It’s Not Denial if it Isn’t True: Working with sex offenders in precontemplation

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“Very few people, sex offenders included, voluntarily change their behavior attitudes and beliefs, unless they see it is to their advantage, and probably no one enters treatment without hope that the resultant changes will benefit them.”

Stages of Change

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance

PROGRESS

RELAPSE

www.addictioninfo.org
Brogan, Prochaska, & Prochaska, (1999)
Precontemplation

- Denial
- Lying
- Minimizing
- Justifying
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of belief in own ability to change
- Lack of belief in effectiveness of treatment
- Time bomb techniques and avoidance behaviors
The Trans-Theoretical Model Approach

**Experiential**
- Consciousness raising
- Self reevaluation
- Environmental reevaluation
- Self-liberation
- Dramatic relief

**Behavioral**
- Social liberation
- Counter conditioning
- Stimulus control
- Reinforcement management
- Helping relationships

Prochaska & DiClemente (1994)
The Trans-Theoretical Model Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of change&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; (offender’s behavior)</th>
<th>Treatment intervention</th>
<th>Processes of change to facilitate progress to the next stage&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Decisional balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precontemplation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial or minimization of offence and impact</td>
<td>Modifying cognitive distortions (analysis of offence cycle, police records, victim statements, etc.)</td>
<td>Consciousness raising</td>
<td>At this stage the cons of change outweigh the pros. Intervention aims to address the disadvantages of change and identify personally relevant advantages of change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing victim empathy (assess the impact of behavior). Identifying the broader impact of behavior. Expressing feelings about problems</td>
<td>Environmental re-evaluation</td>
<td>Dramatic relief</td>
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Table 1. Integration of the Constructs of the TMBC With the Characteristics of Sex Offenders and the Treatment Components and Intervention Strategies

Good Life correlation with precontemplation

- **Phase I**: Establish treatment goals, increase readiness, address problematic pre-contemplative attitudes.

- **Phase II**: Conceptualize what a good life would mean to the client.

- **Phase III**: Develop a formulation to achieve good in an adaptive way.

- **Phase IV**: Create a detailed plan.

- **Phase V**: Attain the goods and monitor progress.

Barnao et al. (2016), Barnett et al. (2014), Whitehead et al. (2007)
Rule out Responsivity Issues

- Major mental Illness
- Cognitive/Learning disorder
- Personality Disorder
- Unique life stressors
- Readiness to change
- Substance abuse
- TBI
- Physical sensory
- Culture
- Other deficit / Need

Covell & Wheeler, (2005)
Rapport development

- Helps establish some trust with the therapist
- The basis of any therapeutic relationship
- Address lack of belief in effectiveness of treatment
- Establishing treatment goals is more effective with the client’s input
- Rapport helps uncover the function of undesired behaviors and treatment resistance
Motivational Interviewing

- Affirmations
- Open ended questions
- Reflective listening
- Summaries
- Eliciting change talk
- Develop discrepancy
- Rolling with resistance
- Expressing empathy (caution)
- Support self-efficacy
- Eliciting change talk

DOES NOT WORK

- Persuasion
- Righting reflex
- Power struggle

Blagden et al. (2011)
Prescott & Porter, (2011)
Psychoeducation
Awareness and Preparation (SCC)

Motivation for Treatment
Program Overview
The Winning Mindset
Discussion of DRFs
Offense Cycle
Behavioral Interventions
The Cognitive Model
Cognitive Interventions-ABCDE
Debunking Common Treatment Interfering Beliefs
Psychoeducation Cont.
Cohort Treatment Assignments (SCC)

My Change
- Need for change

My Good Life
- Personal needs and values.
- Develop plan to achieve values adaptively

ABC / ABCDE
- Focus on distortions and thinking errors.
- Create rational thought process.

Autobiography / Sexual Autobiography
- How developmental history influenced behavior choices.
- Identify patterns in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to problematic lifestyles and offending.
Documentation

- Can be used to address denial and minimization
- Verify transparency
- Encourage consciousness raising
- Encourage environmental reevaluation

Marshall (1994)
Programmatic Responses to precontemplation

- Better housing units
- More privileges
- Sentence reduction or release
- Avoiding civil commitment
- Better Image in court
- Increase in work pay rate
- Increased media access
### Case Study: What does Precontemplation look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to Change</td>
<td>I've been making changes for years in the areas I could “see &amp; understand” the need to change. It's only been in the last few years that I've learned that P.T.S.D. is the underlying fuel to my stress and anger. Now my focus is learning how to understand and move forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing the goal</td>
<td>I live with nightmares.... They are a daily reminder as to why I want to find a solution to them. Everything else should fall into place in one form or another after wards I should think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing in the program</td>
<td>I have 100% belief in my wish and need to change what “is” wrong with me. I just have 0% belief in SCC wishing to or facilitating the “real” change necessary for me; especially in what SCC is presently offering under their suggestions of treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing in your ability to succeed in the program</td>
<td>I have 100% belief in my success to change what is necessary. It's just being allowed the correct tools to facilitate this change that SCC is denying me.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
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<td>Honesty</td>
<td>To say that SCC is not interested in charging anyone for unadjudicated crimes is a bold face lie! I am being honest in my efforts to being a better human being and “my” treatment goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Disclosure</td>
<td>Everyone has secrets. Anyone who says they don't is a liar. The only relevant secrets are those relating to deviant sexual behavior, for which I have none.</td>
</tr>
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## Case Study: What does Precontemplation look like?

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<th>Therapeutic/Working Alliance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement on Goals</td>
<td>Any goals relating to why I was committed I am agreeable to, i.e., P.T.S.D. only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement on Tasks</td>
<td>Any tasks relating to why I was committed I am agreeable to, i.e., P.T.S.D. only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting your therapist</td>
<td>As each therapist is different, I will trust them each accordingly, or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liking your therapist</td>
<td>As each therapist is different, I will like them each accordingly, or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling understood, accepted, and respected by your therapist</td>
<td>Until SCC's treatment regimen is geared towards actually helping/treating me with P.T.S.D., there will never be any understanding or acceptance, much less any respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling a fully accepted part of your group</td>
<td>This is simply not a goal I am trying to achieve in any capacity whatsoever. I will always show respect to anyone and everyone in any group setting. I can only hope to receive even half as much in return.</td>
</tr>
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Case Study: What does Precontemplation look like?

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<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Owning up</td>
<td>I'm over 30 years and counting on accepting the consequences of my actions/conviction of a SRA 10 year maximum sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding victim stance</td>
<td>That's kind of hard not to do given I was committed for P.T.S.D. only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on your own behavior change</td>
<td>That is literally what I've been trying to do since my arrival to SCC on August 17, 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing consequences as allies in change</td>
<td>That truly depends on the given situation and how it came about. However, if I am truly wrong I will truly accept the given punishment.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Patience and Persistence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accepting that true change takes time</td>
<td>The concept in and of itself makes sense; it's how I've been here at SCC 9 years and counting and SCC still has yet to provide me with any treatment relevant to P.T.S.D., that does not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting that new skills require practice</td>
<td>If only SCC would provide these blessed skills so I “could” practice them....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting that treatment is ongoing</td>
<td>What Treatment?!</td>
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# Case Study: What does Precontemplation look like?

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<td>Being willing to consider new ideas</td>
<td>I am most definitely willing to consider new ideas if only SCC would provide them based upon what “they” themselves committed me for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admitting when you're wrong</td>
<td>I have when I am..... well, most of the time anyways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking out and welcoming feedback</td>
<td>When this is given honestly and constructively, I'm generally not apposed to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing sensitivity to criticism</td>
<td>This is a work in progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting help / wisdom however it comes</td>
<td>This too is a work in progress.</td>
</tr>
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Case Study: Motivational Interviewing

- “If only SCC would provide these blessed skills so I could practice them.”
- Inquire as to what skills he currently uses to cope with stress.
- What skills could SCC provide to him.
- What skills does he think would have benefited him in the past, i.e. prevented the criminal acts.

Prescott & Porter, (2011)
Case Study: Motivational Interviewing

- “I’m the only man in the state to get committed to the SCC for PTSD.”
- Has multiple diagnosis in addition to PTSD
- Addressing the presence of other diagnosis could alienate him further from treatment
- Reflection statements “It sounds like you feel treatment at SCC could not help your PTSD symptoms.”
- Point out that CBT can be used to treat sex offending behaviors as well as PTSD
- Establish discrepancy between personal narrative and documentation
- DO NOT persuade to see your way
- DO NOT right the error
- DO NOT express empathy

Prescott & Porter, (2011)
Self Care and Compassion Fatigue

- Working with sex offenders in Precontemplation is exhausting.
- High rate of compassion fatigue
- Be mindful of your self-care
- Be mindful of your work/home balance
References


