

Challenge Psychotherapy

Stella Gould

Julie Hay



HMP Sheppey Group

- Swaleside B Cat, Elmley Local B Cat, Stamford Hill D Cat
- Stella – Head of Counselling & Psychotherapy for 12 years
- Julie – came on placement and stayed
- Stella – masters research rage type murders
- Stella – NOMS approved doctoral research



IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

- Study of what experience is like for individual
- How particular lived experience is seen by a specific group
- They are expert witnesses to their own stories
- Dynamic and interpretative process
- Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) IPA Sage

From IPA to IVP

- Usually IPA interviews analysed later for themes
- But I quickly found common problem for IPP prisoners who were over tariff
- Designed semi-structured therapeutic intervention
- Mainly instrumental violence
- Also domestic violence, relationship issues
- Others – e.g. victim aware, self harm, road rage

Instrumental Violence Programme

- Called programme as prison jargon
- Was a therapeutic intervention
- Pre-planned topics in sequence
- Usually 12 1-hour one-to-one weekly sessions
- Fewer or more as appropriate
- Explored coercion because on sentence plans
- Now trying to get research data on outcomes at Hearings
- Anecdotally, results fit report contents



Parole Board Implications

- Depth reports needed
- Ethical aspects considered
- Careful contracting done
- Therapist reported on process
- Clients did learning reflections after sessions
- Therapist selected extracts for reports

Contracting considerations

- Sentence plan implications – clients saying what they think we want to hear
- Our concern that our report may have negative impact
- Prison concern over collusion
- No real option to opt out once started

Careful assessment of potential clients

- Assessment interviews
- Made sure client understood process, especially reporting
- Some clients not suitable e.g.
 - Insisting innocent
 - Basic spoken & written English needed
 - Wrong sort of violence

Structure (flexible)

- Intro, goal setting
- History of violence
- Justifying beliefs
- Relationships
- Addictions
- Emotional intelligence
- Patterns & Links
- Sabotage mechanisms
- Changing Identity
- IV revisited
- Planning
- Reflect & Review

Theoretical underpinnings

- Attachment theory
- Neuroscience
- Transactional analysis
- Somatic trauma therapy
- Psychological masquerade
- Schema therapy
- CBT, REBT, CBTA

Common themes

- Childhood abuse
- Family cultures e.g. criminals
- Group cultures e.g. religion, race
- Childhood environments e.g. estates, gangs
- Addictions to violence and/or power – being the big man
- Lack of cognitive ability to predict consequences

Confrontational approach

- Confrontational and challenging
- Focus is psychological intelligence
- Not person-centred
- Support without collusion
- Strong relational working alliance
- Therapist manages process
- Client provides content, not dossier

Too much success

- Many requests from OMU
- Many requests from individuals
- Probation starting to ask
- Solicitors asking
- Transfers from other prisons
- We began to plan how to add to our team
- Challenge style of working

Current update

- Unit closed by prison due “budget cuts”
- IAPT commissioning
- NICE IAPT counselling not for violence
- IAPT CBT short-term
- Set up as non-profit service

www.pifcic.org

