



Connect: the importance
of community education for
workers supporting families
& post release prisoners.



Community Restorative Centre

- Largest non-government organisation in NSW working with prisoners, ex-prisoners, their families & friends
- Range of support services from point of arrest, during incarceration & post-release



CRC Services

Family

- Casework Services
- Transport
- Court Support
- Video Visits



CRC Services

Post Release

- Transitional support
- Supported accommodation
- Mentoring
- Disability transitional support



CRC Services

Community

- Community Radio
- Resource Development
- Community Training



The need for training

Approx 25,000 people cycle through the NSW
prison system each year

Around 100,000 family members
affected each year



CRC has the equivalent of one full time family worker for all of NSW

Families report a reluctance to disclose their situation to other services



*When a Family Member
Goes to Prison:
Information & Strategies for
Community Workers*



Training Content

- Facts & myths
- Invisible sentence
- The First 24 Hours
- Practical Issues
- Going to Court
- Visiting Correctional Centres



Training Content (continued)

- Prison Talk
- Children of Prisoners
- Grandparents as carers
- Common Problems – who can help?
- Preparing for Release

August 2006 – August 2009

- 30 workshops - 471 participants

Presentations to an extra 491 workers:

- Police training days; interagency meetings; staff meetings; community forums

Media:

- Community radio: Koori radio; Muslim radio; Arabic radio



Who attends?

- Health
- Child care, schools
- Family support services
- Centrelink
- Child protection services
- Housing NSW
- Police NSW
- Welfare agencies
- Religious leaders



Feedback

“The training has given us a far greater understanding that helps us to support our families and students with more compassion and knowledge.”

- *School counsellor*



Feedback

“I just provided the grandmother of my client with information on how jail visits operate and what she needs to bring. It was good to be able to have that information to give her.”

*- Child Protection Caseworker
Department of Community Services*



Feedback

“The prison system can be frightening and complicated. I had two families that had dads in prison and...it helped me feel more confident navigating the system and providing information to the families.”

- Case worker

Department of Community Services



Feedback

“Thanks again for an excellent presentation, already proven useful when I saw an ex-inmate walk in using ex-inmate slang!”

- Hospital Social worker



*From Prison to Community:
Working with Prisoners
Post Release*



Need for Training

- Services have reservations about client group
- Limited understanding of clients' circumstance
- Too hard basket because of complex needs
- Clients report being treated differently without worker with them



Training Content

- Facts and Myths
- Initial Impact
- Doing Your Time
- Prison Demographics
- Prison Talk
- Preparation for Release
- Reality of Release
- Client DVD

Post Release Workshops

Since 2007:

- 26 workshops in Sydney & regional NSW
- Mixture of Housing NSW staff & other workers
- 478 participants

Who attends?

- Accommodation services, Housing NSW
- Employment agencies
- Centrelink
- Gambling services
- Community Health, Mental health
- Welfare agencies
- Drug & alcohol services

Feedback

“Lots of information. Great day spent discussing really important issues.”

- *Homeless Hostel worker*

“Very pleased with the training and the amount of knowledge that was shared around the room. Learnt a LOT and very grateful.”

- *Pacific Island Support Service*



Outcomes

- Training improves access & builds capacity
- Access to resources increased
- Networking between services increased



Questions?

Community Restorative Centre



changing lives
reducing crime

www.crcnsw.org.au