

12th Aug 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Tuesdays 2:00 – 3:30pm Chapel

Sharing Experiences

Participants: 12 Offenders & 6 Others (2 Prison Staff, 1 Agency, 1 Ex-offender Agency & 2 PD)

LEARNINGS

"I've been Mr Normal since '91. I wash my car, I mow the lawn on Sundays, I live in a little close in Hampshire. One day I get an anonymous piece of paper through the door. It said: 'We know who you are, we know what you've done and we don't want you here.'"

(Ex-Offender)

"We come from different sides of the divide, but everyone here in this room can agree on one thing whatever side we come from: prison does no good to anyone."

(Prison Staff)

"The only thing that would stop me stealing is chopping my hands off. If I lived in Saudi they'd have chopped off all my body parts by now, I'd just be a head with one eye rolling around on the ground still saying 'Trust me!'"

(Offender)

You can't go on blaming other people forever. You've got to accept responsibility for your actions.

Some prisoners need to address their offending behaviour independently of drug use and they're asking for victim awareness.

Prison changes people. Even someone who's done really well has big problems re-integrating.

"You need something to shock you into thinking about it. I did a victim awareness course and it lasted about a year. I was the most powerful thing I could have done. I stole a video camera with someone's wedding video in it. Later I got married and we videoed the wedding. On the course I had to think about what I would do if someone took that video from me and I broke down in tears."

(Offender)



"I was in Dartmoor, I'd been caught trying to escape, I'd cut my wrists to get to healthcare. I went up in front of the Governor – I thought finally, someone was going to help me but he just docked me a week's wages. That was it for me – I'd had enough of the bars, the uniforms, the screws, the rules. That was my last sentence."

(Ex-Offender)

"You hear about other addictions – drugs, gambling, cigarettes – but no one talks about being addicted to crime. I was addicted to crime for a long time."

"Prison stays with you when you leave – it's a place in your head that you put to one side but it's always there."

(Ex-Offender)

"It's all drugs these days. Carats do a great job, but why couldn't one of these workers switch to victim awareness and offending behaviour programmes. More than anything, that's what I need. We talked about it last week too."

(Offender)

"I'm genuinely innocent on this latest charge but in truth, I've gotten away with tons of stuff over the years."

(Offender)

Bournemouth Threshold Dialogue brings Bournemouth offenders together in open conversation with the agencies responsible for their supervision and support. Dialogues are themed on the issues affecting re-offending. The process starts in custody and continues post-release in the community, emphasising support, challenge, responsibility and early intervention. Threshold Dialogue is supported by Bournemouth Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership.