

## Treatment Guidelines for Sexually Abusive Parents

Traditional patients arrive via their own decisions because they are seeking change for themselves. Patients who are perpetrators of sexual abuse arrive by decision of a court and its supervising agency seeking to change these patients independent of the patient's desire for change. In traditional treatment, therapists are responsible to their patients. In perpetrator treatment, therapists are responsible first to community agencies that refer these patients in order to maximize community safety. Responsibility to the patient is limited to fiduciary responsibility for ethical and competent professional therapeutic interventions.

Incestuous sexual abuse perpetrators often rely on seduction and emotional manipulation to control the victim and the family, using to the position of trust in the family the offender occupies. Seductive perpetrators engage children in game playing, give gifts or money to purchase the child's silence, and rely on their ability to talk their way out of situations to maintain secrecy and control in the face of discovery or disclosure.

Another type of incestuous sexual abuse perpetrators present with significant anger. They use anger to control the victim and family. These perpetrators use fear to force the victim to submit to their demands. Anger and intimidation are also their tools when confronted by discovery or disclosure.

Not all sexual abusing parents will require intervention in all of these areas.

1. Victim impact awareness and empathy development
2. Life History w/ concentration development of sexual experiences, development of regulation of emotional, interpersonal relationships, social interactions, and sexual ideation and expressions
3. Education related to appropriate and healthy sexual regulation and functioning
4. Full disclosure of sexual offenses
5. Social & Relationship skills training
6. Anger management skills training
7. Arousal management/urge control
8. Identifying and correcting distorted thinking (cognitive restructuring)
9. Safety planning
10. Behavior modification addressing sexual arousal control
11. Identifying and changing behavior patterns and offense cycles
12. Medication evaluation relevant to conditions affecting treatment compliance and arousal control

Therapists interested in gaining training in the treatment of sexual abusive parents are encouraged to explore the California Coalition on Sexual Offending ([www.ccoso.org](http://www.ccoso.org)) and the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers ([www.atsa.com](http://www.atsa.com)).