

STOP Finland



Type of intervention



Group Work



Prison

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



Tertiary Prevention

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

Target population

The STOP Finland program is aimed at men who have been convicted of sexual abuse-related crime, with an aim to prevent recidivism. It is for high and medium risk offenders.

Delivery organisation

The STOP programme in Finland is implemented by RISE (The Criminal Sanctions Agency). The task of RISE is to contribute to social security by maintaining a legal and secure system of enforcement of sanctions, and to contribute to the reduction of recidivism and the disruption of the development of exclusion that perpetuates crime. The STOP programme is based on cognitive-behavioural theory and on the 'Core' programme used in England and Wales and in Finland has been trialled by Kuopio prison and more recently in Riihimäki prison.

Mode and context of delivery

The STOP-program is an 85-session group program for medium and high-risk offenders. It lasts up to 9 months. The STOP-program has been running since 1999 and it has been evaluated by researchers.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Skilled counsellors and therapists are involved with the STOP Finland programme.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Nine months are spent working with offenders, comprised of 170 hours of participation and 85 group sessions of cognitive-behavioural program work aiming to reduce re-offending.

Description of intervention

The main aim of the STOP Finland program is to lower the re-offending risk and building a good life after receiving a sentence. The three main themes taught during the STOP sessions are;

- Thought and action patterns leading to offenses
- Victim empathy
- Building a crime free future (with new thought and action patterns)

The Cognitive-Behavioural model employed by STOP is comprised of two parts.

- Cognitive: Recognising the distorted patterns of thinking that lead to offending. Understanding the effects of offending on victims.
- Behavioural: Changing the behavioural patterns that lead to offending and/or preventing offending through changes in thinking patterns.

Evaluation

The programme's results are as follows;

Internationally, STOP/Core programmes can lower the recidivism rate to a half from the base rate.

In Finland: those who finished the STOP-program have a recidivism rate of 5,5%. Men in the program need to have a re-offending risk over 10%. Re-offenders have had a significantly higher risk of recidivism (usually more than 25%).

In a recent scientific study (Tyni, 2015) no statistically significant effect was found. This is mainly because the base rate for re-offending of sexual offenders is so low and the numbers in Finland are so small.

References

Laaksonen, T. and Tyni, S., 2015. Kognitiivis-behavioraalisen STOP-kuntoutusohjelman vaikuttavuudesta suomalaisilla seksuaalirikosvangeilla. Sosiaalilääketieteellinen aikakauslehti, 52(4).

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