

## Assessing harmful sexual behaviour in adolescence: An overview of AIM3

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An effective assessment of a young person who has displayed, or is alleged to have displayed, harmful sexual behaviour requires the practitioner to assess the young person across all aspects of their life. Young people are in a state of developmental flux and therefore any harmful behaviour needs to be considered holistically, accounting for both risk and protective aspects across the different dimensions of the young person's situation.

Traditionally assessment models have reduced the complexity of young people's situations to categorisations such as labelling them as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' risk. Such categorisations have at times led to a view that young people's behaviours are fixed and exist irrespective of the context in which their behaviours are expressed. Acknowledging the significant pace and growth of cognitive, physical, psychological and sexual development in adolescence means that fixed categorisations are unhelpful and have time limited validity.

AIM3 has been developed in recognition of the complexity of young people's development and the importance of seeing their sexual behaviours in their developmental, familial, social and wider environmental context.

AIM3 provides a structure which aids professional analysis of a young person in terms of:

- Their sexual behaviours.
- Their broader non-sexual behaviours.
- The developmental influences on these wide-ranging behaviours.
- The effect of the environment and wider social and family context in which they live.
- How the young person functions, including their abilities to understand the impact of their behaviour and their self-regulation skills.

This workshop aims to consider the complexity of sexual behaviour in adolescence, the dynamic identification of sexual behaviour from normal (age expected) to inappropriate to harmful and how the AIM3 provides a holistic structure to assessing sexual behaviour.

Joint Event

34<sup>th</sup> International Conference on  
**Adolescent Medicine and Child Psychology**

10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on  
**Pediatrics Research and Adolescent Medicine**

**March 20-21, 2023**

**Webinar**

### **Biography**

Marcella Leonard is Director of Leonard Consultancy and qualified as a social worker in 1989. She has specialised in assessment and treatment in the fields of sexuality, sexual deviancy and trauma with both victims and perpetrators. She co-ordinated the management of sex and violent offenders in Northern Ireland and has worked with several jurisdictions to establish their statutory management of sex and violent offenders. As Director of Leonard Consultancy, she works internationally including Abu Dhabi, Gibraltar, Australia, New Zealand, Norway as well as throughout UK and Ireland. She delivers specialist safeguarding training to sports, criminal justice, religious, educational, social care, voluntary and statutory organisations which includes assessing and managing sexual and violent risk, consultancy, strategic and safeguarding policy development. She undertakes Case Management Reviews for organisations, training safeguarding officers and assisting organisations strategically and operationally to have robust safeguarding for children and adults at risk. Her practice, as a therapist with victims and survivors, is grounded in a trauma informed humanistic approach which is also embedded in her training and consultancy work.

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