Juvenile Case Studies

Student’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course Name& Code

Instructor

Date

Juvenile Case Studies

Kyle is a 14-year-old male accused of inappropriate sexual behavior toward his younger brother, Conner. The case requires a careful and thorough examination by a forensic psychologist to determine the best course of action for treatment and the ethical concerns that the forensic psychologist may face.

A course of action for treatment that may be recommended in court for Kyle would be for him to receive inpatient treatment at a secure facility. This would allow for a controlled and safe environment where Kyle can receive individualized therapy and treatment for his sexually acting-out behavior. Research has shown that inpatient treatment can reduce recidivism rates among juvenile sex offenders (Harrison et al., 2020). Additionally, inpatient treatment can provide a more intensive therapeutic experience, which can be especially important for individuals with low IQ scores like Kyle.

It is also important for the forensic psychologist to work closely with other professionals involved in Kyle's case, such as social workers, probation officers, and the child protection agency. Collaboration and coordination among these professionals can help to ensure that Kyle receives the most appropriate and effective treatment possible and can help to minimize the risk of reoffending (Hochstetler, 2019).

The forensic psychologist may also consider the role of family and community in Kyle's treatment and recovery (Poirier, 2021). Family therapy and community support can be important in helping Kyle to reintegrate back into society and reduce the risk of future offending. The psychologist may work with Kyle's family to address any underlying issues that may have contributed to his behavior and provide them with education and support to help them understand and cope with the situation.

It is also important for the forensic psychologist to keep in mind the potential for long-term effects of the treatment on Kyle, such as the impact on his future relationships, education, and employment prospects (Hochstetler, 2019). The psychologist may need to minimize these negative effects, such as advocating for appropriate legal and social services to support Kyle's transition into society.

Forensic psychologists can recommend evidence-based practices such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) to support Kyle's treatment. CBT effectively reduces sexually abusive adolescent behavior (Rocha & Valença, 2023). Moreover, given that Kyle was sexually abused, the forensic psychologist can also recommend that Kyle receive trauma-focused therapy, which can help him address the impact of his past abuse on his current behavior.

In terms of the ethical concerns faced by forensic psychologists, several must be considered in this case. One of the most pressing ethical concerns is related to the age of the client. As a 14-year-old, Kyle is considered a juvenile, meaning he has certain rights and protections different from those of adult offenders. Forensic psychologists must be aware of these rights and ensure they are not violated during treatment (Poirier, 2021).

Another ethical concern is the relationship between the forensic psychologist and the client. In this case, Mrs. Gillis, the forensic psychologist, is also a relative of the siblings. This creates a dual relationship that can compromise the integrity of the evaluation process and may raise questions about the impartiality of the professional. Forensic psychologists must manage this dual relationship by adhering to the APA Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, which requires that professionals maintain the highest standards of professional ethics.

In terms of the ethical concerns related to the specific case, there are several that must be considered. For example, the forensic psychologist must consider the fact that Kyle was sexually abused and must be sensitive to the trauma that this abuse may have caused. The forensic psychologist must also be aware of the possibility of retraumatizing the client during the treatment process and must work to prevent this from happening (Hochstetler, 2019).

Another ethical concern the forensic psychologist must be aware of is the possibility of false confessions or false incriminating statements by Kyle. Adolescents with low IQ scores may be more susceptible to pressure and coercion. Forensic psychologists must be mindful of this to protect the client's rights and ensure that the information obtained during treatment is accurate and reliable (Hochstetler, 2019). Forensic psychologists must also be aware of potential power imbalances in the therapeutic relationship and ensure that clients can freely and voluntarily express their thoughts and feelings without fear of retribution or harm.

Furthermore, the psychologist must also be aware of the potential for secondary harm to the victim, in this case, Conner. The psychologist must take care to minimize any harm that may result from the evaluation and treatment process and must be mindful of the impact of their actions on the victim and their family (Hochstetler, 2019).

Additionally, the forensic psychologist must know that Kyle has a borderline IQ score of 80 and is easily impressionable. This could impact his ability to understand the implications of his actions and may require special attention during the treatment process (Hochstetler, 2019). The forensic psychologist must ensure that Kyle's rights and autonomy are respected during the treatment process and that he can fully understand the consequences of his actions.

Another important ethical concern is confidentiality and privacy. The forensic psychologist must ensure that Kyle's information is confidential and only disclosed with his consent or as required by law (Di Gioia, Beslay, Cassa & Pawula, 2022). Moreover, the psychologist must also be aware of any legal requirements for reporting sexual abuse and take appropriate steps to ensure that Kyle's rights are protected while fulfilling their legal obligations (Poirier, 2021).

Furthermore, forensic psychologists must also be mindful of the impact of their recommendations on the well-being of both Kyle and Conner. Psychologist must balance their obligation to protect the community from potential harm with their obligation to provide the best possible treatment for Kyle (Hochstetler, 2019). This requires a thorough understanding of the legal and ethical principles and a commitment to ethical decision-making.

In conclusion, the case of Kyle requires a careful and thorough examination by a forensic psychologist to determine the best course of action for treatment and the ethical concerns that the forensic psychologist may face. Based on the information available, it is recommended that Kyle receive inpatient treatment at a secure facility and that he receive evidence-based therapies such as CBT and trauma-focused therapy. The forensic psychologist must also be aware of the ethical concerns related to the client's age, the dual relationship with the client, and the client's history of sexual abuse and low IQ score. By adhering to ethical principles and standards, the forensic psychologist can ensure that Kyle receives appropriate treatment while his rights and autonomy are respected. The ultimate goal should be to provide Kyle with the tools and support to overcome his behavior and lead a healthy, productive life.

References

Di Gioia, R., Beslay, L., Cassar, A., & Pawula, A. (2022). Classification criteria for child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention programs.

Haeflinger, H. M. (2021). A review of assessments and treatment methods for sex offenders.

Harrison, J. L., O’Toole, S. K., Ammen, S., Ahlmeyer, S., Harrell, S. N., & Hernandez, J. L. (2020). Sexual offender treatment effectiveness within cognitive-behavioral programs: A meta-analytic investigation of general, sexual, and violent recidivism. *Psychiatry, psychology and law*, *27*(1), 1-25.

Hochstetler, R. (2019). *Systemic Treatment Approaches for Juvenile Sexual Offenders* (Doctoral dissertation, Azusa Pacific University).

Poirier, J. G. (2021). The juvenile sex offender. In *Forensic Psychology and Neuropsychology for Criminal and Civil Cases* (pp. 437-486). CRC Press.

Rocha, I. C. O., & Valença, A. M. (2023). The efficacy of CBT based interventions to sexual offenders: a systematic review of the last decade literature. *International journal of law and psychiatry*, *87*, 101856.