

Volunteers & Supporting Prisoners with Substance Use Issues

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Presentation Flow

What is substance use disorder?

Working with substance users as a volunteer in prisons

Challenges of working with substance use disorders in prisons as volunteers and staff members

Potential solutions for supporting volunteers in prisons

Example of a Project for Substance User Parolees: VRforDrugRehabilitation

What is Substance Use Disorder?

According to ICD-11;

Disorders due to substance use include;

- single episodes of harmful substance use
- substance use disorders (harmful substance use and substance dependence)
- **substance-induced disorders** such as;
 - substance intoxication, substance withdrawal
 - substance-induced mental disorders
 - sexual dysfunctions
 - sleep-wake disorders.

- **Due to DSM-5, Substance use disorder (SUD) is the persistent use of substances (including alcohol) despite substantial harm and adverse consequences.**

*References;Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association. 2013.
World Health Organization. (2018). International classification of diseases for mortality and morbidity statistics (11th Revision). Retrieved from <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en>*

Substance users constitute an important part of convicts.

Substance users may be offenders who convicted a drug-related crime, such as supplying or using.

Up to 70% of European prisoners have used an illicit drug(EMCDDA, 2021).

Almost half of a million people are incarcerated worldwide for drug possession and an additional 1.7 million for other drug-related offenses(UNODC, 2019)

Prison Entry

- Health assessment(including substance use situation and related psychological parameters)
- Detoxification

The mortality risk in the first weeks after release from prison is high.

Imprisonment Process

- Treatment
- Therapy Approaches

Releasing from Prison

- Overdose Prevention
- Health assessment (including substance use situation and related psychological parameters)

During all process, motivating substance user for a better life without using drugs or other behavioral addiction disorders

MAIN RISK FACTORS OF SUBSTANCE USER PRISONERS

Being male

Having a history of substance use
before incarceration¹ or in his or her
family

Long sentence period

Low level of education risk

Having history of migration

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Ref.: 1-Bukten et al., 2020

Harmful pattern of use of sedatives, hypnotics or anxiolytics

A pattern of sedative, hypnotic, or anxiolytic use that has caused clinically significant harm to a person's physical or mental health

- alcohol(producing alcohol by distilling fruit)
- oral care products containing alcohol
- cough mixture-prescribed
- antiepileptics (gabapentin and pregabalin),
- antigribals (containing dextromethorphan),
- pain relievers (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)
- muscle relaxants (containing phenprobamate)
- quetiapine
- anticholinic drugs (oxybutynin and biperiden)¹
- hand sanitizers** (due to including alcohol-especially during pandemic period)

¹;Sengul, et al, 2015.

**psychologist, social worker, medical
doctors + volunteer coordinators,
volunteer members from NGOs/VSOs**

**Team work is very important while working
with substance misuse or substance use
disorder**



Working with substance users as a volunteer in prisons

-**Orientation Programmes** for New Comer Volunteers who will work with substance user offenders;

General description of substance use/misuse, substance users, intervention programmes, being informed about background of prisoners

-Trainings of **Brief Intervention** for Substance Users

To initiate change for an unhealthy or risky behaviour



Working with substance users as a volunteer in prisons

- Training of **basic assessment/follow-up tools** for substance users which volunteer may use
 - Training of **motivational interviewing techniques for volunteers**
 - Training of **occupational therapy/art therapy** for volunteers to use them on substance users
 - Working with prison staff very closely for substance users as a **team**
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Challenges of working with substance use disorders in prisons as volunteers and staff members

-Patient's resistance

-As volunteer staff member, accepting the lying behavior of substance users as usual since lying is very often toward substance users

-It is important that volunteer should't have her/his own addiction including smoking, behavioral addiction such as gambling etc.

-comorbidity : people in prisons and with substance use disorder/substance misuse may have another psychological problems such as personality disorders, psychotic illnesses, depression, anger control problems, etc.

-Difficulty to detect as mostly substance user prisoners use various tactics to hide their behaviours and they use to keep peer offenders around them frequently.

Limited access to medical services during pandemic(Fovet et al, 2020)

Sudden and unplanned release may cause prisoners with opioid use disorders on a significant risk of overdose and death by suicide(NIDA,2020; Ghosh, 2020) .

Injection drug use and substance use disorders are risk factors for death after release from prison. In-prison substance use disorder treatment services may reduce the risk(Binswanger et al., 2016).

Potential Solutions for Supporting Volunteers in Prisons for Working on Substance Use Issues

- Specific training programmes about substance addiction for volunteers in prisons before starting working and certification systems
- Well-supervision system and teamwork through prison staff, volunteer coordinators and volunteers

Potential solutions for supporting volunteers in prisons

Well-established Sustainable Coordination Systems Between Volunteers in Prisons and Probations





Cigarette Alcohol Substance Addiction Programme(SAMBA)-
Prison Version is a psychoeducational group intervention
which is developed to be used in drug addiction field in
prisons.It is an open group work and people can be taken
into the program from any session.

*Ref.: Ögel K. Koç C. Aksoy A. İşmen M. Başabak A. Cigarette Alcohol Substance Addiction Programme (SAMBA) –
Manual for Prison.Version.1.1. Yeniden Press, İstanbul, 2014*

Example of a Project for Substance User Parolees and Probationers: **VRforDrugRehabilitation**



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



VRforDrugRehabilitation

Developing and Using Virtual Reality Technology for Rehabilitation of Drug Users in Probation Service

Project No: 2018-3-TR01-KA205-061550

Project website: <https://www.vr4drugrehab.org/>

VRforDrugRehabilitation project is expected to build and enhance the capacity of probation services so they can create new sustainable methodologies of rehabilitation by using VR technology for substance user parolees and probationers.





Co-funded by the
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- **Positive changes and attitudes of young adult offenders with substance misuse problems, who participate in the project, towards avoiding substances, looking for a job, developing and/or protecting basic competencies (communication, anger management, controlling stress, healthy nutrition, doing exercise/sports, etc.)**
- **Reduced relapse rate;**
- **Improved efficiency of youth probation/parole staff in rehabilitating probationers/parolees with substance misuse problems;**
- **New and approved methodology using VR for drug addiction rehabilitation in probation/parole systems at national and European level;**





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- **Considerable savings in staff budgets by promoting an innovative and quality training for youth probation/parole staff/, improving their performance and professional motivation and, ultimately, enhancing rehabilitation opportunities;**
- **Valorisation and integration of the intellectual outputs in the strategic partnership organisations mainstream;**
- **Ongoing dissemination and adoption by other prison and probation services nationally and at European level (not only the curricula and training programmes, but the training model, combining blended learning with a work-based approach as well).**



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Thank You.

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