



# **UNDERSTANDING SEX OFFENDER BEHAVIOUR :TREATMENT APPROACHES**

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# Treatment Approaches



- Probation 1980's grass roots dev of group work following Finkelhor (84)
- 1991 HMPS SOTP
- NPS SOTP formalised 1997
- NPS 2007 – i-SOTP(indecent image collectors)

## Key Figures: The Cognitive Behavioural Approach



**SOTP - Finkelhor et al (1986)**- The eclectic approach= individual early experience and environmental influences

**i-SOTP – Middleton & Quayle (2007)**- Eclectic plus role of Internet indecent images in abuse cycle

# The SOTP (HMPS)

- Devised by the Prison Service - framework for the integrated assessment and treatment of sex offenders in prison (Mann & Thornton, 1998).
- The SOTP has gone through a number of changes over the last ten years and is now currently running in 26 prisons in England and Wales
- Approx 1,000 men undertaking treatment in a year.
- Currently, the biggest SO treatment programme in the world
- Approx 80% of men are child sexual abusers, 15% of men rapists and around 5% sexual murderers.
- Approx 400 convicted of Internet related sexual offences

# CBT Aims



- Develop self-management skills
- Collaborative effort, with cognitive restructuring, modelling and positive reinforcement
- Gain insight & develop victim empathy
- Prevent relapse & build self esteem
- Confront distorted attitudes towards children

# Standard Risk Assessment

- There are a number of validated risk assessment tools in use with SO's by practitioners in England and Wales.
- These include screening tools such as OASyS and Risk Matrix 2000 (Thornton et al 2003)
- RM2000 is a risk measurement tool designed specifically to assess risk in sex offenders- evidence based actuarial risk assessment instrument
- RM 2000 comprises three scales (RM2000/s, RM2000v and RM2000c) which seek to predict sexual offending, violent non-sexual behaviour and sexual or other violence.
- Static risk factors are assessed to obtain one of four classifications: Low Risk; Medium Risk; High Risk and Very High Risk. (Thornton, 2003).

# SOTP Treatment Techniques



- Groupwork & individual supervision
- Group interaction & confrontation
- Role plays- victim empathy
- Confrontational- break down denial & victim blaming
- Cycle of abuse – identify offending ‘triggers’ (Wolf & Sullivan)

# Assessing Internet Sex Offenders (ISOs)

- In addition to social history data, psychiatric/ psychological functioning should also be explored.
- In a study comparing the characteristics of 210 online offenders with child offenders in the UK, Webb et al (2007) reported that a significantly higher number of online offenders had been in contact with mental health services as adults.
- Assessors should consider utilising standardised semi-structured interviews for psychiatric illness and personality disorder such as the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV personality disorders.
- In the comparison of online offenders and contact sexual offenders, Webb et al. (2007) reported the Internet offender groups scoring higher on some items on the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R, Hare, 1991).
- This semi-structured interview instrument has psychometric properties and has been cross-validated on sexual offender populations (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005).

# Assessing ISO's

- Given the amount of time online sexual offenders disclose spending on the Internet and the bearing this can have on their life (O'Brien & Webster, 2007) .
- Assessors should also focus on problematic Internet use.
- However, there are few relevant instruments that have undergone any form of psychometric evaluation. One exception to this is the Internet Sex Screening Test (Delmonico, 1999).
- \* The ISST contains 34 items split into eight sub-scales: online sexual compulsivity, online sexual behaviour – social; online sexual behaviour – isolated; online sexual spending; interest in online sexual behaviour; non home use of the computer, illegal sexual use of the computer; online sexual compulsivity

# Treatment Considerations ISO's

Shaw and Imhof (2009) recent review set out the following likely necessary treatment considerations in treating online offenders:

1. Deviant sexual arousal/fantasy.
2. Offence history.
3. Supporting cognitive distortions.
4. Empathy deficits.
5. Obsessive compulsive disorders, personality disorders, Mood disorders, & adjustment disorders.
6. Low self-esteem & social withdrawal/isolation,
7. Specific social skills deficits, and unresolved childhood sexual trauma.

Some caution must however be applied to for as Middleton et al. (2006) point out, many of the measures used to indicate dysfunctional mechanisms have not been tested for validity or reliability with an Internet offender population.

# Treating Internet Sex Offenders

## i-SOTP

- Based upon cognitive behavioural model which underpins Sex Offender Treatment Programmes in Scotland, England and Wales.
- England and Wales -Internet Sex Offenders Treatment Programme (i-SOTP, Middleton) introduced by the National Probation Service. July 2006.

*'Early feedback from trained staff (facilitators) is that the training manual looks positive but we will wait to see how it works in practice. The CBT programme draws upon the best elements of other CBT models so it should work'.*

Senior Probation Officer, National Probation Service, 2007

# Key Treatment Areas Guiding work with ISOs

- Intimacy and social skills deficit
- Distorted sexual scripts
- Anti-social cognitions
- Emotional dysregulation
- Cognitive distortions:
  - ▣ Justification of possession (only an image)
  - ▣ Normalisation (many others do this)
  - ▣ Objectification of victim/victims
  - ▣ Collusion (with wider network)

*Ward & Siegert, 2002: Quayle & Taylor, 2003: O'Brien & Webster, 2005: Middleton, 2006.*

# THE EUROPEAN ONLINE GROOMING PROJECT\_

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# The European Online Grooming Project

- Largest study of online grooming to date.
- Aims:
  - ▣ to understand the different ways sexual offenders approach, communicate and ‘groom’ young people online.
  - ▣ to empower policy makers, front line professionals, teachers, carers and young people to effectively manage online risks.
- Funded by the European Union, through the Safer Internet Plus Programme (June 2009 to December 2011).

## Scoping findings: Model development

- Two broad ‘types’ of groomer are hypothesised: **targeted** and **opportunistic**.
- Offender maintenance appears to run concurrently with phases and encompasses:
  - cognitive distortions; time on offender forums; indecent image collections.
- Groomers appear to pass through the phases in minutes, hours or days – process does appear to have speeded up.
- When contact is made at phase 5 - process of risk management appears to develop.
- A nine phase model of grooming behaviour in development for testing in stage 2.

## Offender Characteristics

- *'Well, my first thought is, it's useful to know if they're different, because what you want to understand as a treatment provider always is: Why did you do it? What made him want to do it? What enabled him to do it? What triggered it? What maintained it? All that kind of thing. So, (to see) if people's different routes into offending **mean** something different.....a lot of the research isn't very helpful, I think. People have done (the) research that they can do, all we've got, particularly with internet offenders, we can split in to two groups and we'll compare them without really thinking about it. How valuable is it?.....often I get journals with an internet paper and I look at the abstract and I get halfway through and I think 'oh it's not really going to tell me anything'.*
  - (UK SH1 Treatment Provider)

# SOTP Core Programme

- Average treatment element of the Core Programme is reported to be 80 hours (Beech & Mann, 2002).
- Session content is a minimum two hours duration.
- Some prisons run 2.5 hour sessions.
- Offending Behaviour Programme Unit (OBPU) recommend that the group should run for around 91 sessions (plus or minus 10 sessions) for nine men starting a group.
- The average treatment dose of the 55 Core Programmes reported in the Beech et al (2005) study was 188 hours (94 sessions).
- The recommended number of times groups meet is between two and five sessions per week.

# SOTP Extended Programme

- If an offender is assessed as having extra treatment needs over and above the Core SOTP he would also undertake a second stage of treatment in this programme.
- The goals of this programme are (from Mann, 1999)
  1. To identify and challenge patterns of dysfunctional thinking
  2. To improve the management of emotions, improve relationship and intimacy skills
  3. Address deviant fantasy and sexual arousal
  4. To understand the links of all of these to sexual offending.

# How Effective Are CBT Treatment Programmes?

## **Friendship et al(2002)**

- Biggest outcome study in UK
- Compared reconviction rates of 670 male offenders receiving treatment to 1,801 not(in prison)
- Two year period(follow up needed)
- Reconviction rates untreated= 14% higher

# SOTP Treatment Evaluations



- Programme integrity- context & practice
- Programme impact –recipients
- Programme outcome- recipient survival & reoffending

# SOTP Programme Evaluations

- Beckett et al(1994):Davidson(2003) NPS - Beech et al(1998, 2005)-prison programmes.
- Friendship, Mann & Beech (2004)- treated less likely to re-offend (be reconvicted) -2 year period
- Less likely to attribute blame to victims (although Beech (2005) – treatment appeared to have little impact on denial )
- Greater victim empathy
- Good Impact on motivation to change
- Recognised risk
- Long term programmes higher impact on self esteem

# Summary: Implications for SOTP Assessment and Treatment?



- Evidence of problematic attachment with parents, particularly mothers, physical and emotional abuse.
- Evidence of bullying in early peer relationships
- Difficulty in maintaining adult relationships
- Evidence of denial and victim attribution-
- Memory loss and PTSD
- Specific issues in assessing and treating online offenders
- How can these issues be addressed in SOTP assessment and treatment ?



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