

# "Better Lives"

## A 10 week sexual offending treatment program for individuals with intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

Starting in Brisbane  
& Rockhampton 2011

"Better lives" is a 10-week cognitive behavioural treatment program designed specifically for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviour. The program's goal is to help participants develop skills and abilities to stop sexually abusive behaviour. Each group is conducted by two experienced facilitators and will contain a maximum of eight participants. A comprehensive evaluation will be completed prior to and after the program. Specific attention will also be given to providing support staff with guidance with respect to specific strategies and techniques to assist their clients be successful in managing unhelpful sexual urges and behaviours.

### BACKGROUND

The problem of sexual offending and overrepresentation of people with intellectual disability perpetrating these types of behaviours has been well documented within the literature. Individuals with ID who commit such offences often experience segregation and stigmatisation, in addition to a reduction in quality of life due to the imposition of various restrictions. The access to specialized treatment and support is often limited, and until recently was considered to be ineffective. Studies however have started to emerge that show that community based programs can assist people with intellectual disability to manage their behaviours and prevent of future re-offending.

The current program utilises Cognitive Behavioural Treatment (CBT), which is considered to be effective in reducing sexually abusive behaviour than other treatment programs or no treatment at all.

CBT programs tend to be comprehensive, evidence based and useful in addressing deviant sexual arousal, cognitive distortions and social skill impairments. Importantly, the program is underpinned the Responsivity Principles. Or put another way, working with individuals

in a way that accounts for their unique difficulties, skills and deficits to optimise the ability to learn.

### THE PROGRAM

The Better Lives Cognitive Behavioural program utilises multiple learning strategies to maximize opportunities for skill development and knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, the program applied methods commonly used in treatment including modeling, role playing, positive reinforcement, cognitive restructuring, self-instructional training, and moral reasoning.

The program consists of 10 sessions. Each session will span five hours and will contain a brief lunch break. Participants will be provided with lunch. The duration of the program can vary depending on the size of the group and learning ability. There is a standard pre and post assessment which includes Service Completion report. The assessments and report typically require three separate sessions. The program is offered as a group format and requires a minimum of 5 and maximum of 8 participants.

Two experienced practitioners will facilitate the group, and the Brisbane group will contact an observer to provide feedback.

## Details

### What?

- **10 week cognitive behavioural sexual offending treatment program**
- Once per week (5 hours per session)

### Who?

- Adults with intellectual disability and/or developmental disabilities
- **Facilitators: Luke Hatzipetrou & Lars Madsen**

### Where & When?

- Rockhampton: Wednesday 22nd of June 2011 - Wednesday
- Brisbane: Start of September (date to be finalised with numbers)

### Cost?

- \$5000 per participants, includes 50 hours of group treatment, pre and post assessment and report.
- Includes coffee/tea, biscuits and lunch

### Coordinator / Contact Person:

**Ms Amber Learthwick (Coordinator)**

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### Facilitators:

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