

An Intensive Psychotherapy  
program within an adapted TC \_  
A new way to do treatment?



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# Caraniche

Caraniche is a specialist in forensic service delivery and has been the major provider of substance use treatment programs within the Victoria prisons system since 1994.

We deliver a range of programs across Marngoneet including psycho educational programs, 40 hour criminogenic programs, harm minimisation pre-release programs and an Intensive Psychotherapy program.



# Marngoneet Correctional Centre

The Marngoneet Correctional Centre is a 300 bed, medium security facility, providing intensive treatment and offender management programs for males who are at moderate to high risk of reoffending, and who have a minimum of six months of their sentence left to serve.

Marngoneet operates as an adapted Therapeutic Community.



# The community

At Marngoneet most of the men reside in cottages, this is a privilege encouraged and earned after orientation. The cottages are self catering and require that the men learn to budget, share household tasks and partake in fortnightly house community meetings to address any issues.

The week is structured, based on 30 working hours made up of therapy, education and work. Community rules apply to all activities



# The community

The men in the community are also required to attend whole of community meetings, and input into prison liaison meetings and whole of prison meetings.

This is a unique opportunity within a correctional setting, for the men to have a voice on improving their environment, to take responsibility and ownership.



# The Intensive 130 hour Psychotherapy D&A Program

Individuals in the Intensive program are required to be active members of the community, role modelling to others community principles and undertaking Peer Roles where appropriate.

Undertaking this program requires a large personal investment and commitment from the participants, the men are required to address all aspects of their lives which impact upon their addictive behaviours and offending.



# The Intensive 130 hour contract

- to participate in the program for four to six months that involve 4 (2 hour) group psychotherapy sessions and a community group meeting per week.
- one session of individual counselling per fortnight
- to participate honestly and fairly
- to listen openly to other participants, and not interrupt
- to respect all members of the group
- to respect group rules
- to give feedback to other group members
- to attend all sessions, and be on time
- to respect the confidentiality of other participants
- to remain drug free.



# Daily program structure

Check –in

Old business

Work

Feedback

Closure



# The challenges - Men

## Participation

For many of the men speaking up in a group is difficult – particularly when discussing issues which may invoke shame, embarrassment or difficult memories

## Letting go of prison culture

Many prisoners operate under a hierarchical system in traditional prison culture. The program requires prisoners to relinquish prison culture and be open to discussing with, being challenged by and participating with all men within their group.

## Taking responsibility

Many of the men blame the system or external factors for their situation. Undertaking the Intensive program requires them to take responsibility for all of their actions in order to be empowered to make change.



# The challenges - Men

## Separating from friends

When undertaking the Intensive program many men find that they have to make difficult choices between staying with their current friendship group, many who may be the only “family” they know and separating from these friends in order to meet their new goals. This is difficult and prisoners typically feel rejected/isolated as a result of separating from their stoical networks.

## Vulnerability

Traditionally any show of vulnerability in prison has the potential to lead to victimisation. One of the challenges faced by the men in the Intensive group is to allow themselves to be vulnerable, to care for their group and to accept the feelings that come with this.



# The challenges - Men

## Confronting

For many of the men it is the first time they have considered the impact of their drug use and offending on them, their families and their victims. One of the most challenging aspects is when they consider their role as a current or prospective father. Also, they reflect on their relationships with their own fathers.



# The challenges - Therapists

## Trust

Unlike in a community TC, the men at Marngoneet are often not in their current environment by choice. A prison is not traditionally a place of trust and therapists work hard to challenge the men to understand that trust is something that is developed between group members.

## Expert barrier

Unlike many traditional TC's, therapists and staff have not been through this particular therapeutic journey. Initially, this can lead to the men considering that we don't understand or have nothing to offer. Within the Intensive program the men are considered the expert, that is why the program only works with participation from the men. The therapist provides direction, safety and containment.



# The challenges - Therapists

## Therapy within a correctional setting

Good order and safety of the prison are always top priority – this means that when one of the men makes a choice to threaten the prison's security they can be removed – often at short notice. In some situations this means that therapists do not have an opportunity to process the decision making, ending or consequences with the men.

## Clinical and custodial staff relationships

At Marngoneet the staff work very closely, men are jointly managed by a clinical treatment manager and custodial case manager. However, clinicians also have privileged information – managing relationships and boundaries is a unique challenge within the correctional setting.



# The challenges – The Prison

## Supporting therapy whilst keeping the prison safe

Similar to the challenges faced by therapists, custodial staff and prison management are trying hard to support the TC principles, without the background knowledge or supervision provided to therapists. This can sometimes lead custodial staff to be confused about how to operate within a correctional environment using TC principles.

## Managing the men after group – PSO role

Given the unique challenges of the Intensive group the men sometimes act out after leaving group. Custodial staff are there to provide support and containment at this time however it can be a difficult balance for them given their lack of exposure to what has been covered in the Intensive group.



# The outcome

To date 71 men have successfully completed between 4 and 6 months of Intensive therapy. Psychometric outcomes utilising the Carlson Psychological Survey demonstrate that the program has positively influenced prisoners' antisocial tendencies, increased subjective feelings of self worth and improved general psychological functioning. On the Trauma Symptom Inventory there was a significant reduction on 9 out of 13 trauma scales.

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Thank you for your time

