

Seminar 3
Responsivity in Supervision:
Enlisting offenders as agents for change

Notes from Plenary Session

1. Feedback from the Workshop sessions

Workshop 'scribes' presented key points. Fuller notes will be included on the Seminar web-site.

2. Comments from Speakers

Charlotte Knight (CK), Judith Sawbridge (JS) and Mark Farmer (MF) attended the plenary session and were asked to comment on the day so far.

Charlotte observed that there is a risk that emotion is seen as negative. She suggested that on the contrary it is important engage with offenders and each other in emotional ways that are not simply 'mopping up' operations but are productive foundations for future work.

Mark had been asked specifically to expand upon new thinking about denial, alluded to in his morning presentation.

He described how during the 1980s, a core strand of work with sex offenders was the breaking down of denial (do this and the work was done). A central element of expertise was that of 'breaking down'. In the 1990s research (*Hanson and Bouzier*) suggested that denial was not, as had been thought, a risk factor in recidivism. Thinking has developed since 2000 to acknowledge that denial may be a risk factor for *some* offenders but not all. *Mann and Maruna* argue that denial is a normal. It's how we cope with facing this type of behaviour. Thus if you are working with sex offenders time is likely to be equally well spent helping the offender get a job and integrating them productively in society as working on denial.

3. Questions from the floor

Qu. (for MF):

What are your views about polygraph testing?

MF

There was data about offenders lying about their behaviour but this has to be balanced against the risk of pushing against people's rights.

Qu. (again for MF)

Can you give any examples of where reintegrative shaming is used?

MF

You should read *Braithwaite* and be aware of examples in Japan and Scandinavia

Qu. (for CK)

To what extent have you spoken to managers about Emotional Literacy?

CK

I should have done and may need to think about this. This is a structural issue that has implications for organisations.

Qu. (again for CK)

How do we improve Emotional Literacy

CK

Good supports/colleagues, ongoing reflective practice. Most importantly a safe place to talk about emotions and 'let off steam' but not your best friend but someone who will challenge and unpick emotional issues.

Debate about Emotional Literacy is a silenced debate and evidence of a macho culture.

Qu. (for JS)

In relation to the theme emerging from your research, time-v-targets, do you have any feedback from Senior Management groups' about the outcomes of the Offender Survey?

JS

In Staffs/West Midlands PS, a development project has been set up to look at freeing up time for 1:1 work, including group supervisions

Participant (from Staffs/West Midlands PS)

94% offender satisfaction statistic from the survey has been widely stressed to staff but not those aspects of service that need change

Qu. (for MF)

In prisons, those in denial can't go on to Sex Offender programmes, will this change?

MF

In the community we do take people in denial (programmes have been adjusted to make this possible). Prisons should take note of this and address the issue.

Observation from Bernadette Wilkinson

There is now a challenge about how you get new ideas (e.g. the Good Lives Model) out of 'silos', generalise knowledge

Observation from participant regarding the issue of time

Biggest challenge described by a colleague in these terms: ' We used to do the work but couldn't prove it; now we can prove it but don't do it'

At this point the event was closed with thanks to all contributors.