



Case Formulation:

Creating better assessments with better narratives

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Who developed the M-CAAP what was the perspective

- A collective effort of the MASOC Board of Directors and friends, but especially Steve Bengis, Ed.D., Kevin Creeden, M.A., LMHC, Nancy Dias, M.A., LMHC, Monica Ferraro, Ph.D., Robert Kinscherff, Ph.D., J.D., Ron McKenzie, M.A., LMHC, and Phil Rich, Ed.D. LICSW
- Juvenile development and behavior are greatly influenced by family dynamics, peer groups, connection to school, involvement in prosocial activities and community factors. (Caldwell & Dickinson, 2009)
- Risk and protective factors emerge from and are embedded in these interconnected systems

Comprehensive Assessment of Risk and Needs

- “There is a consensus in the field that assessment of risk in juvenile offenders should include a comprehensive assessment of an array of individual and contextual factors.” (Caldwell & Dickinson, 2009)
- Risk assessment and related consequences for a youth who has engaged in sexually harmful behavior “must not be” based on the use of a risk assessment instrument alone.
- It must integrate a comprehensive consideration of the child or adolescent’s severity of offenses and history of psychosocial adversities in order to provide interventions that match individual risks and needs. (Barra et al., 2018)

CONDUCTING COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS

- There is no single way to conduct and organize a comprehensive assessment.
- Similarly, there is no universal structure by which to understand and organize the assessment process.
- However, assessment is a process with several distinct stages.
- Each stage includes structure, method, tasks, and content.

The formulation of risk

An assessment of risk is not based upon a single factor or even a group of factors. Instead, it is an effort to understand how certain factors influence the adolescent's engagement in problematic sexual behavior and in doing so, identifies treatment areas that, if addressed, would promote positive development while diminishing future risk.

The assessment of risk is dynamic rather than static

Understanding the formulation of risk

Risk is influenced by individual personality dynamics and factors as well as environmental resources and demands

Because adolescents are going through a period of rapid change the factors that were influential before may have changed

By nature, risk assessments of adolescents are time limited and should be reconsidered when there are notable changes in circumstances

THE FUNNEL OF ASSESSMENT

- Ultimately, in a comprehensive assessment there are a series of stages that pass through:
 1. Data gathering
 2. Data organization
 3. Data consolidation
 4. Data integration
 5. Data interpretation
 6. The assignment of meaning (addressing areas involving risk in the case of risk assessment)
 7. The development of interventions



The Funnel of Assessment





COMPONENTS OF CASE FORMULATION

- History (with focus on factors related to target behavior)
- Narrative portrait characterizing the youth
- Summary of assessment DATA
- Summary of assessment INFERENCES FROM DATA
- Summary of assessment OPINIONS BASED ON INFERENCES
- Summary of RECOMMENDATIONS

COMPONENTS OF CASE FORMULATION

- Articulation of:
 - ✓ Predisposing Factors (Vulnerabilities, including static factors)
 - ✓ Precipitating Factors (Factors driving risk trajectory towards manifestation)
 - ✓ Perpetuating Factors (Factors maintaining or aggravating target behavior)
 - ✓ Protective Factors (Factors providing protection, resilience)

MULTI-PERSPECTIVE GRID FOR FORMULATION

(ADAPTED FROM WEERASEKERA, 1996)

	Biological	Behavioral	Cognitive	Dynamic-Individual	Dynamic-Familial	Dynamic-Contextual	Criminogenic Needs
Predisposing							
Precipitating							
Perpetuating							
Protective							
Coping Response Style							
Monitoring and Containment Needs							
Responsivity Factors							
Interventions							
Other							

Case Formulation

Consider the following in the case formulation process

- General developmental trajectory including periods or domains of adequate functioning or relationships
- Context in which the target behavior(s) first occur, including reactions of caregivers, peers, others to learning of it
- History of interventions and consideration of whether and why these interventions were effective or ineffective specifically in addressing the target behavior(s) or related risk, protective or contextual factors
- Availability of positive youth development assets in the young person's social environment and history of effectively accessing them over the course of development

Case Formulation

- **Individualized** by articulation of the youth's presentation, interests, learning style, cognitive abilities, aspirations, etc.
- **Contextualized** by articulation of highest, lowest, and most likely scenarios for target behavior(s) in light of the most relevant individual and contextual risk, protective, needs, and responsivity factors.
- **Prioritized** by articulation of which interventions are the most important at the time of assessment (e.g., individual clinical treatment, family dynamics, peer dynamics, school climate, environmental such as containment or monitoring).
- **Link** the assessment to the recommendations-interventions by precisely articulating which interventions specifically target concerning factors, strengthen protective factors, address specific developmental needs, access positive youth development assets, or are tailored due to responsivity needs.

Summary and Conclusions

The M-CAAP seeks to blend and integrate an understanding of the adolescent's past sexual behavior and potential risk with an understanding of the "whole" individual and their environment.

Recommendations include a formulation of the adolescent's individual and developmental needs, as well as the supports and resources necessary to meet those needs.

Summary and Conclusions

- The process of evaluation for youth engaged in problematic sexual behavior requires a developmental approach to understanding and interpreting information.
- This is true, not only about the sexually harmful behavior, but more broadly understanding the young person in the context of his or her whole life, rather than just the circumstances of the sexually problematic or harmful behavior.

