

## **Juvenile Sexual Offenders: A Comprehensive Guide to Risk Evaluation**

Phil Rich

Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons ([www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com))

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In his book, *Juvenile Sex Offenders: A Comprehensive Guide to Risk Evaluation*, Phil Rich offers an overview of current theoretical and empirical understanding of risk in sexually abusive youths. Additionally, practical tools and methods for conducting risk assessments with these youths are outlined. In line with his view that sexually abusive behavior in youths is a multi-determined phenomenon, Rich suggests that risk assessment with these youths must be comprehensive. Thus, in this book, Rich provides detailed information on conducting comprehensive risk assessments with sexually abusive youth.

In essence, Rich's book is divided into two parts. In the first section, Rich provides theoretical and empirical information on a variety of topics related to risk assessment. Specifically, he details current conceptualizations of risk and risk assessment, the purposes of risk assessment, and current understanding regarding the differences between juvenile and adult sex offenders and between juvenile sex offenders and delinquents. Furthermore, he provides an overview of the field's current, albeit limited, knowledge of the different types of sexually abusive youth, e.g., those that perpetrate against children as opposed to peers and adults, and he offers a comprehensive review of risk and protective factors for juvenile sexual offending.

Beginning with chapter nine, the book becomes more applied in nature. That is, instead of providing information about a topic related to risk assessment in youth (e.g., juvenile sex offending or current conceptualizations of risk) and then briefly suggesting how such knowledge can be applied to the practice of risk assessment, Rich, in the later portions of his book, limits information to practical tips, processes, and methods for conducting risk assessments with sexually abusive youth. Specifically, a detailed outline of a comprehensive risk assessment is provided and current guidelines that inform the practice of risk and psychosexual assessment with youth are reviewed. Practical tips for conducting interviews with youth and their parents and for presenting information, e.g., suggestions for report content and style, are offered. A review of clinical and actuarial risk assessment instruments is also provided in these later chapters. Finally, Rich concludes with a summary of his book and its purpose: to provide theoretical and practical information to individuals interested and/or engaged in the assessment of risk in sexually abusive youth.

In sum, Rich provides an abundance of information on risk assessment with sexually abusive youth. There are many aspects of his presentation that are notable. For instance, his conceptualization of risk in sexually abusive youth draws on both developmental and forensic psychology. Additionally, Rich consistently and persistently acknowledges those limits to the field's understanding of the topics presented throughout the manuscript. For instance, in the introduction, he reminds the reader that most available information on risk assessment with sexually abusive youth has been garnered from experience with and research on males. The book is also laced with case vignettes and clinical examples, which help clarify presented information. Finally, and perhaps most importantly considering the book's purpose, information presented in this manual is detailed enough that the practicing clinician may improve his or her risk assessment practice. For instance, the appendix provides "boiler plate" language for

informed consent, waiver, and disclosure documents and a checklist for completing a comprehensive risk assessment and a report.

There are, however, some less desirable aspects of this book. Though mostly well-organized, some portions of the book seem misplaced. For instance, a number of chapters reviewing actuarial and clinical risk assessment tools interrupt Rich's outline and detail of a comprehensive risk assessment. Additionally, likely due to space considerations, Rich devotes only limited space to reviewing current theories regarding the *development* of sexual behavior problems in youth. Consideration of these models may inform risk assessment. Despite these limitations, however, Rich presents a thorough and informative volume on risk assessment with sexually abusive youth. Thus, this book is strongly recommended to clinicians engaged in risk assessment with sexually abusive youth or to any reader who wishes to further his or her knowledge of risk and risk assessment with sexually abusive youth.

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