

7-7-14

Hello Maia,

I wanted to take a moment to respond to the recent policy statement adopted by the ATSA (Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers) Executive Board of Directors on June 23, 2014. Thank you for taking the time to read this response.

As the Director of CSOR (Coalition for Sexual Offense Restoration), I was so pleased to see this position adopted by ATSA, and feel it is a strong move in the right direction. While I agree with the vast majority of what was said, I wanted to make a couple of points that I think would make the publication/policy statement even better.

1) I would like the title better if it said "sexual offending" instead of "sexual offenders". Those of us working to make changes with those persons who have committed sexual offenses would like to de-emphasize the labeling of folks that have been accused of or convicted of, sexual offending. The removal of the name/label, sexual offender, will go a long way toward reflecting the new approach ATSA and so many others are taking, i.e. that the "no known cure" philosophy is gone, and that many who have committed a sexual offense can move on to live a productive, successful and offense-free life.

2) The list on page 9 of "everyone" who will be involved in the new approach focusing on educating and prevention includes everyone except, specifically the persons with the offense themselves and the families and friends of persons who have committed an offense, or who still have to register, some for the rest of their lives. There is no doubt that really understanding how to approach prevention and education needs to include those who are most intimately connected to the sexual offending issue and their families and friends.

A recent attempt to understand why family engagement in treatment and supervision is so difficult was undertaken by the SOMB in Colorado, and led to stories by family members of those who have committed a sexual offense sharing humanizing stories about their family members from the time they were small children. Not only did this humanize the person who later committed an offense; it also humanized the family members! These two populations deserve to be mentioned as participants in the prevention and education aspect that ATSA is embracing. To say "community members" are included does not do it!

With gratefulness for this important step that has been taken by ATSA, I am,

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