

Inform Couples Programme UK



Type of intervention



Family Work

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

(Potential)
Offenders

Tertiary prevention

Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Family Work | Internet Specific

**Communities
/ Families**

Tertiary prevention

Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Family Work | Internet Specific

Target population

Couples where one partner has been viewing illegal images of children or committing other sex offences online. The offending partner may have been convicted or awaiting the outcome of a police investigation or court case, but the person's online behaviour should be known to the authorities. This partner should also ideally have attended a Lucy Faithfull Foundation Inform Plus Course or an intervention (this can include counselling) which has focused on the illegal online behaviour. The programme can be a kick start intervention, prior to engaging in longer therapeutic options.

Delivery organisation

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, UK

Mode and context of delivery

Whilst following a general outline, the programme can be adapted to the unique needs and dynamics of the couple taking part on the course. The content of the programme will inform and culminate in a New Life Plan which the couple will negotiate together. The New Life Plan is underpinned by strengths-based theory (Jenkins, 1990; Marshall et al., 2011; Turnell and Edwards, 1999; Ward and Maruna, 2007) which posits that re-offending is less likely to happen if the person is living in a genuinely mutually satisfying relationship with a partner in which needs and desires are met

pro-socially, as opposed to anti-socially by offending. Relapse prevention strategies (Pithers et al., 1990) are also included in the plan, with the couple agreeing on safe boundaries, signs of risk and what should happen if signs of risk emerge.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Staff members should be professionally qualified as social workers, probation officers, psychologists or the equivalent, or hold a recognised counselling qualification up to diploma level. In addition, staff members should either have experience of delivering couple counselling or other interventions to couples. Staff members should also have experience of child protection issues, with particular experience of working with individuals and families to reduce the risk of and protect from sexual offending.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The 10 hour programme is usually delivered over two intensive five hour days, broken up into one two hour session and one three hour session each day. However, the programme can also be spaced out over four separate sessions.

Description of intervention

Adapting to life after it has been discovered that a partner has been viewing illegal images or has been involved in illegal online sexualised behaviour is a significant challenge for most couples. Couples are usually faced with re-negotiating their relationship, in the light of the non-offending partner having to monitor future risk. The following programme is designed to enable couples to develop greater transparency and respect in their relationship, whilst exploring how they can enjoy increased mutual satisfaction in their life together.

Day one:

- 11am-1pm: feedback on how recent challenges have impacted on the relationship and how each partner wants relationship to progress
- 2pm-5pm: historical course of the relationship and identifying strengths and tensions to be resolved

Day two:

- 10am-12pm: exploring how each partner wants the other to change and if and how this can occur
- 12-1pm: emotional challenges for the couple with regard to the non-offending partner having to monitor risk, how resentment can be avoided and mutual respect and trust enhanced
- 2pm-4pm: negotiating and agreeing a New Life Plan, including how safe boundaries can be established and what should happen if signs of risk begin to emerge

Evaluation

Each partner completes a course evaluation form at the end of the course.

References

Jenkins, A. (1990) *Invitation to Responsibility*. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.

Marshall, W.L., Marshall, L.E., Serran, G.A., O'Brien, M.D. (2011) *Rehabilitating Sexual Offenders: A Strengths-Based Approach*. Washington: APA Books

Pithers, W.D. (1990) 'Relapse prevention with sexual aggressors: a method for maintaining therapeutic change and exchanging external supervision', in W.L. Marshall, D.R., Lewis and H.E. Barbaree (eds) *The Handbook of Sexual Assault: Issues, Theories, and Treatment of the Offender*. New York: Plenum Press.

Turnell, A. and Edwards, S. (1999) *Signs of Safety: A Solution and Safety Approach to Child Protection Casework*. New York: Norton.

Ward, T. and Maruna, S. (2007) *Rehabilitation: Beyond the Risk Paradigm*. London and New York: Routledge.

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