

Groupwork Services

Community Sexual Offences Groupwork Programme

**Names have been changed in the interests of client confidentiality.*

Joe* attended the Community Sexual Offences Groupwork Programme, having committed an offence of downloading indecent images of children. Joe was given a three-year probation order with conditions to attend CSOGP.

Initially Joe was subdued and reluctant to discuss his offence. He had felt the courts had treated him harshly in accordance with his offence. He had lost his job, had increased family debt, and his relationship with his wife had broken down due to his offending behaviour. His feelings of being harshly treated were explored within group work and Joe believed his offence was 'victimless' given that he did not physically have any contact with the victims within the indecent images.

Focus was given to victim empathy and awareness and during an exercise named the 'victim ripple effect', Joe was given the opportunity to learn how he had assisted in the abuse of the victims in his offence by creating demand for the abusive images and a greater understanding of the abuse victims experienced at the hands of those supplying the abusive images. Furthermore Joe gained a deeper insight into all aspects of victim empathy, considering not only the direct victims, but also their parents, his own family and friends etc.

Afterwards Joe became more involved in groupwork. Joe immediately removed his computer and Internet access from his home, eliminating the immediate risk factor involved in re-offending. He then explored his own negative thoughts and feelings, his pro-offending thinking prior to offending and gained a greater insight into why he offended and thus had a greater understanding on how to recognise 'risky thoughts' in the future and how to implement appropriate coping strategies so as to avoid re-offending.

Over a period of time, Joe gained employment and built up his relationship with his wife. Joe contributed this to the learning from the group and his communication abilities, such as being honest and discussing thoughts and feelings rather than 'bottling' them up.

Joe continues to lead an offence free life. He stated that understanding the impact his offending behaviour had on others, the short and long term effects of abuse on victims, and his insight into how he had been involved in the abuse of others, had made him determined to be a better person. Joe acknowledged his feelings of shame and guilt assisted in his relapse prevention plan for the future and is determined not to be responsible in any way for the abuse of another person.

Forth Valley Groupwork Services

