

Improving family relationships for
prisoners and their partners

Building Stronger Families

Prisoners' Profile



- Background of dysfunctional families (47% ran away) or in care (27%)
- Family member criminal (43%)
- Poor empathy
- Poor communications

Family Life in Prison



- 97% say they have a family
- 55% living with partner before imprisonment
- 31% receive no visits
- 43% of sentenced prisoners lose touch with their families
- 125,000 children in the UK have a parent in custody
- Average distance from home - 53 miles

Research

Resettlement of
Imprisoned Fathers
into Families in the
UK

Margaret O'Brien
UEA

Supported by Nuffield
Foundation

Resettlement outcomes
on release from
prison in 2003

*Stephen Niven &
Duncan Stewart*
Home Office
2005

O'Brien's Conclusions

- Resettlement initiatives need to be *father* and *couple* sensitive.
- Routinely record parental status, couple status and quality, family residence pattern on prison admission.
- The couple relationship could be central in promoting more responsible parenting from fathers and in reducing re-offending

Niven & Stewart Conclusions

- 37% of those who had been visited in prison had education, training or employment arranged on release compared with 16% who had not received any visits
- over half of those who had education, training and employment had arranged this through family and friends
- prisoners who had received family or partner visits were nearly three times more likely to have accommodation on release
- 69% of offenders who were homeless or in temporary accommodation before going to prison, but had an address to go on release, were moving in with their partners or family, and a further 10% moved in with friends

Does Marriage make a Difference?

- In USA a study of 500 men, some until they were 70
- Marriage reduces odds of crime by 35% (this may apply to stable cohabitation as well)

“Your friends or me.”

Spouse of an adult offender who desisted from crime

Sampson, Laub & Wimer, Criminology 2006

Why does marriage make a difference?

Possible reasons:

- Opportunities for investment in new relationships that offer support, growth, and new networks;
- Routines that centre more on family life and less on unstructured time with peers;
- Supervision and monitoring of behaviour;
- Opportunity for identity transformation

Can we make a difference?

Can

TRAINING OF THE OFFENDER AND THEIR
PARTNER IN SIMPLE SKILLS WITHIN THE
PRISON ENVIRONMENT

lead to

LONG TERM AND SUSTAINED CHANGE
IN FAMILY DYNAMICS, EMOTIONAL AND
FINANCIAL STABILITY WHICH HELPS REDUCE
RE-OFFENDING

Practical Issues

- Finding an officer in the prison who is determined to make the scheme work
- Suitable venue
- Security issues
- Getting the prison to pay

The Course

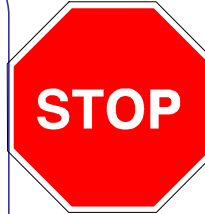
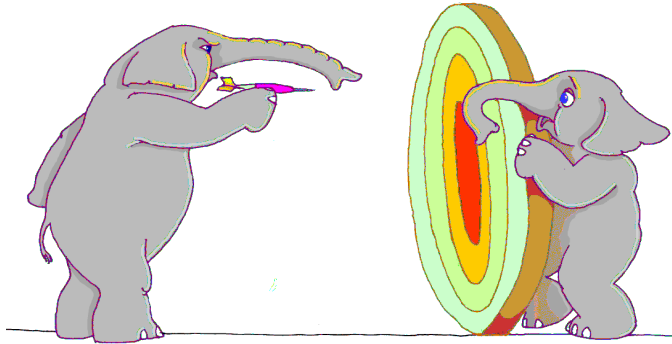
- Six days, usually over 6 weeks
- Three modules
 - Couples Relationship
 - Parenting
 - Finance
- OCN qualifications

Material

- Ideas from a variety of sources
- Using PREP for overview
- What destroys a relationship is not the opposite of what builds one

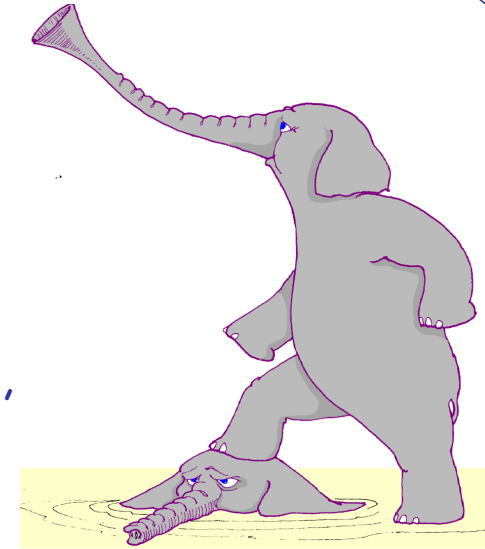
PUTTING THE RELATIONSHIP AT RISK

No Scoring points please
I don't want to feel angry
and resentful



Please
don't put
me down

I don't
want to
feel hurt,
small and
unloved



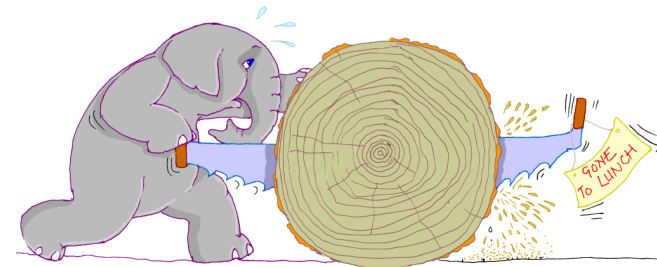
Don't
think the
worst of
me

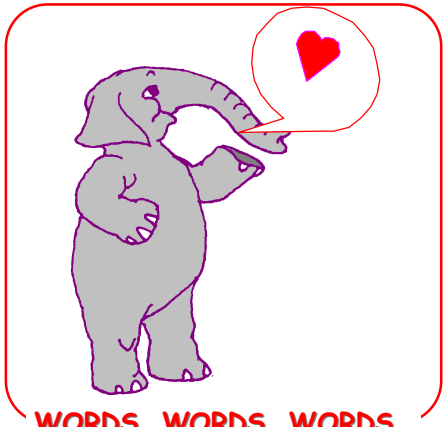
I need
you to
trust me



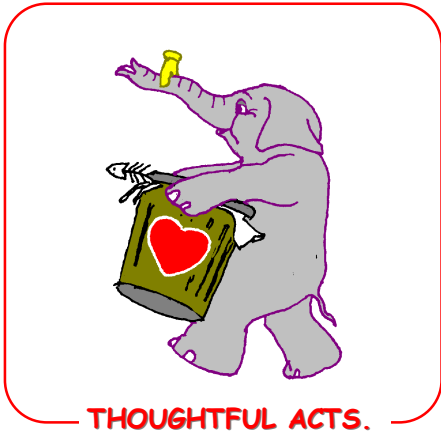
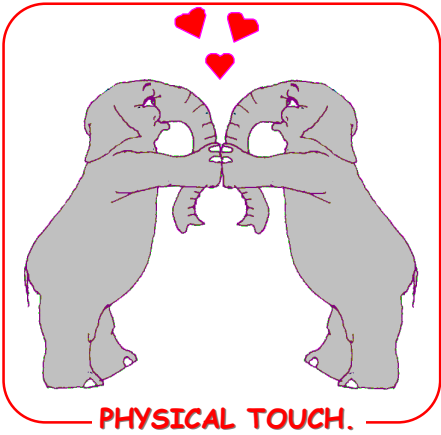
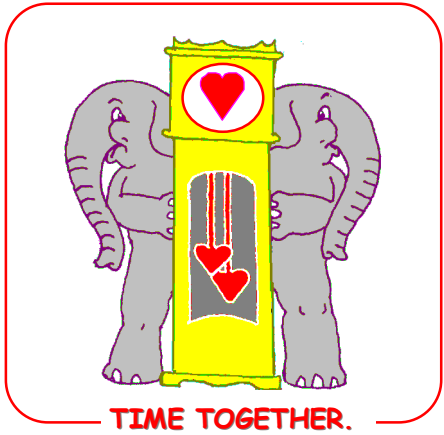
Don't let's opt out and
ignore the problem.

Let's be open and honest
with one another

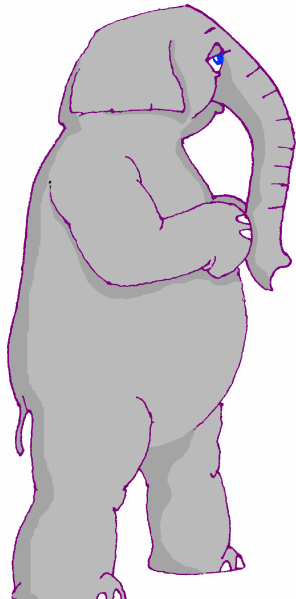




WHAT IS YOUR
PREFERRED
LANGUAGE OF
LOVE ?



The process of forgiveness



Listen to the hurt caused



Show understanding of the hurt caused



Accept responsibility and offer sincere apologies

NO FISHING

Forgiveness is more than just a feeling –
it's a DECISION!