

The Ma'agalim Centre Israel



Type of intervention



Group Work



Counselling



Individual Work

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



Tertiary prevention

Young Adults (18 – 20 Years), Adults (21 Years +) | Male | Group Work, Counselling, Individual Work | Hebrew

Target population

This centre is targeted at medium-high risk male sex offenders, over 18 years of age. These individuals may attend The Ma'agalim Centre as part of a probation condition specifying that they must undergo treatment for at least one year. This is either after imprisonment with a judicial condition or on a voluntary basis.

Delivery organisation

The Centre is operated by 'Shel Rehabilitation Projects', and supervised, funded and given professional guidance by the Israeli Adult Probation Service. The Centre provides preventative intervention for sex offenders, in accordance with the Public Protection from Sex Offences Law 2006.

Mode and context of delivery

The Ma'agalim Centre, in Israel, provides preventative intervention for adult sex offenders in the community. The therapeutic centre includes a number of units: a residential hostel and a day centre which provides community-based programmes for adult sex offenders and maintenance groups to maintain learning following treatment completion. Some offenders are also provided with anti-libidinal medication to reduce their sex drive. The programmes mostly adopt the cognitive-behavioural approach to treatment. Some aspects of the programmes also adopt the psycho-educational approach. Treatment is mostly provided in group format, but individual therapy is also provided.

The community approach of the Centre provides a treatment option which reduces unnecessary and expensive incarceration for certain types of offenders. Establishing the Centre in a community location makes it possible to

supplement treatment with family support (sometimes family members are also included in the therapeutic process) and allows offenders to be integrated, gradually, back in to the community.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

The Ma'agalim Centre is staffed by a range of skilled professionals, including a director, professional coordinators, therapists, social workers, psychiatrists, nurses, guides, students and volunteers.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The residential hostel programme will provide beds for 24 medium-high risk sexual offenders and is due to open in January 2015.

The day centre at Ma'agalim provides a day time programme five times a week and an evening programme three times a week, for 20 medium risk sexual offenders in each programme. The daily day time programme runs from 8am to 4pm and constitutes 'the first stage' of treatment. The evening programme runs from 5pm to 8pm and constitutes 'the second stage' of treatment. Following these two intensive treatment stage, the individual will proceed to 'the maintenance stage' which requires individuals to attend two meetings a month. The maintenance stage acts as a 'booster' to learning from the programme and reinforces prior learning and skills.

Description of intervention

The goals of treatment at The Ma'agalim Centre are:- to reduce a patient's sexual risk to prevent recurrent sexual offending and to prevent the creation of further victims of sexual abuse. The Centre aims to provide patient's with behavioural alternatives to offending, which are in line with the normative population.

To be accepted to the Ma'agalim Centre, individuals must recognise they have a sexual behaviour problem. Various offences may have been committed, including contact and non-contact sexual offences against male or female children or adults, incest, or other forms of sexual deviance. Individuals must be motivated to receive treatment to address their behaviour and be reasonably able to verbally communicate. Basic literacy skills are also required, as well as taking into account an individual's current physical state (e.g. no use of alcohol or drugs).

Initially, a multi-disciplinary team working at The Ma'agalim Centre assess the needs and risk of each individual patient, in order to construct the treatment programme and supervision plan. Patients then undergo the first stage of treatment in the Day Centre (8am-4pm, five days a week) and then graduate to the second stage of treatment (5pm-8pm, three evenings a week) which is also held in The Centre. The length of engagement with each treatment stage is highly individualised and depends on the risks and needs of the individual as well as the length of sentence they have received.

Throughout the programme, treatment modules include: identifying and analysing the offence-chain, sex education, communication, role play and cognitive restructuring, anger management, assertiveness and life-skills training, defensiveness reduction, relapse prevention, victim empathy education and reducing the offender's denial/minimisation. Another focus of the programme is on the offender's life cycle and the cycle of events during the offence itself, including encouraging the offender to consider his individual, family, employment, social and leisure circumstances at the time of offending. Therapists attempt to teach the offender how feelings can lead to thoughts which ultimately lead to actions. The therapy attempts to teach an offender how to control or change their thought patterns to lead to changes in their behaviour. It examines why an offence is not a single event in the offender's life

cycle, but an accumulation of thoughts and feelings which may interact to produce offending behaviour. Offenders are taught how a continuation of offence-supportive thoughts and feelings may serve to reinforce the cycle of offending.

Following the first and second stages of treatment, patients graduate to the maintenance stage of the programme. The maintenance sessions run twice a month and aim to reinforce skills and learning from the programme. Individuals must continue to attend maintenance sessions until the end of their probation sentence. The entire treatment process can last up to three years.

The Ma'agalim Centre also runs groups for offenders' significant others, so that they can share in and contribute to the offender's rehabilitation process.

Evaluation

In 2012, Prof Mally Schori conducted a study which was designed to examine the effectiveness of the programme run at The Ma'agalim Centre. Demographic data was collected from patient records who had received treatment at The Centre and interviews were conducted with staff as well as past and current patients. Recidivism information was gathered from the Israeli police. The results indicated that The Ma'agalim Centre served as an effective therapeutic environment, where patients reported improvements in their coping mechanisms, self-confidence and awareness of their problems following treatment. The findings indicated lower recidivism rates of Ma'agalim graduates, than similar programmes from around the world (less than 3 %).

References

Leaflets available on request (see contact details below).

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