



Preventing repeat child exploitation material offending:

A psychological intervention approach

CEM-COPE:

Coping with Child Exploitation Material Use Group Program

Program Referral Information Sheet



The Problem Behaviour Program, Forensicare, and the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science (CFBS) at Swinburne University of Technology, is piloting a group program for individuals with child exploitation material (CEM) offences without a known history of contact sexual offences. The 15-session program aims to reduce risk of future CEM use and is delivered by the Problem Behaviour Program. There is also a voluntary research project tied to the program that is run by the CFBS, which aims to understand the benefits of the program to group members and if the program can be improved in the future.

About the CEM-COPE Program

CEM-COPE is a 15-session psychoeducation program which aims to reduce the risk of future CEM use through increasing participants' understanding of their offending and increasing psychological coping skills. The program includes education and skill development relating to the legal context, problematic internet use, emotional and sexual coping skills and interpersonal relationship skills. Sessions are two hours in duration and will be run at the Problem Behaviour Program at 505 Hoddle Street Clifton Hill (or online if required because of the pandemic).

Depending on referral numbers, the program will run one to two times per year. See the instructions below to find out when the next round of the program will run and how to make a referral to the program.

About the CEM-COPE Pilot Study

Researchers from the CFBS at Swinburne University are conducting a study to investigate how the CEM-COPE Program benefits group members, including if it helps people to make positive changes in areas that contribute to CEM offending and to avoid reoffending. Following completion of the program, participants will be asked to complete two brief questionnaires and to participate in a focus group to provide feedback on their experience of the program. Permission will also be requested to access clinical and legal information related to their participation in the program. Although we are keen to include anyone who completes the program in the research, participation in the pilot study is voluntary and not a requirement of participating in the program.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the program, participants must have either pleaded guilty or been convicted of activity related to the accessing, possession, distribution or digital creation of CEM. Individuals involved in the direct exploitation or abuse of children, whether indirect (via webcam) or direct (recording of own contact offences against a child), will be excluded from participating in the research.

Individuals will also be ineligible for the program if they have a history of contact sexual offending, are currently experiencing acute symptoms of a severe mental illness (e.g., psychotic disorder or bipolar affective disorder), are in acute distress (self-harm or suicide risk), or have a severe cognitive impairment (e.g., acquired brain injury or intellectual disability).

How to make a referral to the program/pilot program

If you are aware of a client who may be eligible to participate in the CEM-COPE Program, please discuss this with them and provide them with the attached information sheet and Referral Details and Consent Form. To make a referral to the program, please contact the Community Forensic Mental Health Service Intake team at CFMHSintake@forensicare.vic.gov.au (subject: 'CEM-COPE Program') with the following information:

1. A copy of the CEM-COPE Referral Details and Consent Form, completed and signed by your client
2. A copy of the Preliminary Brief for the current CEM offence(s)*
3. A copy of the client's criminal history*

* This information is requested to ensure that referred clients meet the offence history eligibility criteria specified above.

What happens next?

Once the referral is received and accepted, a member of the CEM-COPE team will contact your client to answer any questions they may have and schedule a time to complete the pre-program assessment process with them. This will occur at the Problem Behaviour Program clinic (or online if required due to the pandemic). The assessment will involve completing a brief interview and some questionnaires, which they will also be asked to complete again at the end of the program (if eligible). Eligible individuals will also be provided with detailed information about the voluntary CEM-COPE pilot study at this appointment, and if interested, will be formally enrolled in the study.

If relevant to your ongoing work with your client, you will be advised of the program referral outcome by a member of the CEM-COPE team following the assessment. Information regarding participation in the voluntary research pilot will not be shared with referring agencies.

For more information

For further information about the program and/or research pilot, please contact the Problem Behaviour Program on 9947 2500, or research team at the details below:

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