

**The Effect of a Positive/Motivational Treatment Program for Sexual Offenders on Therapeutic Process Issues**

Liam E. Marshall, M.A., Symposium Chair

This symposium presents three papers on the impact of a positive/motivational open-ended treatment program for sexual offenders. Three separate sites in two countries (USA & Canada) report on the effect of the program on client perceptions, and group climate in incarcerated sexual offenders and those with a serious mental illness. An outline of the program and approach will be presented first and then the three papers examining the effects of the program on therapy process issues, that is, group climate and clients' perceptions, will be presented and discussed.

**The Inmate-Participant Experience of a Positive/Motivational Sex Offender Treatment Program: Qualitative Data from the Inpatient Healthy Lives Program**

Kirk Newring  
Paul Rodriguez

With the increased demand on evidence-based practices, mental health professionals are often asked to conduct program evaluation and to evolve their programs in light of developing research. In the field of sex offender treatment, the integration of the SOTP Study, the Working Positively and Approach Goals efforts, and the Good Lives and Self-Management Models have led to a shift in the ethos in sex offender treatment. Client perspective of treatment has been shown to be an important predictor of treatment success with clients predicting treatment benefits at a higher rate (72%) than therapists' perceptions (26%) (see Marshall et al, 2001, for a review). This presentation will focus on clients' experience in shifting from a confrontational Relapse Prevention style program to a collaborative Positive/Motivational sex offender treatment program within a correctional setting. The change in the treatment program in terms of approach and focus will be presented. Inmate participants responded favorably to this change. The inmate participant experiences to this shift will be presented and discussed.

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

### **Group Climate in an Open-Ended versus Closed Sexual Offender Treatment Program**

L. E. Marshall  
G. A. Serran  
W. L. Marshall

This paper examines group climate differences between an open-ended or rolling group versus a more traditional closed ended sexual offender treatment group. Although there are claimed to be many benefits of open-ended sexual offender treatment groups compared to a closed-group format (e.g., Marshall, Marshall, Serran, & Fernandez, 2006) there has been no research which specifically addresses this issue. This is, presumably, because of the difficulty in assessing whether there are any differences between these two approaches. For example, given the large influence of therapist characteristics on treatment outcome (up to 61%) any comparison between these two approaches (open versus closed) would be confounded by differences in therapists. In this study the same therapist ran both open-ended and closed groups. Using the group member self-report Moos' Group Environment Scale (GES), for comparison with Beech and his colleagues (1997, 2005) research, we found that the open-ended group scored significantly higher on the subscales Beech and his colleagues report to be associated with a composite measure of positive treatment gains. Further results and their implication for treatment are discussed.

### **Group Environment in a Positive/Motivational Treatment Program for Incarcerated Seriously Psychiatrically Ill Sexual Offenders**

A. Davis  
L. Marshall  
J. Bradford  
W. L. Marshall

This paper reports on the group environment in a positive/motivational sexual offender treatment program for incarcerated seriously psychiatrically ill sexual offenders. Moos' Group Environment Scale (GES) was used shortly after entry to the program, and then repeated after approximately every six weeks in the program. The results show that seriously psychiatrically ill sexual offenders can achieve a positive group environment that is similar in nature to non-psychiatrically ill sexual offenders. Primary diagnosis was found to be significantly related to scores on the GES, as was offender and offence features. Implication of these findings for the treatment of psychiatrically disturbed sexual offenders is discussed.