

**TESTIMONIAL FROM STUART ROBINSON  
GOVERNOR OF HMP WARREN HILL**

SEM was recommended to me by Stephen Pryor (following nearly 40 years in HMPS), who said he believed it would meet a “critical need for offenders” – and that he was “unaware of anything like it in the prison service”. We have run four SEM Workshops over the last year as a ‘purposeful activity’ in association time at Warren Hill YOI, and they have proven their worth.

As Governor I see positive working relationships involving staff and offenders in Warren Hill YOI as critical in achieving our aim of challenging and changing damaging behaviour. Through SEM’s work, offenders learn how to relate to each other, work as a team, explore deep and sensitive issues – with adults, work within boundaries, stay committed to a task, respect other peoples points of view, listen, welcome visitors, and so on – which I feel directly contributes to this aim.

As Governor I have to have faith that SEM works, because unlike some of our other programmes it has no pre-determined and easily measurable outcomes. In many ways this represents strength, because the young men lead an exploration of the relationship and family issues that are on their minds – which can vary enormously. For example in one of the SEM 12-session Workshops I understand the offenders explored experiences relating to money, work, elderly in-laws, trust, sex and contraception, children and drink and drugs, bad habits, violence, health problems, resolving conflict, and a wide range of further experiences. In another Workshop with different participants the experiences explored will naturally be different – so the outcomes vary each time. But invariably their own thinking is tested and developed, thereby affecting behaviour.

Finally I am aware from the research that re-offending is most likely to stop when an offender settles into a stable relationship with a partner. Whilst SEM has no evidence that it directly impacts on this, I believe they probably make a small yet valuable contribution towards an offender settling into, and sustaining such a stable relationship.