

Minnesota Prison Programme



Type of intervention



Group Work



Prison



Individual Work

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:



Tertiary Prevention

Offenders (21 years +) | Male | Prison | Individualised Work & Group Work | English

Target population

The Minnesota Prison-Based Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) provided by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MNDOC) offers treatment, therapy, and transitional services to convicted male sex offenders in prison.

To be eligible for the SOTP, offenders must have at least 20 months to serve in prison. Because treatment capacity doesn't always keep pace with the growing prison population, the SOTP targets moderate- to high-risk sex offenders for treatment. Low-risk sex offenders who are unable to enter treatment while incarcerated are referred to community-based treatment at the time of their release. Under the current process, priority for treatment is based primarily on offenders' scores from the following actuarial instruments: Static-99, Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offense Recidivism, and Minnesota Sex Offender Screening Tool (Revised).

Delivery organisation

The SOTP is delivered by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MNDOC). Their responsibilities and work are rooted in chapter 241 of Minnesota statutes. Under Minnesota law, they are responsible for the "care, custody, and rehabilitation" of anyone committed to the Commissioner by the courts. Their mission, structure, and work all flow from this statutory directive.

Mode and context of delivery

The SOTP is a residential program for inmates that offers rehabilitation and integration into the community. Inmates in the SOTP are housed in two adjacent wings of a larger living unit. The living units operate within a modified therapeutic milieu, which includes clear living unit/program structure and rules. Inmates meet weekly with other members of their living unit to address general housekeeping issues and community cohesion, and to provide support to one another as a community. The SOTP is not a closed living unit, and inmates in the program have some interaction

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with the general population during movement and activities such as dining, religious services, or educational programming.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Staff are trained practitioners within the DOC.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Although individualized treatment plans vary widely among participants, the average dosage consists of 10 to 15 hours of direct staff facilitated services per week for a duration that can range from 1 to 3 years.

Description of intervention

Inmates in the SOTP are housed in two adjacent wings of a larger living unit. The living units operate within a modified therapeutic milieu, which includes clear living unit/program structure and rules. Inmates meet weekly with other members of their living unit to address general housekeeping issues and community cohesion, and to provide support to one another as a community. The SOTP is not a closed living unit, and inmates in the program have some interaction with the general population during movement and activities such as dining, religious services, or educational programming.

Eligible sex offenders start the program in a 30-day assessment phase. The assessment phase includes psychological testing, completion of assignments to facilitate the assessment of treatment needs, and a review of offending history and offense dynamics. There is also a lecture, discussion, and videotapes to provide information on treatment participation and expectations, defenses and denial, sexual assault dynamics, victim impact, and chemical dependency. In addition, a written psychosexual assessment report and an individualized treatment plan is developed based on information gathered from clinical interviews, client observations, and test results.

Following the assessment phase, inmates participate in an average of 6 hours per week of staff-facilitated group therapy sessions. Therapy groups are also available for inmates with cognitive/intellectual limitations to address their particular needs. Additional individual therapy sessions are offered based on the specific needs of inmates and the availability of staff. Therapy is provided in progressive phases and includes transitional programming as well as aftercare. Ongoing therapy and postrelease programming is provided in the community by private agencies under contract with the MNDoc.

Another component of the SOTP is treatment for chemical dependency. Offenders who enter the MNDoc are formally screened, assessed, and diagnosed for chemical abuse or dependency. Treatment plans are developed based on the outcome of these assessments. For sex offenders needing treatment for alcohol or drug dependency problems, treatment is typically provided following the assessment phase of the SOTP.

In addition, education sessions are facilitated between inmates and members of their family and/or support system to prepare offenders for their return to the community as well as to help them reach specific treatment goals. During these sessions, information is provided about the nature and impact of the inmates' offending, and support persons are informed about the risk for reoffense. Response strategies for the offender and the support person are also developed during these sessions.

Inmates also participate in psychoeducational programming, which varies according to offenders' individualized treatment plans. Classes are usually provided for 1½-hour sessions, three to four times a week in 12-week (quarter) terms. During each quarter, inmates are enrolled in one or two classes, including the following: Emotions Management, Alcohol and Drug Education, Cognitive Restructuring, Sexual Health, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault Dynamics, Reoffense Prevention, Victim Empathy, Personal Victimization, Grief and Loss, Morals and Values, and Transitional

Curriculum. Modifications are made to some of the classes to address the particular needs of inmates with cognitive/intellectual limitations. Additional classes, such as classes on parenting and transitional planning (housing, employment, transportation, etc.) are also available. Inmates in the SOTP also attend additional support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Sex Abusers Anonymous. Meetings are held in the institution and groups meet on a weekly basis for about 1½ hours a week. The groups are monitored, but not facilitated, by program staff. Although individualized treatment plans vary widely among participants, the average dosage consists of 10 to 15 hours of direct staff facilitated services per week for a duration that can range from 1 to 3 years.

Evaluation

The SOTP has been rated 'promising' in a report from Duwe and Goldman (2009). The full report can be found here: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1079063209338490?casa_token=K16HaMVea8cAAAAA:MrduE-V72ExXEqJ8aO9Fx2gqDoB0SkttfO7PFmMqxI96DbC1CDGBw02RXZyzaWMdItQ7ItGer7DTDg

References

Duwe, G. and Goldman, R.A., 2009. The impact of prison-based treatment on sex offender recidivism: Evidence from Minnesota. *Sexual Abuse*, 21(3), pp.279-307.

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