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Support on the mentoring *of prison officers*

European Educational Support for Prison Officers Interacting in prisons Learning Context with Women and Minorities (EESPIP project)

March, 2021

EESPIP 2018

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Programme

EESPIP - *European Educational Support for Prison Officers Interacting in prisons Learning Context with Women and Minorities*

Partners

Institut Saumurois de la Communication (France) - *Coordinator*

Aproximar, Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social (Portugal)

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Module Plan

Training: EESPIP - European Educational Support for Prison Officers Interacting in Prisons Learning: Context with Women & Minorities		
Module: SUPPORT ON THE MENTORING OF PRISON OFFICERS		**Trainer:**
Session nr.:	**Duration:** 8h	**Date:**
General objectives:	To enable prison officers to understand the importance of lifelong learning for women and minorities in prison context. Introduce the concept of peer learning and peer mentoring within prison officers.	
Learning outcomes:	Prison officers clarify the importance of human relationships in shaping a learning career and of the impact of non-educative prison staff on the learning experiences of the prisoners.	
Methods:	Expositive, Interrogative and Interactive training with alternating theoretical input and role-playing.	
Content:	• ABOUT EESPIP, • Concepts of criminology, • Working in prisons and of Human Rights in prison context, • Role of prison officers and its main challenges, • Basic needs of prisoners, • Prison officers' importance in prisoners' education and lifelong learning, • Working with vulnerable groups, especially with minorities and women in prison, • Peer support schemes, • Profile of a peer supporter.	

Schedule *(proposal)*	**Activities**	**Resources and materials**
9.00 am -9.30	Presentation; Ice breaking activities;	PowerPoint / Interactive platform (e.g., Jamboard)
9.30 to 11.00	Working in prisons and of Human Rights in prison context Role of prison officers and its main challenges	PPT presentation Exchanges with participants (group exercises)
11.00	Coffee break	
11.15 to 12.00	Basic needs of prisoners Prison officers' importance in prisoners' education and lifelong learning	PPT presentation Exchanges with participants (group exercises)
12.00 to 1.00 pm	Brainstorming about the possibility to implement a peer mentoring programme targeting prison officers	PPT presentation
1.00	Lunch	
2.00 to 3.15	Working with vulnerable groups, especially with minorities and women in prison	PPT presentation Exchanges with participants (group exercises)
3.15	Coffee break	
3.15 to 5.00	Peer support schemes Profile of a peer supporter	PPT presentation Exchanges with participants (group exercises)
5.00	Debriefing	
Course evaluation	Verify that the course meets the requirements	Evaluation form

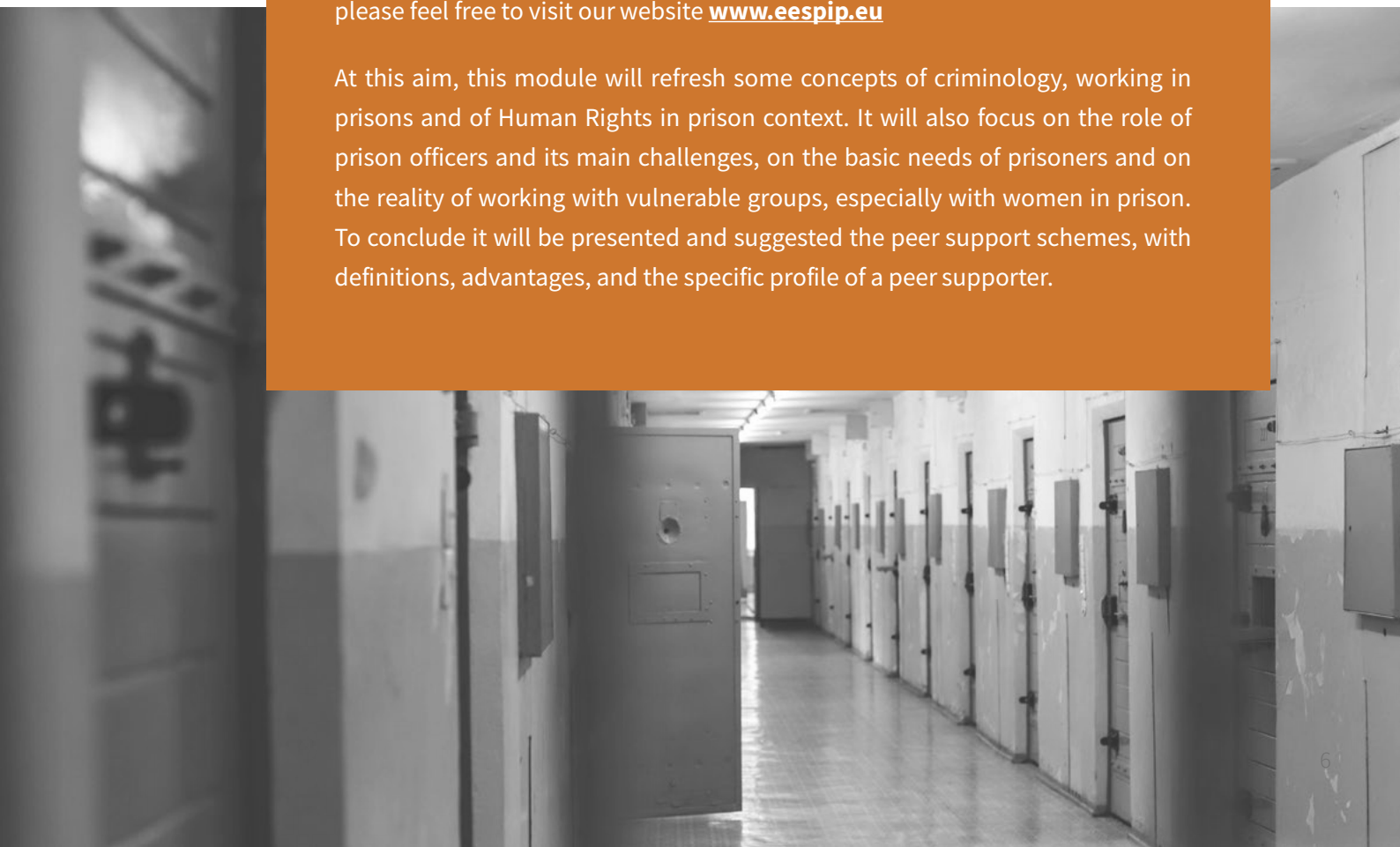
Contents

1. About EESPIP

The European Educational Support for Prison Officers Interacting in prisons Learning Context with Women and Minorities project (EESPIP), is co-financed through the Erasmus+ Project and the National Agency FR01, under the coordination of Institut Saumurois de la Communication alongside partners from Romania (CPIP), Spain (DEFOIN), Poland (ARID) and Portugal (Aproximar). Our project aims to open up to staff learning opportunities related to professional development of an environment not associated with learning: the prison. EESPIP intends to deliver contents and activities for prison officers to further develop their professional training, related to their professional environment. The thinking behind this project is about the importance of human relationships in shaping a learning career. Our focus is understanding the impact of non-educative prison staff on the learning experiences of the prisoners.

For further information about the project and for the full version of the report, please feel free to visit our website **www.eespip.eu**

At this aim, this module will refresh some concepts of criminology, working in prisons and of Human Rights in prison context. It will also focus on the role of prison officers and its main challenges, on the basic needs of prisoners and on the reality of working with vulnerable groups, especially with women in prison. To conclude it will be presented and suggested the peer support schemes, with definitions, advantages, and the specific profile of a peer supporter.



2. Defining criminology, reflecting on crime and on the prison staff role

Crime-related issues can be conceptualised, contextualised, and analysed in a wide variety of ways (O'Brian & Yar, 2010). Criminology as a field of study encompasses varied perspectives that come from "disciplinary backgrounds that most commonly include sociology (…), social policy, psychology, history, anthropology, economics, law and political science. Each has a different 'light' to shine upon crime and its associated problems" (p. 8). This means that within criminology there is a natural diversity of viewpoints. According to White, Haines & Asquith (2017), there are two typical viewers in this field: the view from the 'ivory tower' (academics) and the view from 'the streets' (practitioners).

For this specific work we will assume O'Brian & Yar (2008) definition of Criminology as a **'field of study' on motion where different disciplines encounter one another around the topic of 'crime'**, a multidisciplinary framework whose focus is dominated by questions of crime and justice.

Criminal behavior refers to acts that are injurious and prohibited under the law and render the actor subject to intervention by justice professionals, including a variety of acts subject to some historical, social and cultural variation. According to Andrews & Bonta (2010), also based on the study of Ullmann and Krasner (1976, in Andrews & Bonta, 2010), the definition of **criminal behavior** is the following:

> *Criminal behavior refers to antisocial acts that place the actor at risk of becoming a focus of the attention of criminal justice professionals within the juvenile and/or adult justice systems." (p. 12)*

The crime is one of the subject matters of criminology. When trying to study crime and its reactions, we cannot isolate it from humanity history. Crime does not exist outside of our definitions about it. Alongside with our existence, it was we, as society that defined what is crime or not: "What in the past may have been a crime in the eyes of a society's members might today be considered normal, unremarkable and perfectly acceptable." (O'Brian & Yar, 2010, p. 10). When a crime occurs, there are social and political responses to it, that are normally institutionalised (e.g. courts). When a person is sentenced for committing a crime, there is a range of punishments

that can entail custodial detention (imprisonment) or not. When not entailing detention, such punishments can take a variety of forms, including: "financial reparations (such as payment of compensation to the victim); unpaid work in the community; mandatory rehabilitation programmes (such as treatment for drug and alcohol addiction); and incapacitation and monitoring (for example the imposition of curfews and electronic tagging)" (O'Brian & Yar, 2008, p. 24). When entailing detention, normally offenders are placed in prisons.

Prisons and prison staff – the power of offering training, allowing participation on decision making processes and ensuring job variety.

Prisons are a significant component of the criminal justice system and represent the place where people that commit crimes and are sentenced to custodial detention are placed. **Prison employees play a crucial role in the success or failure of prison facilities due to their responsibilities of running safe and secure correctional institutions** (Roy & Avdija, 2012). Correctional staff not only affect the facilities where they work, but the work environment of those facilities also affects their staff (Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker-Gail & Baker, 2010), namely in terms of job-related affective well-being, job satisfaction, and job burnout.

One of the appointed strategies to improve prison staff wellbeing and performance is to invest on induction and ongoing training and on strategies that allow their participation in the decision-making process.

Investing in Training

The standard and length of the training given to new recruits to prison work varies enormously from country to country. The most basic arrangement is that in which new staff are expected to learn purely by working alongside experienced staff. They are given only the most rudimentary advice before being handed a set of security keys and left to get on with their tasks; this is a very dangerous practice (Coyle & Fair, 2018). At best, it means that new staff will not understand what their work really involves and will learn habits from older staff which do not represent best practice. At worst, it means that the new staff will be vulnerable to pressure from powerful prisoners who will take advantage of their vulnerability and will have power over them in a way which will weaken security and good order. In some countries new recruits are sent for a few weeks to a training school or college where they learn the rudiments of their work before taking up their duties in prison (IACHR, 2008). In other countries first line staff undertake up to two years' training before beginning work as qualified prison officers. In Norway, for example, all newly recruited prison officers undertake a two-year course of education in the Staff Academy. During this period, they receive full pay, and they are required to give a commitment to stay in the service for a fixed period on successful completion of training. The course covers psychology, criminology, human rights, and ethics as well as security and operational issues.

> *All new prison staff should be given a clear set of principles about what their work involves and sufficient technical knowledge to carry out their basic work before they enter a prison. They should then work alongside experienced staff who have been identified by management as most likely to give the new members of staff the best example and provide them a confidence in their work (Coyle & Fair, 2018).*

A hight quality of training helps staff to be more productive and successful at work, which typically results in a positive psychological state of mind (Griffin, 2001; Lambert et al., 2009). According to Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) training motivates employees, which increases the likelihood of success at work duties and tasks. Conversely, if this job resource is low or missing, it is likely to result in frustration, in low work success and more problems.

Other appointed strategies to improve prison staff wellbeing and performance:

Participation in decision making processes

Input into decision-making refers to empowering the staff and to promote perceptions of having a say within the work environment, of being respected and valued. This kind of input in fact, is a job resource and can lead to a more productive and enjoyable work experience. Conversely, not allowing input into decision-making can send a message to staff and colleagues that they are just "cogs", and this can result in frustration, resentment, and feelings of being powerless at work (Lambert & Hogan, 2009).

Job variety

Another important element is the job variety, that is, the degree of variation in a job; some jobs have a high degree of variety, that allows staff the opportunity to experience new things, develop and utilise new skills and knowledge, and grow (Lambert, 2004). Regarding this:

> *Especially, involve prison officers in prisoners' education, is an opportunity to introduce variation, motivation and stimulation in prison officers work and raise commitment.*

Job variety is different from role overload. Role overload occurs when staff are required to handle too many tasks and/or are not being provided with the necessary resources/equipment to accomplish the assigned duties. Role overload was observed to be negatively associated with affective organisational commitment and productivity (Lambert, 2019).

The quality supervision in terms of guidance, consideration, and support (Lambert, 2004)

Quality supervision can also aid staff in either avoiding stressful job demands or dealing with them more effectively. Poor supervision can not only hamper staff in their jobs but can make work unpleasant and even unbearable (Brough & Williams, 2007). Overall, quality supervision is important for correctional institutions and for most staff, supervisors are representatives of the organisation (Lambert, 2004).

The job autonomy

That indicates the organisation/institutions trusts and values staff. In return for this job resource, correctional staff should be more likely to raise their psychological bond with the correctional organisational (Lambert et al., 2006). Little autonomy on the job may result in frustration and resentment (Lambert et al., 2006; Lambert & Hogan, 2010).

Reduce Feelings of anxiety

Concerning prison officers' feelings and emotions related to their job, anxiety is a commonly felt, ongoing emotion, in the sense that most prison officers experience some degree of anxiety whenever they are at work. Anxiety arises from the unpredictability of prison life: although much of prison life routine, the officer is always conscious that a prisoner may assault him, that a prisoner may try to escape, or may try to take him hostage etc. Especially new recruits experience anxiety particularly keenly, not only due to their lack of experience in dealing with prisoners, but also because they are expected to look competent, even though they are performing to an unfamiliar script. Moreover, in the prison setting the construction of an authoritative, confident, and dispassionate persona an, perhaps unsurprisingly, entail an intense degree of "face work! And a number of emotion work strategies" (Crawley, 2004).

In a nutshell, most new staff will have little or no experience or knowledge of the prison world. Once staff have been properly recruited and selected, they need to be given appropriate training. The first requirement is to reinforce for all of them an appreciation of the ethical context within which prisons must be administered and must be made clear that all the technical skills which will subsequently be taught are underpinned by a belief in the dignity and humanity of everyone involved in prisons (Coyle & Fair, 2018).

Through this module we also highlight the importance of prepare and encourage prison officers to assume the supporting role in the education of prisoners and these include all prisoners, whoever they may be and whatever crimes they may have been convicted. It is a crucial first step towards the role of mentoring of prison officers.

3. The prison officers – what are the main challenges of the role?

As staff is an integral component of the success of correctional organizations, there has been a demand for more research on how working in corrections affects employees. Part of this literature has examined the impact of the work environment on correctional workers, and how it relates to their occupational attitudes (Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000; Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Griffin, 2001; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Lambert, 2004; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 1999; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2002b; Slate & Vogel, 1997; Stohr, Lovrich, Monke, & Zupan, 1994; Triplett, Mullings, & Scarborough, 1996, 1999, in Lambert & Paoline, 2008). These attitudes have significant effects on the intentions and behaviors of correctional staff. Most of the research on corrections has focused primarily on job satisfaction and job stress. Only in the past ten years there was an increased focus on the antecedents of correctional staff's organizational commitment.

Job stress is generally defined in the correctional literature as feelings of work-related hardness, tension, anxiety, frustration, worry, emotional exhaustion, and/or distress (Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985; Grossi, Keil, & Vito, 1996; Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, & Wolfe, 1991, in Lambert & Paoline, 2008). Job stress occurs because of stressors in the work environment and has been found to have numerous negative effects on correctional staff. For example, high levels of stress in correctional staff often result in higher-than-expected likelihoods of hypertension, heart attacks, and other stress-related illnesses, which can ultimately affect the life expectancy of the employee (Cheek & Miller, 1983, in in Lambert & Paoline, 2008). It has been reported that correctional workers die sooner than expected when compared to the national life expectancy, and stress was the leading reason for the shortened life expectancy (Cheek, 1984; Woodruff, 1993). Moreover, job stress has been linked to divorce, substance abuse, and suicide among correctional staff (Cheek, 1984, in Lambert & Paoline, 2008). Finally, correctional job stress has negative effects also on the employing organization (Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Slate & Vogel, 1997, in Lambert & Paoline, 2008).

Stress and burnout have been described and discussed since a long time, as a problem emerging from conflict between two sets of ethical norms: those associated with community protection and justice, versus norms related to offender/defendant well-being and autonomy. This situation foster high levels of stress, sometimes manifests in potentially aggressive and harmful behaviours. Prison officers are requested to respond effectively to complex phenomena that often lead to the degradation of the conditions of detention, such as: overcrowding, ageing and the increase in prison population (in some countries); gangs and organized crime; extremism and in-prison radicalisation; prisoners' mental illness; the overall degradation of the social and psychic health and increasingly dangerous behaviours of the prisoners (Neves & Adams, 2020).

Workplace stressors

As part of their job, officers can be exposed to numerous workplace stressors including verbal abuse, physical assault, and witnessing traumatic or violent events (Konda, Reichard, & Tiesman, 2012; Spinaris, Denhof, & Kellaway, 2012, in Trounson & Pfeifer, 2017). Considering the range and severity of the challenges faced by officers, research indicates that corrections officers perceive a significantly higher level of adversity in their workplace than those in other occupations. However, recent research suggests that this heightened perception of adversity experienced by officers may be linked to increased levels of stress, lowered psychological wellbeing and a range of negative organisational outcomes such as increased absenteeism (e.g., not coming to work despite being physically and psychologically able), "presenteeism" (e.g., coming to work but not being mentally attentive or productive), and job dissatisfaction (Trounson & Pfeifer, 2017).

4. Prison officer's role in the advocacy of prisoners' education

Education plays a pivotal role in social inclusion and can be transformative in prisoners' life, helping them changing their behaviour and having a law-abiding life. "Education does help to prevent criminal behaviour in the first place, or at least the criminal behaviour most commonly sanctioned by custodial sentence. This is because it helps to give people the capacity to earn a proper living; and because, at least to some extent, it reinforces norms which inhibit criminal behaviour." (Schuller, 2009; Torrijo & Maeyer, 2019).

Prison officers are prominent examples of potential 'intermediaries' of prisoners' participation in lifelong learning. Incarcerated individuals in correctional education classes are students first and have many of the same needs and challenges as students in any classroom (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Moreover, education is not restricted to the classroom. Education is implicit in the designation of institutions and systems termed "corrections". In this sense, prison officers can also be there to assist prisoners in learning. A good start to be an effective support of prisoners learning process, is to dedicate time to interact with prisoners daily and to pay attention to their educational needs and barriers.

Promoting prisoners' learning can be also a prison officers' task, and as suggested by Braggins and Talbot (2005) these professionals can facilitate prisoners' learning with some practices such as:

- Implementing a policy of dynamic security
- Preventing disorder
- Using a good communication
- Providing appropriate activities

However, it is important to bear in mind that it is needed an integrated management of learning where prison services clarify what prison officers can and should do to promote learning, providing training and formalising a range of opportunities (such as, mentoring, support, skill instructors etc.).

Barriers to prisoners' participation in education

In a larger survey conducted in Norwegian prisons among all prisoners with Norwegian citizenship by Manger, Eikland & Asbjornsen (2018) focused on those who did not participate in education considering:

- institutional barriers (e.g. insufficient practical arrangements; lack of access to computers and to Internet)
- situational barriers (e.g. education is not considered to be of help in the current situation)
- dispositional barriers (e.g. having difficulties in mathematics, reading, writing and concentrating)

The authors observed that, besides gender, age, educational level, learning difficulties and length of prison sentences, prisoners who wish to participate in education perceived more than others the limits of institutional barriers, more than situational barriers (Manger, Eikland & Asbjornsen, 2018). Prison officers can play an important role in motivating prisoners and support them also to report and try to overcome some institutional barriers. Poor work habits and lack of motivation characterize the profile of a prisoner (Desir & Whitehead, 2010) and this affects their level of involvement in educational programs. For this reason, offenders need motivation and engagement. The Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction model (ARCS model) as a strategy focused on motivation (Keller, 2000, in Desir & Whitehead, 2010), based on the following steps: attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. By adapting this theory from the educational environment to the outside classroom environment prison officers' can:

- Gain the initial interest of the prisoner/learner, incorporating relevance in their field of practice out of the classroom.
- Propose motivational objectives that match the needs of the learners.
- Create confidence, which provides a sense of self-worth.
- Promote prisoners' satisfaction. Prison officers should engage to replace the use of fear and threats to take one's freedom, with the promotion of a personal fulfilment for example, increasing the application of the learning in real-life activity; providing positive feedbacks (Keller, 2000, in Desir & Whitehead, 2010).

5. The peer support programmes - Support on the mentoring of prison officers

Although peer-support programmes have a long history, only recently they have garnered attention from researchers wishing to explore their potential utility. Such programmes are built upon principles of mutual reciprocity, empathy, and emotional support (Blagden & Perrin, 2014).

Defining peer-support

A review of the literature most commonly defines peer-support as a variation of social and emotional support that rests on the core tenets of mutual reciprocity, shared problem solving, and empathy (Dennis, 2003; Solomon, 2004; DeVilly et al., 2005, in Blagden & Perrin, 2014).

A most pragmatic conceptualisation is one offered by Mead, Hilton & Curtis (2001), who have delineated peer-support as "a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful" (p. 135).

What is "peer support"?

> *According to Riessman (1989) "peer support refers to a process through which people who share common experiences or face similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive help based on the knowledge that comes through shared experience". (p.1)*

A "peer" is an equal, someone with whom one shares demographic or social similarities. "Support" expresses the kind of deeply felt empathy, encouragement, and assistance that people with shared experiences can offer to one another within a reciprocal relationship. Peer support as an organized strategy for giving and receiving help, can be understood as an extension of the natural human tendency to respond compassionately to shared difficulty. Most people who have been through hard times empathize with and have an urge to help when they meet others who struggle with similar problems. It not only benefits the person receiving support, it makes the helper feel valued and needed (Riessman, 1965, in Penney 2018).

Research into peer support in prisons is limited and is mostly focused on the different types of peer support that can be implemented with offenders, such as emotional support, help with education, resettlement work, health advice, advocacy and that can be provided during induction and/or later in sentences.

Figure 1 presents some examples of peer support schemes that can be implemented with offenders:

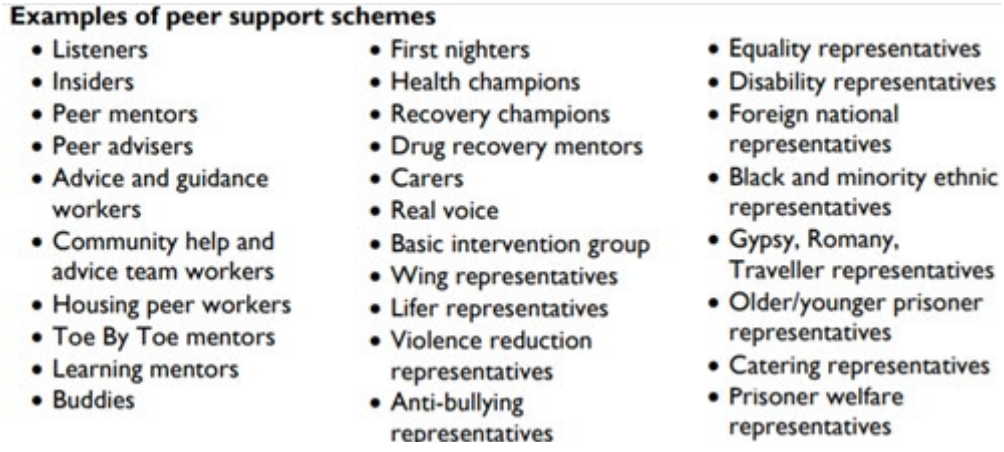


Figure 1 - Examples of peer support schemes (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2016, p. 4)

Some benefits of PSP to the offender are reported (GOV.UK, 2019):

- Increased positive self-identity, self-confidence and employability skills
- Positive impact on attitudes, engagement, and behaviour for the recipients of the services
- Positive impact on prison regime

And some features that a PSP should have:

- Outcomes which are clearly defined by the needs of the people being supported by the scheme
- A clear predefined purpose for the interaction
- Activities which are targeted to meet specific needs
- Schemes which last for the period that the support is required

There is an extensive evidence on the use of peer roles among prisoners, where prisoners provide education, support or advice to other prisoners. However, the use of peer support teams among prison officers is not yet explored and has not been systematically reviewed (therefore, it lacks evidence of its positive impacts). This module is, therefore, exploratory and only intends to create awareness on the potential benefits of this approach. It intends to provide an alternative for prison officers, namely providing some clues on how to support prisoners' participation in education and also encourage their peers (the other prison officers) to play the same role of supporting prisoners' participation in education.

Defining Mentoring

Mentoring is the offer of support to another person in a limited period of time, for the development of objectives, with the aim to promote the change of the mentee based on self-esteem, respect and trust. The model focuses on the personal development of both the mentor and the mentee, adapted to their characteristics and as part of the technical intervention. Mentoring is a process based on skills development, which combines guidance, counselling and coaching, with proven success in terms of promoting employability and social inclusion of excluded groups. Mentoring is not a professional relationship with a client or a formal education model. It is a relationship in a given period between an individual who has more experience or knowledge, and a mentor (the beneficiary), who is, in most cases, in a vulnerable position and available to benefit from the skills and abilities of the mentor (Tolan et al, 2008). When we use the expression "peer mentoring" we refer to more specific form of mentoring. One feature of peer mentoring in fact, would be for the mentor to have been in a similar situation to their mentee, which corresponds to the 'same background' (UNODC, 2003). Here, in order to form analysis of peer mentoring, we will consider the definition above and understand 'peer mentoring' as described by Tolan et al (2008) as mentors of the same age and/or who have been in a similar situation and/or come from a similar background as their mentees. It is important to remember that sometimes some interventions do not label themselves as peer mentoring but in practice they correspond to relationships based on similarity of age and background. The observation of this kind of relationships is also important to highlight which factors are fundamental for the definition of a successful mentoring process (Finnegan, Whitehurst & Deaton, 2010).

Designing a peer-mentoring programme for prison officers

As recent research shows, two kinds of negative influences affect officers, organizational and environmental. Peer support teams were conceived in part to provide an alternative for

officers before mounting worry and stress negatively affect them on the job and at home. At this aim, officers selected for a peer-support program must be approachable, discreet, abide by confidentiality protocols and must be trained to listen, provide support and practical assistance, with referrals to professional mental health care when needed (Dudley, 2019).

The peer-mentoring model focused on self-development and career contribute to:

- Increase the self-esteem,
- A greater sense of responsibility
- A greater knowledge of reality
- Define realistic goals
- Provide an example for others (MPATH, 2017)

Among the benefits for the mentee are:

- Support, encouragement, friendship
- Knowledge of ways of working and other areas of knowledge
- Discussion and sharing of ideas
- Feedback and constructive criticism
- Increased self-confidence
- Affirmation, career advancement and commitment
- Reflection

Among the benefits for the mentor are:

- Support, encouragement, friendship
- Knowledge of ways of working and other areas of knowledge
- Discussion and sharing of ideas
- Feedback and constructive criticism
- Increased self-confidence
- Affirmation, career advancement and commitment
- Reflection (MPATH, 2017)

Referring to the possible impact of the peer-mentoring programmes to increase prison officers' capacity to ensure dynamic security

> *European Prison Rules (2006) Rule 51: "(2) The security which is provided by physical barriers and other technical means shall be complemented by the dynamic security provided by an alert staff who know the prisoners who are under their control."*

The concept of dynamic security refers to a working method by which staff prioritise the creation and the maintenance of everyday communication and interaction with prisoners based on high professional ethics and ensure that there is sufficient purposeful and meaning activity to occupy prisoners, bounded by effective security. It aims at better understanding prisoners and assessing the risks they may pose as well as ensuring safety, security, and good order, contributing to rehabilitation and preparation for release.

The concept of dynamic security is based on:

- Positive relationships, communication and interaction between the staff and prisoners
- Professionalism
- Collecting relevant information
- Insight into and improving social climate of the penal institution
- Firmness and fairness
- Understanding personal situation of the prisoner
- Communication, positive relations, and exchange of the information among all employees (Ministry of Justice, Republic of Croatia 2014, in COE, 2018).

When implemented effectively, dynamic security allows prisoners to feel comfortable when approaching prison staff before problems escalate. It is important, therefore, that a peer mentor take every opportunity to encourage the mentee to interact directly with prisoners, to be aware of what is going on in the prison and to ensure that prisoners are kept active in a positive way (UNDPKO, 2013, in COE, 2018).

6. How to be a peer mentor in your prison and to motivate both your colleagues and prisoners for lifelong learning – Some clues you can follow!

6.1. Respect and ensure your colleagues respect Human Rights in Prisons

Within the member states of the Council of Europe the observance of human rights standards in places of detention is monitored by the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2020), and over the years its reports have become increasingly significant. There are certain basic physical requirements that must be met if the state is to comply with its obligation to respect the prisoner's human dignity and fulfil its duty of care. These include adequate provision of accommodation, hygienic conditions, clothing and bedding, food, drink, and exercise. When a judicial authority sends someone to prison, the international standards are clear that the punishment imposed should be solely the deprivation of liberty. Imprisonment must not include risk of physical or emotional abuse by staff or by other prisoners. It must not include risk of serious illness or even death because of the physical conditions or the lack of proper care. Prisoners must not be subjected to living conditions which are in themselves inhuman and degrading (Coyle & Fair, 2018).

We present here the main international instruments and their articles about the Human Rights in Prison.

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (1966) affirm in the Article 10: *"All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person."*

The Nelson Mandela Rules (2015), in the Rule 1, affirm that, *"All prisoners shall be treated with respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings. No prisoner shall be subjected to, and all prisoners shall be protected from, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, for which no justification may be invoked as justification. The safety and security of prisoners, staff, service providers and visitors shall be ensured at all times."*

In the **Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners** (1990), we find in Principle 1: *"All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings."*

In the **Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment** (1988) Principle 1 affirm: *"All persons under any form of detention or imprisonment shall be treated in a humane manner and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person."*

As we see, prison management needs to operate within an ethical framework in the respect and promotion of human rights. The respect for human rights is of fundamental importance, because without a strong ethical context, the situation where one group of people is given considerable power over another can easily become an abuse of power. The management and the work in prisons is primarily about the management of human beings, both staff and prisoners. Men, women, and children who are in prison are still human beings. Their humanity extends far beyond the fact that they are prisoners. Equally, prison staff are human beings. For this reason, when making decisions about the treatment of human beings there is a fundamental consideration; the first question which must always be asked is "Is what we are doing right?" Where such recognition is lacking there will be a real danger that human rights will be abused.

When a state deprives people of their liberty it takes on a responsibility to look after their health. The right of a good health is also important to everyone and it affects how people behave and their ability to function as members of the community. By its nature imprisonment can have a damaging effect on both the physical and mental wellbeing of prisoners. Prisoners often arrive in prison with pre-existing health problems which may have been caused by neglect, abuse, or the prisoner's previous lifestyle. In many countries, a large percentage of those in prison are infected with transmissible diseases, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS. Prison administrations have a responsibility to those who come into prison (prisoners especially, but also staff and visitors) to ensure that they are not exposed to risks of infection. Prisoners should not leave prison in a worse condition than when they entered. A failure to manage these conditions will mean that they become community health problems because of contact between the prison and wider society, through staff and visitors, and because of the eventual release of prisoners. Prison administrations have a responsibility, therefore, not simply to provide medical care but also to establish conditions which promote the wellbeing of both prisoners and prison staff (Coyle & Fair, 2018).

Concerning the **right of the staff,** the appropriate training of staff is a requirement and a right which continues from the moment of first recruitment to that of final retirement. There should be a regular series of opportunities for continuing development for staff of all ages and all ranks. This will help to make staff aware of the latest techniques. It will also provide training in specific skills for staff who work in specialist areas and opportunities for more senior staff to develop their management skills. According to the **Nelson Mandela Rules, Rule 75**: *"1. All prison staff shall possess an adequate standard of education and shall be given the ability and means to carry out their duties in a professional manner. 2. Before entering on duty, all prison staff shall be provided with training tailored to their general and specific duties, which shall be reflective of contemporary evidence based best practice in penal sciences. Only those candidates who successfully pass the theoretical and practical tests at the end of such training shall be allowed to enter the prison service. 3. The prison administration shall ensure the continuous provision of in service training courses with a view to maintaining and improving the knowledge and professional capacity of its personnel, after entering on duty and during their career."*

Furthermore, and as a fundamental principle, the international human rights instruments do not leave room for any doubt or uncertainty in respect of torture and ill-treatment. They state clearly that there are absolutely no circumstances in which torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment can ever be justified. Torture is defined as any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person, other than that pain or suffering which is inherent in the fact of detention or imprisonment (Coyle & Fair, 2018).

Some key guidelines that can be applied to respect human rights in prison are the following:

- Treat everyone with humanity and respect their human dignity
- Be fair and courteous both with colleagues, staff and prisoners
- Engage proactively with prisoners and seek to know them as individuals
- Communicate with compassion sensitive or unwelcome news to prisoners
- Treat prisoners' cells with respect
- Offer special support to the most vulnerable group (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017).

6.2. Meet and ensure your colleagues meet prisoners' needs

Experience has shown that if a prison does not meet the basic human needs of prisoners, the prisoners will find a way to satisfy their needs in ways that may be unfavourable to the orderly operation of the prison.

Understanding needs that motivates human behavior provides prison administrators and staff with a very useful tool for managing prisoners since it helps explain both good prisoner behavior and bad.

According to Hoke & Demory (2014) and in a more general vision, some prisoners' basic needs are: physical needs, security and safety needs, medical needs, social needs, maintenance, housekeeping, laundry, foods service, prisoner programmes, training, among others. When prisoners' needs are not met, some of these behaviours could happen: vandalism of prison property; stealing; disruptive behavior; loudness; abusiveness; fighting; inappropriate sexual behavior; manipulation of staff; attempts at self-harm; intimidation of others; contraband; hoarding; fashioning weapons (Hoke & Demory, 2014). Also, according to the study of Hoke and Demory, (2014) the main benefits of meeting and managing prisoners' needs will bring to the following benefits: increased cleanliness; fewer complaints; motivation to work; better re-entry skills; better morale; safer prison; fewer incidents; better risk management; increased financial savings; better work environment for staff; fewer confrontations; better consistency; better public image; less stress.

According to Burt (1977), the self-concept is often distorted in prison, and for this, a fundamental need of prisoners is to work on the personality development and personal growth. Placing the attention on learning, the central issue of this module, Roth (1970) reports that inmates usually consider themselves academic failures and that: *"Self-improvement follows self-respect in the process of rehabilitation, and the chance to complete one's high school education is a necessary step"* (Roth, 1970, in Burt, 1977).

According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, people first need to fulfil their basic needs (physiological, safety, belonging and esteem). It is important here to clarify that the considerations of these needs may be relevant before prisoners are motivated by, and can work towards, self-actualisation, that is, to try to fulfil his or her potential. In fact, although it may seem controversial to regard prison as an environment of personal development, where self-actualization is possible and promoted, prisoners may use it as an opportunity to learn new skills, engage in peer-support roles, or address emotional problems through counselling, having so a positive impact on the process of desistance (Soyer 2014, in Van Ginneken, 2015).

Another important need that is important to mention here, is the information need: Lehmann (2000, in Sambo, Usman & Rabiu, 2017) made it clear that incarcerated persons generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world. They can, however, be considered disadvantaged in this regard by the fact that they do not have access to libraries in the outside community. Ajogwu (2005, in Sambo, Usman & Rabiu, 2017) maintained that the

prisoners' information needs, range from legal needs, religious needs, health needs, educational needs, vocational needs, recreational needs and financial needs (Sambo, Usman & Rabiu, 2017).

Meeting the basic human needs of prisoners

To take full advantage of the power of meeting the basic human needs of prisoners it is important to understand that prisoners who behave badly while attempting to meet basic human needs are still just attempting to meet their needs. Various forms of need-fulfilling behaviors will continue until the needs are satisfied, and a certain proportion of all need-fulfilling behaviors will be against prison rules.

> *Administrators and prison staff should keep the connection between needs and behavior in mind when they are doing advance planning or contemplating about making a change or bringing in something new and new policies, practices, buildings, or technologies should not be adopted without first analysing their effect on meeting basic needs.*

The way to reduce the rule-breaking need-fulfilling behavior is to take steps to ensure that prisoners' basic human needs are being satisfied legitimately. Another sobering thought to bear in mind is that although the meeting of a basic human need is usually an individual matter, people with similar needs tend to group together to find ways to satisfy that shared need. Suddenly, an individual prisoner trying to trick an officer into giving him an extra food tray becomes a riot that involves an entire housing unit or prison facility. An understanding of basic human needs helps us avoid unwanted prisoner behavior on the one hand, while encouraging desired prisoner behavior on the other.

Some strategies and important steps that can be follow in order to facilitate the meeting of prisoners' needs are:

- Understand the impact of life experiences, such as trauma, abuse and mental illness
- Take time to explain how and why the prisoner made a mistake if he/she broke a rule
- Encourage prisoners to reflect on the consequences of their behaviours
- Believe in the possibility of rehabilitation and support prisoners to achieve their objectives
- Encourage prisoners to take responsibility for their rehabilitation
- Encourage prisoners to contribute positively to the prison community
- Encourage prisoners to take responsibility for meeting their own needs

- Support and motivate prisoners to engage positively with activities that can help in preparing them for the release
- Provide support with prisoners' rehabilitation and resettlement issues.
- Being aware of the services available in the prison and use them to help prisoners (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017).

6.3. Respect and ensure your colleagues respect multidisciplinary teams

A multidisciplinary team can be defined as a group comprised of members that have complementary skills, qualifications, and experience. Multidisciplinary collaboration means a team consisting of members with different professional backgrounds and skills that can compensate each other and work together toward the same direction to achieve the same goals (Jackson, May & Whitney, 1995). Diversity is a great tool to create an atmosphere where the members understand and become considerate. This principle is especially useful in a correctional environment where we find professionals with different competences, roles and backgrounds and it brings benefits to the peer mentoring as it allows professionals to learn from their peers' experience and different fundamental skills. Multidisciplinary teamwork applied in a correctional context allow to reach the root of many problems and to make decisions about specific subjects in a collective manner, with the help of several perspectives and different viewpoints. In fact, the different backgrounds of the professionals help to gain several opinions that can prove beneficial in problem-solving, encourage innovation and cost-effective completion of projects and programs (Stempfle, & Badke-Shaub, 2004; Tang & Hsiao, 2013).

The characteristics of a multidisciplinary team are as follows:

- A multidisciplinary team consists of members that have individual skills and knowledge that can be used collectively for the welfare of a particular context
- Its work is based on shared principles
- Collaboration and co-creation are pillars of a multidisciplinary team
- All the different skill, knowledge and know-how complement each member so that they can give their best in a given situation (Bhasin, 2019).

Some steps to follow in order to fit and work with respect in a multidisciplinary team are:

- Clarify roles and boundaries, be clear about what other team members do
- Be aware of the power dynamics and of your professional identity
- Learn the value to each other's contributions, avoiding making judgements on other professionals
- Be aware of the decision-making process, for example, if someone want to have all the responsibility or someone else seek refuge in other people's decision-making
- Recognize the difference among professionals' views, as some can have different priorities
- Pay attention to the efficacy of the team and to the input from prisoners (CommunityCare, 2005).

6.4. Relationships matters! - Stablish and ensure your colleagues stablish a professional and constructive relationships with prisoners

Many indicators of a prison system's success are shown in the efforts of prison staff to work constructively with prisoners, and to exercise their judgement and discretion in doing so. For this reason, is important that each professional develops and sustain professional relationships in prison context. Corrections officers interact and engage with prisoners during the course of their work by:

- Regularly walking through the area in which they are posted
- Talking to prisoners, gaining their trust, and building rapport
- Checking prisoners' physical welfare during musters and head checks

- Maintaining a consistent approach to inappropriate behaviour
- Encouraging positive behaviour and addressing negative behaviour
- Engaging in case management process
- Following up on requests in a timely manner
- Remaining calm during incidents (Australian Capital Territory, 2011, in COE, 2018).

We can say that placing an emphasis on the need for prison staff to establish positive relationships with prisoners is a key of dynamic security.

Some important skills that will help you stablishing a good relationship with your colleagues and prisoners:

Interpersonal skills

It is important that staff working with prisoners have a high level of interpersonal skills: their job can be demanding, intense, and at the same time very rewarding. Staff must be able to always maintain professionalism and fairness. If staff are confident and assertive in their approach, they will find that conflict is limited, and they are able to deal with volatile situations as they arise. Staff should be familiar with and understand the different groups (including religious, ethnic, cultural) that they may come across within their prison; staff should know and understand how behaviour, communication and interpersonal skills affect an individual's expectation and barriers that may interfere with communication and they must also be aware of the possible interpretation of their non-verbal behaviour is interpreted during communication with prisoners. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is a two-way process (COE, 2018). Fundamental interpersonal skills are the following:

- Being clear
- Being concise
- Probing
- Listening
- Resolving differences of opinion
- Resolving conflict Selling
- Negotiating influence
- Resisting manipulation
- Understanding body language

- Building rapport
- Being assertive
- Handling tricky situations
- Controlling emotions
- Defusing anger
- Leading discussions
- Influencing groups
- Awareness of the body language Good Listening Skills (COE, 2018).

Active Listening skills

Listening obviously is based on hearing and understanding what others say. Hearing becomes listening only when one pay attention to what is said and follow it closely and it is important part of effective communication. Active listening involves being aware of all the non-verbal messages that people give as well as attending to what they are saying. The following points are important to maintain active listening skills:

- Focus attentively on what the person is saying
- Maintain comfortable eye contact
- Have a relaxed posture, leaning slightly towards the person
- Use appropriate gestures such as nodding or smiling
- Do not interrupt
- Allow silence
- Ask open-ended questions (What, How, When, Where? Can you say more...? What exactly do you mean when you say...? May I clarify that you...? etc.)
- Reflect back to the person what you have heard
- The truth of statements
- The sincerity of the person speaking
- Whether what is said fits the situation
- All this entails looking for assumptions and thinking in the context in which the prisoner acts and how this affects them (COE, 2018).

In active listening, a good question is one that helps the person to learn more about the issue. The act of asking a question implies that the questioner:

- Does not know the answer
- Desires to know it
- Believes there exists at least one true answer
- Thinks that the responder can and will supply the/an answer
- Believes in the truth of the questions presuppositions (COE, 2018).

Conflict-handling skills

Handling conflict requires the following skills:

- The ability to appear calm, neutral body language and good eye contact
- The ability to keep the confrontation (and any exaggeration) in perspective and keep the overall goal in sight
- Active listening
- The three-part sentence ('I understand…, however, this is how I feel….. so I think we should…') (COE, 2018).

6.5. Be and ensure your colleagues are pro-social models!

Pro-social practice or pro-social modelling is the process by which professionals bring out the best in people by acting as a positive, motivating role model and is increasingly becoming recognised as a key skill in working with offenders. Pro-social modelling theory arose from studies carried out on Probation officers in Australia and Canada where it was noted that prisoners of some probation officers were less likely to reoffend than others. It was found that those probation officers were: consistently pro-social in their interactions; had higher degrees of empathy; reinforced pro-social expressions and actions (Trotter, 2009). By discouraging anti-social behaviour and attitudes, this model actively help prisoners to learn new behaviour and to understand how their thoughts and feelings influence the ways in which they behave. The pro-social model can be applied also in peer-support relationships between prison officers to improve relationship and effectiveness of the interventions. Among the pro-social activities that a peer mentor should adopt we find:

- Being punctual
- Attempting to solve problems

- Victim empathy
- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- Social perspective taking
- Controlling inappropriate behaviour
- Express empathy
- Develop discrepancy
- Avoid arguments
- Roll with resistance
- Support pro social attitudes and behaviours
- Positive, future looking attitude to change.
- Setting Example
- Active Communication
- Respect for the individual
- Respect for the law and for Rules
- Punctuality
- Reliability
- Consistency
- Fairness
- Putting things right
- Assertiveness
- Staff positively modelling what they want others to do
- Actively encouraging appropriate behaviour (COE, 2018)

6.6. How to encourage others for lifelong learning

In this section we present some indications and suggestions to encourage lifelong learning, a continuous learning approach as a part of everyday work and life, both of prison officers' colleagues and of prisoners. We can consider here the lifelong learning with a two-sided perspective, including both the knowledge needed to go further on education and training, and the skills needed to continue the lifelong learning process in society and at work (Schenck, 2005). In the prison settings, education and training must be characterised both by providing opportunities to develop personal skills such as self-confidence, problem-solving, creativity, and by improving the ability to learn and assess information in a continuous perspective.

Encouraging lifelong learning of prisoners with a whole-person approach in a context where identities are often fragmented (Schuller, 2009), in addition to benefit the individual's life, can contribute to both the social and economic well-being of society; encouraging lifelong learning of prison officers can improve the well-being of prison officers at work and the functioning of the working system and environment.

Agreeing that the persistent motivation to learn, as well as the correspondent learning skills, appears to be essential requirements to integrate in the current society, it is important to make efforts to ensure that offenders in prison context, as every other individual in the outside world, gets the knowledge and skills they need to face life and employment situations in a society in constant transformation, by giving the sense of a greater stake in society, greater self-efficacy, a stronger identification with social norms and by increasing earnings potential and therefore be able to move to an environment with a less presence of offending behaviour (Schuller, 2009).

It must be clear that the lack of these skills and knowledges in a lifelong learning perspective, will probably mean the exclusion or marginalization from the ordinary educational system and the labour market.

As considering lifelong learning an effective instrument against crime requires intervention on several fronts, we can say that prison officers represent one of the preconditions for meeting the educational needs of prisoners, building useful networks of support. Before proceeding with some indications on the promotion of the lifelong learning of prisoners, it is important to recognise that there are many challenges to be faced in the effective delivery of learning opportunities and engagement of offenders. One of these challenges is the movement of offenders, as they can be moved from one prison to another with little or no notice; they may find themselves released from court without returning to prison; they may have health demand, and by consequences less opportunity to involve in the lifelong learning process consolidation. The length of an offender's sentence also influences the opportunity to engage in lifelong learning programmes,

for example, if an offender is sentenced to a period of less than twelve months, there are fewer opportunities to engage in learning inside the prison context (O'Grady, 2013). It is proved that moving offenders around between prisons, as happens frequently and disruptively, affects their educational achievements (Schuller, 2009).

Being aware of these existing challenges, and that not all learning takes place in a classroom, it is important to ensure prison officers along with the education staff, are able to support offenders in the development of their lifelong learning skills. Prison officers are prominent examples of potential 'intermediaries' of this process. In fact, they are not directly part of lifelong learning services, but they can play a crucial part in promoting learning, being guides, information sources and mentors (Schuller, 2009).

Key conditions for a successful strategy on offender learning are the commitment and the competence of the prison staff (Schuller, 2009). According to Schober, Finsterwald, Wagner, Lüftenegger, Aysner and Spiel (2007), among the strategies to promote lifelong learning, and that can be applied in this specific case to prison officers' role in encouraging prisoners lifelong learning, we can find:

- Encourage a learning goal orientation
- Encourage interests of prisoners
- Encourage a flexible implicit theory
- Encourage self-efficacy and confidence in own abilities
- Encourage meta-cognition
- Encourage learning strategies
- Encourage skills associated with cooperative learning
- Provide feedbacks

In a more specific perspective, to promote lifelong learning in prisoners, prison officers can also:

- Encourage the building of an appropriate self-esteem
- Encourage the belief in a better life ahead (Schuller, 2009)
- Encourage learning ownership, that means, encourage prisoners to be responsible for their own learning
- Show the rewards of taking such a responsibility
- Encourage to learn from mistakes and to turn them into opportunities

- Suggest and recognize some learning tools, tricks, that can help to learn in a more efficient and easy way (for example, mental repetition)
- Help to set or propose learning goals (Wabisabi Learning, 2021)
- Promote a life-course approach which sees the offender as changing over time, with particular needs at particular stages
- Understand the offender in his or her cultural and social context, and relates their potential and progress to the world outside
- Be aware of the pluralism of methods and of the importance of a clear communication (Schuller, 2009)

Thinking in the re-entry process, in order to lifelong learning have a reasonable chance to improve the crime situation, it is important to recognize the offenders need to be part of networks and social groups which will support their desistance and not the reverse. Prison officers can here contribute by conveying the importance of building social links and supportive external networks (Schuller, 2009).

In a perspective of encouraging lifelong learning among prison officers' colleagues, it is important to remind that also prison staff can learn new skills in multiple occasions and in a range of different forms, as long as they're self-motivated and receive the adequate support. We present here some suggestions for prison officers helping other colleagues to develop a lifelong learning aspiration and making continuous learning a normalized part of work and life:

- Promote the connections between more experienced colleagues and new entry prison officers
- Encourage colleagues to self-direct their learning (for example, by asking colleagues what are the priority they need/want to learn and in which one can help)
- Discuss ambitions and challenges
- Encourage to consider learning goals as important as performance goals: as the work time is limited, it is important to encourage the learner colleagues to see learning as a critical part of the job goals
- Recognize learning as an achievement and the learning progresses of the colleagues
- Highlight the benefits of learning by providing realistic and clear examples
- Stimulate curiosity and persistence to continue to learn
- Be a role model, that is, be a lifelong learner oneself as a prison officer and as a person in constant growth (Andriotis, 2018; Leal, 2020).

7. Working with vulnerable groups – Minorities and Women in Prison

The situation of minority groups in prison context is a crucial and complex reality. In most countries, minorities group such as ethnic, racial minorities and indigenous people are insufficiently represented in the countries' criminal justice systems (IPS, 2020). According to the research realised by Namoradze and Pacho (2018) in the European context, there is a significant level of unfairness in the way minorities are treated inside the prison. Especially people with a non-national ethnic background do not enjoy the same level of protection for their rights once they are arrested. One of the causes of this lack of protection starts in fact with the missing access to interpreters and clear information on their rights in their own language (Namoradze & Pacho, 2018). Linguistic barriers that these minorities face during incarceration-not only these barriers - as often come together with a general discrimination also based on different culture, traditions, religion needs, that are not addressed in prison context (IPS, 2020).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people are also minorities groups internationally neglected in prison, and just recent international research and policy started to focus on these prisoners' reality in other to improve the assessment of their specific needs. Jails are in many cases traumatizing and often dangerous places for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and other gender nonconforming individuals, as heteronormativity, homophobia and transphobia are perpetuated both inside and outside the prison. These individuals are suffering the threat of physical and sexual violence, institutional discrimination and neglect, specific health need and isolation. Especially the lack of specific policies and practices to protect LGBT prisoners aggravate their situations (Carr, Mcalister & Serisier, 2016). In fact, also acknowledging the problems a closed one-gender orientated environment poses, the principle of separation of prisoners according to their presumed (biological) sex may be questioned.

Cuéllar, Markov, Tortosa & Doichinova (2015) highlight the lack of official data about the minorities and their invisibility to the statistics. The further marginalization that minorities face in prison reinforce, and perpetuate racial, ethnic and gender stereotype existing in the outside word, and it can hinder the rehabilitation process leading to a new cycle of incarceration when released.

In many cases, prisoners may belong to more than one group with special care and treatment requirements, which translates into a multiplicity of needs and increased vulnerability. For this reason, individuals in conflict with the law belonging to minorities groups require special attention.

Another minority group in prison on which this chapter will focus are female individuals, especially vulnerable due to their gender, to their gender-specific needs and to the reality they face where a low number of women prisoners is subjected to a male-structured environment.

Speaking about vulnerable groups, and in this specific case of women in prison, it is important to highlight that as demonstrated in national reports, all guidance or recommendations of promising practices can only be taken in their broad sense since every country or region should consider its own legal, social and cultural environment. In fact, also acknowledging the problems a closed one-gender orientated environment poses, the principle of separation of prisoners according to their presumed (biological) sex may be questioned. In many cases, prisoners may belong to more than one group with special care and treatment requirements, which translates into a multiplicity of needs and increased vulnerability. Similarly, female inmates belonging to other minority groups, are especially vulnerable both due to their gender, as well as due to their special needs as members of these groups. Thus, the multiple needs of prisoners, including the gender-specific needs of women, should be considered with respect to all of these groups.

Here we will focus on the reality of subjecting a low number of women prisoners to a male-structured environment: women represent a minority within the prison. The fact of the existence of few prisons exclusively for women presupposes female inmates' dispersion over the territory, producing greater uprooting. In the case women share prisons with men, most of the times common spaces are more often used by the latter. With fewer facilities and spaces dedicated to women, they are also usually grouped unclassified (youth and adults, preventive and sentenced, prisoners with short and long sentences, and those with drug dependence) (Cuéllar, Markov, Tortosa & Doichinova, 2015).

Research indicates that female prisoners with mental health care needs are at particular risk of abuse, self-harm and deteriorating mental well-being in prisons. Women without any mental health problems prior to imprisonment may develop a range of mental disabilities in prisons, where they do not feel safe, conditions are poor, dormitories overcrowded, and staff not trained to deal with their gender-specific psychosocial support requirements. Women who are admitted to prison are more likely than men to suffer from mental disabilities, drug and alcohol addiction, often as a result of domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse. Separation from their families and the community due to imprisonment has a particularly harmful effect on women, which may lead to anxiety, depression and the development of more serious mental disabilities (UNODC, 2009). It is important that legislators, policymakers, prison managers, staff and non-governmental organizations operate to implement the resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations to address the gender-specific needs of women prisoners, as well as to increase awareness about the profile of female offenders and suggest ways in which to reduce their unnecessary

imprisonment, by rationalising legislation and criminal justice policies, and providing a wide range of alternatives to prison at all stages of the criminal justice process. Women constitute a vulnerable group in prisons, due to their gender, although there are considerable variations in their situation in different countries, the reasons for and intensity of their vulnerability and corresponding needs, a number of factors are common to most. These include:

- The challenges in accessing justice on an equal basis with men in many countries
- Victimization from sexual or physical abuse prior to imprisonment
- A high level of mental healthcare needs in many cases as a result of domestic violence and sexual abuse
- Their high level of substance dependency
- The extreme distress imprisonment causes which may lead to mental health problems or exacerbate existing mental disabilities
- Sexual abuse and violence in prison
- The high likelihood of having caring responsibilities for their children, families and others
- Gender-specific healthcare needs that cannot adequately be met
- Post-release challenges as stigmatization, victimization and abandonment by their families (Cuéllar, Markov, Tortosa & Doichinova, 2015).

Female prisoners, typically from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and many women in low-income countries suffer from a variety of health conditions which may be untreated in the community. In many countries' women face additional discrimination and barriers in accessing adequate healthcare services in the community, due to their gender. Therefore, female prisoners often have greater primary healthcare needs in comparison to men. Their condition may become worse in prisons due to the absence of adequate medical care, lack of hygiene, inadequate nutrition and overcrowding. In addition, all women have gender-specific medical requirements and need to have regular access to specialists in women's healthcare. In many countries worldwide healthcare in women's prisons encompasses many children living with their mothers, as well as the medical care of pregnant women and nursing mothers, with which most prison services are not equipped to cope (Bergh, Gatherer, Fraser & Moller, 2011).

Violence against women, especially sexual violence, has numerous short- and long term sexual and reproductive health consequences for victims. Due to the typical background of female prisoners, which can include injecting drug use, sexual abuse, violence, sex work and unsafe sexual practices, a significant number of women are infected with STD, including HIV and hepatitis, at the time they enter prison. In some countries where abortions are criminalized,

women who have delivered a stillborn child, have not registered the birth or death of the child, have had a miscarriage, or undertaken an illegal abortion, may be detained or imprisoned on charges of concealment of childbirth, infanticide or homicide.

For all these reasons women prisoners represent a high-risk group for sexual and reproductive health diseases, including cancer. In many countries' women are sexually abused and humiliated by law enforcement officials, including in prisons, such abuse can range from subtle humiliation to rape. The former can include verbal abuse, improper touching during pat-down searches, frequent and unnecessary searching and spying on prisoners during showers and in living areas. Rape may take place in the form of sexual services which women prisoners are forced to provide in return for access to goods and privileges or to enjoying their most basic human rights. Sexual abuse of women by male prisoners may take place with the complicity of prison guards. Women who have been charged with or convicted of crimes against morality, as well as lesbian, bisexual or transgender women are at particular risk (UNODC, 2009).

Recognizing the vulnerability of women to sexual abuse, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (2015) prohibit any involvement of male staff in the supervision of women's prisons.

Research from many countries has revealed that when fathers are imprisoned, generally the mother continues to care for the children. However, when mothers are imprisoned the family will often break up, or as mothers are more often the sole or primary carers within a family, alternative carers will need to be found, which may include state welfare services/institutions. Pregnant women rarely receive adequate ante- and post-natal care in prison as prison healthcare services in the large majority of countries worldwide are under-resourced and understaffed. The particular dietary requirements of pregnant women may not be considered or catered for by prison authorities, while the food provided may be insufficient to cover the nutritional requirements of pregnant women (UNODC, 2009).

Although many problems women face during re-entry into society are similar to that of men, the intensity and multiplicity of their post-release needs can be very different. Women are likely to suffer discrimination after release from prison, due to social stereotypes. They might be rejected by their families and in some countries, they may lose their parental rights. If they have left a violent relationship, women will have to establish a new life, which is likely to entail economic, social, and legal difficulties, in addition to the challenges of transition to life outside prison. In some countries women may not be able to leave prison unless they have a male guardian to collect them from prison, which might lead to their prolonged detention beyond the term of their sentence. Or in some countries, women are at risk of murder by their families following release, if they have committed "moral offences", or they are victims of rape or other sexual abuse. They

may also be at risk of being returned to violent marriages or being forced to marry someone against their will.

It is important also to highlight the facto that pre-release preparation and post-release support policies and programmes are typically structured around the needs of men and rarely address the gender-specific needs of female prisoners, with targeted continuum-of-care in the community after release (UNODC, 2009).

Because there are fewer female than male offenders dealt with by the criminal justice system, there has been a tendency to view female criminality in terms of individual characteristics and only peripherally in terms of social forces and influences. Female offenders have always been thought of in different ways from male offenders, as less delinquent, less dangerous, and less involved in criminal subcultures and therefore they have less frequently provided a focus for criminological theory. Gelsthorpe (1989) concluded that images of female offenders are mediated by a whole host of factors that cannot be linked directly to sexist ideology.

Need for improvement in gender equity: Research evidence indicates that some needs may be similar for both men and women (for example, criminal history, unemployment, and substance misuse), though how they have come about and how they contribute to offending may be different according to gender. Some needs in fact, appear to be more specific to women, such as experience of physical and sexual abuse. This clearly has implications for the focus and content of work with women, though both custodial and non-custodial interventions designed to address criminogenic needshave tended to be based on the needs of male offenders. As Hedderman (2004, p. 241) concludes from her analysis of research on men's and women's criminogenic needs:

> *"…overall the available evidence suggests that programmes which focus on male criminogenic factors are unlikely to be as effective in reducing reconviction among women offenders as they are for men. This is not only because they focus on factors which are less relevant to or operate differently for women, but also because they fail to address factors which are unique to, or more relevant for, women who offend." (Hedderman, 2004, p. 241, in Gelsthorpe & Sharpe, 2007).*

Imprisonment as an institution, often reinforces social structural problems and societal inequalities (Van Ginneken, 2015), to avoid this, it is important to be sensitive to the potential differences in the impact of imprisonment on men and women and be aware that women are in need of special protection and support.

Women staff

The qualities of the prison director and other staff are key to the successful management of prisons, but in many prison systems staff assigned to supervise women prisoners receive no special training to help them deal with the particular needs of women prisoners. In the male dominated, hierarchical prison environment, female prison staff may face unfair competition as well as overprotection, often they have less authority and decision-making power, and they themselves may suffer from sexual harassment and discrimination in their workplaces. In most prison systems there is a need to ensure that capacity building of female staff comprises a key component of policy and programme development and delivery, to enable staff to address the special social reintegration requirements of female prisoners, as well as to empower female staff within the prison service. Staff assigned to supervise women prisoners should receive training relating to the gender-specific needs of female prisoners, as well as approach and style of management. Female prison staff should be employed in senior positions with key responsibility for the development of policies and strategies and delivery of programmes for female prisoners. In order to combat discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, there needs to be a clear commitment at managerial level that discrimination will not be tolerated. Women staff need to be made aware of different types of sexual harassment and recognize such actions by male staff to be against law and should be able to make complaints without fear of retaliation, when such acts take place.

Taking account of the reality of many countries, female staff themselves may come from similar backgrounds to those of women prisoners, with a history of violence, abuse and addictions, which under pressure of working in prisons can translate into extreme stress, emotional trauma and unprofessional behaviour. Training staff should be complemented by training of the male staff on gender sensitivity, prohibition of discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace (UNODC, 2008).

Further reading section

When we speak about Human Rights and Prison, it is fundamental to refer to the Nelson Mandela Rules, United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (2015). These Rules, in fact, aim to promote human conditions of imprisonment, to raise awareness about prisoners being a continuous part of society and to Value the work of prison staff as an important social service. The Basic Principles of the Nelson Mandela Rules are the following:

Rule 1 *"All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings. No prisoner shall be subjected to, and all prisoners shall be protected from, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, for which no circumstances whatsoever may be invoked as a justification. The safety and security of prisoners, staff, service providers and visitors shall be ensured at all times."*

Rule 2 *"1. The present rules shall be applied impartially. There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status. The religious beliefs and moral precepts of prisoners shall be respected. 2. In order for the principle of non-discrimination to be put into practice, prison administrations shall take account of the individual needs of prisoners, in particular the most vulnerable categories in prison settings. Measures to protect and promote the rights of prisoners with special needs are required and shall not be regarded as discriminatory."*

Rule 3 *"Imprisonment and other measures that result in cutting off persons from the outside world are afflictive by the very fact of taking from these persons the right of self-determination by depriving them of their liberty. Therefore, the prison system shall not, except as incidental to justifiable separation or the maintenance of discipline, aggravate the suffering inherent in such a situation."*

Rule 4 *"1. The purposes of a sentence of imprisonment or similar measures deprivative of a person's liberty are primarily to protect society against crime and to reduce recidivism. Those purposes can be achieved only if the period of imprisonment is used to ensure, so far as possible, the reintegration of such persons into society upon release so that they can lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life. 2. To this end, prison administrations and other competent authorities should offer education, vocational training and work, as well as other forms of assistance that are appropriate and available, including those of a remedial, moral, spiritual, social and health- and sports-based nature. All such programmes, activities and services should be delivered in line with the individual treatment needs of prisoners."*

Rule 5 *"1. The prison regime should seek to minimize any differences between prison life and life at liberty that tend to lessen the responsibility of the prisoners or the respect due to their dignity as human beings. 2. Prison administrations shall make all reasonable accommodation and adjustments to ensure that prisoners with physical, mental or other disabilities have full and effective access to prison life on an equitable basis" (UNODC, 2015).*

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