PANEL 6: PERPETRATOR-CENTRED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Inxeba lentliziyo: What the Life Stories of Violent Offenders in South Africa Tell Us about Reducing and Preventing Violence

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Since the transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994 South Africa has been plagued by high levels of violence. Understanding what drives violence and its perpetration is thus a critical line of inquiry for policy researchers in South Africa. Between 2010 and 2014, Chandre Gould interviewed men incarcerated for multiple violent offences with the intention of identifying the factors that contribute to trajectories of violence and criminal careers. In 2015 she returned to the places where several of the men had lived and committed their crimes, to understand the context for their offending. The interviews covered the respondents' experiences from birth to incarceration including structural conditions, familial and interpersonal relationships, schooling, victimization and perpetration of violence and substance abuse. She found that the respondents' individual characteristics, their relationships with family, untreated trauma, and exposure to violence and crime, combined with harsh punishment and the absence of supportive adults, interacted to inform their use of violence. Their experiences of violence were not restricted to discrete settings violence experienced at home was mirrored at school, by employers, and in their communities and was reinforced in their interactions with the criminal justice system. Each of these experiences of violence had a compounding effect. The combination of structural violence and physical violence, in the absence of warm, trusting relationships, is shown in the study to cause complex trauma and lay the basis for further violence. In this paper she will reflect on how these findings should inform strategies to prevent violence.

Tertiary Prevention: Addressing Own Victim Empathy in Youth Sex Offenders

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The goal of this research was to measure, describe and compare the prevalence of victim empathy in youth sex offenders. One of the objectives, on which this paper is based, was to provide recommendations with regard to the need for the inclusion or exclusion of victim empathy advancement components in intervention programmes aimed at rehabilitating youth sex offenders. The mixed methods approach was followed in the study. Quantitative data was collected by means of a questionnaire and qualitative data was obtained by means of semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires were completed by 96 sentenced youth sex offenders from three Youth Correctional Centres (YCCs), where after interviews were conducted with each of the participants.
The questionnaire measured the prevalence of empathy for a general sexual abuse victim as well as own victim empathy in youth sex offenders. Comparisons were made between the two types of empathy and in the quantitative section of the study it was found that the research participants displayed significantly less empathy for their own victims when compared to their levels of empathy for a general sexual abuse victim.

The research participants were asked about their attendance of correctional programmes in the YCCs and whether these programmes contained an empathy component. Most of the participants indicated that the Sex Offender Programmes which they attended did not have an empathy component and did not focus on the influence that rape had on the victim. Only a small number indicated that the programmes which they attended focussed on the victim. However, it was clear from their explanations that the main focus was on general sexual abuse victim empathy and not on own victim empathy. Considering the results of this study, it is evident that programmes should focus on own victim empathy, as that is where the most prominent deficits are displayed.

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The Effectiveness of Perpetrator Programmes in Promoting Gender Relations and Prevention Domestic Violence: A Case Study of NICRO’s PIPV Programme

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Domestic violence is an enduring social problem in South Africa and calls for a competent response to reduce the high rates of its occurrence (Kruger 2006). The South African government has taken legal action to deal with this issue through the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. However, this legal reform alone is insufficient to reduce domestic violence, which is still prevalent. In recent years, some quarters have called for intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence. There is much contention with regard to the efficacy of working with perpetrators, thus this study aimed to contribute to this debate by examining the effectiveness of the Perpetrator for Intimate Partner Violence (PIPV) programme. This programme evaluated was pro-feminist oriented and presented by NICRO as a condition to a Non-Custodial Sentence. Hence, the programme was coupled with suspended sentences for intimate partner violence perpetrators to rehabilitate offenders. The goal of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the PIPV programme in promoting positive gender relations and preventing further domestic violence. A sample of eight respondents, including four perpetrators and four victims of intimate partner violence, were interviewed. The study was conducted 12 months after programme completion and was both qualitative and evaluative in nature. The results of the study revealed that physical violence did stop but other forms of domestic violence were only reduced. There was also a significant increase in accountability and responsibility from offenders, which helped in effecting behavioural changes. The research also gave an insight into the importance of empowering perpetrators with non-violent conflict resolution skills as these played a significant role in the cessation of domestic violence perpetration. However, it is apparent from the study that successful perpetrator programmes have to be coupled with legal reforms to ensure compliance and effectiveness. Finally, results from this study indicated that positive gender relations are the key to reducing domestic violence.
Will They Do It Again? The Assessment of Children Who Sexually Offend

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To help determine which children pose the highest risk of subsequent offending, courts frequently seek risk assessments from probation officers and other mental health practitioners (Borum & Verhaagen, 2006; Conroy & Murrie, 2007, in Viljoen, Elkovitch and Ullman, 2009). For the adult sex offender population, there has been progress in developing reliable actuarial risk assessment instruments (Epperson, Kaul, & Hesselton, 1999; Hanson & Thornton, 1999). However, in the last decades, only a few risk assessment instruments have been developed specifically for children who sexually offend, and the literature on these instruments is limited. The purpose of this presentation is to provide a systematic review of the literature on the predictive accuracy of child sexual offending risk assessment instruments, describing the most suitable risk assessment instruments for children who sexually offend and to list some limitations.