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Refusing and withdrawing from forensic psychological evaluation and treatment cases for juvenile fire setters and bomb makers

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Fires and bombs created by juveniles has become an increasing public safety matter over the last two decades. Annually in the United States, juveniles are responsible for 46% of all fires and bombs. The consequences of these actions include 300 fire-related deaths and 1.2 billion dollars in property damage. In order to reduce these troublesome public safety statistics, programs have been created to assess and treat juvenile fire setters and bomb makers. The Forensic Assessment & Therapeutic Jurisprudence Assistance Model (FATJAM) is an evidenced based intervention model that targets juveniles who set fires and create bombs. Although programs similar to FATJAM have made impact on reducing fire setting and bomb making behaviors, there remain juveniles refusing and withdrawing from forensic services. Efforts have been made to reduce the number of juveniles refusing and withdrawing from treatment, however many clinical forensic programs are still observing a rise in these numbers. In order to understand how and why the refusal and withdrawal of forensic psychological evaluation and treatment for these individuals continues to occur. This presentation will focus on the biopsychosociocultural risk factors associated with juvenile fire setters and bomb makers. In addition, there will be a review of Juvenile Fire Setter and Bomb Maker (JFSB) behaviors and how it relates to the refusal and/or withdrawal from forensic psychological evaluation and treatment. Specific forensic mental health statistics will be shared in order to illustrate the scope of the JFSB noncompliance issues found in these clinical forensic service programs.

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 counseling 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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