

Realising Potential: Community service, pro-social modelling and desistance

by:

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Recent attention to the question of ‘what works?’ in supporting desistance, coupled with the emergence of a number of research studies which suggest that Community Service (CS) might be effective in reducing recidivism, has contributed to growing interest in the rehabilitative potential of CS. Informed by this context, this paper reports on the findings of a small scale Scottish study which set out to evaluate the impact of pro-social modelling training on the practice of CS supervision within a local authority team. The study indicates that the training had a positive impact on CS supervision – most accurately described as a validation or development of existing approaches. However, the findings also highlight areas of limitation in training impact and, in doing so, present a rationale for attending to a number of key areas if CS is to realise its potential and assist offenders in their efforts towards desistance.

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