



# Working with Sexual Offenders with Learning Disabilities

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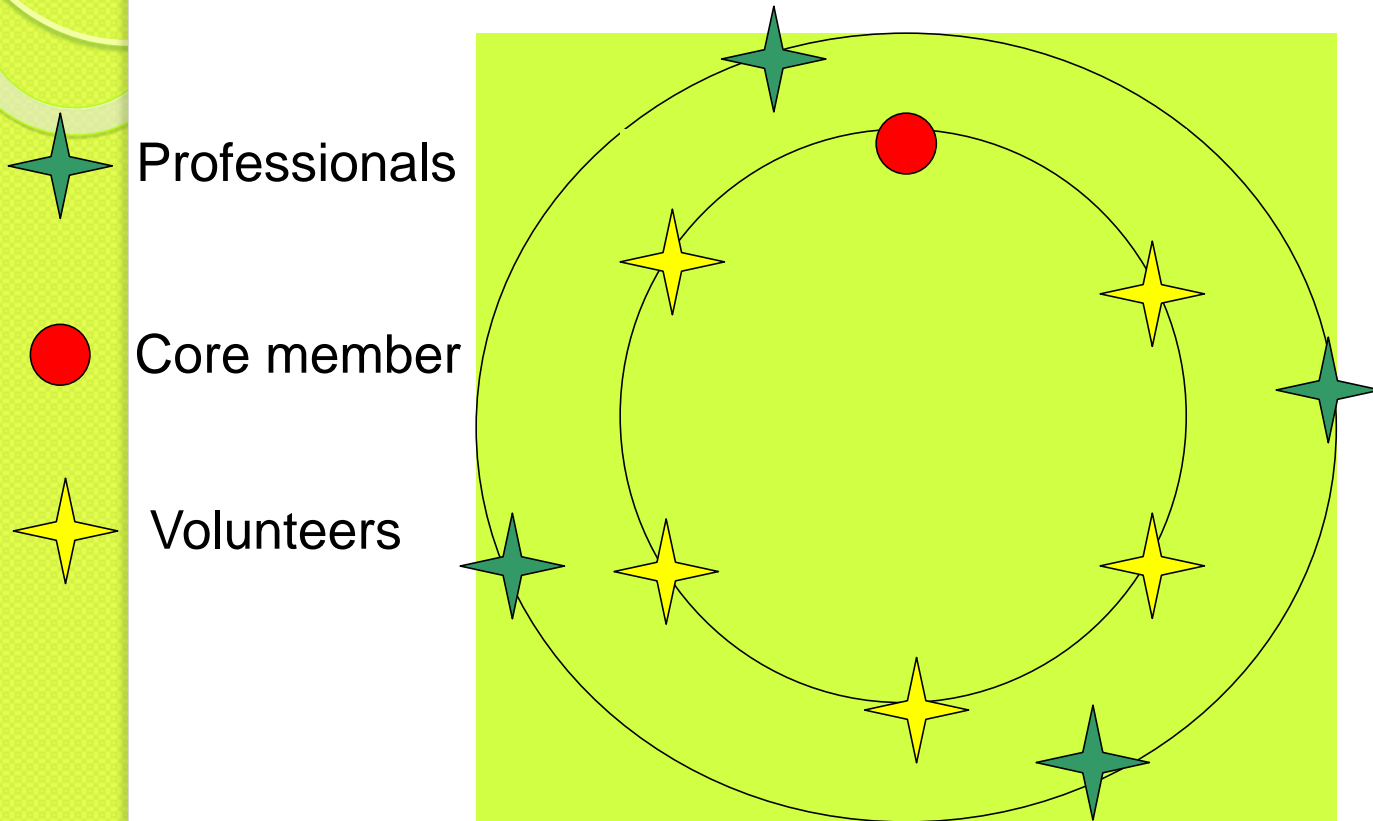
# Introducing Circles South East

- A sexual harm / public protection charity
- London and the South East, Hertfordshire & Northamptonshire
- Staff team of practitioners with experience in offender management, sex offender treatment programmes, risk assessment & management
- Voluntary sector organisation
- Work with perpetrators, survivors, partners of abusers, Court assessments

# What is a mainstream Circle?

- Criminal justice pathway
- Men & women over 18 years
- Convicted through the courts
- Some admission of responsibility
- High levels of risk and need
- Reduce risk; improve self-esteem; reduce social isolation; improve life-skills, employability etc
- 18 months, 4 volunteers, 1 perpetrator (Core Member)

# What does a Circle look like?



The Circle comprises volunteers from the community who are supported by professional staff

# Why adapt our mainstream services for people with learning disabilities?

- Circles South East receives a significant number of referrals for individuals who have been diagnosed with either a Learning Disability (LD) and/or Autism.
- Growing awareness of the need to better equip staff and volunteers in order to deliver a model of best practice.
- An analysis of our referrals confirmed that 19% had a formal diagnosis of either LD and/or Autism. A further 4% had no formal diagnosis, but evidence was present to suggest the presence of either LD or Autism (23% in total).

# Characteristics

	LD/Autism Group	Comparison Group
Average Age	35	45
Pre-cons (Sexual)	60%	40%
Pre-cons (Non-sexual)	40%	30%
Sentenced to Custody	30%	80%
Completed Treatment Programme	50%	90%

# Outcomes

	LD/Autism Group	Comparison Group
Negative Outcome/Behaviour (Mid-Circle)	56%	28%
Negative Outcome/Behaviour (Mid-Mentoring)	43%	20%

# The Pilot

- Aim: To assist in the development a model of best practice, which can be rolled out nationally
- 2½ year pilot (since extended for further 12 months, due to end October 2017)
- Six Circles
- Fully evaluated (Andrew Bates, Forensic Psychologist)
- Adapted Circle Co-ordinator
- Steering group of LD & autism specialists



# What have we adapted?

- Volunteer training
- Materials in 'easy-read' format
- Tools/language
- Increased the Length of a Circle
- Referrals from other agencies – Social Services, NHS etc
- Unconvicted as well as convicted
- New Adapted Risk Assessment Tool

# What are we aiming to achieve?



# Learning points to date

- Higher levels of impulsivity/disengagement
- Greater need to 'chase', compromise & be flexible
- Volunteer training – two days not three
- Gradual introduction of volunteers can be beneficial
- Reduced numbers of volunteers per Circle
- Greater levels of interaction between Co-ordinator, volunteers and CM
- Less appealing to volunteers?

# Case Study 'B'

- Had offended against a member of his family
- Initially in prison prior to being transferred to a secure hospital (18 months)
- History of substance misuse (cannabis and alcohol)
- Mental health problems and multiple suicide attempts
- Multiple diagnoses, including frontal lobe damage and Borderline Personality Disorder
- Survivor of physical and sexual abuse

- Anti-social peer group
- Inappropriate accommodation
- Emotionally unstable
- Unable to cope with the demands of daily life
- Police, social work and mental health involvement

# Progress made by 'B'

- Risk scores reduced from 40 (out of a possible 66) at commencement of Circle, to 12 at conclusion of Circle.
- Positive/Healthy Relationships: renewed contact with his mother; developed pro-social friendships. through attendance at groups and day centre.
- Healthy Living: lost 8st in weight; healthy eating; improvement in mental health.
- Managing my behaviour: reduction in substance misuse; reduction in levels of sexual pre-occupation.

- Well-being and Self-esteem: regular attendance at counselling sessions; reduction in anxiety levels; ability to interact with others during the course of daily life.
- Managing Life's Problems: much less likely to lose his temper; less impulsive; able to listen and remain calm in stressful situations; able to ask for help.
- Making Plans: moving home; planning trips to see friends; voluntary work and paid employment.
- Time and Activities: fishing, painting, photography, table tennis, day centre.
- Personal Achievements: all of the above.

# Questions.....

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