

POSTER

Evaluating Treatment Change in an Outpatient Relapse Prevention Program for Sexual Offenders

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The literature on sex offenders has primarily focused on recidivism of treatment completers. However, little attention is devoted to the change in sex offender treatment. This study compared the entrance and exit scores of 48 sexual offenders who completed a manualized relapse prevention program. The scores from five published measures were used as outcome questionnaires: (1) Locus of Control of Behaviour Scale (LCB), (2) two scales from the Hanson Sex Attitude Questionnaire, (3) Interpersonal Reactivity Index scale (IRI), (4) Sex Offender Acceptance of Responsibility Scales (SOARS), and (5) Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Short Form C). Statistically significant and clinical improvements were found on several of these measures. The results from the study demonstrated that relapse prevention treatment effectively increased offenders' perceptions of events as being a consequence of his own behaviour and therefore under their own personal control. Furthermore, offenders showed greater acceptance that their offence was planned, that the victim was harmed, and that they have some inappropriate sexual interests. Although the findings of the study did not reveal any significant improvement in reducing cognitive distortions or in increasing empathetic concern, these findings support manualized relapse prevention programs to effectively provide sex offenders with skills for identifying offending behavior patterns and to increase their acceptance of responsibility for their own actions. These skills and attributes may augment the offender's ability to recognize high risk factors that can lead up to an offense in order to prevent one from occurring. Implications of this empirical endeavour will also be discussed in this presentation.