

## **BETTER TOGETHER**

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

**F-21**

### **Involving the Community**

#### **Minnesota CoSA at 50: Updated Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial**

Kevin Nelson, MA  
Grant Duwe, PhD  
Minnesota Department of Corrections

In 2008 the Minnesota Department of Corrections (MnDOC) implemented a version of the CoSA model due to the promising results reported by Wilson and colleagues (2005). In 2013, a preliminary evaluation of Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (MnCoSA) found promising results in the reduction of general recidivism and in the yield of cost-avoidance benefits examining the recidivism of offenders in the MnCoSA program (N=31) and control group (N=31) during a period from 2008-2012. (Duwe, 2013). These initial findings had yet to show evidence for the reduction of sexual recidivism due to the low rates of sexual offending found in both the control group and the experimental group in the randomized controlled trial among the 62 sex offenders included in the initial MnCoSA evaluation.

This study updates the preliminary evaluation by Duwe (2013) by continuing the randomized controlled trial comparing recidivism and cost-benefit outcomes among sex offenders in the MnCoSA (N = 50) and control group (N = 50) during a period from 2008-2016. In addition to tracking recidivism outcomes for the original 62 offenders for a longer period of time, it also contains 38 additional offenders (19 apiece in the MnCoSA and control group) providing a more definitive view on whether CoSA has a significant effect on sexual recidivism.

The results suggest MnCoSA significantly reduced sexual recidivism, lowering the risk of rearrest for a new sex offense by 88 percent. In addition, MnCoSA significantly decreased all four measures of general recidivism, with reductions ranging in size from 49 to 57 percent. As a result of the reduction in recidivism, findings from the cost-benefit analysis reveal the program has generated an estimated \$2 million in costs avoided to the state, resulting in a benefit of \$40,923 per participant. For every dollar spent on MnCoSA, the program has yielded an estimated benefit of \$3.73.

Although difficult to implement, the CoSA model is a cost-effective intervention for sex offenders that could also be applied to other correctional populations with a high risk of violent recidivism. Because of the earlier success of MnCoSA, the Minnesota Department of Corrections has begun to experiment with adapting this successful model for use with other populations in the correctional system besides sex offenders.

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### **References**

- Duwe, G. (2013). Can Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) work in the United States? Preliminary results from a randomized experiment in Minnesota. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 25, 143-165.
- Wilson, R.J., Picheca, J. E., & Prinzo, M. (2005). *Circles of Support & Accountability: An Evaluation of the Pilot Project in South-Central Ontario*. Ottawa, Canada: Correctional Service of Canada.

### **Learning Goals:**

- Provide information on how the Canadian COSA model has been implemented in Minnesota.
- Report updated results of a randomized controlled trial regarding recidivism reduction and deferred costs.
- Explore future applications of the COSA model for other populations besides sex offenders.

**Kevin Nelson, MA** is the Lead Coordinator for Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (MnCoSA) at the Minnesota Department of Corrections. MnCoSA is a Restorative Justice program that recruits and trains volunteers to provide pro-social support and accountability to sex offenders transitioning back into the community. He also coordinates similar circle programs for military veterans and those being released from prison while serving life-sentences. He has been working with sex offenders for the past 23 years and has worked in both prison and community-based treatment programs. He has also assisted in the sex offender evaluation process for the Risk Assessment/Community Notification Unit at the DOC. Kevin also serves as Board Chair for the Minnesota Sex Offender Reentry Project (MNSORP), a non-profit organization with a mission to enhance public safety by reducing barriers to sex offender reentry through public education. He has been an ATSA member since 2011 and has served as co-chair of the MnATSA Conference Planning Committee.

**Grant Duwe, PhD** is the Research Director for the Minnesota Department of Corrections, where he forecasts the state's prison population, develops risk assessment instruments, and conducts research studies and program evaluations.

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### **Bringing Treatment into the Community: The Role of Community Support Services Within the Therapeutic Process**

Bruce Sapach, BA (Psych), MFA  
Shosana Funk, MA

Aligned with the theme of Better Together this Workshop will focus on our practices multidisciplinary team and multi---modal intervention model, with a specific focus on the support services delivered by our Community Integration Managers (CIMs). The CIM team reinforce and build upon the traditional treatment modalities of individual and group therapy and integrate hands on practical life skill, coping and risk management skill development taught and modeled in real life/real time community settings. CIM's provide individual support, mentoring, training, skill building and crisis intervention services. They also deliver group---based life skill, recreational and culturally based programming to meet the holistic needs of the individuals we treat. This collaboration of therapy, mentoring and support allows for a more efficient, comprehensive and successful intervention process.

This workshop will describe:

- ▣ the role of and composition of the CIM team and what to look for in hiring and supervising community support staff;
- ▣ the individual approaches used and support goals typically targeted in providing strategic therapeutic support (e.g., community adjustment and integration; practical life skill training; healthy coping skill development; use of risk management strategies; challenging antisocial/unhealthy values and behaviours; exposure to pro---social environments, people and activities; enhanced monitoring and observation; role modelling and mentoring; crisis intervention; and, advocacy) and
- ▣ CIM delivered group programming (e.g., recreational, volunteering, horticultural, music and art/craft based activities).

In addition, we will highlight the role of our Aboriginal CIM team members in providing culturally relevant healing services as part of the extended intervention model as well as the role and functioning of our residential services which extends treatment and support services into the homes, providing a therapeutic home environment.

We will discuss each of these support services and how they are delivered to facilitate experiential opportunities to enhance addressing psychologically meaningful risk factors, pro--- social coping, meaningful community integration, risk management and community safety.

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### **Learning Goals:**

- To identify the role and benefits of extending therapeutic treatment to include community based support and mentoring services to individuals with a history of sexual offending behaviour.
- To identify and discuss the process and benefits of working as a multidisciplinary and integrated team and how treatment and support services reinforce and strengthen one another.
- To demonstrate how activities in the community can be structured to create strategic opportunities for the development of healthy coping skills and risk management strategies.

**Bruce Sapach** is a Senior Community Integration Manager who has been involved in treatment oriented capacities with various social service agencies since 1980 upon receiving his B.A.(Psych.). His work has focused on providing support to high needs youth and adults (often involved in the criminal justice system) and families in crisis. Bruce obtained a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) degree in 1991 followed by Master's of Fine Art from Alfred University, New York State. After returning to Winnipeg he re-involved himself in the social services community while maintaining an art studio and teaching at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. His artistic sensibility is a vital influence in the way he works with clients and his involvement in both of these areas is viewed as complimentary in their mutual reflection of his interest in the human condition. Bruce continues to make art, loves reading and being out in nature, bonfires on winter nights and paddling a canoe under a starry sky.

**Ms. Shosana Funk** is Senior Community Integration Manager who came to FPS in 2007 after several years of volunteering and employment with Circles of Support and Accountability, a volunteer-based program assisting individuals with high risk of reoffence integrate back into our communities. Her education is entered around conflict resolution studies, earning a B.A. from the University of Winnipeg in 2006 and Master of Arts from Antioch University McGregor in 2010. Through her education and experiences, Shosana was introduced to the benefits of a holistic therapeutic approach for high risk and high need individuals. She is excited to be able to work within such a model, where she has the opportunity to both work with female offenders and as a female, work intensively with males who have a history of violence against women. In her spare time, Shosana plays with her two feisty cats and channels her creative side into embroidery and cooking.