

5th August 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP DORCHESTER

Tuesdays 2 – 3.30pm Chapel

It's your life – what do you want to make of it?

Participants: 9 Offenders & 3 Others (Prison Staff & PD)

LEARNINGS

"When I was training we were taught that burglars were the most risky offenders – from the point of view of prison management as well as re-offending. The evidence was that they were often instigators in prison disturbances – riots like at Manchester."

(Prison Staff)

"I heard it from a victim in court. She said she couldn't sleep in her bedroom for 4 days after I burgled her house. It really made me think – I couldn't get it out of my head – it made me feel sick. I'd forgotten about it until now."

(Offender)

"You've got to use what you can to your advantage. At the end of the day it's your life – you have to make of it what you can."

(Prison Staff)

You have to make what you can of the opportunities that are available as and when they arise.

"What do I really need? Well first - the system doesn't offer anything to address your offending behaviour – all they can offer is ETS. There's no victim awareness – that's what I need to really make me look at my behaviour. And a halfway house in the community where you can really address your drug use – not one negative piss test and you're out."

(Offender)



The system is concerned with other issues as well as individual need – risk to the public, managing a growing prison population etc – so it can't always provide offenders with what they need when they need it.

"I got 7 years. I did everything I could – ETS right at the start here in Dorchester. Then I went to Lancaster Farms to do a 12 step programme. I think I did it all too early. I couldn't settle back on normal location. I think I almost went into a depression. Now I'm back on recall and I'm trying to do it again."

(Offender)

"9 months into my sentence I got on the RAPT course. I didn't want to do it really – I just wanted to get my Cat D. But then it started to get through to me. You drag your body there and in the end your mind follows!"

(Offender)

"You've got to gather evidence. If you're applying for a transfer to another prison to do your courses and you can't get one, or you get knocked back – keep a copy of the reply from OCA. If you're applying for a course and there's a waiting list – keep a copy of the reply. It's all evidence that you've been motivated and are trying to address your offending behaviour."

(Prison Staff)

It's your life – whatever you have done in the past you should make of it what you can.

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.