



COMMUNITY
RESTORATIVE
CENTRE

**What works? – housing & supporting people who have
been in prison**

Affordable Housing Conference NSW

Sally Ringrose June 2018

Community Restorative Centre

- Established in 1951
- Specialist- works with people impacted by the criminal justice system- with a focus on transition and post-release and family support
- 51 staff across 4 different sites in NSW
- Supports between 400 and 500 people on release each year

Homelessness and people leaving prison in NSW

- 13,000 adults locked up in NSW
- 18,284 released from prison in 2016/2017
- 9.6% of people in prison were in primary homelessness prior to incarceration
- 24.6% of people in prison either have no fixed address or had moved twice or more in the six months prior to incarceration
- Imprisonment increases the likelihood of homelessness
- Estimate at LEAST 4000 people released each year from prison with nowhere stable to live

Rough Break down of beds for people leaving prison

Across NSW (at last count) only 58 beds for people leaving prison

31 specialist beds in services specifically for people custody (12 weeks)

14 (although varies) crisis beds in Homeless Hostels specifically for people leaving prison

Between 6 and 13 negotiated transitional beds always for people leaving prison

Principles for best practice with complex needs populations

1. Housing First with wraparound support
2. Through-care model (includes pre-release engagement)
3. Long term, pro-active, holistic, relational case work models
4. Community Based Outreach
5. Service Delivery Incorporating Systemic Advocacy (people with lived experience embedded in agencies)
6. Reintegration Framed Outside of the Lens of Individual Rehabilitation

Housing First

- Very limited dedicated bed spaces in short term programs
- HNSW Temporary Accommodation (T.A.) – [link2home](#)
- Almost impossible to build a pathway out of prison if you do not have somewhere to live.

Throughcare and Pre-Release Engagement

- Pre-release engagement important tool for pre-release planning
- Community worker can operate as a metaphorical bridge between prison and the community
- Planning transitional pathways prior to release
- Needs to be some form of continuity between needs identified while in prison, and needs on the outside.
- If workers get to know somebody in prison, when the wheels fall off post-release, much more likely to retain engagement

Long Term, Intensive, Relational Case Management

- Draw on ideas from desistance research (significance of social bonds and connection)
- Acknowledge referral fatigue and long histories of exclusion to services
- Skill up workers to ‘hold’ a complex range of issues (and pay them appropriately)...(avoid unnecessary referral)
- Work with people long term (acknowledge that change is often a long and difficult process, and desistance from crime is a process that requires ongoing support)

Community Based, Outreach Support

- “You cannot train a man for freedom under conditions of captivity” (Alex Paterson, Penal Reformer, 1933)
- Outreach work v appointment based work; the case for outreach where possible
- Assist in building a pathway outside of the criminal justice system.
- Assist in building an identity narrative that is not about being an ‘offender’.

See Hunter et al, 2016, Nunn et al, 2010, Gilbert et al 2015, Elison et al, 2016, Deakin (2013), Scott (2013), McNeil (2013), Halsey (2013), Maruna (2012), Pettus-Davis (2011), Lowthian (2010), Rowe, (2007)

Community Building and Advocacy (Not just 'rehabilitation')

- Services achieving outcomes for clients are unapologetically advocacy organisations.
- Structural *and* individual understanding and *practice*
- Workers see themselves as 'in the corner' of the people they are working with
- People with lived experience of incarceration are embedded in organisations (significance of this experience is acknowledged)

Reintegration framed Outside of the Lens of Rehabilitation

- Demographic realities of *who* goes to prison and *why*, and disconnect between what is funded to prevent recidivism
- Best practice models place structural predictors of recidivism at the heart of service delivery design (housing, poverty, social isolation)
- Reintegration not framed in terms of ‘rehabilitation’
- Offending behaviour and ‘fixing’ people is *not* at the centre of the conversation

Outcomes for Sydney CRC Clients (2008-2012)

| | 12 Month Rates | 24 Month Rates |
|-------------------|--|--|
| All Clients | 44% reoffended 26% re-incarcerated (n=387) | 56% reoffended 34% re-incarcerated (n=313) |
| Completed Program | 24% reoffended 7% re-incarcerated (n=148) | 38% reoffended 12% re-incarcerated (n=132) |

Contact Details

Sally Ringrose
Transition Program Manager – Sydney Metro
Community Restorative Centre

sally.ringrose@crcnsw.org.au

02 92888700

0414 267527

www.crcnsw.org.au

