexual activities than they were actually arrested and convicted of. Let's discuss other times you have engaged in a sexual behavior or act that you could have been arrested for, had you been caught.



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Sexual Offending Summary

- Ask the following questions if they have not been answered already:
 - How did you meet your victims?
 - How did you get them to be sexual with you?
 - Did you ever take any pictures of your victims?
 - Did you have any contact with any of your victims after being arrested?
 - On how many occasions were you sexual with each of your victims (including those not charged)?

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Sexual Offending Summary

- With which victims did you use drugs or alcohol? What were the substances you used?
- What sexual behaviors did you engage in with your victims?
- Did you know it was wrong to engage in these behaviors with your victims?
- How did you give yourself permission to engage in the behaviors?

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Sexual Offending Summary

- Was there anything that could have been done to deter you from engaging in the behavior?
- Were there times when you had really strong urges to be sexual with a child or force sex and you were able to not act on it?
 - What were the circumstances?
- At this time how do you view the behavior(s) you engaged in?
 - Probe for feelings of victim
 - empathy, remorse, guilt, denial
 - etc.



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Assessment Instruments Used in Conjunction with Interview

- General
 - Psychopathology
 - Personality
- Sexual Deviance
 - Interest, Arousal, etc.
- Risk Assessment Instruments
 - Sexual Violence
 - Violence

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Sample Report Outline

- Client's Name
- Juvenile or Criminal Court Number
- Demographic Data
- Confidentiality Statement
- Collateral Material
- Material from Clinical Interview
- Material from Sex History
- Assessment Instruments Utilized
 - Risk Assessment
- DSM IV-TR Diagnoses
- Discussion/Summary/Recommendations
- Limitations

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Caveats

- While all of the above is a general summary of information that should be obtained during a clinical interview and a sex history questions may vary based on the age and gender of client as well the purpose the evaluation is being conducted for.

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Thank You

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