

# Transformative Learning Theory and Its Application to the Delivery of Community Maintenance Programs for Men Who Have Sexually Offended

International Journal of  
Offender Therapy and  
Comparative Criminology  
1–21

© The Author(s) 2022

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/0306624X221099491

journals.sagepub.com/home/ijo



Carollyne Youssef<sup>1</sup> 

## Abstract

Given public perceptions about those who have sexually offended, there tends to be a focus on offence-specific intervention programs in a bid to address re-offending risk. With a significant portion of the literature on sexual offending focused on the development and evaluation of interventions targeting this behavior, there is little that considers community maintenance programs (CMPs) or those programs in the community where those who are released from prison are attempting to reintegrate. Further, there is no known research considering the theoretical underpinnings of or a framework for delivering CMPs. This paper offers Transformative Learning Theory as a potential framework for the delivery of CMPs and offers that adult learning theory needs to be considered in the delivery of offending interventions.

## Keywords

sexual offenders, reintegration, community maintenance programs, learning

Sexual offending is a crime with serious short- and long-term social and financial repercussions. Sexual offences take a significant toll on the physical and psychological wellbeing of victims and their families with broader ripple effects (George & Marlatt, 1989; Ullman & Filipas, 2001). No other type of offending attracts as much community concern and fear as does sexual offending. This places sexual offending at

---

<sup>1</sup>PsychOrium Forensic & Clinical Psychology Services, Manahan, NSW, Australia

## Corresponding Author:

Carollyne Youssef, PsychOrium Forensic & Clinical Psychology Services, PO Box 20, Manahan, NSW 2200, Australia.

Email: [Carollyne.Youssef@psychorium.com](mailto:Carollyne.Youssef@psychorium.com)

the forefront of political and legislative policies with increased efforts over the past few decades made to try and protect the community from those who have sexually offended. Increased efforts include a range of offender management approaches including electronic monitoring, scheduling, restrictions, extended supervision orders, mandated intervention, and sex offender registers (see McAlinden, 2006, 2007). There is clearly importance in considering the re-entry and reintegration process for those who are being released from prison to the community, given this is the inevitable outcome for most of those who are incarcerated.

Given public perceptions of, and fears about those who have sexually offended, there tends to be a focus on custodial offence-specific intervention programs in a bid to address re-offending risk, often at the exclusion of considering community-based reintegration programs. Indeed, a significant portion of the literature on sexual offending is focused on the development and evaluation of interventions targeting this behavior. Despite some studies suggesting that treatment for men who have sexually offended has some effect in reducing sexual and non-sexual recidivism (e.g., Lovins et al., 2009; Olver et al., 2008), there continues to be conflicting evidence regarding the efficacy of current treatment programs (e.g., La Fond, 2005; Marques et al., 2005; Schmucker & Lösel, 2015; Seager et al., 2004).

While there is a strong focus in the literature on the efficacy of custodial and community treatment programs aimed at addressing offending behavior, these studies seldom mention a maintenance component, and on the rare occasion if they are mentioned, there tends to be no breakdown of the efficacy of the maintenance component (see Youssef, 2013, 2022). Furthermore, there is little information regarding *how* those who have completed an offending behavior intervention program go on to implement those learnings and maintain those assumed changes in the community. There are also no known studies examining the efficacy or delivery of community programs that released inmates may participate in upon their re-entry into the community.

The importance of developing an understanding of how people who have been to prison, maintain changes they may have made in a custodial program, successfully (re) integrate upon release to the community and ultimately, desist, is imperative. Not only is this relevant for policy makers, the general community, and possible victims but also for the very people who have engaged in behavior that has caused considerable harm. In light of these outstanding questions and gaps in the literature, it would be remiss not to consider the role of ongoing support and maintenance for men who have sexually offended who are re-entering the community.

Community maintenance programs (CMPs) are described as community programs for released inmates who have generally completed an offence-specific custodial treatment program (Youssef et al., 2016). For the purposes of this paper, CMPs will be used to refer to *psychological* intervention programs/services, as opposed to non-psychological services in the community (e.g., probation and parole, supportive community services, after-care, and pre-release programs), volunteer or mentor-like programs (e.g., Circles of Support and Accountability; CoSA), or monitoring and surveillance of those who have offended. CMPs for the purposes of this paper will also refer to programs offered to those who have been in custody and completed a custodial program, rather than something akin to a community treatment program.

CMPs seem to be tasked with the goal of assisting those who have previously offended to “maintain” something (i.e., adaptive changes made because of intervention) and desist from something else (i.e., sexual offending behavior). As mentioned, CMPs are conceptually different to “treatment” programs, however a clear definition of what these programs are remain vague at best (see Youssef et al., 2017). Two primary targets have been suggested as important for CMPs; reintegration and the maintenance of treatment gains (Youssef et al., 2017). The first is in assisting those released from custody with the re-entry stage and reintegration into the community, which entails stability in basic areas such as accommodation, employment (or regular income), and social support and specifically providing psychological support during this stage. The second is maintaining treatment gains so that those who are released can identify and then manage their risk; CMPs would provide additional support and “revision” as needed as participants face situations that increase their vulnerabilities or susceptibilities for reoffending.

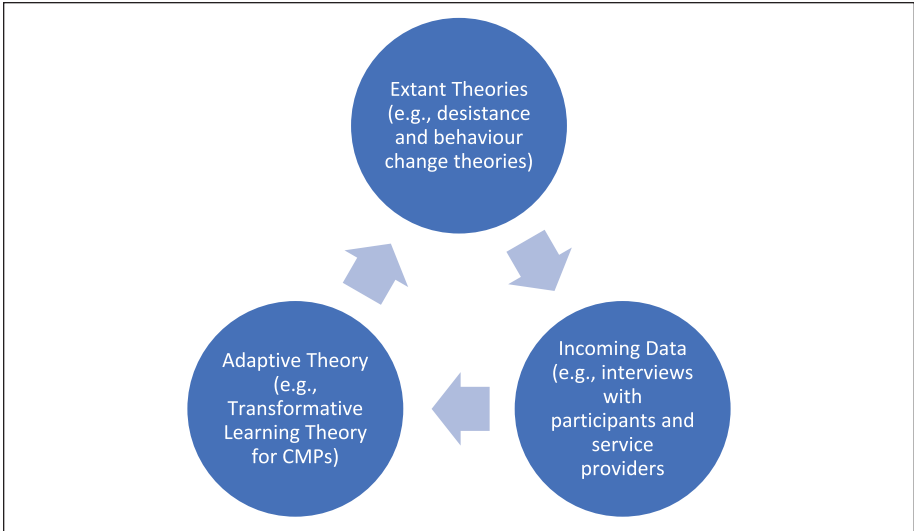
However, while CMPs appear *theoretically* to have a solid place within offender rehabilitation (Cumming & McGrath, 2005; Day & Casey, 2010; Whisman, 1990; Youssef, 2013) as purportedly consolidating treatment gains made through a custodial program and implementing those changes in their lives post-release, very little research has explored the conceptualization or operationalization of such programs (see Day & Casey, 2010; Youssef, 2013). Furthermore, how people who have offended make these very changes and then maintain them upon release from prison is something that has not been thoroughly explored in the literature (Youssef, 2013).

This paper will start with a review of literature and a summary of two recent qualitative studies that have explored one of Australia’s largest CMPs for high-risk men who have sexually offended, this will be followed by a brief consideration of human change and learning before outlining and proposing a learning theory as a framework for the delivery of CMPs. There will also be a consideration of implications for practice as well as future research.

## Existing CMP Research

While CMPs are often referred to, or implicitly assumed to be, an imperative component of intervention for those who have offended, the literature fails to provide anything comprehensive regarding the theoretical underpinnings or definitions (see Day & Casey, 2010; Youssef, 2013; Youssef et al., 2017). Grafting traditional treatment models onto CMPs to inform their theoretical underpinnings or delivery may not necessarily provide an adequate knowledge base for understanding how these interventions should be delivered at the release stage (Jonson & Cullen, 2015).

Given the lack of research in this field it is important to ground any preliminary work in theory to guide data collection and analysis, whilst also allowing for the exploration of emergent concepts (Glaser & Straus, 1967). There are only two known studies examining CMPs specifically; these studies are two qualitative studies exploring Australia’s largest maintenance program, which interviewed CMP service providers and participants (see Youssef et al., 2022a, 2022b). This research adopted an exploratory, qualitative design to generate ideas about the conceptualization, and theoretical



**Figure 1.** Process of adaptive theory.

underpinnings to enable CMPs to be examined further in future research; they also provided some information in relation to how best CMPs can be facilitated and what approach seemed most effective.

Adaptive Theory (Layder, 1998) was used as the methodology that recognizes that relevant extant theories exist *before* data collection. As Figure 1 shows, the incoming data from the empirical works from interviews with CMP participants and service providers (i.e., emergent theory) were interpreted through existing concepts and theories (i.e., extant theories such as desistance theories and behavior change theories), leading to adaptations and refinements to existing theories (i.e., “adaptive theory,” in this case, Transformative Learning Theory). From this process, adaptive theories related to maintenance generally were identified. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the adaptive theory that was proposed as a possible framework for the delivery of CMPs, which is Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1996).

The literature points to several key areas to consider as relevant to CMPs and to how people change from offending to nonoffending behavior including desistance theories (see Maruna, 2006; Maruna & LeBel, 2010; Weaver, 2019), reintegration factors (McAlinden, 2006), environmental influences such as social support (Fox, 2016; McNeill, 2006), the therapeutic alliance (Sandhu & Rose, 2012; Walij et al., 2014) as well as certain internal factors such as hope (Moulden & Marshall, 2009; Snyder et al., 2002), identity (Healy, 2010; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Maruna, 2001), and a sense of agency (Serin & Lloyd, 2009; Woldgabreal et al., 2014).

Data for these two studies were collected across three separate groups utilizing in-depth qualitative interviews with two separate groups of CMP participants and the service providers who facilitated an Australian CMP for men who have sexually

offended.<sup>1</sup> Youssef et al. (2022a) interviewed two groups of CMP participants including those who had not sexually reoffended post-release ( $n=13$ ) and those who had sexually reoffended either during their CMP participation or following its completion ( $n=13$ ). Both groups were considered important to interview to explore whether there were differences in the needs and experiences of those who reoffended and those who did not. An open-ended recursive style of questioning was adopted to explore how participants conceptualized the role of maintenance, their perceptions and experiences of the CMP, and its relationship to reintegration and desistance. Youssef et al. (2022b) also explored the perceptions of CMP service providers ( $n=11$ ).<sup>2</sup> Understanding these professionals' lived experience and perceptions of the program they facilitated was considered important for advancing further understanding about the delivery of maintenance programs.

For the first study, Youssef et al. (2022a) found that the CMP participants felt the therapeutic relationship with their therapist was crucial to their experience in the CMP. CMP participants felt that there needed to be a focus on "community" and "reintegrative" factors rather than having a containment or risk focus. CMP participants highlighted the role of support, trust, and hope as key factors to their successful reintegration. A significant finding was that those who had sexually reoffended seemed to have internalized the identity of "sex offender" in comparison to those who had not sexually reoffended. Those who had reoffended also struggled to transform the way in which they perceived their purpose in the community, leading to a preference to return to prison as compared to those who had not reoffended (Youssef, 2022). This difference was largely related to those who had reoffended lacking a general sense of purpose and meaning in their lives whilst in the community. Finally, those who had not reoffended seemed to be better able to use the skills they had learned in custodial treatment, which was evident in by them having better coping strategies and an ability to adapt to community living compared to those who had reoffended (Youssef et al., 2022a).

Interviews with the service providers, revealed that reintegration related topics such as social interactions and social supports, identity, and meaning making were all recurring topics arising in the CMP group discussions, suggestive of their importance for participants in the community (see Youssef et al., 2022b). There was agreement amongst the service providers that the CMP participants who reintegrated more successfully and therefore were less likely to reoffend, were better able to implement the coping skills they were taught in a custodial offence-focused treatment program, which was also consistent with the findings from the CMP participants (Youssef et al., 2022a). Participants who did not go on to reoffend were also observed by the service providers to be able to develop a sense of meaning in comparison to those who did reoffend (Youssef et al., 2022b). A focus *away* from pure risk-management to a positive psychology approach also emerged as crucial when working with those who have been released from prison and trying to reintegrate in both studies.

These two studies highlighted the general lack of information and knowledge regarding CMPs, including limitations in an understanding of their theoretical underpinnings, most appropriate mode of delivery, and focus and content, which unfortunately often resulted in an inconsistent delivery of the program and an unclear focus

amongst the CMP groups. The development of a framework for the delivery of CMPs, including *what* to address and *how*, emerged as an urgent need particularly given the inconsistencies in relation to how the program was delivered, and the topics being discussed (see Youssef et al., 2022a, 2022b). Service providers and CMP participants alike agreed that the maintenance program was unclear in its goals, objectives, and therefore, its delivery.

Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of adult learning theories and in particular transformative learning, which presumably leads to more stable shifts in one's understanding of themselves and their worlds. This seems to be salient at the point in which someone released from prison is reintegrating and reconnecting with the community and ideally, moving away from an offending identity to one that is not offending. Indeed, most of those released from prison have an intention not to return. The goal then is to assist these people to develop new ways of being in the community and transform. The following section will explore human change and learning.

## Behavior Change and CMPs

Change requires practice for it to be embedded in behavior and even then, there is a likelihood that behavior change will diminish if practice is not reinforced on a regular basis. Within a forensic context, new skills can be practiced within a clinical environment, such as in the group room in prison, however this seldom replicates the environment in which the relevant cues/triggers for the problem behavior(s) are present (Evans, 2013). It is more productive to practice new skills in the setting within which they will be used, or when confronted with stimuli that will likely trigger the old, unwanted behavior or response(s). As change becomes more active in nature, true maintenance cannot be assessed if the individual has few chances to engage in the behavior (Martin, 2012).

While those in custody may feel or think they have changed due to treatment interventions, the absence of exposure to the triggers, negative influences, and stressors they may normally encounter in their daily lives, makes it difficult to determine degrees of change. Subsequently, some may believe they have changed upon re-entry into the community when they have not had the opportunity to put their suppositions to the test. CMPs however, can provide support during this process as well as assist the individual to adjust approaches to life situations that in custody may have seemed appropriate but are not applicable when faced with the reality of living in the community (Youssef, 2022).

CMPs provide practical support for behavior change because the programs provide psychological support whilst those released from prison engage in rehearsal of new skills and the implementation of skills as needed, while in the community (Evans, 2013). While custodial interventions can provide the tools for change and have some opportunity for practicing these skills, in the absence of being able to rehearse and use the skills appropriately in a "real life" setting, effective change may remain limited. Once the individual is released into their natural environment, they are afforded the opportunity to "try out and test" changes and skills in the very setting that may trigger them, all while being supported in the CMP.

One may argue that a CMP is no different to a community treatment program, however the focus of a CMP is on the implementation of skills already taught, and to a degree changes already assumed to be made. According to Youssef et al. (2017), who attempted to define CMPs:

“[M]aintaining behaviour change requires generalisability and transferability, in the absence of therapeutic factors which may have resulted in the change initially . . . community maintenance programs for offenders can ideally provide an opportunity for the enhancement of skills acquired in treatment to be actively rehearsed in a genuine setting (i.e., the community or natural setting). If possible, maintenance would constitute a period of reintegration which allows offenders an opportunity to demonstrate ‘newly acquired’ behaviours” (p. 110)

CMPs for the purposes of this discussion refer to programs that are offered to inmates upon their release. Therefore, a primary target of CMPs in addition to the maintenance of treatment change is reintegration, unlike an offence-specific program which focuses almost exclusively on offending behavior and the dynamic factors associated with that behavior.

## Factors Assisting Behavior Change

There is often consideration of *how to change* people’s behaviors and thoughts, with little consideration however for how these changes are then *maintained* or *reinforced*. Factors that have been identified as being related to behavior change and its maintenance, include self-efficacy, hope, coping, identity, and social support (Youssef, 2022). Each of these will be briefly mentioned, before a focus on adult learning given the focus of the current paper.

### Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1997) first introduced the concept of self-efficacy and its importance in behavior change. Self-efficacy refers to a person’s sense of capacity and control to perform a particular behavior or action. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to feel more in control of their lives, enjoy better psychological well-being and possess better decision-making capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy has been identified as an important construct for desistance from offending behavior (Healy, 2010; Maruna, 2001; Sheldon et al., 2010). For example, a recent review by Woldgabreal et al. (2014) examined the importance of self-efficacy to parolees, who had re-offended found that treatment withdrawal (attrition) rates were higher among those with lower self-efficacy ratings (see Youssef, 2022).

### Hope

Hope is often cited as being at the core of change efforts amongst humans. There is a strong correlation between the degree of hope one has and the success of change

(Kottler, 2014). Hope appears to be universal and relevant to all therapies, all types of people and all modes of change (Moulden & Marshall, 2009). Those who have sexually offended have consistently been identified as having poor coping skills, often using avoidance-focused coping. Given that hope is associated with enhanced coping, increasing hope seems particularly relevant to interventions with those who have sexually offended (Marshall et al., 2005), especially at the maintenance phase when they need the most support. Hope helps people to see a chance for them to change and indeed, maintain those changes (see Youssef, 2022).

### *Coping*

Coping is defined as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). How one copes is known to play an important mediating role between the individual and their environment. Learning to adopt and maintain more appropriate coping strategies is paramount in sustaining adaptive changes. To maintain change and sustain desistance, individuals must be capable of maintaining their new identities in the face of life’s stressors and obstacles. Healy (2014) interviewed men in the process of desisting from crime and found that those with authentic desistance narratives experienced the highest levels of agency and used coping styles consistently and effectively when faced with problems (see Youssef, 2022).

### *Identity*

Identity, which is a sense of who someone is, is crucial for a myriad of reasons, not the least of which is the provision of motivation and a direction behavior change (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). Those who have offended are often called upon to explain themselves and thereby reconcile multiple selves, usually the “offending person” they were with the “good and responsible person” (Presser, 2009). They are likely to have developed theories about themselves that are unhelpful and that may have consolidated over time making them potentially difficult to access and address (West, 2007). Healy (2010) notes that desisters were more likely to regard their possible selves as achievable, which implied that they had higher levels of self-efficacy, hope, and feelings of control over their lives. A balance between both the positive and the negative possibilities increased motivation to achieve the desired self (Healy, 2010). Successful behavior change requires the development of a new self-theory, that is, explicit, provides meaning and enables adaptive goals to be identified, with ways to accomplish them (see Youssef, 2022).

### *Social Support*

Social support is often considered essential for people who are trying to maintain change and many scholars have noted its important in triggering or supporting the



desistance process (Fox, 2016; Maruna, 2011; McNeill, 2006). Specifically, Sampson and Laub (1993) emphasized social bonds, which they saw as providing “turning points” for those who had offended. Social supports can provide support to those who are trying to desist from offending by providing support, monitoring, encouragement, and structure (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Youssef, 2022). Social supports generate social capital, which can move someone away from antisocial peers and closer toward desistance (Crank, 2014).

## Learning

The contextual differences between a custodial treatment program and a community maintenance program should encourage program differences (Casey et al., 2005). CMPs for those who are released from prison may need to take a different approach, different to those which custodial interventions take; the needs of those who have offended and are in the community are vastly different to those who are still serving their sentence in custody. CMPs should address the unique features of re-entry and reintegration and these programs are in a unique temporal position of being able to assist with the desistance process, in a way that custodial treatment programs are not.

An understanding of how people make changes and then maintain those changes requires a review of learning theories to allow for a consideration of the processes involved in change and its maintenance and the implications for a program designed to maintain changes people make. Specifically, when looking at how those who have offended move on from offending to non-offending, there is a transformation that presumably takes place, a change in one’s self view as well as their world view. One shortcoming of interventions for those who have offended has been the tendency to overlook traditional learning theories or consider how it is that people learn new information and skills and then go on to maintain those changes. Often it seems that programs are developed and then implemented with little consideration for what learning theory underpins a program.

The goal of an offence-specific intervention program is to teach new knowledge, correct misunderstandings, or errors in thinking and, assist those participating to understand this knowledge and in turn internalize it, with the hope that this knowledge will translate to practice and ultimately be maintained. In essence, the goal of offender intervention appears to be to transform those who have offended from an offending person to someone who no longer feels the desire or need to offend, thus desisting. With this in mind, it seems logical to consider those who are participating in offending-related intervention programs as learners.

To facilitate transformative learning, the learner needs to be helped to become aware and critical in their own and others’ assumptions (Mezirow, 1997). Learners also need to be assisted in participating effectively in discourse and CMPs can provide an opportunity for that discourse to take place. Discourse within this context refers to a dialogue “devoted to assessing reasons presented in support of competing interpretations, by critically examining evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). An important condition of being human is that people must

understand the meaning of their experiences. For some people, any “uncritically assimilated explanation by an authority figure will suffice . . . in contemporary societies we must learn to make our own interpretations . . . transformative learning develops autonomous thinking” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5).

When considering the changes that are required for those who are released from prison, one could argue that there needs to be a transformative process that needs to take place for successful reintegration. One can also argue that it is imperative that those released from prison learn autonomous thinking as sooner or later, they will be required to make their own decisions and be autonomous agents in their own lives. Most importantly, thought needs to be given to how those who are released from prison learn and then go on to transform themselves. The learning that they may encounter could be in the custodial treatment programs that they participate in, the education they may receiving in custody, and/or other reflective process that the individual may engage in. Transformative learning offers a theory of learning that is especially adult, abstract, idealized, and grounded in the nature of human communication (Taylor, 1998).

## **Transformative Learning Theory and CMPs: A Framework for the Delivery of CMPs**

Traditionally, TLT has been applied to adult learning contexts, such as university training, though more recently the theory has been implemented in the field of health sciences (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2011). TLT offers a practical framework that facilitates an understanding of *how* people change their assumptions, beliefs (meaning structures) and behavior, where “learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experiences in order to guide future action” (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162). According to Mezirow, TLT explains how adult learners make sense of their experiences, how their experiences are influenced by social and other structures, and how the dynamics involved in modifying meaning undergo changes when people find them to be dysfunctional and maladaptive.

### *Two Domains of Learning*

According to proponents of TLT, change in people’s meaning structures evolve via instrumental and communicative learning. *Instrumental* learning focuses on that which occurs through learning task-oriented problem solving, such as learning a new skill and is acquired deductively. *Communicative* learning concerns understanding the meaning of what others “communicate concerning values, ideals, feeling, moral decisions, and such concepts as freedom, justice, love, labor, autonomy, commitment and democracy” (Mezirow, 1991, p.8). In instrumental learning, the “truth” of an assertion can be established through “empirical” testing, such as cause-effect relationships, whereas in communicative learning, one needs to understand purposes, values, beliefs, and feelings. In communicative learning, it becomes imperative to become critically reflective of the assumption(s) underlying intentions, values, beliefs, and feelings. The

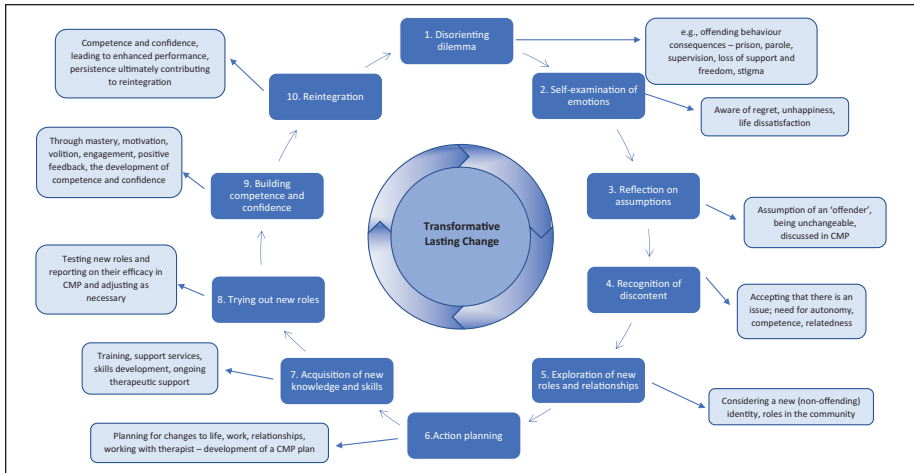
focus of communicative learning is increasing insight and attaining common ground usually through symbolic interaction (Kurnia, 2021). The aim of TLT is to assist people to challenge the current assumptions upon which they act and, if they find them wanting or unhelpful, to change them. This requires a psychological shift as well as a behavioral one. TLT operates from a philosophy that better people will build a better world (Christie et al., 2015), and seems particularly suitable to those who are released from prison.

In light of these principles, TLT would appear to be particularly relevant to CMPs given the goal of reintegration and desistance is for those who have offended to recognize that their interactions with their world have been unhelpful. In so doing, transformative learning incorporates the development of skills and an understanding of values, ideals, feelings, and moral decisions and, in so doing, assists those who have offended with both a psychological and behavioral shift to live a better life. This better life is less likely to result in a need to reoffend, if their needs are adequately met (Laws & Ward, 2011; Ward & Stewart, 2003). Most people who offend recognize that their behaviors have resulted in less-than-optimal consequences and life circumstances, such as being incarcerated, losing relationships, work, freedom, and implications for their sense of identity within the community and subsequent acceptance.

Transformative learning and therefore change is likely to occur when one's frame of reference is challenged; this is what usually occurs when someone offends, is apprehended and imprisoned. The ripple effects extend well beyond the person who offended, to those who surround them, such as family, friends, and colleagues, notwithstanding the effect on those who are offended against. It is these frames of reference that provide people with a sense of coherence that enables one to understand their surrounds (Nogueiras et al., 2019). Therefore, when these frames are threatened, individuals can experience unpleasant emotions such as confusion, uncertainty, or anxiety, all of which can be a catalyst for transformative learning as they can assist the process of identifying and reconsidering obsolete assumptions about the world (Malkki, 2010).

When we consider offending behavior rehabilitation programs, the goal seems to be providing knowledge and skills to those who have offended and for them to learn and implement these into their lives and thereby reduce the need to reoffend. Knowledge and new skills are generally viewed as something outside of the learner to be taken in through the learning process. The meaning of what one learns rests with the accuracy with which one internalizes and represents this knowledge within one's own cognitive schemas (Mahoney, 1990). This is informational learning which increases one's skills or existing cognitive structures, thereby providing more available resources to an established frame of reference (Kegan, 2009). This would be akin to those who have offended completing an offending behavior program in custody, being taught skills (i.e., communication skills) and new information (i.e., consent and boundaries). Perhaps, in the maintenance phase of change, communicative learning becomes vital.

As a theory with constructivist underpinnings, transformative learning assumes that a person's established and "taken for granted" frames of reference can change. This implies that people can habitually conceptualize and engage in behaviors they have intentionally or unintentionally assimilated as part of their context or worldview.



**Figure 2.** Transformative learning framework applied to CMPs.

However, with suitable input, “transformative learning can begin with people first looking at old things in new ways, then moving through a process of looking at new things in new ways, and finally doing new things in new ways” (Schneppfleitner & Ferreira, 2021, p. 45). This would be an ideal change that would more likely be maintained, which would in turn increase the likelihood of desistance when considering those who have offended. For Mezirow (1991) the outcome of transformative learning reflects individuals who are more inclusive in their perceptions of their world, able to differentiate increasingly its various aspects, open to other points of view, and able to integrate differing dimensions of their experiences into meaningful and holistic relationships (Dirkx, 1998).

## Perspective Transformation

Mezirow (1996) identified ten phases of perspective transformation which inform the process by which people revise and change their meaning structures, namely: disorienting dilemma; self-examination of emotions; reflection on assumptions; relating discontent to others; exploring options for new roles and relationships; planning a course of action; acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans; experimenting with new roles; building competence and confidence in new roles; and reintegration (see Christie et al., 2015). Figure 1 illustrates how these ten phases can be applied to CMPs, leading to transformative lasting change. These phases can be grouped into four main steps (Figure 2):

1. *Occurrence of a disorienting dilemma*: The individual struggles with a dissonance of views because their current frame of reference no longer “works.” This leads to confusion and/or annoyance because meaningful solutions cannot

be found. This phase may be akin to the experience in an offending behavior treatment program where an individual is required to re-evaluate the choices that led them to their offence(s) and incarceration and in some cases, individuals may question their very identity or sense of self. The CMP participants often commented that their unhelpful coping strategies (e.g., sex as coping and avoidance) which led to their offending behavior, ultimately led to them going to prison and suffering the consequences of this (e.g., loss of family support, loss of work, incarceration, and stigma; Youssef et al., 2022a). In a CMP this phase can occur when an individual has a dilemma in the community (e.g., the breakdown of a relationship) and is required to reconsider their views. The CMP participants reported that relationship concerns were often a topic of discussion and there was a realization for many that their attitudes and perspectives required some refinement (Youssef et al., 2022a, 2022b). This is a necessary precondition, to propel the individual into reassessing the tendencies they may have that are no longer working for them, for example using sex as a coping mechanism, aggressive communication, or avoidant coping. Participation in a CMP can also assist with this process through providing feedback to the person or providing a safe space for individuals to reflect and come to their own conclusion that their current frame of reference is simply not effective and has been problematic for them. CMP service providers confirmed that the CMP provided a space to allow for these types of discussions and reflections to occur, which was helpful for participants (Youssef et al., 2022b).

2. *Critically assessing assumptions:* Here, the frame of reference is now questioned. The individual is self-reflecting and assessing previously helpful assumptions or views to find a way out of the dilemma. Ideally, this phase takes place in offending behavior treatment programs, although it may be that this also occurs in a CMP where the individual is still reflecting on their perspectives and assumptions. This phase can also take place as a CMP participant is working through their reintegration process and as they encounter life stressors that in the past may have resulted in a reoffence. Or it could be assumptions about women for example, that start to emerge in their intimate relationships and cause problems. There is perhaps the offer of a different perspective, a different way of looking at things. This is where social support is important as those supports, whether they are personal or professional can provide advice, feedback, and/or guidance. There is also an opportunity for the individual to start developing new coping strategies. CMP participants, both those who reoffended and those who did not shared that questioning and critiquing their assumptions was essential to assist with reintegration. Specifically, those participants who went on to reoffend felt that they were unable to critically reflect and share those reflections due to a general lack of trust in the program and their therapist (Youssef et al., 2022a, 2022b). For example, the assumption that one is a “sex offender” was significant amongst the group that went on to sexually reoffend and they shared that they felt unable to challenge that assumption and did not safe in the CMP to challenge this belief (Youssef et al., 2022a).

3. *Acquisition and implementation of new knowledge:* The individual observes others' reactions and behaviors. A rational internal dialogue may occur as new information is discovered, which replaces old assumptions; this allows for the instillation of hope. This phase has several applications to CMPs. The first is the value of having a group whereby a participant can vicariously learn from other group members and indeed participants highlighted that receiving feedback and support from other group members as well as listening to other participant experiences, was a particularly important part of the CMP (Youssef et al., 2022a, 2022b); the group in this sense functions as a support network. As they discuss the issues they face in the community, they are provided the opportunity for feedback from fellow group members as well as the therapists facilitating the group. A CMP can provide participants with revision and assistance where needed as participants acquire new knowledge and skills to assist them with reintegration. CMP participants reported that they could share new experiences or situations with the group and receive feedback and reflect on these situations, all the while receiving support from their therapist as needed (Youssef et al., 2022a). During this phase, a participant's self-efficacy is likely to be enhanced, as they share new experiences and situations and receive support.
4. *Exploring options for new roles, relationships, and behavior:* This phase allows the person to practice the newly acquired skills and knowledge, discovering new roles and competencies (Youssef, 2022), which is expected to enhance self-efficacy, hope, assist with the development of adaptive coping strategies, which in combination are likely to contribute to the transformation of oneself, or identity. A new self-confidence evolves, and new relationships are built, allowing new perspectives and assumptions to emerge. This is the phase that is likely traditionally thought of as "maintenance" whereby participants can practice new skills and be supported as a new sense of self is evolving. The individual can discuss their new roles in group, receive feedback, and reflect on what is working well for them. CMP participants reflected that when the CMP was effective for them, it was because they could discuss real-life examples of situations and their response, receiving validation that they were managing well (Youssef et al., 2022a). In comparison, CMP participants who reoffended felt unable to share these experiences or did not feel supported, reported that it contributed to their sense of helplessness, failure, and inadequacy, contributing to their offence pathway (Youssef et al., 2022a). Through this process, there is a sense of efficacy or perhaps even mastery, as they develop skills and competencies that allows for a better quality of life, which is essential for behavior change and its maintenance (Youssef, 2022). As participants practice these new skills, they are in essence "transforming," as this becomes their new "normal." Those participants who did not go on to reoffend reported that their sense of identity shifted away from "an offender" and they no longer wanted to return to prison, contrary to most of the CMP participants who went on to sexually reoffend; they reported that they wanted to return to prison as a "time out" from the community (Youssef et al., 2022a). This phase would be considered the final phase

in a CMP and would likely signify someone who is well on their way to being (re)integrated and on their desistance pathway.

Mezirow describes adult learning as an “organized effort to assist learners who are old enough to be held responsible for their acts to acquire or enhance their understanding, skills, and dispositions” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 89). Mezirow goes on to describe some ideal conditions to facilitate transformative learning. The first suggestion is that conditions need to be participant-centered, including participation and be interactive in nature. Secondly, in order to examine and validate assumptions, values, beliefs, ideas, and feelings conditions need to include opportunities for participants to engage in such dialogue and group problem solving. Thirdly, the participants need to have the opportunity to critically reflect, either individually or as part of a facilitated group (Schnepfleitner & Ferreira, 2021). This allows for an opportunity to make more autonomous choices and to act based on that reasoned, critical reflection. Those facilitating this process, such as therapists can assist by developing an authentic therapeutic alliance with participants, to assist them with overcoming situation and knowledge constraints and by providing support.

This is a new way of conceptualizing CMPs for those who have offended and may also have implications for the general approach to offending behavior interventions. Obviously, as a conceptual idea for a framework that may be applied to the CMP model, this needs further refinement and evaluation should be a focus of future research. That aside, TLT offers a framework from which to understand human change as well as some of the tools to achieve change. Attempting to change behavior is the primary aim of most offending behavior interventions, therefore a practical framework that offers the tools to enact such a transformation is imperative. This model allows for an opportunity for participants to work on their transformation and provides guidance right through to the final “reintegration” phase.

CMP delivery should also consider how adults best learn and retain new knowledge. Behavior change requires the learning of new information and the ability to implement it in their own lives and have it influence future behavior before it can be maintained. Using TLT as a framework for delivery ensures CMPs employ strengths-based future-focused learning principles to maximize the likelihood of behavior change. Based on the principle that personal experience is an integral part of the learning process, TLT suggests that one’s interpretation of their experience creates meaning that leads to a change in behavior, mindset, and belief. When transformational learning occurs, people undergo a “paradigm shift” that directly impacts their future experiences. For example, they might discover that they have a hidden talent or that a long-held assumption is inaccurate. These changes are more intrinsic, impactful, and “transformative” than just reciting psychological concepts or recognizing a “cognitive distortion.”

## **Implications for Practice**

Conceptualizing and designing offending programs from a TLT framework is a new way of viewing interventions for those who have offended and offers a different way

of viewing those who participate in these programs. It suggests that those who engage in these programs should be viewed as “learners” rather than just participants or passive consumers. The goal of TLT is for learners to become autonomous and responsible thinkers for themselves (Mezirow, 1997). Some practical suggestions for service providers who are delivering programs from a TLT perspective include:

- Providing a safe space where learners become aware and critical of their own and others’ assumptions. This allows learners to practice recognizing frames of references and use their imagination to redefine problems from an alternate perspective.
- Allowing effective discourse by being empathic and open to allow those participating to feel free from coercion, to have an equal opportunity to become critically reflective of assumptions and make tentative judgements to guide their behavior.
- Learners need to be encouraged to be autonomous thinkers and this can be fostered by using imaginative problem posing and ensuring that participation is learner-centered, participatory, and interactive.
- Any instructional material should ideally reflect real-life examples and experiences to make them applicable and assist with learners fully engaging with the topics.
- The use of metaphors to solve and refine problems is helpful in assisting with the learning process through discovery.
- Service providers should ideally function as facilitators rather than an authority on the topics. Learners need to be encouraged to help each other, engage in peer collaboration around resolving problems, and provide opportunities for all to participate (Mezirow, 1997).

By understanding how learning happens service providers can maximize their efforts and create environments and programs where learners can thrive and transform. Working from a TLT framework requires service providers to go beyond simply teaching or imparting knowledge; it requires a consideration of the way that learners find meaning in their lives and understanding. This type of learning involves a fundamental change in perceptions, as learners start to question the things they knew or thought before and examine things from new perspectives to make room for new insights and information. This kind of learning leads to true freedom of thought and understanding.

Of course, programs will require a revision to modify program content and delivery to be in line with TLT and service providers will require training in the delivery of programs within a TLT framework. The role of the “educator” in this case the service provider is critical within a TLT framework, as it is imperative that they foster a transformative learning environment. This is perhaps not surprising given the vast literature regarding the importance of the therapeutic alliance when working with those who have sexually offended (Blasko & Jeglic, 2016; Flynn, 2010; Holdsworth et al., 2014). Furthermore, those “educating” or facilitating that process need to be able to critically examine their own practice and develop an understanding of their practice. This needs to be done through ongoing professional development with the use of reflective activities, supervision, action plans, case studies, and critical theory discussions (Cranton & King, 2003).



## Future Research

One of the obvious limitations of this conceptual proposal is that it was derived from two research qualitative studies in Australia and is yet to be tried and tested. Given the lack of empirical evidence or a research base for this topic, future research should seek to apply TLT to CMPs and then examine the efficacy of the delivery. A pilot study can perhaps be set up with a comparison to the current CMP in order to consider the efficacy of this approach. While this paper proposes TLT as a possible framework from which CMPs can be delivered, there is no reason that this framework would be limited only to those who have sexually offended, notwithstanding the limitations thus far of this being purely conceptual at this point. Future research should seek to explore the generalizability of TLT as a framework to CMPs for other populations. While the two studies noted in this paper examined adult men who had sexually offended, researchers might also seek to explore the generalizability of findings to CMPs for other offending populations, such as juveniles, those who offend violently, those with an intellectual disability and females who offend. There is also value in future research exploring the role and significance of *custodial* maintenance programs as well as the provision of programs to those who have offended by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). TLT should also be further investigated for its utility as a framework guiding not only CMPs, but other intervention (treatment) programs for both the forensic population as well as clinical populations, specifically in relation to program design and delivery.

## Conclusion

This paper considered the application of TLT to CMPs providing a framework for the delivery of these programs in light of the paucity of research on CMPs. Transformative learners are anticipated to move through critical reflection on assumptions previously held and toward more self-reflection and an integration of experiences. This seems particularly relevant when we consider how those who have offended change and then go on to maintain those changes, ultimately leading them to desistance. Although this proposed framework is preliminary and conceptual at this stage, it offers a much-needed exploration of the delivery of CMPs; a starting point upon which further research and practice can build upon.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## ORCID iD

Carollyne Youssef  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7161-7399>

## Notes

1. CMPs are available in three of the eight Australian states and territories, with marked differences in the structure, length, and delivery of these programs. Although limiting the generalizability of the findings, recruiting participants from just one of the three known nationally available programs was considered prudent due to significant program differences. The CMP used in this research is the longest running/most intensive of the Australian CMPs.
2. The term “service provider” will be used throughout this paper to refer to the CMP “program facilitators” and “therapists” who for this program were all psychologists.

## References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Freeman.
- Blasko, B., & Jeglic, E. (2016). Sexual offenders' perceptions of the client-therapist relationship: The role of risk. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 28, 271–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063214529802>
- Casey, S., Day, A., & Howells, K. (2005). The application of the transtheoretical model to offender populations: Some critical issues. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 10, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1348/135532505X36714>
- Christie, M., Carey, M., Robertson, A., & Grainger, P. (2015). Putting transformative learning theory into practice. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 55, 9–30.
- Crank, B. (2014). *The role of subjective and social factors in the desistance process: A within-individual examination* [Doctoral dissertation]. Georgia State University. [http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=cj\\_diss](http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=cj_diss)
- Cranton, P., & King, K. (2003). Transformative learning as a professional development goal. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2003, 31–38.
- Cumming, G., & McGrath, R. J. (2005). *Supervision of the sex offender*. Safer Society.
- Day, A., & Casey, S. (2010). Maintenance programs for forensic clients. *Psychology, Crime and Law* 16, 1–10.
- Dirkx, J. (1998). Transformative learning theory in the practice of adult education: An overview. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 7, 1–14.
- Evans, I. (2013). *How and why people change: Foundations of psychological therapy*. Oxford University Press.
- Flynn, N. (2010). *Criminal behaviour in context: Space, place and desistance from crime*. Willan Publishing.
- Fox, K. (2016). Civic commitment: Promoting desistance through community integration. *Punishment and Society*, 18, 68–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474515623102>
- George, W. H., & Marlatt, G. A. (1989). Introduction. In D. R. Laws (Ed.), *Relapse prevention with sex offenders* (pp. 1–31). Guilford.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies of qualitative research*. Aldine.
- Healy, D. (2010). *The dynamics of desistance: Charting pathways through change*. Willan.
- Healy, D. (2014). Becoming a desister: Exploring the role of agency, coping and imagination in the construction of a new self. *British Journal of Criminology*, 54(5), 873–891. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azu048>
- Holdsworth, E., Bowen, E., Brown, S., & Howat, D. (2014). Offender engagement in group programs and associations with offender characteristic and treatment factors: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 19, 102–121.

- Jonson, C., & Cullen, F. (2015). Prisoner reentry programs. *Crime and Justice, 44*, 517–575.
- Kegan, R. (2009). What “form” transforms? A constructive-developmental approach to transformative learning. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary theories of learning: Learning theorists . . . in their own words* (pp. 129–146). Routledge.
- Kottler, J. (2014). *Change: What really leads to lasting personal transformation*. Oxford University Press.
- Kurnia, R. (2021). A case for Mezirow’s transformative learning. *Diligentia: Journal of Theology and Christian Education, 3*(1), 73–82.
- La Fond, J. Q. (2005). *Preventing sexual violence: How society should cope with sex offenders*. American Psychological Association.
- Laub, J., & Sampson, R. J. (2003) *Shared beginnings, divergent lives*. Harvard.
- Laws, R. D., & Ward, T. (2011). *Desistance from sex offending: Alternatives to throwing away the keys*. Guildford Press.
- Layder, D. (1998). *Sociological practice: Linking theory and social research*. SAGE.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. Springer.
- Lovins, B., Lowenkamp, C., & Latesa, E. (2009). Applying the risk principle to sex offenders: Can treatment make some sex offenders worse? *The Prison Journal, 89*(3), 344–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885509339509>
- Mahoney, M. (1990). *Human change processes: The scientific foundations of psychotherapy*. Basic Books.
- Malkki, K. (2010). Building on Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning: Theorizing the challenges to reflection. *Journal of Transformative Education, 8*, 42–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344611403315>
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*(9), 954–969. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954>
- Marques, J. K., Wiederanders, M., Day, D. M., Nelson, C., & van Ommeren, A. (2005). Effects of a relapse prevention program on sexual recidivism: Final results from California’s sex offender treatment and evaluation project (SOTEP). *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 17*(1), 79–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107906320501700108>
- Marshall, W. L., Ward, T., Mann, R. E., Moulden, H., Fernandez, Y. M., Serran, G., & Marshall, L. E. (2005). Working positively with sexual offenders: Maximizing the effectiveness of treatment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20*(9), 1096–1114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260505278514>
- Martin, K. (2012). *The transtheoretical model of behaviour change and possible selves in criminal offenders* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Toronto.
- Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. American Psychological Association.
- Maruna, S. (2006). Who owns resettlement? Towards restorative re-integration. *British Journal of Community Justice, 4*(2), 23–33.
- Maruna, S. (2011). Reentry as a rite of passage. *Punishment & Society, 13*(1), 3–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474510385641>
- Maruna, S., & LeBel, T. (2010). The desistance paradigm in correctional practice: From programmes to lives. In F. McNeill, P. Raynor, & C. Trotter (Eds.), *Offender supervision: New directions in theory, research and practice* (pp. 65–89). Willan Publishing.
- McAlinden, A. (2006). Managing risk: From regulation to the reintegration of sexual offenders. *Criminology and Criminal Justice, 6*(2), 197–218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895806062981>
- McAlinden, A. (2007). *The shaming of sexual offenders: Risk, retribution, and reintegration*. Hart Publishing.

- McNeill, F. (2006). A desistance paradigm for offender management. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 6, 39–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895806060666>
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1996). Contemporary paradigms of learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 46(3), 158–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369604600303>
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.7401>
- Mezirow, J. (2012). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformative theory. In E. W. Taylor & P. Cranton (Eds.), *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 73–95). John Wiley.
- Moulden, H. M., & Marshall, W. L. (2009). A hopeful approach to motivating sexual offender for change. In D. Prescott (Ed.), *Building motivation for change in sexual offenders* (pp. 139–159). The Safer Society Press.
- Nogueiras, G., Iborra, A., & Kunnen, S. E. (2019). Experiencing transformative learning in a counseling masters' course: A process-oriented case study with a focus on the emotional experience. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 17(1), 71–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344618774022>
- Olver, M., Wong, S., & Nicholaichuk, T.P. (2008). Outcome evaluation of a high-intensity inpatient sex offender treatment program. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24, 522–536.
- Paternoster, R., & Bushway, S. (2009). Desistance and the feared self: Toward an identity theory of criminal desistance. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 99(4), 1103–1156. <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol99/iss4/5>
- Presser, L. (2009). The narratives of offenders. *Theoretical Criminology*, 13(2), 177–200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480609102878>
- Sampson, R., & Laub, J. (1993). *Crime in the making: pathways and turning points through life*. Harvard University Press.
- Sandhu, D., & Rose, J. (2012). How do therapists contribute to therapeutic change in sex offender treatment: An integration of the literature. *Journal of Sexual Aggression: An International, Interdisciplinary Forum for Research, Theory and Practice*, 18, 269–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2011.566633>
- Schmucker, M., & Lösel, F. (2015). The effects of sexual offender treatment on recidivism: An international meta-analysis of sound quality evaluations. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 11(4), 597–630. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-015-9241-z>
- Schnepfleitner, F. M., & Ferreira, M. P. (2021). Transformative learning theory: Is it time to add a fourth core element? *Journal of Educational Studies and Multidisciplinary Approaches*, 1(1), 40–49. <https://doi.org/10.51383/jesma.2021.9>
- Seager, J. A., Jellicoe, D., & Dhaliwal, G. K. (2004). Refusers, dropouts, and completers: Measuring sex offender treatment efficacy. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 48(5), 600–612. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X04263885>
- Serin, R., & Lloyd, C. (2009). Examining the process of offender change: The transition to crime desistance. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 15, 347–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10683160802261078>
- Sheldon, K., Howells, K., & Patel, G. (2010). An empirical evaluation of reasons for non-completion of treatment in a dangerous and severe personality disorder unit. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 20, 129–143. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.760>
- Snyder, C. R., Rand, K. L., & Sigmon, D. R. (2002). Hope theory: A member of the positive psychology family. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 257–276). Oxford University Press.

- Taylor, E. (1998). *The theory and practice of transformative learning: A critical review. Information Series no. 374.* ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.
- Ullman, S. E., & Filipas, H. H. (2001). Correlates of formal and informal support seeking in sexual assaults victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 16*(10), 1028–1047. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626001016010004>
- Walij, R., Simpson, J., & Weatherhead, S. (2014). Experiences of engaging in psychotherapeutic interventions for sexual offending behaviours: A meta-synthesis. *Journal of Sexual Aggression: An International, Interdisciplinary Forum for Research, Theory and Practice, 20*, 310–332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2013.818723>
- Ward, T., & Stewart, C. A. (2003). Criminogenic needs and human needs: A theoretical model. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 9*(2), 125–143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316031000116247>
- Weaver, B. (2019). Understanding desistance: A critical review of theories of desistance. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 25*, 641–658. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2018.1560444>
- West, B. (2007). Using the good way model to work positively with adults and youth with intellectual difficulties and sexually abusive behaviour. *Journal of Sexual Aggression: An International, Interdisciplinary Forum for Research, Theory and Practice, 13*(3), 253–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600701664262>
- Whisman, M. (1990). The efficacy of booster maintenance sessions in behavior therapy: Review and methodological critique. *Clinical Psychology Review, 10*(2), 155–170. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0272-7358\(90\)90055-F](https://doi.org/10.1016/0272-7358(90)90055-F)
- Wilner, A. S., & Dubouloz, C. J. (2011). Transformative radicalization: Applying learning theory to islamist radicalization. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 34*(5), 418–438. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.561472>
- Woldgabreal, Y., Day, A., & Ward, T. (2014). The community-based supervision of offenders from a positive psychology perspective. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 19*, 32–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2013.12.001>
- Youssef, C. (2013). Community maintenance programs for sexual offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 52*(3), 217–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2012.759170>
- Youssef, C. (2022). Self-determination theory as an underpinning theory for community maintenance programs for those who have sexually offended. *Journal of Sexual Aggression.* Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2022.2044525>
- Youssef, C., Casey, S., & Birgden, A. (2017). Potential underpinnings for community maintenance programs for sexual offenders. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 36*, 108–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.05.002>
- Youssef, C., Casey, S., Birgden, A., & Guadagno, B. (2022a). The significance of an Australian Community Maintenance Program for men who have sexually offended: Participant perspectives. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and Practice.* Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24732850.2021.2013365>.
- Youssef, C., Casey, S., Birgden, A., & Guadagno, B. (2022b). The significance of an Australian Community Maintenance Program for men who have sexually offended: Service provider perspectives. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and Practice.* Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24732850.2022.2055959>
- Youssef, C., Casey, S., & Day, A. (2016). Desistance: The other side of change and implications for maintenance programs. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 55*(7), 443–465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2016.1216913>