

Prisoner Rape Support Package

Addressing sexual assault in men's prisons

By David Denborough and the
Preventing Prisoner Rape Project

Dulwich Centre PO Box 7192, Hutt Street, Adelaide 5000
Email: dulwich@senet.com.au

The following support package has been developed to try to provide assistance to men who have been raped or sexually assaulted in prison. It has been developed by the Preventing Prisoner Rape Project. This project, based at Dulwich Centre in Adelaide, Australia, is hoping to: raise awareness about the issue of rape in prisons; reach out and support prison rape survivors; support those workers both inside and outside prisons who are trying to deal with the issue of sexual violence in detention; and bring about appropriate law reform and changes to prison administration in order to prevent prisoner rape. This package relates to men's experience. In the near future we hope to be able to develop a similar package for female survivors of prisoner rape. While currently in written form, we hope to make CDs and tapes of this information and distribute these within prisons. We would value your feedback as this is a continuing project.

Keywords: prison, prisoner rape, child sexual abuse,
sexual assault, support package

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An early draft of this package was developed ten years ago by David Denborough and Wayne Jones. This version was generated by David Denborough with helpful feedback from Lovisa Stannow, David Newman, Andrew Groome, Shona Russell, Cheryl White, Gary Foster, Mary Pekin, Michael White, John Stillman, Walter Bera, Manja Visschedijk and Ron Nasim. The work of Patrick O'Leary was also influential.

This package has been developed to try to provide support to men who have been raped or sexually assaulted while in prison. We hope this material will offer some sense of company to those still incarcerated and that it may also be relevant to those who have since been released. It has been designed so that it can either be read in private, or used in conversations with a friend, counsellor or family member.

This package contains the story of one young man who experienced sexual assault inside prison and describes how he managed to survive his experience. It also contains information that other inmates have told us would be useful to include. Overall, we have made an effort to provide as realistic a picture of prisoner rape as possible. We know that those in prison often cannot or do not want to let staff know of the details of assaults. Whether a person is planning on reporting the assault or not, we hope this package will enable them to feel a little less alone. In the near future we hope to be able to develop a similar package for female survivors of prisoner rape.

PART ONE: RAPE IN AUSTRALIAN PRISONS

No-one really knows just how many people are raped in Australian prisons because those who are assaulted rarely report the assault for fear of the response. There have been very few studies into sexual assault in Australian prisons. The most significant study was conducted in NSW in 1995 by David Heilpern (Heilpern 1998). This study found that out of the 183 male prisoners aged 18 to 25 who were surveyed, 11 said they were rarely sexually assaulted, 17 said they were occasionally assaulted, 14 said they were assaulted weekly and two said they were sexually assaulted daily. Overall, a quarter of the young men surveyed (44) said they had been sexually assaulted while in prison. The same study included 10 women prisoners who also reported both sexual and physical assaults. It is impossible to know how representative these figures are, but they show that there is a clear need to provide support to those in the Australian prison system who have been sexually assaulted.

The rest of this package is written as if the reader is a survivor of prisoner rape.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Everyone who experiences sexual assault copes with it and gets through it in different ways. No matter how traumatic the rape, being assaulted does not mean that the person is permanently damaged. People cope, survive and thrive through the most impossibly difficult situations.

Every person who has been raped in prison has two different stories to tell. One is the story of the rape and its effects: how it occurred, who was involved, what happened and the effects that the attack has had and is still having.

But there is a second story too, one that is sometimes more difficult to describe. This is the story of how the person survived the rape: how they tried to minimise the damage, how they tried to protect themselves, the things they have thought about to get through each day, and so on.

People who have been subjected to rape often find it important to have a chance to explore both these stories in some detail. This package will ask questions to assist in doing so. Some of these questions may be hard to answer at first but we hope they will be helpful.

It can take a lot to reclaim your life from the effects of sexual assault, especially in prison, but people all around you have probably done just that or are still doing it. You are not alone.

ALEX'S STORY – A STORY OF PRISONER RAPE SURVIVAL

The following story is from a young inmate, Alex, who was in prison for car theft. Alex was raped a number of times while in prison and the story below describes his experiences. This story was generated from an interview in which Alex talked about not only the violence he experienced, but also how he managed to survive this, what memories he held onto, and whose spirits he called on to get through the most difficult times. The interview took place while Alex was still in prison.

It started when I went to court in the prison truck. There were eight of us in the truck. Four on each side. One of them started harassing me – he wanted my shoes. But when I gave them to him he became very aggressive. I thought I had to do what

they wanted me to do. I didn't want to get killed. They were pretty wellknown in the gaol. They forced me to have oral sex and anal sex. It was very painful. It was my first time. It was very distressing emotionally. I didn't want it to happen but I couldn't really say no. There were three of them. One was the main person. He was the main instigator. He just said to the others: 'C'mon have a bit of fun. Get your rocks off'. How can one human being do this to another human being?

One of the inmates was standing up against the window so that the officer couldn't see. When the officer looked around he just saw the back of the inmate. I had nowhere to go. I had handcuffs on and everything. They were all handcuffed. I realised that the three who were on my side of the truck had got on my side deliberately. One had a bit of a grudge against me already. I just wished I'd been on the other side. Then again, the same thing could have happened.

I'm angry that it happened. One of them has a wife. I spoke to a couple of other guys and they went and belted him in the ribs. But that wasn't what I wanted. I wanted him to say it himself that he was sorry. Later, one of the other inmates that did it said he was sorry for what happened, and that he'd never do it again. He said he knew how it must have felt. He was alright. He was pretty cool about it.

Afterwards I couldn't get to sleep at night. I got put on medication. Then I realised the medication made it worse. I was always thinking about it. I had bad dreams. Sometimes the inmates would talk about it: 'You're good for this, you're good for that'. One of the inmates that did it spread the word. It's a bit like a family tree. One person spreads it to two to four to eight. Half the gaol knew. Some of the guys told me to stick close to them, that they'd help me out. I did that and they were helpful.

I was scared though and went into protection. I thought protection would be a safe place, a good place to go. But it wasn't for me. This time the rape was in the yard. They wanted drugs off me. They wanted me to put my money into their account. One of their friends would bring dope in and they wanted me to be the courier for them. I said no and they said 'Do it or we'll kill you. We've got word to kill you already. If you do what we say we'll just use you as a courier.' I thought, they'll do that now,

then they'll get tired of that and they'll rape me and they'll kill me. So I said 'stuff that' and they got angry. The next day one of them had a screwdriver. Another inmate said: 'Don't use it', and so they just belted me instead. It was in the yard in a hidden place. They belted me up and then it was rape.

So I left protection and came back into the main. Some young guy wanted to get a name for himself and bashed me. So then I had to go onto strict protection. It seemed like the only thing I could do other than kill myself.

I still have bad dreams. It's something I have to live with. I try to think about something else but it's still in the back of my head. I can't stop thinking about it. The rape scene makes it very hard when I go to court in the prison truck. I'm stuck in there with other guys and I don't know what they'll do next. I go insane on the trip.

The counsellors and other inmates helped me out heaps. I saw a psychologist and a nurse. I saw the clinic and the drug and alcohol counsellor and some of the education people too. This helped. A group we had also helped, I heard about what other inmates did on the outside, about their regular lives when they weren't in prison. It was good to listen to everybody else. It made me feel more comfortable in the yard. I'm not on my own in the yard any more. I have talked to a few other guys who have also been assaulted and this has meant a lot.

It's been very hard. I've cried myself to sleep and wanted to kill myself over it. I thought there must be something wrong with me if they wanted to do it to me. Why aren't I strong? Why aren't I big? I wish I was tall. I felt so bad at times that it was either kill myself or survive. With what I've got outside now I didn't want to ruin my life. If I had killed myself it would have been best for them. They would have thought: 'Ha, he's killed himself just because of what we've done'. They'd be boasting about it. I didn't want them to have that satisfaction.

I think a lot of people I know outside would be very surprised at how strong I've been, they'd be wondering how I did it. I've tried to think about those people who care about me. My brother would be spinning out. He'd think: 'My poor little brother'. He's always cared for me, been there with me. When we were growing up he was always pleased

to see me, never too busy. Even if he had to go to work he'd drive me there and I'd just sit there. He'd always be there for me. He knows I've got brains. I'd tell him why I had to do it, that I didn't have any choice. I share everything with him. One day he'll find out about this. It might be next week, it might be next year. It's hard for me to keep anything from him so he'll find out one day. I used his spirit to get through all of this. If he was here we'd just talk about it. It'd be very informal. He'd just be here and hearing his voice would help a lot.

I think about my ex-girlfriend too. I'm writing to her now. Her spirit is already helping me to get through. I think of the things we have done together. She always talked me through situations. Even though she didn't speak much English I learnt Vietnamese. She'd say just be strong and I'll be with you all the way. When she'd get in trouble at school and she'd have to go to the principal I'd go too. I'd say: 'Anything you can say to her you can say to me'. I was really angry at him. I said: 'It's as much my fault as hers'. I guess there was some strength there. That's where I think I got some of it from. She'd be surprised at what has happened but she wouldn't be surprised at my strength. It's gotten me through this far.

I guess I have a history of struggling against things. I'm adopted and I've had to deal with that. I've got in trouble before and dealt with that. Back then, there were times when I didn't have anyone to help me out and I had to do it all by myself. So I guess that history has made a difference. Three months ago I was going to kill myself and instead of doing that I've come all this way.

When you've got your life on the line you can't play it as a game. You don't know what the inmates who are hassling you are in here for. You don't know what they're capable of doing if you say 'no' to them. It's a bit hard to give advice to others. Every situation is different. Some people say you should just fight them off. Just fight the people and everything will be alright. But it's not as easy as that. In my situation, I just had to put up with it and not do too much. If I stood up, I'd get knocked back down. I just stayed down and then found that strength from somewhere.

I try to think of the good things in life, what I've always done that made me happy: a TAFE

course, my ex-girlfriend, family, brothers, sisters. I brought their spirits with me. I thought about what I was going to do when I got out of here. I talked to some inmates that I could trust. I have always tried to stay in people's eyesight. Some officers will care, others won't. I wrote letters to a lot of people. I didn't tell them what happened. I just said: 'I'm feeling a little bit down emotionally, can you write to me and make me feel a little bit better?' On the inside getting a letter is something big. I guess we just have to find our own ways to get through. I hope this is of some help to others.

The next section explores some of the possible effects of prisoner rape. After this, some of the ways in which people have dealt and coped with the experience will be shared.

THE EFFECTS OF RAPE

Physical effects

All experiences of rape or sexual assault are different and the effects vary for different people. Sometimes rape has physical effects: you may feel severe pain, shock, tremors of arms and legs, stomach problems, nausea or vomiting, loss of appetite, constipation, diarrhoea, nightmares and/or sleeplessness, headaches, dizziness. You may find yourself spacing-out as a way of coping. Some people have flashbacks, when memories of the rape intrude at different times. All these reactions are completely normal; they are signs that your body and mind is trying to cope with what it has been through. Then again, other people do not have these sorts of responses. The experience differs for everyone.

The voice of rape

Apart from the physical trauma of rape, what rape often does is encourage people to think of themselves in particular ways. Often you need to deal with these thoughts in order to claim all of your life back from sexual assault. If you have been assaulted it is very easy to be overtaken by thoughts that say bad things about yourself. Attackers often encourage these views, as if you are to blame, as if you deserve it, as if you are weak, dirty or somehow not a man anymore. Resisting these thoughts can be really difficult. These sorts of ideas can hang around and keep the

effects of abuse alive. Frequently, these ideas are made worse in prison. The 'voice of rape' can often try to make you feel dirty, violated and guilty. It sometimes tries to take away your dignity and self-respect.

We've included here some questions that might assist in thinking about the 'voice of rape' and how it might be influencing you since the assault:

- What has the 'voice of rape' tried to convince you about yourself?
- Has it tried to say that you were weak, or dirty, or that you deserved what happened to you?
- When is it most likely to get into your head?
- Are there times when it is less likely to be around?
- Are there any ways that you have tried to speak back to this 'voice of rape'?
- Are there ways in which you have tried to get 'the voice of rape' out of your head?

The voice of self-blame

One of the most devious effects of rape is that it encourages you to blame yourself for what has happened. The voice of self-blame may try to convince you that the rape was somehow your own fault, that you should have been able to resist it, prevent it, that it was something about you that made the perpetrator(s) single you out. There are so many ways in which the voice of self-blame operates. It often appears when people are feeling most vulnerable. It twists the truth and can leave people feeling guilty or even hating themselves.

- Since the rape, has the voice of self-blame invited you to judge yourself harshly?
- Have you found ways to quieten the voice of self-blame?
- Are there any memories of people or past times that act as an antidote to the voice of self-blame?
- Who in your life would be the person who would most stand up against the voice of self-blame, who would want to support you at this time? This person might be an old friend, a relative, your mother, a partner, or ex-partner. You may or may not still be in contact with them. In fact, they may not even still be alive.
- Whatever the case, if they were present, if they could speak to you now, what might they say about self-blame?

Despair – a loss of hope

There are many things about life in prison that can make despair grow large after an experience of sexual assault. This is particularly true if you are at risk of further assaults and when you have little control over your circumstances. Some people have described how a loss of all hope can descend at times like this.

- Have there been other times in your life where you have lost hope and where despair has been close by?
- How did you make it through such times in the past?
- Are there any hopes for the future that you still hold onto?
- What is the history of these hopes?
- Why are they important to you?
- Who would know that these are important to you?

Sexuality and your body

One of the effects of sexual abuse is that it can confuse people about their own sexuality and sexual preferences. Physical responses to assault can be very puzzling. Your body may have become physically aroused during the assault and you may have got an erection. If the assault was by someone of the opposite sex, the attack may trigger questions about heterosexuality and sexual identity. If the assault was by someone of the same sex then this can bring questions about homosexuality and sexual identity. If you experience a variety of feelings, there is no need to try to put a label on yourself. Your body is trying to deal with a very complex situation. Some people also describe that after experiencing sexual assault their sexual fantasies change; what is arousing to them may also change for a time.

People's bodies respond to sexual violence in different ways. Some people's bodies close down for a while. They choose to avoid sexual activity. Others take steps to reclaim their own physical responses and sexual pleasure. In a place like prison this can be really difficult. You may still be at risk, there is often a lack of privacy, lack of anything sensual, and of course you may be separated from those you care most about. Despite these obstacles, if you wish to, there are still ways of trying to reclaim your sexuality from the effects of rape. The world of fantasy and opportunities for masturbation are generally still available. Sometimes there are also opportunities for

consensual sex behind prison walls.

If reclaiming physical pleasure is important to you, or becomes important to you sometime in the future, we suggest you try to find ways of experiencing sexual pleasure free from the images and associations of rape. If you masturbate, it may be possible to explore holding different images in your mind – perhaps of ex-partners, perhaps of places where you have been sexual in the past, times when you have felt in control of what was to happen, and when your choices were respected. There may also be ways of relating to your own body with kindness and tenderness.

On a different note, some men try to claim back a sense of their bodies through engaging in sport, or weights, or exercise. There are many different ways or reclaiming a sense of your own body and sexuality.

A STORY OF SURVIVAL

Despite all the difficulties of prison life and the assault(s), if you are reading this, then somehow you have managed to survive. What does it say about you that you have survived? What strengths or skills have you drawn upon? What is the history of these skills? Where did you learn these survival strategies?

These sorts of questions may seem strange at first and difficult to answer, especially if you are feeling shaky. But they are important questions. This section focuses on the ways in which people resist and survive prisoner rape.

Acts of resistance

Even if it is not obvious at first, everyone who is subjected to rape resists in different ways. Some people resist physically and fight back. Others resist by thinking particular thoughts, holding onto positive images, or by blocking out what is taking place. Some people manage to almost leave their body and it is as if they are hardly present during the assault. Some people try to persuade their attacker(s) to allow them to perform certain sexual acts and not others, or to use a condom (where they are available). Others are deliberately quiet and physically passive in order to minimise the violence against them. Some men say and do one thing while thinking something completely different. They ensure that the rapist(s) do not know their thoughts and

feelings. Others try to think about what they will do when the assault is over. They keep their minds focused on the future.

It can be significant to acknowledge how you tried to resist the rape, or how you tried to minimise its harm. While these might seem like small actions at first, they often show what is precious to you and how you have tried to protect yourself in the most difficult circumstances. We suggest you try to think about these acts of resistance, and then ask yourself:

- What do these actions of resistance say about what is important to you?
- Who would be least surprised (and most supportive) to know that you resisted the rape in these ways?
- If they could be present now what do you think they might appreciate about how you are trying to deal with this situation?

Trying to stay safe

After an assault, people try to stay safe in many different ways. Some people seek support from other inmates. Some keep very quiet and try to be invisible, perhaps staying in their cell for days at a time. Some people hook-up with a stronger inmate, become their cellmate and offer sexual favours in return for safety from other inmates. Others speak out to an officer or other staff member and may be placed in 'protection'. Some people ask advice from fellow inmates and plan ways to fight back if they are threatened again. Others decide to stop showering in an attempt to keep people away. Some people self-harm in order to be removed to a safe cell. Every situation is different. What is always true is that people take some sort of action to try to be safer. Even if these efforts are not completely successful, even if the person is subjected to further violence, it is important to acknowledge the different steps that you have taken to try to stay safe.

- What are some of the ways in which you have tried to protect yourself?
- What do these actions and plans say about what is important to you?

Living life

After an assault, it can take some time to 'return to life', to re-engage with the things in life that are important to you. But, people often say that getting back to do the things that are meaningful in life is a critically important part of reducing the effects of

rape. For instance, some people find it helpful to get back to exercising, study, writing to those you care about outside, reading, working, drawing or painting, playing sport, etc. Others find counselling, meditation or spiritual practice and prayer to be sources of strength.

- Are there ways in which you are 'returning to life'?
- Are there small examples of ways in which you are re-engaging with the things that you value and enjoy in life?

Dealing with life in prison more generally

Much about prison life is degrading and invites a sense of worthlessness or hopelessness. The following questions are included to help in thinking through how people try to deal with the everyday pressures of prison life. Despite the harshness of life behind bars, there are ways in which some prisoners support each other. There are, at times, acts of kindness, company, and care. People try to make the best of their time inside and some inmates try to assist others in the process.

- Are there ways in which you protect yourself from the degradation of imprisonment?
- What are you trying to protect?
- Are there ways you have held onto dreams or memories from outside?
- If there are memories that you have held onto, why are they precious to you? What do they indicate that you value in your life?
- What is the history of these values? When did these things first become important to you?
- Are there ways in which you are now trying to act on these values in your life, even while in prison? Do they influence your actions in anyway now? If so, how?
- What would the people you have good memories about think of you calling up their presence? Is there any way of conveying to these people what these memories mean to you?
- Are there other people who are helping you get through prison life? If so, who are they and how are they demonstrating their support? Why do you think they choose to support you? What makes you open to their support?
- Have there been ways in which you have contributed to others dealing with the effects of imprisonment? If so, how? And why?

- Have there been acts of kindness or care from other inmates that have been significant to you? Have there been particular conversations that have meant a lot to you?
- Are there aspects of prison life, or other people in prison, that are sustaining your hopes and dreams?

Finding an audience

It can make a significant difference to dealing with the effects of rape if you can find just one person who is willing and able to be an audience to the stories of how you are trying to deal with the effects of the assault. This person can reflect on the skills and strategies you have been using, they can acknowledge all that you are doing to try to recover.

While in prison, finding such a support person can be difficult. You might be able to write to a friend or family member outside about your efforts to recover and receive a letter from them in response.

Alternatively, perhaps there is a psychologist or social worker in the prison who you could trust with these stories. If you don't want to tell them about the rape itself, it may still be possible to ask them to listen to your responses to some of the questions that are included in this document. At the end of this document we have included some information for professionals. If you do try to approach a psychologist or counsellor, please show them this information to assist them in responding to your stories in helpful ways.

If you can't find someone who is helpful and who you trust, you might like to write to us here at Preventing Prisoner Rape. We will write back to you, acknowledging the ways in which you are taking steps to reclaim your life from the assault. We would really like to hear from you.

PART TWO: CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

Many men in prison have experienced sexual abuse in their lives when they were young. Sexual abuse includes any unwanted sexual contact from another person, especially from someone in authority over us. Often the abusers are older members of the family and they are usually (but not always) men such as uncles, fathers, step-fathers, and older brothers. Sometimes they are people in positions of authority like teachers, sports coaches, school counsellors, religious ministers or scout masters. For those who have spent time in boys' homes and juvenile

institutions, the abuse often came from staff and older guys. Indigenous Australians have had to struggle against the sexual abuse and assaults that occurred in missions and boys' homes.

Because childhood sexual abuse occurs when you know little about sexuality and your own body, it can be very disturbing and confusing. Sometimes men who were sexually abused as children get confused about their sexuality – either by thinking that they are gay when they are not, or by thinking that being gay is something bad and connected with abuse. Others feel guilty if their bodies physically 'enjoyed' the abuse, feel ashamed and never speak to anyone about their experiences, or are disbelieved and silenced. The 'voice of self-blame' often accompanies sexual abuse, so much so that victims of abuse sometimes sometimes feel very bad about themselves even though they did nothing wrong. The effects of sexual abuse are different for different people and each person seeks to cope with it in his own ways.

We have included here some questions and ideas that others have found helpful in thinking through experiences of sexual abuse.

Resisting abuse

Even young children in very powerless situations take steps to try to reduce the effects of abuse while it is occurring. These efforts might involve small things like closing their eyes, imagining they are elsewhere, crying, trying to influence what the abuser is doing, seeking comfort afterwards, or confiding in an imaginary friend or toy. Older children or young people who are abused also take actions whenever possible to lessen the harm and frequency of abuse and to seek comfort where it is available. Even in the harshest of situations young people take these small steps but, because there is little chance to talk about these things, they may have been forgotten. If memories of childhood sexual abuse are coming into your mind, it can be significant to try to remember the ways in which you sought comfort during those years and the ways in which you tried to escape the effects of abuse.

Stories of protest

Some young men who were subjected to sexual abuse tell stories of how they were understood by others to be 'juvenile delinquents' or 'anti-social' or 'a problem' when they were young. These labels may have been created by others when a young man didn't attend family events, ran

away from home, or skipped school to avoid the abuser. These actions may have been understood negatively by others, but they can also be seen as acts of resistance.

- If you were unable to speak about your experiences of abuse, do you think that this influenced you to make some other sort of statement like challenging rules?
- Would your actions of 'rebellion' at school have been more or less likely if the abuse had not occurred?
- Did you hope that these actions of rebellion might make it less likely for the abuse to continue?
- Do you see your actions as fitting with a story of resistance?

Stories of resilience and spending time alone

After being subjected to sexual abuse, some boys and young men withdraw from various relationships, develop ways of spending time alone, take up particular games, and even develop imaginary friends who allow them to escape into a world of their own. Sometimes other people interpret these actions negatively, describing these young men as 'loners', 'distant' or 'dreamers'. However, these solitary pursuits often represent stories of resilience, stories of how they kept themselves sane and safe.

- Were there ways in which your imagination and dreams protected you when you were young?
- Were there particular games or places that you would escape to?
- What do these actions say about the young man you were, that you sought out ways to keep yourself sane and safe?

Stories of connection

For many men, experiences of abuse brought a sense of profound isolation, and yet there may have been one or two people with whom they experienced a special connection. This person may have been another child or a supportive adult – perhaps a teacher – who recognised something positive about you as a young person.

- Was there any other young person or adult with whom you had a good connection when you were young?
- What were the sorts of things that you used to do together?
- What were some of the ways in which this person contributed to your life?
- What do you think this person saw in you that meant they wanted to spend time with you in these ways?

- What were some of the ways in which you contributed to their life?
- What does it mean to you that, despite the effects of abuse, these connections were made?
- If this person was present now, how do you think they would try to support you? What do you think they would say about the ways in which you are trying to deal with what you are going through?
- Is there any way that you could reach out to this person now?

How childhood abuse may be relevant now

The reason we have included this information about childhood sexual abuse is that a large percentage of men in prison experienced abuse when they were younger. When sexual assaults occur in prison, they can bring to life these past experiences.

- Are there any ways in which you tried to deal with the sexual abuse you experienced in the past that may be helpful to you now, in your current situation?
- Are there any stories from your childhood of protest, resistance, resilience and connection that could assist you now?

If you would like to discuss your experiences of sexual abuse and the ways you have coped with this over the years, you may want to talk to a psychologist or social worker in the prison. If you do not want to talk directly with someone but would like to share your experiences, you could write to us at Preventing Prisoner Rape. We have the greatest respect for people who have been subjected to abuse and to rape in prison and who have found ways to stay alive. We would always welcome hearing from you and we will write back.

A NOTE TO PSYCHOLOGISTS / SOCIAL WORKERS WITHIN PRISON

If an inmate has given you this document, it is because he wishes to speak to you about the ways in which he has endured experiences of childhood sexual abuse or prisoner rape. He may or may not want to tell you the details of what he has experienced. Please make it clear to him whether what he tells you will be kept confidential or in what circumstances you will be required to disclose your conversations to other staff.

Regardless of whether he wishes to tell you the details of what he has experienced, if he is showing you this writing then he wants someone to be able to listen to the steps he has taken in dealing with what he has been through.

The sorts of responses that may be most helpful include:

- Acknowledging the skills and knowledge that he has developed to deal with the circumstances he has been facing.
- Exploring the history of these skills and knowledge, and how he came to develop them.
- Inquiring about who else in his life would know about these skills and knowledge, and what they would say about him using them in these ways now.

It may also be healing for him to hear about how what he has shared with you will assist you in your work with others. If there is a way of acknowledging how what he has been through has not been for nothing, that his experiences can help other people, this can make a significant difference. If in listening to him you can honestly describe ways in which his stories will influence your work with others, it would be very appropriate to let him know.

If you would like further information about these forms of responses please do not hesitate to contact Preventing Prisoner Rape, c/o Dulwich Centre PO Box 7192, Adelaide, South Australia 5000. Phone: 61-8 8223 3966. Fax: 61-8 8232 4441. Email: dulwich@senet.com.au

REFERENCES AND RELEVANT READING/RESOURCES

- Denborough, D. (ed) 1996: *Beyond the Prison: Gathering dreams of freedom*. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Heilpern, D. 1998: *Fear of Favour: Sexual assault of young prisoners*. Lismore: Southern Cross University Press.
- Human Rights Watch, 2001: *No Escape: Male rape in U.S. Prisons*. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- O'Leary, P. 1998: 'Liberation from self-blame: Working with men who have experienced childhood sexual abuse.' *Dulwich Centre Journal*, 4:24-40. Republished 1999 in Dulwich Centre Publications (eds): *Extending Narrative Therapy: A collection of practice-based papers* (chapter 12), pp. 159-187.
- Sabo, D., Kupers T., & London, W. 2001: *Prison Masculinities*. Philadelphia: Temple Press.
- Preventing Prisoner Rape: www.dulwichcentre.com.au (follow the links from the home page)
- Stop Prisoner Rape (US based organisation): www.spr.org This website contains comprehensive information and writing about rape in US prisons.



DEAR READER

This paper was originally published by Dulwich Centre Publications, a small independent publishing house based in Adelaide Australia.

You can do us a big favour by respecting the copyright of this article and any article or publication of ours.

The article you have read is copyright © Dulwich Centre Publications Except as permitted under the Australian Copyright Act 1968, no part of this article may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission.

All enquiries should be made to the copyright owner at:

Dulwich Centre Publications, Hutt St PO Box 7192, Adelaide, SA, Australia, 5000;
email dcp@dulwichcentre.com.au

thank you!

We really appreciate it.

You can find out more about us at:
www.dulwichcentre.com.au

You can find a range of on-line resources at:
www.narrativetherapyonline.com

And you can find more of our publications at:
www.narrativetherapylibrary.com

