

29th July 2008

BOURNEMOUTH THRESHOLD DIALOGUE

Where everyone learns
but nobody teaches

PRISON DIALOGUE: HMP GUYS MARSH

Tuesdays 9.00 – 10.30am ETS Room

The change has to be from within

Participants: 6 Offenders & 5 Others (Prison Staff, Housing Officer, Offender Supervisor, Police & PD)

LEARNINGS

"Last week was a great conversation. Everything slotted into place – 12 prisoners, prison and agency staff. It felt like the right mix to make for a good session. Today has been more of a struggle to get people in the room because movement slips weren't done. It's eaten into the time available." (PD)

"It is crazy that there's an on site laundry here but we're still not getting clean clothes. At (X prison) they have to send all the laundry out but you still get loads – 10 clean t-shirts a week. It sounds like a small thing here but it ****s me right off." (Offender)

"I'm on methadone but there's no courses available for me – as far as I know I can't get onto P-ASRO while I'm on methadone. I stayed clean on the outside by going to 12 step meetings, then you come in here and find they're not running." (Offender)

When one thing gets up your nose it feels like everything's not working.

"I can feel myself getting wound up. There's been no clean laundry for days, it drives the whole wing mad. Then it goes up a notch and I kick a door or something – if it still doesn't get sorted it's bound to go one stage further. I know what I'm like. The crazy thing is, I know I've become far more of a danger to the public than I ever was before I came to prison." (Offender)

In dialogue, prisoners and prison staff are often surprised that they have the same feelings about issues.

"I can only speak for myself but I've almost felt like walking out from the job recently. I've taken time off sick and Officers have been on weekend leave - so no movement slips got sorted out. It's what happens when people work shifts – all we need is back up to cover this kind of thing happening." (Prison Staff)

"The change has to be from within. If you do what you've always done you'll get what you've always got. You can never beat the system from a powerless shape. You have to disengage from it and come at it from a different perspective – never take it on directly because you can't win." (Prison Staff)

Agencies value this dialogue and feel demoralised when offenders don't get into the room.

"All this stuff is annoying but believe me, it isn't unique to this prison – it happens everywhere we go." (PD)

"Hygiene is a right, not a privilege." (Offender)

"As staff we share your frustrations. That's not lip service and I hope today has shown that." (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.