The Potential Role of Recovery Capital in Stopping Sexual Offending: Lessons from Circles of Support and Accountability to Enrich Practice

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Summary: The rehabilitation and reintegration of people who have committed sexual offences presents significant challenges. Current research and practice on desistance from offending behaviour discusses a harm reduction journey that is more multifaceted than the concept of social capital; it is, in fact, closer to recovery capital. This paper discusses how the framework of recovery capital is also useful in the rehabilitation and reintegration of people who have committed sexual offences drawing from the experiences of the Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) model. It will consider the CoSA model as an example of recovery capital using its evidence base (especially McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014 and McCartan, 2016) to frame it as a narrative for rehabilitation and reintegration. The paper will then provide practitioners with some recommendations as well as thoughts for effectively using recovery capital in practice.

Keywords: Sexual abuse, desistance, Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), recovery capital, prevention.

Introduction

This article will examine the benefits of broadening the concept of *social capital* (i.e. a focus on the importance of networks, belonging, trust and reciprocity within groups) to *recovery capital* (i.e. a broader focus on the role of cultural, physical, human, and social factors) in the management and reintegration of people convicted of a sexual offence. The article will argue that the shift to recovery capital will help us better understand and conceptualise risk management, rehabilitation and community integration. In doing so, the article will use Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) as

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a model to explain the relevance of recovery capital in working with sexual offending. By drawing on two studies of CoSA (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016), this article will examine how broadening the concept of social capital to recovery capital can assist practitioners and contribute to the design of service delivery to respond to the complex issues facing people convicted of a sexual offence.

The reintegration of people who have committed sexual offences

People convicted of a sexual offence have become the most demonised offenders of our age (Mills, 2015), subject to extensive levels of regulation, surveillance, and control within communities (Levenson and Hern, 2007). The consequences of this can be social isolation, ghettoisation, and exclusion. One of the most extreme examples is Tuttle Bridge in Florida, with registered sexual offenders living under a road bridge without running water and adequate sanitation as they are unable to find housing in the local community (Socia *et al.*, 2014). Closer to home, media coverage including the 'outing' of 'sex offenders' in the British tabloid press has in some cases led to offenders moving away from their local community and leaving employment. The impact of social exclusion presents challenges for all those convicted of offences, but in particular those convicted of a sexual offence.

What are Circles of Support and Accountability?

Since their emergence in Canada in 1994 (Correctional Service Canada, 2002), CoSA have become a feature of the criminal justice landscape in North America, the United Kingdom (UK), New Zealand and Europe (including Catalonia, the Netherlands, Ireland, Latvia and Belgium) (Richards, Death and McCartan, 2020). CoSA programmes around the globe rely on a variety of different operating models, receive funding from various sources, and have varying relationships with the criminal justice system.

CoSA can be described as groups of trained community volunteers who support people convicted of a sexual offence (usually contact offences against children) in integrating back into the community post release (Richards, Death and McCartan, 2020). They aim to promote pro-social values, reduce reoffending, promote desistence, and empower communities (Hanvey, Philpot, and Wilson, 2011). CoSA programmes operate on the premise that by providing recently released core members (people convicted of a sexual offence) with a circle of 4–5 community volunteers who provide both practical support and accountability, offenders will be better equipped

to lead law-abiding lives in the community. Each circle is managed by a circles coordinator, who is an experienced and paid criminal justice professional. Volunteers report back to the coordinator about the circle and the core member, who in turn may, if required, report to statutory authorities (who effectively form an outer circle that is compliance-focused). For example, if there is any concern that there is a risk of a further offence, this is reported to authorities. This has resulted on some occasions in an offender being recalled to prison (Bates, Saunders, and Wilson, 2007). For a more detailed explanation of CoSA service delivery, see Elliott and Zajac (2015).

Existing research, both nationally and internationally, highlights that CoSA assists in the integration of people convicted of a sexual offence by providing pro-social support, role modelling, a positive platform and grounded assistance (see Richards, Death and McCartan, 2020, for a comprehensive overview of the international CoSA research literature). Therefore, COSA is often seen, in criminal justice terms, as a form of social capital that provides a network of supportive community relationships but that also interfaces with statutory oversight.

What is social capital?

From the early 2000s onwards, research conducted on the role of social capital and desistance has grown, with social capital increasingly being seen as critical to successful re-integration and desistance (for a full review, see McNeill and Weaver, 2010). Arguably, social capital plays a key role in the 'staged journey' of desistance, which includes re-engagement with social groups and key institutions (Best *et al.*, 2016, p. 2; see also Sampson and Laub, 2003; Maruna and Farrall, 2004; Best *et al.*, 2010; Irving, 2016; Harris, 2017). Social capital has also been characterised as the 'resources and opportunities' required by offenders to achieve non-offending lifestyles (McNeill, 2009), but has also been more broadly defined as access to bonds of trust with pro-social others, participation in positive networks and gaining a 'sense of belonging' within communities often associated with experiences of reciprocity (Boeck *et al.*, 2006). In this sense, social capital focuses solely on networks, belonging, trust and reciprocity within groups, to the exclusion of other forms of capital, such as human, physical, or cultural.

The distinction between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital has also been significant (Harper, 2001; Best *et al.*, 2018). Bonding social capital reinforces belonging to an existing social group (including productive and problematic groups), and bridging social capital enables the individual to

access other groups, including pro-social groups. As a consequence of the nature of their offence, people convicted of a sexual offence can often be restricted to bonding social capital in their community integration, as they often find themselves isolated, stigmatised, tied into existing (negative) peer groups or dependent upon professional services for 'peer' support (i.e. police, probation, CoSA, social care).

Social capital has also been framed as the external resources required for positive functioning in the community. However, the potential for change can be restricted by limited physical capital (e.g. unemployment, lack of appropriate housing) and restricted human capital, in that sexual offenders are often 'ghettoised' (Tolson and Klein, 2015). Social capital has also been criticised for a lack of attention to the internal resources required to sustain change over the long term (McNeill *et al.*, 2012).

The authors, therefore, argue that we should look beyond social capital to explain desistence from sexual offending, and instead look to the more rounded concept of recovery capital.

What is recovery capital?

Derived from substance misuse research, recovery capital is defined as the total sum of resources which individuals can draw on to overcome substance misuse (Cloud and Granfield, 2008; for a systematic literature review of recovery capital, see Hennessy, 2017). Arguably it is a useful theoretical development of social capital (which is a component part of recovery capital but not its sum). Recovery capital is conceptualised more broadly and encompasses cultural capital, physical capital, and human capital, but more importantly the positive interaction of these components as people transition out of drug misuse (Cano *et al.*, 2017). White and Cloud (2008) argue that a practice focus on personal recovery capital, family/social capital, community recovery capital and cultural capital has been successful in the addictions field (see also White, 2011). Cloud and Granfield (2008) have clearly defined and explained the central component parts of recovery capital, highlighting four key components:

- **Social capital** as discussed above is defined as the sum of resources that each person has because of their relationships, including support from, and obligations to, groups to which they belong;
- **Physical capital** is understood as income, property and assets that can be used to increase recovery options (e.g. paying for treatment, detox, relocating, etc);

- **Human capital** includes skills, and personal resources, such as coping mechanisms, resilience, hope, and positive aspirations towards a 'good life'. Such capital is often linked to higher educational attainment and positive problem-solving skills that aid the recovery journey;
- **Cultural capital** includes pro-social values, beliefs and attitudes that can promote and sustain recovery and enhance social conformity and rule compliance.

Analytical framework and discussion

This paper describes an approach to align an example of sex offender treatment and management, that is Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), to the concept of recovery capital, which is generally a theoretical framework used in drug treatment.

Therefore, this approach is exploratory in nature and pragmatic in methodology (Robson and McCartan, 2016). The authors have extensive experience and knowledge of the CoSA model in the UK and internationally, having published on it previously (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2012; McCartan, 2016; Richards and McCartan, 2017), and therefore are well placed to discuss the theoretical, practical and empirical aspects of CoSA in respect to recovery capital.

In developing their rationale, the authors believe that it is important to have a clear empirical basis for the link between CoSA and recovery capital; consequently they have used data collected in previous empirical research studies they have conducted, to shape and emphasise their points (for more details, see McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2012; McCartan, 2016). The two studies were both mixed methods in nature, had university ethical approval and examined comparable topics (both were process and impact evaluations of CoSA, looking at its impact upon the reintegration of core members from core member, volunteer and stakeholder perspectives). In terms of the data analysis, the two studies were not reanalysed for this article, rather the authors aligned the existing data to Cloud and Granfield's (2008) definition of recovery capital to see if the existing CoSA data offered insights to the feasibility of the model. Hence, the research presented here is not a new or purposeful reworking of an existing data set, rather a realigning of existing data within a new theoretical framework.

Discussion

In what follows, we consider whether CoSA meets each of the four component parts of the recovery capital model (i.e. social, cultural, physical, and human) laid out by Cloud and Granfield (2008).

Social capital

As mentioned, the first key component of recovery capital is social capital, which is discussed extensively in the criminology literature across all individuals convicted of an offence, including those convicted of a sexual offence (Burchfield and Mingus, 2008, 2014). Social capital is important in regard to the (re)integration and management of people who have committed sexual abuse into the community, as the more socialised and integrated they are, the less likely they are to reoffend (Tolson and Klein, 2015). Often, people who have committed a sexual offence have no stable family unit or friendship circle to return to, and this lack of social support in conjunction with the label that these individuals carry can increase the risk/likelihood of reoffending (Brankley, Monson and Seto, 2017; Wilson and Sandler, 2017; Harris, 2017). Research indicates that people convicted of a sexual offence with higher social, family and community support are less likely to reoffend and more likely to have a lower risk of reoffending (Hanson, Harris, Helus and Thornton, 2014). However, in recent years, upon their return to the community, there has been a reduction in the volume and type of support given to people who have committed sexual abuse, largely as a result of budget cuts, notably in the UK, USA and Canada (Levenson, 2016).

Social capital is a central part of the role as well as mission of CoSA, whereby the circle becomes a surrogate support system for the core member, providing the opportunity for them to seek, find and receive support (Höing, Bogaerts and Vogelvang, 2013; Hanvey *et al.*, 2011). The circle enables the core member to pro-socially discuss, receive support for and access additional resources/services linked to the sexual abuse they committed. Therefore, in many ways, the circle provides the 'advise, assist and befriend' role that probation traditionally held. This means that the social capital provided by CoSA is more tangible, more transferable, and more routed in a pathway to integration than purely state-run interventions (Thompson *et al.*, 2017; McCartan, 2016).

> It's another means of support, some of the Core Members that I am aware of have no other means of social support. (Volunteer, participant 6)

The circle acts as a group that works to demonstrate and reinforce positive social values for the core member in the same way that a pro-social family member or peer would. This is important given the dysfunctional backgrounds that many core members have.

> We have to be a benchmark for what he can achieve, put him in a situation where he can make his own friendships. (Volunteer, participant 1)

The circle offers core members, who often have no other friends or family, a space and opportunity to practise, develop and grow. The core member, therefore, can understand what an appropriate relationship looks like and how to navigate it. They can learn how to manage their behaviour in a grounded way that supports successful risk management.

> I hope that it gives the Core Member a place to talk about things that they cannot really talk about with other people, outside of probation. (Volunteer, participant 4)

> [P]eople that we would refer to circles have poor socialisation and issues in integration. (Stakeholder, volunteer 7)

Ultimately, CoSA is an opportunity for the core member to practise social and family relationships in a safe environment; the circle is not the core member's only opportunity but rather their first opportunity. As the circle continues, the core member should start to learn, grow, develop, and get more confident in developing social and family recovery capital. The circle is therefore a testing ground.

> It feels like a group of friends rather than somebody in a professional capacity. (Core member, participant 1)

CoSA provides social capital to people who have committed sexual offences, enabling them to integrate into the community in a pro-social way (Höing, Bogaerts and Vogelvang, 2013; Thompson *et al.*, 2017). Research indicates that core members are likely to be more pro-social, more engaged in community activities and more socialised following completion of their circle (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016). Social capital can also enhance quality of life and positive wellbeing, and both are important to

recovery and desistance. Wellbeing is underpinned by positive personal relationships, self-determination, and positive life experiences (De Maeyer *et al.*, 2011).

Human capital

Human capital includes the skills, positive health, aspirations and hopes, and personal resources that will enable the individual to prosper (Becker, 1993). Human capital can be demonstrated by individuals 'bettering' themselves through things like educational achievement and promotions at work. It is often linked to problem-solving skills and the ability to navigate positively the situations that individuals find themselves in. As a group, people who commit sexual offences are quite heterogeneous and, therefore, have differing levels of cognitive ability, problem-solving skills and educational achievement; but, on the other hand, we do know that sexual offending is contextual, situational and linked to poor decision-making as well as risk-taking (Wilson and Sandler, 2017; Laws and O'Donohue, 2016). Therefore, human capital is important to understanding, preventing, and managing sexual offending. CoSA helps core members to develop and improve their human recovery capital, both directly (by aiding them in achieving their goals in positive, pro-social and non-risky ways) and indirectly (through positive, pro-social modelling). The circle allows the core member to work on their self-esteem, self-confidence, socialisation, and social communication skills. The circle provides positive role modelling and aspects of social learning for the core member so that they can improve their social and interpersonal skills.

> People that we would refer to circles have poor socialization and issues in integration, they are not necessarily the most high risk but they are the people that we think would struggle to make friends, settle back into the community well. (Stakeholder, volunteer 7)

The positive socialisation that the circle provides allows the core member to develop desistance strategies in a non-threatening environment, which is important as effective risk management cannot be effectively tested in a prison setting. During the meeting, volunteers can challenge core members around their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of themselves as well as others. These conversations test the core members' ability to think about themselves from different perspectives and how they would respond to issues that arise in the real world.

> We challenge them [core members] and sometimes they don't like it … but we always talk it through and don't leave in a bad place. (Volunteer, participant 9)

Core members learn resilience in their meetings with the volunteers. They learn how to navigate problematic outcomes and then respond to them appropriately, which is demonstrated by the fact that core members remain in the circle regardless of the challenges that it sometimes presents.

> It's only voluntary anyway; if I wanted to walk out I could but I don't want to. (Core member, participant 5)

As the circle is based around support and accountability, it is not set up to respond directly to the training/qualifications aspects of human recovery capital. However, the circle can assist core members in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, thereby enabling them to see where they may need to develop new skills or qualifications, and then encourage the core member to strive towards change and positive societal engagement. During the circle meetings, both volunteers and core members highlight and discuss how core members can improve their human capital through reinforcing their professional, social, and educational development through the recommendation of educational and/or self-help courses.

> As part of the circles project they put me on to new activities. And it gets me out. I have to be careful in what I do pursue because there cannot be young people there, they help with that. (Core member, participant 8)

> [The volunteers] have really helped me to work out what I want to do and how I can do it in an appropriate way. They have helped me find courses to attend, that I can attend … I am now thinking about jobs. (Core member, participant 12)

In addition, core members talk about how the volunteers help them to prepare for new social activities, whether it be attending classes or going for a job interview.

> I have one Core Member that I helped get a job. I helped them fill in the application and then drove them to the interview as they did not have a car or money for public transport. (Volunteer, participant 4)

The circle provides the core member with the means of achieving their own human capital, by supporting them throughout the processes involved in developing the skills and resources that they need to integrate back into the community (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016). However, because of the nature of their offences, their risk management and public perceptions, it must be stated that it is particularly challenging for people who have committed a sexual offence to gain and maintain human capital (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016; Kemshall and McCartan, 2014; Harris, 2017). The reality is that for people who have committed sexual abuse, volunteering and joining groups/societies may be a more realistic option rather than traditional working and skills development (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016).

Physical capital

Physical capital is the tangible assets that a person has that enables them to move beyond offending and integrate into the community. These assets could be financial (i.e. money, property, a car, etc.) or social (i.e. social support network that can provide access to resources). Physical capital provides people with the ability to enact the change that is needed to enable desistance. The more physical capital that an individual has, the more likely they are not to reoffend and to (re)integrate better back into the community. The levels of and access to physical capital are not the same for all people who sexually offend given the socio-demographic, age, and employment spectrum that these offenders span.

Consequently, some individuals may have access to their own physical capital (i.e. own a house, have savings, etc.), whereas others will not. Access to social physical capital is often determined by the offences committed by the individual and the consequences linked to their family/peer network (i.e. the amount of residual social capital they can draw on). This means that physical capital is complex and non-generalisable to all people who are convicted of a sexual offence. CoSA helps core members to develop and improve their physical capital indirectly, as they cannot provide assets for the core member themselves or directly intervene on their behalf with the state, to help them gain these assets. However, CoSA can support the core member in achieving these physical assets themselves and can inform the state (police and probation) of positive steps that the core member is making, thus contributing to their risk management. The volunteers and CoSA provide the means to help core members develop their skills, gain access to resources, manage their resources/budget and move towards independence.

> You can ask them anything and they will help you with it. If there is anything that you are not sure of, paperwork and the like, they can help. (Core member, participant 2)

> [The core member] had to get to a job interview but did not have access to a car or the money for a bus; even if he had the money, he would have needed to get two buses because the interview was early in the morning … so I drove him to the interview and waited; he got the job. (Volunteer, participant 8)

Ultimately, the circle equips the core members with the knowledge and the social learning that will enable them to achieve the personal recovery capital skills that they need to develop by themselves.

> We have to give the Core Members the tools to look after themselves and hope that they can do so, that they don't get themselves into trouble. (Volunteer, participant 6)

> It's great, they have really helped me … I can do everything online. I can do my banking, do the food shopping, search for jobs, and look for groups to join. I feel more confident! (Core member, participant 3)

The circle provides the core member with the means of achieving their own physical capital (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016; Thompson *et al.*, 2017). Although, some people who have committed a sexual offence will be financially independent and able to sustain themselves, this is not the case for everyone. A conviction for a sexual offence can result in job loss, with individuals becoming financially insolvent upon arrest and unable to recover fully from it. In addition, as mentioned earlier, having a strong, reliable social network that can provide ongoing support is often lacking for people who have committed sexual abuse. However, this is a core feature of what CoSA can provide.

Cultural capital

Cultural capital is about the individual having the appropriate pro-social, values, beliefs, and behaviours that allow them to fit into, and function within, the accepted social norms of society. This means understanding and adapting to dominant and mainstream social, as well as cultural, behaviours. Depending on

the psychology, cognitive distortions, social norms, motivations and behaviours of the individual, they could believe that they are adhering to an excluded subgroup with justifiable norms (i.e. the 'true' paedophile), reflective of society themselves, believing that everyone else is also like them but afraid to say anything (i.e. power/control rapists), or completely detached from prevailing cultural values and social norms (i.e. anti-social, violent sexual abusers). Cultural attitudes to sex, sexual offending, sexual harassment and consent play a major (and central) role in the establishment of cultural capital in the area of sexual abuse, with there being a range of what is seen as 'socially acceptable' or 'socially tolerated'. Therefore, some people who commit sexual abuse may struggle to fit into normal society. People who commit sexual offences tend to suffer from distortions of reality (Szumski, Bartels, Beech and Fisher, 2018) or from mental illness (Moulden and Marshall, 2017) and are socially dysfunctional (Blake and Gannon, 2011). Despite this, perpetrators of sexual abuse are often adept at fitting into society and displaying social norms and cultural values, which is why many of them can abuse in the way that they do. This means that people who commit sexual abuse are paradoxical when it comes to cultural capital, as they do not necessarily have it (or want it) but they can mimic it. The complexity of cultural capital increases tenfold when we start to consider cultural heritage and sexual abuse, especially in terms of sexual abuse across social and cultural boundaries (Kalra and Bhugra, 2013; Cowburn *et al.*, 2014). CoSA volunteers are members of the public and therefore they represent as well as advocate the dominant social norms in society; by acting as pro-social role models for core members, they provide clear cultural capital.

The majority of core members are white, as are most volunteers, and CoSA largely 'speaks' for the dominant UK culture (i.e. white, British, Christian). In the future, CoSA must recruit a wider diversity of volunteers and ensure that greater emphasis on cultural capital, as well as diversity, is embedded in volunteer training, to enhance the responsiveness to the prevailing beliefs of other cultures. Shafe and Hutchinson (2014), based on a systematic review of literature, argue that: 'The documented evidence supports the facts that cultural and community practices continue to be potent forces in perpetuating sexual abuse' (p. 636). Education and public awareness campaigns are often central to reducing this abuse (e.g. campaigns in the UK against Female Genital Mutilation), particularly as some abuse is intergenerational (Shafe and Hutchinson, 2014, p. 636). Intervention work would need to focus on these cultural differences, and how to align existing cultural beliefs and self-identity with lawful, acceptable norms and values.

The circle provides cultural capital directly through enabling core members to see what is situationally, socially, and culturally appropriate behaviour. The accountability strand of CoSA carries this function. The fact that volunteers are members of the broader community means that they can provide meaningful cultural capital in a way that the state cannot. This can result in cultural capital messages being more acceptable to the core member when offered.

> We challenge them when they say inappropriate things, reminding them that certain attitudes and behaviours are not right.… Do they always listen? No ... but we will keep challenging them. (Volunteer, participant 10)

> I see them in a different way [from probation], but I am aware that anything that we discuss in my circle that they think is worrying, they have to tell offender managers or the co-ordinator. (Core member, participant 7)

In addition, the circle also creates cultural capital indirectly through primary prevention (i.e. broad-based community support and education). For example, CoSA educates communities about the reality of people who have committed sexual abuse, and their management. Through training volunteers, CoSA provides communities with an opportunity to understand and actively engage in the management of sexual offenders by humanising sexual offenders and putting the abuse in an everyday context. This means that core members will be proactively managed back into communities, selective through they are, in a way that enables desistance, allows proactive risk management and protects the community — therefore, enabling them, theoretically, to access more resources.

> Yes, yes, I would [recommend volunteering with circles to another person] as it opened my eyes to the reality of being an ex-offender in the community. (Volunteer, participant 9)

> To me they were too soft ... I bluffed them a lot and they did not challenge me; when I started my second circle, I told them to challenge me more and they have, it has been better... I have a different attitude to it and them now. (Core member, participant 10)

This has resulted in professionals seeing CoSA as a proactive service that supports prevention and integration, and therefore a service that they

recommend to people who have committed sexual abuse and are re-entering the community.

> That safeguard is invaluable as it allows them to start reintegrating back into the community in a safe way. It means that they learn what they can say, what they cannot say and the most appropriate times to do it. It means they realise what they can and cannot do, and why. We say these things to them, but do they listen? It helps to have someone else say it too. (Stakeholder, volunteer 9)

The circle clearly provides the core member with cultural capital directly (i.e. via role modelling and safeguarding) and indirectly (i.e. through increased community education and support) (McCartan, Kemshall *et al.*, 2014; McCartan, 2016). However, it is particularly challenging for people who have committed a sexual offence to gain and maintain cultural capital because of the nature of their offences and public perceptions linked to them. Cultural attitudes to sexual abuse are traditionally at odds with the reality of offences and offending, but this is slowly starting to change with the recognition that perpetrators of sexual abuse are not radically different from everyone else.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the potential benefits of extending the notion of social capital to that of recovery capital to understand better, and to facilitate, the integration and management of people who have committed sexual offences. Recovery capital provides a greater focus on the opportunities, resources and skills required to achieve change, and offers a more holistic approach to desistance than social capital alone.

Whilst social capital does play a role in desistance, not least in offering some opportunities to gain positive social capital (e.g. pro-social networks), it alone does not necessarily offer the individual the capability to gain more insight into their behaviour or to learn from their experiences. CoSA has demonstrated its contribution to the social capital of people convicted of a sexual offence (see Höing, Bogaerts and Vogelvang, 2013). It goes beyond this to demonstrate clearly the effective application of the broader components of recovery capital in supporting the process of desistance. CoSA, through its commitment to 'Support', could enhance access to and use of social, human, and physical capital, and arguably 'Accountability' could

strengthen the core members' cultural capital of acceptable norms and behaviours. CoSA already has a focus on skill development, problem solving and self-management, and aids the core member in effectively practising these through social engagement both within the controlled environment of the circle, and beyond with the support and mentoring of volunteers. Arguably, enhancing the recovery capital of people convicted of a sexual offence could enable and strengthen their successful integration into the community and aid desistance.

There are also lessons for other practitioners who supervise people convicted of a sexual offence in settings outside CoSA. Broadening interventions with people convicted of a sexual offence to include recovery capital with a wider practice focus on personal recovery capital, family/social capital, community recovery capital, and cultural capital can assist in the 'transitioning out of offending' (Best *et al.*, 2016; Mawson *et al.* 2015; Dingle *et al.*, 2014; Harris, 2017). This require a multi-intervention approach, focusing on practical assistance to improve primary assets of income, health, and wellbeing; problem-solving and skill enhancement; strengthening of family and pro-social supports, positive use of leisure, workplace and community organisations; and non-stigmatising access to community resources and positive actions that support and sustain positive change (Healey, 2016). This type of work can be supported by one-to-one interventions or in group settings (Healey, 2016).

To date, the recovery capital of people who have committed sexual offences has not received significant attention, but arguably it should do so. Using a recovery capital approach to desistance would have benefits for people convicted of a sexual offence, victims/survivors of a sexual offence, and society more broadly.

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