Gurnang Life Challenge

CO-OPERATION (CO-OP)

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM

OVERVIEW
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Introduction and Philosophical Overview

We do not believe in ourselves until someone (or something) reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our touch, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves (or at least begin to believe) we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit”

E. E. Cummings

What is the Issue?

Young Adult Offenders, arguably, can be the most difficult group of inmates in NSW Corrections as they, often are like all young people, still attempting to find their way in the world without the benefits of adult experiences to guide them, often many young adult offenders missed out on some early parts of their development into adulthood. These missing links can be caused through the lack of parental control or in some cases, too much control or through the influence of peers, the easy access to drugs and alcohol or a lack of responsibility or accountability for their actions or through such deep issues as physical, emotional or sexual abuse or mental disease. Young adult offenders all have some common issues such as; impulsive behaviour, not being accountable for their actions, negative peer pressure, a lack of communication skills, a lack of motivation and goal setting skills, anger and frustration and poor decision making and judgement skills. Additionally, a large number of young adults present with low self concept and hence the possibility of suicide/self harm are high, as well as confusion with relationships and even dealing with their own sexuality.
Introduction and Historical Overview

Traditionally, the outdoor environment has been used effectively and efficiently for personal development of human beings for many years, the outdoor environment is mainly used in adventurous activities such as bushwalking, expeditions, climbing, abseiling, canoeing and river rafting, etc. These activities were and are utilised by diverse organisations such as Outward Bound, military, schools, commercial firms and youth organisations.

The NSW Department of Corrective Services was also using these adventurous activities, in the “Project Survival” and in what is now commonly referred to as the “Newnes Experiment or Experience”. Currently, the Department also utilises the expedition/climbing/abseiling/experiential learning concept in Gurnang Life Challenge program at Oberon Correctional Centre with results of visually seen characteristic changes in the participants, which is similar to what was seen in the “Project Survival” and “Newnes Experiment”. Basically what is being said here is that adventurous activities are an essential requirement in any program that is going to effect life changing habits and attitudes, especially, with young adult offenders! However, the big question; will adventurous activities alone, inculcate long term life changing habits, characteristics and attitudes?
The answer of course is NO; however, modern research shows that the adventurous activities will serve as a catalyst to impel young adult offenders into other programs with positive behavioural, attitudinal changes.

Common Dynamic Risks

The accepted common dynamic risks of male Young Adult Offenders IAW the Young Adult Offender Strategic Framework Action Plan are:
Impulsive, risk taking behaviour, lack of long/medium term planning, peer pressure, motivation, lack of self direction, lack of acceptance of responsibility for behaviour, low communication and social skills and a low sense of self image and a low ability to achieve self efficacy.

Definitions of Self Constructs

A prominent experiential learning researcher James Neil (2006) refers to the need for definitions of the self-constructs of self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-concept. The definitions are:

- Self-esteem: Self-esteem refers to general feelings of self-worth or self-value.
- Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is belief in one's capacity to succeed at tasks. General self-efficacy is belief in one's general capacity to handle tasks. Specific self-efficacy refers to beliefs about one's ability to perform specific tasks (e.g., driving, public speaking, studying, etc.)
• Self-confidence: Self-confidence refers to belief in one's personal worth and likelihood of succeeding. Self-confidence is a combination of self-esteem and general self-efficacy.
• Self-concept: Self-concept is the nature and organisation of beliefs about one's self. Self-concept is theorised to be multi-dimensional. For example, people have separate beliefs about physical, emotional, social, etc. aspects of themselves.

Co-operation (CO-OP) an Element of the Gurnang Life Challenge

The purpose of this manual is to explain and detail the objectives, purpose, and processes of the CO-OP program in the Gurnang Life Challenge program.

What Is Adventurous Activities and Experiential learning

(1) Before we can answer the question of the effectiveness of the adventurous activities a discussion on WHAT an adventurous activity exactly is, needs to be aired. A recent paper entitled "A Descriptive Analysis of the Experienced Based Training and Development Field" by Todd Miner of the University of Alaska, examines a variety of facts on what TODD calls Experience Based Training and Development (EBTD). The facets examined are:

- What is EBTD
- Extent of the EBTD field
- Activities and Setting
- Goals of EBTD
- Participants of EBTD
- Providers of EBTD

(2) Todd and a number of other writers divide EBTD into two main areas:

- Wilderness programs, where participants have to sleep in a wilderness setting eg. tentage and usually involved an expedition of some sort. Todd argues that wilderness programs are principally concerned with individual growth through leadership, decision making and self-esteem.
- Outdoor – Centred programs, where participants mainly stay in housing style accommodation, participant in initiative games, ropes courses, confidence courses, etc. Todd further argues that these activities are concerned with team building, self esteem, leadership, problem solving and decision making.

Effectiveness of Adventurous / Experiential Learning activities

(1) Todd also argues in his conclusion, and correctly so, that research is required as to how and why the challenges and real life experiences of EBTD are, or are not, efficient tools for improving organisational performance. Though there are a number of research papers that now state that there is positive and sustainable changes that have occurred with participants of adventure/ experiential learning programs, see References 1, 2, 3, 4,and 5 of this manual. The document, "Future Directions for Juvenile Justice in NSW" supports this argument in the statement "Adventure challenge based programs are conducted for juveniles and
adults for a variety of purposes. However, claims that such programs can alter behaviour have not been founded on solid research”. This argument is being questioned by a number of organisations and individuals.

It is of interest to note that the document on Juvenile Justice further adds that “Whilst there has been little research to support their effectiveness, adventure based programs can provide a catalyst for change if incorporated as part of a wider program”. The adventure challenge activities within a program, but not as a sentencing option, have been included as a key objective of the Juvenile Justice system.

(2) A paper, entitled “Therapeutic Wilderness Programs and Juvenile Recidivism: A program Evaluation by Castellano and Soderstrom (1992) examined the effects of participation in an Outward Bound type program on the recidivism of sample juvenile probationers. Findings indicate a definite one year delinquency reduction, whilst the reduction was not evident in a two-year follow up. The writers further argue, “While overall results are mixed, the wilderness stress challenge program appears promising as an alternative to traditional juvenile justice placements”. Despite being a short-term intervention for a relatively high rate delinquent population, discernible reductions in arrest rates have been found. The fact that the delinquency reduction effect is short–lived begs questions such as what would happen if the intervention was lengthened or if systematic and supplemental follow-up services were provided to program participants once they returned to their natural environment”

(3) The reader of this paper will now be asking, where this information is heading. Essentially, this paper is arguing that wilderness programs or adventurous activities although effective, are not enough to effect life changing habits, characteristics and attitudes in participants, particularly for clients of the NSW Specialised Young Adult Offender Program. The wilderness program at Oberon CC for male young adult offenders currently fulfils the requirement as the catalyst that propels a participant into being motivated to achieve vocational, educational and life changing habits and goals. Accordingly, what we are saying is that wilderness style programs are essential in a program of the type at Oberon, but wilderness programs are not enough to affect the desired outcomes in a participant. A further argument that the provision of academic, vocational, work ethic, drug and alcohol and living skills education, combined with wilderness programs, are also not enough to effect the desired outcome of a decent, growth-oriented, positive, contributing member of society.

(4) Later research (Wilson & Mackenzie 2006) on recidivism and “What Works” documents (Wilson & Lipsey 2000, Singh & White 2000 and J. McGuire “Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment”), indicates that effective adventure orientated programs can prove effective with recidivism if the programs include the following components:

- Thorough assessments and ongoing monitoring of participants
- A risk management assessment of activities and screening of program staff
- Multi-modal treatments with cognitive-behavioural orientation, eg. behaviour and attitude modification
- Addressing specific criminogenic needs, eg. attitudes, peer pressure
- Meaningful and substantial contact between participants and staff
- Inclusion of an after care component

Additional research and practises gave rise to the term **Adventure Therapy (AT)**; is the creation of challenge in a safe environment through experiential activities for groups or individuals to solve, provided there was effective and realistic processing. In AT there must be perceived risk, generating a level of anxiety that is significant to elicit a desired behavioural change. Positive behavioural changes, which are synonymous with psychological healing, generally occur through isomorphic connections. See Gillis 2000, Parker 1992, and Ziven 1988.

**What Else Is Needed**

(1) The missing link in the equation of the Gurnang Life Challenge program is essentially the personal development (PD) component. That is not to say that it does not exist, it does, and a current PD program (called Personal Growth) is implemented at OCC. However, experience has shown that theoretical PD programs are not effective enough, what is needed is the practical approach in real life of the PD subject, to experience the real life components one needs to actually experience the situations in real life which can obviously take many, many years. Should the reader be able to grasp this concept then they could quickly realise, that the emphasis is placed on the words REAL LIFE and EXPERIENCE. Therefore one could argue that the EXPERIENCE could be actually EXPERIENTIALLY ACHIEVED in a SIMULATED REAL LIFE SITUATION, and if this could be carried out in conjunction with the PD program and inherently linked to the vocational education, self responsibility, work ethic and dynamic risk combined with the wilderness programs, then we could have (complete with a safety net of Case Management) a realistic, achievable, cost effective “holistic” program that crosses all spheres of a human beings potential as a decent, contributing member of society

(2) It is worth noting the results of a recent Queensland survey, which reflects the issues of young adult offenders. The Mount Isa Mines carried out a detailed management survey, which focussed on what skills employees were looking for over the next decade. These are the results – a priority list of people’s characteristics needed for the future.

i. Communication Skills
ii. Problem Solving Abilities
iii. Teamwork Skills
iv. Greater Literacy and Numeracy
v. People Management Skills
vi. High Self-Esteem
vii. Attitudes which recognise the need to work together
viii. Accountability for actions or inaction
ix. Reliability
x. Flexibility and Adaptability
xi. Being Multi Skilled

(3) If one analysed the Gurnang Life Challenge program one would quickly see that all of these facets and more have been included in the existing program and from all areas and levels of the program, eg. work, vocational education, wilderness, self-responsibility and dynamic risk programs coupled with the daily structured day elements. However, to further facilitate certain requirements, the PD and the real-life experiential education needs to be included.

*It is the sin of the soul to force young people into opinions – indoctrination is of the devil – but it is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences*

Kurt Hahn

(4) To implement this “real life experiential education” a name has to be added, the appropriate name is Co-operation (CO-OP) which essentially covers Todd’s name of Outdoor-centred Programs. The CO-OP concept was originally titled Adventure Based Counselling (ABC); see Islands of Healing A Guide to Adventure Based Counselling, Jim Schoel, Dick Prouty, and Paul Radcliffe. Project Adventure Inc. 1988 ISBN 0-934-38700-1. The term ABC is a major component of the Project Adventure Australia, a private firm operating in Victoria. The original developers of the term and concept were Project Adventure America.

**Experiential Learning**

The program is based upon *experiential learning*; please do not confuse experiential learning with experienced-based learning. Experienced based learning is where people practice the skills they are learning. Experiential based learning is where the action experienced learning is subject to reflection, transfer and support.

- **Reflection** examines the process to enhance the awareness of the learning.
- **Transfer** change is expected in real life from the learning; this aspect is enhanced by the utilisation of metaphors and isomorphs in the activities.
- **Support** providing opportunities that permit people to continue changing and lessen resistance to change.

Programming of experiential learning can be defined as the deliberate use of action events and facilitated reflection to bring about lasting changes and learning. In outdoor education there are 5 types of programming (see Priest S 2004):

- **Sport**- the use of outdoor environments for sport; abseiling, climbing, bushwalking, rogaining etc.
- **Recreational**- the uses of outdoors and indoors to relax, entertain, re-energise and socialise.
Gurnang Life Challenge  

Co-Operation (Co-Op) - an Experiential Learning Program

- Educational - the use of experiential learning to allow people to gain knowledge and skills.
- Developmental - the use of experiential learning designed to change the way people feel, think and behave.
- Therapeutic - the use of experiential learning designed and intended to change the way people feel, think, behave and resist negative dysfunctional behaviour.

What is CO-OP?

(1) Essentially, CO-OP is a personal development program that utilises outdoor environment, for initiative games, openness, situation leadership, trust development and communication exercises as well as goal setting, decision making, social and personal responsibility processes that accelerates a persons learning potential in a personal development growth process. CO-OP utilises developmental programming and therapeutic programming to achieve its aims and objectives; CO-OP is definitely not to be confused with sport, recreation or education. Additionally CO-OP utilises a High and Low Challenge Ropes Course and wilderness expeditions as part of the tool kit.

(2) The essential cornerstones of the objectives is development of:

- Openness
- Goal Development
- Attitude
- Self-Concept
- Communication
- Trust
- Problem Solving
- Respect for the dignity of others
- Assertiveness
- Self Efficacy
- Cause and Effect
- Social Responsibility
- Positive/Negative aspects of Peer Support
- Personal Responsibility

How is CO-OP Conducted?

(1) CO-OP is conducted in a challenging, achievable manner that allows the participant to develop or at least question the development at her own pace. In the early sessions, success in the activities are easily achieved, provided the participant makes an effort, later in the program the activities are much more difficult. The difficulties are deliberately placed so that although the activity is difficult, it is achievable. To be able to handle failure, and be aware that success or failure are basically similar, and that the trying or putting in your best effort is more important than failure or even in some cases success. The reader can relate this philosophy with real life, not everyone is going to achieve at everything he/she does in life, but the man/woman who tries is a winner.

*Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though chequered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the grey twilight that knows no victory nor defeat.*
Essentially CO-OP is conducted through a wave process. Like life there are high points and low points and life could be a succession of these waves; there often occurs these high crest parts and there are the lows (troughs). It just depends on the way a person handles the crests and troughs. The wave process is also used to enable a procedure to be implemented.

*LEARNING IS SOMETHING DONE BY SOMEONE, NOT TO HIM*
The Aim and Terminal Objectives of CO-OP

PROGRAM NAME: Co-Operation (CO-OP)

PROGRAM AIM: To enable young adult offenders to examine and experience the benefits of being a successful, positive, growth oriented contributing member of society who is confident and holds good communication, teamwork, leadership and self-esteem skills.

PROGRAM TERMINAL OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of the CO-OP program, each participant should:

(a) Experience success and failure and be aware that success or failure are not as important as trying or making the best effort.

(b) Be capable of achieving effective communication.

(c) Be responsible for one’s own actions or lack thereof, the cause and effect.

(d) Become assertive without aggression.

(e) Be a capable, positive and contributing team member.

(f) Be aware of the requirements, difficulties and successful outlook of an effective leader.

(g) Be capable of tackling large problems with effective problem solving skills.

(h) Be able to ingrain one’s self with a mental tough attitude.

(h) Examine personal and life goals in a realistic manner.

(i) Be able to trust one’s self and others.

(j) Be capable of being involved and make decisions.

(k) Be capable of providing realistic respect for the dignity of others.

(l) Be able to discern and utilise the negative and positive aspects of peer support.

(m) Experience personal growth.
(n) Be aware of the rights and property of others.

(o) Experience and process self efficacy

(p) Develop social responsibility skills

(q) Develop personal responsibility skills

(r) Be capable of effecting change in a person’s abilities as a human being

**Scheduling/Time table of CO-OP**

CO-OP is scheduled over a 10 session period; each session is conducted over a time frame of 3 to 4 hours dependent upon whether it is scheduled for an am session or a pm session. The sessions are linked to the Personal Growth, see Personal Growth manual (PG) and hence are required to be sequenced with the PG program as well as sequencing of the individual aims and activities of CO-OP. This means that PG 1 (theory) is linked to CO-OP 1 (practical), hence PG 1 is scheduled for an am session then CO-OP 1 must be a pm session, likewise P2/CO-OP 2, etc. Due to major learning issues and hence a more intense time period requirement the CO-OP is changed at CO-OP 5 for an am schedule and PG 5 is conducted at a pm time frame. See table below.

**Linkage of CO-OP and Personal Growth**

It is emphasised that the Co-operation program is inherently linked to the Personal Growth program, as well as both programs linking and being part of the Gurnang Life Challenge program, each must co-exist and must be completed in the sequence and the objectives specified in the following table. For further information on PG, see the Personal Growth Gurnang Life Challenge Handbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CO-OP</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>PG</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Acquaintance, De-inhibitisation and attitude</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Attitude, Adult Learning Theory and Perspectives</td>
<td>PG AM, Co-op PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>De-inhibitisation and enthusiasm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Self Confidence and habits</td>
<td>PG AM, Co-op PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Co-operation in groups and conflict</td>
<td>PG AM, Co-op PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Trust and empathy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Owning offence and victim empathy</td>
<td>PG AM, Co-op PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Decision making and problem solving</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Classification and Parole (how to problem solve)</td>
<td>Co-op AM, PG PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social responsibility and goal setting</td>
<td>Co-op AM, PG PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Personal responsibility and goal focus</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dress, language, behaviour and reactions to change</td>
<td>Co-op AM, PG PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gurnang Life Challenge

Co-Operation (Co-Op)
- an Experiential Learning Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Personal responsibility and change focus</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Cycle of offending behaviour</th>
<th>Co-op AM, PG PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Past, present and future isomorphic and re-focus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No formal session, preparation for classification</td>
<td>Co-op AM, Preparation own time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Affirmation and ratification of belief</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No formal session. Completion of Therapeutic programs</td>
<td>Co-op AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principles of Operation (PoO) CO-OP

CO-OP has a number of standard PoO’s, additional PoO’s can be added to each intakes requirements. The standard PoO for each intake are specified below:

1. **Have F.U.N.N.** (an experiential learning manner of spelling fun, means Functional Understanding Not Necessary. To learn people have to have fun otherwise learning does not occur.

2. **Dignity and respect** to all people at all times, to learn and develop people need to feel safe and respected.

3. **Admit your fault- fix the problem.** CO-OP and experiential learning is about having a go, making a mistake and rectifying the mistake. Unless one first admits to a fault, it cannot be fixed.

4. **Never assume,** like life unless you know the rules, you will stuff up. Like wise never assume you know what is required in an activity until you get the goals and how the activity is to be conducted.

5. **No excuses.** No yes buts are accepted, which means don’t be late, don’t bullshit.

6. **Murphy’s Law (modern term is Shit Happens) whichever is used they are dead.** Systems and equipment does not fail people stuff up.

7. **I can’t is dead, I won’t is alive and well.** Participants are encouraged to say no when on climbing type activities, the argument is that people given freely the choice will generally say yes if a choice is given, and if they say no then there is a good chance they will say no to drugs, crime etc.. Please do not think of this as a soft option; there are real choices and responsibilities involved. The following will help to explain this important PoO.
THE FOLLOWING IS A “CREDO” WITH GURNANG LIFE CHALLENGE

“CHALLENGE BY CHOICE” means the participants are given the choice to determine their level of involvement (or challenge) in a given activity. Nobody is forced to do anything they don’t want to. The motivation comes from within rather than from external influences. However, “CHALLENGE BY CHOICE” is more than simply saying “NO” and pulling out of the activity. It’s about creating a safe learning environment for all participants; it helps you make appropriate decisions in an atmosphere of care and support. In essence, the aim is empowering you to make your own decisions but also encouraging you to “give it a go”.

“A choice not to participate in a particular activity, or (more often) to assume a role that is more comfortable for you, is always respected”. Real success and learning occurs only when individuals choose to commit to their own standards and goals that are personally meaningful.

NOTE: “CHALLENGE BY CHOICE” is in operation whilst on High Challenge Ropes Course, Abseiling and Rock climbing ONLY.

The Role of G.R.A.B.B.S.

GRABBS is a scanning tool that is written for each CO-OP session. Essentially GRABBS is a modality checklist, regarding important personal and interpersonal operations. The checklist of GRABBS include; Goals, Readiness, Affect, Behaviour, Body and Stage of Development. GRABBS is utilised by a range of adventure/experiential organisations and the development and usage of GRABBS is a standard generic skill in the Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia standard generic competencies. GRABBS originally comes from Arnold Lazarus “The Practice of Multimodal Therapy” 1981. More information is provided in “Islands of Healing” Schoel, Prouty and Radcliffe 1981.
GRABBS Modality Checklist

Goals
How does the activity relate to the group and individual goals that have been set?

Readiness
This regards levels of instruction, skills and safety capabilities. Is the group ready to do the activity? Will they endanger themselves and others? Do they have the ability to attempt or complete? What will you have to do to change the event to compensate for lack of readiness?

Affect
What is the feeling in the group? What kind of sensations are they having? What is the level of empathy or caring in the group?

Behaviour
How is the group acting? Are they resistive? Disruptive? Agreeable? Are they more self involved or group involved? Are there any interactions that are affecting the group in a positive and negative? How co-operative are they?

Body
What kind of physical shape are they in? How tired are they? Do they substance abuse? Are they on medication? How do they see there own bodies?

Stage
Which developmental stage are they at? Forming, storming, Norming, Transforming (also called mourning or termination. See Tuckman 1965, Schutz 1971, Bion 1961 and Webber 1982 “The group a Cycle from Birth to Death”

A final word on GRABBS.

Facilitator, the GRABBS in the sessions of CO-OP are designed as a guide and will give important information as to readiness, goals and planned group development stages. The remainder of affect, behaviour and body can only be written as a guide. Please ensure that you adjust for each group and individual, sometimes you will have to “adjust on the run”. Use your judgement wisely.

How Does CO-OP Measure up to “What Works” (see page 4 of this manual)

Thorough assessment and ongoing monitoring of participants- All participants in CO-OP/PG are assessed through a rigorous and intense induction case management process and readiness program. These activities are listed in the Gurnang Life Challenge Induction/Reception Protocol, wilderness expedition Kick Start, and the induction process outlined in the Gurnang Life Challenge Program Flow Chart. Additionally, monitoring as to participants performance is by case notes, CO-OP/PG performance notes which are all subject to regular performance reviews via Gurnang Life Challenge Program Performance Indicators; see Gurnang Life Challenge PPI Protocols.

A risk management assessment of activities and screening of program staff- All activities in CO-OP and PG programs have been assessed for risk management, both physical and more importantly emotionally (see GRABBS in CO-OP and...
Facilitator Guides in Personal Growth programs). The High Challenge Ropes Course is subject to specific risk management in terms of operation and internal and external inspection and accreditation cycles.
Staff facilitating the Personal Growth program are assessed as accredited facilitators with a requirement to have *Training Small Groups, Work Place Assessor and Motivational Interactions* (note staff are to have the skills of Motivational Interactions). Additionally, staff are to have experienced each PG session as a co-facilitator of the session prior to presentation. A CO-OP facilitator must be qualified in Certificate 3 Outdoor Recreation, with specific competencies in Adventure Based Learning Activities, Low and High Challenge Ropes Course Facilitation. Additionally, staff operating CO-OP programs is to have experienced each CO-OP session as a co-facilitator, prior to operating as lead facilitator. Certificate 3 means that the facilitator can operate, facilitate and report on planned, scheduled operations. To amend, vary or perform unscheduled operations, the minimum qualification is Certificate 1V. See Appendix 2, this manual.

Multi-modal treatments with cognitive-behavioural orientation- The CO-OP program is designed around the concepts of Experiential Learning (see earlier descriptions), essentially, CO-OP is practical orientated with elements of cognitive requirements. Personal Growth program is designed around concepts of cognitive skills with some practical, experiential learning involvement. CO-OP and PG are designed to complement each other and work in synergy with the whole Gurnang Life Challenge program. All of the programs are designed and operated to reflect improvements in behaviour.

Addressing specific criminogenic needs- CO-OP and PG programs specifically address the common dynamic risks of young adult offenders, see Young Adult Action Plan, Gurnang Life Challenge Therapeutic Protocol and earlier in this manual.

Meaningful and substantial contact between participants and staff- Meaningful and substantial contact between participants and staff occur during all sessions of the CO-OP and PG programs. Additionally, often participants require 1:1 counselling after a session due to behaviours exhibited in the session or when issues are raised in the sessions which require more in depth examination or discussion.

Inclusion of an after care component- After care is provided through other elements of the Gurnang Life Challenge program such as case management, participation in more specific dynamic risk related programs and general behaviour and completion (graduation) and lowering of classification grading. Additionally, after care is provided through stages 4 and 5 of the Specialised Young Adult Offender Program; see Young Adult Offender Strategic Plan.
Preparation and Mustering

**Preparation**
The facilitator is responsible for reading and understanding the context of the Intake Analysis (from the Induction Analysis of each intake) and therapeutic requirements as specified in the Case Plan. Each document will guide the facilitator in issues such as; dynamic risk, special needs, behaviour, schooling level, medical and other alerts. This information is critical to effective learning outcomes and the changing of attitudes and the addressing of particular dynamic risks such as; peer pressure, impulsivity and attitude.

Facilitator is to obtain a copy of these documents and add to the CO-OP participant’s notes, complete with an imaging page of each intake.

**Mustering**
CO-OP participants and nucleus inmates are mustered at the Tennis Court gates, immediately after general musters. Each inmate must be accounted for and advised to the Compound Officer as soon as practical. On completion of the CO-OP, escort participants to the tennis court gates and advise Compound Officer as to returns.

**Briefings, De-Briefing and the Role of “Gurney”**

**Briefings**

“If only we knew what we were about perhaps we could get about it better”

Abe Lincoln

A guide to briefing requirements is on each GRABBS of each CO-OP session, as well as in activity notes and activity schedules, all of these are mandatory. Always ensure that each session commences with a brief on the goals and a reflection on the link to Personal Growth.

A brief should be always conducted in a thoughtful, disciplined and controlled tone. If it is a safety brief ensure you use the words “This is a safety brief you must position yourself in such a manner where you can see and you must listen very carefully”

Always include What, How, When, Why, Where and Who in your brief. Check for understanding by first asking for any questions and then check with the group or individuals by asking participants questions as to the brief, expectations, goals, safety and rules.

Additionally, a brief should always include:
- Authority and safety
- Framing the experience
- The PoO’s
- Goals

Ensure you don’t over brief; remember adventure/experiential learning is about trial and error, making mistakes, solving problems and discovery about an individual.
Don’t be too authoritative, “When authority begins to inspire contempt it stops being an authority”.

De-Briefing

De-briefs or processing the experience are critical to the success of CO-OP. Each GRABBS and activity notes and activity schedules provides a guide to the de-briefing requirements. Essentially, the de-briefs are built around the concepts of What, So What and Now What (see Knapp “The Art and Science of Processing Experience” and “Processing the Adventure Experience Theory and Practice”, Reldan S. Nadler, John L. Luckner).

There are numerous and effective de-briefing techniques, provided the context of the goals is de-briefed as well as specific instructions are met, any style is appropriate. A mistake is to ask about feelings.

An effective technique is to conduct edge counselling, this works very well on HCRC and abseiling activities. The de-brief is conducted in the moment, when a participant is on the HCRC and won’t let go or move. Sooner or later it will be necessary to get the participant down from the activity and if it is necessary to forcibly remove the participant then all is lost in terms of development or therapy; in fact the force has retarded the participant. It is much better to treat the situation as an opportunity for the participant to gain significant ground. An example; a participant won’t let go of an activity in order to descend, facilitator climbs to the participant and discuss the concept of (“to gain something you have to let go of something”), a basic outcome from a practical point of view, when the participant lets go he will gain relief, or if the isomorphic concept of to let go of drugs will cause some fear, but also relief, is understood then significant gains have been made.

Some sessions of the CO-OP activities have deliberate Frontloading, meaning questions are asked prior to the activity at the briefing stage, de-briefs generally, are spontaneous at the end of these sessions if the Frontload is well presented. See GRABBS on each CO-OP for Frontloading.

The old adage of adventure education of “Let the mountains or activity, speak for themselves”, is no where near effective. The adult learning and the experiential learning cycle are dependent upon the sequence of; experience reflection, processing and applying. Therefore, always ensure that the CO-OP session is de-briefed, at times the GRABBS will guide as to mini de-briefs in the activity schedules. The essential aim of the program is that the participants apply the learning in the Correctional system and more importantly in the community upon release; therefore without processing or de-briefing the session, the learning may be lost, taken out of context or ignored.

Metaphors

A significant number of activities in CO-OP are metaphorical designed; Metaphor is an idea, object or description used in place of another different idea, object or description to denote similarity between the two.
Isomorphic
The term isomorphic is normally associated with minerals, organisms and mathematical equations. In Adventure Therapy, the term isomorphic is defined as; transferring of learning from a specific experience to other life experiences. To avoid confusion between isomorphic and metaphoric activities; isomorphic activities will make “real the event”, see CO-OP GRABBS in particular CO-OP 5 to CO-OP 10.

Gurney
People learn by auditory, visual and kinaesthetically, the adage of adventure learning is worth remembering:

I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand

Confucius

Often a mistake made by people in processing/de-briefing sessions is when we forget the small number of people (10%) who learn in the auditory (blah, blah) and visual, 10%, (green tomatoes) means, the majority of people 80%, still learn best by doing. As much as possible ensure that de-briefs are conducted in the doing manner. An effective way of achieving a doing manner, is to attach a Gurney to each group.

Let me introduce Gurney; Gurney unlike us as humans, went through three birthing processes; firstly he was born as a pine tree, thence he was processed into a piece of MDF and finally cut into his shape. Essentially, Gurney is a piece of MDF approximately one metre by half a metre in the shape of a human being. Gurney’s purpose is to record the goals and PoO’s of each intake, additionally, he will record the achievements and learning of each member of the intake at each CO-OP session. Hence de-briefs are now auditory, visual and often kinaesthetic.

Participant Notes and Participant Reports

Each session of CO-OP has a section for performance notes on each participant, the purpose is to record goals, performance, issues and observations for individual de-brief and performance based reports. All participants have to have a performance based report completed after CO-OP 1 in time for PPI C and CPE, as well as PPI A and Exit Summary (see Case Management Protocols). The performance notes are essential for the facilitator to write up the reports, please ensure that the performance notes actually reflect the goals of each session, and not words such as “travelling well”, “better then last week” etc. Issues such as attitudes, performance as reflecting the session goal, good/bad safety issues etc. should be noted.

Further instructions for the compilation of reports for CPE are contained in GRABBS CO-OP 1. Additionally the rationale, purpose and publication of reports are to be
found in Program Performance Indicator (PPI) Protocol of the Gurnang Life Challenge Case Management Handbook

A sample; A level CO-OP report is attached in Appendix 1

**Activity Notes and Sequencing of Objectives and Activities.**

It is critical to the integrity and learning outcomes that the sequence of CO-OP and the activities of each CO-OP are rigidly followed, otherwise learning is not achieved. Each GRABBS schedule has Activity Notes, they are designed to assist the facilitator achieve the requirements of the GRABBS, it is vital that the facilitator reads and understands each GRABBS and associated activity notes prior to the presentation of the CO-OP.

A range of activity notes do not include instructions as to how to do, it is expected that each facilitator develop their own lesson plan format, all activities can be located in the various reference materials. Some activities have detailed lesson plans; these activities are ones peculiar to Gurnang Life Challenge.

**Role of Nucleus Inmates**

Nucleus and Nucleus under Training (NUT) are allocated to each intake; their role is to assist with presentation of activities, act as co-facilitators/peer educators and to participate. They also help to rig and de-rig activities and clean up, put equipment away etc.

The nucleus major role is to lead by example and participate, lead in de-briefs (particularly when participants are reluctant to open), support the program contexts, work one on one with reluctant and/or fearful inmates, stop prankish and bullying behaviour.

To operate as *belay supervisors* on High Challenge Ropes Course, nucleus inmates require approval from the CO-OP Facilitator.

Nucleus inmates require special assessments and are to be certified within the requirements of the Specialised Young Adult Offender Program, Nucleus Inmate Protocol.

*Warning, often in exuberance a nucleus will attempt to help too much, the facilitator is responsible for ensuring the nucleus learns the hardest thing in adventure facilitation “Shut Up”.*
HOW CO-OP SUCCEEDS IN A NUT SHELL

THE PARTICIPANT
↓
EXPERIENCES A STATE OF
↓
DISEQUILIBRIUM
↓
BY BEING PLACED IN
↓
NOVEL SETTINGS
↓
AND
↓
A COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT
↓
WHILE PRESENTED WITH
↓
UNIQUE PROBLEM SOLVING SITUATIONS
↓
THAT LEAD TO
↓
FEELINGS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
↓
WHICH ARE AUGMENTED BY
↓
PROCESSING THE EXPERIENCE
↓
WHICH PROMOTES
↓
GENERALISATION AND TRANSFER
↓
TO FUTURE ENDEAVOURS

(Source Nadler, Luckner “Processing the Adventure Experience” 1992)
APPENDICES

Appendix 1                  Program Performance Indicator
Appendix 2                  Staff Competencies
Appendix 1 - Program Performance Indicator

**MANAGEMENT PROGRAM - YOUNG ADULT OFFENDER**

**A LEVEL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**

**CORE - CO-OPERATION (CO-OPS) MODULES 1 TO 8**

**DATE:**

________________________

**INTAKE:**

________________________

**INMATE NAME:**

________________________________________

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**PERFORMANCE**

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**Recommendation**

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Reporting Officer Name: ___________________________ Reporting Officer Signature: ___________________________
Appendix 2 – Co-Operation Program Staff Competencies

All staff involved in CO-OP programs are to hold minimum standards and competencies to facilitate an effective program and to meet standards of What Works and NSW Department of Corrective Services Program Accreditation requirements. This appendix specifies generic meta skills, accompanying staff minimum and ideal requirements and the specific Oberon Lead and Co-facilitator competencies.

CO-OP Generic Meta Competencies and Attitudes

All staff custodial and OS&P are to hold the following generic competencies in addition to their individual discipline qualifications and competencies:

- Ability to make sound decisions and to take responsibility for the decision,
- Ability to earn people’s trust and confidence,
- A good understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses,
- Good interpersonal communication skills,
- Good facilitation and organizational skills,
- A high sense of personal ethics,
- A flexible, non-judgmental style of person who can make a judgment call based on common sense whilst adhering to legislative/departmental policies and protocols.

Co-Operation Facilitator Minium Requirements Oberon Staff

1. All of the generic meta and accompanying staff competencies
2. Experience in co-facilitation of wilderness expeditions, experiential learning, high challenge ropes course and abseiling.
3. High case management skills, with a deep understanding of de-briefing and report writing skills.
4. Managing Young Adult Offenders

Ideal Requirements

Again, in an ideal world and to facilitate best practice a co-facilitator is to hold:

1. Generic and minimum requirements
2. Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation with specific competency of abseiling co-facilitator
3. Accredited Remote Area First Aid
4. High level of experience in wilderness expeditions, abseiling, experiential learning and High Challenge Ropes Course
5. A deep understanding of Adventure Management SOP and Risk Management practices
6. Excellent team work skills
Co-Operation Lead Facilitator Requirements

Lead facilitator overall in the Gurnang Life Challenge CO-OP Young Adult Offenders program must hold the following skills and competencies:

1. The ideal competencies of an accompanying co-facilitator and Oberon CC facilitator
2. Lead facilitation of Managing Young Adult Offenders (CSA course)
3. Instructor Remote Area First Aid
4. Certificate IV Outdoor Recreation SRO03 with competencies of; instructor bushwalking, generic, guide abseiling, adventure based learning and manage high and low challenge ropes courses.
6. High level of experience in conduct and development of ABC programs.

Specific CO-OP Sessions Lead Facilitator Competencies

To lead facilitate abseiling the minimum requirements are; Certificate III abseiling and/or certified by overall lead facilitator.
To lead on expeditions, the minimum requirements are; Certificate III bushwalking and/or certified leader by overall lead facilitator.

Note: The essential difference between Certificate III and Certificate IV is:

- A Certified III person can only lead over an established route or area and must follow procedures and plans specified.
- A certificate IV person can alter and design, develop new procedures, plans, routes and areas.
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

The following documents / books are required to operate the CO-OP program and or they are utilised in explanations.

References for Adventure Experiential Learning

1. Corporate Adventure Training Institute (CATI) located at Brock University in Canada,
   Abstract. Group of managers, control group of 11 and experimental group of 17, all completed a Team Development Inventory (TDI), 2 months before experimental group completed a 3-day initiative training program. Both groups completed TDI 2 months post training. Post test scores of the experimental group were significantly different from control group in areas of group goals, effective listening, decision-making, respect for peers, and encouragement of feedback.

   Abstract. Meta-analysis to examine effects of adventure programs on a diverse array of outcomes such as self-concept, locus of control, and leadership. Meta analysis based on 1,728 effect sizes from 151 unique samples from 96 studies. Average effect size at the end of the programs was .34. Effect size varied with ages of groups and program length.

   Abstract. A study of literature of outdoor programming for young offenders in detention, much of the literature focuses on extended wilderness experiences in the Outward Bound style, this book may help destroy the myth that programs for young offenders must use wilderness experiences to effect change.

   Abstract. A study on the personal growth outcomes of participants in the Gurnang Life Challenge Program, study found significant changes in participants in such areas as self efficacy, leadership, self concept, dealing with authorities, and dealing with relationships.

Abstract. A descriptive web site, explains modern experiential learning programming and de-briefing concepts.

Abstract. The bible or essential reading to develop a program utilising adventure/experiential education and personal growth, examines and advise on Challenge by Choice, GRABBS, group development issues and leadership/ facilitation.

Abstract. The essence of de-briefing in adventure/experiential learning.

Abstract. Easy to read book on initiatives and activities that mean things in terms of learning and development in adventure/ experiential training.


10. Ropes Course Facilitator's Handbook Adventure Training Systems Brookvale NSW (NON PUBLISHED) Abstract. A decisive guide to operation of low and high challenge ropes course gives advice as to front loading and de-briefing, plus helpful maintenance and design issues of a HCRC.


