

Sexual Crime

Series Editors

Belinda Winder
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Phil Banyard
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Nicholas Blagden
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Helen Elliott
Bishop Grosseteste University
Lincoln, UK

Rebecca Lievesley
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Sexual Crime is an edited book series devised by a team at SOCAMRU led by Professor Belinda Winder in the Psychology Division at Nottingham Trent University.

It offers original contributions to specific avenues of research within the field of sexual crime with each volume drawing together a review of the literature from across disciplines, including cutting edge research and practice, original material from services and offenders themselves as well as future directions for research and practice.

These volumes will be highly relevant to clinical and forensic psychologists and therapists, offender managers and supervisors, social workers and those working in the field of rehabilitation. They will be a great source of insight for academics, researchers and students in these disciplines as well as criminologists and policy makers.

More information about this series at
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Helen Elliott • Kerensa Hocken
Rebecca Lievesley
Nicholas Blagden • Belinda Winder
Phil Banyard
Editors

Sexual Crime and Circles of Support and Accountability

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Editors

Helen Elliott
Bishop Grosseteste University
Lincoln, UK

Kerensa Hocken
HMPPS Whatton
Whatton, UK

Rebecca Liesley
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Nicholas Blagden
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Belinda Winder
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

Phil Banyard
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham, UK

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Foreword

This book offers a welcome contribution to the literature and evidence base that is available on Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). The authors offer a fresh and interesting look at CoSA through offering perspectives on current literature and both published and unpublished research in the field. The book is relevant not just to psychologists, criminologists, social workers, Probation Officers and students, but to practitioners and the general public with an interest in learning how CoSA operates. It highlights the successful contribution CoSA makes to the rehabilitation of those who have committed sexual crime and those who engage in sexually harmful behaviour.

The publication of the book is timely as there has been a continuous grappling with the issues of how best to address sexual abuse in society, both in the UK and internationally. The statistics for sexual abuse continue to be disturbing. According to a study conducted by the Office for National Statistics there were 47,008 sexual offences reported against children between April 2014 and March 2015. In 2015, 8595 defendants were prosecuted for child sexual abuse, up from 7536 in 2014, a rise of 14%. There are approximately 49,466 registered sex offenders recorded as living in the UK as of March 2016¹ and an average of 3000 are released from prison every year.

It is important that we recognise that although it is crucial for us to continue to give help and support to victims of sexual abuse, we should

also address the root causes of this behaviour, if we are to prevent further victims of sexual abuse and the devastating pain and trauma that this is continuing to create in societies and communities all over the world. We can only do this by working with those who have committed these crimes, through treatment and support programmes, of which CoSA are a recognised and respected intervention. It is this recognition that has enabled CoSA to expand significantly over the last few years and the initiative is now fully operational in Canada, the US, the UK, Ireland and a number of countries in Europe. In the UK alone there are now 16 Providers of CoSA, which are overseen by Circles UK as the national overarching organisation. We have also managed to establish CoSA in areas where they have not been delivered before, with the help of a Big Lottery funded project—this will enable the roll out of 188 additional CoSAs over the next two years—100 new in London alone. Our network of trusted and valued volunteers has continued to grow and we now have more than 500 active volunteers who deliver CoSA throughout England and Wales. These are significant achievements, and the publication of this book will add to our knowledge base and further inform the current debates and discourse on what is effective in reducing sexual reoffending.

The book is made up of eight diverse and highly relevant chapters. It starts with a summary of the historical development of CoSA, from its early beginnings in Canada, to the successful implementation in both the United Kingdom and Europe. This first chapter explores how the original model was adapted to a British context to ensure it became a meaningful component of the risk management process and highlights how this restorative community based initiative works effectively within the existing criminal justice system. Chapter 2 focuses on what we know about sexual offending and desistance from sexual crime. It specifically highlights the role of narrative identity in desistance from sexual deviance and how CoSA maps onto this. Chapter 3 addresses the issue that despite a growing body of research on the effectiveness of CoSA, particularly from Canada, the US, UK and the Netherlands, there is not yet enough evidence to determine whether they significantly reduce sexual recidivism. The author includes an overview of the key CoSA effectiveness studies carried out to date, along with an overview of future directions for research. Chapter 4 outlines the first prison-model of CoSA, which was

established in the UK in 2014 and discusses some of the key findings from the evaluation. The chapter emphasises the importance of the support offered immediately on release from prison and the continued barriers individuals convicted of sexual crime face to successful reintegration into the community. Chapter 5 discusses the importance of evaluation and proposes a structure and process suitable for an evaluation of CoSA. Chapter 6 provides a fascinating overview of how the media shape societal attitudes towards sexual offending and makes suggestions to promote more constructive responses and debates that could help to more successfully address these complex issues. Chapter 7 gives a very personal insight into the thoughts, feelings and impressions of those most closely involved, namely CoSA Core Members and Volunteers. The final chapter of the book concludes with an exciting view of how CoSA may evolve and adapt in future. The authors focus on psychologically informed CoSA, specifically the attachment needs of individuals convicted of sexual crime and CoSA for non-offending individuals in the community who are concerned about their sexual thoughts or behaviour. The chapter also explores the concept and practicalities of CoSA for certain minority groups, including CoSA for transgender populations, deaf individuals and young people.

CEO Circles, UK

Riana Taylor

Notes

1. Office for National Statistics: <file:///C:/circlessbs/RedirectedFolders/EmmaB/Desktop/Focus%20on%20Violent%20Crime%20and%20Sexual%20Offences%20%20Year%20ending%20March%202015.pdf>

Preface

This Series: Sexual Crime

This book series will offer original contributions to current books available on this fast growing area of high public interest. Each volume will comprehensively engage with current literature, and make efforts to access unpublished literature and data by key authors in the field. The series will also, by the end of each volume, suggest potential new directions for researchers and practitioners.

These volumes are relevant not just to psychologists, criminologists, social workers, final year undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral students of all these areas, but to practitioners and the general public with an interest in learning more about the topic. The aim is to create books that are readable, yet firmly anchored in a sound evidence base from both researchers and practitioners. The volumes will include therefore a robust synthesis of the literature, consideration of the theories relevant to each topic, a focus on projects that are relevant to the topic, with a summary of the research and evaluation of these, chapters focusing on the service user voice and a final summary chapter, highlighting future possibilities and directions (as suggested by others in the field or by the authors themselves).

This Volume: Circles of Support and Accountability

The current volume offers a contribution to the growing interest and evidence base for Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). The volume highlights the theoretical underpinnings surrounding CoSA and how it contributes to the rehabilitation of those who have committed sexual crime and offers an overview of the literature to date. The book also provides original and unpublished research on CoSA, as well as a unique opportunity to hear about both the service user, volunteer and coordinators perspectives when engaging in CoSA. The perceptions of the public and influence of the media are also explored, and finally interesting and practical suggestions are made for the future of CoSA.

Future Texts

This series is ongoing, with planned future volumes including: sexual offender experience of imprisonment, the prevention of sexual crime and experiences of individuals living in the community with a sexual interest, spirituality and sexual crime, internet offending, sexual crime and personality disorder and the protective factors of sexual crime.

Lincoln, UK
Whatton, UK
Nottingham, UK

Helen Elliott
Kerensa Hocken
Rebecca Lievesley
Nicholas Blagden
Belinda Winder
Phil Banyard

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Notes on Contributors

Dr Nicholas Blagden is a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology and Associate Head of the Sexual Offences Crime and Misconduct Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University (UK). He is a Chartered Psychologist and has worked and researched within the criminal justice system and HM Prison Service for many years.

Michelle Dwerryhouse is a PhD student at Nottingham Trent University, UK. She spent some time working in corporate business before completing her undergraduate degree in Psychology at the Open University in 2015. She then completed an MSc in Forensic Psychology and Mental Health at the University of Manchester in 2016. Michelle volunteered at Childline and Circles of Support and Accountability whilst studying, and worked with a prison mental health team during her MSc. She is currently working with the Safer Living Foundation to carry out a National Evaluation of Circles of Support and Accountability. Her research interests include offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

Kim Cox is a forensic psychologist in training. She did her undergraduate degree in Psychology with Neuroscience followed by a master's degree in Forensic Psychology. Kim has worked with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) for over ten years and she specialises in the rehabilitation and risk assessment of people in prison for sexual offending.

Helen Elliott is a Lecturer in Counselling at Bishop Grosseteste University (UK). She has a background in forensic psychology with a focus on offender rehabilitation and therapeutic change and is a trainee integrative psychotherapist. Helen was also co-founder of the Safer Living Foundation—a charity set up to run rehabilitative initiatives.

Claire Good has spent the last 14 years working in the crime and community safety field, since gaining an MSc in Criminology. Most notably prior to her appointment as Young Persons Project Manager for the Safer Living Foundation she spent 8 years as a Manager within a Youth Offending Team with particular responsibility for work around victims, restorative justice, volunteers, referrals orders and prevention and early intervention.

Craig A. Harper is a Lecturer in Human Psychology at Nottingham Trent University (UK). His research interests lie in the psychological processes that underpin decision-making in relation to controversial social and political topics. Most of his research has been focused on how people form and express attitudes towards people with sexual convictions, with the aim being to promote progressive and evidence-based policies to prevent and reduce sexual victimisation. Away from forensically-based research, he is a member of the Heterodox Academy, which is an organisation seeking to promote viewpoint diversity and reduce political polarisation in higher education.

Dr Kerensa Hocken is a registered forensic psychologist at HMPPS Whatton (UK) and is an expert in the field of sexual offending. She has oversight for the assessment and treatment of people in prison for sexual offending in the Midlands region and is a co-founder, trustee and clinical lead for the Safer Living Foundation.

Rosie Kitson-Boyce has previously completed a BA in Criminology followed by an MSc in Psychology. Rosie has also worked as a psychology assistant in the prison service for 3 years where she facilitated on Sex offender treatment programmes. Following this Rosie completed an MSc in Forensic Psychology before starting a PhD at Nottingham Trent University. Rosie is currently completing her PhD, which is evaluating a prison-model of Circles of Support and Accountability. This research is part of the Sex Offences Crime and Misconduct Research Unit at the university. Rosie's research interests include, offender reintegration, rehabilitation and offenders with intellectual disabilities.

Rebecca Lievesley is a Lecturer in Forensic Psychology and member of the Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit at NTU. She is also a co-founder and Trustee of the Safer Living Foundation.

Helen O'Connor is a trainee forensic psychologist who specialises in the field of sexual offending. She helped design and deliver the first group-based treatment programmes for deaf prisoners in HMPPS.

Dave Potter was born in England and has lived his whole life in the UK. He is a coordinator for the Safer Living Foundations circles of support and accountability and has been working within the criminal justice system since 1989. He has extensive knowledge of sex offender treatment programmes and is especially interested in the rehabilitation back into the community of those convicted of sexual offences. He is committed to raising the profile of the work done by the SLF and he lives with his wife Susan, a teacher, and their 2 cats.

Carrie Webb is a qualified Probation Officer who worked in both community and custodial settings for a number of years prior to joining Circles South East in 2008 as the Circle Co-ordinator for Hampshire. Webb has been a Senior Co-ordinator since 2014 and has overall responsibility for the delivery of Circles across Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex. During the last four years she has overseen the design, implementation and delivery of the Adapted Circles pilot for individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Chris Wilson is a qualified Social worker. He worked in Child Protection prior to his appointment as treatment manager at the Thames Valley Sex Offender Project. He was a member of the design team for the accredited Thames Valley Community Sex Offender Group-work Programme and in 2002 was appointed project manager for the Thames Valley Circles of Support and Accountability pilot project.

Belinda Winder is Head of the Sexual Crime, Misconduct and Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University (UK). She is a trustee, Vice Chair and co-founder of the Safer Living Foundation, a charity set up to prevent and reduce sexual offending.

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