



Counselling in the Custodial Setting. Vision and future direction.

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Background issues

- ◆ Overcrowding
- ◆ High levels of mental ill health within prison population
- ◆ High levels of re-offending behaviour
- ◆ Increased levels of suicide and self harm

These are symptoms of a wider problem



Core Issues

- ◆ The present prison regime is anti-therapeutic
- ◆ It does not seem to promote psychological growth or change within the life of the prisoner, or staff



The regime

- ◆ A key factor in addressing these emerging issues is to promote positive constructive relationships.

However

- ◆ The custodial regime is a victimising regime.



The role of therapy in custodial settings.

- ◆ Building and modelling non- victimising relationships
- ◆ Addressing historical issues
- ◆ Addressing offending behaviour in a positive way
- ◆ Therapy is about working with broken lives

Dynamics – Theoretical Framework

◆ Critical parent

Adult

◆ Adapted child

Adult



Revictimisation Equation

Reduction in victimology =

Reduction in maladaptive behaviour /
symptomology =

Reduction in mental ill health and offending
behaviour



Building a therapeutic culture

- ◆ Relationships between staff, victim and regime are key to developing a therapeutic culture.
- ◆ Power v autonomy v choice
- ◆ Empowerment



Counselling in Prisons network

◆ Vision

◆ Future Direction



Vision.

- ◆ To pool expertise and best practice, to identify research agendas and develop excellence in working with offenders, with a view to pushing back the boundaries.
- ◆ To develop constructive and positive cultures that promote health and reduce re-offending.



Future Direction

- ◆ To begin work on a 5 year strategy on counselling in prisons and working therapeutically with offenders.
- ◆ To pool best practice.
- ◆ To develop research agendas and begin to build an evidence base.
- ◆ To develop the Counselling in Prisons network to facilitate the above.



Next Steps:

- ◆ Therapy in prisons needs to be ethically underpinned.
- ◆ Produce a guidelines document
- ◆ Produce a toolkit for counsellors /therapists working in prisons