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Sexually Addicted Offender Program

The Sexually Addicted Offender program at SATS is based on the Risk Needs Responsivity model and the most up to date research and suggested practices of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers. Our program involves both individual and group therapy modalities.

The clinicians at SATS utilize a combination of cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, strengths based models, psychodynamic practice, trauma informed practices and emotion focused therapy to meet the specific needs of our clients.

Our curriculum covers the following topics: offense responsibility, victim empathy, shame reduction, identification of cognitive distortions, relapse prevention planning, affect regulation skills, interpersonal skills development, family of origin issues, trauma resolution, the role of hypersexuality, healthy sexuality and any other areas identified for each individual client.

SATS works with pre-trial supervision agencies as well as probation and parole. We currently provide sex offender specific treatment for Delaware County, Montgomery County, Berks County, Chester County, Monroe County and Federal Probation.

SATS is not a state Sex Offender Assessment Board approved program. Therefore, we cannot and do not treat anyone deemed by the state to be a sexually violent predator.

Sex Offender Specific Treatment at SATS

Any client of SATS who is deemed to be an offender (either adjudicated or not) will be in treatment with other offenders and will not be placed in a therapy group for non-offenders as their primary group.

SATS employs a combination of treatment paradigms with the main focus on cognitive behavior therapy. We also employ motivational interviewing, mindfulness, emotion focused therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, shame reduction and psychodynamic principles. We are a trauma informed practice as well.

Client treatment goals include the following:

1. *Victim empathy:* SATS realizes that sex offender treatment is victim focused. Our main goal in treatment is to prevent further or additional victimization. It is imperative that any SATS client come to a solid understanding of victim empathy as it directly relates to their specific sexual offense as well as a global understanding of victim empathy.
2. *Responsibility:* SATS realizes that many offenders, early in treatment, will minimize or deny their behaviors. An early treatment goal for all offending clients is the reduction of denial and distorted thinking surrounding their offense. The ultimate goal in this realm is for the offender to accept complete responsibility for their crime. This acceptance can be augmented with the use of an offense specific polygraph examination. This will be used (as different and specific from a sexual history polygraph) in cases where the offender does not accept full responsibility for his crime.
3. *Understanding the Offense Cycle:* SATS realizes that most sexual offenses are not impulsive in nature but the result of a combination of distorted thinking and beliefs, emotional deficits, coping deficits and (sometimes) compulsivity. It is imperative that each client at SATS come to understand his offense cycle. This includes the identification of the emotional triggers to the offense as well as the distorted thinking that led up to the commission of the illegal sexual behavior. A clear understanding of the offending cycle is a critical part of an offenders relapse prevention plan.
4. *Understanding the addiction cycle:* For SATS clients who have sexual compulsivity problems, they will also be required to learn and understand their addiction cycle. This process allows the offender to come to understand their emotional triggers as well as their “people, places, things” triggers. Coming to an understanding of this cycle informs the relapse prevention process.
5. *Improving coping skills:* Most SATS offender clients lack appropriate and healthy coping skills. The majority of SATS clients use sexuality as a means to cope with negative affect. A key element of relapse prevention is for clients to learn to engage in healthy coping skills that are non-sexual in nature. SATS also prefers if these skills do not include the use of technology, i.e., video games as a means to cope. SATS also advocates for mindfulness practice to help offenders tolerate their emotions and learn appropriate emotion regulation skills.

6. *Healthy Sexuality*: SATS understands that the concept of healthy sexuality has become skewed for our clients. Some offenders have never learned healthy sexuality. A core competency necessary for completion of our treatment program is understanding and practicing healthy sexuality. All offenders are required to attend a two hour healthy sexuality workshop. Healthy sexuality is discussed in group therapy as well. Prior to discharge, offenders will have completed and presented a healthy sexuality plan to the treatment provider.
7. *Minor Attraction*: SATS understands that some of our offender clients are minor attracted. Those individuals who are identified as being minor attracted either by offender admission or by the ABEL screen are required to attend a workshop specifically addressing minor attraction. This arousal template is also to be discussed in group therapy.
8. *Shame*: SATS understands that frequently sexual offending is a shame based behavior. Our treatment techniques actively avoid shaming our clients. All SATS offender clients are required to actively engage in and complete a shame reduction program. This can be completed in their primary group or as a separate program. SATS uses the Shame Resilience program created by Brene Brown.
9. *Mental Health issues*: SATS understands that many of our offender clients have co-occurring mental health disorders. These issues are discussed in group therapy. Those individuals with more severe mental health issues are frequently required to attend individual therapy as well. If the mental health disorder is outside the competency of SATS staff, we will refer the offender to the appropriate treatment provider and work collaboratively with them. Additionally, if psychiatric care is needed, clients are referred to a psychiatrist for medication management. SATS works collaboratively with psychiatrists as well as other mental health providers. SATS requires a release of information signed for all treatment providers for coordination of care.
10. *Substance Abuse issues*: SATS understands that many of our offender clients have co-occurring substance abuse problems. This is why some of the SATS staff are dual credentialed by the state of Pennsylvania as certified substance abuse providers. Offenders with substance abuse problems will address these issues in counseling and will be encouraged to attend 12 step meetings. SATS does not do drug testing and will rely on probation and parole for this accountability.
11. *Relapse Prevention*: As the main goal of sex offender treatment is to protect the community from any further victimization, relapse prevention planning is critical. All of the above mentioned treatment objectives are the components of an offender's relapse prevention plan. Prior to successful completion of the offender program, an offender will have an approved relapse prevention plan that assesses all aspects of his behavior, thinking, social competency, sexuality and emotion regulation.

Individual Treatment Planning:

Each offender at SATS will have an individualized treatment plan that reflects his or her specific issues related to the sexual offense. This plan will be tailored to the offender's sexual history, criminal history, emotion regulation deficits, addiction concerns, and arousal templates. This treatment plan will include tangible and measurable goals and will be reassessed by the treatment team throughout the treatment process.

Objective Psychological Testing:

Each offender in treatment with SATS will be required to complete a number of psychological tests. Each offender is required to take the MMPI (or other objective personality measure such as the MCMI), and ABEL screen. Additional testing may be required based upon the client's history, behavior and presentation in treatment. These assessments may screen for substance abuse issues, other mental health issues, sexual addiction and compulsivity, and psychopathy.

Testing does not need to be completed at SATS, though SATS staff does have the training and capability to complete the testing, including the ABEL Screen. If the testing was completed with another psychologist or at another treatment program, SATS requires the offender to provide access to the testing results.

Use of Polygraph Testing:

SATS employs the use of polygraph testing in our offender treatment program. All offenders are required to take and pass a sexual history polygraph within six months of entering treatment. Maintenance polygraphs will be used on an annual basis. Other polygraph testing such as offense specific or specific issue testing may be employed if there any specific concerns arise during the course of treatment.

SATS does not provide polygraph testing in our office. Our preferred polygrapher is Mr. Erik Abel from Mid Atlantic Truth Consultants. Any polygraph results obtained are immediately shared with probation or parole.

Collaboration with the Criminal Justice System:

SATS understands that sex offender treatment is most effective when approached as a team effort. SATS works cooperatively with any aspect of the criminal justice system. For pre-trial clients, SATS requires a signed release of information for any pre-trial officer or other court supervisor. For clients on any type of supervised release, SATS requires a signed release of information for any party involved in the supervision.

Probation/Parole officers are provided with a written monthly report by SATS staff. This report will summarize the offender's progress in group, compliance and any other issues that may arise. SATS staff will also maintain open communication with any officer of the court or agent

in charge of the offender's supervision. It is SATS' policy that probation and parole officers are not permitted to sit in on group therapy sessions.

SATS Staff Credentials:

SATS staff members who participate in the offender program will be licensed by the State of Pennsylvania in a field directly related to therapy and counseling. (LPC, LCSW, Ph.D., etc). Staff members working in the offender program will be members of ATSA or a regional affiliate.

SATS staff members who work in the offender program will have training specific to the following core competencies:

Assessment and diagnosis, counseling and psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, psychopathology, risk assessment, psychopathy, family systems, ethics, forensic psychology, psychological testing, relapse prevention, sexual arousal templates, motivational interviewing, group therapy, substance abuse treatment, family reunification, assessment and treatment of mental health disorders and sexual addiction and compulsivity.

All SATS staff members who work in the offender program are directly supervised by Dr. Jennifer Weeks.