
In Working With Children With Sexual Behavior Problems, Eliana Gil and Jennifer A. Shaw have created a book that outlines normative as well as problematic childhood sexuality and presents a comprehensive treatment program for the latter. Given the lack of awareness of childhood sexuality and the dearth of empirically based treatment options for children with sexual behavior problems, this book is a valuable contribution to the mental health community.

The book encompasses four different areas. Gil and Shaw discuss normative childhood sexual behavior, sexual behavior problems (e.g., inappropriate touching or exploring, an increased interest and use of pornography, and inappropriate play between children of differing ages), etiology, and intervention. The authors provide a well-rounded discussion on normative childhood sexuality with reference to one’s cultural and family background. Regarding etiology, Gil and Shaw briefly discuss the role of genetics and intergenerational modeling while providing a more in-depth exploration of the influence of media and the Internet as children learn about sexuality. Gil and Shaw take this opportunity to note how permeable children are in their developing stages of life and how much of the sexuality portrayed in the media does not go unnoticed. This emphasis seems appropriate given the increasing importance of media and Internet in American culture. Gil and Shaw, as have other researchers, suggest that significant environmental stress during the first five years of a child’s life can predict an increase of sexual behavior problems (Simpson et al., 2012). The authors argue that the importance of particular etiologic factors should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The second and third portion of the book introduces and describes Gil and Shaw’s Boundary Project model for treatment as “an integrative, family-focused model for children ages 4–11 with sexual behavior problems (and their parents or other primary caregivers)” (p. 100). The authors compare their treatment model to the existing assessments and treatments for maladaptive childhood sexual behaviors noting that the Boundary Project has incorporated many of the positive attributes of other therapy models. The authors explain that the project incorporates elements from trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy as well as expressive play models, thus differentiating the project from therapeutic approaches that primarily focus on attachment. However, it is important to note the integration of the primary caregivers into the Boundary Project model of treatment. In comparison, other treatments in the field range in the degree to which they include the child’s guardians. It makes sense to make use of primary caregivers, as Gil and Shaw do, to be supportive and therapeutic within the time of treatment. Last, the book
presents case studies that illustrate assessment and treatment to give clinicians practical guidance regarding how to incorporate the information given in the earlier chapters into their treatment of sexually troubled children.

Gil and Shaw have created a book that gives clinicians a much-needed resource. *Working With Children With Sexual Behavior Problems* provides a therapeutic model and assessment tools for reaching children struggling with sexually problematic behaviors and includes their caregivers in the process. Although the book is meant for clinicians in the field, it provides vocabulary that one can use in speaking with and educating parents and communities. This book provides information that is not only useful to an experienced professional but also the novice clinician. The discussions regarding etiologic factors point the clinician to the uniqueness of each child’s experience and highlight systemic factors, looking beyond the common history of trauma and taking into account family history and environmental factors. The case studies provided in the book offer a range of cultural backgrounds, ages, and behavior patterns. With the publication of this book, Gil and Shaw have provided a resource not only for clinicians but also for parents seeking to learn more about their sexually troubled child.

Childhood sexuality in general, and problematic childhood sexual behavior in particular are controversial and challenging subjects for parents and clinicians. *Working With Children With Sexual Behavior Problems* gives readers a foundation for addressing sexually problematic behaviors by first discussing normative childhood sexuality and then, using evidence-based practices, provides a comprehensive treatment model. This book should be on the shelf for any mental health provider that works with children.

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REFERENCE


*Modern Motherhood: An American History* is a new book about modern American motherhood—a book that aims to review the fascinating aspects of past and present motherhood in the United States. Jodi Vandenberg-Daves has accomplished this feat and much more. In her book, Vandenberg-Daves has examined the paths that motherhood has taken throughout American history and highlighted the many changes that have occurred and the historical reasons why they did. Along the way, this author helps make sense of the current status of mothers in the United States. Vandenberg-Daves’ background is vital to the successful creation of this book. She is an accomplished historian and a professor of women’s studies at the University of Wisconsin–LaCrosse. Her enthusiasm for this topic is evident throughout her writing.