



# Family Reunification After Childhood Sexual Abuse

Presented by Joan Tabachnick, MBA, and Peter Pollard,  
MPA

Tuesday, March 15, 2016, 3PM EDT

Host: Joan Tabachnick

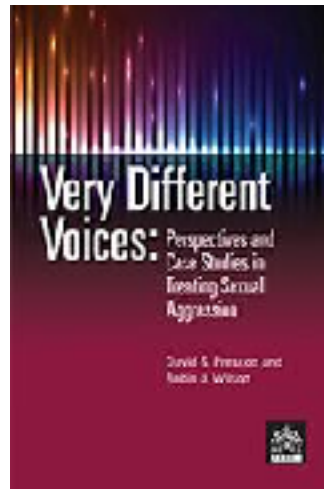
Technical Advisor: Tim Griffith



## Learning Objectives

- Identify five situations where family reunification may be considered
- Describe the process for navigating the family reunification process and the potential conflicts regarding concerns, risks, and benefits.
- Identify three specific resources to engage individuals, families, and providers to enhance safety for all in reunification planning.

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## Joan Tabachnick, MBA and Peter Pollard, MPA



**Family Reconnection & Reunification after  
Child Sexual Abuse:  
A Road Map for Advocates & Other Service  
Providers**

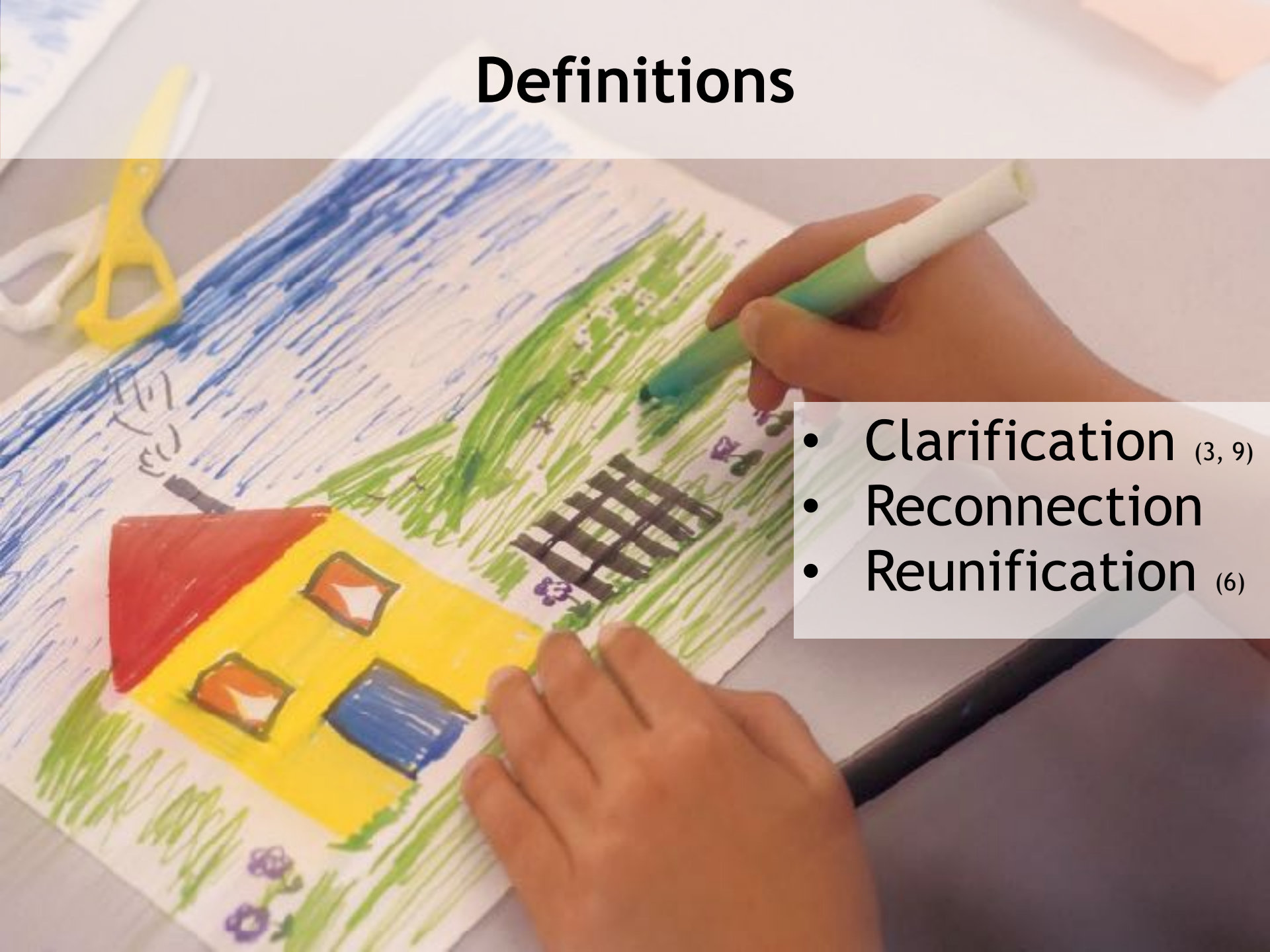


# Sexual Assault Across the Lifespan: Training and Technical Assistance Project

Advocates  
Law enforcement  
officers  
Medical Professionals  
Prosecutors



# Definitions



- Clarification (3, 9)
- Reconnection
- Reunification (6)

# Why should I care?

- Family wants connection
- Planning increases control
- Supports increase safety & healthy outcomes
- Social media - increases likelihood of contact





# Important Concerns

- Abusive person's ability to control behaviors
- Family's ability to support & reinforce change
- The risk of re-victimization;
- Interests of victimized child
- Access to supportive resources



# We are all impacted

- 1 in 4 girls; 1 in 6 boys<sup>(7)</sup>
- Life long consequences
- Fear immobilizes families
- Self-awareness can help our response



# Cultural Considerations

- Multiple cultural influences in any family
- Positive or negative history with services
- Unique support options
- Awareness of biases



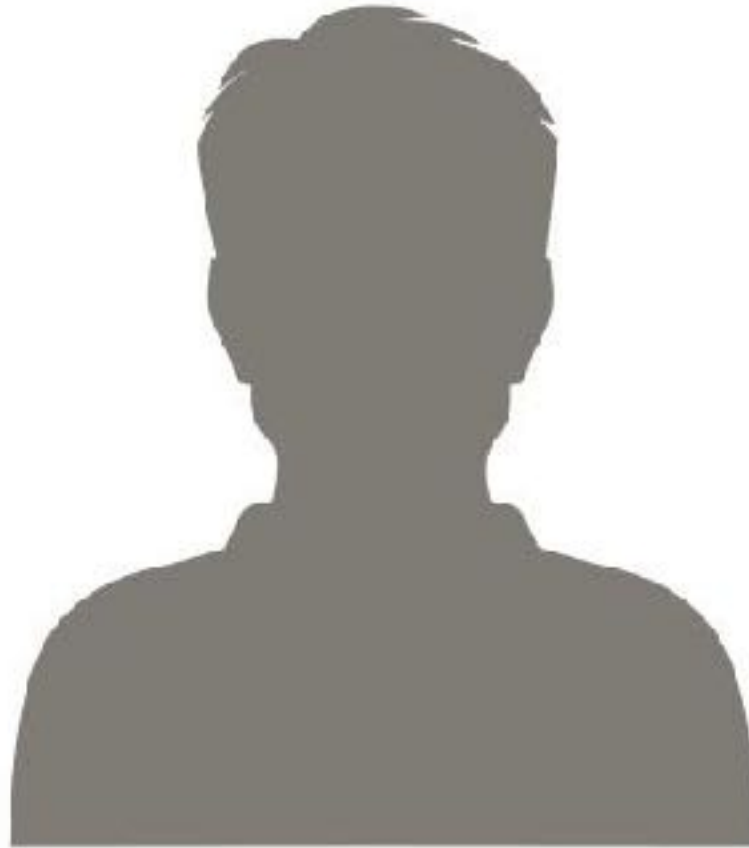
# What do we know?

People who sexually abuse children

- Who are they?
- Impact of treatment?
- Person-first language



# Who are they?



# Who are they?



# Who are they?



# Who are they?

- 34% are family <sup>(10)</sup>
- 59% are known to the victim <sup>(10)</sup>
- Majority are male <sup>(10)</sup>
- 30-50% are children or teens <sup>(2,8)</sup>





# Impact of Treatment?



# Impact of Treatment

- Not one-size-fits all<sup>(3)</sup>
- Children and teens respond well to treatment<sup>(1,4)</sup>
- Adult males who sexually abuse outside of the family have highest recidivism rates<sup>(5)</sup>



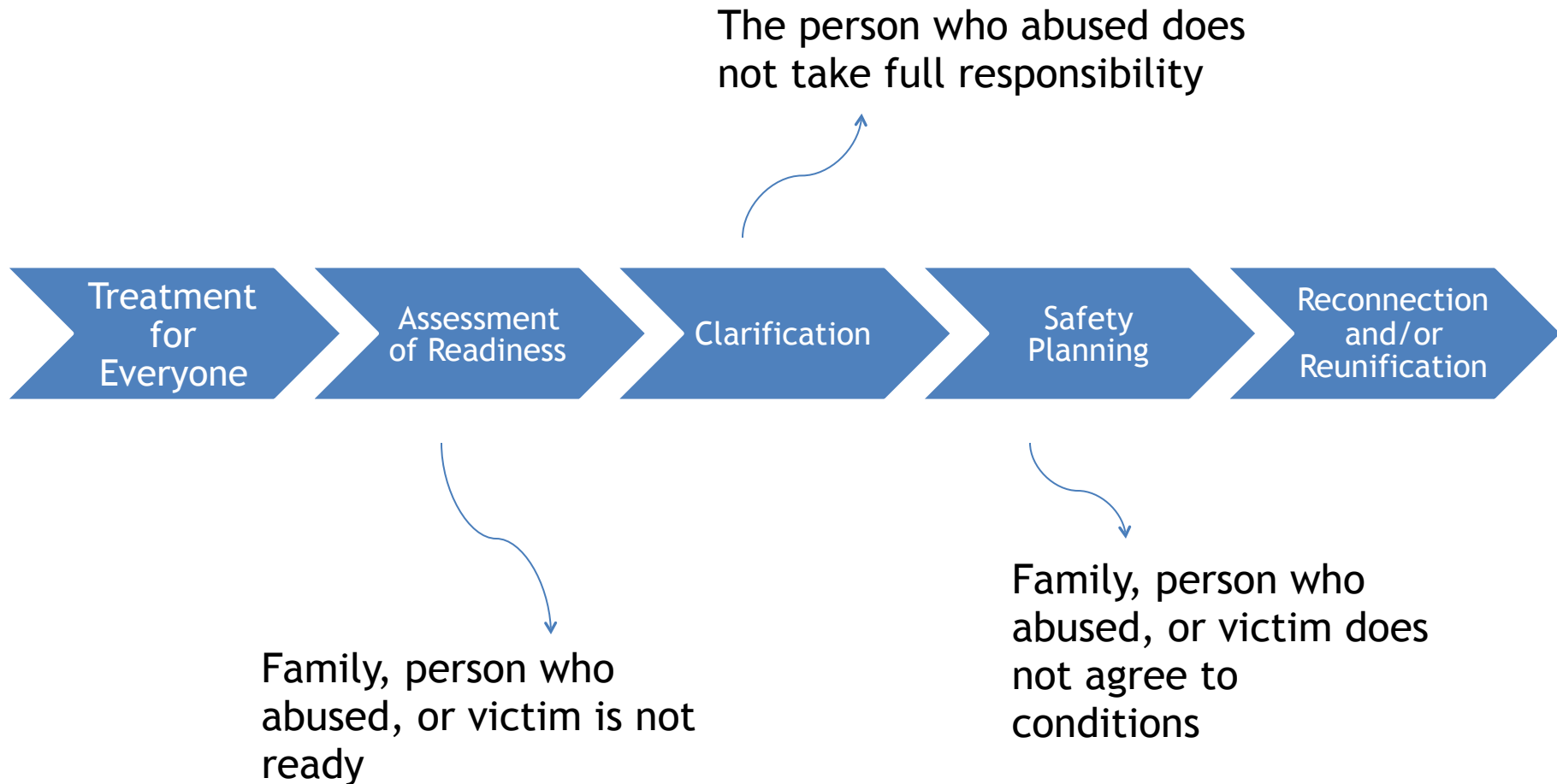
# Person-first language



Using person-first language:

- *“avoids defining them solely by that experience. It asks us to consider that people can change, heal and grow, and develop new, healthier identities. Person-first language demands hope.”* (11)

# Five Possible Steps to Reconnection and/or Reunification <sup>(11)</sup>



# Guiding Principles <sup>(11)</sup>

- Everyone brings a unique set of assumptions and principles
- Every member of the community deserves to be safe
- Acknowledge the harm caused to everyone
- Use of a trauma-informed approach
- Follow current best practice standards
- Do no further harm
- A collaborative approach brings all perspectives to the table
- Interventions are culturally-informed and strength-

Treatment  
provider

Attorney

Family therapist

Who's at the table?

Faith leaders

Therapist

Judge

Extended Family

Advocates

Child

Supervision

Person who

Parent/caregiver

abused

Other caregivers = Guardian ad litem

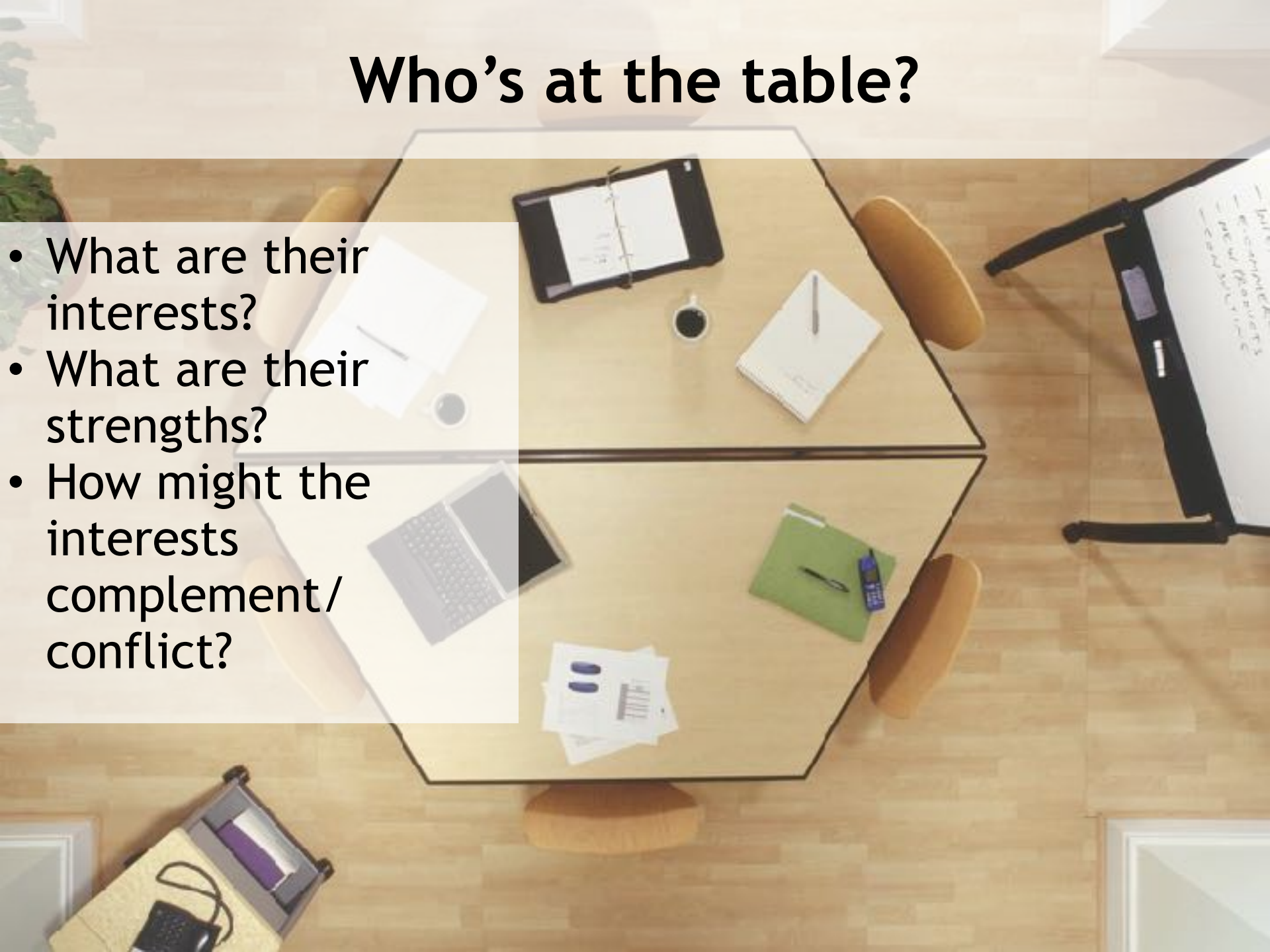
School personnel

Prosecutor

Child welfare worker

# Who's at the table?

- What are their interests?
- What are their strengths?
- How might the interests complement/ conflict?





# Discussion Q&A



**Joan Tabachnick**



# Additional Resources

**Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers:**

<http://www.atsa.com/>

**Center for Sex Offender Management:**

<http://www.csom.org/>

**Child Welfare Information Gateway: Family**

**Reunification: <http://tinyurl.com/oqh4s9z>**

**NEARI Press: <http://www.nearipress.org/>**

# Additional Resources

NSVRC Lifespan Project: [www.nsvrc.org/projects/lifespan](http://www.nsvrc.org/projects/lifespan)

Resources for Resolving Violence: <http://tinyurl.com/ocr6r3r>

Safer Society Foundation, Inc.: <http://www.saferociety.org/>

Stop It Now!: <http://www.stopitnow.org/>

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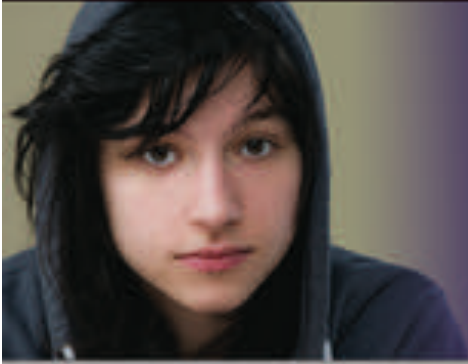




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