

A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

**OF THE ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL PROCESSES IN COMMUNITY SEXUAL OFFENDING
GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES FROM A COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE**

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1. ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of Sexual Offending Treatment programmes has generally been measured through evaluating intervention content and reoffending rates. In response to the growing call to explore the role of therapeutic process in facilitating meaningful change on these programmes, this thesis considers how interpersonal dynamics may influence programme effectiveness from the perspective of the group member. This offers the opportunity to consider the impact of how we work, rather than what we do. The critical literature review uses a pluralistic framework to present relevant existing research and identify gaps in practice-based knowledge in the field of sexual offending intervention from a Counselling Psychology perspective. While the literature suggests interpersonal ingredients important to this process, it offers little information regarding where, when and how these qualities are effective. Furthermore, little is understood about the impact of relational dynamics between the facilitators and group members in creating a facilitative environment. This reveals broad gaps in research relating to a neglect of the client's experience of these interactions and how they are conceptualised in their change process. This research therefore uses a social constructivist grounded theory method to generate data exploring these process issues. The results highlight the value of facilitators fostering a dynamic and balanced core interpersonal process that is sensitive to the unique context of these group interventions. This offers a foundation for group member engagement and effective group functioning relevant to subjective change. The implications for theory and practice are discussed, highlighting how a Counselling Psychology presence in this field has the potential to enhance practice. The study is concluded with reflections of the study's limitations and areas in need of further research.

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3. REFLEXIVE STATEMENT (PART 1)

“The connection between subjectivity and reflexivity is key to the Counselling Psychology research process” (Kasket, 2013, p7). Acknowledging the researcher’s presence in their research practice provides an opportunity to make assumptions and biases explicit to oneself and others (Morrow, 2005). The following statement presents my reflections upon how my background and interests have influenced my topic choice, and how as Willig (2001) notes, this has been managed and integrated into the research process.

As a Trainee Counselling Psychologist who has worked as a facilitator in the Community Sexual Offending Treatment Unit of the London Probation Service for seven years, it is perhaps unsurprising that I have an interest in working therapeutically with men who have committed a sexual offence. Indeed, I decided to pursue a career in Counselling Psychology in recognition that my job satisfaction came from the opportunity to support and facilitate change with this marginalised client group. Looking back, what surprises me is that I had not regarded myself adequately qualified to pursue a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. It was not until commencing my first term that I fully realised that I had been using therapeutic skills for years. When reflecting on my professional identity I became aware of subtle messages that may have influenced this perspective. Foremost, my role is referred to as a ‘group facilitator’ who is trained to deliver an accredited manual-based programme, which has firm boundaries regarding ‘programme integrity’. Although group work skills are covered in training, these were not framed as ‘therapeutic’ approaches. Historically the programmes were designed with the aim to be delivered effectively by ‘relatively inexperienced staff’ (Jones, 1996, p. 261). This intervention is very much contextualised within the Criminal Justice System and the training is not professionally recognised outside this field and therefore limits scope for transferability to other areas of practice.

Training as a Counselling Psychologist in parallel to my work in a forensic setting has required on-going negotiation and management as my professional identity has developed. I have been mindful of the conflict between the client-centred Counselling Psychology approach and the forensic expectation to protect the public, along with the tension of trying to work collaboratively within a setting that largely dictates and imposes sanctions on those within it (Sims, 2010). The idea to explore the role of therapeutic processes in sexual offending treatment was first prompted by a professional experience in my work for the unit. Despite

generally finding that I do not have difficulties working positively and respectfully with people who have committed a sexual offence, during one session I noticed that I was struggling to listen to a group member speak unashamedly about the abuse he caused his child victim. I noticed a shift in the group atmosphere as this man was talking, which led my co-facilitator and myself to become more withdrawn and rely heavily on certain group members to continue the exercise at hand. Reflecting upon my behaviour with hindsight left me wondering what occurred in this session that led to an uncharacteristic change in practice. When this issue was taken to supervision I noticed that there was discussion about what I could do differently, yet there was discomfort in trying to explore this shift in the therapeutic environment or understand what prompted my response. This led me to wonder what opportunities were potentially being missed in neglecting process and relational issues within this professional field. This was further supported by attending a National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) Conference in Brighton in 2011 where Dr Ruth Mann highlighted a need for clinical practitioners to engage in research, particularly regarding process and therapist skill (Nota News, 2011).

As this research is situated in the context of completing a professional doctorate in Counselling Psychology, it was approached with an interest in identifying gaps in knowledge that may both inform sexual offending and Counselling Psychology theory and practice. As a counselling psychologist trainee, I am mindful of the Counselling Psychology humanistic values of respecting subjectivity and intersubjectivity, being open to multiple ways of experiencing and knowing, being practice led in research, working to standards of anti-discrimination and being aware of wider contexts (BPS, 2005). With regard to my identity as a facilitator, consistent with Marshall (1996) I view people who commit sexual offences as a heterogeneous and diverse group, whose offending can only be fully contextualised by understanding the individual and their personal circumstances. To manage my preconceptions in the research process, I attempted to take a 'naïve enquirer' stance to the review stage to have a broader perspective of the literature (Etherington, 2004). This involved embracing a pluralistic view of previous research to respect that each ontological and epistemological perspective has the potential of contributing new knowledge. However, as an inexperienced researcher, I initially did not have a clear sense of my own ontological and epistemological position, which I have needed to negotiate through the course of the research. This process has led to placing myself in a realist social constructionist position (Eldervass, 2012). This combines critical realist ontology with social constructivist theory. It is based on the belief that reality is complex and layered. This broadly believes that

humans and discourse have causal mechanisms, however processes of social construction shape these. This acknowledges the dynamic nature of these realities in response to the movement of society. It recognises that the research process is unlikely to fully represent these realities as it involves participants and researcher making attempts to capture them through the language they construct. While this means there may be multiple interpretations, it grounds them in an attempt to connect with a reality rather than assume that this knowledge is purely subjective and representative of the people who constructed it. This highlights the critical potential of constructivism to make judgements between different constructs and to tentatively highlight 'tendencies' rather than limit these observations solely to those involved in the research. This offers the potential to move beyond abstract statements, to not only observe and explain the world but also provide points of comparison to develop and change it. Keeping a reflective diary (Appendix A) throughout the research facilitated my awareness of how my personal and professional values shaped this process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ortlipp, 2008). It quickly became evident that the influence of my experience in sexual offending intervention on the research process was unavoidable and my attempts to put this in check would have varying degrees of success. However, rather than trying to negate my presence in the research, I came to recognise the potential benefits of sensitively and mindfully integrating my knowledge into the process to bridge theory and professional practice.

4. INTRODUCTION

4.1 UK based Sexual Offending Treatment Programmes

A sexual offence is a behaviour whereby another has been subjected to a contact or non-contact sexual act without their consent (Golding & Duggal, 2011). These offences include rape, sexual assault, sexual activity with a child, abuse of trust, indecent exposure, voyeurism, frottage, viewing indecent images of children, bestiality and extreme pornography. The development of UK based accredited Sexual Offending Treatment Programmes emerged from a drive over the 1990's in both Prison and Probation services to provide effective intervention for men convicted of a sexual offence (Allam, Middleton & Brown, 2006). The British Criminal Justice System does not offer group intervention to females due to small referral numbers, a lack of empirical research and resource restraints (Gannon & Rose, 2008). There are fourteen variants of accredited group work programme for sexual offending in the Criminal Justice System, which are based on a cognitive behavioural theoretical framework. A common goal of these programmes is to prevent future sexual offending by supporting group members to recognise, understand and address offending behaviour (Hollin & Palmer, 2006). Although not conclusive, research into the effectiveness of sexual offending programmes has led to a general consensus that they have value in facilitating change in their participants (Cann, Falshaw & Friendship, 2004; Friendship, Mann & Beech, 2003; Hanson et al, 2002). However, this evaluation has tended to focus on the role of programme theory, content and structure, and draws little attention to 'how' it is being delivered (Harkins & Beech, 2007).

4.2 A neglect of the therapeutic environment in programme effectiveness

The therapeutic environment can be understood as the ingredients, characteristics and dynamics that are thought to create a productive climate between a therapist and a client (Hazler & Barwick, 2001). While broadly accepted as a fundamental element of the therapeutic process across a number of theoretical fields (e.g. Bion, 1961; Frank, 1971; Rogers, 1961; Yalom, 1980), there has been a lack of research into this aspect of practice in sexual offending treatment programmes. To gain an understanding of this neglect, the broader context of the development and delivery of these programmes needs to be considered, as follows.

4.2.1 Social and political context

Although sexual offending is not solely a modern day phenomena, public awareness and interest in this nature of offending has increased greatly over the last 50 years (Perkins,

Hammond, Coles and Bishop, 1998). Greater awareness of the harm and distress these offences cause to victims has provoked strong public reactions to perpetrators. In recent years, the Jimmy Savile scandal has highlighted the extent of institutional denial and a culture of cover up of sexual abuse, triggering a 'moral panic' (Cree, Clapton & Smith, 2014). The social perceptions of this group of people have led to blanket, and arguably unhelpful, stereotypes (Hudson, 2005). One only need read a newspaper to be confronted by social loathing for sexual offending (Klein & Fowler, 2000; Soothill & Walby, 1991).

Faith in the concept of 'rehabilitation' in the Criminal Justice System was shaken in the 1960's due to the observation that crime rates in the UK had hit a peak for the century (Evenden, 2008). Subsequent public and political cynicism of interventions resulted in practices and reforms that fell in line with the viewpoint that 'Nothing Works' (Martinson, 1974). However, in an environment of limited custodial resources it soon became clear that a purely punitive approach was unrealistic (Brown, 2005) and attention was drawn to exploring 'What Works' (McGuire, 1995). Despite these changes, public pressure for stronger punishment for sexual offences and a political push to toughen sentences still remained. The initiation of the current accredited sexual offending programmes, therefore, occurred within a climate of public fear and subsequent political pressure to protect potential victims rather than consider the wellbeing of the offender (Home Office, 1991).

4.2.2 Historical development

In the early 20th century, sexual offending interventions followed humanistic or psychoanalytical approaches with the aim of 'curing' the individual (Wood, Grossman and Fichtner, 2000). These approaches became widely criticised through a number of studies (Frisbie and Dondis, 1965; Martinson, 1974), which suggested that no treatment gains were found from these methods. As a result, the findings led to scepticism of these approaches in sexual offending intervention (Harris, Rice and Quinsey, 1998). In response, it appears that relational processes (Bion, 1968) and core humanistic skills (Rogers, 1957) were largely disregarded in this field due to their association with humanistic and psychoanalytical practice. However, these early interventions lacked clarity in their theoretical underpinning and were often unstructured, non goal-orientated and varying in approach (Brown, 2005), calling into question what elements of practice these pieces of research were assessing. This suggests that certain therapeutic processes may have been dismissed despite a lack of research into this dimension of practice. In the 1960's, sexual offending treatment in the US and the UK moved towards a behavioural

approach (Skinner, 1969), which focussed on modifying behaviour through a process of reward and punishment (Mandeville-Norden & Beech, 2004). This approach argued that the quality of interaction between practitioner and client was irrelevant to outcome (Kazdin, 1978). The integration of cognitive approaches to treatment emerged in the mid seventies (Abel, Blanchard & Becker, 1978) to consider the thought processes believed to preclude offending behaviour. In the development of the current accredited programmes in the nineties, sexual offending treatment programmes consequently paid little attention to the role of the therapeutic environment on influencing change (Marshall, Anderson & Fernandez, 1999). Considering the mounting public and political pressure to identify and utilise interventions that were proved to be effective; more emphasis was placed on cognitive behavioural techniques as they had been found by the 'What Works' (McGuire, 1995) initiative to be effective in implementing behaviour change. In an attempt to ensure quality and consistency, the programmes took on the form of a highly structured and somewhat prescriptive manual format. In view of human and financial resources, there was a sense that the programmes should utilise 'more readily available, much less skilled and less expensive program deliverers' (Polaschek, 2011, p. 21). Following the accreditation of these programmes, to some degree they adopted a 'one size fits all' mentality in an attempt to ensure programme integrity (Ward, Melser & Yates, 2007). This took the perspective that as an accredited programme, effectiveness could only be ensured by strictly following the manual to keep accountable to empirically supported practice (McGuire, 1995).

4.2.3 Mode of delivery

Sexual offending intervention programmes in the Criminal Justice System have generally adhered to a group work format. Although one-to-one work is offered alongside the group work in some correctional settings, this is not practiced in all programmes and little is known about the advantages and disadvantages of providing one or both modes of treatment (Ware, Mann & Wakeling, 2009). Group intervention can broadly be understood as a helping process that can vary in theoretical approach and aims, ranging from psychodynamic analysis to address mental health problems (Bion, 1961; Foulkes, 2012), support groups for shared difficulties (Vatano, 1972), skills training groups to develop self management (Montgomery, 2002) and psychoeducation groups to empower individuals to deal with their problems (Anderson, Reiss & Hogarty, 1986). However, lack of clarity regarding how sexual offending treatment programmes are conceptualised in relation to these differences further contextualises the neglect of the therapeutic process. As Ward (2010) reflected, are sexual offending treatment programmes punishment or therapy? Are their intentions psycho-educational, coaching or therapy? From a

psychotherapeutic perspective, there is growing support for group interventions having a positive effect on a number of presenting problems (Robinson, Berman & Neimeyer, 1990; Budman et al, 1998). Toseland & Siporin (1986) found that group therapy can be either as effective or more effective a treatment than individual therapy. Although the choice of group work in this forensic setting is largely influenced by practical considerations, such as an efficient use of resources and cost (Sawyer, 2002), additional benefits of this method of delivery have been identified. One argument involves the perspective that a group allows its members to address deficits in social skills, which acknowledges sexual offending itself is an interpersonal behaviour (Jennings & Sawyer, 2003). Members of a stigmatised group may derive benefits that alleviate distress by sharing with people experiencing the same problems (Ware, Mann & Wakeling, 2009). A group setting is further thought to provide rich opportunity for peers to offer perspectives based on personal experiences that the facilitators do not have (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). Thus, the group format is regarded by the English and Welsh prison service as one of the significant agents of change (HM Prison Service, 2000).

4.3 The relevance to Counselling Psychology

In a society where the rights of the offender are not regarded as important and there is a strong political pressure to protect the public, the quality and dynamics of human interaction within treatment programmes have not always been seen as a priority. From a professional perspective there has been a strong expectation to provide an intervention that is deemed effective and following some influential studies relating to 'What Works', an emphasis has been placed on areas of empirical significance (e.g. cognitive behavioural approach). This has led to a blanket dismissal of certain theoretical approaches and a neglect of consideration for interpersonal qualities that may influence the work. This seems to run the risk of preventing helpful components being explored and integrated into practice, which is at odds with the programme aim to facilitate change in the group members (Sims, 2010).

By approaching this research from a Counselling Psychology perspective a number of opportunities are made possible. This includes engaging with the tensions of conducting client-centred work in an organisation that prioritises public safety and is responsible for enforcing court orders (Sims, 2010). In line with Counselling Psychology philosophy, the consideration of the therapeutic environment considers a bidirectional issue of social justice (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar & Israel, 2006), by seeking balance in working respectfully with men who are demonised by society for their actions while being sensitive to the victims of the offences and

the wider public. Giving voice to a group of people who are marginalised by society may help inform wider practice and meet calls for counselling psychologists to engage in social-justice orientated work (Goodman et al, 2004). Drawing attention to the therapeutic qualities in this field therefore considers the role of subjective and inter-subjective experiences within the programme to generate new information aimed towards improving professional practice with this client group (Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009). Being mindful of the heterogeneous, complex and dynamic nature of this group of people therefore provides a broader and nuanced understanding of these processes, which offer alternatives to 'one size fits all' solutions (Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009). In recognition of the pluralistic ethos of Counselling Psychology (Cooper & McLeod, 2007), an acknowledgement of multiple ways of knowing therefore allows for broader psychological and theoretical perspectives to be integrated into the research process to sensitively enhance understanding of this field of practice.

In the following section, the existing research into the role of the therapeutic environment of sexual offending treatment programmes is reviewed to outline the process of arriving at this study's research question. To accomplish this, a Counselling Psychology framework (BPS, 2005) is employed to critique the evidence, consider methodological rigour and reflect on existing measures of 'change' to consider research implications and on-going gaps in knowledge.

5. CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Aims

This review uses a Counselling Psychology framework (BPS, 2005) to investigate the role of the therapeutic environment in sexual offending treatment programme effectiveness. Current recommendations for practice in the literature are considered, followed by a critique of the research investigating therapeutic process in sexual offending treatment. In light of the small sample of studies available, each will be considered with a view to identifying what can be offered to practice along with highlighting gaps in knowledge that can be used to inform the research question for this study.

5.2 Method

This review focuses on working specifically with men who engage in a sexual offending group work programmes. As mentioned, the British Criminal Justice System does not offer group intervention to females (Gannon & Rose, 2008). Considering the western cross-cultural contributions to this field, lack of research into this particular subject and the broader professional context of these programmes, research and findings from America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have also been included in this paper.

The literature discussed in this review has been accessed from databases including PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES and Science Direct using search terms such as 'therapeutic methods and sexual offending', 'therapeutic processes and sexual offending' and 'group environment in sexual offending programmes'. Specific journals relating to the field of sexual offending have also been searched (e.g. The Journal of Sexual Aggression and Sexual abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment). To expand on these materials a snowballing approach (Ridley, 2008) was used by drawing references from existing papers.

5.3 Current recommendations in therapeutic approach

In recent years there has been a growth of interest into the therapeutic climate of sexual offending group programmes and its role in treatment effectiveness (Beech & Fordham, 1997; Serran, Fernandez, Marshall & Mann, 2003; Sandhu, Rose, Rostill-Brooke & Thrift, 2012). Marshall and his colleagues (2005) raised concerns about the treatment process by pointing out a focus on negative factors in the treatment targets, unhelpful language used by practitioners, a lack of optimistic encouragement regarding capacity for change, a lack of collaborative work

between facilitator and group member, a lack of approach goals and a neglect of the role of the therapist. During the development of sexual offending treatment programmes, it was widely believed that using a confrontational, challenging approach was the only way to work with men committed of sexual offences (Salter, 1988). The rationale for this position was a belief that this was the most effective way to reduce a person's denial/minimisation of their offence and alter the cognitive distortions believed to motivate offending. By reviewing past recommended practice, it appears that adopting a non-aggressive confrontational style was professionally encouraged (Stephenson, 1991; Morrison, Erooga & Beckett, 1994). This method has since been widely disputed, and it has been found that confrontational approaches will more likely lead to resistance than change (Kear-Colwell & Pollack, 1997; Thornton, Mann & Williams, 2000). Equally significant are the findings that some group members will respond to confrontation by demonstrating 'change' on a surface level to appease the therapists (Cormier & Cormier, 1991). These findings have led to the argument that an enabling, goal focussed approach with group members is more conducive to a productive therapeutic environment (Marshall et al, 2005).

5.4 The role of the therapeutic environment on change

Beech and Fordham (1997) set out to understand what ingredients create an optimum climate for facilitating change on the treatment programmes. A group environment scale (GES; Moos, 1986) was administered to both group leaders and members on 12 UK probation based treatment groups to measure inter-group relationships, personal growth and group structure. This scale had measures for group cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, assertiveness, intellectual interests, leisure, religion, organisation and control. The success of the group was measured through scales measuring levels of cognitive distortions about children, fixation on children, denial, admission of offence behaviours and social inadequacy. Using a series of ANOVA and MANOVA tests, variables (e.g. member/leader, treatment group) were measured in relation to the qualities outlined in the GES. The results indicated that significant to positive change in members of the community programme was group cohesiveness, good organisation/leadership, being encouraged to openly express feelings, a sense of group responsibility and the instillation of a sense of hope. Furthermore, it was found that facilitators who were seen by group members to have a higher level of leader control, had a detrimental effect on the scores of cohesion, leader support, expressiveness, independence, task orientation and innovation. This study supports the perspective that a more collaborative, tolerant climate is helpful in facilitating change and confrontational approaches, indeed, seem

to have a negative impact on the group environment. An enabling group climate therefore appears to be linked to group members feeling able to explore their offending, build trust in the facilitators/group members and increase motivation to take on board the material (Serran, Fernandez, Marshall & Mann, 2003). Observation that groups reporting high levels of group cohesiveness have the most significant treatment change scores supports this view. These findings are further supported by a follow up study by Beech and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005), which observed the same patterns in a replicate study carried out in UK prison based programmes.

These studies were conducted by employees of a forensic psychology department and a forensic psychiatry department, and are underpinned by positivist epistemology. This assumes that research generates a single objective reality, which is separate from researcher subjectivity (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). From this perspective, this research is helpful in identifying possible relationships between variables (e.g. feeling able to express feelings seems to be linked to levels of group cohesion) and supports the theory that the therapeutic environment influences how group members benefit from the programme. This was consistent across both a prison and probation setting, adding further strength to the findings. However, this research provides little information regarding how these qualities are achieved and why they are regarded useful to the group members. There is also no scope to explore whether there are other factors of significance that are not covered by the Group Environment Scale. This seems important, as understanding how to work effectively with an individual's subjective needs is integral to the underpinning phenomenological philosophy of Counselling Psychology (Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009). In light of the growing call to develop responsive practice in sexual offending practice (Marshall et al, 2005), this highlights a significant gap in research. A second area for reflection relates to the scales chosen to assess change in the group. These measures rely on a number of concepts that are in debate regarding whether they have an impact on recidivism, such as cognitive distortions and denial of offending (Kirsch & Becker, 2006; Yates, 2009; Marshall, Marshall & Kingston, 2011). In recent years, the focus on cognitive distortions in sexual offending programmes has been in debate. This is largely linked to the unclear definition of this term and the lack of clarity between pre and post offending cognitions. The term cognitive distortion is generally described as offence supportive thoughts (Ciardha & Gannon, 2011). Of late, attention has been drawn to distinguishing between the cognitions that indicate deep seated attitudes in the lead up to the offending, and the cognitions after conviction that work to justify behaviour to self soothe and appease (Marshall, Marshall & Kingston, 2011).

Recognising these differences appears important, as the former indicates beliefs that may increase a person's risk of offending, while the latter suggests that the person's offending behaviour is in conflict with their values and the values of society, resulting in them trying to soften the impact on their sense of self. There is consequently suggestion that these factors may hold protective qualities, particularly as it has been argued that denial and minimization of offending can be conceptualised as a way of maintaining a positive self image vital to well being (Serran, Fernandez, Marshall & Mann, 2003). As low self worth is regarded a dynamic risk factor for offending, preserving or developing it is arguably important to mitigate the likelihood of reoffending (Beech, Friendship, Erikson & Hanson, 2002). This study therefore provides limited information regarding the impact the environment has on meaningful change to the individual. This highlights a need to explore the context in which therapist qualities are effective in creating this environment (Beech & Mann, 2002). Considering Beech and Fordham's findings that the approach of the facilitator was key to some of the core conditions to a helpful group environment (e.g. encouraging to express feelings, good leadership), the role of the facilitator in creating and managing a therapeutic climate will be considered further.

5.5 The role of the facilitator in developing a therapeutic environment

Marshall and his colleagues (2002; 2005) conducted a series of studies into the role of therapist characteristics in creating a helpful therapeutic environment on sexual offending programmes. In these studies, videos of group sessions were chosen by the researchers where positive behaviour change had been observed between pre and post-treatment psychometric tests measuring factors such as reductions in denial, victim blaming, offence-related attitudes, relationships, and locus of control. Through the use of trained judges, therapeutic features were identified in these sessions and the level of their presence rated on a likert scale from 1 (not at all present) to 4 (very clearly present). The therapeutic features assessed included empathy, genuineness, warmth, respect, confidence, being rewarding, being directive, appropriate self-disclosure, appropriate humour, encouraging participation, encouraging prosocial attitudes, being non-collusive, asking open ended questions and level of confrontation. From the results they found a significant correlation between positive therapeutic features demonstrated by the facilitators with constructive change in the group members. The findings supported the general psychotherapy literature perspective that qualities such as empathy, warmth, and reward are associated with positive change (Rogers, 1957; Safran & Segal, 1990; Horvath & Greenberg, 1994). Interestingly, while confrontational approaches had a detrimental effect on behaviour it was found that being directive strongly

correlated with positive change on the measure, suggesting that leadership qualities are important.

These studies make a significant contribution to professional practice by highlighting that therapeutic processes vary between groups and may be associated with some measurable change in the group members. This change can be credited to environmental and interpersonal processes as the groups all followed the same manual-based programme. This research also takes a positivist/empiricist, quantitative approach and there remains space to explore group member and facilitator perspectives of which therapist characteristics are conducive to change. In doing so, there is scope to identify constructs and concepts specific to working with these clients in a group setting. Although this study observes overall change relative to the group, it is unclear how this is conceptualised in relation to both individual wellbeing and risk of reoffending. There is little speculation regarding the difference between behavioural change and a deeper psychological change, which will be a personal and individual process. Indeed, it provides little insight into how to work responsively with the individuals or with particular group dynamics (Jacobson, Follette & Revenstorf, 1984). This is relevant considering the complex and heterogeneous nature of the group members, which challenges the assumption of offending as a 'linear, additive and relatively stable construct' (Lussier et al, 2011; p530). There is, therefore, argument for using qualitative approaches to explore dynamic factors relating to client change rather than assuming change can only be measured by clinical blocks of data relating to reoffending rates (Losel & Schumuker, 2005). The observation that facilitators tend to view the group as more positive than the members (Beech and Hamilton-Giachritsis', 2005) highlights the importance of exploring how the group process is perceived by the group members (Horvath, 2000). This is congruent with Counselling Psychology values around personal subjective experience and processes between people (Cooper, 2009).

5.6 The client perspective of the therapeutic process

The tendency to overlook group member experience and perspective has perhaps been influenced by global perceptions of sexual offenders, leading to an attitude that their views are not relevant, important or worth exploring (Garrett, Oliver, Wilcox & Middleton, 2003). Historically, group members have frequently been perceived as passive recipients of treatment, having treatment goals set for them in the assumption that they do not take responsibility for their offending (Salter, 1988). There are also challenges in attaining research access to this

participant group due to being regarded an ethically vulnerable population, who often reside in closed institutional settings.

Garrett and colleagues (2003) sought to explore the client view of treatment by distributing questionnaires to group members who had completed the sexual offending group work programme from a health and probation setting between 1992 and 2000. The design of the questionnaire was part quantitative (measuring responses to set topics by use of a 5 point likert scale) and part qualitative (open questions exploring opinion). Although this research aimed to get an overall picture of group member experience of the programmes rather than specifically explore the role of the therapeutic environment, the results touched upon some process issues. Namely, some group members suggested that the facilitators' role in creating a safe group environment encouraged the group members to talk openly. The group members were generally satisfied with the facilitator approach and described helpful qualities such as being 'fair minded', 'good at bringing out relevant points' and being 'non-judgemental' (p.333-334). With regard to characteristics that were perceived as less useful, one group member felt the facilitators were 'a bit negative in their attitude towards [him]' (p.334). These observations suggest variance in therapist approach, which affects the client experience of treatment and highlights a need for understanding what factors influence differences between facilitator/group member interactions within the same group. Also of significance was the observation that group member dynamics impacted on the group member experience. This is reflected in the feedback that being in a group with men who were not being 'honest' (p. 327) was unhelpful and a sense that hearing other group members talk about their offending made them feel 'as dirty as' them (p. 327). It appears that these views and beliefs are likely to create an in-group hierarchy of offences and influence people's responses to one another (Hudson, 2005). This signifies the role of group facilitators being aware of and skilled in managing unhelpful group dynamics that could impinge on the group experience and potentially its outcomes.

Members of the regional forensic psychiatry service in Birmingham carried out this study. The paper approaches the research from 'a climate of acceptance and understanding' (p.326) in relation to the client group it is exploring. This suggests a spirit of valuing, respecting and learning from client views. The strength of this study is that it generates group members' perspectives rather than shoehorning responses into preconceived constructs (e.g. GES, Moos, 1989). It also reveals variance in the quality of the client/facilitator relationship between group

members, and acknowledges negative personal reactions to being in a group with other people who have committed a sexual offence. This introduces the concept of exploring the interpersonal dynamics contributing to these differences. This challenges the idea of identifying a number of fixed therapist characteristics to be demonstrated with all group members. This may suggest that more important to practice is an understanding of the human interaction between individuals within the context of the wider group.

With regard to research limitations, the study was based on a written questionnaire, which limits scope in elaborating answers and runs the risk of being misconstrued or hastily completed (Bailey, 1994). The breadth of qualitative data collected therefore may be limited compared to the information potentially gathered through a semi-structured interview or focus group. As a consequence there may be less potential to draw conclusions and observe themes. Despite the benefits that could have been drawn by the anonymity of a questionnaire, the study acknowledges that a number of group members wrote their names on the paper and in the probation setting the group members completed the measure at the end of the treatment before handing them in to the facilitators. This situation would suggest that the participants felt they were identifiable and could have led to answering in a socially desirable manner. Furthermore, the participants may have indirectly felt obliged to take part in the context of complying with an offence order, calling into question how far the participants' contributions faithfully reflected their experience. Most significant to this review is the fact it offers little information regarding *why* and *how* certain interpersonal qualities were helpful or unhelpful to group member's change process.

As this piece of research explored the group member's view of the programme in general, there is need for more focussed research on the client perspective of interpersonal processes. This research highlights a need to go beyond identifying the facilitator's independent characteristics and qualities, to acknowledge that these will vary in response to the interpersonal workings between them and the group. Consistent with Bion's (1968) extensive work on group workings in psychotherapy, there is indication that the behaviour of one group member can influence and be influenced by all other group members and the functionality of the group can largely be determined by the group's individual and collective interpretation of the role of the 'leader'. To better inform the therapist in how to create, maintain and manage the therapeutic environment, awareness of the client's perspective of the interpersonal dynamics seems

important to acknowledge how different personalities, qualities and dynamics affect the group process.

5.7 The role of relationships

In Drapeau's (2005) research he used both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the group member perspective of the therapeutic processes on the prison-based treatment programme. His study drew from a sample of men who had committed a contact sexual offence against a child. Among the areas investigated were the client's views of their relationship with the facilitator, including whether they viewed the therapists as technicians or whether they perceived them as a 'therapist, parent or a bit of both' (p.120). The interview narratives were analysed through the observation of relationship patterns, the assessment of the motives behind client behaviour, the analysis of client response and theme analysis (Core Conflictual Relationship Theme Method, Luborsky & Crits-Cristoph, 1998; the Wish and Fear List, Perry, 1994, 1997; the Defence Mechanism Rating Scale, Perry, 1990; Perry & Cooper, 1989; Plan Analysis, Casper, 1995, 1997; Comparative Analysis, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 and Dynamic Qualitative Analysis, Drapeau, 2002; Drapeau & Letendre, 2001). The initial observation from this study suggests that group members reported the role of the therapist to be the most important factor in facilitating change on the programme. The group members described judging the quality of the programme on their view of the facilitators' competence, and used this as a determining factor as to whether to engage in the work. The facilitator qualities of significance to the group member experience included honesty, respectfulness, availability, being caring and being non-judgemental. Other characteristics included encouraging discussion, listening to and answering questions, and strong leadership. With regard to which relational figure the therapist represented, the results indicated that it was not unusual for group members to feel like children and to compare the therapist to parental figures. This similarity perhaps is particularly pronounced as the therapy places the facilitator in a role that has some power over both 'granting and protecting' (p.120) the group members' rights. Further analysis indicated that an alliance of respect was created when facilitators provided group members with constructive feedback, suggesting that praise and reward alone are not sufficient in promoting growth. The relationship developed between the therapists and group members was therefore felt to be significant, as for some, this positive interaction could provide an alternative to a lifetime of 'indifference from the client's significant others' (p.121). This study also acknowledges difficulties for group members achieving a sense of mastery in a context where many decisions are made about them (e.g. treatment pathways). This was found

to be at odds with the group members wish to have some independence and autonomy. This raises the role of collaboration in the therapeutic process; group members were found to become oppositional when they felt they were not involved in the decision making process. This has significant implications for professional practice as it suggest that attention needs to be drawn to how to integrate this into the therapeutic environment, particularly in an organisational context where undercurrents of coercion, control and threat are ever present in the periphery of the 'therapeutic' work (Collins & Nee, 2010).

As an associate professor of Counselling Psychology and psychiatry, Martin Drapeau offers an opportunity to go beyond merely identifying therapist characteristics to analysing the interpersonal dynamics of the therapeutic alliance and their influence on the group members. Although sexual offending group work programmes are underpinned by cognitive behavioural theory, this research offers a glimpse of how applying different theoretical perspectives may be helpful in increasing knowledge of this area of practice. Viewing the therapeutic relationship through a psychoanalytic lens arguably has value, as regardless of the theoretical model that structures the programme, there is an acknowledgement that the relational qualities of this process affect the clients' ability to utilise the work (Marshall, 2005).

A limitation of this study is that it only examines the perspective of people who have committed a sexual offence against a child. As the treatment groups are made up of men who have committed a range of different sexual offences there is need to explore the views of group members convicted of other offences. This is significant, as the facilitator's ability to manage these dynamics seems to be integral to the quality of the group member experience. While this study is helpful in offering a psychoanalytical perspective to this field, the measures only tested specific hypothesis (e.g. 'does confronting the therapist mean treatment resistance?' p. 119). The results, therefore, are limited to the areas being investigated (e.g. technician, therapist or parent). Furthermore, this study does not acknowledge that two facilitators deliver the programme. This opens up avenues regarding the client's perception of their relationship with each facilitator, and the impact the facilitator's co-working relationship has on the group member treatment experience. In view of the link of relational deficits and intimacy difficulties to sexual offending (SARN; Thornton, 2002), this co-working relationship may have an important function in modelling appropriate interpersonal skills and respectful relationships (Bandura, 1977). The working dynamic and personal styles of the facilitators therefore have implications for the group environment as they have the potential to compliment or hinder the treatment

process. The quality of interaction between the facilitators and group members therefore may hold consequences for the development and growth of the group. This perhaps expands this inquiry from merely *what* the facilitators *do* to *how* the facilitators *are* (Lavinia, 2004).

5.8 Review summary and research question

This review highlights multiple gaps in the current research regarding the role of the therapeutic environment in sexual offending group work programmes. More knowledge is needed about the context that certain facilitator characteristics, qualities and relational interactions are helpful or unhelpful to the group member experience. This appears particularly important as these research findings indicate that group dynamics (e.g. offence hierarchies, group member conflict, group member openness) and how they are managed by the facilitator affect the quality of client experience. The current research has identified a range of factors considered important to the client, yet little is known about *when* and *how* these qualities are valuable. Of interest would be drawing examples of scenarios of when these processes have been effective or ineffective. This seems significant as some group members felt that the facilitators treated them differently to other group members (Garrett, Oliver, Wilcox & Middleton, 2003; Marshall, 2005). Furthermore, there is need to explore the client perception of the co-working relationship between facilitators and the impact this has on their group experience. Little is known of how group members conceptualise the impact of interpersonal processes on their gains of treatment. This seems particularly important considering current measures of group member 'change' have tended to base their observations on a number of constructs that have questionable validity, such as level of denial, use of cognitive distortions and level of victim empathy (Kirsch & Becker, 2006; Yates, 2009; Marshall, Marshall & Kingston, 2011). In line with a Counselling Psychology philosophy, change is relative to the individual and therefore arguably effectively measured through exploring personal, dynamic factors in addition to global outcome measures.

When considering the lack of research in this area, professional practice from a Counselling Psychology perspective may be best informed by using a 'bottom up' approach to explore the role of facilitator qualities and client/facilitator interactions on the treatment process. This would provide an opportunity to generate rich information regarding specific dynamics between the client and facilitators to take into consideration individual and contextual factors relevant to these interpersonal processes. By approaching this area of enquiry openly and without a particular theoretical model in mind, there is opportunity to be guided by the data

rather than preconceived ideas and theories. While the findings will offer limited information about working with group members on a macro level, this micro exploration may generate opportunities to explore and understand each group as unique and diverse. Although this will not aim to provide a list of qualities for facilitators to engage in, it will aim to promote an awareness of interpersonal workings in practice. This may provide some grounding to build on for future research in this area and offer new lines of enquiry based on what is found. The research question proposed therefore asks; what is the role of interpersonal processes on sexual offending treatment programmes in the group member's subjective change process?

6. METHOD

6.1 Design

A qualitative research design can 'offer a range of information and depth of understanding about the experience of treatment that cannot be obtained through a quantitative investigation' (Martin, 1997: p.27). In a field that has historically neglected to consider the perspective of the recipients of 'treatment', this approach provided an opportunity to 'give voice' to those whose accounts tend to be marginalised or discounted' (Willig, 2008: p.12). In the spirit of social justice within the Counselling Psychology ethos, this has particular significance in working respectfully with people who have experienced social ostracism in response to their offending behaviour. The use of Grounded Theory was felt to be the appropriate method to take a non assumptive exploration of the processes that facilitate and hinder group member experience on sexual offending programmes from the perspective of the client. This method was chosen in preference to other qualitative methodologies as the research aimed to generate a theory from the data and was interested in exploring social processes. Interpersonal Phenomenological Analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003) was deemed unsuitable as it is interested in exploring experience alone and Discourse Analysis (Gee, 2005) considers how language constructs phenomena as an active social practice. An abbreviated version of Grounded Theory was used (Willig, 2001), as this is a doctoral research project with practical limitations and time restraints.

6.1.1 Research paradigm and epistemological framework

A social constructivist version of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) was judged most suitable for this research as its aim to capture multiple voices, perspectives and views of participants' lived experience (Breckenridge, Jones, Elliot & Nicols, 2012) seemed most sensitive to the participant group and nature of enquiry. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) aim to verify theory through their version was thought to be incongruent with the research approach. However, their version has evolved to increasingly overlap with constructivist process and has significantly informed the Charmaz model (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). The classic Grounded Theory approach in contrast aims to provide a conceptual perspective that transcends subjective description and focuses on patterns of behaviour abstracted from the data (Glaser, 2002). With regard to the researcher presence in this process, the social constructivist approach gives the researcher an active role in constructing knowledge with the participant to reflect a shared reality (Charmaz, 2003). While Glaser (2002) recognises the researcher in the research process as another perspective that can be interwoven into the data, this is framed as researcher bias

and a degree of objectivity continues to be sought. In this study there is awareness of how the researcher's professional experience and assumptions of 'good practice' within the field of sexual offending treatment may influence data. While the researcher will have an active role, this study aims to remain mindful of keeping the participant's voice in focus to take heed of Glaser's (2002) warning that the researcher's interaction with the data runs the risk of overpowering the presence of the participant altogether. Furthermore, while evolution, development and flexibility of Grounded Theory principles are to some extent accepted and encouraged (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), it has been argued that it must be approached with caution to avoid becoming another methodological variant altogether (Cutcliffe, 2004). This research locates itself at the critical realist end of the social constructionist position (Elder-Vass, 2012). There is no single definition of a social constructionist paradigm (Burr, 2003) but it broadly assumes that reality is constructed rather than inherent in the phenomenon itself (Gergen, 2001). A realist constructionist position regards reality as multilayered and influenced by social constructs. This position therefore assumes that causality is not universal and predictable but contextual and social. This is not inharmonious to Charmaz's (2006) model, which describes grounded theory as a 'way to learn about the world we study and a method for developing theories to understand them' (p10). While Charmaz's approach claims to allow for one interpretation of a phenomenon or process, one could argue that scope to understand the world and develop theory is limited when constructionism potentially undermines the reliability of all ethical and knowledge claims, and thereby undermines its own assertions (Elder-Vass, 2012). A realist constructionist position highlights the potential for subjective and intersubjective knowledge to highlight the presence of 'tendencies' that potentially transcend the limited parameters of the researcher and participant constructed reality. As observed by Willig (2001), small-scale qualitative studies have value in considering perspectives beyond those of the sample of participants, as the identification of an experience in a given environment suggests it may also be more widely shared. This highlights the potential to develop more durable, albeit tentative frameworks of knowledge (Bhaskar, 1998) and has value in developing interconnectedness between practice and theory (Oliver, 2011). It has been argued that: "social constructionism must be combined with a critical realist social ontology if it is to offer a coherent approach to developing critical social theory" (Elder-Vass, 2010; p20). This research therefore assumes that data will be constructed and relative to the shared reality of the participants and researcher. However, there is scope for these experiences to resonate more widely, and there is potential for the future development of these constructs through comparison to other interpretations to build on professional theory and practice.

6.2 Participants

6.2.1 Inclusion criteria

To reflect the demographic of this intervention, the criteria included male participants, aged over 21, who had been convicted of a sexual offence. To ensure the data reflected their entire treatment experience, group members were only approached once they had completed the Thames Valley Sexual Offending Group work Programme (TVSOGP). This was also designed to prevent the participants' contributions being affected by concerns about still being in the process of attending the group.

6.2.2 Exclusion criteria

Participants were not considered for the research if they had not completed their assigned modules of the programme. Group members who had completed the 'Becoming New Me' programme were also not considered because it is designed for men with learning disabilities, which would likely introduce additional dynamics that are not of focus to this particular research question (e.g. obstacles to communication, self-expression and information processing).

6.2.3 Recruitment

The Thames Valley Probation Trust sexual offending unit provided the details of the Probation Officers supervising the men who had completed the programme in the previous year. Copies of the information sheet (Appendix B) and registration of interest form (Appendix C) were emailed to these Probation Officers to give to the group members. When interest was registered, the Probation Officer shared the group member's details with the researcher who contacted the volunteers by telephone as a follow-up. This involved confirming their interest in participation and acquiring demographics with the aim to seek heterogeneity in the participant sample. For those who confirmed interest in participating, an appointment was arranged to hold the interview.

Consistent with the abbreviated version of grounded theory (Willig, 2001), a sample of seven participants were recruited. All had completed a community based sexual offending treatment programme within Thames Valley Probation Trust. The participant age range fell between 29 and 76 ($M = 53$, $SD = 15.3$). Six of the participants identified as White British and one as White European. Five had been to prison prior to their probation sentence, with four completing programmes in custody. It was not felt relevant or ethical to ask the participants to disclose

details of their offence as this was not the focus of this research. Each group member completed the programme between one and twelve months before the research interview. Six participants completed the full treatment pathway and one completed the Better Lives Booster. None of the participants had experience of dropping off the programme during the process. While on the programme, the participants worked with between 5 and 10 facilitators. At each interview, the participants were asked to rate how helpful they found the programme and how effective they found the facilitators on a likert scale of 1 (not very helpful/not very effective) to 10 (very helpful/very effective). The results are represented in the table below to give context to the participants' views.

Table 1. Programme and facilitator ratings

	Adam	Ben	Charles	Dan	Eric	Fred	George	
Programme	7	8	10	8	4	6	8	M=7.3
Facilitators	8	8	10	9	4	6	8	M=7.6

Pseudonyms are used throughout for both participants and group facilitators to ensure confidentiality.

6.3 Materials

A semi-structured interview schedule of open-ended questions was created at the beginning of the study to initiate exploration of the subject area (see Appendix D). These initially broadly explored how the interactions between the group members and facilitators influenced their experience and learning in the programme. The researcher was sensitive of the potential to prejudice the interviews by her experiences, and was subsequently mindful of keeping this open and participant led. Participants were asked to reflect on what dynamics they felt were both helpful and unhelpful to their treatment process in the context of the wider group. These questions were adapted through the interviews to explore the themes being constructed (Appendix E). The interview lasted on average 124 minutes.

6.4 Procedure

Pilot work with professionals in the field of sexual offending treatment and other trainee counselling psychologists was carried out to consider the usability and relevance of the interview schedule (Baker, 1994). This work involved informal conversations and role-plays to refine the interview questions. A further pilot was carried out with a participant for the researcher to explore the usability of the interview schedule and to become familiar with the

research process, providing an opportunity to highlight any potential barriers to the data collection process (Siedman, 2013).

Participants were invited to interview appointments in a different Probation Office to the Sexual Offending Programme Unit to ensure confidentiality. Each interview started by going through the information sheet with the participant and responding to any initial questions regarding their involvement in the research. Following the signing of consent (Appendix F), the participants completed the demographics sheet (Appendix G) before the audio-recorded interview commenced. The interview schedule was used as a guide, however when certain themes or subjects were raised by the participant time was taken to explore these in some detail.

Following the interview, the participants were given time to ask any closing questions and were given the debriefing form (Appendix H). Each interview was transcribed and coded before the next interview was conducted to allow for the construction of themes and patterns to develop over the data collection process. After three interviews, an initial theoretical model (Appendix I) was developed and used to amend the interview schedule for future interviews. The following four interviews were used to refine this model by mapping and amending the analysis according to the data.

6.5 Data analysis

6.5.1 Memo writing

Analysis started at the point of interview, where the researcher was open to initial ideas based on observations, interactions and data content. These were recorded as memos (Appendix J). Memos were kept throughout the research process to record the researcher's thoughts and interpretations, and were used to map analysis and theory development. Such recordings helped inform the direction of the research by refining the interview schedule to focus on the themes being developed and highlight discrepancies (Charmaz, 1995).

6.5.2 Coding

The analysis was structured using guidelines from grounded theory literature (Charmaz, 2006). Each transcript was coded line by line to attach labels to the sections of data. These codes were used as a basis of comparison to other sections of the data to observe similarities and differences. Through this process of comparison and memo writing, these codes were analysed

and grouped into corresponding categories based on the meaning interpreted from them. This process involved exploring the data for the presence of interpersonal processes, the conditions these processes develop, the context they occur, the context they change (covariances) and the consequences of these processes on the individual (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Focussed coding was used to filter through the data to check the presence of these themes, allowing the codes and memos to be checked against the original data. These codes were then organised into higher order categories (Appendix K).

6.5.3 Constructing the theory

By devising a theoretical model to visually highlight the links between the categories identified in the data, attention was drawn to possible enabling and hindering processes to the client's experience of the programme, which would be accessible to practitioners when considering their practice. This involved the researcher being immersed in the data to develop an awareness of emergent themes and subsequently constructing a theoretical model to encapsulate the higher order categories and overarching process.

6.5.4 Validity enhancement

Validity was enhanced through frequent cross-referencing between the coding process and the raw data to ensure relevance and fit (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Where possible the participant's own language was retained in the codes in an attempt to reflect the participant voice and improve 'trustworthiness' of the data (Cooney, 2010). This information was collated into an audit trail (Appendix K) and reviewed both in research supervision and peer supervision to ensure the analysis was sufficiently grounded in the data (Brown et al, 2002). The researcher also utilised a reflexive journal to increase awareness of biases and personal agendas to manage her presence in the analysis process (Harry, Sturges & Klingner, 2005). Member checks were not sought as the study aimed to construct an amalgamation of the participants' experience rather than reflect seven individual perspectives (Glaser, 2002a).

6.6 Ethical considerations

6.6.1 Ethical approval

An application to conduct the research was sent to the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS), which was reviewed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and sent to

the Thames Valley Probation Trust for a final decision. A letter of approval (Appendix L) was supplied as evidence for the university to grant ethical approval.

6.6.2 Participants

As the researcher works within the London Community Sexual Offending Treatment Team, a sample of participants were recruited from the Thames Valley Probation Trust to account for any potential discomfort this could cause a participant recruited from the researcher's unit. This ensured that the researcher had not worked with the participant professionally to prevent the analysis being affected by the researcher's experience of the unit. The research was conducted at the end of the intervention to ensure it did not impact on the participant's treatment experience. As this research relates to the sensitive nature of sexual offending, the role of transparency, confidentiality and respect was emphasised throughout the participants' experience with the research process. Stringent measures ensured anonymity and a respectful interpersonal style through the interviews. The participants have been assigned pseudonyms rather than letters or numbers to ensure confidentiality and reflect the Counselling Psychology value that challenges the labelling of human beings.

6.6.3 Briefing, consent, debriefing and data protection

In line with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2010), a thorough briefing of the research, including information regarding how the data would be used was held with each participant. The participant was given a briefing form to outline the research aims, and a consent form was completed before the interview. It was emphasised that participants were entitled to withdraw at any time during the interview and up to the point of data analysis. It was also made explicit that participation would have no impact on the participant's probation conditions or record and there would not be any individual results generated from the research. All data was stored securely at the researcher's home to ensure confidentiality and data protection (Data Protection Act, 1998). The transcripts of the recording were anonymised (names, significant places, unit location) and following the research submission the audio recordings were destroyed. The debriefing included a discussion to check out the participant's feelings and provide space for questions. A debriefing form, which included the researchers contact details should any questions arise in future or should they wish to withdraw participation, was then given out.

6.6.4 Distress protocol (Appendix M)

Prior to interview, the participant's social network was explored to ensure they had means to access support should the research generate any difficult feelings. They were also signposted to support agencies (e.g. The Samaritans, General Practitioners) in the event of feeling distress from participating in the research. The researcher monitored participant wellbeing before, during and after the interview by checking how the participant was feeling and observing non-verbal communication (body language, tone of voice).

6.6.5 Researcher safety

In the interest of researcher safety the interviews were conducted in a Probation Service office. Despite being familiar with working with this client group, the researcher aimed to utilise her reflective diary and personal therapy to process any distress or residual feelings that could potentially arise from conducting the interviews.

7. ANALYSIS

The following section will start with an overview of the research model developed from the analysis of the data. This will be followed by a table of the components and subcategories of this model, along with a narrative of how they link together within the context of the research. Each category and subcategory will then be discussed and evidenced using quotes from the interviews. This section will conclude with a discussion about how the core dimension of the model emerged and was constructed from the data.

7.1 The research model: The balancing act

Achieving a humanised, empowered and safe grounding for group processes that support subjective change.

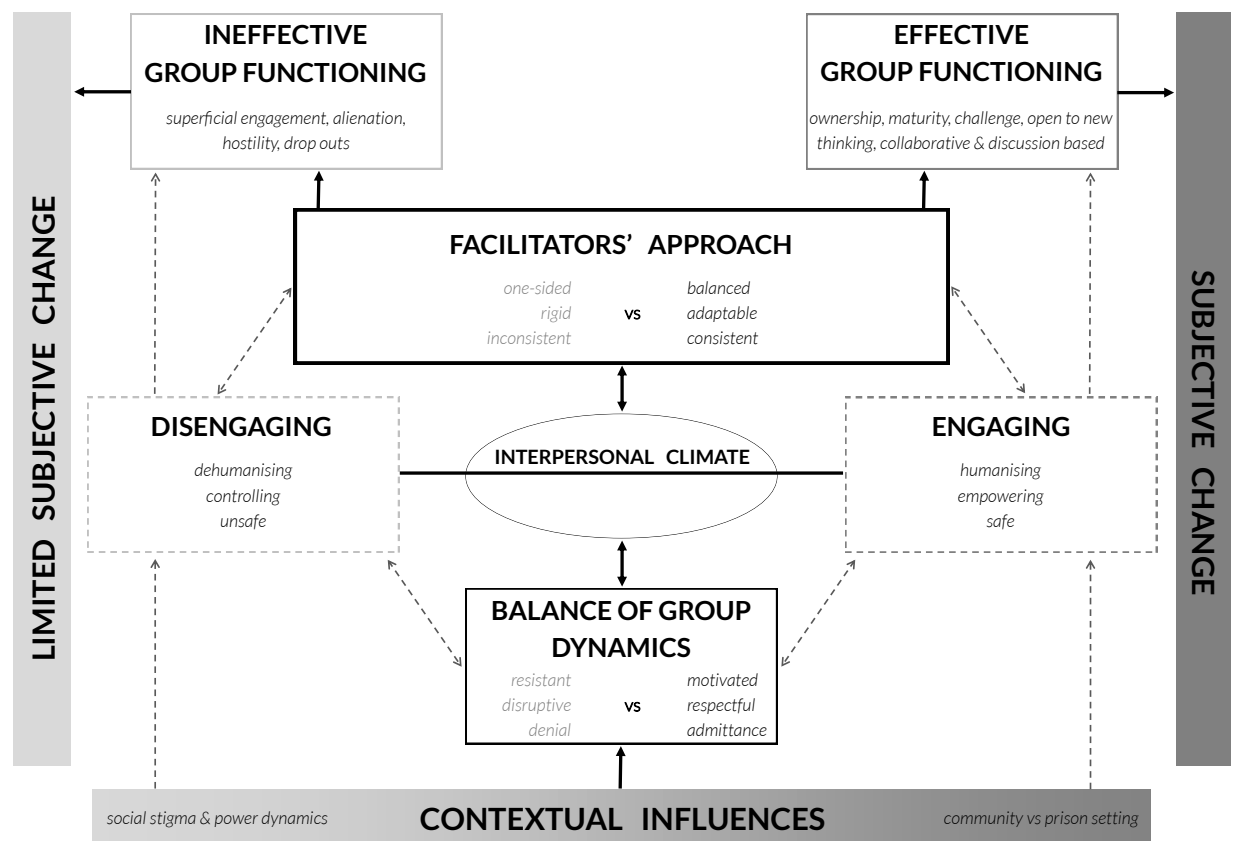


FIGURE 1: A grounded theory model reflecting the role of interpersonal processes on group member experience of a community sexual offending group work programme (Appendix N)

At the core of this model is a process of engaging the group members on community sexual offending programmes and creating effective group functioning that facilitates subjective change. Engagement appears to be primarily achieved through creating an interpersonal climate that balances the need for humanising, empowering and safe participant experiences,

while managing the contextual and relational dynamics that can conversely dehumanise, control and threaten safety. When this interpersonal climate is not achieved, it appears group functioning is less effective, which limits subjective change.

7.2 Analysis overview

The following section will summarise how the categories outlined in Table 2 (p.36) relate to the research model presented in section 7.1.

The contextual influences (category 1) underlying this field of practice are unique and could strongly inhibit or facilitate the development of the interpersonal climate relevant to supporting effective group functioning and subjective change. The inhibiting influences included the group members' shared experience of stigmatisation (subcategory 1.1), the institutional power dynamics of delivering this intervention within the Criminal Justice System (subcategory 1.2), and the programme being offence-focussed and manualised (subcategory 1.3). By contrast, delivering this intervention within the community as opposed to prison was experienced as more enabling and helpful (subcategory 1.4), which was linked to group members feeling better able to benefit from the course and hence achieve greater subjective experience of change.

The interpersonal climate subsequently appears to be a product of the interaction between the group dynamics (category 2) and facilitator approach (category 3) within this unique context. When the composition of individuals in the group created a dynamic that was motivated, respectful and took responsibility for offending behaviour, participants seemed to find a positive interpersonal climate more available than when the group dynamic was experienced as resistant and/or disruptive (subcategory 2.1). The ease with which the group 'gelled' and supported one another (subcategory 2.2) was often described as being more important than the role of the facilitators. However, another dynamic integral to engagement was the perspective that group members who deny their offence do not benefit from the programme (subcategory 2.3) due to the expectation to take responsibility for their offending behaviour.

Participants tended to regard the role of the facilitator as central to developing helpful interpersonal interactions within the group. Group members suggested that facilitators who were effective treated their job as a vocation, which involved the facilitator's capacity to consistently find a good balance between personable and boundaried qualities both within and outside the session (subcategory 3.1). Being responsive to the group and the individual within

this context (subcategory 3.2) appeared integral to creating a helpful interpersonal climate as participants described it as important to be treated like individuals with different needs. Having consistency among facilitators (subcategory 3.3) supported these interactions as it offered predictability, trust and safety. However, in light of the mandatory element of the work, the facilitators had a vital role in motivating the group members (subcategory 3.4). This balance of interactions also had an important role in the facilitators' co-working as it contributed to an engaging environment, while modelling positive relationships and appropriate ways of interacting within the group (subcategory 3.5).

The interpersonal climate (category 4) therefore seems to be a product of the quality of the intra-group relationships (subcategory 4.1) and therapeutic environment (subcategory 4.2) influenced by these fluid interpersonal processes between group, facilitators and context. These dynamics appear as though they have significance to the quality of the group functioning (category 5) as those who were genuinely engaged with the process as a consequence of this climate seemed to be in a better position to maturely own their contribution to the group process (subcategory 5.1), to challenge one another, hold each other accountable and 'dig deeper' (subcategory 5.2), and use collaborative, discussion based interactions to encourage flexible thinking (subcategory 5.3). When there was imbalance in these interpersonal interactions, the subsequent interpersonal climate and the group functioning tended to be experienced as less effective (category 6). In such cases, group members seemed more inclined to feel alienated, a state which could lead to superficial engagement with the process (subcategory 6.2) or power games and hostility (subcategory 6.2).

When the group functioned effectively, group members identified subjective change (category 7) including accepting and taking responsibility for the offence (category 7.1), an improved sense of self and identity (category 7.2), flexibility of thinking (category 7.3), and developed self-management skills (category 7.4). When there was ineffective group functioning, participants reported limited subjective change from their experience.

Table 2. Summary of the subcategories and the participants who contributed

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
1. CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES	1.1 The social stigma of the inescapable 'sex offender' label	ABDEFG
	1.2 Institutional power dynamics of mandatory attendance and institutional agendas	ABCDEFG
	1.3 Limitations of an offence-focussed manualised programme	ABCEFG
	1.4 The community setting is more enabling and realistic than prison	BEFG*
2. BALANCE OF GROUP DYNAMICS	2.1 Level of motivation and willingness to engage	ACDEFG
	2.2 'Gelling' and active mutual support	ABDEFG
	2.3 Being in 'denial' is incompatible to the programme	ABDEFG
3. A BALANCED, ADAPTABLE AND CONSISTENT FACILITATOR APPROACH	3.1 Vocational facilitators have a balanced (personable but boundaried) approach within and outside the session.	ABCDEFG
	3.2 Effective facilitators adapt qualities to be responsive both in the group and in one-to-one interactions	ABCDEFG
	3.3 Effective facilitators are motivational with an open and engaging questioning style	ABCDG
	3.4 Facilitator consistency is important to engagement	ABDEFG
	3.5 Good co-working relationships and responsibilities are interpersonally balanced (personal/professional)	ABCDEFG
4. INTERPERSONAL CLIMATE	4.1 Developing positive relationships to support trust and respect	ABCDEFG
	4.2 Creating a safe environment for group members to engage more freely	ABCDEFG
5. EFFECTIVE GROUP FUNCTIONING	5.1 Group ownership and maturity	ABCDEFG
	5.2 Challenging/accountability and digging deeper	ABCDEFG
	5.3 Exploring new perspectives through collaborative discussion	ABCDEFG
6. INEFFECTIVE GROUP FUNCTIONING	6.1 Alienation and superficial engagement in response to relational imbalance	BCDEFG
	6.2 Power games, adversity and hostility in response to relational imbalance	ABCDEFG
7. SUBJECTIVE CHANGE	7.1 Accepting and taking responsibility for the offence	ABCDEFG
	7.2 Improved sense of self and identity	ACDFG
	7.3 Flexible pro-social thinking	ABCDEFG
	7.4 Self and life management	ABCDG

* Only participants BEFG had been to prison

(Participant letters relate to the first letter of their pseudonym e.g. A = Adam, B=Ben)

7.3 Model categories

The following section will elaborate on each higher order category and its subcategories within the context of data. Quotations from the interviews are presented within the analysis for each component of the model.

7.3.1 Category 1: Contextual influences that inhibit or enable programme engagement

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
1. CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES	1.1 The social stigma of the inescapable 'sex offender' label	ABDEFG
	1.2 Institutional power dynamics of mandatory attendance and institutional agendas	ABCDEF
	1.3 Limitations of an offence-focussed manualised programme	ABCEFG
	1.4 The community setting is more enabling and realistic than prison	BEFG*

** Only participants BEFG had been to prison*

This component of the model addresses the way in which social and institutional attitudes seemed to strongly inhibit or enable engagement when individuals joined the programme. Society's dehumanising and inescapable 'sex offender' label was seen to give the message that people can't change. Consequently, participants felt they had received a life conviction because sexual offending is perceived the 'worst kind' of offending, which makes it difficult to reintegrate into society. Such a perception could create shame, fear and judgements that inhibited openness to the group process. Institutional power dynamics were further thought to create barriers to engagement due to the consequences of not conforming to mandatory attendance and the expectation to follow institutional agendas. Additionally, the manualised programme structure and content were often experienced as 'one size fits all' and gave the impression that the group members are not of priority. However, delivering this intervention within the community was strongly regarded as more enabling than a prison setting. This seemed to be because the community was experienced as a more realistic setting where the work could be applied into every day lives. All participants who spent time in custody spoke explicitly about the obstacles to engagement in prison-based sexual offending programmes due to their safety being compromised by the lack of confidentiality, the power dynamics of being imprisoned and often a more punitive facilitator style. The significance of the context of this

intervention was therefore seen as crucial to influencing group member engagement and functioning within the programme.

Subcategory 1.1: The social stigma of the inescapable 'sex offender' label

Participants consistently noted through the interviews that the social stigma of sexual offending is 'huge' and unlike other criminal offences, it feels inescapable. This was compared to a life sentence and it was observed that society's view of this behaviour is unforgiving. This dehumanising label consequently created significant barriers to reintegrating into society (e.g. finding employment and accommodation) and it gave the message that people with a sexual offending conviction are not capable of change.

'...you can be a recovered alcoholic, you can be a recovered murderer, but you're never a recovered sex offender, you're a sex offender for life' (Dan: 1270-1272).

The awareness of social views about sexual offending was a source of anxiety for most group members. As many participants had, to some extent, kept their conviction a secret, they held concerns about the possibility of the offence being discovered through association with attending the group, which could have an impact on both them and their family. This fear had an effect on how group members felt about attending the group, as participants spoke of feeling wary due to concerns about their safety. Furthermore, as socially embedded individuals, the group members were not exempt from holding these attitudes themselves. This appears to have had two consequences: judgements towards others in the group and judgements towards themselves. When considering the range of behaviour that falls under the 'sexual offending' label, participants spoke of their expectations and anxieties about being on the group with people who were dangerous and lacking morality. This had the potential to create hierarchies and divides among the group, and occasionally participants felt this led to people dropping out. Conversely, the shame group members felt about their own conviction created significant barriers to openly participating out of self-judgement and fear of judgement from others. As one participant reflected: *'it was quite a challenge to, to speak openly and to talk about things, mainly due to the subject we were talking about, you know' (Adam: 761-762).* This demonstrates how important 'engagement' work is for facilitators to encourage participation and genuine investment in the programme work.

Subcategory 1.2: Mandatory attendance & institutional agendas

The programme cannot be imposed on group members without their signed consent. However, the consequences of not complying were felt to be highly significant for all the participants. As one person observed:

'I did obviously ask my previous probation officer... if I didn't do it, what would happen, and basically they said well, it's going to raise questions for us about your suitability and your order, i.e., are you really, are you safe to be here and if you're not doing it, it is part of your licence, you're breaking a condition and breaking a condition means technically a recall' (Ben: 37-43).

Attendance was therefore laced with an ever-present threat to group member liberty. These power dynamics had implications regarding group member participation as attendance was, at least initially, often driven by compliance to coercion and control, rather than intrinsic motivation to invest in the process. The consequence of this could be hostility, disengagement or ambivalence.

Engagement was further shaped by the expectations and agendas of the criminal justice system. The primary aim of the service to prevent future reoffending and protect potential victims creates unclear messages regarding what and whom the programme is designed for. The group members' experience of the programme often alluded to an agenda linked to moral teaching and speaking the truth as Probation viewed it. As one participant commented, the *'...whole point of this course was to start thinking the right way not the wrong way, and catch yourself when you were thinking the wrong way. Very important' (Dan: 1479-1481)*. There was therefore, an expectation for group members to confront and take responsibility for their offending. On occasion this expectation could appear unrealistic, uncaring or could insult people's intelligence as there was an expectation to 'tell the truth' only as the Probation file saw it rather than allowing the client to have their own perspective. This could create anxiety about saying 'the wrong thing' and again related to the power dynamics experienced by participants. These moral agendas created further tensions regarding offence disclosure:

'... you know there's a very unrealistic view I think perhaps on the course of disclosure, because its, its, this is what you should do as told by people who have never had to disclose anything in their life, and then therefore it's a moralistic view rather than practical view, er we did a couple of disclosure, but I think it perhaps has to be a bit more realistic than, than perhaps where it is at

the moment, which is, which is that it's a good thing to do, as long as you want to stay unemployed' (Fred: 957-964).

This participant's experience highlights a need for facilitators to acknowledge the challenges of living with a sexual conviction in the context of society, and suggests that for the programme to be of use to group members, there is a need to take a more realistic and practical approach.

Subcategory 1.3: The limitations of an offence-focussed, manualised programme

With regard to the programme content, six participants questioned how helpful the work could be when it was manual-based, time bound and run in a group format. All participants referenced how the facilitators needed to 'get through' the material. While regarded as necessary to some extent, this at times had the potential to come at the cost to what the group members felt they wanted or needed. Indeed, one group member commented:

'...that came over to me on the first week, so I thought it's not about us ten guys, it's about, right, this is what's set up, this is the plan for the next 9 months or whatever and we've got to stick to the plan rigidly regardless' (Eric: 739-740).

The manualised programme had the potential to give the message of 'one size fits all', where it was experienced that covering the material could be more of a priority than being attuned to the individual or group's needs, which could be described as invalidating, restrictive, intense, categorising and at times, demotivating or inimical to real engagement.

Subcategory 1.4: The community versus the prison setting

Although some participants discussed gains of attending the prison-based sexual offending programme, they invariably regarded the community setting as more supportive, more relaxed and less threatening than prison, making it easier to speak openly and engage with the group work without fear of reprisal. A community setting for the programme appeared to be associated with more opportunity for learning and change, while prison seemed more likely to instil fear, defensiveness and obscuration. The participants spoke of feeling they could be more 'truthful' in the community than in prison where honesty is more threatening and lying more common. Participants referenced experiences where they felt it difficult to speak openly due to perceived risk. For example, some believed their disclosures might be used against them by other prisoners on the wing or by professionals when writing their parole report. This reticence included feeling as though they were not allowed to acknowledge inappropriate sexual

thoughts. The community, in comparison, was considered more 'real' in both the environment and attitude in helping people move forward with their lives. As one participant commented about the community setting:

'...it was a very friendly environment, the whole thing allowed you to, er, be honest with what we were saying rather than... Golly, I've done courses in prison, which were the other extreme, I mean 99.9% of what people said on those courses were complete and utter lies because nobody was going to tell the truth because of the, the reaction the truth might get' (Fred: 11-15).

The social environment and the facilitator approach in prison were generally described as more invasive, punitive, off-putting and threatening than the community. The participants spoke of safety being compromised by the lack of confidentiality in prison due to the association with the facilitators and group members telling other people on the wing details about the group. There was a general acknowledgement of the 'us and them' (Ben: 368) dynamic between group members and facilitators and a description of the prisons as 'jungle warfare' (Fred: 36). Many described a lack of empathy, little support and a distinct sense of not being trusted by the facilitators in prison. They also shared experiences of information being held on their file and decisions being made about them without consultation. Funding was considered by some to be the prison's priority, which involved getting as many people through the programme as possible rather than helping the group members. In general, the prison approach appeared to be experienced as destroying the individual, in which the person had to be rebuilt and conditioned into a new person by a largely non-relational system.

The context of being imprisoned and within a system of absolute control therefore seems to offer a very different experience to a community setting where there are fewer restrictions and people have lives outside their probation commitments. When describing the community setting in comparison to the prison setting, one participant reflected:

'... it was a lot easier to be honest and that and to speak out about it, cos I'm in, I know I've got the possibility of being recalled but um, it's not quite the same and also it's open and honest and that, where the facilitators seem to be more realistic, and there to help you, it's not, I'm not going for my release, I'm out in the community so it's really a lot easier to be open and honest and knowing that if they mention anything in the report I can talk to my PO (Probation Officer) about it and deal with it in the appropriate way' (George: 761-768).

This carries implications for the facilitators whose practice seemed to parallel these institutional dynamics. In the community setting there was a sense that there was less hold over group members, there was less threat of abuse of power and the facilitators approach was seen as freer, more realistic and future focussed. This promoted more hope for group members when the end of their licence was in sight and was therefore considered by many as a more enabling and motivating experience than the prison setting groups.

7.3.2 Category 2: The balance of group dynamics

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
2. BALANCE OF GROUP DYNAMICS	2.1 Level of motivation and willingness to engage	ACDEFG
	2.2 'Gelling' and active mutual support	ABDEFG
	2.3 'Denial' incompatible with the programme	ABDEFG

A helpful group dynamic was seen as a fortuitous result of the mix of a good level of responsibility-taking by group members, the decision by participants to 'make the most of it', a commitment to not judge one another, and by the group 'gelling'. Indeed, the group's support of one another was often regarded as more important than the facilitators in the group functioning well. A feeling of being 'in the same boat' was regarded integral to overcoming some of the initial barriers to engagement discussed under Category 1. Thus, when there were individuals in the group who were disruptive or resistant to the work, it was reported to affect the group's emotional safety, making the process more challenging for the facilitators and having an impact on the other group members' experience. This could be contained when there were enough group members committed to 'making the most of it'. However, there was a sense that those who denied their offence, or aspects of it, were incompatible to the group due to the programme expectation to take responsibility for behaviour.

Subcategory 2.1: Level of motivation and willingness to engage

A key contributor to a successful outcome from the programme was considered to be the group's collective attitude about engaging. When the majority of individuals were generally motivated, the process was experienced as easier because people described feeling more comfortable, being at ease with one another and the facilitators faced fewer challenges in managing the group dynamics. This was seen as important in light of the contextual barriers to engagement. On some occasions, the outcome was regarded as a product of luck based on the make up of the group, yet its significance was reflected in the idea that *'what makes a group is*

the group itself' (Fred: 20-21) and, as discussed under category 3, the facilitator approach was seen as having a role in shaping these dynamics.

As engaging the group members was seen as an essential stage in the treatment process, the group dynamics provide a powerful opportunity to facilitate engagement, placing less pressure on the role of the facilitators as extrinsic motivators. This collective attitude was thought to create safety and stability in the group, while supporting intrinsic motivation. It also had the potential to prevent disruptive dynamics, such as resistant behaviour or changes in the facilitators running the group, from ruining group members' experience. At times this collective readiness to engage was seen as having a role in drawing in less willing group members. For those who felt their group were there to take responsibility and benefit from the programme, it helped develop a climate where the group were willing to 'make the most of it' despite anxieties or reservations about attending.

'I was very lucky and the positive spin was like that before they [the facilitators] really started going and I think they took it and ran with it, since it was going so well, 'we'll go with it, thank you very much, this will be a nice simple one', but er, and we can do as much as we can with this group as they seemed to be interested, where as I presume if you've got the complete opposite group, which I presume happens, then you're not going to get a lot out of it are you really...' (Dan: 809-813).

The safety of the group could be compromised when the group composition included significantly disruptive or resistant behaviour, as it could be off-putting, unpleasant and create challenges for the facilitators to manage. This was again seen, at times, as a product of luck depending on who was allocated to the group and it was observed that it only takes one person to interfere with the overall dynamic. When participants spoke of disruptive group members being on the group, there were more challenges to the sessions running smoothly and it could create animosity between group members when others were trying to make the most of the process. One participant commented *'...there is nothing worse than having a disruptive member in the group'* owing to his experience that it *'puts you off, it stops you being able to concentrate, and also it, it means the facilitators concentrate on them so it means you wouldn't get as much time'* (George: 39-48). This had the potential to lead to divides in the group, particularly when the group members did not feel comfortable challenging each other about their behaviour.

These challenging dynamics also appeared to create more demands for the facilitator role, which had an impact on the rest of the group members' experience.

Subcategory 2.2: 'Gelling' and active support

The role of the group gelling was regarded as an important ingredient to the participant's engagement on the programme as this influenced how they felt about attending the programme and contributed to a climate of support between the group members. This was facilitated by a joint commitment to 'make the most of it' and be supportive:

'...another thing that made the group close is the fact that everyone wanted to work and get things done, no one wanted to be there but we all wanted to get it done to our best and put 110% into it' (George: 509-511).

This dynamic was thought of as being more directly powerful to group members engaging and investing in the work than the role of the facilitator. One group member spoke of how the positive group ethos and collective support helped motivate and shift the attitude of one of the resistant members:

'...the facilitators as well but, I think it's more the group, I think the group helped him a lot along those lines, surprisingly large amount, I thought it would more come from the professionals but I think, we, it was, mutual support helped him get there' (Dan: 602-606).

To achieve this feeling of cohesiveness between group members in the group, being non-judgemental towards one another was integral as it helped them feel 'in the same boat', to develop mutual regard and understanding. This contributed to the group engagement because it felt positive and different to what they had expected in light of the contextual influences discussed under category 1.

Subcategory 2.3: Being in 'denial' is incompatible with the programme

Another dynamic that appeared to affect group engagement with the group process was group member 'denial'. As previously discussed, the group members tended to experience the programme as moral teaching, with the expectation to confront and take responsibility for their offence. This created challenges to engaging group members who were maintaining their innocence. When a participant elaborated on the reasons people tend to leave the programme early, he commented:

'...certainly denial because if you feel you haven't done what you've been accused of doing, then the course becomes meaningless because you're supposed to be assessing what you've done but if you think you haven't done it, it's incredibly difficult' (Fred: 151-154).

This led to the reflection that the programme is more helpful for people who are willing to take public responsibility for their offence. For those who were not owning their offending behaviour, there was an impression that they would achieve little and they were the 'problem person', which could create frustrations and distance between them and the rest of the group who were taking responsibility for their behaviour. Interestingly, when talking about the people who were disruptive on the group, resistance and 'denial' were often discussed interchangeably, suggesting that denial can prompt resistance in the context of a programme that requires people to openly discuss their offending behaviour.

7.3.3 Category 3: A balanced, adaptable and consistent facilitator approach

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
3. A BALANCED, ADAPTABLE AND CONSISTENT FACILITATOR APPROACH	3.2 Vocational facilitators have a balanced (personable but boundaried) approach within and outside the session.	ABCDEFG
	3.3 Effective facilitators adapt qualities to be responsive both in the group and in one-to-one interactions	ABCDEFG
	3.4 Effective facilitators are motivational with an open and engaging questioning style	ABCDG
	3.5 Facilitator consistency is important for engagement	ABDEFG
	3.6 Good co-working relationships are interpersonally balanced (personal/professional) with balanced responsibilities	ABCDEFG

In general, participants spoke very positively about the majority of the facilitators they had interactions with and their role was perceived as having a central influence in providing the grounding for engagement and effective group functioning. Effective facilitators were described as vocational, with a balanced, adaptable and consistent approach. Facilitators who lacked balance in their interpersonal approach and the ability to adapt these qualities based on the person and group were generally thought to negatively influence engagement as this was likely to exacerbate the contextual power dynamics and feelings of shame. Being too 'strict' could feel restrictive, controlling, judgemental and 'one size fits all' and was linked to adversity or false

compliance. Being too flexible could affect the group management and the group members' view of the facilitator competence. Both tendencies could negatively impact group safety, group member openness and levels of engagement because they made the process feel harder. This appeared to be more likely to happen with people in denial or who were resistant/disruptive, when facilitators hadn't managed their own feelings, or when there was inconsistency in the facilitator team.

Subcategory 3.1: Vocational facilitators have a balanced approach within and outside the session

'Good' facilitators were described as a 'type of person', who treat their role as a vocation. A theme across the interviews related to the idea that *'...it does definitely take a certain person to do it' (Ben: 1085)*, as one participant articulated. Another said, *'I think it was just their, um, their, their attitude and the person themselves, how they are inside, how they feel about, what, what, what they're doing' (Charles: 180-182)*.

When unpicking these qualities, the best approach was considered to be a balance between being personable and boundaried. The personable qualities referenced were friendliness, non-judgemental, respectfulness, authenticity, caring, openness, relaxed, able to listen, collaborative, able to 'have a laugh' and empathy. The qualities associated with being boundaried included being professional, experienced, 'unruffled', 'in charge', knowledgeable and 'on the ball'. Getting this balance was referenced to be significant to the process:

'...they've got to be people you can sit down and talk with er, but they've also got to be firm not to stand any rubbish from anybody, and um, I think they're the two key elements to be quite honest' (Eric).

The facilitators' personable qualities were perceived as having a vital role in engaging the group members as they helped break down shame and power dynamics by putting people at ease, validating them as people, contributing to everyone feeling 'on a level' and helping group members feel safe. Personable qualities were viewed as being important not only in the group work but also in the interactions outside the session. Allowing time before the sessions for tea and coffee and the chance to speak to the facilitators or to do homework was considered important as it was experienced as welcoming, made the facilitators appear approachable and created an environment different to a punitive one.

Additionally, the facilitators' boundaried qualities were seen as important to engagement. Having faith that facilitators were 'in charge' and professional raised participants' confidence that the group dynamics would be managed well, that the work would be kept 'on track' and would contribute to the group members feeling safe to share personal information. This sense of confidence had particular significance in this context, where there was fear and anxiety prompted by the idea of the offence being discovered by others. It also contributed to breaking down any anxieties or discomfort about working with female facilitators, as their professionalism was seen to quickly put people at ease about discussing personal and sexual information.

A number of obstacles to engagement arose when participants felt facilitators did not achieve this balance. Being too strict was referenced as a quality that exacerbated rather than contained unhelpful power dynamics, and it affected group member confidence, created feelings of adversity, and made the process more difficult for group members. As one participant reflected:

'...you sort of lost your confidence a bit you know, and um, it was.. it sometimes it was really, really hard, you know and it, you did feel really upset and really, sort of, angry, like 'why are they doing this?' Why are they asking those questions? This is not nice, you know and that, that, I think that was what made some of the times in the group, that, well that sometimes, well that made it really really tough' (Charles: 194-900).

It was observed that facilitators were more inclined to pressure those who were in denial as there was an expectation to conform to the programme agendas (e.g. admitting and taking full responsibility for the offending behaviour). It appears that this approach had the risk of becoming quite rigid and confrontational in the attempt to get group members to take responsibility, but had the opposite result to that intended as the group members were more inclined to disengage when feeling pressured, controlled and judged. When discussing how taking a strict approach with group members in denial could lead to disengagement, one participant commented:

'... being persistent for too long might not be a good idea cos eventually he'll probably just, you know, they'll end up being 'I'm not doing this course anymore' (Ben: 1617-1619).

To the opposite extreme, facilitators' being 'too relaxed' was linked to boundaries not being maintained, a lack of therapeutic movement and was undermining of both the facilitators and the programme. When facilitators were not seen to have an active presence in the room, it affected the group members' view of their competence. When describing one facilitator who was *'not particularly good at their job'*, a participant reflected:

'...he just added nothing, you know it was almost there, and this wasn't just my opinion, this was a, an almost a group opinion that he was almost there just to hold the paper, and you know, and all he could say was 'yes that's really good, that's really good' (Fred: 230-239).

Being 'too relaxed' appeared to be linked to insufficient management of disruptive behaviour, and unhelpful group behaviour continued despite their efforts to address them. Indeed, this was observed in how the group 'joker' could strongly interfere with the flow and productivity of the group, and a sense that hostile group members at times had to be tolerated despite it being frustrating for the rest of the group.

Subcategory 3.2: Adaptability and responsiveness to the individual and group

Another sign of effective facilitators was their ability to adapt their qualities appropriately depending on the person, group and situation. The ability to understand the needs and behaviour of group members was considered key to responding to them appropriately and not being pulled into an unhelpful approach that can become rigid. This indeed was marked as a quality that separated the 'good' from the 'bad' facilitators: *'Everybody's got different ways of communicating, and er, that wasn't taken on board on that course, except for the 3 'good cops' (Eric: 897-898).*

Adaptability was reflected in how the facilitators shifted the tone of different pieces of work appropriately (e.g. humorous or serious), judged when to allow discussion or when it was appropriate to move on, and being responsive to individuals learning needs in their approach (e.g. adapting delivery according to literacy levels). With regard to the programme manual, this skill was used to offer flexibility in their delivery of the material for the sake of the group:

'...just following the manual step by step... it would just be a bit much for some of the guys I think... It would just be like 'oh God, not another session', sort of thing I think, yeah, 'let's get it over and done with and get out of here as quickly as possible' (Ben: 1119-1129).

The facilitators' ability to judge when a group member may need one-to-one space was also important. Although this approach tended to be used to re-engage group members, it was recommended by participants as a component of practice that could be expanded due to feeling that it would allow areas of relevance to the individual to be covered when the manual content did not allow for it. This potential was regarded as something that could be helpful for processing and integrating the work on a more personal level and for providing additional support. As one participant reflected:

'I think it would be nice to have a mixture of both [group and one-to-one], because like, er, when I, I was doing group work, you know, you've got a group to bounce and get monitoring from and that but, on the HSF [Healthy Sexual Functioning Programme] which is one to one, I felt I could be a lot deeper...' (George: 1002-1005).

When the facilitators did not demonstrate an understanding of group members as individuals and respond to their needs it had the potential to significantly detract from the programme's value. As one participant reflected, it felt *'... 'one size fits all', and that's the way I was treated, which was a complete and utter waste of time'* (Eric: 149-150). When facilitators did not adapt their approach for the individual, the group members spoke of it triggering annoyance and animosity. It was observed that the skill of being able to moderate and judge the shifts in these interpersonal dynamics could be affected by a lack of understanding of the group members behaviour and facilitators not managing their own feelings to the work. This seemed to span between experiences of facilitators reacting passive aggressively to group members out of their frustrations in the work, and at times it went unnoticed when the quieter group members 'switched off'. The need to understand the individual was particularly pronounced with more resistant or disruptive group members. An example of this is reflected by a participant's observation about a more antagonistic group member:

'The guy taken off towards the end, er, not everybody, but a large number of people felt had been treated badly, that he could have been handled differently because there were certain

facilitators that could handle him and understood that... so much of it [his behaviour] was for show' (Fred" 198-202).

Neglecting to understand what was fuelling group behaviour therefore appeared to present the risk of the facilitators being pulled into a punitive response.

Subcategory 3.3: A motivational and open questioning style

Given the programme was mandatory and group members had varying degrees of investment in the group work, facilitator motivational influences were seen as vital by participants. They spoke of how the facilitators achieved this by doing their 'homework', setting up exercises well, using an open questioning style, and 'cleverly' utilising the group dynamics.

Familiarity with the group members' case files and having a good knowledge of the programme material were considered important to group member motivation. Participants spoke of being more inclined to listen to and respect facilitators who had 'done their homework' for the sessions. This involved facilitators appearing professional and knowledgeable in their delivery of the session and in how they incorporated information from the group members files respectful and relevantly into the work. In terms of how the facilitators delivered the programme material, it was seen as 'clever' when they spent time explaining and building up to the work so that the group understood what was expected and how it may be of value to them. This was seen as important to motivation as it provided 'a reason to do it' by giving group members an opportunity to connect how it could help. This was supported through the facilitators' open and motivational questioning style, which was considered 'vital' to facilitator competence. It was observed that this way of questioning was more involving as it invited group members to contribute and think more fully. Indeed, this was a distinguishing factor identified between effective and ineffective facilitators. One participant reflected that a 'good' facilitator:

'... would have involved people more, asked more open questions, he would have been more aware of when there was more to be said that wasn't being said and develop the social skills to be able to pull that out of the person, but again, all of the, really good ones did that without even realising' (Fred: 244-248).

The facilitators' motivational approach was also linked to their ability to tap into and utilise the group dynamics. This involved recognising how the group members had an important role in influencing engagement in one another. When one participant was discussing the role of a group member who used his teaching experience to support other group members, he observed:

'...the good thing about the facilitators is that, so, they would let him do that. You know, er, he, he's got a wealth of experience, he taught for all his life, he's a bloke in his 60's, um, and he would be able to say something which, relieved the pressure in that moment' (Adam: 995-999).

It was also regarded as 'clever' that facilitators would draw in quieter group members by directing questions to more confident members, which initiated discussion for the reticent group members to contribute to.

Subcategory 3.4: Facilitator consistency

A number of participants mentioned having more consistency in facilitators would be an improvement. The more there were changes in the facilitators, the more it disrupted the emotional safety and group functioning. This was particularly important to the group members at the beginning of the modules. However, in general participants said that these changes affected the flow, the level of ease and the group's subsequent openness. While acknowledging that consistency may not always be possible, it was noted that it was more difficult to make a connection with facilitators who were not regularly there because of the need to have trust in the context of what they were doing, particularly when introduced in the more difficult modules:

'... it might have put people on edge a bit more and like, then we might be going nicely with the flow of things and then all of a sudden you turn up one day and there's a new person and, you're doing like a major block, like you, like life, life histories.. probably one of the most challenging things for most people, so I guess it might have been a bit daunting for people maybe, cos you're talking about some quite in-depth things aren't you, so that maybe that might not be the best thing to do' (Ben: 543-554).

Subcategory 3.5: 'Close knit' co-working relationships with balanced responsibilities

Broadly, the quality of the facilitators' interactions with one another was positively referenced, with the TVSOGP unit consistently being described as '*a close knit team*'. In parallel to the

description of the facilitator qualities, the facilitator relationships were also regarded a balance of personal and professional. This involved the feeling that the facilitators knew each other on a personal level, with some participants describing this as two friends working together. This was picked up through observing that the facilitators knew each other's idiosyncrasies, had a level of familiarity with one another that allowed humorous and relaxed interactions. While it appeared that facilitators worked together well, group members picked up on who had worked together more frequently or who knew each other better:

'Oh, because they had little routines, you know, it was all, it was almost like, um, er, you know, there's always like little catch phrases that would or banter between them or and, and also I think some of them felt more relaxed with person A, rather than person B, you got the impression that perhaps they had worked together more' (Fred: 659-663).

The facilitators' relationship had significance to group member engagement, as facilitators' ease with one another and being *'on the same page'* impacted on the flow, mood and enjoyment of the session. The professionalism in this relationship was reflected in the facilitators' co-working style, which was generally experienced as consistent, transparent and interchangeable.

'It made me feel in the group, you're in good hands, people knew where they were going, what they wanted to do, they'd done it regularly, um, and it's easy to, follow... it means that, when we did have someone come in they weren't, there was still the dynamic between anyone they were working with where it's, if it was someone they didn't know, I presume that wouldn't, wouldn't be the same would it' (Dan: 753-756).

Balance in the facilitators' relationship made their approach appear boundaried but flexible, which contributed to group members feeling safe. While there was recognition of different facilitators characters and personalities, there was a sense that they were trained the same way, allowing the approach to generally feel coherent and complimentary. This had a role in the sessions being run efficiently and smoothly, and made changes in facilitators feel less disruptive to the process.

7.3.4 Category 4: The interpersonal climate

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
4. INTERPERSONAL CLIMATE	4.1 Developing positive relationships to support trust and respect	ABCDEFGF
	4.2 Creating a safe environment for group members to engage more freely	ABCDEFGF

The interpersonal climate appears to be a product of the interactions of group and facilitators within the context of the community-based sexual offending programme, described in this model as a combination of positive intra-group relationships that are based on trust and respect, along with the development of a safe environment. This was regarded as having an integral role in engaging the group members and providing grounding for effective group functioning relevant to subjective change.

Subcategory 4.1: Developing positive relationships to support trust and respect

Having personable and boundaried interactions, a helpful group dynamic and consistency in the facilitator team were all conceptualised as having a role in developing positive and appropriate relationships. This role was thought to support openness, trust and respect in one other, along with making the facilitators approachable and familiar.

‘... you.... find it harder to connect to someone you don't really know, where as people you start the course with, and you go through the course with, you get to know, you know you get to trust them and I know all these people are very trustworthy’ (Dan: 193-197).

The rapport that was created through these interactions developed over time and felt important to the group member’s willingness to listen. Participants noted a positive difference in atmosphere in the sessions when facilitators they ‘got on with’ were running, in comparison with those they didn’t. Trust and respect between everyone in the room was consistently linked to effective practice as relationships were seen as essential to lowering people defences with people who are inclined to feel very guarded due to the contextual obstacles to the work. This was therefore important in enabling group members to take risks and consider new ways of thinking. This appeared to allow the group to keep things on track, and to both support yet challenge one another appropriately. Having a good relationship therefore allowed the

facilitators and group members to feel as though they were working as a team, which facilitated movement towards a shared goal, and discouraged boundary pushing.

'I don't think any of us ever pushed the facilitators in any sort of way, or another, you know... I just think they were quite tolerant, and I think we thought, well, you know they are the way they are and they're quite good so, it's probably going to be a bit naughty if we, do something like that, I mean if we, if any of the people on the group, you know just didn't really like them at all or, they will have tried, cos everyone can be a kid at times can't they' (Ben: 1312-1323).

Subcategory 4.2: Creating an emotionally and psychologically safe environment

Although the initial mood in the room was 'uncertain' (PA), it was observed by all participants that it soon shifted to a more enabling one. In general, a helpful change-enabling group environment was described as friendly, relaxed, lively, non-judgemental and emotionally safe. When this was achieved the participants spoke of feeling more at ease, more open and more confident to share. This was also experienced as making the process more enjoyable and liberating. The participants reflected on how this atmosphere helped them feel as though they could be honest with both themselves and with each other in this environment.

'... everybody knew it was a supportive environment rather than a hostile environment. If you're in a hostile environment, you don't let your guard down, where as if you're in a supportive environment and, I don't know, perhaps it becomes quite stressful, you know that, not only the facilitators are there not only to support you during that period rather than beat you over the head with a truncheon and send you back to your cell, um.. that's an exaggeration but also that you're, you're not going to get grief from the people, the peers on the course, you're actually going to get support from them' (Fred: 128-137).

The facilitators balanced and adaptable approach was seen to contribute to a 'laid back but business like' atmosphere, which the group members believed created security but also drove the work. Being lively and humorous particularly had a role in contributing to an engaging atmosphere, as it made the process more enjoyable, which prevented the material and process becoming dull and monotonous. Additionally, the facilitators' boundaried qualities were key to creating safety due to the importance of the group members feeling confident in ground rules being maintained. This was particularly related to the importance of maintaining confidentiality in the work due to the social views of sexual offending and the group member's reservations about attending the group. Interestingly, the role of the facilitators being knowledgeable about

the group members' offence helped create a climate of transparency rather than secrecy. This included feeling consulted and informed about decisions being made about them and the other group members. Being open and transparent with the group was described as lowering a barrier by preventing suspicion and hostility.

The atmosphere and the quality of relationships seemed closely interlinked. This connection was reflected in the observation of the atmosphere feeling more enabling when the sessions were run by facilitators they 'got on with' and those with a good experience described the environment as '*a family atmosphere*' (Charles: 191). Furthermore the relationships between the two facilitators were observed to have a role in contributing to this atmosphere as it could be noticeable when facilitators worked well together as people. Tensions in this relationship could impact on the overall atmosphere in the room.

7.3.5. Category 5: Effective group functioning

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
5. EFFECTIVE GROUP FUNCTIONING	5.1 Group ownership and maturity	ABCDEFGF
	5.2 Challenging/accountability and digging deeper	ABCDEFGF
	5.3 Exploring new perspectives through collaborative discussion	ABCDEFGF

This category describes how the group members' experience of these interpersonal dynamics influenced the effectiveness of the group functioning. When this was a positive experience, the participants referenced how they were open to processes that facilitated change. This supported more ownership of the process, helped each other 'dig deeper' and encouraged openness to new perspectives through collaborative and discussion-based work. This was significant to their subjective change process as engaging alone was not necessarily sufficiently linked to movement and growth.

Subcategory 5.1: Group ownership and maturity

Group members who reported to have engaged well due to positive interpersonal experiences in the group spoke of being in a position to take more ownership of the process, and although the facilitator role was still important, it became subtler. One participant compared facilitators to the captains of a ship who set the direction at the tiller, with the group doing the paddling. Indeed, it was referenced that when facilitators strongly gave the message to the group that the

programme was the participants' course, this ethos was felt to help group members contribute. In turn, this dynamic allowed the facilitators to 'hand over the reigns' to the group members, which had a role in increasing group member responsibility from a position of maturity:

'...that was really strange you know, that we were in, we were, we were in charge, and that was a laugh, that was really good... we were all thinking and acting like... adults, rather than children, you know, and then to be in, to put us in their shoes, it was, it was, it really was good' (Charles: 1050-1057).

This mature functioning was referenced as having a significant role in the group members' investment in the work and subsequent gains and was regarded one of the most powerful agents for change. Holding this responsibility helped group members and facilitators feel 'on a level', it promoted intrinsic motivation and it had a role in supporting and helping move each other along.

Subcategory 5.2: Challenge, accountability and 'digging deeper'

When the group was functioning well, participants reflected that challenge and accountability became part of the group culture, which was considered 'vital' to the programme being of value as it allowed them to 'go deeper'. This was based on the relationships and environment of the interpersonal climate as this supportive grounding bolstered their ability to accept challenges from one another helpfully, without being defensive. The group members discussed how the facilitators were able to bring in information from their probation file to facilitate this process. While this at times ran the risk of feeling pressuring or punitive, when done respectfully and judged well, it could be very helpful for the group members to make progress:

'...obviously they know, they know everything, they've got your case file haven't they so they can, kind of, help click something in your, in your head so 'what about this bit here' or 'what about that bit there' or whoever, um, so I think that, that can help' (Ben: 87-90).

By exploring their selves and their offence in more depth, participants reflected that it helped them come to terms with what they'd done and to manage difficulties differently. This tended to be seen as a product of how the group and facilitators worked together. For example, there was a sense that challenge was more effective between group members, as opposed to being led by the facilitators, due to the power dynamics previously discussed. However, it was

simultaneously important that the facilitators oversaw and managed this process to retain the overall safety of the group. The facilitators guided or introduced different perspectives into the conversation and ensured the contributions were balanced across the group and delivered respectfully.

'... it's how they do it that's important... they're not pushing you to... they're not pushing you to give answers, they're asking you... and the more I dug deeper, the easier it got to answer the questions, and the more, the more open I become, which was a lot, which made it really good...' (Charles: 10-14).

The role of the facilitators' interpersonal approach was therefore thought to be important to enable this process rather than to shut it down, which required a careful balance between personable and boundaried qualities.

Subcategory 5.3: Exploring new perspectives through a collaborative discussion-based process

The participants referenced how a helpful interpersonal climate allowed them to engage in more in-depth conversations, while being open to learning from one another and considering different perspectives. Working in a group format was considered an opportunity for a diverse range of people with different experiences to offer varied ideas and viewpoints to open up new lines of thinking. As one participant observed:

'...I think it was also interesting and quite informative to see how people responded to the information they were given and, the different interpretations of that information, from different people within the group' (Fred: 417-420).

One participant observed that the group discussions:

'...brought out opinions and when you bring out an opinion, that meant that the group could question that opinion or agree with it or disagree with it, as, as you would and I think that was an important part. We all have different opinions and suddenly you realise some of those opinions, even when you said it out loud to yourself, in, you think 'hold on, that's not necessarily where you're supposed to be going' (Dan: 1575-1581).

Group discussions brought out different opinions and multiple perspectives, which then allowed the rest of the group to explore a plurality of views. This was seen as important to help people explore their own and different attitudes and beliefs, and to make discoveries about how these may manifest through their and others' behaviour. They suggested that this could be facilitated through an open, non-confrontational questioning style and the capacity to explore opinions through collaborative discussion rather than interrogation. This process was thought to encourage an intrinsic shift in the group member's attitude rather than rely on the facilitators extrinsically pushing them to change their views, which would be less meaningful.

7.3.6 Category 6: Ineffective group functioning

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
6. INEFFECTIVE GROUP FUNCTIONING	6.1 Alienation and superficial engagement in response to relational imbalance	BCDEFG
	6.2 Power games, adversity and hostility in response to relational imbalance	ABCDEFG

This category captures when group members did not sufficiently engage or had an unbalanced or negative experience of the facilitators and group. The consequence could include disengagement, alienation, superficial engagement and/or hostility, which could lead to negative judgements of the facilitator competence and a lack of progress.

Subcategory 6.1: Alienation and superficial engagement in response to relational imbalance

When group members experienced the group as punitive or controlling, they were inclined to feel demotivated, restricted and powerless, which exacerbated contextual obstacles. This was more inclined to occur as a result of a difficult group dynamic, facilitators losing balance and adaptability in their approach and when group members were 'in denial'. It was observed that for some this could lead to dropping off the course. Other group members spoke of not disclosing anything 'real' as it made them vet their contributions or engage superficially with the process. One group member articulated:

'...if it was just people telling you how guilty you are... it alienates the people you are trying to deal with, and also you're trying to help people, and just telling them they're guilty is just making them feel more guilty, at which point, you kind of, you know, just overwhelmed with that feeling and it gets to the point where 'so I'm guilty so whatever, I've had enough, I'm not interested, I don't want to play anymore'... And you'll just get the... the saying yes, you know, nodding with

agreement, sort of situation, not actually, taking part and just saying yes, thank you very much (Dan: 514-529).

It appears that this experience creates obstacles to a helpful interpersonal climate, and hence creates barriers to the intra-group relating and functioning central to subjective change.

Subcategory 6.2: Power games and adversity in response to relational imbalance

When one group member spoke of his experience of feeling pressured and controlled, he expressed that:

'... it made it really really tough, you know but um, you were, I stuck with it, and um, I come out on top because I stuck with it, and um, I come out on top because I wasn't going to let anybody get me down... if anyone wants to ask me nasty questions, I'll give them nasty answers, you know' (Charles: 900-902).

It was observed that a lack of safety and positive relationship in the interpersonal climate had the potential to aggravate power dynamics, which prompted hostility and adversity. Participants spoke of tensions arising in the session when the interactions were not respectful, when they felt restricted or controlled and when facilitators were perceived to have an 'arrogant' or 'pushy' attitude. This was linked to people feeling defensive and closed, not working together and a sense of injustice, which made the process feel more difficult and took value away from the work. Interactions could become adversarial rather than supportive, and this was unhelpful to the group functioning.

6.3.7 Category 7: Subjective change

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	PARTICIPANT
7. SUBJECTIVE CHANGE	7.1 Accepting and taking responsibility for the offence	ABCDEFGF
	7.2 An improved sense of self and identity	ACDFG
	7.3 Developing more flexible pro-social thinking	ABCDEFGF
	7.4 Self and life management	ABCDFF

A number of themes were raised as an outcome of the participants' experience of helpful interpersonal processes in the programme. Common benefits cited included accepting and

taking responsibility for the offence, an improved sense of self, flexible thinking and self-management. Interestingly, and as explored in the discussion section, research suggests that some of these areas have little relevance to risk and recidivism. When the participants had experiences of an unhelpful interpersonal climate and ineffective group functioning they reported a lack of subjective change, which could either exacerbate shame or create power traps that violate safety, or generally make the programme feel meaningless.

Subcategory 7.1: Accepting and taking responsibility for offending

Accepting responsibility for the offence was conceptualised by the participants as a foundation to moving forward with an offence-free life. They regarded it as an adult way of dealing with the conviction. Participants acknowledging that the offence was both in their control and wrong was seen as important in coming to terms with the offence and preventing reoffending. As described under Category 3, this seemed to be facilitated through the interpersonal conditions breaking down shame and enabling a deeper exploration of the offending behaviour:

'...it allowed you to confront what you did, um, to accept what you'd done and to look into the reasons behind it, but because it was done in a, I wouldn't use gentle, it's not really the right word, but gentler way, then, then I think it worked far far better' (Fred: 108-111).

Indeed it was observed that when the offence focussed work was handled in a way that allowed people to contextualise it in their past, it instilled hope and the group members felt more in control of their future.

'... I think it was basically down to the way the course was laid out and the facilitators but, you end up feeling that, yes you've done something you shouldn't have done and, this course has been, you've had to have been on this course because of that and you have a conviction but, you can do something about it and here's the tools to do it with, so... which is kind of, gives you bit more of a positive feel about it, you know, go out and do something good with your life' (Dan: 1195-1202).

Some participants who witnessed group members moving from denying their behaviour and resisting the group process at the beginning of the programme, to accepting responsibility and learning from their behaviour by the end of the course, referenced the course layout as significant to these people's development.

Subcategory 7.2: An improved sense of self and identity

The interpersonal conditions in the group seemed to have a role in increasing confidence, self-esteem and a developed sense of self. Prior to the programme, many of the participants spoke of having long-standing problems with self worth and their conviction of a sexual offence was a source of much shame. The participants felt the process of going through the group highlighted their self-critical beliefs, positively shifted how they felt about themselves, helped them find the positives in situations, facilitated an internal determination and developed more social competency. One participant reflected:

'I think that changed when I done this [programme], yeah, cos, yeah alright I was, I was ok before, but, but I was nowhere near as confident then, as I am now, I'm a lot more confident now about doing anything... It helped a lot, it helped me think about what I wanted to do, where I want to go, what my goals are, and.. not to be frightened to say what you, say what you think, because I used to hold things back and not say anything' (Charles: 236-240).

Most participants included a sense of reinstating their rights as human beings worthy of a positive life and future. Following conviction and having initially felt that they had lost their rights to be part of society, the participants spoke of starting to recognise their achievements, develop a more balanced opinion of themselves, feel stronger, feel less afraid, develop more internal control and develop a more relational sense of themselves through the process of the group. These changes were linked to both the work and the process of interacting in a group format with facilitation.

Subcategory 7.3: Developing more flexible pro-social thinking

Having space to explore and discuss attitudes in this environment was linked to shifts in beliefs and more flexibility in thinking. Participants generally considered this a 'clever' product of the process, as they noticed opinions gradually shifting in both themselves and other group members over the course.

'... one thing I've learned in, up there, if I have a problem and I don't solve it, I don't see it as a failure, I see it as a learning curve, cos I look at it and think 'how can I look at it differently' so it's just reinforcing that sort of thing, where you change yourself, to reinforce that reflecting, where you think 'oh yeah, I could, I see your point now, I could do it that way...' (George: 535-540).

Participants reflected on how the process made them think about things they had previously not considered or actively avoided. This related to how they viewed themselves, others, their offending, and the world around them, through questioning and deconstructing within the group discussion things they had previously taken for granted (e.g. attitudinal norms). The ability to consider the different contextual influences on their decision to offend, along with being able to recognise the impact of their behaviour on others, was regarded a powerful tool in lowering people's defences for 'the wall come down' and strengthening their resolve to not reoffend. This work contributed to group members reviewing their lifestyle choices and values and in general this was seen as a skill that equips the group members to better participate with different points of view and to cope with life and relationships.

Subcategory 7.4: Improved self management and life skills

Participants cited group work as integral to promoting and developing skills in self-management. They regarded it as 'clever' that the group developed skills in both managing their own lives and in supporting others to manage theirs. All participants noted improved life skills as a result of the group experience, including better management and relationship to emotions, and improved coping with interpersonal problems.

'...it made you think, think about things you didn't want to ... and it.. think about things you didn't want to talk about, and for someone to, you know, in my case, I've had some things bottled up for 40 years or whatever, um, I, it was, er, quite an achievement in some ways, you know' (Adam: 568-571).

This involved a recognition that self-management is broader than the circumstances immediately around the offence. This included adopting the 'good lives' perspective that takes a holistic approach to wellbeing and risk management rather than view the offending behaviour in isolation. The act of interacting and forming relationships with others within a group environment was perceived as valuable for promoting effective interpersonal skills due to learning from each other: giving feedback, supporting one another, challenging one another, helping identify people in each other's social networks and the process of working as a group. Participants spoke of internalising these skills and experiences as new or expanded capabilities over the course of the programme, and applying them to their day-to-day lives, which was facilitated through the process of confronting rather than avoiding problems.

7.4 The emergent core dimension: A humanised, empowering and safe grounding for engagement and subjective change

An interpretation of the data suggests that moving from a dehumanised, controlled and unsafe state towards one that is humanised, empowered and safe is central to group member engagement and subjective change. This process seems to be supported when professionals understand the role of contextual influences and have an awareness of how these states can affect individual and group member behaviour. Facilitators who are skilled in adapting their interpersonal interactions appropriately to take account of these dynamics support this process. As the composition of each group will be variable, the facilitators' role appears integral in both containing and shaping these dynamics through their interpersonal approach. Key to this role is the facilitators' ability to find a balance between personable and boundaried qualities, along with the skill of responsively adapting this relational style to take account of the group and the individual processes within it.

Understanding and managing the shame that can inhibit group member engagement fosters the process of 'humanising' group members and requires the ability to connect with the group members as people rather than the label. As one participant positively reflected: *'I think they were all treating us quite, like we were human beings and adults'* (Ben: 1135-1136). A balanced and responsive facilitator approach seems to encourage a group dynamic of acceptance that encourages the development of respectful relationships central to both a humanising experience and a change-enabling process.

The process of empowering change in group members appears supported by understanding the influence of institutional dynamics on both the client and professional. This seems integral to facilitating awareness of power dynamics and adopting a balanced, responsive and motivational facilitator style to break down these interpersonal divides. One participant reflected that the community facilitators were successful in achieving this and it made them *'very different... separate, it felt like a very separate group from Probation'* (Dan: 1365-1366). Allowing group members to take an active role in shaping their programme experience encouraged group ownership: *'Whenever we were in charge we all felt like proper adults, you know, and it made us feel like proper people, like it made me feel like a proper person'* (Charles: 1065-1067).

Ownership encouraged intrinsic motivation, rather than superficial engagement, and made the process experience more meaningful. This seems likely to encourage group members to

integrate the learning. The subsequent increase in group members' confidence, hope and self worth seemed to encourage them to take control of their lives positively.

With regard to creating a safe environment, understanding the obstacles in the context of stigma, institutional expectations and public judgement of sexual offending seems important to form appropriate boundaries to contain these anxieties. As one participant observed '*...It's the confidence in knowing that nothing left the room, um that's obviously a big thing*' (Adam: 425-426). When facilitators managed the group dynamics and build trust in relationships, group members felt enabled to have confidence in the process and to more freely engage and push out of their comfort zone for development. This seemed to be experienced as fundamental to increasing the group members' ability to utilise the group process to develop more mature self-management skills.

8. DISCUSSION

This section will consider what the research results offer to understanding the role of interpersonal processes in sexual offending programmes in light of existing literature. By approaching from a Counselling Psychology perspective, it will reflect on how the findings may inform professional practice with this client group and will draw from research and papers from the sexual offending field in relation to broader psychological theory to consider the organisational implications of the results, the studies limitations and areas for future research.

8.1 A dynamic and balanced approach: The implications of a core process of humanising, empowering and creating safety

These research findings seem to suggest that an interpersonal process of humanising, empowering and creating safety in a context that is often dehumanising, controlling and unsafe can be central to engagement and effective functioning in sexual offending treatment programmes. Without this grounding the group appeared less likely to function effectively, which arguably limited subjective change and perceived learning.

Using a Counselling Psychology lens to approach this research created an opportunity to value pluralism, engage with professional tensions and better understand the influence of wider systems upon this field of practice (Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009). There appears to be much that could be gained from Counselling Psychology having a presence in the field of sexual offending treatment when research is increasingly pointing to an approach that values interpersonal interactions that are congruent with values based on social justice, giving marginalised people a voice and facilitating wellbeing (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Indeed, as in other recent studies, these findings broadly contest original assumptions about the need to use a confrontational approach to push for group member confessions to achieve change (Salter, 1988; Stephenson, 1991; Morrison, Erooga & Beckett, 1994) and supports the idea that providing a more enabling environment is conducive to genuine engagement and meaningful change (Beech and Fordham, 1997; Serran, Fernandez, Marshall & Mann, 2003; Beech and Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Marshall et al, 2002; 2005). Previous research has tended to present a list of static therapeutic qualities associated with a positive group experience and have provided little information grounding why they may be necessary and how they may be implemented or responsively adapted. By comparison, this research places emphasis on the

dynamic nature of human interactions between the group and facilitators, and the need to negotiate a dynamic balance appropriate to the context, group process and group members' shifting needs. By explicitly recognising the contextual influences that can dehumanise, control and impair safety, professionals are in a better position to responsively adapt their practice on an on-going basis with awareness of how this may impact on the individual, the group and on themselves as facilitators. The model suggests that the interpersonal dynamics within the group have the potential to either contribute to building a humanised, empowered and safe experience or fall into traps of reinforcing a dehumanised, controlled and unsafe environment. This bears significance, as productive and mature group functioning was thought to develop out of this process and deemed central to cultivating learning and change. By contrast, when this process was not achieved the group seemed to function more immaturely and superficially, which limited learning and benefits from attending. Consistent with Counselling Psychology values, this recognises the key role of relationships in providing a safe and supportive interpersonal climate, which allows for group members to tolerate uncertainty, relate more helpfully to one another, push outside their comfort zone to maturely challenge one another, hold each other accountable and own their change process. These attributes encourage the idea of developing a healthier self-concept in general psychological practice (Erikson, 1950; Rogers, 1951, Winnicott, 1960). Furthermore, this model offers scope to reflect on how individuals conceptualise their change process in relation to their experience of these dynamics. This provides an opportunity for professionals to review how relevant or helpful these areas may be to risk and personal development. The current study therefore tentatively offers a more integrated understanding of the interpersonal processes that may enable or inhibit engagement and subjective change on sexual offending treatment programmes. This places focus on a way of 'being' rather than 'doing' (Woolfe, 1990). The implications of this model on theory and practice will be discussed below along with consideration of how they may be achieved or managed.

8.2 Explicitly integrating context issues into practice

Given the powerful impact of contextual issues upon group engagement highlighted in the analysis, there may be a clear need to explicitly acknowledge and manage these influences as part of the group process. Failing to do so appeared to create significant barriers to group engagement and could prevent attendance on programmes. This seems to further support a Counselling Psychology ethos in practice as it has been observed by Cordess (2002) that the sign of a good forensic Counselling Psychologist is the ability to see past the obstacles created by the

context to see the human being and develop a relationship through a therapeutically respectful manner.

8.2.1 Understanding stigma, shame and denial

Social stigma is the extreme devaluation of social identity of a person or group based on characteristics that mark them as different from other members of a society (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998). Shame can be understood as an all encompassing and overwhelming perception of the self as 'bad' that feels fixed and unchangeable (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). This research highlights how the stigma of sexual offending is particularly potent and can prompt debilitating subjective feelings of shame in response to this societal mirror. As a consequence, some group members had difficulties tolerating the group process and felt that change was unachievable. The analysis further supports recent literature that suggests denial can be a natural response to shameful feelings (Blagdon, Winder, Gregson & Thorne, 2014) through the observation that resistance and denial were often discussed interchangeably. This is consistent with the idea that there are a number of defences and coping strategies group members are inclined to use to avoid confronting the painful reality of their offending behaviour (Reid, Harper & Anderson, 2009).

From a Counselling Psychology angle, a number of implications for practice are then raised, particularly concerning the need to understand the impact of shame on the individual. For some, this stigmatising experience seemed to be a painful extension of an already shameful sense of self that was perhaps relevant to their motivation to offend. It has consistently been supported by research that people who have committed a sexual offence often suffer from feelings of low self-worth (Marshall, Champagne, Brown, & Miller, 1997; Marshall, Champagne, Sturgeon, & Bryce, 1997; Marshall, Cripps, Anderson, & Cortoni, 1999; Marshall & Mazzucco, 1995). A negative sense of self is correlated with intimacy deficits, emotional loneliness, poor coping and offence related sexual interests, which are all dynamic risk factors to offending (SARN; Thornton, 2002). Indeed, sexually addictive and compulsive behaviour has been conceptualised as an intimacy disorder based on shameful early attachment experiences (Adams & Robinson, 2001) signifying that for many the process of overcoming shame in sexual offending treatment does not merely relate to engagement, but also offence-related treatment needs.

Another potential implication could be for people with narcissistic personality traits who have been convicted of a sexual offence, as they can be prone to shame-rage (Tangney, Wagner, &

Gramzow, 1992b) and splitting as a defence (Gramzow & Tangney, 1992). This can prompt devaluation of others, difficulties reality testing and empathy deficits (Martens, 2005). The perceived criticism for their offending therefore has the potential to be a source of hostility, aggression, anxiety and resistance in the process, which could be a barrier to engagement and adequately relating to other people in the group. However, stigma may not be as pressing for certain complex personalities (e.g. those with psychopathic or sadistic traits, or those whose behaviour felt justified) who do not experience high levels of shame for their offending (Marshall, Marshall, Seran & O'Brien, 2009).

Consistent with general psychotherapy practice, these findings highlight how shame can prevent group members wanting to open up in the group to expose their perceived 'badness' and subsequently can prompt defensiveness (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006). Recognising these links seems vital to practice as failing to recognise the impact of shame can lead to group member behaviour being perceived as 'difficult' and prompt countertransference responses in professionals that are punitive and dehumanising. Challenges arise when the accredited programmes tend to open with offence-focussed work that has the potential to exacerbate rather than manage these feelings. While these programmes are currently being rewritten in recognition that this may be unhelpful for group members (Carter, 2015), in the interim treatment unit staff may benefit from considering how to actively utilise and adapt their therapeutic style to ameliorate the interpersonal pressures to help lower group members' shameful feelings and help them to develop more compassionate views of themselves.

8.2.2 Understanding the system of control and spotting power traps

This research emphasises the need for awareness and monitoring of the processes that can contribute to institutional resistance (Hollin, 1990; 1995), particularly in prison interventions. It also highlights the merits of holding this intervention in a community setting. Understanding the interplay of control and the triggers that prompt these divides appears important to better manage power dynamics and develop relationships of equality, acceptance and respect central to engagement and group functioning. This signifies important areas for reflection for the National Offender Management Service as this research had not intended to make comparisons between community and prison interventions, yet participants consistently made these observations.

This research suggests that professionals can be controlling within both contexts, but these dynamics are more pronounced within the prison where a wider range of contextual control

pressures are present. In support of previous observations, there was anxiety and frustration that facilitators in prison have a significant influence on parole decisions from the reports they write (Crewe, 2009). This highlights the dilemma of a dual relationship, where professionals who work therapeutically in a forensic setting are expected to hold conflicting ethical norms of being interested in client wellbeing while protecting the public (Ward, 2014). The participants' observations about the contrast between their experience of prison and community programmes suggest that the professional environment has a powerful impact on facilitators ability to manage these tensions to find an appropriate balance that does not hinder effective practice. Indeed, the responsibility of being held accountable to people's 'risk' has the potential to create an institutional anxiety that fosters rigidity as a defence mechanism (Menzies-Lyth, 1988). This is suggested by the observation that the prison approach, whose infrastructure is more punitive, feels more controlling than the community's. While justifiably this nature of intervention calls for robust and defensible practice, understanding the impact of these contextual dynamics appears important as they run the risk of triggering inflexible responses and protocols from professionals, which can be experienced as dehumanising and controlling for group members.

This dynamic of control also potentially has significance to group member offence-related risk issues. As it is common for people who commit sexual offences to hold an external locus of control, the offending behaviour, in part, can be understood as a way of reclaiming some internal sense of control by putting themselves in a position of sexual power (Groth, Hobson & Gary, 1982). The Criminal Justice System is an agency that has control of those within it, and as reflected in the analysis it therefore appears to ironically externalise individual's feelings of control, which is in conflict with group member empowerment and contributes to feelings of inadequacy (SARN; Thornton, 2002). Consistent with Mitchell and Milikian (1995), the results raise further challenges when facilitators have to manage their own feelings triggered by countertransference responses to non-compliance or feelings of deception. Professionals must therefore to be aware of the implications and able to recognise these interpersonal power traps that can create obstacles to a helpful process. A Counselling Psychology presence may facilitate effective practice in considering how as an institute anxieties are moderated about risk so they do not trigger unnecessarily punitive or controlling responses from professionals, but equally offer appropriate and helpful boundaries.

Counselling Psychology values seeks 'to recognise social contexts and discrimination, and to work always in ways that empower rather than control and also demonstrate the high standards of anti-discriminatory practice appropriate to the pluralistic nature of society today' (BPS, 2005a, p1-2.). From an organisational perspective, professional contributions and presence may have implications for the National Offender Manager Service (NOMS), the Prison Service, the Probation Service and the Criminal Justice System in how they think about enhancing programme delivery and the training of facilitators, in particular in spotting and managing these institutional dynamics and intra-group processes.

8.2.3 Understanding and managing obstacles to safety

As cited in the results, this study has argued a need to understand the significant barriers to creating a safe, therapeutic environment in a punitive institution, with people who face the reality of scathing public perceptions about their offending and fear of confronting their own shame and self-criticism. While achieving a safe therapeutic environment is a foundation to group psychotherapy (Bion, 1962b; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005; Gilbert & Leahy, 2007) there is little acknowledgement of this process in the field of sexual offending and terms relating to 'safety' are largely saved in reference to protecting other people against the group member.

While the role of a group contract is cited as key to creating safety, the facilitators face the dilemma of having limits to confidentiality based on their responsibility to protect the community. Consequently, sexual offending treatment programmes have been considered 'a systematic sabotage of traditional ethics' within the therapeutic world (Glaser, 2003; p114). How facilitators negotiate this dilemma is therefore integral, as the results signify that the framework of confidentiality offered was largely sufficient in creating safety. The implication is that as long as the boundaries and limitations of confidentiality are clear, consistent and appropriately enforced, the group can feel safe enough to engage. Indeed, respectfully managing these boundaries in a personable way appears key to ensure that the pendulum does not completely swing to the opposite extreme where the overall group management is lost, so safety and programme value are compromised, suggesting that there is an active process where facilitators need to maintain boundaries in a way that does not get pulled into a confrontation.

8.3 Developing a group culture of acceptance and ownership

As the data consistently referenced how the attitude and contributions of other group members were often more significant than those of the professionals, there are implications for how the

groups are populated. As will be discussed in later sections, while these dynamics may be managed to some degree helpfully by the facilitators, there must be consideration of what is realistic and fair to expect professionals to manage. The rest of the group, whose process may be facilitated or jeopardised by the behaviour and attitude of other group members, also signifies the importance of group members having adequate motivation to engage positively with the programme. These dynamics support the need for thorough suitability assessments and appropriate one-to-one pre-group work to increase the likelihood that group members can adequately engage meaningfully and non-judgementally with the process, which is consistent with the suggestion that suitable referrals are the 'life source' of a therapy group (AGPA, 2007).

8.3.1 Developing a group dynamic of acceptance

As shame is a self-conscious emotion based on a perceived negative social response to impropriety (Tangney, Miller, Flicker & Barlow, 1996), it is perhaps not surprising that the research indicates that the process of overcoming these painful feelings appears supported by positive human interactions built on acceptance. As a micro-society (Yalom, 1995), the group format seems to offer the opportunity for group members and facilitators to meet each other as human beings to create a social experience of support and appropriate relatedness, allowing for defences to be lowered and new self-perceptions to be experienced. In support of Perkins, Hammond, Coles & Bishopp (1998) this environment can provide a social arena where group members become less closed and deal with previously unresolved shame, anger or anxiety. This has significance to practice as it provides a space to develop hope and a belief in the ability to change, which is also relevant to a state of empowerment and safety. The group theoretically has the potential to facilitate and develop the human warmth system that may have been lacking from previous attachment experiences, which is relevant to addressing shameful self views (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006). The facilitators' personable, non-judgemental qualities and ways of relating also seem significant as they can model a dynamic of acceptance, which allows group members to feel treated both like human beings and adults. This process appears to be key to group members developing trust in the group process and engaging more freely.

8.3.2 Achieving a culture of collaboration and group ownership

In line with Marshall and his colleagues' (2005) reflections, this study highlights the importance of the facilitators having a role that instils a culture where group members drive the work and have an active role in shaping their treatment and goals. Yalom and Leszcz (2005) described this as the 'the self-monitoring group' norm. However, this research suggests that the term 'ownership' better encapsulates a process of group empowerment with a subgroup of people

who are marginalised and largely stripped of their social rights. Having a sense of autonomy and self-belief seems to bolster group members' ability to overcome social adversity, and has an active role in the change process. Therefore, the facilitators' role in communicating and supporting this message appears integral, as the group are more receptive to engaging with this norm when there was a climate of stability, trust and respect. This seems dependent on the interplay between the group composition and the facilitators' skill in managing the interpersonal dynamics. Validating group member's contributions, using an open, socratic questioning style (Paul & Elder, 2006), using motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 1991) and setting up exercises to be lead by the group appears significant to developing feelings of empowerment, autonomy and personal agency. Of importance to achieving this process is an interpersonal environment based on discussion rather than instructions, particularly when maintaining boundaries. This has implications across the treatment process as the facilitators ability to maintain the balance in their interpersonal style is negotiated by how they encourage communication rather than shutting people down with rules that create an 'us and them' dynamic. This appears central to the process of moving from a controlled to an empowered state as it contributes to mature functioning by encouraging facilitators and group members alike to interact and relate as adults.

8.3.3 Safety versus comfort

This research highlights a need to distinguish between feeling safe and feeling comfortable within the group. Having a safe frame of therapy appears to help group members tolerate more discomfort, which may be understood as allowing them to work within their proximal zone of development (Vgotsky, 1978). Achieving a balance, where group members feel comfortable enough in the group to develop trust, but not to the extent where this becomes an avoidance strategy to addressing their problems, appears to underpin this position. In light of the growing call for more positive work with people who have committed a sexual offence, there is a risk Of losing this balance and becoming polarised. Indeed, group members spoke of the value of challenge in their experience of the programme. In fact, they tended to respect the facilitators who were most knowledgeable about their file information and were able to respectfully integrate this into the work to explore new avenues without being pulled into a confrontational approach that violates safety. Therefore, comfort and engagement cannot be the only product of the interpersonal environment as personable but boundaried interactions that develop trust and respect can be seen as a key to unlocking a culture of accountability, challenge, ownership and collaborative discussion integral to subjective change and growth.

8.4 Reflexive practice: Negotiating a balanced & responsive approach

When a balanced and responsive interpersonal approach from the facilitators was not achieved, group members described feeling coerced or pushed into work, or neglected altogether. This feeling was linked to superficial engagement with the process and holding resentments that exacerbate contextual obstacles rather than break them down. While these skills can be developed in facilitator practice, more understanding and self-awareness is needed in times when facilitators find it difficult to utilise these skills and fall into traps of being punitive, neglectful or dehumanising. By formally integrating more reflective practice into the facilitators working role and through supervision, this awareness may be achieved.

8.4.1 Maintaining a vocational and personable approach

The need to demonstrate the interpersonal qualities of being non-judgemental, genuine, relaxed, open, empathic and with appropriate humour is consistent with previous research both within the field of sexual offending (Beech & Fordham, 1997; Kear-Colwell & Pollack, 1997; Beech & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005) and wider psychology (Rogers, 1957). This also extends to the nature of facilitator's interactions with one another as professionals, as having a personal, 'close knit' team was considered important to creating a relaxed but contained interpersonal climate, which seems to model a group norm (Yalom & Rand, 1966) for group interactions. However, the ability to adapt these qualities to individual needs is important as it was acknowledged that group members have different ways of relating and coping. As a client group that often has difficult attachment experiences (Ward, Hudson, Marshall & Sigert, 1995), it seems beneficial to recognise that people have default relational patterns and so, may not be responsive to a 'one size fits all' interpersonal approach. Therefore a genuineness and ability to connect to different individuals appears important, particularly as it seems to become more difficult when a group member exhibits challenging behaviour. Responsiveness is further necessary in facilitators judging the tone of different elements of work within the group process, suggesting that facilitators would benefit from developing their awareness of how they negotiate this balance of personable and boundaried qualities. Such development may be supported through integrating more reflective practice into their working process to help prevent traps of attributing difficult dynamics to a group member alone, or to unknowingly recreate unhelpful attachment dynamics that may increase group member feelings of shame or hostility and reduce treatment impact. A Counselling Psychology presence in these organisational developments may further support this development.

8.4.2 Maintaining the therapeutic frame

The importance of therapeutic boundaries is highlighted through this research in the group members' own conscious acknowledgement of a need for this frame in the group process. This highlights the need for a clear, transparent contract for group members, which is appropriately enforced through the facilitators' personable interpersonal style. A respectful, collaborative and discussion based approach to managing boundaries is key to this balance, and a need to use reflective practice to effectively negotiate these boundaries in the process. Winnicott (1962) reflected that commonly those who have committed offences are seeking boundaries and an authority figure as they are unconsciously looking for what they have been deprived of in their early relationships. As many people who have committed a sexual offence have experienced difficult or traumatic life events (Marshall & Marshall, 2000), boundary development may have been disrupted (Prentky, Knight, Sims-Knight, Straus, Rokous & Cerce, 1989), which is seen as integral to building positive identity and healthy expressions of intimacy (Evans, 1988). This seems pertinent to this client group as difficulties forming emotionally intimate relationships and feelings of inadequacy are common dynamic risk factors (SARN; Thornton, 2002). This also appears to bear significance to the violation of boundaries in sexual offending behaviour, which requires the perpetrator to overcome, both, their own and their victim's emotional, physical and sexual inhibitors (Finkelhor, 1984). Creating a clear therapeutic frame therefore appears to have an important role in modelling and promoting the development of appropriate boundaries vital to personal wellbeing, mature development, intimacy skills and sexually appropriate behaviour. This also offers support for the idea that confrontational approaches are harmful to the change process as they are intrusive and, in turn, replicate this theme of boundary crossing (Evans, 1988). Thus, there is apparently real value, from the participant perspective, of facilitators skilfully applying a fluid and responsive balance, that incorporates clear directions and formal expectations alongside personable, interpersonal relatedness as appropriate to a given situation.

8.5 Attunement and formulation skills

A professional who lacks understanding of what might be prompting an individual's behaviour (e.g. a response to shame) could run the risk of being pulled into relational traps that lead to a loss of the aforementioned balance, which can dehumanise, control and threaten the group member's experience of emotional safety (e.g. by responding passively or punitively). There is therefore argument for the development of modest formulation skills and appropriate awareness of transference and countertransference issues to allow professionals to better

understand group member behaviour and develop appropriate responses to manage these challenges. Integrating these skills into training, supervision, reflective practice and session planning with co-facilitators may help facilitators develop a more active awareness of group behaviour and help prevent them unknowingly fall into unhelpful relational patterns. This has the potential to help facilitators prepare for certain behaviour to appropriately manage and empathise with both the individuals circumstances and their own personal and professional responses.

This supports the idea that attunement and predictability facilitate responsiveness to the individual and group process (Baim & Morrison, 2011). Working in a way that is sensitive to individual attachment styles is thought to encourage an interpersonal approach that supports meta-cognition, reflective function and a broader range of coping strategies to meet life's challenges (Crittenden, 1997). This is consistent with the findings of this research that suggest balanced and responsive interpersonal qualities promote mature functioning. Baim and Morrison's (2011) attachment-based assessment and intervention with adults who pose a risk of harmful sexual behaviour offers pragmatic suggestions of adapting practice, based on the understanding of individual attachment patterns. This thesis would add that attunement is required both in relation to individual attachments but also to its broader influence on the individuals response to context (e.g. social pressures and views of sexual offending). The suggestion that clients hold learnt interpersonal patterns of how to interact based on previous social experience and attachments (Safran, 1998) has particular significance when considering that the organisational set-up of the programmes may mirror attachment experiences based on other institutional settings (e.g. care homes where parental bonds are inconsistent and often unexpectedly cut). An awareness of these transference issues could help increase understanding of client behaviour and enable facilitators to respond more effectively, particularly when considering the counter-transference issues that may arise from misunderstanding these issues (e.g. difficulty demonstrating empathy, interpersonal conflict), which creates obstacles to demonstrating positive therapeutic characteristics (Day, 1999; Friedrich & Leiper, 2006). This therefore offers scope to understand the individual rather than solely categorise people's needs, which would indirectly reinforce dehumanising themes of labelling. Facilitators should also be recognised as socially embedded individuals working with this difficult nature of offending behaviour. Indeed, it has been found that practitioners can experience significant negative and difficult feelings in response to the work (Mitchell & Milikian, 1995). This includes a tendency to feel controlled and deceived, which can impact on

their ability to create and maintain the therapeutic relationship, which is at the heart of the humanising experience. Integrating elements of formulation into the assessment and treatment process to support facilitators in understanding the individual and their behaviour within the group may support this practice. While sexual offending treatment programmes take a more structured approach to shape the work and create safety, a reflexive and psychologically informed ethos offers an opportunity to support this practice so it does not become inflexible, rigid and controlling. Counselling Psychology can contribute to this in practice, research and service development.

8.6 The relevance of the subjective change process to risk of reoffending

This research suggests effective ways of engaging the group members and encouraging effective group functioning to prompt movement and change. While there were a number of constructs identified that appear both helpful for the individual and congruent to managing risk dynamics (e.g. self worth; Thornton, 2002), there were a number with questionable evidenced links to recidivism. If, indeed, the facilitators are 'steering the ship' and the participants are 'doing the pedalling', could we be heading them in the wrong direction? As the subjective change cited by group members was generally congruent with the programme agenda (e.g. responsibility for offending through challenging excuses for the behaviour and practising social skills), it emphasises the influence of these institutional messages on the group members, which calls to question how far these relate to building a better future and addressing risk of re-offending.

The programmes were written nearly twenty years ago and are no longer well supported by contemporary theory and evidence. Although our understanding has evolved, the manual has generally remained the same. In response to the high prevalence of attachment difficulties and trauma in group-member histories, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has recently reported on using developments in bio-psycho-social approaches to develop sexual offending programmes (Carter, 2015). As a consequence, it has been argued that there is a need for programmes that are sensitive to the neurobiology of people who have committed a sexual offence (Creedon, 2009) to impact on developmental intimacy skills and self-regulation relevant to recidivism rates (Carter, 2015; Thornton, 2002). An increasing amount of studies are now contending the original assumptions that group members are required to take full responsibility for their behaviour to lower their risk of reoffending (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005). In contrast, new research signals that rather than being a risk issue to overcome, denial may in fact be a protective factor for group members to preserve a healthy sense of self (Blagdon,

Winder, Gregson & Thorne, 2014; Craissati, 2015). Deconstructing offending behaviour appears to provide limited benefits for the group members, and can create shame-based defences to understanding the function of their offending and the needs it may be filling. Furthermore, research suggests that people who have committed a sexual offence do not necessarily lack empathy skills or morality but they are suppressed when the needs being met by offending are stronger (Marshall, 1996). Sexual offending may be better understood as compensatory in nature, suggesting it may be more effectively managed through fulfilling life needs appropriately (Hudson & Ward, 2010). If sexual offending can broadly be understood as an attachment-based intimacy problem, there appear significant merits to drawing attention to the relational quality of the therapeutic process as this appears to have the potential to influence treatment progress. Therefore, while this research highlights interpersonal processes to facilitate change, it also emphasises the need for clarity about implicit formulations and assumptions about people who have offended sexually and how they inform what the programmes aim to achieve. While we may develop a better interpersonal climate to guide group members towards this change, it may prove unhelpful if we do not consider what is meaningful for them as individuals. The implications of this will be discussed in the section below.

8.7 Organisational implications

8.7.1 Professional identity of the facilitators and programme

A key question raised through the research process relates to the identity of sexual offending programmes and practitioners. As Ward (2010) reflected, is our work punishment or therapy? Are our intentions psycho-educational, coaching or therapy? This question is in need of some scrutiny as it is central to understanding and guiding professional practice in this area. While an understanding of facilitative processes may be helpful, it may be limited by a lack of engagement in clarifying what the aims of the intervention are. This may be a further area supported by the Counselling Psychology profession, which places uniqueness of identity at the heart of its existence (Woolfe, Strawbridge, Douglas & Dryden, 2010). Perhaps sexual offending treatment units need to develop more confidence in owning an identity, which can be sensitive to the unique contextual influences of this field with a clearer view of what equates to meaningful change. This could extend to negotiating the differences between prison and community based interventions, as both may have different requirements to achieving an enabling grounding. While professionals are faced with the dilemma of offering an intervention

to support the perpetrator while protecting the public, there is growing evidence to suggest that these two priorities may not be inharmonious. It appears that supporting the individual to develop and meet their needs in a positive and future-focussed way is likely to reduce the likelihood of offending, which is beneficial for both client and public wellbeing (Ward, Mann & Gannon, 2007).

However, the theme of balance may be relevant to this development of programme identity. The development of future programmes appears to barely acknowledge the offence and the focus falls on addressing broader needs (Good Lives Model; Ward, Mann & Gannon, 2007). This seems to recognise sexual offending as an attachment based and developmental problem. While this may be an effective approach, in the spirit of balance one wonders whether there is the potential for this to go to the opposite extreme. While a confrontational approach is clearly unhelpful, the role of accountability and challenge can be helpful. Although denial may be regarded as a protective factor for some, one wonders whether it is too simplistic to generalise and it may be more prudent to understand the function of denial for the individual. Indeed, if we completely move away from discussing the offence is there the potential to collude with secrecy and avoidance, and inadvertently reinforce people's shame and avoidant coping? Are we ignoring that, for some, the process of accepting their conviction and offence contributes to mature development and improved self-regulation? While it is suggested that this has little relevance to reconviction rates, theoretically, this may enhance individuals inner peace, spirituality and self-management, which are needs identified by the Good Lives model (Ward & Brown, 2004).

With regard to facilitator identity, the research analysis has highlighted scope for certain process issues to be helpfully integrated into the work and signifies relevance to attrition levels. However, although highly trained practitioners, facilitators are not regarded therapists or psychologists. Current assessment tools do not specifically require facilitators to develop formulations about their clients yet research is pointing to the benefits of developing this understanding. This presents a dilemma, as it appears that politically it is not deemed appropriate to consider this intervention a form of therapy as this has wider implications for training and resources. Therefore, to utilise the research in a way that will inform practice helpfully requires some thought to consider what may be realistic within this professional context. In line with the theme of this research, perhaps there is a balance to be found where this field can develop and be confident in its own identity, which involves finding a 'good

enough' interpersonal approach to support group members in their development on the programme. This would undoubtedly be a fluid and on-going process, requiring the incorporation of basic process issues into the culture and training of sexual offending programmes. This may be facilitated by developing modest formulation skills to help professionals better understand the individual and their path to offending. Providing more consultancy with psychologists could integrate these skills in treatment management supervision sessions and incorporate more reflexive practice in the facilitators working role. Considering the rich interest in enhancing practice in this field, there is scope for these developments to be integrated into both national awareness and team functioning.

8.7.2 What is realistic to expect of facilitators?

As this research highlights, there are challenges to the facilitators offering a humanised, empowered and safe grounding. As socially embedded individuals, facilitators are not impervious to the attitudes and beliefs that contribute to group member stigmatisation. However, as part of their job, they are required to manage difficult group dynamics, individual issues and contain their own feelings in relation to the process and content of the work. On a daily basis, facilitators are exposed to the details of abuse, which they are expected to contain and hold (Moulden & Firestone, 2007). Potentially, the more these dynamics permeate the facilitator, the more difficult it may be to retain best practice and balance in the work. However, how much space and resources do they have to process these issues and how much can we expect them to open themselves up to working with transference and countertransference in the current context? As observed by Clarke (2011), there is a very real discussion to be had about how much the facilitators are expected to tolerate, and how to engage in an active process of developing resilience. However, as discussed, developing the skills to become attuned to relational dynamics may enable facilitators to manage obstacles to the therapeutic environment and engage in processes relevant to group member development (McCluskey, 2002). The neglect of exploring these dynamics may miss an opportunity to maximise the effectiveness of the programmes and certain relational issues may continue to provide obstacles to engagement for some people. Being conscious of these processes may offer an opportunity for professionals to process and manage the impact of the work appropriately rather than potentially deny its existence. Hence, the value of a simple yet thorough model to bring these processes and practice issues into active awareness. This raises the importance of facilitators having space to engage with these dynamics, which highlights a

need to consider the role of facilitators' own personal therapy or a more active space in supervision to support these professionals.

8.8 Limitations & future research

As this research has embraced a realist social constructivist approach to the research, it represents one interpretation of the data yet is open to this construct having relevance to a wider application beyond the small participant sample. The intersubjective process between the participant's articulated experience and the researcher's efforts to extract and construct meaning from these accounts is rightly considered both a responsibility and privilege, which has implications for the knowledge it can offer (Willig, 2012). The results are tentative based on the limited number of participants in an abbreviated version of grounded theory. This was not aspiring to reach a point of saturation, and the findings, although representative of the data, were not aiming to be generalizable. However, it offers constructs that may represent 'tendencies' in this professional field (Elder-Vass, 2012). In the spirit of different methodological approaches offering new knowledge, there may be benefit from further support and refinement of these constructs to reflect on their relevance to a wider demographic and potentially be compared to other constructs. By utilising a variety of methods, the implications of this research model may be considered in relation to different contexts from multiple perspectives, for example, through focus groups, case studies, facilitator perspectives and triangulation (Cohen & Manion, 2000). It can also be argued that quantitative methods may offer an opportunity to administer a wider scale evaluation of these research findings to explore the breadth of these opinions and potentially highlight conflicting experiences. There is an increased interest in using mixed methodologies with the aim to unite different philosophical positions as means of best answering research questions (Duncan & Nicol, 2004).

In light of the broadness of the current research, scope to explore each component of the research model in more detail exists. Exploring context, group interactions, the facilitator role, group functioning and experience of subjective change as separate areas of enquiry may allow for a fuller understanding of each area. For example, there appears a need for further research to observe the impact of contextual differences between community and prison interventions on professional practice to explore how these influences may be effectively managed or utilised. The current study also offered limited scope to explore the individual's experience of subjective change with much sophistication. There is therefore need for research to focus on a wider picture to gauge subjective perspectives on risk and wellbeing. There is also scope for the

core dimension of this research (moving from a dehumanised, controlling and unsafe state, to one that is humanised, empowered and safe) to be more specifically studied in relation to both group member and facilitator experience and perspective of the programme process.

As the individual attachment styles of group members appear to influence their response to the relational dynamics of the programme, there is scope to have a more focussed study of how these may influence the group members' experience and gains. It may also be interesting to relate these findings to current theoretical knowledge to reflect on the compatibility of certain theoretical models to potentially enhance practice (e.g. limited reparenting; Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2003). It can be noted that this research does not take into account group members who feature on the psychopathy scale. From the existing research, it is indicated that people with psychopathic traits can be understood as having complex treatment needs with a challenging interpersonal and emotional style, which emphasises the importance of an effective working alliance to facilitate engagement (Oliver & Wong, 2006). The current research highlights processes that therefore may be suitable as there is an emphasis on responsive interpersonal interactions and a supportive interpersonal climate. However, this warrants further exploration.

The heterogeneity of this study's participant sample lacked diversity. Although the participant demographic (White British; limited age range) was considered a fair reflection of the Thames Valley catchment, it is not a fair representation of heritage, culture and age nationally. This therefore highlights a need for research with a wider range of diversity. Furthermore, this research only drew from experiences of men who had completed the programme. There is argument that more needs to be understood about those that are unable to engage and who discontinue the programme. These findings indicate that facilitators are less effective at managing responses to more challenging behaviour and people who deny their offence, some of which potentially have a high risk of reconviction. Therefore there is need for future research to consider the group members who 'slip the net' as it is indicated that those who drop off the programme are more likely to reoffend than those that never started it (Hanson et al, 2002).

9. CONCLUSION

This research reflects on the power of utilising interpersonal processes to create a humanising, empowering and safe grounding to facilitate engagement and effective group functioning on sexual offending group work programmes. Creating a space where facilitators and group members can collectively connect as human beings in the context of a society that demonises sexual offending and within an institution that is responsible for criminal enforcement and public protection was shown to be significant. Integrating Counselling Psychology principles with these findings offers an opportunity to develop balance, which respects subjectivity, the therapeutic alliance and appropriate boundaries as a foundation to effective practice. It draws attention to the need for sexual offending interventions to reflect on their professional identity to establish how the work aims to support both client wellbeing and public safety, along with discussion regarding what may be reasonable expectations in engaging more challenging group members who may be in need of support. This offers a tentative model for facilitators, managers and wider organisations to reflect on their practice and negotiate the complex dynamics of this work.

10. REFLEXIVE STATEMENT (PART 2)

When I started this study, I valued my Counselling Psychology identity over that of my facilitator identity. I was dismayed at the manual format of the sexual offending intervention and the neglect of process issues in the work. However, as the research has evolved I have come to respect each field of practice. My research indicates that the programme and facilitators are generally well regarded by clients' and are reported to support subjective benefits, which suggests that professionals are managing to negotiate this complex professional terrain with some success. While a manual-based intervention can be limiting and in conflict with Counselling Psychology values of catering for the individual, when used with some flexibility there are perhaps some benefits to having a frame that both facilitators and group members can utilise to give the work some shape, containment and safety. Such a framework may be particularly important when considering the identity of facilitators as different from therapists or psychologists. Nonetheless, using a Counselling Psychology perspective has provided a grounding to review practice and pluralistically consider the role of interpersonal processes within this context to highlight areas in need of change. I have found that sensitively integrating these values has enriched and supported this process, as they have largely been congruent with the client's voice. The interplay between the different sides of my professions has therefore been an on-going negotiation through the research process as both have influenced and informed one another. This has highlighted the importance from a Counselling Psychology perspective to connect with the human being, while acknowledging through experience in sexual offending treatment that a person's likelihood of reoffending is not a personality contest. This emphasises the importance of understanding the individual rather than merely 'getting on' as people. It has also highlighted the important balance between robust assessments that facilitate the process rather than control or punish out of anxiety about 'risk'.

Returning to the critical incident in the first part of my reflexive statement, this research offers some understanding of this professional experience of losing balance in my interpersonal approach. When effective practice can be understood as the ability to negotiate a responsive interpersonal style, my passive reaction to this group member gives a live example of how this approach can be lost in response to challenging group dynamics. On reflection, I recognise that I found it difficult to attune to him as an individual and develop a formulation of his behaviour. This created obstacles to the therapeutic relationship as I found there was little I could relate or empathise with. I now understand my withdrawal as a countertransference reaction to his

apparent lack of shame about his offending behaviour. In light of this research, it appears that as a socially embedded individual I found myself in a moral struggle in response to my social and personal expectation for him to show remorse for his actions. While I believe my views of sexual offending are markedly different to societies, I am still sensitive to the impact of this behaviour on victims. Furthermore, working within the Criminal Justice System with an expectation to help people address their risk of offending, I was faced with having to tolerate behaviour that was in conflict with programme and institutional agendas to accept responsibility and demonstrate motivation for change. As this group member did not conform to these expectations I had the dilemma of managing these dynamics without becoming punitive. When combined with the personal distress triggered by how this group member discussed his offending, my response appeared to be protective of my personal wellbeing while preventing my judgements becoming apparent to the client. I also wonder whether my withdrawal may have unconsciously been the desired response from the group member. It is possible that prompting shock in others may have had a role in keeping distance between him and others on the group, or perhaps there was something he gained (e.g. feelings of power) from presenting in this way. Had I a better understanding of him as an individual, I may be in a better position to formulate an answer to these reflections. This has therefore emphasised the importance of attunement, recognising countertransference reactions and developing better formulations of group member's in my practice. This has felt fundamental to facilitating better relatedness and subsequently a more helpful response to difficult interpersonal dynamics. It has also highlighted for me, the value of integrating these process issues into supervision for the future development of both practitioners and the wider unit.

Despite the tensions of both researching and working in the same field, it has meant that I have kept in close contact to the emerging research in this area. I have reflected on my own professional practice with this client group and found myself adapting my approach in an attempt to take on board the feedback from participants. It has led me to reflect on the impact of context in my practice along with the reality that finding balance and responsiveness is an active process, which requires regular reflecting, consulting, supervision and peer support. Inevitably, no person will find the perfect balance, and this perhaps highlights the role of being 'good enough', and the value of recovery and reparation of the therapeutic alliance when this balance inevitably gets lost (Bordin, 1979).

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Appendix A – Reflective diary excerpt

15/11/2014

Situation - Model building

1) I've realised that I've been trying to organise the research categories and components in a way that makes it neat and linear. This has meant that I have been inclined to present the categories in a specific order, and view participants' subjective change as an end product rather than an active, on-going dynamic process within the group. I think this is because the data still feels quite overwhelming, and finding a straightforward explanation feels less anxiety provoking and easier to process at the moment. The temptation is to get anything on paper and skip corners. I've noticed that this, at times, has led to imposing assumptions on the data (e.g. a component called 'genuine investment', which was only relevant to one participant).

Action step: I think I need to manage these anxieties, and allow myself more time to process the information to start pulling out more nuance. Maybe I need to step back to give myself more flexibility to better reflect multiple relational processes. This has highlighted the importance of revisiting the raw data and my audit to ensure my assertions are grounded in the data, rather than my own views of practice.

2) I've also realised that I was trying to solely present ideal practice rather than capture the participants account which suggests more fluidity in the quality of these relational qualities dependent of a number of influences (e.g. difficult group members behaviour, power dynamics). This again has at times slipped into a 'how to do good practice' way of thinking, which is unrealistic and unhelpful in capturing the participants' varied experiences of the process. I wonder whether I'm trying to present the facilitators in a good light and keep a focus on what works well, where it is probably more beneficial to consider where practice at times falls down and becomes less helpful as it will open up more implications for improving practice. I think I'm also finding it quite overwhelming considering how these dynamic processes can be presented in a way that is digestible. I feel like I have a lot of information I want to share, and there is a trap of getting caught up in the lower level components rather than work from the higher order categories.

Action step: I need to tolerate this uncertainty and be wary of falling in a trap of rushing. I've been steaming ahead and need to slow down, connect with my data and make it watertight. I will spend time cross-referencing the data to the process to keep the participant's voice at the forefront of my decisions in developing this model.

3) I think I've wasted a bit of time trying to present the specific individual's experience of these processes in the model. Every single person has been different and their life experience, attachment style, problem solving styles etc are hugely varied. While this clearly has a bearing on what they take from the programme and how they react to the process, I have realised that a better focus is on thinking about how the facilitators recognise and tune into these differences so they don't assume a 'one size fits all'.

Action step: I can't expect myself to tailor a model to each participant. I can, however, capture more shared experiences and reflect on how the facilitators manage these individual differences within the wider group.

Appendix B – Information sheet

Understanding the role of interpersonal processes between group members and facilitators on sexual offending group work programme

The Principal Investigator

Kimberly Barker

Email: kjb0061@londonmet.ac.uk

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this research study. This study is being conducted as part-fulfilment of my Counselling Psychology doctorate at London Metropolitan University.

Project description

You are being asked to take part voluntarily in a research project to explore how interactions between you and the group facilitators have influenced your experience of the sexual offending treatment programme. This will involve attending a one to one semi-structured interview to discuss your experience of the facilitators in the group and their role in what you may/or may not have gained from the programme.

The research procedure

The interview will be audio recorded and then written up for the researcher to analyse. The aim is to identify what factors were felt helpful or unhelpful to your treatment process. This will be used to improve awareness of how to work effectively with group members so they can better benefit from attending the treatment programme.

Confidentiality

Should you wish to participate, all the information you provide will remain completely confidential, and you will be protected from any infringement of privacy. The only exception to this would be if there were concerns regarding harm to yourself or others (e.g. disclosing intentions to self harm, or harm others). All interview data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet that only the researcher will have access to. The information will not be shared with anyone else, including your probation officer and the sexual offending treatment unit. The interview will be transcribed and the data collected will be made anonymous by changing your name and identifying information (e.g. group number, offence, facilitator names). This anonymity will be kept throughout the research process and in the final report and in any further documentation (e.g. research articles). Extracts of the anonymous interview transcriptions will be accessed by the researcher's supervisor and university examiners for the research report to be marked. Brief quotes from interview will be used but these will be fully anonymised. The audio recordings will be erased once transcribed and the electronic transcripts will be kept for 3 years, as publication of the research is a possibility. A copy of the final research project will be made available to you at your request and you will be informed should this research be published.

Location

The interview will take place at a Probation Office of your choice.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time prior to the point of data analysis. Participation will have no impact on your probation conditions or record and no individual results will be generated from your involvement. If you have any questions you can talk to me at any stage of the research process. There will also be a debriefing following the interview where you will have an opportunity to ask any further questions. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this information sheet for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the study's supervisor, Dr Philip Hayton, School of Psychology, London Metropolitan University, Tower Building, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB. Telephone: 020 7133 2622. Email: p.hayton@londonmet.ac.uk.

Appendix C – Registration of interest

The role of interpersonal processes in treatment experience on Sexual Offending Group Work Programmes

Having read the information sheet outlining the details of this research, please tick an option below:

- ☐ **I am interested** in participating in the research and I am happy for the researcher to contact me to arrange an interview.

Contact number _____

- ☐ **I am not sure** at present whether I would like to participate in the research but I am happy for the researcher to contact me to discuss further.

Contact number _____

- ☐ **I am not interested** in participating in the research and would not like to be contacted by the researcher

Print name

Signature

Date

Appendix D – Interview schedule (1st round)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I've invited you to talk to me because I'm interested in your opinion of how the facilitators worked with you and their role in your experience of the programme. Hopefully this will help build awareness of what can be helpful or unhelpful in how facilitators work with group members. All the information will be kept completely anonymous, which I hope will enable you to be as open and honest about your experience as possible. The interview should take around an hour.

PART A – The facilitators (10-15 mins)

1. What was your first impression of the facilitators?

- *How did they come across? Did this change?*
- *How would you describe their approach and qualities?*
- *What were the differences?*
- *Did you find yourself preferring different ones at different times? Why do you think this was?*
- *How did these styles affect your programme experience/programme outcome?*

3. How would you describe the way the facilitators interacted with one another?

- *What things do you think worked well and what things didn't work well?*
- *How did you decide whether these things were effective or ineffective for you personally?*
- *How did this differ between different facilitators?*
- *What impact did the facilitators' relationship have on your experience of the programme?*

PART B – The facilitator and the individual (20/25 mins)

1. How would you describe your relationship with the facilitators in your group?

- *How did you get on with each facilitator and how did they get on with you?*
- *Were there any difficulties/challenges in how you got on?*
- *What was the difference in your relationship with each facilitator?*
- *What do you feel influenced these differences?*

2. What was it about this relationship, in your view, that was helpful/unhelpful in general?

- *Why do you think these qualities are important to you in how people interact with you?*
- *How did they affect you and your learning?*
- *How did they affect you as a person?*
- *How did this affect your programme experience?*

PART C – The facilitator and the group (20/25 mins)

1. How would you say the facilitators interacted with the group?

- *How did people get on/work together in the group and to what extent did the facilitators influence this?*
- *How, if at all, did these group interactions affect your experience?*
- *What were the differences between the facilitators in how they interacted with the group? Did this make any difference to you?*
- *What are your preferences in how a group is managed? Why?*

2. Can you give me an example of when you felt the facilitators managed something well?

- *What made this effective for you?*
- *Why might this be important to you?*
- *What impact did this have on you and your programme experience?*

3. Can you give me an example of when you felt the facilitators could have managed something better?

- *What was ineffective about this in your opinion?*
- *Why might this be important to you?*
- *What impact did this have on you and your programme experience?*

4. How able did you feel to participate in the group?

- *Can you describe how the facilitators affected your level of participation?*
- *Could they have done anything that would have made you want to engage more fully?*
- *Why do you think these work for you as an individual?*
- *How did this affect what you could take from the experience?*

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- 1. What do you feel you have gained from attending the programme and to what extent did the interactions between you and the facilitators contribute to this?**
- 2. Are there any final things you would like to add about your experience of the facilitators on your programme?**

Appendix E – Interview schedule (2nd round)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I've invited you to talk to me because I'm interested in your opinion of how the facilitators worked with you and their role in your experience of the programme. Hopefully this will help build awareness of what can be helpful or unhelpful in how facilitators work with group members. All the information will be kept completely anonymous, which I hope will enable you to be as open and honest about your experience as possible. The interview should take around an hour.

A) Barriers to engagement and change

- 1) Before you started, how did you feel about going on the programme?
 - *What, if anything, were you hoping to achieve from going on the programme?*
 - *What, if any, concerns or reservations did you have about attending?*
- 2) In general, how motivated do you think you were to do the programme?
 - *Why do you think this was?*
- 3) What, if anything, made it difficult to participate in the group?
- 4) How did you feel about yourself before attending the programme?
 - *What do you think made you feel this way?*
- 5) What role, if any, did the facilitators have in getting you involved in the sessions or not.

B) The atmosphere

- 1) How would you describe the atmosphere in the group?
 - *Did this change at different points? What did you make of this?*
 - *How, if at all, did this affect your experience of the programme?*
- 2) How do you think this atmosphere was created?
 - *Is there anything you particularly liked or would have wanted to be different?*
 - *What, if any, role did this have in what you took from the programme?*

C) The facilitators

- 1) How would you describe the facilitator's qualities?
 - *What did you like or dislike?*
- 2) How important was it to you that the facilitators found a balance in their approach (e.g. serious but relaxed)?
 - *Why?*

- *What impact (would it) did it have on you?*
- 3) How, if at all, did the facilitators maintain ground rules/boundaries?
 - *What was your experience of this?*
- 4) How motivating would you described the facilitators?
 - *How do you think they did this?*
 - *What, if any, impact did this have on you?*
- 5) Could you give an example of a time the facilitators may not have managed something as well?
 - *Was there anything the facilitators did to repair this?*
 - *Was this helpful? Why?*
 - *What would you have found helpful in this situation?*

D) Relationships

- 1) How would described the facilitators relationship with each other?
 - *What, if anything, did you like or dislike about this?*
 - *How, if at all, did this affect how you felt about being in the group?*
- 2) How would you describe your relationship with the facilitators?
 - *Did this vary with different facilitators? Why?*
 - *How did these compare to other people you've met in the criminal justice system? What is your opinion of this?*
- 3) How would you describe your relationship with other group members?
 - *Were there people you preferred, was there anyone you found it difficult to get on with? What impact did this have on you, if any?*
- 4) How well would you say the facilitators managed the group dynamics?
 - *How did this affect your experience?*
 - *Is there anything they could have done differently?*
- 5) How, if at all, did getting on with people, have a bearing on what you took from the programme?

E) The group

- 1) How, if at all, were group members contributions and interactions used in the group work?
 - *How helpful or unhelpful was this in your opinion?*
 - *Was there anything in particular you took from this?*

- 2) To what extent do you feel you could take on board the perspectives and opinions of others in the group?

- *Did you notice your perspective on anything changing?*

- *If so, why do you think this was?*

F) Change

- 1) What would you describe as your main gains from the programme?
- 2) How, if at all, did the facilitators and other group members contribute to these?
- 3) Is there anything you feel the programme didn't help you achieve?
- 4) What, if anything, could the facilitators have done to help you get more from the programme?

- 5) How did you feel about yourself when you finished the programme?

- *Was this different to how you felt about yourself when you started?*

- *If yes - what, if anything, do you think contributed to that change on the programme?*

Appendix F – Informed consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Understanding the role of interpersonal processes between group members and facilitators on sexual offending group work programme

I have read the information sheet and have been given a copy to keep. ☐

I understand the purpose of this study and its procedures. ☐

I have been given the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about his research project and my involvement in it. ☐

I understand that there will be a de-briefing in which I will have the opportunity to ask any further questions about this study. ☐

I understand that all the data collected for this study is strictly confidential and I will not be identifiable in any report of this study, including any publication in academic journals. ☐

I understand that brief quotes from interviews will be used and these will be fully anonymised. ☐

I understand that my participation will have no impact on my probation conditions or record. ☐

I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time prior to the point of data analysis. ☐

I understand that if I withdraw prior to the point of data analysis the interview transcript and audio recordings will be destroyed. ☐

I understand If the analysis process has started, my anonymous data will be used in the write-up of the study and may be used for further analysis. ☐

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's statement

I have informed the above named participant of the nature and purpose of this study and have sought to answer their questions to the best of my ability. I have read, understood and agree to abide by the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines for conducting research with human participants.

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)
KIMBERLY BARKER

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix G – Demographics sheet

Age:

Ethnicity:

Previous programmes completed:

Which ones:

Date finished TV-SOGP:

Length of time on this programme:

Have you ever dropped out off this programme before?

Was there a change of facilitators during the course of the group?

No. of facilitators you worked with on the programme in total:

General experience of the programme:

Please rate out of 10 how helpful you found the programme:

(1 = not at all helpful, 10= very helpful)

Please rate out of 10 how effective you found the facilitators:

(1 = not all effective, 10 = very effective)

Facilitator demographics

Facilitator	Age (approx.)	Gender	Ethnicity
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Appendix H – Debriefing form

Understanding the role of interpersonal processes between group members and facilitators on sexual offending group work programme

This study is exploring the role of interpersonal processes in treatment experience on Sexual Offending Group Work Programmes. It is interested in investigating how interactions between the group facilitators and the group members influence the individuals subjective change process. It is hoped that this research can be used to build a better understanding of effective ways of working with people who engage on sexual offending treatment programmes.

If you experience any enduring distress as a result of taking part in this research, consistent with the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles & Guidelines (2011), it is suggested that you consider seeking support or information from an appropriate source.

Possible sources of support might include:

- Your GP
- Your social network
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy: www.bacp.co.uk
- The British Psychological Society: www.bps.org.uk/psychology-public/find-psychologist/find-psychologist

If you have any questions or comments about any aspect of the **interview or research** or would like to request a copy of the findings, please don't hesitate to me on the contact details below.

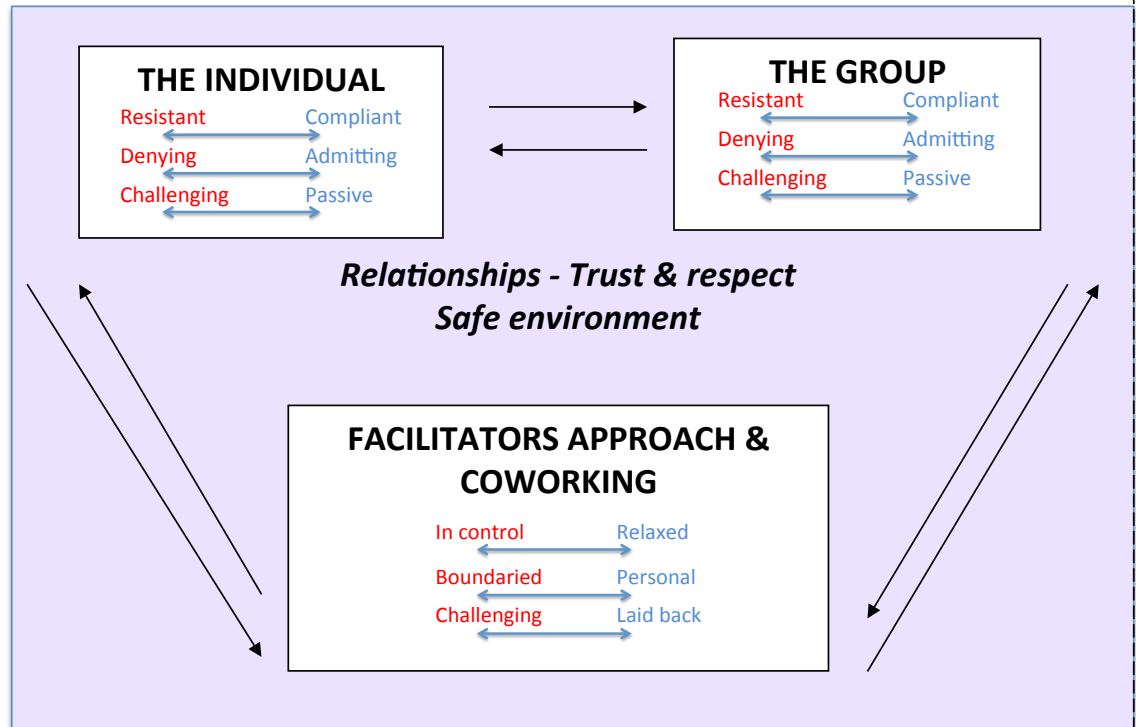
- Kimberly Barker kjb0061@londonmet.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this study.

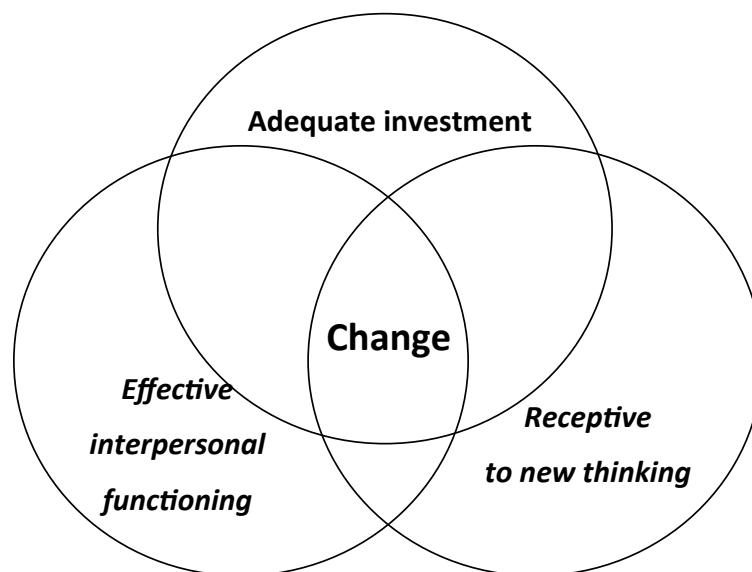
Appendix I – Initial theoretical model

PHASE 1: UNDERSTANDING CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES

PHASE 2: THE DYNAMICS AFFECTING ENGAGEMENT



PHASE 3: THE PROCESSES AFFECTING CHANGE



Appendix J – Memo excerpt

Prison versus community setting & power games

There is a clear distinction between prison and community being observed. The latter is safer and more non-judgemental = more honest/open. Is there something about the differences in institutions? Facilitators are part of the institution, is it more difficult to separate selves from being agents of control?

It seems that facilitators at times can mirror group member antagonism and become punitive – this was linked to being less skilled (e.g. took a GM off and made him do the programme again). In contrast facilitators were very supportive when they understood the source of the resistance (e.g. a traveller, struggling with the fact his offence was against a man – shame in his community). Good facilitators compared to chess players, thinking 2-3 moves ahead.

Facilitators being punitive annoyed the group but also seemed to bond the group. However, this was in the face of adversity, so looks as though they bonded to get through it rather than benefit from it. Is there more call to bond if they have a common threat/enemy? Did it become more 'us and them' or did they realise they had to rely on themselves because that was the only thing that was stable anymore. To unite means, the resistant GM couldn't continue to isolate himself from the other GMs because he needed them for security as much as anything else, and building this relationship meant he was open to what they were going to say at least (even if not the Fs). Also because the F who made the decision to take the GM off the group was a one off, they could project the wrongdoing on to her personally so it didn't have to mar the relationships with other facilitators. He couldn't remember the second facilitator on that day – to preserve that relationship? The other F becomes the 'bad' split off from the rest to protect the process?

Also was the disruptive GM having more of an impact than anyone realised? In childhood, the less the parent presence, the most siblings potentially have to club together to survive?

It makes me think about reciprocal roles of control. Clients are powerless, facilitators are powerful... is there a trap of playing power games.

One-to-one support

One-to-one counselling works well in parallel to the group – space to process the work – why do we institutionally resist this, when they can work in harmony? Is it a resource issue. The most helpful thing to this participant was his counsellor alongside the programme.

The importance of the relationship

Relationships appear to allow group members to give facilitators more leeway and understand/respect their personal boundaries and style. The most important thing is knowing where they stand. Need relationship before you can be particularly challenging.

Appendix K – Data audit example

LINE NUMBERS	RAW DATA	INITIAL CODE	SUBCATEGORY	CATEGORY	HIGHER ORDER CATEGORY
A1191-1193	'I think on that course there were properly... five or six different offences, you know, categories'	Group members being viewed/viewing themselves as 'categories'	101. The sexual offending label creates shameful stigma that gives the message that people can't change because it is regarded as inescapable/a life conviction.	201. The barrier of the dehumanising and inescapable 'sex offender' label, gives the message that people can't change and feels like a life conviction because it's difficult to reintegrate into society, perceived as the worst kind of offending, which creates shame, fear and judgements that inhibit openness	301. Social and institutional influences can dehumanise and create power dynamics that strongly inhibit openness and engagement
D1254-1255	'if it's, you go to prison at all, you're now a sex offender for life and there's no getting away from it'	The label is worse if you've been to prison			
D1255-1259	'That will follow you for the rest of your life as a legal requirement so some of those, I'm not in that boat but, I've got a date when I come off the sex offender register but some people will be on the sex offender register for life so, basically it's a life sentence'.	Being on the sex offender register is linked to the label feeling inescapable			
D1259-1261	'You might not have even killed anyone or even physically assaulted anyone but you are now, have a life conviction you don't get that for murder'.	Sexual offending is seen as worse than murder or physical assault			
D1261-1263	You do your conviction, you do your probation and it finishes, but with a sex offender it never finishes.	Sexual offending is a life conviction			
D1277-1279	'There's nothing you can do about it, whatever you do, you're stuck with the label for the rest of your life'	There is nothing you can do to remove the label			
D1279	'...anyone can look up that label any time they want'	Powerless to others finding out about their label			
D1285-1286	'...there is no getting away from it, it is there, it is imposed, it is inescapable'	The label is imposed and inescapable			
D1268-1271 I think it's a bit of a... negative side from society, I can understand why,	Society gives the message that there is no such thing as a 'recovered sex	102. Sexual offending convictions make it difficult to		

	I'm not stupid but... there's never, you're never not going to be... you know, you can be a recovered alcoholic, you can be a recovered murderer, but you're never a recovered sex offender, you're a sex offender for life'	offender'	reintegrate into society and regain work regardless of capability.		
E1145-1153	'Done everything for myself... Oh with one exception, cos of disclosures and whatever it should have been the manager of the lodge did my disclosures for me renting but [PO] stepped in and done it, cos that was a big barrier, huge big barrier even if you have money in your pocket, and um... or the professional ability and whatever'	Having to disclose the offence to get accommodation is a huge barrier regardless of money or ability			
F948-952	'...the biggest issue that perhaps you face coming is the difficulty of however hard you try, being able to slip back into society because at this moment in time, the UK's view of dealing with prisoners is lets make it as difficult as possible'	Feels as though society makes it as difficult as possible to 'slip back into society'.			
F961-964	'we did a couple of disclosure (exercises), but I think it perhaps has to be a bit more realistic than, than perhaps where it is at the moment, which is, which is that its a good thing to do, as long as you want to stay unemployed'	Having to disclose the offence makes it difficult to get employment			
A760-762	'I still found it quite a challenge to, to speak openly and to talk about things. Mainly due to the subject we were talking about, you know'	Nature of the offence makes it difficult to talk about	103. Sexual offending label prompts feelings of shame that creates fear, inhibits openness and personal conflict.		

F286-287	'I even struggle to tell a doctor or tell psychologists and er, what I've done'				
B1245-1254	'cos those attitudes are out there aren't they...They're even in the group, of course... so I think a lot of people didn't want to open up in front of other group members...'	Societal attitudes are also in the group and makes it difficult to be open			
D1423-1425	'...no matter how painful it was, you had to get on and do it and it's not easy to do that, we like to have a good opinion of ourselves don't we'	Makes it painful to do the work because people want to have a good opinion of themselves			
F172-174	'it was an offence against a man, and, and he was struggling with the whole concept of, of, of offending against a man rather than the issue itself '	The type of sexual offence can create more shame than the overarching 'sex offender' label			
F177-178	'...and I think to the extent that he wanted to carry on but found it really difficult working in a group'	High levels of shame make it difficult to work in a group			
G283-285	'it's sitting there and disclosing what I've done and I was shaking, I was crying, I was scared and that, you always think to yourself that you're the worst, you've done the worst crime than anybody'	Assuming you have the 'worst offence' is upsetting and makes it scary to talk about			
B1213-1220	'...some people, might, f, find annoying having to come into wait with other people, it might have been for a sexual offence as well, and then perhaps seeing someone in there that they know and then that person may put two and two together and be 'he's with those guys he must have..', yeah, I think that, and especially, um, at the beginning of,	Being in the waiting room before the group could mean that people work out the nature of his offence, which is off putting.	104. Societal views of sexual offending create fear and anxiety for self and family members about being 'discovered'		

	you're just about to start doing the course, these, some of the things on your mind, the, are quite small things like that and that could be really something that might be off putting'				
B1231-1242	'I think some people might be a bit more wary about that (people finding out about offence)... Just fear I guess about what people might say or do to them, yeah'.	Worried how other people may behave if they find out about their offence			
D190-193	'I've been lucky there's.. one of our guys, it was found out he was on the course and I know he got beaten up down in town, broken jaw and everything so, you know, you are aware that could happen to any one of you'	Real physical threat if the offence is discovered.			
D1287-1289	'I don't think anyone's ever bothered to look up my name but if someone did I'd hate to think what affect it would have on my family'	Fearful of the impact on family if the offence is discovered			
E596-601	I was lucky that there was no publicity in my case, cos there's a section 41 on it, and erm, very lucky, exceedingly lucky, and erm... I couldn't possibly do anything that... you could see that headlines 'beast', 'animal' whatever, 'takes life' or does this or whatever, cos the reflection that would have on my kids and their families, it's not about me'				
B295-296	'...when you go into these groups you make judgements on everyone you see in there straight away, cos that's what we're like as humans	At the beginning group members make judgements of others on the group	105. Group members make judgements and assumptions in line with negative social views of sexual offending about each other based		

	aren't we, we can be very judgemental'		on this label		
D929-934	'R90: Did you have any anxieties or concerns, you know, about attending? P90: Coming to the course for the first time? Yes. A group of people that you didn't know their level of offending until we got there and we did have quite a mix'	Assumptions and expectations of other group members created anxiety before the group started			
D953-954	'Well you can always, I think there are some people there that are capable of physical violence'	Assume some other group members may be capable of physical violence			
D958-959	'Yeah possibility some people might have been, have some quite serious mental issues along the way'	Assume some other group members may have mental health issues			
D943-945	'...there are other people there who had been in prison, and, you wonder how that affected them and where, how that's going to fuel dealing with people who'd been to prison who might have been affected negatively by it and, by people who were immoral'	Thinking people who had been to prison may be 'immoral'			
F27-31	'probably every group was, was er, a brief description of what your offence was, um... and i think, without going into detail, in certain circumstances, people who felt that they couldn't deal with some of the offences didn't come back'	Group members can drop off the programme based on their judgements of the other group members			
F155-159	'one guy I've met him subsequently, um, because he's up here somewhere, um, said that on the first session there was a traditional review of what you've done and he basically said 'I wasn't going to sit in a room with				

	some of those people', so, that was a dropout'				
A530-532	'...you ask a question, and er, where as nobody really wants to answer it'	Not intrinsically motivated to engage	106. Court ordered attendance can affect motivation by creating hostility or ambivalence due to threat to liberty and feeling they have no choice, which was dehumanizing and makes things harder.	202. The institutional power dynamics of mandatory attendance and institutional agendas vs group members needs can create barriers to engagement	
A1100	'I was there was because I had to be there'				
B146-148	'I don't know what the percentages are like for people that don't want to do these courses, probably quite high'				
B37-42	'I did obviously ask my previous probation officer, not [PO name], erm, if I didn't do it, what would happen, and basically they said well, it's going to raise questions for us about your suitability and your order, i.e., are you really, are you safe to be here and if you're not doing it, it is part of your licence, you're breaking a condition and breaking a condition means technically a recall	Coerced to attend/'pass' due to the threat of recall			
D493-494	'...passing it is a prereq.. prerequisite, to not go back to prison'				
C96-98	'...no matter what the facilitators are like, we're here to, we're here to do the course, we're here to do a job and that's it'.				
C200-202	'...you got to take the rough with the smooth, and um, because you knew you had to do the work and you got, you got to think about what you done'				
D544-545	'I think that getting people involved is kind of the hard part really because none of us really want to be there'	Mandatory element was an obstacle to getting involved because no-one wanted to be there			
D1030-1033	'You're kind of, it's, something you've got to do, um, if	Mandatory element makes the timing of going on			

	you're adult enough to realise that you, kind of make it a bit what you will, then there isn't any good time is there really, it's just times when it comes'	the group irrelevant because it's something they've <u>got to</u> do.			
D1039-1041	'I think it we hadn't felt that it's something you have to do and we were going to make the best of it, if you didn't like that way, then the compulsory side of it would make it hard for some people to do'.	Compulsory element makes it hard to do if GMs do not decide to make the best of it			
D1088-1090	'Not everyone wanted to be there and, I don't think anyone wanted to be there, you had to be there and you make the most of it'				
E62-63	'...you had to be a robot and all attend it'	Having to attend and comply feels dehumanising			
E418-419	'I thought, if I don't do it I'm going to get hassle forever, so basically it was appeasement'	Complying to appease rather than to gain from the programme			
A796-798	'... you had to stick to, the truth as.. even if it wasn't the truth as you saw it, you, you know, you couldn't start talking about things that weren't (quietly) right'.	Feeling an expectation to 'tell the truth' as Probation see it.	107. Institutional agendas influence what group members feel are expected of them, which inhibits honest responses in the group, creates a compliant moralistic mindset and appear unrealistic & uncaring.		
B727-729	'...if someone's missed something out or not telling something truthfully about something, then, it's part of the job'				
B747-749	'Laying out everything on the table and doing what we came to do I think, that was what it was for'				
A1248-1249	'what this did was draw out of you the fact that, you know, what you think were the reasons it happened are not necessary and definitely, probably not necessary, um, the right reasons'	The message that there are 'right and wrong' answers and ways of working			

C733-737	<p>'I'd answer it in a slow way to make sure I got it right, you know, because it wasn't just.. blurted, I didn't, I don't, don't just blurt out things, you know, I think.. yeah, but, um, so I don't, I, I, I didn't want to say the wrong thing, you know'.</p>	<p>Anxiety about saying the 'wrong thing' means thinking through things before contributing.</p>			
D1477-1482	<p>We've all had, you know, especially ... can be very corrosive and lead you to wrong way of thinking and whole part of this course was to start thinking the right way not the wrong way, and catch yourself when you were thinking wrong way. Very important.</p>	<p>Thinking a programme aim is moral teaching right from wrong, which affects how relevant people think it is for them</p>			
E143-146	<p>'I mean the course could be good from, for some people who don't know right from wrong. So it could be good for people like that or the, that are, they've got, er, learning difficulties or stuff'</p>				
E151-156	<p>'...for someone of my intelligence and that, that applied to a few guys on that course, most really seemed to be quite intelligent, it's, it's knowing right from wrong and there's some people that just don't understand, they think they can get away with things, and um, yeah they do the time, come out and say 'yeah, i've been alright for a couple of years' and off they go again'.</p>				
F957-961	<p>'...you know there's a very unrealistic view I think perhaps on the course of disclosure, because its, its, this is what you should do as told by people who</p>	<p>Moralistic approach can feel unrealistic in the real world.</p>			

	have never had to disclose anything in their life, and then therefore it's a moralistic view rather than practical view'				
D509-510	'That's what probation is for, to stop you reoffending'	A probation priority is to protect the public (over the group member)			
E1019	'...we're talking about protecting the public here'				
F951-954	'we're protecting the public from God knows what, but we're protecting the public'				
A1044-1046	'...you've got to get through this, you've got a programme which you've got to get through so there were times where they probably would have to bring us up'	Things being moved on for the sake of getting through the material	108. Feeling that the manual has to be 'stuck to' can feel rigid and restrictive	203. The manualised programme structure/content can feel restrictive, be compared to school and feel intense.	
E59-62	'...it was a serious thing, and um, they said 'oh and so what' and whatever, I said 'so what?', you know, it was things like that, where as it didn't matter because it wasn't part of the facilitators, um, thing they had to present'	Getting through the material could make it seem like other serious things didn't matter			
E63-64	'...everything was on this 'wheel of life', and to me quite frankly, I found it insulting'	The course felt 'one size fits all'/generic because of the content and the amount of people to get through			
E149	'one size fits all', and that's the way I was treated'				
E773-776	'...they're under instruction, you've got to do this in this time and with ten people, all individuals, all got different degrees of offending and whatever, that's not easy to do. This is the problem, that's why I say one size fits all'				
F365-369	'...the course is a very generic.. as it must be, because you've got				

	theoretically at least 10 people in there for 2 hours, once/twice a week, whatever it might be, um, so the training whilst you had a segment of that 2 hours perhaps on yourself, um, the training is... is got to be very generalistic.				
E461-465	'...wanted to put my point over but they.. time wouldn't allow it, and I don't see the point in running anything if it's only run for the course, and how much you've got to get in this session and whatever, I think it's a pointless exercise, I really do'	Running things for the sake of getting through the programme feels pointless			
E736-742	'I kept having to tell myself, self talk, erm, about look they're here to, they're getting paid to do a job and they're doing a presentation and they've got this much time to do it in, which is very important because that came over to me on the first week, so I thought it's not about us ten guys, it's about, right, this is what's set up, this is the plan for the next 9 months or whatever and we've got to stick to the plan rigidly regardless'	Sticking to the manual feels rigid and gives the impression that it is more important than the group members			
A492-493	'...it's like, you know at school, you want to sit at the back...'	Wanting to sit at the back because it's like school	109. The programme can be compared to a school environment		
A578-580	'I said after the, um, the um, first.... the foundation, I think I put a joke in my diary, oh, got a good end of term report'	Reports make it feel like school			
A727-728	'After all, they were the... you know teacher to pupil sort of relationship'	Relationships can feel like teacher/pupil			
E225-227	'...you're going to be there sitting there and you can't	Response in programme can mirror response to			

	wait to get out and whatever, and that, that hasn't changed since I was a kid at school'	school			
A18-22	'...it was quite, a, a, um.. not intense but that first week was, every day for a week, and then... every Friday for 5 weeks, or something like that, I think it was. Um, that first week was, was, was quite, um, yeah, quite a lot'.	The first week is time intensive and 'quite a lot'	110. The programme work can be intense and difficult, which can make GMS want to be less truthful		
B344-348	Big pressure on you around all these people you've never met before, maybe, obviously the first block or the first week, whatever was always the worst one because you're like, oh you know, I can't talk about this in front of all of these people I don't know,	The first week was the worst because there's a big pressure being around people they don't know			
A167-168	'...the victim empathy course, because that was quite a tough course...'	The victim empathy work is 'tough'			
A598-600	'... one of the empathy...ha.. ones that, that was quite hard work and I was quite tired and... shattered I think I put in my diary'				
A1080-1082	'...the empathy one, I think I said here somewhere (looks at diary) that, um, it it, um, I said, ah yeah, 'very difficult', which I suppose is the point of it (laughs)'				
A468-470	'I've mentioned in there doing the BL that, errrr, I suppose you're getting a bit, not bored... I think as we were going over the same thing'	The better lives module is a bit boring, repetitive or rushed			
A1079-1080	'I think on the main, I found a, the BL was long and tiring'				
G74-76	'I, this booster course, one thing I found was it was a				

	bit rushed, to get everything in, in the time span, they could have done with a couple of extra sessions'				
C1276-1283	'R76: is there anything about the group environment or anything that would have... like, either contributed to it or made it more likely that you would have wanted to be less truthful or...? P76: It was the, the sessions were really intense, you know and um, you, you had, you might, you might have like 4/5 different segments, in that, in that particular... session, or that particular bit of the session and... it was really, and like the risks'.	The intense sessions (content) can make group members want to be less truthful			
B1228-1231	'...after a few days I just told people, I thought, what are they going to do?, they're not going to beat me up or anything I'm in a hostel, I mean, it's not prison, it's different there isn't it'	Easier to disclose to people outside of prison because it feels less threatening	111. Probation is a more supportive/relaxed and less threatening/intense environment than prison making it easier to speak openly without fear of reprisal.	204. The community setting is more enabling to the process than a prison setting because group members feel safer to open up	
B186-188	I think that once you're out in the community there's a more relaxed environment whereas in prison it's quite intense	The community is more relaxed than prison, which is intense			
E384-388	'in prison, I'd observed it, I knew enough people, I knew prison course facilitators and stuff like that but, and whatever and it was very intimidating and then they would try to gang up on people on the wing and whatever and um, cos you've got to really stand your ground inside to survive'.	Group members were ganged up on in the wing and had to stand their ground to survive			
F35-36	the prison course weren't in any way supportive, it was just jungle warfare,	The prison was just jungle warfare & not supportive			

F128-129	'...everybody knew it was a supportive environment rather than a hostile environment'	Probation environment is supportive not hostile			
F719-722	'I mean I've not found the probation system here in (location) anything other than supportive and, and , in similar, but i guess, the facilitators were slightly more relaxed because of the, the environment you know'	Probation is supportive because people can be more relaxed in the environment			
G96-97	the community one i found, it's a lot less formal, which made it, and um, the facilitators were a lot less formal	Community felt less formal			
G108	'...it's er, in the community, it's reassuring, it'	The community is reassuring			
F11-14	'I've done courses in prison, which were the other extreme, i mean 99.9% of what people said on those courses were complete and utter lies because nobody was going to tell the truth because of the, the reaction the truth might get.	People are not as honest in prison because of the reaction the truth might get/negative consequences	112. People can be more truthful overall in the community than prison where truthfulness is more threatening and lying more common		
G762-763	i'd say it was a lot easier to be honest and that and to speak out about it, cos i'm in, i know i've got the possibility of being recalled but um, every, it's not quite the same				
F14-17	The course, or courses I've been on 'outside' have been the other extreme, I think, i reckon your truth ratio, um.. was, was certain in the high or medium 90s, or as truthful as people were being with themselves'.	The 'truth ratio' is higher in the community to be as truthful as they were being with themselves			
F53-54	'as tended to be the cases in prison courses, you're in for, er, offence A and in fact what	In prison, people tend to lie about the details of their offence			

	you were telling people was offence Z'				
G765-768	i'm not going for my release, i'm out in the community so it's really a lot easier to be open and honest and knowing that if they mention anything in the report i can talk to my PO about it and deal with it in the appropriate way.	Easier to be open in the community as there are less threats to liberty			
G25-28	'...another good thing about it is it's the first time I've been able to put things I've learned from the programme into practice in a realistic environment cos prison is a very unrealistic environment'	The community allows group members to put things in practice in a realistic environment	113. The community is a more enabling and real environment for progress in moving forward with their lives by thinking different and practicing new skills.		
G30-32	'...it's nice to be able to come out, refresh from what I've learnt in prison and actually get to the stage where, it's a refresher and I can go straight out into society and do it'				
G899-904	'...the community challenges and that, yeah, fair enough you do it inside but it's always on the wing related, it's very narrow minded, I think one of the things I've learned on doing the community programme is people coming out with different community challenges, it gets you thinking differently about different situations, so it's, it's other people experiences in a realistic environment, I think that is the biggest thing'				
G101-103	'it's like keeping you in whereas out here it's more realistic, its er, 'well you will have these	Community is future focused and realistic, not trying to hold back (like prison)			

	circumstances' it's all a lot more future focussed'.				
F955-957	Suggestion for the programme is to be more realistic about the rejection from society and the difficult reintegrating	Negative cases – could be more realistic about the impact of society			
F960-961	Suggestion to take a more realistic/practical rather than moralistic approach to disclosure				
F964-966	There should be a far bigger discussion about whether you should disclose when not legally required to in terms of practical benefits or negatives				
B9-12	'...the facilitators there I remember, I know we're not talking about them while I didn't really, sort of, really find them very helpful when I found it was kind of like, you have to do this, you haven't got a choice'	The prison facilitators weren't very helpful because they made people feel like they didn't have a choice	114: In prison there are very powerful coercive and restrictive power dynamics by facilitators but in the community group setting there's more autonomy, hope and freedom.		
F65-72	'You know, the prison courses weren't particularly removed from everything else in prison, you know the whole macho bullshit thing, um, and the facilitators to a large extent bought into that, you know, they, it was quite clear that they were the people in charge and whilst it was clear on this one, that the facilitators were in charge, it wasn't overplayed, it was only brought into play when necessary and because it was so understated, it wasn't necessary to bring it into the situation very much at all'	In prison, facilitators buy into 'macho bullshit', in the community they don't have to			
F698-706	'the external facilitators you felt that you were part of a team and that	There is a feeling of 'us and them' in prison, not the community			

	<p>team included both the, the attendees and the facilitators, there was no us and them, i can't think of ever, i don't think i can give an example of anything like that at all.</p> <p>R52: Yeah, have you exp, well have you experienced that sort of 'us and them' feeling elsewhere?</p> <p>P52: Yeah, it's rife within the prison system'.</p>				
G368-369	The one thing I found in prison is, there's a 'them and us' attitude, you've got the officers on the wing, and then psychology				
F826-828	'...that's a little bit different from... from the the prison side... it it was very much a democracy,	The community feels like a democracy in comparison to prison			
G28-30	'...you're controlled what you do, you're controlled when you go out and a lot of the stuff, they said you've got to do this, you've got to that, you can't do...	Everything is controlled and there is less autonomy in prison			
B192-198	'time goes a lot quicker out here doesn't it so you don't really notice it... you've got other things going on, you're working, seeing your family and socialising and stuff'	Freedom to go home at the end of the session in the community/live life			
G314-315	'...the good thing about that (community) was at the end I could go home'				
G414-415	'I think one of the other big things was knowing that, er, knowing that at the end, i can just walk out, and then I was at the hostel, it was just knowing I could go out at the end of this'				
G692-694	in prison, i'm going to do a pun here, in prison, they've literally got a				

	captive audience and that, um, and they know that.				
E111-114	'I don't think there is any rehabilitation, that they talk about, they talk about it in prison it's not, I mean in prison it's even worse because your (laughs), it made me laugh really because you're banged up, what are they going to do to you?'	The idea of rehabilitation is laughable in prison when they're 'banged up'			
G1022-1025	with an IPP sentence aside you've got a goal to aim for, because you've got no release date and you automatically think, oh I'll be doing another programme after this anyway, there's no release day, so it's knowing that end goal and seeing it in sight.	On the community the end is in sight, unlike prison			
G98-101	in prison, er, i remember one thing that stays with me when I first went in there and i was in the 'rolling', i was looking at, 'oh I've only got 2 years, 3 months' but was IPP and er, one facilitator turned around and said to me 'we've got you for 99 years'	Prison constant threat to liberty/see no end to it			
G165	It was hard going, it was hard when there seemed no end to it				
G168-169	'they say you've got to do this programme and they bring it out just before parole, and that and, which is annoying, frustrating'				
G737-738	you're controlled and monitored on everything you do and if you do do it, you got not chance of getting rid of it	Things are kept on file so can never move on from them			
B169-172	'they used to come round every Friday and come talk to	Association with the facilitators disclosed the	115. Lack of confidentiality in prison through		

	people, so whenever they used to come onto the wing, everyone would look and be like, 'oh, you're that'	nature of their offence to other inmates	association with the group facilitators		
F39-44	my experience is in prison facilitators were, they were quite, er.. they were looking to be antagonistic, where as there wasn't, there was an occasional issue, it wasn't plain sailing, um, but for the most part, it was, they were also buying into this whole non-judgemental, safe environment to say what you feel type vibe.	Prison facilitators were more antagonistic than community facilitators who were generally non-judgemental	116. The prison approach is more judgemental, unempathetic and punitive, making it feel like the aim is to 'destroy and rebuilt' as a person.		
F77-81	'...the whole prison thing is that 'we don't trust you' and 'we don't care we, if you know that we don't trust you' and nothing's going to change that, where as in the, out of the prison environment there was a least a surface degree of trust'	Less trust in relationships between group members and prison staff in comparison to the community			
F940-943	they may have underneath not have believed anything anyone said but it never came across that way at all, where as certainly with the prison, er, it was, it was...				
F90-93	'the whole crux of the SOTP seemed to be, 'well destroy you' and then we're going to build you up to this new wonderful person, which didn't, well, certainly didn't exist in the TV.. whatever it's called'.	Prison aim appears to be to destroy and rebuild, which was different to the communities			
F110-111	'because it was done in a, i wouldn't use gentle, it's not really the right word, and gentler way then, then i think it worked far far better'.	The communities 'gentler' approach worked far far better (than the prison punitive approach)			

F294-296	'a degree of empathy, um... cos that was, that was certainly what was missing out of the prison version, absolutely no empathy at all'	The prison approach lacks empathy			
F675-681	'one of the biggest things in prison is, especially for a mentor, is all they want to do is get you on the programme, they get money for people on programme, and all they want to do is get as many people on the programme as possible, and they'll do anything to do it, and that was the sort of attitude a lot of people had, because it seems to be, only a last minute thing, they'd change their mind or vice versa but, on the community one I didn't get that sort of attitude'	Priority is to get funding by getting as many people as they can through the programme	117. Priority is getting money by pushing people through the programme and being uncaring rather than to help the individuals		

Appendix L – Ethics approval letter



Thames Valley Probation

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Dr Chris Chandler

Chair School of Psychology Research Ethics Review Panel

London Metropolitan University

School of Psychology

Research Ethics Review Panel

Ref: KV/PMH

19th July 2013 (amended 5th August 2013)

Dear Dr Chandler

RE: Kimberly Barker – Research

I have reviewed the research request from Kimberly Barker asking to complete her research project at Thames Valley Probation to explore how interactions between group members and the group facilitators have influenced their experience of the sexual offending treatment programme. This will involve group members attending a one to one semi-structured interview to discuss their experiences in the group and their interaction with programme facilitators. I have also seen the briefing and consent forms for those volunteering to take part in the study.

As the Director for Thames Valley with the lead for Public Protection, I would like to support Ms Barker in her research with the usual caveats regarding the ethics of completing such research, which she sets out clearly in her submitted documents. I can confirm that I have had sight of the IRAS application form sent to NOMs.

I look forward to reading her findings.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kilvinder Vigurs".

Kilvinder Vigurs

Director

cc: Kimberly Barker

Appendix M – Distress protocol
Adapted from Draucker, Martsof & Poole (2009)

Signs of distress during interview	Action plan	Participant response	Emotional distress/safety concern (Y/N)	Imminent danger (Y/N)
Participant expresses they are experiencing a high level of emotional distress/ the researcher recognises distress in non verbal communication (e.g. restlessness, crying, incoherent speech)	1) Stop the interview 2) Offer support and allow time to regroup 3) Check out thoughts and feelings 4) Check whether they feel able to continue 5) Check how safe they feel 6) If no to above, ask questions below			
Participant expresses intentions to hurt themselves	1) Stop the interview 2) Express concern and do a safety assessment 3) Check out their intention to hurt themselves (thoughts, means)			
Participant expresses intentions to hurt others	1) Stop the interview 2) Express concern and do a safety assessment 3) Check out intention (thoughts, to who, when, how and what means)			

If emotional distress reflects a response reflective of what would be expected in an interview, offer support and the option to a) stop the interview b) regroup c) continue.

If emotional distress is acute but the participant is not in imminent danger, encourage the group member to access social support, contact his GP, provide signposting to support agencies (Samaritans) and with the participants permission, the researcher will contact them the next day to see if they are okay.

If emotional distress indicates imminent danger, consult the probation office senior management, contact the participants next of kin, local law authority or family member accompany participant to A&E/Crisis team and with the participants permission, the researcher will contact them the next day to see if they are okay.

Appendix N – Research model

