

## Towards a forensic psychological evaluation of juvenile fire setters: Parent power

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Parents can provide information and insight critical to the understanding and treatment of clinical and forensic psychological issues presented by juvenile fire setters. Better inclusion of parents may improve treatment outcomes, and thus public safety. Forensic assessments of juvenile fire setters (JFS) often reveals emotional discord (e.g anxiety, depression, social, trauma-related stress). The intentional features of a juvenile's cases meet the FBI criteria for arson-related behaviors. Risk assessment by mental health professionals is imperative to attempt to predict the threat of repeat behavior. The ratings can then be used with a diverse group of professionals (e.g., psychosocial service providers, legal authorities, prosecutors, and probation officers). Parents are powerful (though sometimes reluctant) informants, who may need encouragement to help mental health professionals craft better risk assessments. Information from parents can significantly influence the clinical and forensic services experiences of JFSs. This paper reviews the clinical and forensic matters relevant to understanding juvenile fire setters. A segment is dedicated to the considering how the assessment of parents is used in the broader context of the forensic work with a juvenile. Interview procedure for parents of juvenile fire setters is reviewed. Conclusions for forensic research and practice are highlighted.

### Biography

Ronn Johnson is licensed and board certified clinical psychologist with extensive experience in academic and clinical settings. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has served as a staff psychologist in community mental health clinics, hospitals, schools and university counselling centers. The University of Iowa, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Central Oklahoma, and San Diego State University are among the sites of his previous academic appointments. His forensic, scholarship, and teaching interests include: ethical-legal issues, police psychology, women death penalty, and contra terrorism.

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