

2011 WSPA Fall Convention

Mental Health: Reactive Attachment Disorder | Ray W. Kinney M.S.

The topic of Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) has received considerable attention in recent years, due, in part, to the increased number of international adoptions. Reactive Attachment Disorder results when a young child's most basic needs are not met in a consistent manner by a caregiver. The results can include many challenges for the child including learning issues, psychological problems, and an inability to attach to even a loving adoptive parent. Children with suspected RAD require serious attention including careful diagnosis by a qualified clinician, treatment that includes the whole family, and specific goals that decrease anxiety and open the door for healing and increased attachment to the parents. Treatment must also focus on behavioral management as some children with RAD demonstrate increasingly destructive behaviors in the home, school, and community.

In this workshop you will develop a thorough understanding of Reactive Attachment Disorder and how it manifests in both the home and school environments. Although the effects of inadequate and inconsistent care have long been noted in the bonding and attachment literature, recent research continues to confirm the serious challenges children face that experience early deprivation. Participants will become familiar with the many faces of Reactive Attachment Disorder as the leader shares his clinical experience of having worked with this disorder for 15 years in private practice and as a consultant to many school districts. Strategies for supporting students with Reactive Attachment Disorder will be outlined as well as understanding how to more effectively communicate with the parents of students who have this disorder.

Objectives:

- Identify the causes and effects of Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)
- List the symptoms of RAD
- Understand why RAD can look so different in the school setting versus the home
- Demonstrate an increased understanding of interventions with students who have RAD and how to partner with the student's parents
- Summarize the goals of outpatient treatment and why "traditional therapies" are not effective
- Become familiar with the research regarding the effects of early deprivation on brain development, learning, and perception and how this impacts the child's life in all areas of functioning
- Exercise caution in the diagnosis of RAD and understand the importance of assessing all the child's issues (differential and comorbid diagnosis)

BIO

Ray W. Kinney M.S. is the Director of the Waukesha **Cornerstone Counseling Services** clinic. He has been in private practice working with children and their families for 30 years. He specializes in working with adopted children and their families. Besides his private practice, he offers parent training workshops, lectures frequently on the topic of Reactive Attachment Disorder, consults with school districts, and is called upon to testify as an expert witness in court cases involving child custody cases where the issue of Reactive Attachment Disorder is pertinent. Most recently, his clinical work was featured on a **PBS** documentary filmed by **NOVA** titled "*This Emotional Life*". Ray and his wife Carol live with their family in Eagle, WI.