Greetings from the SOAR program. We’re very excited about some new additions to the program, which are highlighted in this newsletter. We have a new Staff Psychologist in Ms. Jeanine Brent. She is not only experienced and motivated to do sex offender treatment, but she is a pleasure to work with! We’ve added a brand new module to the program called Fitness – encouraging building healthy bodies to go with that new healthy mind. We have also developed the SOAR Wall of Fame – to honor individual accomplishments of SOAR Peer Counselors. I hope that SOAR aftercare groups around the state may adopt a similar method to recognize and reward SOAR graduates who continue to better themselves.

Keep those cards and letters coming. I am sorry that it is difficult for me to respond to all the letters I have received, but please know that we are always glad to hear from SOAR graduates and other SOAR supporters. It is very encouraging to us to hear of the ways many of you are continuing to put into practice the things you have learned in SOAR. Together we will work towards our goal of “No More Victims”.

NEW STAFF
Jeanine Brent, M.A.

Greetings from the newest member of the SOAR family! My name is Jeanine Brent and I have recently transferred from Pasquotank Correctional Institution to Harnett Correctional. I have only been with the program for one month and must say, I feel right at home with my new “family.” For the past several years I have been working with sex offenders. It is my opinion that this is some of the most challenging therapy that can be done. So why do it? Because the flip side is that it is also some of the most rewarding work I can do as a therapist. There are some truly amazing individuals in the SOAR program, including the participants, peer counselors, and therapists. I am looking forward to a long, interesting, and challenging career here with the SOAR program.

STAFF UPDATE
GOODBYE, SOAR PROGRAM
Keith Hersh, Ph.D.

Less than a year ago, I was asked to write an article for the newsletter in which I introduced myself as the new therapist at the SOAR program. Now, I’m writing an article to say goodbye. I’ve taken a job at Dorothea Dix Hospital, on a short-term men’s unit. Although I’m looking forward to my new position, it isn’t easy to leave SOAR. The SOAR program is a special place. As a therapist, it has meant a lot to observe participants as they grow and change for the better. It’s been an honor for me to be part of this process. SOAR is also special for me because of the people I’ve worked with. I’ve enjoyed working with Mr. Carbo, Rick (Franklin), and Pat (VanBuren). I feel like I’ve grown as a therapist and as a person through working with them. The peer counselors have also been an important part of making this a great experience for me. I’ve been impressed by their dedication and skills, and I’ve learned a lot from them. Everyone involved in the SOAR program – staff, PCs, participants, administrators, and the therapists at other units – plays an important role in fulfilling the SOAR motto: No More Victims.

PEER COUNSELOR UPDATE
The SOAR program now has positions for ten peer counselors. Currently they are:

| Rocky W. 91-1 | Bobby E. 99-2 |
| Ronnie C. 91-2 | Thomas V. 99-2 |
| Lucas M. 97-1 | Hugh L. 00-1 |
| Bill C. 97-1 | William C. 00-1 |
| Reinaldo S. 99-1 | Don C. 00-2 |

In addition to the ten assigned peer counselors, the program has two graduates who volunteer to work as peer counselors. They are:

| Jamie P. 00-2 | Roberto C. 00-2 |
SOMETHING NEW
Pat VanBuren

Hi Guys: Thought you might enjoy this. At the end of the last few sessions, I have read a poem titled “ANYWAY” to the guys leaving. It came from a sign in the children’s home in Calcutta.

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered,

LOVE THEM ANYWAY
If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives

DO GOOD ANYWAY
If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies,

SUCCEED ANYWAY
The good you do will be forgotten tomorrow,

DO GOOD ANYWAY
Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable,

BE HONEST AND FRANK ANYWAY
What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight,

BUILD ANYWAY
People really need help but may attack you if you help them,

HELP PEOPLE ANYWAY
Give the world the best you have and you’ll get kicked in the teeth,

GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU’VE GOT ANYWAY

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SOAR wants to give a heartfelt “thank you” to the following organizations and people for their support of the program.

Durham Rape Crisis
Harnett County Health Department
SAA Volunteers
Probation and Parole
Raleigh Press
Tom B.

SOAR WALL OF FAME
William C.

The SOAR Wall of Fame was developed to recognize and reward personal growth and achievement in our never ending efforts to be well rounded, healthier, and wiser individuals.

When a SOAR staff member or peer counselor receives recognition inside or outside of SOAR (i.e., certificates for various courses, personal achievements) they may be nominated and inducted to the Wall of Fame by their peer group. A photo of the inductee and a list of his accomplishments are then added to the Wall. In an environment short on positive recognition, this is one way we can recognize and show appreciation for each others’ accomplishments in a positive manner.

We would like to encourage our SOAR Alumni who are in aftercare groups to follow this path in some manner whether it be a Wall of Fame or possibly a Notebook of Fame. Positive reinforcement for positive, healthy behavior is a keystone to having No More Victims.

The SOAR newsletter would like to hear from you on how you have incorporated a “Wall of Fame” for your own group.

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

The offender should contact the unit psychologist. The psychologist will then interview the offender. If the offender is assessed to be a suitable candidate for SOAR program participation, he is then referred to the SOAR staff, who select the participants for the next SOAR group.
FITNESS MODULE ADDITION

Rick F. & Bill C.

We have added yet another module to the SOAR program. This module is entitled Physical Fitness. Sex Offenders often do not take care of themselves nor do they spend enough time having fun. Physical exercise is a great way to treat yourself well and exercise is fun. In addition to physically feeling better, physical fitness has positive effects on self-esteem and an overall sense of well-being. This module is completely voluntary; that is, it is not required for program completion. Participants are encouraged to be involved in the module as much as possible. The level of involvement is sometimes limited by factors, such as age, health, and general physical fitness. So far, participation has been high and the current group of men appear to be thoroughly enjoying this addition to the SOAR program.

Each module session begins with classroom instruction on topics, such as nutrition, aerobic exercise, the positive benefits of regular exercise, etc. When the weather is cooperating, the men then go outside to participate in calisthenics, weight lifting, speed walking, or running. A variety of methods for monitoring progress have been developed, such as body fat calculations, body weight, and simply monitoring the number of minutes per week spent exercising. SOAR participants are encouraged to select specific fitness goals and to monitor their progress.

The philosophy behind this new module is that everyone, no matter their age or present level of fitness, can benefit from some kind of physical activity.

Some of the benefits one can expect from a physical fitness program are: a reduction in stress, increase in lean muscle mass, reduction in body fat, increase in energy level, lower risk for cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

The Physical Fitness module also gives the participants an opportunity to work as a team and allows them an opportunity to form healthy bonds.

PROGRAM APPROACH

Treatment for sex offenders is based on the understanding that deviant sexual behavior is learned. The treatment of sex offenders involves learning appropriate and responsible social and sexual behavior to substitute for the inappropriate and irresponsible behaviors which led to the offense.

Each offender has a sexual offending cycle which becomes habituated and interferes with the offender’s ability to examine alternative responses to the environment. When the cycle is used as a conceptual framework in treatment, the offender is shown how to identify high risk situations and maladaptive responses so the inappropriate and irresponsible behaviors in the cycle can be interrupted and healthy, appropriate responses substituted.

Each module in the program helps the offender see and deal with events in his life so that he can learn to live a healthy, victim free life.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

If you have additional questions about the SOAR Program, please feel free to contact us at the address below:

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