

Family Voice Bulletin – Issue 28 (Jan 18th/2022) Sexual Behaviours

Summarized by KJ (Krystal-Jyl) Thomas, MSW, RSW

In this week's session, facilitators KJ Thomas, MSW, RSW and Jillian Crabbe, MSW, RSW were joined by guest speaker, Heather Tarnai-Feeley, MSW, RSW. Heather spoke to the group about the Sexual Behaviours Clinic (SBC) at The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. This clinic sees both men and women over the age of 18 and addresses sexual interests and behavioural problems. While some SBC clients may have come in contact with the law, most have never offended. The SBC believes in early intervention to prevent sexual misconduct. The SBC can be accessed by a referral from a family doctor, through probation and parole, court order, or by self-referral.

The assessment process within SBC includes a number of different stages. There is a complete and detailed intake questionnaire, a psychological assessment (e.g. aggression, deception, substances, sexual history, interests, behaviours), phallometric testing, blood work, and meeting with a SBC psychiatrist to discuss next steps/follow up treatment options. These assessments help determine which areas should be targeted, and which have higher risk. This can help keep the focus on client-centred care.

Clinicians in the SBC follow the Good Lives Model. This centres on the belief that all humans have the same basic needs, and sex offences result from using inappropriate strategies to meet those needs. The SBC focuses on strengths and identifying pro-social goals and desires. The primary emphasis is on developing healthy skills needed to engage in pro-social ways, followed by distancing oneself from harmful or criminal actions.

Treatment options can include pharmacological therapy, psychotherapy, and connecting with other allied health assistance in the community. This can include substance use supports, sleep clinics, mood disorder clinics, day programs, etc. The SBC also offers groups which run for 1.5 hours each week on topics such as mood and anxiety, social skills, resiliency, and adult interest groups. Group therapy offers a safe space to talk about sensitive issues, connect with experts, and instill hope.

Resources

- Sexual Behaviours Clinic <https://www.sexualbehavioursclinic.ca/who-we-are/>
- John Howard Society of Ottawa <https://johnhoward.on.ca/ottawa/>
- Elizabeth Fry Society <https://efryottawa.com/>
- Publications <https://johnhoward.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/JHSO-Prison-Visit-Handbook-July-2014-FINAL.pdf>