

# Atypical Theft Offending (A.T.O.) Intervention Programme



WE CARE offers a unique and specialized outpatient treatment programme for **COMPULSIVE STEALING** or **SHOPLIFTING** behaviour. Our professional team is able to provide clinical assessment and intervention on a psychological problem that is not commonly understood, much less treated.

Through the ATO programme, we aim to provide a safe, non-judgmental and confidential environment where clients can learn to resolve the problem behaviour and regain control of their lives. Our programme help them to understand, manage and stop the compulsive stealing, and effect lasting lifestyle changes that are critical for sustained long-term recovery.

This is achieved through an integrated treatment programme that incorporates individual, group, and couple/family therapy, as well as educational workshops and self-help support groups. The goal is to prevent further shoplifting while upholding and strengthening the dignity and self-respect of clients

## Defining the Atypical Theft Offender

Cupchik and Atcheson (1985)

“Usually honest and often hard-working individuals who are inclined to shoplift or commit acts of theft, and who appeared to have much difficulty stopping their theft behavior.

These sometimes well-educated and successful individuals almost always fail to understand the reasons or motivations underlying their often recurrent theft behavior.”

## Programme Objectives

The programme aims to help individuals to:

1. Stop their shoplifting or theft behavior
2. Gain insight into the reasons behind their inappropriate theft behavior
3. Learn about triggers, urges, and recovery
4. Develop a relapse prevention plan
5. Address any co-occurring disorders, and
6. Educate their family members on compulsive shoplifting, atypical theft and kleptomania



*"I felt so much shame and guilt; it just reinforced the denial, secrecy and low self-esteem which I already felt... I realized that unless I seek professional help, I cannot recover from this on my own."*

*~A., female, 48 years old. Financial professional.*

*"...The family sessions really helped. My wife has become very supportive and understanding of the trauma I am going through. With the counseling, backed by the support and love of my family, I have learned to control my temper and my behaviour."*

*~P., male 51 years old. Manager*



## Programme Structure

The Basic Package comprises:

- Free pre-registration Brief Consultation (max 20 min)
- 1 Counselling assessment
- 6 Individual counselling sessions
- 1 Follow-up counselling session
- 1 psycho-education workshop for client and family members (or significant others related to client).

*"...Knowing the problem enabled me to focus on my recovery in a way that I could never have done so myself. I would encourage people who have the same problem like me to get help... As soon as they can, in order to get early treatment."*

*~M., female 38 years old, IT*



## Optional Components

- Additional individual sessions (recommended for clients with multiple disorders)
- Family /Couple therapy sessions
- Group therapy sessions

*All therapy sessions may be conducted in English and/or Mandarin upon request.*

## The Team

The ATO Programme is a community-based programme that is available to all persons at affordable rates. It is the first of its kind in Singapore to offer specialist treatment for individuals with this specific problem.

The 2 programme leads, Tham Yuen Han and Yvonne Yuen, are in the team that first designed and implemented the ATO programme at WE CARE in 2009. The team also went on to develop a similar programme - the C.A.T. Intervention Programme in 2012. Since inception, they have worked with close to 300 persons and their related family members on this particular psychological problem.

***For more information on the programme, please contact:***

Tham Yuen Han  
Programme Lead  
*M.Coun., B.Soc.Sc(Hons), CSAC*  
yuenhan@wecare.org.sg  
M: 8152 3867

Yvonne Yuen  
Programme Lead  
*M.Soc.Sc(Counselling), B.Sc(Psych), CSAC, CGAC*  
yvonneyuen@wecare.org.sg  
M: 9189 2016