

RESPECT LIMITS

A mandatory educational programme for juvenile sex offenders

Marianne Jonker, manager juvenile sex offender projects
Rutgers, Utrecht, the Netherlands, www.rutgers.nl, m.jonker@rutgers.nl

Introduction

Juvenile sex offenders who have been arrested in the Netherlands for a first-time sexual offence may be obliged to take part in Respect Limits, a behavioural intervention on sexual boundaries developed by Rutgers. Complex situational factors such as group pressure and ambiguous sexual communication are important risk factors for this group (Hoïng et al, 2010)¹. Respect Limits is evidence-based and has been approved by the Ministry of Justice (Accreditation Panel, March 2012) demonstrating that the intervention meets the necessary quality requirements in making a contribution towards decreasing recidivism.

1

Aim and description of Respect Limits

- Main aim: relapse prevention and promotion of healthy sexual behaviour.
- The intervention also affects important dynamic risk factors for general delinquency:
 - susceptibility to peer pressure of false friends.
 - impulsive behaviour.
 - experiencing little support from parents.
- A cognitive behavioural approach (in particular the relapse prevention model) and parent guidance, supported by psycho-education, are effective methods in reducing recidivism of young sex offenders².

2

Programme

The training consists of 10, 15 or 20 weekly sessions of 90 minutes each. Stereotypes and misconceptions about sexuality and behaviour, including gender-specific behaviour, are discussed and corrected. Skills are improved with respect to sexuality and relationships, impulsive behaviour and peer-pressure. Parents are actively involved.

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Facts and figures

- (registration Rutgers 2014, N=34)
- 47% of participants were 14 years or younger when they committed the offence.
 - Most victims (65%) were the same age as the perpetrator, 29% much younger.
 - 50% were group sex offenders.
 - Boys and parents gave Respect Limits a report rating of 9.

Example



Learning how to recognize signals in risk situations - visualised by a crossroads - and exploring new coping skills in order to choose alternative behaviour.

References

- ¹ Hoïng, M., Jonker, M. & Berlo, W. van, "Juvenile Sex Offenders in a Dutch Mandatory Educational Programme: Subtypes and Characteristics". In: Journal of Sexual Aggression, November 2010, vol. 16, no. 3, pp 332-346.
- ² Haas, S., Jonker, M., Berlo W. van, Manual Theoretical Framework, Respect Limits, Rutgers 2011.