

29th July 2008

## BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns  
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Tuesdays 2.00 – 3.30pm Chapel

### Mistakes are human

Participants: 6 Offenders & 5 Others (Prison Staff, Police & PD)

#### LEARNINGS

"I lie to everyone, I lie all the time and I'm really good at it. I've been doing it for 20 years, especially sat across a table from you lot (Police). I've even convinced myself that I'm telling the truth sometimes. I've been known to put polygraphs to sleep."  
(Offender)

"I'd been clean for 2½ years, but then I had feelings that I couldn't handle and picked up. I kept up a front about it - I knew what the consequences were – mistakes are human and lapses are a part of the recovery process."  
(Offender)

"I'm not sure that 12 step can help you in a crisis. With CA, I shared that I'd used and was inundated with phone numbers and offers of support, but with NA and AA, they treated me like I had a disease they could catch - they pushed me away."  
(Offender)

Current housing provision lacks support for all but the most drug abstinent.

Lapse/early relapse is a point where a support is vital, but abstinence-based interventions have to protect their collective wider interest and can't provide that support.

People need to be dealt with personally and directly if they are to learn from their mistakes.

"I've had numerous situations where it would have been easier for me to not be honest in my job, not speak my mind when I knew something was wrong. I wouldn't have to file that report and perhaps work late. What makes me do it every time is my conscience – I don't want to be lying in bed at night worrying about the things I should have done."  
(Prison Staff)



"My housing provider looked through my rubbish bin and found evidence that I'd been using. It was 5 days earlier and I'd lied to them so they threw me out of the dry house. I know they had to do it, but it's the time when you need the support the most and it seems most of your network just cuts you loose."  
(Offender)

"Someone at my dry house thought I'd been using, they saw me go out and I came back looking different. They called my Probation and I got kicked out. No one came up to me and asked if I was having a hard time, if I needed help, even if they had to evict me."  
(Offender)

"And that's the stupid thing – no one confronts anyone with the real issues these days. There's always a procedure, some form you can put in, anything that stops you just going up to that person and saying 'I've got reason to believe that you've done X.' How's a person supposed to learn from their mistakes if it's all done through the system at arms length?"  
(Prison Staff)

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.