

The Te Piriti Sex Offender Treatment Programme New Zealand



Type of intervention



Prison



Individual Work



Group Work

Target group, level of prevention and sub-groups:



Tertiary Prevention

Adults (21 Years +) | Male | Prison, Group Work, Individual work

Target population

Primarily Maori men who are in prison having committed a sexual offence against a child/children. Te Piriti also caters for non-Maori clients who have sexually offended against children.

Delivery organisation

Department of Corrections (Statutory body), New Zealand

Mode and context of delivery

The Te Piriti programme is delivered at a special treatment unit at Auckland prison. Te Piriti is one of two specialist child sex offender units in New Zealand, which aims to reduce the rate of reoffending. Te Piriti aims to provide effective assessment and treatment for Maori men, the indigenous people of New Zealand, who have sexually offended against children. This programme also caters for non-Maori clients.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

The Te Piriti Unit is staffed by 10 individuals.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Programme lasts for 40 weeks, although Te Piriti runs with an open group format, meaning that men engage with the programme until their identified sexual rehabilitation needs have been adequately addressed, so may engage for less than the full 40 weeks. Four weekly sessions are run over this 40 week period.

Description of intervention

The Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit for child sex offenders at Auckland Prison was set up in 1994. It is closely modelled on the Kia Marama programme at Rolleston Prison in Christchurch. However it includes a far stronger Māori content with specific focus on promoting a therapeutic environment – combining psychological best practice principles such as cognitive behavioural therapy - within a tikanga Māori framework, a holistic set of practices based on a Maori world view and understanding of the universe.

The programme involves an adaptation of the Kia Marama programme (see below) and consists of the widely accepted core components of sex offender treatment (e.g. relapse prevention, cognitive restructuring and sexual reconditioning etc). The programme includes additional components and processes specifically focused on the needs of Maori. Staff at Te Piriti seek to maintain an ongoing relationship with the local *iwi* (tribe) and community through providing information about the programme.

The highly structured Kia Marama programme aims to prevent relapses by teaching offenders that their offending behaviour is the result of linked steps of thought and behaviour. It offers skills and strategies to break these links and opportunities for change from initial assessment, through treatment, to post release. The programme views sexual offending through a relapse prevention framework, based on cognitive behavioural principles.

- It encourages the client to see his offending as a series of identifiable links in a chain of problem behaviour rather than as a random event, which is the common view.
- It allows him the possibility of control at several points (i.e. escape or avoidance) to end the behaviour chain.
- He is not held responsible for factors making him vulnerable to offending, but is responsible for managing them.
- If he can grasp the relapse prevention framework at even a simple level, treatment and what it requires of him makes sense and he will be better motivated.

In the Te Piriti programme, Maori clients undergo an initial assessment by the cultural consultant at Te Piriti which covers familiarity and comfort with aspects of Maori and non-Maori cultures, with recommendations to address deficits. It is hypothesised that addressing symptoms of cultural alienation (for example, poor communication skills and prohibiting the development of intimacy) will increase self-esteem and confidence and help develop skills to reduce the risk of re-offending. A discussion of any deficits are discussed with the Te Piriti therapist and built in to the client's personal therapeutic goals.

Evaluation

Nathan, L., Wilson, N.J., & Hillman, D. (2003). *Te Whakakotahitanga: An evaluation of the Te Piriti special treatment programme for child sex offenders in New Zealand*. Psychological Service Report, Department of Corrections. Wellington, New Zealand.

A recently completed evaluation study (Nathan, Wilson & Hillman, 2003) compared Te Piriti graduates (who were released from prison before May 2000) with the same control group as used in the previously reported Kia Marama evaluation. Results from this study of 201 men are promising, with a sexual recidivism rate for Te Piriti graduates (Māori and non-Māori combined) of 5.47% as compared to the control sample sexual recidivism rate of 22%. This result is obtained after a two and a half to four year follow-up, post release from prison. Of perhaps most significance however is that when recidivism rates are analysed separately for ethnicity, Māori men do better at Te Piriti, with its marriage of tikanga Māori and Western psychology, than they do at Kia Marama, with its predominantly Western psychological approach. These results are supportive of the argument that programmes are more effective in reducing sexual recidivism when the design and implementation are attuned to the cultural background of offenders.

References

<http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/the-effectiveness-of-correctional-treatment/5-the-te-piriti-sex-offender-treatment-programme.html>

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Larson, J., Robertson, P., Hillman, D., & Hudson, S. (1998). Te Piriti: A bicultural model for treating child molesters in Aotearoa / New Zealand. In W. Marshall, S.M. Hudson, T. Ward, & Y. Fernandez (Eds.), *Sourcebook of treatment programs for sexual offenders* (pp 385-398). New York: Plenum.

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Contact details

Jim van Rensburg
Principal Psychologist
Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit
Jim.Rensburg@CORRECTIONS.GOV.NZ