

Criminal Justice Platform Europe

International Criminal Justice Summer Course Responses to Sexual Violence

Barcelona, 5-8 July 2022

WORKSHOP REPORT

Workshop Title: Ethics in management and treatment of individuals sentenced for a sexual offense

Moderator: Gustav Tallving, EuroPris

Leader 1: Marianne Fuglestved, Directorate of Danish Prison and Probation

Leader 2: Nicholas Blagden, University of Nottingham

Participants:

There were 5 participants from 3 different countries, 1 from Switzerland, 2 from Slovenia and 2 from Spain.

Note taker: Gustav Tallving

Impression:

The Workshop was highly participative and 100% practice orientated. The sessions involved many group exercises with participants sharing their own experiences and perspectives, which allowed for mutual learning and a deepening of professional knowledge. The workshop members developed a trusting and safe working environment and many expressed that they were very happy with the group and the contents.



1. Introduction

As workshop leaders Marianne and Nick brought different competencies to the workshop. Both have a vast experience in treatment of persons convicted of sexual offenses. In addition, Marianne has developed and implemented new programmes in Greenland. Nick is a researcher with a vast knowledge about evidence based methods and management of this group of offenders. In the group there was a broad representation of prison practitioners, probation staff, psychologists and teachers.

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2. Workshop Methods

Self-monitoring

Mentimeter

Review/Evaluation

Group discussions

Take home messages

3. Summary of Presentations

Session 1

Introduction of workshop leaders and each of the participants, their backgrounds, interests and expectations in relation to the workshop. Presentation of the workshop programme and methodology. Initial discussion about fundamental dilemmas in working with persons convicted of sexual offences, and in prisons.

Session 2

How are rights of victims and rights of offenders connected? Are these conflicting perspectives? How can interventions be designed and used? What is an evidence based intervention? How can interventions towards sexual violence be ethically motivated?

Treatment ethos: Respect for the individual's *Autonomy, Integrity, Vulnerability, Dignity*.

Contextual factors and how context can both support and destroy a treatment intervention. Rehabilitation paradigm shift – "From programmes to lives", resulting in the inclusion of the Good Lives Model.

Session 3

New approaches in assessment and interventions. Treatment effects and expectations. Module based programming. Group based interventions in Denmark and Greenland. External and internal motivation. Methods in motivational interviewing. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), defusing thoughts and identity, defining a value direction.

Session 4

Denial and how it links to risk, needs, responsivity and desistance. What is denial? Categorical denial may be an obstacle to treatment, minimisation not. Full admission may be a justification of the crime rather than a marker for progress of treatment. What are the main problems with working with this client group? How can these problems be overcome? What markers can be used in assessing change or progression?

Session 5

Sexual interest in children and child abuse. What is paedophilia? How is paedophilia being expressed? Motivational programmes and their content. What is a value and how does it affect crime? How can we work and reconstruct criminal values into pro-social values? How to identify strengths and enhance inhibition? What is sexual deviances? How much should we as therapists focus on the deviant behaviour?

Session 6

Case study: John, convicted for child pornography

Session 7

Case study: Chris, convicted for rape

Session 8

Summary and evaluation.

4. Key Learning Points

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- Ethical issues are important in all correctional work. Sexual offenses are particularly challenging and trigger a lot of emotions and doubts among criminal justice professionals.
- Victim empathy is not an evidence based risk factor and lack of victim empathy does not predict recidivism in sexual offenses. Empathy is hard to measure. This specifically accounts for victim empathy. It is more important for the offender to work on his/her inhibition skills/self-control.
- Treatment development is moving towards general programmes rather than offense specific programmes. For sexual offenses there are a few specific risk factors, such as sexual deviances.
- Context is as important as the intervention, to achieve and maintain a treatment effect.
- Ethics in treatment: Respect the client's *Autonomy, Integrity, Vulnerability, Dignity*.
- Re-integration is an illusion many times. Many persons convicted for sexual offenses are poorly integrated in society from the start.
- Based on What Works research evidence, treatment interventions have changed from personality diagnosis and trauma treatment, through cognitive behavioural approaches focusing on thoughts and feelings, to (re-)learning by acknowledging anti-social thoughts but not anti-social behaviours. Trauma and life trajectory information, feelings and values are still relevant, to achieve a constructive and safe treatment environment.
- Principles for good prison practice:



- ACT therapy: *I notice that (3), I am aware of (2), I have a thought (1)*. Value direction; how might you follow your valued life?
- Denial is now considered less as a risk factor and more a matter of responsivity. Denial does not necessarily mean low motivation! It can be viewed as a scaffolding, being needed as long as the building (individual) is being renovated.
- Denial, along with other targets such as victim empathy and full disclosure, is a non-criminogenic target in treatment.
- Value propositions: **I count – You count**, **I count – You don't count**, **I don't count – You count**, **I don't count – You don't count**

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- Deviant sexual interest is not that deviant. Up to 25% of male populations have interest in prepubescent and pubescent children.
- Sexual preference is fairly robust and will not change much over a life-time.
- Three main explanations to sexual deviant behaviour: *Neurodevelopmental, Conditioning, and Psychological/Developmental explanations.*

5. Key Practice Issues for the Future

- Continuous professional learning!
- Identify, embrace and adapt to new research evidence
- Creating the rehabilitative culture
- Reduce labelling, changing the language and terminology

6. Annex

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