

PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY: LESSONS LEARNED

Teamwork in Reentry: Parole, Counseling, and Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA)

Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower
Patrick Hutcheson
Casandra Lindell

Integration of high risk sexual offenders into the community upon release from prison is most effective when parole, counseling services, and COSA work together. Each makes a unique and important contribution to successful reentry. The workshop will focus on teamwork which provides Containment, Counseling, and Community for High Risk Sex Offenders in Fresno, CA.

The *Containment* approach to parole provides the optimum protection to the community by gathering information on the needs of the prior victim and building a protection against further victimization by sex offender parolees. This is accomplished by developing a set of parole conditions particular to the parolee's history and then monitoring his compliance with those conditions through GPS, law enforcement and community input as well as frequent contact with the parolees by their parole agents.

Through sex offender-specific *Counseling*, an offender learns to identify and change the distinct patterns that led him to act out. Treatment plays an important role in helping the offender make changes for himself that also benefit society. Further, it is absolutely critical to having no more victims.

Circles of Support and Accountability provide practical, emotional, spiritual, and physical *Community* support for an offender along with calling him to be accountable. This takes place in the context of friendship, establishing relationships that motivate the offender to lead a responsible, productive, and accountable life.

The partnership between parole, counseling and COSA enables high risk sex offenders to be accurately identified and referred to COSA. Each partner maintains an appropriate level of communication about the risks, needs and successes of the offender. Further, each leg of the partnership provides a critical component to COSA volunteer training to better enable volunteers to understand the restrictions, impacts and influences upon the released offender. Together, the team works to create an environment of successful reintegration for the sex offender towards building safer communities and no more victims.

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A Nine Year Partnership for Community Safety in Seattle

Gerald Hover
Lindsay Palmer

Washington State's Department of Corrections literally fell into a big problem when it secretly began housing sex offenders around Seattle in 2000. We are no longer secretive. We have learned to communicate early and often about our plans. We have learned we are not the only agency concerned about sex offenders and community safety. We have learned that when we play fair with others they do the same with us.

Nine years later we have a pro-active relationship with the Sex Offender Management Team of King County. This Team includes: law enforcement, prosecutors, defense lawyers, land lords, citizens, and victim providers. Our agenda is simply about community safety and sex offenders, but the particulars are ever changing. Recently we brought local area churches together to address the presence of sex offenders in their congregations.

We would like to share how we have successfully managed this evolving process for the last 9 years. We also intend to articulate our mistakes.