



Creating a Safe Place for Black Offenders

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POPS Mission Statement...

- 'Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group aims to provide a variety of services to support to anyone who has a link with someone in prison, prisoners and other agencies.'

POPS provides assistance to these groups for the purpose of enabling families to cope with the stress of arrest, imprisonment and release'

Restorative Justice.

- Restorative Justice is not about specific programmes, it is a philosophy, a set of principles and values.
- At its heart is the concept of ENCOUNTER.

Restorative Justice cont...

- Encounter – Offenders confront their personal responsibility to make amends for the crime committed although not directly with the victim. Offenders need to encounter their personal obligations and responsibilities.
- Amend – Acknowledging the effect their crime has on victim or society and the effect their imprisonment has on their families. We challenge the offenders perception of themselves

Restorative Justice cont...

- **Reintegration** – BPSP Mentors aid ex-offenders to reintegrate with in their communities and make positive contributions to society.
- **Inclusion** – Black Ex-offenders successfully integrating back into their communities without re-offending. POPS value the skills and experience these men have and encourage them to volunteer and Mentor other Black Offenders.

Restorative Justice in Prisons

- In prisons, prisoners are not required to face up to the effects of their crimes.
- Breaking rules are punished but prisoners are not required to take responsibility for their actions.
- Staff and prisoner disputes often leave conflict unresolved and tensions simmer.

Restorative Justice in prisons cont..

- RJ in prisons could encourage prisoners to take full responsibility for their behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for improving self esteem.
- Become a way for resolving complaints.
- Provide opportunities for outside agencies and communities to assist the rehabilitation of the offender.
- Could offer the chance for victims to have their questions answered prior to the prisoners release.

Restorative Justice in POPS

- POPS' Black Prisoner Support Project provides specific services to this group of prisoners.
- We want to encourage the provision of end-to-end management and for the opportunity for encounter to take place.
- This opportunity is provided via the Black Prisoner Groupwork programme.

Why provide services for Black Prisoners?

- 'The last 6 years have seen the steepest-ever climb in the numbers and proportion of Black prisoners... Imprisonment is becoming a defining experience for some ethnic minority groups' (Black Information Link, 2004)
- Raising issues which affect Black Prisoners is a priority for POPS... we strive ensure equality of services for Black Prisoners
- The acceptance of institutional racism has been a major step forward - CRE report on HM Prison Service, 2003.

UK Prison Statistics Fact File...

- Black and Ethnic Minorities (BME) are disproportionately represented in the prison population when compared to the UK population.
- UK BME POPULATION = **5.6%**
- MALE BME UK PRISON POPULATION = **19%**
- FEMALE BME UK PRISON POPULATION = **25%**
- Black and Ethnic Minorities are more likely to receive longer sentences than their white counterparts

UK Prison Racism Fact File...

- UK Commission for Racial Equality Report on the HM Prison Service found 14 failure areas (2003).
- This illustrates that the HM Prison Service is integrally racist.
- This manifests into **Institutionalised Racism** and **Increased Re-offending** amongst prisoners

UK Racism: Case Studies

- Racist murder of Zahid Mubarak
 - AGE: 19
 - LOCATION OF MURDER: HMYOI Feltham
 - DATE: 22nd March 2000
- Racist murder of Stephen Lawrence
 - AGE:18
 - LOCATION OF MURDER: South East London
 - DATE: 22nd April 1993
- Racist murder of Anthony Walker
 - AGE:18
 - LOCTAION OF MURDER: Huyton, Merseyside
 - DATE: 29th July 2005

Black Prisoner Group Work

- Black specific services = Services which cater for the specific needs of these Black men Monthly facilitated group work sessions
- The programme currently runs in 6 prisons
- They provide Black Men with a positive understanding of their culture
- Building confidence = Empowerment
- Men can get together to discuss issues and how to solve them appropriately
- Celebrate Black History Month in October

A "Safe Place"

- **Safe.** Time for Black men to come together and communicate in an environment that they value and feels comfortable.
- **Freedom** of expression
 - Language and Body Language
- **No Stereotyping.** Not the usual stigma attached to Black men in a group
 - Planning a riot or something sinister
- **Enjoyment.** People learn better in an environment that is relaxed and see to be honest.

Case Study: South Yorkshire Group Work

- Control Problems = Needed assistance
- Wanted to bring the men together to discuss issues pertinent to them
- Issues were mainly around RACE RELATIONS:-
 - Racism
 - Lack of Understanding regarding Black culture
 - Communication

Rules set out by the group...

1. Respect for other peoples points of view
2. Listen to each other
3. No shouting at each other
4. Acceptance of constructive criticism and challenges
5. Agree to disagree

General and Practical Issues

- Information = Power (PSO 2800)
- Canteen Products (Importance of culturally appropriate food)
- Discussed negative perceptions of Black men
- A Black Prisoner representative able to attend the RMT and other forum meetings
- Culture and Communication

Specific Issues

- Gun Crime (Video)
- Parenting Skills/Role as a Father

Evolution of Group Work Sessions

- Group Work is intended to 'MOVE ON'/'EVOLVE' to include more than just general and practical issues
- Prisoners felt they wanted to explore: -
 - Black and Asian Culture (Knowledge and Understanding)
 - Drama (Build confidence via free expression)
 - Celebrate Black History Month

Black History Month (October)

- Designed the UK to take place in Octobers
 - Chance to celebrate positive historical achievements
 - Inform themselves and audience of diversity and culture
 - Skills acquired:-
 - Poetry
 - Music
 - Drama
 - Literature
- Important subjects such as Slavery and the influence of ancient Africa on modern society

What do the prison get from this?

- An informed Black prisoner population
- Encouraged to use internal mechanisms for complaints
- A resource to tap into – to find out about the needs of Black Prisoners
- Stable Black Prisoners population
- Encouraged to articulate their feelings and needs in a constructive/positive way.

What does the prisoner get from this?

- Knowledge
- Empowerment
- New skills
- Safe place to explore issues
- Confidence
- Self esteem
- Genuine growth and transformation

What does the community get from this?

- Greater possibility of a reduction in the re-offending of these men.
- Active community citizens
- Safer communities
- Healthier environments
- Stakeholder involvement



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