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All together now! : Sex offender grouping and the normalisation of offending attitudes

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Abstract for Conference *'Sex Offenders – Punish, Help, Change or Control?'* Newport  
Centre for Criminal and Community Justice, April 29<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Title: **'Sex offender grouping and the normalisation of offending attitudes.'**

This presentation focuses on the experiences of sex offenders living within a Probation Approved Premises (hostel). Of primary concern is the way in which resident sex offenders group together within the hostel environment and the function that this serves for them. The presentation draws upon the work of Sykes and Matza (1957) in respect to techniques of neutralisation and considers the role of the group in normalising neutralisations and, thus, resisting offence-based work.

The presentation draws upon the findings of 2 years of ethnographic participant observation and interviewing within a single hostel. This study explored the interactions between sex offender residents, other residents and staff. The focus was on the way in which sex offenders experience institutional life within the unique, but often overlooked, sphere of Probation Approved Premises.