

19th Aug 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Tuesdays 2 – 3:30pm Chapel

Laying blame and taking responsibility

Participants: 12 Offenders & 5 Others (2 Prison Staff, 1 Police Officer & 2 from PD)

LEARNINGS

"We can't always blame other people. We all need to take responsibility for the part we play... I take responsibility for the team I manage and ensuring that we provide the best possible service to all of you."
(Prison Staff)

"I take responsibility for the bad reputation I've got. At one point there were leaflets all over my neighbourhood saying 'if you see this man call the police.' I can change my reputation for the better."
(Offender)

"Probation Officers don't recall you out of spite. They have to adhere to National Standards that give them very little leeway about how they deal with you. There are good and bad probation officers, but they all have to adhere to those standards."
(Prison Staff)

People believe they're being recalled on minor issues and are not being given a chance.

"I was doing so well. 5 ½ months out and clean, I had a job and had even been offered promotion, then I had a small wobble that I couldn't handle, took some subutex to block the cravings. Then it shows up on a test and they throw me back here... it doesn't seem fair. All that time clean and no new offences – no chances, instant recall."
(Offender)



You can't only blame the system – it may fail you, but you play a big part in what happens to you.

"I've been using gear for 25 years, what do they expect? Is it realistic? For people in my situation, there's a 99% chance they'll slip up in recovery. Even though you get warnings from Probation, it's still not enough."
(Offender)

"Some Probation Officers are cool, they say 'it's ok if you have a drink or a spliff, but no class A's.'
(Offender)

"I would say that's an irresponsible approach to take with a recovering drug addict and I would reprimand any member of my team who said that."
(Prison Staff)

"I was in the army before I joined the prison service. At school I won awards for my violin playing. We competed nationally."
(Prison Staff)

"I was a professional boxer when I was younger."
"I'm a qualified canoe instructor."
"I was playing for Motherwell Under-15's."
(Offenders)

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.