

17th Mar 2009

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP GUYS MARSH

Tuesdays 9–10:30am ETS Room

If you don't try you can't fail

Participants: 4 Offenders, 2 Prison Staff & 1 B'mouth Council

LEARNINGS

"When I'm in a secure unit I have to take my meds. When I'm in prison I can't be made to take my meds. I chose not to because they push all the feelings down and if something happens and I don't get them I just explode. I'd rather just deal with things as they come along."
(Offender)
"So you've got more freedom in prison then..."
(Prison Staff)

"You can't change the system. You have to work the system to your advantage."
(Prison Staff)
"I think the system has changed, housing for example. Only small changes, but that's how change works, and I've seen changes in individuals too."
(B'mouth Council)

"If there's one thing I'd like to change it's the cravings. Even when you're off drugs and normal the craving is always there. It'll never go away and I've got to learn how to deal with that."
(Offender)

Change is often gradual but little changes can make a big difference.

When something can't be changed you need to learn how to live with it.

"It's funny how people see you. I've been in and out of prison and secure units since I was 13 and every time I've spoken to a psych I've had a different diagnosis - a mild personality disorder, a moderate one and then a severe one. I don't know what I am now, although I've been told I'm up and down emotionally."
(Offender)

"Prisons are full of people with mental health issues...that or drug addictions."
(Offender)

"When something is written down about you it's there, you can't change it, but they don't ask your reasons for why it happened, so they don't have the whole story. That reputation stays with you unless you change your friends."
(Offender)

"You can change it - change yourself and keep behaving like that. It doesn't matter what other people think, it's about you."
(Offender)

"You have no real friends in prison. Everybody has ulterior motives. You can't really talk to other prisoners. You can't talk to the guards because everyone thinks you're a grass. It isn't like that on the out though, you can have real friends."
(Offender)

"I don't think so...prison is a community, like a f***ed up community but still a community."
(Offender)

"When things happen in here it's hard to deal with."
(Offender)
"It takes a big man to walk away from an argument. Sometimes staying is about your image and what sort of person you want to be known as...machismo."
(Prison Staff)

"It's not as easy to walk away in prison. You can go to your cell and lock down but you still think about things and when you come out, that person is still there."
(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.