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Adolescent Sexual Offender Treatment Programmes in New Zealand:
A Process Evaluation

Jan Elizabeth Geary

Whiria nga topeki, rarangatia nga kete, kawe mai te hapu, hei ora

Bring together the strands, weave the basket, it will carry the wellbeing of the tribe
Abstract

Adolescent sex offenders are recognised as perpetrating a significant proportion of all sexual abuse in our communities. The results of extensive research in this area have clarified many intervention issues and this has led to the development and implementation of treatment programmes aimed specifically at adolescents. Notwithstanding the publication of a small number of outcome studies, process evaluations of treatment programmes for this client group have not featured in the literature. This dissertation presents the findings of a process evaluation of the three main community based adolescent sexual offender treatment programmes in New Zealand. The evaluation aimed to investigate how the programmes worked so that their strengths and weaknesses could be identified. The findings provided the basis for recommendations aimed at improving service delivery and programme effectiveness. Qualitative methods were employed with data being obtained from in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, direct observation and written documentation across three sites. Results indicate (a) high levels of consumer satisfaction with the programmes; (b) the importance of providing flexible and integrated approaches to treatment; (c) engagement in treatment was facilitated by the quality of the client-therapist relationship, family involvement, culturally appropriate communication, and creative and physical activities; (d) the importance of providing clients with good pre-entry information to reduce barriers to participation; (e) recognition should be given to issues of cultural difference by ensuring cultural services for ethnic minorities are integrated into all levels of programme delivery; (f) the importance of building strong interagency collaborations and public relations; and (g) the importance of strong organisational structure and leadership support for staff. The results are discussed in terms of programme improvement in the New Zealand context as well as their application to programme development and improvement in other settings.
Acknowledgements

This study was supported by the Department of Child, Youth and Family. I wish to thank the members of their Evaluation Advisory Group for providing direction and guidance during the key stages of the project. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Tertiary Education Commission’s Bright Futures Scholarship and the University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship.

I would like to thank the managers and staff of SAFE Auckland, WellStop in Wellington, and STOP Christchurch for their assistance and participation in this research. I would also like to thank the adolescents and family members with whom I met, for sharing their experiences with me. I am also grateful to the stakeholders who gave up their time to take part in this study.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support and expert oversight provided by my supervisors Dr Ian Lambie and Associate Professor Fred Seymour. Thanks also to Professor David Thomas for his advice during the early stages regarding qualitative evaluation methods and report compilation. Special thanks to Rawiri Wharemate for his cultural expertise and collaboration throughout the project. I was both honoured and privileged to be guided by him. My friend Diana Ward deserves special mention also for her research assistance, generosity, and encouragement, and I am also grateful to Anna who so willingly gave up her time to help me in the final stages.

Finally, I would like to thank John for getting me started in the first place and helping me along the way, and also my family, especially my parents and Billie for their love and support.
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