

Restorative Practice in Prisons

An International Perspective

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***Responsibility-taking, Relationship-building and
Restoration in Prisons***

Final conference of project

Mediation & Restorative Justice in Prison Settings

17-19 January 2012

Five themes

- Service to the community
- Victim awareness/ empathy
- Victim-offender communication
- Relationships in prison
- Restorative prisons

Service to the community

Prison-initiated projects

- Sorting clothes for refugees
- Refurbishing bikes for local people, or to send to Africa
- Transcribing texts into Braille for blind people
- Raising funds for Victim Support

Victim awareness/ empathy

- Needed as first step towards meeting, or in its own right
- Sycamore Tree: 27 countries; 36 prisons in UK
- Bristol Prison 2003-4: 3-session group in 1 week

Victim awareness/ empathy

SORI – 5 prisons in UK

(Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside)

- Victim Awareness Course

leading to

- Victim-offender groups – 1 day
- Special version for domestic violence perpetrators

Victim awareness/ empathy

Other countries

- Several in the US
- Hope Prison Ministry, South Africa
- Many faith-based (mostly Christian)

Victim-offender communication

Victim-offender groups

- Pioneered by Rochester Youth Custody Centre, UK (burglary victims and burglars) 1985
- SORI
- Sycamore Tree
- Burglary group in Bristol Prison 2004

Victim-offender mediation/ conferencing

Community-based services also working in prisons

NGOs - Remedi (South Yorkshire), Kent Mediation

Probation - Thames Valley STARS, West Yorkshire,
Probation Victim Liaison Officers

Police - Manchester, Bristol

Youth Offending Teams

Victim-offender mediation/ conferencing

Prison-based services

- Government Research Project 2001-7: London & Oxfordshire
- Hewell: SORI project
- South-west prisons: Bristol, Channings Wood, Gloucester, Guys Marsh, Portland YOI, Swansea
- London: CALM: Sutton
- Northern Ireland: Magilligan

Victim-offender mediation/ conferencing

Other countries

- Belgium: serious crimes
- US: Victim Offender Dialogue (26 States)
- Canada: Restorative Opportunities
- Australia: NSW RJ Unit
- New Zealand: Department of Corrections national scheme
- South Africa: Khulisa

Victim-offender mediation/ conferencing

Meetings with Families

These projects deal mainly with the harm caused by offenders to their families. It is important to address this before offenders are released.

- South Africa: Phoenix Zululand
- South Africa: Hope Prison Ministry
- Hawai'i: Huikahi Restorative Circles for Re-entry Planning

Resolving conflicts in prison

Adjudications handled restoratively

- Using restorative processes as part of adjudications for prison incidents, e.g. assault, theft, fighting, bullying.
- Adjourn for restorative process & 'RJ report'
- Concerns re time constraints

Resolving conflicts in prison

Resolving conflicts in prison: staff trained in mediation/ conferencing/ conflict resolution

- South-west prisons in UK
- Serbia: Young offender institution
- Bulgaria: adult prisons
- Hungary: MEREPS project (Mediation & Restorative Justice in Prison Settings)

Resolving conflicts in prison

Inmates trained in mediation/ conferencing

- Ashfield YOI
- Full Sutton prison: race-related conflicts
- Chowchilla Women's Prison, California

Building relationships in prison

- Communities of Restoration (APAC): 12 countries, especially Brazil
- Kainos Community UK: 3 prisons and local communities
- Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP): 56 countries
- Prison therapeutic communities, e.g. Grendon

Programmes for Women

Most prison RJ programmes are for men.

Two examples of programmes for women:

- Amicus Girls Programme, US
- Chowchilla Women's Prison, California

Importance of grief/ trauma counselling

Restorative Prisons?

Core values (Edgar & Newell)

Healing	Inclusiveness
Voluntarism	Equal status
Respect	Personal accountability
Empowerment	Problem solving

Issues in custodial settings

- Getting started
- Gaining entry
- Vagaries of prison schedules
- Fears and doubts
- Clarity of purpose
- Preparing victims and offenders
- Feedback and evaluation
- Acceptance

Ten golden rules (1)

1. You can't do it on your own
2. Build effective partnerships – Steering Group?
3. Learn from others – training and beyond
4. Agree protocols – internal and external
5. Raise staff awareness

Ten golden rules (2)

6. Raise prisoner awareness
7. Get the basics right
8. Build your project into prison structures
9. Support post-mediation/conference agreements
10. Evaluate and publish

Acknowledgements

- **I would like to acknowledge the help of the following people who helped me to update information for this presentation:**

Tracy Adevai (Insight Development Group, Oregon, US), Joe Belso (HMP Channings Wood), Kristel Buntinx (Sugnomme, Belgium), Tim Chapman (University of Ulster), Jonathan Clayton (Hope Prison Ministry, South Africa), Amanda Dissel (South Africa), Borbala Fellegi (MEREPS & Foresee Research Group, Hungary), Clifford Grimason (HMP Hewell), Julia Hennessy (Family Works, New Zealand), Nick Hughes (Avon & Somerset Police), Terry Kenyon (formerly of HMYOI Huntercombe), Karolien Marien (European Forum for Restorative Justice), Tania Petrellis (Correctional Service Canada), Garry Shewan & Gail Spruce (Greater Manchester Police), Fiona Shipley (CALM Mediation Service, London), Jon Simpson (HMP Guys Marsh), David Walker (Prison Fellowship), Loren Walker (Hawai'i Friends of Justice & Civic Education), Malcolm Walsh (HMYOI Portland), Ken Webster (KW Consultancy & Training Ltd), Avril Wood (West Yorkshire Probation Service, Leeds).

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