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# The DIACEN Project Toolkit

A Toolkit for use by inmates, prison staff and community members to help with the reintegration process

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**DIACEN** is based around the idea that dialogue is a powerful method for delivering adult education. Building a community around authentic interaction could reduce massively the relapse / re-offend rates of the prisoners. The inmates need a programme for pre-release where all interested parties meet and develop together a solution with the motto: “Nothings for me that is made without me”.

Elements of the pre-release programme for inmates:

- The prison as a learning environment;
- The education, social work, security staff, prisoner and the local community sit around the table and set a learning pathway for reintegration for each prisoner in the pre-release period;
- A European framework and method built with the expertise of 5-member states and several networks;
- Methods for community development and public policy consultation which capture the assets of a local community, preparing it to receive the ex-prisoner and acknowledge his / her capabilities and needs.

The DIACEN project is composed of 5 organizations from 5 different EU countries – Romania, Portugal, Poland, the Netherlands and Italy. The partnership is a balance and mix that reflects the prison education world realities at European and international level.



#### Associazione Antigone Onlus

Associazione Antigone Onlus (ANTIGONE) – Italy  
<http://www.associazioneantigone.it>



#### CPIP

Centrul Pentru Promovarea Invatarii Permanente (CPIP) – Romania  
[www.cpip.ro](http://www.cpip.ro)



#### ICPA - European Branch

International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) – European Branch - The Netherlands  
[www.icpa.ca](http://www.icpa.ca)



#### Innovative Prison Systems (IPS)

Qualify Just- IT Solutions and Consulting LDA (IPS) – Portugal  
[www.prisonssystems.eu](http://www.prisonssystems.eu)



#### ARID Lacjum

Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Inicjatyw Regionalnych “Lacjum (ARID Lacjum) – Poland  
[www.lacjum.org](http://www.lacjum.org)

**PROLOGUE:**

What does it take to live in today's complex society, with the growth of government and business bureaucracy, concerns over credit and lawsuits, the environment, health risks, changing social and moral codes, and exploding new technologies? The formal definition of the term "survive" is "to remain alive or exist after". We think that survival, after prison, should come with a certain quality of life and have produced this skills guide to strip the confusion which often accompanies day-to-day living. Through the use of dialogue between inmates, prison staff and the public during incarceration and continuing after release much of the "mysteries" of everyday life disappear. If one has been away from "normal" living, even for a short time, what many see as simple, can be obstacles or embarrassments. For example, if a person has not used public transportation in a while they may not know that in some systems, once they buy the ticket they must stamp that ticket prior to getting on the bus or subway (or in a machine on the bus). Being caught by the transportation police without a stamped ticket can result in a fine BUT even worse for an ex-prisoner is the public embarrassment. They may not realize that with some public transportation the doors do not open automatically – rather a button must be pushed. This may seem like a simple, even juvenile example to some. However, a newly released person can be sensitive and feel everyone is watching him or her not being able to open a subway train door. It is our hope that by the time an inmate is ready for release and has participated in the dialogue sessions and read this material, they will know more about living independently than those who have done it for year.

**NOTE:** Much of the contents comes directly from material prepared by the Convicts Liberty Aid Project (CLAP) project developed as part of the Multilateral Projects (Grundtvig) project number and code: 517620-LLP-1-2011-1-RO-GRUNDTVIG-GMP and the Survival Sourcebook developed by Contact Center, Inc.

This workbook is broken down into 2 parts. The first, using material from CLAP is a blueprint for establishing a dialogue program between inmates, staff and participants from the community. The second section comes from the Contact Center developed "Survival Sourcebook" and is meant as an example of a booklet each inmate, with input from dialogue partners, can create for their personal use as they transition back into the non-correctional community.

## INTRODUCTION

### What do we want to do?

The successful reintegration of ex-prisoners resides in a set of complex activities from the moment of entering the imprisonment system until well after the release time. Many of these are in the hands of a few dedicated professionals and volunteers, inside and outside the system. Most of all, the reintegration effort is dependent on the work and active participation of the inmate population. Our work is dedicated to all of them and to their accomplishments.

In undertaking its work, the Convicts Liberty Aid Project (CLAP) team that prepared most of this toolkit found that there were many initiatives developed locally or at a country level, with similar results, and a common European approach was the next logical step. How did they approach this step? By figuring out that the common thing to us all is dialogue and accepting the challenge to turn this in to a powerful tool for reintegration, a tool that fits beyond national priorities, and targets the exact needs of the professionals, volunteers and inmates.

What are the steps we propose in developing dialogue as a reintegration tool?

- ↘ Find out at the grass root level the reality in our prisons. Start a dialogue with the prison workers of all types and at all level and extract their needs and wants. Add the input from decision makers, outside organizations, ex-inmates to have a clearer picture of pre-release moment. Though this is a continuing process, the DIACEN team began the process by conducting surveys of prison staff and inmates and also compiled data on existing pre-release program from our participating agencies.
- ↘ Based on this research and with study cases from each partner country and material developed by the Contact Center's Survival Sourcebook project, develop material for prison workers. This material is to give practical hints and to stimulate the dialogue in helping prepare inmates for their release. In the long run we hope that using this material under the form of a toolkit will stimulate the prison workers and inmates in developing their own pre-release materials and activities based on dialogue.
- ↘ With the involvement of a few dedicated prison workers and decision makers across the partnership we will have a tryout of this Toolkit in a specially dedicated training session, a testing workshop and a piloting period.
- ↘ Once we have established our community of practice (COP) and a final version of the Toolkit we will implement it in the prisons that joined our program. As a result of this implementation, the prison workers together with inmates will develop a reintegration guide. This will be our ultimate goal, to get all relevant actors in a prison in a dialogical process<sup>1</sup> of developing a tool built for their specific needs.

### Where do we come from?

The conclusions of the European Penitentiary Policy Forum from Warsaw in June 2007, funded by the European Commission's EQUAL program, stated that "there is an urgent need to promote change in prison, to adopt a culture of innovation and to support cooperation with external agencies to support social inclusion of those who are releases from prison."

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<sup>1</sup> **Dialogic** learning is learning that takes place through dialogue. It is typically the result of egalitarian dialogue; in other words, the consequence of a dialogue in which different people provide arguments based on validity claims and not on power claims. The concept of **dialogic** learning is not a new one.

Successful reintegration of those who have a deprivation of liberty requires involvement of all stakeholders, public institutions, nongovernmental and private organizations. Another important point is involvement of prisoners in the design, development and implementation of this approach. Staff working in prisons must realize that multidisciplinary interventions depend on communication, knowledge sharing and interactions between them and various stakeholders, to provide changing opportunities for detainees in custody.

On these grounds, in 2011 a consortium of 9 partners from 7 European countries developed a project for the reintegration of inmates, CLAP – Convict Liberty Aid Project. The consortium leaders, CPIP from Romania, had the idea of bringing the dialogical tools in the daily routine of the prison workers, when preparing with the inmates for the release moment. From this point, a complex 2-year project started. And one of the first and most important activities was research, a complex endeavor aimed at probing out the needs of professionals inside the detention system. As a result, the project consortium developed “Preparing for release – Dialogue in prison. Comparative report & Recommendation Paper”. This study identified the needs of social workers and educators who work in prisons and on the other hand the needs of prisoners to facilitate better social reintegration of prisoners into society.

The CLAP research started in 2011. Staff in all types of prisons across 7 EU countries were interviewed about their experiences working with offenders in all detention moments. They gave examples of difficulties engaging with offenders or enabling offenders to access offending behavior programmes. Staff identified a lack of knowledge and experience working with communication difficulties but also the inaccessibility of information presented to these offenders.

Additional research came from the DIACEN Project survey of inmates, staff and prison administrations. [DIACEN team ran surveys in Romania, Portugal, Poland and Italy, with the help of several specific prisons and the national Administrations. It was a qualitative research, focused on the perspective of the professionals and the personal experiences of those interacting with prison settings.](#) Conclusions included:

- Various systems have very good programs to help inmates learn skills (job and personal), achieve educational goals, socialize through sports and activities – BUT, none surveyed had **pre-release** programs as we are talking about them in the DIACEN project.
- Most were geared toward adjustment and achievement during confinement with the **aim** of instilling skills and qualities that would help the person upon release – they were not coordinated with release nor based on needs offenders identified.
- There was no apparent organized direct involvement of correction staff with inmates geared toward release planning.
- All the staff interviewed felt inmates were interested in pre-release programs and all staff indicated they felt the local community should be involved in pre-release programs.
- Staff felt the five most important topics in a pre-release program were:
  - Employment/finding a job/interview techniques, resume writing
  - Family Relationships
  - Maintaining mental and physical health, including drug abuse help (mentioned by only about 1/3 of the staff), anger management (one mention)
  - Housing, independent living, cost of living – mentioned by about ¼ of staff

- Social services and support agencies
- In terms of how to best conduct an effective pre-release program
  - 1/3 staff interviewed felt a standardized pre-release program would be most effective and,
  - 2/3 staff interviewed felt a pre-release program jointly developed by inmate and staff based on inmate's perceived needs would be the most effective – this is the basis of the DIACEN approach
- The inmate surveys produced the following areas which inmates would like information on prior to release:
  - Mental health care
  - Medical care
  - Medications
  - Appointments
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Substance/alcohol abuse
  - Health care/benefits
  - Income/benefits
  - Food/clothing
  - Transportation
  - Identification
  - Life skills
  - Family/children
  - Emergency numbers of assistance
  - Referrals to other services and court dates
  - Summaries of prison-based treatments, laboratory and radiology results, and medication regimens.
- Inmate surveys also indicated that 65% of them would prefer to work with prison staff in establishing their individual pre-release program. 58% of inmates surveyed wanted to involve people from the community, in addition to staff, in their pre-release planning.

This toolkit has been developed following discussions with staff in both the prison and outside services. Specialists were also consulted to give expert guidance. However, the information in this toolkit does not necessarily represent expert opinion. It identifies some of the barriers that may make it difficult for staff and offenders to communicate with each other in a dialogical manner. The toolkit aims to raise awareness of some of the dialogue difficulties of offenders who come into contact with criminal justice agencies. It provides some guidance on how to respond to the communication needs of offenders and tools to aid more effective communication.

The toolkit should not take the place of any training available to enable staff to work more effectively with a range of offenders with different needs, including dialogical needs. It has been developed to provide quick and easy access to support practice. Whilst this toolkit does offer some strategies for working with offenders with it does not provide an assessment tool for screening offenders.

## Who should use this toolkit?

This material is destined for prison workers - **all** staff who are working with inmates and who can help them in a direct or indirect way with preparing for release. This material is an exercise proposed by our team, a reflection tool and at the same time a challenge to take on in the daily activities with the inmates in the pre-release period. This is also a tool useful for the staff responsible with producing information and training material used in offending behavior programmes.

We are addressing to:

- ↳ Security staff
- ↳ Education staff
- ↳ Psychologists
- ↳ Social workers
- ↳ Mentors
- ↳ Counselors
- ↳ Program managers
- ↳ Support staff

This is not a complete list. And even if this toolkit is aimed at prison workers to bring dialogue in the pre-release period, the ideas presented here can well be implemented throughout the entire prison, at all levels. [In our work, all DIACEN team supports and promotes the idea of “multidisciplinary teams”](#). Dialogue in a powerful tool, it can change all interaction inside and out.

## Why use the Toolkit?

How do you check that the inmates you are working with understand what you try to accomplish in their pre-release period? And if you realize that they are not on the same page as you, how do you find out their support needs?

The research we have conducted among prison staff showed that preparing for release is quite a challenge and the problems are numerous:

- ↳ Overloaded.
- ↳ Excessive administration.
- ↳ Apathy in work – “burning out”.
- ↳ Conflicts between staff in order to can organized their task.
- ↳ The motivation-raising of inmates for school or working is not too appropriate.
- ↳ Overloaded staff, because the social workers have not enough time to make training, because they must make a lot of administrative tasks and present reports about their object of assessment.
- ↳ Lack of appropriate tools.
- ↳ Low level of innovation.
- ↳ Difficulties in understanding the range of realities facing prisoner pre and post sentence.

With this Toolkit we propose an alternative solution for addressing only a few of the above-mentioned problems:

- Bring an innovative tool with the methodology of dialogue that has inmate and prison staff working together.
- Challenge the existing understanding of pre-release preparation by getting the involved parties to express their own understanding and reach a common point.
- Try to ease the burden of the prison workers in being the responsible persons for preparing the release and shifting the focus to the prisoners.

The ultimate goal of our Toolkit is to bring dialogue in the pre-release process. It is important to be aware that inmates you work with may have difficulty either understanding you or expressing themselves as to what their needs are in preparing for release.

In these cases you need to be able to make adjustments to your practice so that you can communicate more effectively and bring the inmates to the same understanding. Not addressing these needs could result in failing to prepare for the outside realities, which in the end leads to less satisfactory outcomes for the inmates and a higher risk of relapse. Good communication and reaching dialogue can lead to better compliance and ultimately reduced reoffending.

Implementing some of the suggestions made in this toolkit will not take any extra time. However, where extra time is needed up front this is likely to lead to saved time later.

### **How to use this Toolkit?**

This toolkit is designed to be used by prison and probation staff in their day to day work to support the work they do with offenders. [Following this idea, our work can be of support also for professionals outside of the prison, offering “through the gate” services, working on the immediate post-release aspects.](#)

The information in this toolkit does not have to be read in order and may be read selectively.

We propose to you 4 main topics of reflection, detailed in 4 separate sections. In each section you will find:

- “Words of wisdom” selected from different materials and researches made by specialists in that particular area. They are there for you to reflect upon and think if they have any relevance to your current situation;
- Examples from our partner institutions and organizations on how they address the particular topic;
- Proposed games and activities that you can implement in your daily routine with the inmates.

The sections are:

1. **Roles and responsibilities:** Who is involved in preparing for release? What is your role in this process? What is the balance between your responsibilities and the ones of the inmate in this process?



2. **Communication and dialogue in prison:** What is dialogue and how it helps? Do we know when we are not in dialogue? What can we get out of this and how it can improve a difficult situation, as we have in prisons?
3. **Dialogue to prepare the release:** What is there to talk about? How can we share different understanding and develop a common tool?
4. **Dialogue for family:** How isolated is an inmate? Can he/she dialogue his/her way back in to the family?

As you see, we are all about questions. Our aim is to start a reflective process between prison staff and inmates for preparing their release. However, we also understand the need of a clear structure in any activity taking place in the prison settings, and therefore we also propose a work calendar for you. This is a suggestion of a possible pathway to take in working with the Toolkit and involving your inmates too. Our proposal is that you allocate two to four weeks for each section, so in total you can get through the reading and the exercises applied in the prison context over the span of 2 or 3 months, depending if you can overlap the activities or not. As many prisons have specific pre-release programs, our Toolkit can be implemented as a preparation before the inmates enter those programs. Or it can be run complementary, as a support activity.

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>							
Individual reading activity	4 hours reading and taking the reflective exercises  Additional 4 hours reading the suggested support literature							
Work group with pre-release inmates	2 hours working session with inmates (game 1 and 2)	2 hours working session with inmates (game 3 and 4)						
	<b>Communication and dialogue in prison</b>							
Individual reading activity		6 hours reading and taking the reflective exercises on communication, the process and its barriers  Additional 4 hours reading the suggested support literature						
Work group with pre-release inmates			2 hours working session with inmates (game 1 and 2)					
Individual reading activity			6 hours reading and taking the reflective exercises about dialogue  Additional 2 hours reading the					

			suggested support literature					
Work group with pre-release inmates				2 hours working session with inmates on setting up and starting a dialogue circle	2 hours working session with inmates on having a dialogue circle and creating a safe place for discussion			
					<b>Dialogue to prepare for release</b>			
Individual reading activity					4 hours reading and taking the reflective exercises about release  Additional 4 hours reading the suggested support literature			
Individual reading activity					4 hours reading and taking the reflective exercises  Additional 4 hours reading the suggested support literature			
Work group with pre-release inmates					2 hours working session with inmates on having a dialogue circle about release	2 hours working session with inmates on having a dialogue circle about challenges for release		

Work group with pre-release inmates							2 hours working session with inmates on having a dialogue circle about building together a resource booklet	
							<b>Dialogue for family</b>	
Individual reading activity							4 hours reading and taking the reflective exercises about involving family in the release process  Additional 4 hours reading the suggested support literature	
Work group with pre-release inmates							2 hours working session with inmates using the games suggested in the section	2 hours working session with inmates on exploring the idea and preparing a dialogue circle for release together with their families
Individual reading activity								6 hours reading about Survival Sourcebook and working to put together the

								final version of their resource booklet
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## 1. Roles and responsibilities in preparing for release

If you are reading this material it means that somehow you are involved in the “prison business”. You are impacting the lives of inmates at more levels that you can imagine.

### REFLECT ON THIS:

Have you ever given a thought to what your influence might be on the inmates that you have contact with on a daily basis?

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Can you think of 3 messages that you send through to inmates, by your daily behavior, attitudes, and ways of communicating?

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### OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:

Let’s take together an imaginative exercise. Please hold in mind two companion ideas:

- a) Most inmates that I come in contact with will be released from custody to live again in our community.
- b) The staff working with offenders on a daily basis (my colleagues and I) have more opportunities than most to positively influence long-term inmate success.

Now try to imagine your prison not as a correctional facility (as it is) but as a learning environment. Is this an unusual idea?

Think about this: People learn by watching the behaviors of others who they respect; therefore, in a correctional environment, staff members have a responsibility to act in a respect-worthy manner at all times.

The Oregon Department of Correction developed a state policy called the Oregon Accountability Model to provide and assure a proper foundation for inmates to lead successful lives upon release. In this model, one of the 6 components is Staff / Inmates Interaction. This interaction is seen as

creating a learning environment, offering pro-social behavior as role-model, reinforce positive behavior and re-direct negative behavior. Please note that this model is addressing *all* staff in prisons, not just educators, social workers or psychologist.

And what do they have to say about their model: “The nature of interactions and communications with inmates is a key to success. The Staff/Inmate Interaction Component takes advantage of the period of incarceration to clarify and shape pro-social behavior with the ultimate goal of establishing durable behaviors that will translate to the community when inmates leave incarceration and re-enter society. Staff members are encouraged to actively seek out pro-social behaviors by inmates and positively reinforce them when they naturally occur. These “teachable moments” are likely to occur frequently during an inmate’s day but might be overlooked by employees who are more focused on observing and then responding to security deficiencies. Social Learning research is clear, however, that positive reinforcement is a more powerful behavioral shaping tactic than negative reinforcement. Such positive reinforcement need not be complex or time consuming. It may take the simple form of acknowledging an inmate for doing more than they were asked to do on a work detail, recognizing their contribution to an orderly facility by keeping a clean cell, or attending a scheduled treatment program or class.”

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

Going back to our imaginative exercise, think of your daily activities and try to identify what are the “teachable moments” that occurred during your working week?

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What was your role in them?

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What was your inmate’s role?

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We see the ultimate goal of staff/inmate learning dialogue as helping provide for a smooth release, easier reentry into the community and in the end inmate successful reentry.

**WHAT OTHER SAY:**

*Please read the following 2 quotation that give an understanding of the preparing for release process.*

“We define “reentry” as the process of leaving prison and returning to society. All prisoners experience reentry irrespective of their method of release or form of supervision, if any. So, both prisoners who are released on parole and those who are released when their prison term expires experience reentry. If the reentry process is successful, there are benefits in terms of both public safety and the long-term reintegration of the ex-prisoner. Public safety gains are typically measured in terms of reduced recidivism. Reintegration outcomes would include increased participation in social institutions such as the labor force, families, communities, schools, and religious institutions. There are financial and social benefits associated with both kinds of improvements.” – *From Prison to Home. The Dimension and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry*, The Urban Institute.

“Social reintegration can be understood as the support given to offenders during re-entry into society following imprisonment. A broader definition, however, encompasses the period starting from prosecution to release and post-release support. Social reintegration in the prison setting refers to assisting with the moral, vocational and educational development of the imprisoned individual via working practices, educational, cultural, and recreational activities available in prison. It includes addressing the special needs of offenders, with programmes covering a range of problems, such as substance addiction, mental or psychological conditions, anger and aggression, among others, which may have led to offending behaviour. Reintegration encompasses the prison environment, the degree to which staff engages with and seek the cooperation of individual prisoners, the measures taken to encourage and promote contact with family, friends and the community, to which almost all prisoners will one day return.” – *Custodian and Non-Custodial Measures. Social Reintegration*, United Nation Office on Crime.

[http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/cjat\\_eng/4\\_Social\\_Reintegration.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/cjat_eng/4_Social_Reintegration.pdf)

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

What do you think about these understandings of the reintegration process? Do they fit with your own reality?

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If you would create your own definition of the process that is preparing inmates for release, what would it sound like?

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What is your part in all this complex process? What roles and responsibilities do you have?

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What about the inmates you work with? What are their roles and responsibilities in the preparation for release?

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As professionals in the detention and correctional systems we all know exactly our responsibilities and the impact of our actions upon the lives of the inmates. Be it that we have a job description including direct involvement in the preparation for release activities or not, we can all agree that it is one of our roles to help the inmates in this process.

But our challenge for you is to work with inmates and get them to realize what are their roles and responsibilities in the preparation for release. In order to do so, you can just talk to them, or give them some material to read and reflect upon. Or you can play structured games with them.

We will give you a sequence of 4 games for inmates aimed at starting the thinking reflective process towards their responsibilities in preparing for release. These games are destined to be implemented in a group and to trigger discussions. But they work as well as handouts given to inmates to fill in on their own and bring the results to later individual discussions. The games were developed within the BRIDGE project. The BRIDGE project interconnects activities taking place during imprisonment and after a prisoners' release. See: <http://www.bridgeproject.eu/en>.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (1) – TRUE OR FALSE

To be a good citizen you need to be aware of your rights and your responsibilities. Mark the following True or False.

<b>A member of society...</b>	True	False
1. Can own a dog.		
2. Can buy a lottery ticket if he's 16 years old.		
3. Can live in a foreign country.		
4. Is entitled to 4 weeks' paid vacation leave a year.		
5. Can apply for divorce after being married for 6 months.		
6. Can ask for his or her money back if the item bought is defective.		
7. Can be paid the same wage as another person doing the same job.		
8. Can park his car on a street corner.		
9. Can play music at a loud volume at 2 in the afternoon.		
10. Can take a guide dog in a restaurant.		
11. Can drive a bus if he's 18 years old.		
12. Can stand for election.		

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (2) – THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Look at the first two scenarios, and then complete the last one about your own rights and responsibilities.

### SCENARIO 1

I have a **right** to drive a car.

But I have the **responsibility** to:

- Drive carefully;
- Have a driving licence;
- Be insured;
- Ensure I'm not a danger to others.



### SCENARIO 2

I have a **right** to work.

But I have the **responsibility** to:

- Cooperate with the person helping me to find a job;
- Keep up to date through training;
- Be on time to work;
- Do my job well.

### SCENARIO 3

I have a **right** to \_\_\_\_\_.

But I have the **responsibility** to:

- \_\_\_\_\_;
- \_\_\_\_\_;
- \_\_\_\_\_.

# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (3) – TOWARDS SOCIETY AND OURSELVES

In my community I:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

My responsibilities **towards my community** are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

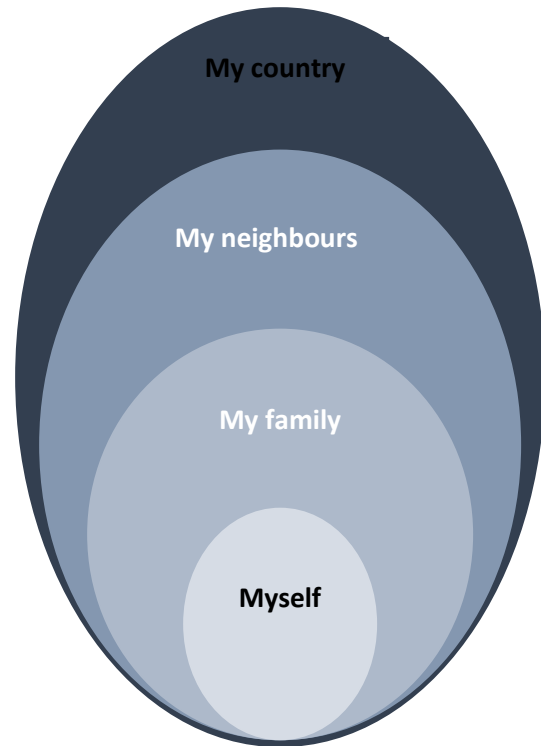
My responsibilities **towards my family and friends** are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

My responsibilities **towards myself** are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What is a community?





## 2. Communication and dialogue in prison

### WHAT OTHER SAY:

Going back into the ‘free world’ and being successful in not returning to the same old cell - doing well in life requires certain changes. These in turn may need skills that a number of inmates have not yet developed. These are essential in bringing about changes in one’s life.

These may include new ways (processes) of thinking, finding better ways of organising one’s daily life, eliminating habits that are a ‘chain and ball’ around one’s ankle and learning a more socially acceptable way of reacting to people, words and occurrences. Positive changes benefit not only the inmate but also others including family members, friends, taxpayers and society. These changes cannot be imposed. They need to come from within the inmate. One way of contributing to this involves dialogue.

“Communication is the process of sharing our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with other people and having those ideas, thoughts, and feelings understood by the people we are talking to. When we communicate we speak, listen, and observe.

The way we communicate is a learned style. As children we learn from watching our parents and other adults communicate. As an adult we can learn to improve the way we communicate by observing others who communicate effectively, learning new skills, and practicing those skills.” – Community Partnerships for Adult Learning.

We need to be careful. In dialogue sessions that are not particularly directive there is the risk that inmates will try to go over their past and rationalize it and think and perceive the future in unreal terms. Another point of concern for teachers, social workers, psychologists and others is the difficulty of inmates who never had a ‘socially’ accepted decent, law-abiding upbringing. Their contribution may be useful as long as the facilitator is skilful enough to turn what is expressed into an eye-opening view of the importance of everyday experiences no matter how small they seem. Another issue that facilitators might have to face involves the attempt by certain inmates who are more vocal, assertive, articulate (and maybe aggressive) to hijack the dialogue and make it ‘their’ platform. These inmates are usually the most difficult to rehabilitate – they are right and everybody else is wrong. Hence dialogue is one instrument in our efforts to achieve two goals; the first to help inmates adjust to life inside and to make the most of it for their own benefit both present and future, the second to prepare for life after release. Dialogue is adding and contributing to prison programmes (such as individual counselling) not substituting others.

### REFLECT ON THIS:

What do you think about this description? Does it fit with your idea of communication? Would you change or add anything to it?

If you were to define communication in your own words, what would it sound like?

If you had to place this description in context, that is, in a community of inmates what would you perceive as the biggest challenge?

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**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Do you remember the imaginative exercise from the last section? One of the starting sentences in the game was “The staff working with offenders on a daily basis (my colleagues and I) have more opportunities than most to positively influence long-term inmate success.”

Did you think on how you are influencing the inmates? By *what* you say and do, of course. But, we should add ‘*how* you say it’?

We believe that communication is all about the person you try to communicate **with**, and how you are communicating with **that** person.

The patterns of communication in prisons do not produce any positive effects, neither on the institution nor on the inmates. The environment is to a large extent dominated by conflict that gives rise to fragmentation with the result that there is little or no synergy between different groups such as management, inmates, officers, psychologists, social workers etc.

*“Dialogue is a form of authentic and candid conversation that builds healthy relationships, re-integrating what is perceived as fragmented”* (PRISON DIALOGUE UK - <http://www.prisondialogue.org/>). The aim of this process is to provide opportunities where inmates can safely and openly delve into issues that matter to them. They also learn to accept other persons’ opinions when they do not agree with theirs in a responsible and serious manner. One of the desired goals is that through this process new ways are developed for different categories of prison personnel to work together for the benefit of the inmates, service providers and the institution. In a restorative justice setting this would also include ex-prisoners, victims of crime and the public to make society more integrative and humanising. The introduction of a dialogic process in the prison may contribute to a change in the institution’s culture

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

Imagine one normal day to day interaction with an inmate. See yourself talking and try to analyze a little. What is the tone of your voice?

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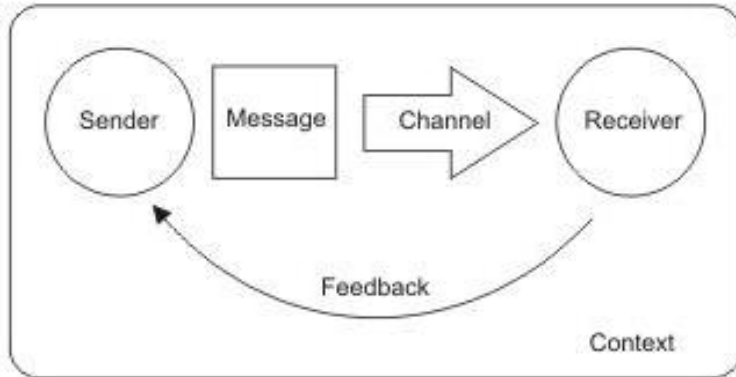
What is your posture, how do you stand?

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**The Communications Process**



The above picture can be described in the following words:

- The sender or communicator is the person who sends the message.
- The message is what we are communicating in speech, writing or symbols.
- The receiver is the person who receives the message and has to make sense of it, understand it or translate it into something that has meaning for them.
- Feedback is the reaction from the receiver. It can be verbal or non-verbal. Feedback allows the sender to know whether the message has been understood.

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

In your normal day of work with inmates, who sends the most messages?

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How are those messages sent? Verbally, written?

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When you are at the receiving end of the communication, how do you check if your understanding is correct?

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What about when you are at the sending end, how do you check if your message was correctly understood?

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Whom do you think is responsible for assuring that the message is understood?

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And what happens if it is not?

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**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

If the message or information is not received exactly, you have partial communication or no communication. Partial and no communication can create confusion, misunderstanding and arguments between people.

We believe that this is one of the most dangerous situations that can happen between you and an inmate.

And to make it even more difficult, we have two other challenges that stress our communication process and we must deal with them:

- a) One can appear in all environments, not necessarily related to the criminal justice system: the barriers in communication
- b) And the other challenge relates to our direct work with inmates: communication difficulties that some/most of inmates experience.

Do you remember the drawing explaining the communication process?

There we had two “actors” doing the communication (with round symbols) and a large rectangle surrounding all the process; we called this “context”.

- a) When talking about barriers in communication we take into consideration barriers that appear within us as persons involved in the communication process and barriers that appear outside of us, due to the context or the environment in which we communicate.

As internal barriers we can think of:

- Poor listening skills
- Poor attitude toward sender or the information
- Lack of interest in the message
- Fatigue
- Fear
- Mistrust
- Past experiences
- Problems at home
- Lack of common experiences
- Negative emotions can create negative thoughts

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

Can you add any internal barriers that are making communication between you and your inmates difficult?

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As external barriers we can put on the list:

- Noise
- Distractions
- Bad telephone/mobile phone connections
- Time of day e.g. some people may perform better earlier in the day
- Sender using jargon
- Environment

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

What external barriers do you think are more likely to appear in a criminal justice system environment?

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b) What does it mean to have a communication difficulty?

**WHAT OTHER SAY:**

“Having a communication difficulty could mean not being able to express yourself, or not understanding information that is given to you or which you read.

We all experience this when in another country with no knowledge of the language, but try to imagine what it feels like to constantly:

- Be unable to tell someone about something important.
- Be unable to find the words you need to say something.
- Have words coming out jumbled up.
- Have sentences getting muddled or stuck and someone jumping in, saying words for you.
- Be speaking but people not being able to understand what you are saying.
- Have people ignoring what you are trying to say, feeling embarrassed and moving away.
- Not understand what is said to you.
- Be unable to join a conversation.
- Being unable to read.
- Be unable to write down your ideas.”

“Some offenders who have problems communicating may find it difficult to express themselves through speech, writing and non-verbal communication and likewise have difficulty understanding other people. They may also have difficulty understanding and retaining information. Some offenders may have problems with speaking and understanding. Others may have problems in using language to convey information.

Research has indicated that children, adolescents and adults who exhibit challenging or anti-social behaviours are more likely to have language and communication difficulties. We do not know if one causes the other but many offenders have unrecognized language and communication difficulties.” *Crossing the Communication Divide; A toolkit for prison and probation staff working with offenders who experience communication difficulties, National Offender Management Service UK*

**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Inmates might have communication difficulties such as:

- Speech and language difficulties: problems at sending the message or receive the message.
- Learning Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficits, autism, Asperger syndrome, etc.
- Literacy difficulties: limited or no skills in reading or writing.
- Problems communicating in the national language of the criminal justice system.
- Sensory difficulties: deafness of hearing, blindness or partial sight.

All these you must consider when planning your communication with inmates. Cooperate with specialists in these areas so you can get accurate information about the inmate and the difficulty. Reach the psychologists, the psychotherapist, the speech therapist, the educator, the social worker, etc. Specialists can give you correct tips and tricks on how to handle these cases.

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

What communication difficulties have you encountered in your interaction with the inmates?

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How did these difficulties change the way you communicated?

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For a few tricks and tips related to communication difficulties, please take a look at Annex 1.

**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

So far we have talked about the communication, what it holds, what the challenges and the special traits of communicating in a prison are. We want to take you one step forward and bring you to the concept of dialogue.

**Skills for successful dialogue**

Dialogic skills are not something we are born with. We do not even get to properly learn them at school since teachers are most times overwhelmed by the demands of the syllabus and examinations. We need to discover what we have in terms of these skills and build and develop those areas that are still missing or underdeveloped. With practice we will acquire these dialogic skills, take them to a more advanced level and then be able to engage successfully in deep interpersonal conversations with inmates. Dialogic skills cut across a large number of situations involving humans and are ‘transferable’ from one context to another with a shift in emphasis where necessary. The site: <http://kutenk2000.blogspot.com/2010/11/5-advanced-dialogic-skills-to-engage.html> is dedicated to business and marketing. However, the learning context it offers is applicable to situations that are far removed from business and commerce.

Five of the skills promoted in this area are described as follows:

1. Being
2. speaking
3. disclosing
4. testing
5. probing

These skills may not be easy to develop but we need to try our best for the sake of the inmates and our profession. The best way is to study them, observe them in others engaged in conversation and then practice them in a real context. It might take some time until the skills become an automatic part of the way we work. As they say, practice makes perfect. They will be a valuable addition to your toolkit.

The first, Being,

**Being**

In this context it means that we should experience and understand situations without imposing our meaning even if we are directly involved. Empathising with the ‘other’ and being open to accept

others unconditionally is another important contribution. Show interest and curiosity in what others are saying and try to get others to ask questions and comment. Keep in mind that we are all vulnerable in one way or another. When you or others take a position on an issue it is important to consider that stance as changeable if circumstances change or it is proved wrong. No matter how much we try we can never claim to 'know it all'. During and after each session we ask ourselves what it is that we have learnt?

## **Speaking**

Speaking can do a number of things and produce results. Here we are concerned mostly about the positive effects of speaking. It may make clear certain points, resolve misunderstanding, produce acceptance of and empathy with others, increase knowledge, facilitate learning, bring persons closer together, provoke reflection and introspection, relieve tension and pent up feelings, reduce shyness and fear of self-expression and so on. Both the facilitator and the inmates will consciously or otherwise assess others partly through their manner of speaking and what they say.

Informal as the sessions are there is still the need for the facilitator to have a peaceful, orderly exchange between the members of the group. When one speaks someone else listens and listening can be considered as a skill. One way to help listeners understand what the speaker is saying is by applying imagery both physical (picture, object film clip etc.) and descriptive (just spoken words). It is also important for everyone to learn to distinguish between what is accepted as a fact (because it has been seen, felt or researched) and assumptions from intuition. Both are important, but confusion can be harmful.

Towards the end of the session are there feelings, opinions, doubts and desires that seem to cut across the group or most of it?

## **Disclosing**

Hiding, covering up and censoring hinder the desired positive effect of Dialogue. Encourage the inmates in the group to use their 'own voice' when speaking about what is troubling, worrying, pleasing and scaring them. Dialogue means using one's mind and voice and not simply echoing others. Speaking about personal experience by referring to the story in as much detail as possible makes things clear both for the speaker and the listeners. It is a known fact that for most of us there is relief, a feel better atmosphere, after we open up about our thoughts and feelings. Others get to know us better. They will allow us more 'space' especially when we are in an undesirable mood.

## **Testing**

In this context testing means reflecting on one's beliefs, self perception, roles (in various contexts), personal history including past actions, ways of thinking and how one behaves in various circumstances. It is important for one to understand where he/she is coming from. This will help us understand better our present situation. The exercise can help us to decide what kind of future we hope we will have.

At this point the facilitator may assess how far the group would have moved in expressing, listening and understanding in order to introduce the idea of reassessment of assumptions the inmates might

have harboured for a long time. Are they showing any signs that they are contrasting their beliefs, assumptions and ideas with those of others?

**Probing**

In this context probing must be non-judgemental. A person’s view has the same status as yours and anyone else’s. However, it is possible during the dialogue session to try to bring forth how the facts were obtained, the reason/s for saying/doing something, what one is assuming, the source of information/knowledge that leads to ‘these’ conclusions and what could happen as a result of some action or plan. Could there possibly be a different perception, understanding, interpretation of someone’s actions, statements and attitudes?

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

In prisons we deal with persons most exposed to isolation and fragmentation, persons from detention, ready to be exposed to the “outside world”. This abrupt exposure, not prepared and handled, can only lead to more isolation and fragmentation due to society’s rejection and lack of acceptance. The aim of our work is to break this vicious circle that only leads to relapse and recidivism, by preparing the release, training and coaching inmates into “dialogue mood”

Do your inmates see themselves as isolated, cut from the rest of the world?

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**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Using a Bohm dialogue:

In a Bohm dialogue, twenty to forty participants sit in a circle for a few hours during regular meetings, or for a few days in a workshop environment. This is done with no predefined purpose, no agenda, other than that of inquiring into the movement of thought and exploring the process of "thinking together" collectively. This activity can allow group participants to examine their preconceptions and prejudices, as well as to explore the more general movement of thought. Bohm's intention regarding the suggested minimum number of participants was to replicate a social/cultural dynamic (rather than a family dynamic). This form of dialogue seeks to enable an awareness of why communicating in the verbal sphere is so much more difficult and conflict-ridden than in all other areas of human activity and endeavour.

Participants in the Bohmian form of dialogue "suspend" their beliefs, opinions, impulses, and judgments while speaking together, in order to see the movement of the group's thought processes and what their effects may be. According to Dialogue a Proposal [Bohm, Factor, Garret] which you can find at:

([Http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue\\_proposal.html](http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html)) this kind of dialogue should not be confused with discussion or debate, both of which, says Bohm, suggest working towards a goal or reaching a decision, rather than simply exploring and learning. Meeting without an agenda or fixed objective is done to create a "free space" for something new to happen. "...it may turn out that such a form of free exchange of ideas and information is of fundamental relevance for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated." David Bohm

From this original method, things got adapted and refined. It evolved to a set of principles that we wrapped up in the development of our Toolkit, for you to use on and with the inmates. Those principles of "Bohm Dialogue" are:

**1. The group agrees that no group-level decisions will be made in the conversation.** "...In the dialogue group we are not going to decide what to do about anything. This is crucial. Otherwise we are not free. We must have an empty space where we are not obliged to anything, nor to come to any conclusions, nor to say anything or not say anything. It's open and free" (Bohm, "On Dialogue", p.18-19.)"

**2. Each individual agrees to suspend judgment in the conversation.** (Specifically, if the individual hears an idea he doesn't like, he does not attack that idea.) "...people in any group will bring to it assumptions, and as the group continues meeting, those assumptions will come up. What is called for is to suspend those assumptions, so that you neither carry them out nor suppress them. You don't believe them, nor do you disbelieve them; you don't judge them as good or bad. (Bohm, "On Dialogue", p. 22.)"

**3. As these individuals "suspend judgment" they also simultaneously are as honest and transparent as possible.** (Specifically, if the individual has a "good idea" that he might otherwise hold back from the group because it is too controversial, he will share that idea in this conversation.)

**4. Individuals in the conversation try to build on other individuals' ideas in the conversation.** (The group often comes up with ideas that are far beyond what any of the individuals thought possible before the conversation began.)

Usually, the goal of the various incarnations of "Bohm Dialogue" is to get the whole group to have a better understanding of itself. In other words, Bohm Dialogue is used to inform all of the participants about the current state of the group they are in.

This is the type of situation we want to bring you and your inmates with the Toolkit, to be in a group where you understand together the pre-release situation and the post release fears and challenges.

### **REFLECT ON THIS:**

How do you feel about creating a free space, together with your inmates, inside the prison?



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Do you think that your inmates will be ready or open to hearing each other’s ideas without an argument?

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Do you think that such a dialogical group will help inmates prepare for release?

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**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Reading all this you might question “Why dialogue in prison? Is this really for us? We have our practice, our tools, we give them to the inmates and this is it.”

We would like to give you two possible answers in why adopting dialogue as a tool for preparing inmates for release is profitable. Analyze them and then decide.

- 1) Already developed answers and solutions are becoming problematic in the social area of today. Why? Because the world is more and more complex and because answers have shorter and shorter life-spans.  
**WHAT OTHERS SAY:** Adam Kahane in his book “Solving Tough Problems” (2004) points out that, tough problems are characterized by three types of complexity.
  - a) Dynamic complexity means that cause and effect are distant in space and time. To address this type of complexity you need a systemic approach to the problem and the solution.
  - b) Social complexity means that there are many different and usually conflicting points of view and assumptions about the issue, and the problem isn’t owned by a single entity. This demands a participative approach.
  - c) Finally, generative complexity means that the old solutions are no longer working, and the problem is constantly changing and unpredictable, which requires a creative approach.

- 2) The outside and imposed answers are not the most appreciated ones; they encounter resistance and often fail. It seems we like to develop our own solutions. Why? Because we can develop a solution to our specific needs and because we feel it is ours, we own it.

**WHAT OTHERS SAY:** “Human beings have a living, deep impetus for freedom and self-determination, and given appropriate circumstances, people are usually more resourceful than expected in terms of finding their own answers. They buy into, and own, solutions they have been a part of creating. The success of implementing interventions on social issues often depends more on ownership and motivation of those involved than on the cleverness of the idea.” – Mapping Dialogue, a Research Project Profiling Dialogue Tools.

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

Can you imagine you and inmates working together in developing your own tools for preparing the release?

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Do you think that dialogue might be a solution?

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For an interesting study case about dialogue implementation in prison surroundings, please take a look at Annex 1.

**CARE TO TRY A DIALOGUE SESSION?**

How to start it? First keep in mind that the key word is **SUSPENSION** of thoughts, impulses, judgments, etc. It lies at the very heart of Dialogue. It is one of its most important new aspects. But it is not an easy state.

“To suspend thought, impulse, judgment, etc., requires serious attention to the overall process we have been considering - both on one's own and within a group. This involves what may at first appear to be an arduous kind of work. But if this work is sustained, one's ability to give such attention constantly develops so that less and less effort is required.” Dialogue a Proposal [Bohm, Factor, Garrett] (you can find it at [http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue\\_proposal.html](http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html))

**CHALLENGE TO YOU:** Think of the judgments and thoughts that you will have to keep out of a dialogue circle inside the prison. Can you list them?

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What's next? Get the group. The success of a dialogical group resides also in its participants and their NUMBERS. An ideal group would be around 20 persons. Remember that some participants might talk more, others might hesitate. Take note that listening is as important as it is communicating in a dialogical circle!

CHALLENGE TO YOU: Who would you invite in a dialogue circle organized in your prison?

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Would you get persons from outside the prison?

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Once we have the group, what is the TIMEFRAME, how long do we dialogite? Expert dialogue facilitators discovered that around two hours sessions are sufficient. But dialogue won't appear instantly from the first moment of our session. Usually more than one dialogical session is needed for the participants to get acquainted with the process and actually experience dialogue.

As a hint to you, it would be useful to agree at the start of the session on the time and get someone to take the role of the timekeeping person.

CHALLENGE TO YOU: Having in mind your prison program and schedules, if you were to organize some dialogical sessions to prepare inmates for release, what would be the program?

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HIERARCHY has no place in dialogue. Dialogue takes place between equals. This is quite a challenge in a prison environment. But your dialogical group still needs one or two facilitators that are comfortable with the method and know how to work with it. Their role is to give hints to the group and assure that the group doesn't step out of dialogical atmosphere.

CHALLENGE TO YOU: If you are to organize a dialogical group within the prison, whom would you invite as facilitator beside you?

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**And now to SUBJECT MATTER:**

**CHALLENGE TO YOU:** On what subjects would you see fit to start a dialogue experience?

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Do you think that preparation for release is a good subject or would you choose another alternative?

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**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Dialogue is a powerful tool. We encourage you to experience it. But ask for advice from experienced dialogue facilitators. We recommend that you seek:

- CLAP project partners from your own country at [www.clap-project.eu](http://www.clap-project.eu)
- A list of facilitators and network of experts at [www.dialogue-facilitators.eu](http://www.dialogue-facilitators.eu)

ANNEX 1

**EXTRACTS FROM “Crossing the Communication Divide - A toolkit for prison and probation staff working with offenders who experience communication difficulties”**

**Practical tips and techniques to help you establish more effective communication with offenders with Learning Disabilities and / or Learning Difficulties:**

- Use the person’s name at the start of each sentence.
- Explain to the person why they are in a new situation, what they should expect and when this will happen. Keep this information, simple, concrete and immediate.
- Explain each part of a process as it happens not all at once at the beginning.
- Avoid jargon - use clear, simple, and focused language.
- Do not rush any discussion and try to accept any responses and discuss any concerns the person raises
- Use visual aids, for example, photos, calendar for dates.
- Use concrete terms rather than abstract, for example, “At breakfast time” rather than “early on”.
- Break information into small chunks and give the person time to understand the information.
- Prepare the person for each stage of the communication, for example, “David, I will now ask you some questions” or “David, I will now explain what we are going to do.”

- Be patient and allow the person to process the information.
- Avoid double negative statements and vague questions, for example, “You were not in the shop, were you?”.
- Be careful about repeating questions as this may suggest that the person did not give the right answer the first-time round.
- If contradictory information is given, do not assume that the person is being manipulative, this may indicate that they don’t understand or can’t remember.

### **Questioning and interviewing people with autism**

- Be prepared to hold several sessions to build up familiarity with the individual.
- Talk to the individual’s parents, care givers or professionals involved with them.
- Seek the advice of a psychologist or a social worker who specialises in the field of Autism.
- Find out if the person has any preferred routines that may help you - e.g. an individual who likes to know the number of questions in advance and who is reassured by questions being numbered.
- Keep the interview as short as possible.
- Explain how long the interview will take and what will happen when it ends.
- Keep the environment as calm as possible.
- Use the person’s name at the start so that they know you are talking to them.
- Talk calmly and keep language simple.
- Keep language concrete and direct.
- Avoid using irony or sarcasm.
- Keep gestures to an absolute minimum.
- Use cues to prepare the person for the next question e.g. state directly that you are moving on to the next question.
- Be patient and give the person time to respond.
- Avoid vague questions. For example, the question “Tell me what you saw yesterday”. Better to say “Tell me what you saw happen in the shopping centre at about 10 o’clock.”
- Find out whether visual aids or support such as keywords will help the person.

### **How to support offenders with literacy difficulties to engage in one to one or group work programmes.**

#### **Giving information**

- Be clear.
- Emphasise or repeat the main points.
- Use everyday language.
- Check understanding frequently during the session. People are often embarrassed to ask for help in a group setting.
- Give one instruction at a time.
- Give information in small chunks.
- Introduce keywords and phrases on flash cards – they can be displayed throughout the session with frequent reminders. Use pictures if possible.

- Don't assume previous knowledge. For example, some people may not previously have come across the word programme in the context of an offending behavior programme (i.e. where 'programme' means 'course').

### **Writing**

- Consider whether a written handout is really feasible or necessary
- Handouts and cards should be clear and simple
- Avoid using handwriting – it is often more difficult for people with poor literacy skills to read handwritten text.
- Do not use block capitals as the shape of a word helps in reading.
- Use a typeface that is clear for example Arial, which is a sans serif font.
- Keep flip charts clear and simple.
- Avoid using words of three or more syllable as this makes it harder to decode.
- Encourage people to jot down things without worrying about spelling.

### **Reading**

- Do not ask people to read aloud.
- Keep specialist language to a minimum
- Have notes and handouts at different levels according to offenders' needs
- Avoid acronyms - use symbols where possible.

### **Managing group room activities**

- Give people time to discuss in pairs before group discussion so that those with speaking and listening skills below level 2 can practise.
- Make sure individuals with low levels of literacy are paired or work in groups supported by their peers.
- Use activities that are more interactive and allow movement.
- Consider using mentors to support individuals with poor speaking skills.
- Use pictures to tell a story rather than words and use multi-sensory materials and 3D models where possible.

### **Suggestions to help you communicate with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and how to make it easier for someone to lip-read you:**

- Find a suitable environment with good lighting, away from noise and distractions.
- Sit or stand at the same level as the person, and three to six feet away (one to two metres).
- If possible make sure the light is on your face and not behind you and try to keep your hands away from your mouth.
- Make sure the person is looking at you before you speak.
- Introduce the topic of conversation.
- Speak clearly at a moderate pace without raising your voice or over-emphasising your speech. Speaking too loudly can distort your speech.
- Do not speak with anything in your mouth.
- Use natural facial expressions, gestures and body language.

- Keep your face visible. Do not put your hands near it or wear sunglasses - and do not turn away while you are talking.
- Use plain English and repeat or rephrase something if the person finds it difficult to follow.
- Check that the person can follow you
- Do not be afraid to write things down if you cannot make yourself understood.
- Do not presume that if a person is wearing a hearing aid that they can hear perfectly.
- Never say “it doesn’t matter” when asked to repeat anything.
- Even if an interpreter is present always address the deaf person directly.
- When communicating via an interpreter do not speak too quickly and allow time for translation. Interpreters are very skilled but would appreciate this.
- Remember that even skilled lip readers often only get 1 in 3 words so make sure they have understood.
- Be patient and take time to communicate.

### **Suggestions to help you communicate with someone who is blind or has partial sight**

- Make sure that the person you are speaking to knows your name, who you are and that you are actually speaking to them. Blind people have embarrassing moments when they join in other conversations because it is not clear if they are being spoken to.
- Talk to a blind person as you would anyone else. Do not be afraid to say “see you later”.
- Always try to give clear instructions or directions when acting as a guide and describe what is happening and what is around them.
- A bowl of water should be available for guide dogs. When a guide dog is wearing a harness it is ‘on duty’ and should not be made a fuss of.
- Remember to say goodbye or let them know you are walking away when you leave a blind person so that they are not left talking to themselves.
- Red bands on a cane or dog harness indicate a hearing impairment as well.
- If offering a seat, place the person’s hand on the back of the chair so that they can sit down themselves.
- If appropriate, place any items in front of the blind person and explain where they are in relation to their hands.
- If appropriate provide written information in Braille, large print or in audio format.

## ANNEX 2

### **GROUP DIALOGUE WITHIN PRISONS**

*Peter J T Garrett*

*Dialogue Groups are an innovative approach to group work currently being pioneered within HMP Whitemoor, a maximum-security prison in Cambridgeshire, where it was introduced by the author and Dave Parsons (both of whom are experienced group workers). This article explains the need for a new socio-therapeutic approach in prisons, gives background details about Dialogue and its principles, and follows with a narrative description of the first year of a Dialogue Group in HMP Whitemoor. Details are then given of The Prison Dialogue, a charitable organization set up to encourage Dialogue in other closed institutions.*

### **Group Dialogue as Socio-therapy**

Group Dialogue is a new approach based on meaning as the primary principle. It is more concerned with the humanizing of the society than the socializing of the individual. It does this through regular, open, on-the-level communication between a cross-section of those living and working in the prison. Since meanings are formed collectively as well as individually, it works to assist participants to discover both the social and individual nature of their behaviour. It is concerned with establishing a community of enquiry. Rather than trying to impose corrective patterns on anti-social traits (which simply continue to act underneath until the pressure is too great and they burst through into expression again), the Dialogue is concerned with the quality of relationship as the norm to which people unconsciously revert. As individuals become aware of their own (and the groups) thoughts and feelings, and start to reassess the value and consequences of them in the light of other's views, then we have the basis for a therapeutic community in a setting which has traditionally denied all such opportunity.

The Dialogue Group addresses social fragmentation directly through open communication in a large group. Aspects of fear, revulsion and hatred that are present are allowed expression so that they can be seen afresh in the present situation, and be reviewed and re-assessed in the light of the attitudes and comments of others. This is a collective addressing of the collectively induced thoughts and feelings, including the peer pressures exerted by inmates on their fellows, and prison staff on their fellows. Other therapeutic approaches which deal with the individual in isolation (or in very small groups) have the limitation that the attitudes, which seemed to have changed, tend to re-assert themselves when the prisoner (or member of staff) returns to the landings and is subject to peer pressure to behave in ways that are acceptable to colleagues. In such circumstance people almost invariably revert to their norms of behaviour. The Dialogue group is actively creating new norms of behaviour amongst sub-cultural groupings within the whole prison society.

### ***Background to Group Dialogue***

We recognized that people speak and act the way they do because of how they think and feel, but we were deeply disturbed to realize that most individuals have little or no awareness about how they come to hold the thoughts and feelings that they do. It dawned on us that this lack of awareness is the root cause of the social fragmentation. Life-styles have changed and become abstracted (I may specialize in underwriting marine reinsurance whilst my neighbour repairs central heating), but the resulting way people have to think (and feel) in this "civilized" world has not really been attended to. It has gone wrong, and the tacit infrastructure of our collective thought has become incoherent.

Of course you assume automatically that when you have a problem, you should think about it to find a solution - but we were suggesting that it is the working of thought itself that has gone wrong. More of the same damaged thinking simply compounds the problem. As David Bohm put it: *"..fragmentation is now very widespread, not only throughout society, but also in each individual; and this is leading to a kind of general confusion of the mind, which creates an endless series of problems and interferes with our clarity of perception so seriously as to prevent us from being able to solve most of them... The notion that all these fragments are separately existent is evidently an illusion, and this illusion cannot do other than lead to endless conflict and confusion."* But unless we find a new way of talking and thinking together, the illusion of separate, fragmentary experience is reinforced rather than broken.

### ***Features of Group Dialogue***



Group Dialogue is a new type of communication we have proposed to bring about awareness of these subtle processes which have been going on unnoticed within each of us, and to clarify the ground out of which our relationships arise. The following may give a sense of the activity:

- Dialogue is an enquiry into what leads us to think, feel, speak and act as we do.
- A Dialogue Group involves 15 to 30 people meeting weekly for a year or more.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Diversity is helpful, with individuals from a range of different sub-cultural groupings. Participants are seated facing one another in a single circle and have one conversation.
- There is no agenda or fixed topic of conversation, and there is no taught content.
- No subject is prohibited from the conversation.
- There is no objective, such as reaching consensus, a decision or agreed action.
- Participants are peers and no particular individual is more important than any other.
- Facilitators bring out the intention of Dialogue in the early stages, in a non-directive way, but aim to give up their special role quickly and become peer participants.
- Everyone has the right to their own perspective, and the responsibility of listening to other speakers seriously, even when they do not agree with what they are saying.
- It is not talk for talk's sake, but talk in order to engage and exchange here and now.
- It is a forum of open communication which concentrates on listening and inclusion.

### ***Listening and Suspension***

Listening is the key activity - only one person speaks at any time whereas everyone present may listen. Surprisingly, most people have never discovered how to listen, and instead spend most of the time whilst another is speaking working out what to say the moment he or she stops, whilst almost nobody listens to themselves speaking. On this basis we have a *discussion* (from the same root as *percussion* and *concussion!*), where people maintain fixed views which are promoted and defended by argument. On the other hand Dialogue (from *dia* meaning *through*, and *logos* which is the *word*) suggests a flow of meaning through the group where you move with the views of others and they enter into yours. How one listens is a major factor in determining what another is able to say, and with practice it is possible to actually listen to what the other person is attempting to say. This requires the holding of one's own opinions more loosely so that there is space for what the other is saying, and includes seeing from another's point of view, which is an exchange of meaning. When this exchange of meaning is undertaken together by a group we have a Dialogue.

Yet greater skill is required to attend to the movement of meaning, and this requires a *suspension* of thoughts and feelings. For example, rather than say openly insulting someone in the Dialogue, I may hold back from that impulse and instead do it within my thoughts. But now I *suspend* the insult going on inside me as well, and just look at it, as if it were reflected back to me from a mirror. Metaphorically, I can walk around the thoughts and feelings, and the impulses and dispositions behind them, to explore them and see them more clearly for what they are. This reveals unnoticed judgments, assumptions, defences, etc., and opens the way to discover the nature of thoughts and feelings (as a social process as well as an individual one), and how they arise and are sustained. I get an internal feel for the whole movement, so that just as I might have been aware of some movement in my body, there is now an awareness of movement in consciousness.

### ***Size of the Group***

A Dialogue Group usually has between 15 and 30 people. Although a group larger than 30 is feasible (but more awkward because each person has less chance to speak), less than 15 is insufficient to reveal the collective nature of much of our thought. The group needs to be large enough for sub-cultures to be able to reveal themselves and for individuals to find themselves identified and aligned with others, even when the apparent reasons for doing so are shown invalid. A smaller group, of say 6 to 12 people, never really achieves this. At first some people prefer the smaller group for just this reason - it avoids the intensity of sub-cultural confrontation and the group is therefore easier to control and more comfortable to take part in - but for socio-therapy it is clearly lacking.

### ***Facilitation***

At the outset the group is led from behind by one or more facilitators. Their role early on is to convene the meeting and convey the intention of Dialogue, but they do not direct the proceedings or control the subject matter. There is no agenda or fixed topic of conversation. They may intervene to foster enquiry by drawing attention to what is happening, to enable individuals to speak, or to stop things from getting out of hand. But they openly reveal their intentions in a way that makes it easy for others to take similar action if they feel it to be appropriate, and thereby steadily work themselves out of a job by relinquishing their initial power (of apparently knowing how to do it) and become peer participants.

### ***Getting Started***

To announce the voluntary Dialogue Group, Dave Parsons drew up and displayed a poster on the wing with the caption: *"When you fight with monsters, make sure you don't become a monster yourself"*, and a cartoon drawing showing an individual (who could be an inmate or a member of the prison staff) confronting a monster. The text described the monster as *"an unfair society, uncaring aspects of an institution or perhaps a cruel family"*, and said there was a need for Dialogue as *"an antidote to bullying, scapegoating, a lack of listening"*, etc. It specified that *"there will be no agenda or decisions"*, that *"there may be anger expressed and uncomfortable silences"* but *"there will be no physical violence"*, and that it would be a mixed group of between 15 and 30 participants including staff and volunteers from outside the prison.

The first meeting attracted just a dozen inmates, an assistant chaplain and a volunteer from outside the prison to join us. By the third meeting we had added two prison officers, and as the term proceeded we were joined by other inmates, another probation officer and a psychiatrist. Our later meetings averaged 20, including a member of the prison's Board of Visitors. All inmates were category B, non sex offenders, and several were serving life sentences. There was some turnover of participants because of transfers to and from the prison, but the majority attended over 75 % of the meetings. We typically had two women (staff) and two blacks in the group.

### ***The Need is Blatant***

The need for Dialogue stood out loudly from the outset. This was clearly a fragmented society, with evidence of isolation for some: *"I get no outside visitors –these Dialogues are my only direct contact with the outside"* and of extreme rejection by many: *"He doesn't want to know me because I'm a convict, and I don't want to know him because he's an arsehole"* (inmate about a governor). There was a barrage of complaint and criticism by the inmates, and when staff pleaded, after several weeks, *"how can we move beyond this cynicism?"*, the blunt explanation was *"You would have to be pathologically ill not to be angry locked up in prison"*.

The anger, resentment and frustration in the inmates was being directed at the officers, who were being held responsible in an unpleasant way. *"All officers are dickheads - I never once heard an officer admit he was wrong."* The officers were surprisingly professional, considering the taunting nature of the exchanges at times, as the facilitators were deliberately encouraging an environment where individuals could be real on their own terms, and be listened to, however outrageous their views. The officers' response was firm and frank: *"We don't trust you and you cons don't trust us - that's just how it is."* No doubt such remarks are often made in prisons, but in the Dialogue the meaning behind what was being said was being listened to seriously, not only fellow inmates, but also by a whole range of prison staff and volunteers from outside the prison.

### ***Officers and Inmates: Leading From Behind***

We did hold true to our commitment not to direct the content of the conversation. Gradually the inmate/officer confrontation subsided and individuals began to see each other beyond their roles. One inmate remarked: *"I thought every officer had the shit in for me until I met one of them who was a person that cared"*. The prejudice many officers held against inmates (whom some had considered to be animals who would never change) was brought out in the exchange where an officer said *"Its all very well here in the Dialogue where we are mature adults talking reasonably together, but most of the prisoners are not like this."* An inmate replied: *"That's where you are wrong - everybody is capable of behaving just like we are now if they are approached in the right way. It is all a matter of how people are approached"*.

The blame, abuse and condemnation was gradually transferred from the prison officers to the penal system: *"All I am learning in this prison is frustration, resentment and anger."* This was a definite progression, and established common ground with the officers who were at times, after all, simply doing what they were told to do by management. Indeed by the second month the officers in the Dialogue Group were clearly considered to be exceptions (to the general rule that *"all officers are dickheads"*) and as the year progressed I recorded reminiscing and commiseration between officers and inmates who had realized many Common interests. Of course officers and inmates are both held long term in the prison, one by sentence and the other by mortgage, and both want to make the best of it. Later in the year, any verbal assault on an officer was quite rare (and restricted to new comers to the group). This initial sub-cultural clash had not subsided because of exercises or cognitive techniques, but because each had spoken openly in the presence of the other, and been heard over a period of time, with the participants determining the content of conversation throughout. There wasn't any one moment when the change occurred, but the norm of relationship has certainly shifted and mutual respect (although not necessarily liking) has increased.

This change was also evident beyond the Dialogue group where there was a shift in the unspoken resistance we had felt from prison officers who had never attended a Dialogue meeting. It had seemed that our open communication and encouragement to *"say it how it is"* had been an intrusion into the status quo, and had resulted in some discomfort. We had met an inertia and lack of communication resulting in officers not being available sometimes for the group which had caused us great frustration and annoyance at times. Now I perceived this giving way to a general sense of support, or at least an acceptance, of what we were doing. *"I think other officers actually are keen to sit in on Dialogues, but don't want to say so in case they get ragged by their colleagues."* Indeed we discovered that some officers even chose to come in on their days off simply in order to take part in the group.

### ***Other Confrontations***

For other staff in the Dialogue, however, the transfer of complaint from officer to the prison "system" was no relief. Some with a commitment to religion found it excruciating at times, and probably considered the facilitators irresponsible for not cutting off the negativity and leading the group into more hopeful topics of consideration. Our intention, however, was to *lead from behind*, by consistently supporting genuinely felt observations and criticisms (including those of us as facilitators!) whilst encouraging enquiry into what was back of those views. We were looking to be peers in an open enquiry, learning together. We were not trying to change other's opinions, but to understand them more fully.

What they hadn't realized was that they themselves formed a religious subculture which in due course confronted an anti-religious subculture. *"You can't talk about spirituality with a*

chaplain because he thinks he knows the answer and tries to tell you how you should think." Part of it involved differing commitments to positivity and realism, and a plea for being less cynical was met the view: *"What's wrong with reality? Shit stinks. Perhaps by displaying the situation as I actually see it we can all get some perspective on it so that it effects us in a different way."* These exchanges, over time, contributed to a healthy shift away from statements about *"How it is"* to ones about *"How it seems to me"*.

After a couple of months I put it to the group that we should invite a member of the Board of Visitors (BOV) to join the Dialogue. The inmates wanted to test whether they had any real say in the matter and voted against the idea. No invitation was sent. When I broached the same proposal a month later there was more openness. Some were against it: *"There's absolutely no point in talking with a BOV - they have tea and biscuits with the governor"*, but the majority were willing and we were duly joined by a woman with counselling and group work skills. Intriguingly, those who voted against her coming welcomed her most whole-heartedly when she was actually present, and after her first week being grilled. We had two BOV members during the year, and I think they both appreciated how much they learnt about themselves and the prison from their involvement.

Perhaps the deepest split within the dispersal prisons is against sex offenders (who for their own safety are housed on separate wings at HMP Whitemoor, along with other vulnerable prisoners). Almost all the officers and inmates were disgusted by the stereo-type images they held of these inmates, whom they usually referred to as paedophiles. *"Sex offenders are never successfully treated - once they are released they reoffend They should be locked up and the keys thrown away."* There was tremendous revulsion when the sex offenders took over the kitchen jobs and a number of inmates refused all food prepared there for months. The most unlikely social integration at this (and many other) prisons would be the inclusion of known sex offenders with non sex offenders in a single Dialogue Group. Sex offenders have to disguise their crimes in prisons where segregation is not available, and risk having their cells burnt out if discovered. One such offender was murdered in the prison during the year, so such a group could not realistically be considered at present at Whitemoor.

### ***Widening the Enquiry***

Participants came to trust the Dialogue process increasingly, as indicated by a prisoner saying: *"Being in the Dialogue it is possible to let your guard down a little. Back on the wing you can't do that because you get hurt"*. We had sometimes heated, and sometimes rounded, conversations for and against drugs, immigrants, abortion, violence as a means of implementing change, and pride and shame about being a criminal. Issues came up as and when they were of interest to people. We pondered on the media and reporting, royalty, former Yugoslavia, homosexuality and AIDs, abortion, contraception, religious experience, insanity, the Bolger murder, Zimbabwe, Nelson Mandela, money management, employment, friendship and love. One of the volunteers from outside the prison said to me: *"We have better conversations here than in my country club, and the subscription there is £500 a year!"*

### ***Personal Development***

Some inmates began deliberately reading newspapers in order to be able to contribute to the conversation, and I noticed a steady increase of vocabulary on the part of many. In the early meetings swear words had substituted (rather ineffectively) for adjectives in almost every sentence, but gradually individuals wanted to express their views more accurately and they had to rediscover a wider vocabulary in order to do so. One governor who had never attended a Dialogue mentioned

to me *"I see far more conversation generally now in the prison now than there was a year ago and I attribute that in good part to the Dialogue Group."*

Some inmates did not speak for many meetings, and we did not require them to do so. At first the only words one prisoner would say (muttered under his breath) were "scum of the earth", referring to prison officers. He later contributed one-liners for several months, but now tells non-abusive, narrative stories and displays a good (although unusual) sense of humour. I noted how his aggression was associated with insecurity and lack of confidence. Although we sometimes lost participants to the segregation unit or healthcare because of (violent incidents on the wing, these clearly lessened as inmates gained self-esteem and began valuing their own views. It felt as if some of these individuals have never really been listened to. People started, at their own speed, to reassess their lives: *"I zigged when I should have zagged"*, and ponder their future: *"What do you do when you don't have enough money?"* Some family details were more personal than would be appropriate for this kind of report.

### ***Re-negotiating Trauma***

There had been minor rioting on a couple of the wings immediately before Christmas which had led to severely uncomfortable conditions for many inmates over the Christmas period, and then to the introduction of a harsher regime throughout the prison. During this period the Dialogue groups acted as a crucial pressure valve allowing steam to be released which otherwise, once the pressure became unbearable, would have been expressed in extreme physical violence. The pain and distress was deeply disturbing and it was clearly necessary that it be expressed in some way. *"I keep thinking this is a nightmare and that one day I will wake up and it will all be over"* and *"they smashed up the TV sets because they didn't want to smash up you (officers)"* were statements made at this time. There was such frustration that sometimes inmates were unable to remain seated whilst they expressing their feelings. On other occasions the extremes of aloneness came through: *"I find the best way is to keep myself to myself. The only time I really communicate with other people is in the Dialogue group."* This lasted for six or seven weeks. Through the Dialogue, traumatic events were allowed to become memories, and once the awful reality had been translated into symbolic form it could be handled by the mind rather than remaining intolerable. This was a collective experience. We later saw similar examples for individuals who suffered the trauma of being segregated for some time or witnessed suicide attempts

***A Plea for Rehabilitation*** There has been a repeated plea for more rehabilitation: *"I want to do more than learn how to wield a mop!"* Inevitably, the strengths and weaknesses of various remedial programmes currently being offered came up for consideration at times. One inmate revealed: *"I did learn something from the Anger Management course, but after a session one day I saw the instructor getting angry with one of the prison staff about something, and I thought 'this doesn't really work, does it?'"* Similarly a prison officer observed: *"The street-wise cons learn to jump through the hoops, but have no intention of actually changing because they enjoy the power their anger gives them over others, and anyway they like hurting people"*. Of course I had heard both encouraging and disparaging reports about the value of our own Dialogue groups, ranging from: *"I can't see any change what-so-ever coming out of these groups"* to *"I had so much support from that group - a month after leaving I still feel a gaping hole!"*. I recognize the need for a variety of approaches to address the complex personal and social difficulties encountered amongst those living and working within prisons. I see the Dialogue group to be an on-going nourishment and support to underwrite any counselling, one-to-one and group therapies offered in prisons, At times

issues arise in the general conversation which are taken up outside the Dialogue by an inmate with a probation officer, chaplain or BOV member. Also, several inmates who had attended the Goose Theatre workshops (who use masks to provide a language to express various layers of an individual's personality) then joined the Dialogue group to sustain their learning experience, at the same time introducing to others in the Dialogue group the concept of living behind masks.

### ***The Prison as an Institution***

The Prison Service pledges to look after those in custody *"with humanity and to help them lead law abiding and useful lives in custody and after release"*. This is not easy to do, and in reality the fragmentation of society, family and the individual is felt very keenly within the walls of a prison, and the dehumanizing bureaucracy of the prison system itself adds significantly to this, As one prisoner commented: *"Introducing Samaritan programmes into the prison when it is the prison itself that is causing people to commit suicide, is like sending troops into battle then following up with the medical corps to deal with the casualties, It is the inhumanity of the prison that is causing people to commit suicide. A cosmetic reduction in the number of suicides for the media is not really that helpful"*

There is brutality, hopelessness and isolation, interspersed with compassion, humour and indifference. During one painful conversation about an inmate who had just tried (unsuccessfully) to commit suicide, an officer found himself reminiscing about a reprimand he had given to the man: *"I booked him recently for taking excessive amounts of custard In a similar situation in the future I would not do so automatically, I would certainly think first about why a con acts as he does."* Kindly breaking the tension, a prisoner remarked *"It must have been obvious that something was seriously wrong, or else he was a very brave man - nobody in their right mind would take extra servings of prison custard!"*.

### ***What has been learnt from the Prison Dialogue?***

1. Dialogue Groups have a fundamental role to play in humanizing the prison society.
2. A community of enquiry emerges, not because everyone agrees but because everyone listens.
3. The behavioural norms (to which those who live and work in prisons unconsciously revert) can be changed through sustained Dialogue.
4. Trauma may be re-negotiated and thereby reduced in individuals and the group as a whole.
5. The Dialogue is a therapeutic environment for the individual participants.
6. Inherent in this form of enquiry is listening, which leads to a deepening of respect between the participants.
7. The Dialogue stimulates conversation and thoughtfulness.
8. Individuals learn how to change their views and form new ones.
9. The large group is a challenge, but quieter individuals do find their own voices and dominant ones do learn to hold back without being prompted.
10. Self-esteem increases as individual participants realize their unique view has validity and relevance, even though it may be different from that held by others.
11. Descriptive and emotional vocabulary increases as participants find the need to express themselves more clearly.
12. The Rigid stance (*How it is*) loosens to become a participatory one (*How it seems to me*).
13. Allowing each their own speed, a self-organizing common sense emerges in the group.
14. What is learnt in the group is first hand (experienced) rather than second hand (taught).

15. Although confidentiality is not contracted, and cannot be in a maximum-security prison, participants do tacitly agree a sound level of confidentiality based on respect for each other and the group as a whole.
16. Published reports have helpfully informed and included those in the prison who do not attend the Dialogue.
17. The Dialogue comes to be owned by the group. (eg: inmate ad dressing me: "*Dialogue may be something that you wanted to do in a prison, but for us it is more important than that.*")

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<http://www.prisondialogue.org/what-is-dialogue/>

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### 3. Dialogue to prepare for release

#### OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:

Preparing the inmates for release is the main goal of our work with this Toolkit. We want to bring you the tools of dialogue, exceptionally powerful and greatly underused, and to explore together who we can tap into this energy together with the inmates.

We strongly believe that the preparation for release, part of the greater process of re-entry / resettlement is a crucial component of the post-prison reintegration process of a person.

#### WHAT OTHERS SAY:

An individual's long-term post prison reintegration is likely to depend on a variety of personal and situational characteristics that are best understood in a longitudinal, life-course framework:

- Pre-prison circumstances (e.g. demographic profile, work history and job skills, criminal history, substance abuse involvement, family characteristics).
- In-prison experiences (e.g. length of stay, participation in treatment programs, contact with family and friends pre-release preparation),
- Immediate post prison experiences (e.g. moment of release, initial housing needs, transition assistance, family support), and
- Post-release integration experiences (e.g. employment experiences, influence of peers, family connections, social service support, and criminal justice supervision).

From Visher C.A and Travis J., (2003) 'Transitions from Prison to Community: Understanding Individual Pathways'. *Annual Review of Sociology*.

#### REFLECT ON THIS:

On which of the above points do you feel you can best work with your inmates? Where do you think you can have an influence?

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#### WHAT OTHERS SAY:

“More prisoners are returning home, having spent longer terms behind bars, less prepared for life on the outside, with less assistance in their reintegration. Often, they will have difficulties reconnecting with jobs, housing, and perhaps their families when they return, and will remain beset by substance abuse and health problems. Most will be rearrested, and many will be returned to prison for new crimes or parole violations.

And this cycle of removal and return of large numbers of individuals, mostly men, is increasingly concentrated in a relatively small number of communities that already encounter enormous social and economic disadvantages.”

From Prisons to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoners Re-entry – Urban Institute

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

What do you think about this description? Does it fit with your reality about the release difficulties?

If you were to define the cycle most inmates you work with go through, in your own words, what would it sound like?

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You can find an interesting story telling the journey of a young man through this process in Annex 1 of this section. It is something we encourage you to share with inmates as a study case.

**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Do you remember the imaginative exercise from the first section? One of the starting sentences in the game was “The staff working with offenders on a daily basis (my colleagues and I) have more opportunities than most to positively influence long-term inmate success.” How does it fit with the above description? It is a pretty grim picture, but unfortunately it is also a pretty accurate one. And yet there is hope because we can influence the inmates towards a positive outcome.

What do we generally do to fight the “not so pretty picture” painted in the first paragraph?

Ideally, *re-entry / resettlement planning* begins at the time of intake/admission and extends beyond the time of release to prepare prisoners for long-term post-release success.

*Release planning* represents a distinct component of the broader process of re-entry planning, focusing on success at the moment of release and in the days and weeks that follow. Ideally, preparing for the moment of release will represent a natural phase in the progression from intake to re-entry.

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

In all this planning work, how much do you involve inmates?

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Release planning often draws upon the assessments, resources and relationships developed during the course of a person's incarceration. Have you ever asked the inmates what do they feel the need to prepare for?

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**WHAT OTHERS SAY:**

“Prison Fellowship International” developed a 10 key checklist for prison workers that can help inmates to prepare their release:

**Building Constructive Relationships**

Constructive relationships are important to prisoners during re-entry. However, many prisoners have broken relationships caused by the imprisonment or by the harm they may have done to their families and loved ones. This increases the chances that they will return to destructive and anti-social relationships.

**Key 1: Find Mentors**

Identify volunteers or family members to serve as mentors during their re-entry. Mentors can be trained to offer support, advice, friendship and sometimes practical assistance as well.

**Key 2: Reunite Families**

Rebuild and repair relationships between prisoners and their families (or friends if family is not an option). Begin by opening lines of communication through letters, telephone calls, and visits.

**Key 3: Develop Communities**

Communities of support can sustain ex-prisoners during their transition. Faith communities can serve this role well. Encourage mentors and family members to help ex-offenders gain the trust of their faith community.

**Addressing Needs**

Ex-prisoners face survival questions from the moment they leave prison, such as how to find food, where to go for lodging, and so forth. A clear plan gives ex-prisoners time to settle into life outside prison.

#### **Key 4: Plan Ahead**

Help prisoners make realistic plans for the first twenty-four hours of release. This includes accommodations for the first night, transportation to that location, locating food and clothing, meeting the costs for these needs, spending free time and so forth. Then help them make realistic plans for the first month outside prison.

#### **Key 5: Locate Resources**

Identify resources available to ex-prisoners from NGOs, churches, government agencies and so forth. Make sure prisoners know the application procedures, hours of operation, location of offices, and qualifications for each.

#### **Key 6: Avoid Trouble**

Prisoners will confront familiar problems when they return to society. Help them identify friends, family members, locations, and circumstances likely to draw them into trouble, and develop strategies to avoid them.

#### **Key 7: Find Help**

Some problems require the help of people with special training. Help prisoners who need it find treatment for mental illnesses, addictions, medical conditions and so forth.

#### **Key 8: Make Amends**

Successful reintegration is difficult while the harms caused by ex-offenders in the past remain unaddressed. Enlist skilled facilitators to guide restorative meetings with victims for discussing how to make amends and rebuild damaged relationships. Becoming contributing members of society takes intentionality, time and effort. Prisoners will need to deal appropriately with the past and build a constructive future.

#### **Key 9: Serve Others**

Volunteering with civic or charitable organisations helps ex-prisoners build positive relationships, develop daily routines, and learn marketable skills.

#### **Key 10: Conduct Inventory**

Identify prisoners' personal strengths, such as education, employment history, and skills. Consider their assets, such as family relationships, social networks, spiritual maturity, and undeveloped talents. Review their needs, such as for treatment of addictions, health problems, and so forth. Use this inventory (and add to it) in helping prisoners prepare realistic plans for returning to society. Effective preparation for re-entry requires honest evaluation of prisoners' personal strengths and weaknesses. In fact, such an assessment creates the framework in which the ten keys can be most effective.

## **OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU:**

Would you like to know what inmates think about their release?

They have little control over daily life, which means that they can be overwhelmed by the choices facing them after prison and unprepared to make good decisions. Further, prison removes them from the support networks they once had, support that might help them to make a successful transition into society.

But are they aware of that? Do they understand that life outside has flown differently for the time they were in prison?

We believe it is essential you make them understand that.

We propose that you get them in group sessions and set up dialogue circles, as described in the previous section. It is possible you won't get much dialogue on the first round, several sessions are needed.

Jean Greenwood (*THE CIRCLE PROCESS: A Path for Restorative Dialogue* 2005) from the Centre for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, University of Minnesota describes the dialogue circle as 'A WAY OF TALKING TOGETHER'. In these dialogues everyone is respected and considered equal to everyone else. Every participant has the space to speak without any hindrance from others, while he/she tells his/her story. Everyone expresses his/her thoughts sincerely while others listen, focused on what is being said. Sometimes it might be necessary to adapt the process if and when certain issues and needs require to be addressed. The needs and context of the participants determine what the model looks like.

It is important for the inmates to understand that it is profitable to talk, listen and ask whatever questions they want. Keeping everything pent up in their minds and hearts will not do them any good. They need to get used to the 'truth' that good communication indirectly resolves issues both for the person and the others. Sometimes people do not understand our thoughts and feelings and end up creating their own 'theories' about us. Most often than not these 'theories' are not very nice! They assume this and that about us because they only have bits of information. Therefore, it is very important to help inmates express themselves and communicate. Silence can be an unplanned message to others. Issues that are not tackled, preferably in a socially accepted manner, tend to fester in one's mind. This can only produce negative consequences.

Dialogue circles have a greater chance of succeeding when:

- There is reciprocal respect among the participants and a responsibility to contribute
- There is agreement on how the session proceeds and each one feels accountable to the success of the meeting
- There is equitable space for everyone and an acceptance that there may be differences between us
- There is a choice for one to participate at one's own pace

- There is a mix of personal values and socially accepted values
- The facilitator and participants keep in mind that each topic/issue addressed in the dialogue meeting is a part of a larger picture.
- There is an understanding that everyone involved has personal interests that may be different from those of others
- There is an understanding that each person attributes his/her personal meaning to words, text and actions
- There is an evolving air of understanding each other and learning how to cooperate and collaborate with others
- There is a an acceptable way of dealing with serious issues, differences and experiences that caused us pain
- There are new and renewed healthy relationships with those close to us and beyond
- There is acceptance of others for what they are and what they stand for
- There is hope and determination in a participant’s future plans

**QUESTION:**

Given the ‘apparent lack’ of the qualities listed above in quite a number of inmates do you think the desired results are possible?

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 .....

In these dialogue meetings all the inmates, no matter how old they are, what their life experiences were, what their status or career (if any) they enjoyed have a right to be considered equally important.

**QUESTION:**

Given that your group of inmates may have substantially different levels of education, developed intelligence, verbal skills and mental processing of that which they see and hear, do you think you are able to maintain a level playing field for all?

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The facilitator, him/herself must be careful in making sure that process is balanced with reference to leading the process and giving maximum freedom to the participants. Facilitators should only intervene if things are getting out of hand and the process is jeopardised. As a facilitator you need to have patience, close attention, careful listening and appreciative of possible short silent periods. Since the facilitator participates at par with the other members (inmates) also as an ordinary human being he/she has to be careful not to be directive in speech as this will diminish the free space of the others. It is also important to keep in mind your mood, body language, the way you use your voice, the choice of words can influence the process.

**QUESTION:**

By whom and how should the dialogue guidelines be set?

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.....  
The topic should be preparing for release. Remember the 10 key points from above and try to insert them into the dialogue.

Remember:

- No group decisions must be made. You don't decide, there and then, what is the perfect way to prepare the release for all the group members.
- We don't judge, we listen. So suspend your beliefs about what preparing for release should and shouldn't be, and just listen to the feelings of the inmates. Encourage them to do so also.
- Stimulate the inmates to be as open as possible in the conversation and to build upon each other's ideas.

In order to get the process going you can do two things:

- 1) Give the inmates, in advance, to read on their own, the story from Annex 1 of this section. You can adapt the language to be in an easy ready format, if needed. This reading exercise can put the participants on the same mood. Or if individual reading is too difficult, you can read it aloud before starting the dialogue.
- 2) At the start of the dialogue session put in the middle a flipchart with some questions regarding the preparation for release. Here are some examples:
  - If you will be released tomorrow, what would you do first?
  - Is there someone to help you when you leave the prison?
  - What would your first outside day look like?

These two actions can accelerate and focus the dialogue.

It is important to keep track of the discussions from one session to the other.

Just take notes of the key words expressed by the inmates regarding their preparation for release, their expectations and beliefs. And it would be useful to compare from one dialogue session to the other, how the words evolve and how meaning changes.

At the end of all dialogue sessions present to the inmates their journey of discovery as seen from the words that they were using.

Once you reached this level with the inmates, we challenge you to do another round of dialogue sessions, on developing a tool useful for inmates for their release.

Start the first session with the topic: what information would help you? What tools will you need to get by in the first days?

### **WHAT OTHERS SAY:**

EPEA Malta, in their BRIDGE project, developed a set of interesting tools for preparing the larger process of resettlement. They started from the analysis of inmates' needs upon release. Their findings are to be taken into consideration:

- **Re-Integration into the Labour Market**

One needs money and without being gainfully employed, the likelihood of an ex-inmate reoffending is high. Most ex-prison inmates need a job, often a new job, after having served their sentence. Training for the world of work should start in prison and should continue outside prison. Training inside and outside prison should reflect the changes in the labour market: it should be relevant to the real world. The prison should also provide training for self-employment. Training courses in prison should be organised round short modules so that the course can be finished during the sentence, and motivation is kept high through the attainment of different staged targets. The prison setup should also do its best to find jobs for inmates while they are in prison, and possibly start work while in prison. This would make resettlement much easier.

- **Children, Family and Friends**

While for most, life in prison stops, life outside prison keeps on the move. Many prisoners have partners who are waiting for them, or partners who have moved on, children who have grown up and started their own life, or those who do not want to have anything to do with them anymore. The extended family may still be there for them. Ex-prison inmates need to be supported to reconnect with their family and friends in a way that they feel they belong and have support. While in prison, inmates should be educated on parenting skills, family relationships, life skills and sex education. The roles of the social worker and NGOs in this sector are vital. Working closely with the family can also result in an informal social control for the ex-prison inmate in the sense that is some stability is offered, and some pressure on behaviour takes place (for example pressure by the partner to be a 'good parent'), then the ex-inmate can possibly resettle better in the norms of a fairly stable family.

The following short quotation indicates in a clear and concise manner the way a prison can prepare an inmate for release with regards to maintaining relationships with the family: 'Prisoners shall be allowed to communicate as often as possible by letter, telephone or other forms of communication with their families, other persons and representatives of outside organisations and to receive visits from these persons. The arrangements for visits shall be such as to allow prisoners to maintain and develop family relationship in as normal a manner as possible. Prison authorities shall work closely with services and agencies that supervise and assist released prisoners to enable all sentenced prisoners to re-establish themselves in the community, in particular with regard to family life and employment. Representatives of such social services or agencies shall be afforded all necessary access to the prison and to prisoners to allow them to assist with preparations for release and the planning of aftercare programmes. Successful re-integration of (ex)-offenders requires a case management approach from arrest, through the period of imprisonment, to the time of release and beyond'.



- Health

Released inmates often need continuous support with regards for their health. As research indicates it is often the case that released inmates suffer from depression, self-harm, anxiety, and issues related to substance abuse, including alcohol. Suffering from some mental health problem is common among released inmates. Courses of therapy started in prison should not be stopped midway because of release, but arrangements should be made so that these are continued outside the prison walls. The general healthy wellbeing of the ex-inmate is a requirement for successful reinsertion into society. Parole officers, NGOs, religious organizations, NGOs and volunteers can supervise and support the ex-inmate in attaining the best possible services for him or her.

- Accommodation

Unfortunately for some ex-inmates the main option upon release from prison is temporary accommodation. Some are abandoned by their families – particularly in traditional societies where having been to prison is considered to be a shame on the family. Few manage to move in with friends – but this is very often a temporary measure. Even fewer can afford to stay in some form of hostel or hotel, while some return to their own or their family’s home. Others unfortunately end up homeless. Without somewhere to live or living with the wrong kind of friends (e.g. heavy drug users) easily leads one to reoffend and re-incarceration.

- Leisure Time

When the economic situation is poor, some ex-inmates may have more ‘leisure’ time than others. It is crucial to prepare inmates for a world of unemployment, a world where time may be on their hands. Misuse of such time could easily lead to a very quick ‘resettlement’ in prison. Very often ex-offenders have characteristics that limit their employability and earnings capacities (such as limited education and cognitive skills, limited work experience and substance abuse and other physical and mental health problems). Employers too may have difficulty with employing ex-offenders for the following reasons:

- Employers are much more averse to hiring ex-offenders than they are towards any other disadvantaged group, such as welfare recipients;
- Employers vary in their stated willingness to hire ex-offenders according to the characteristics of their establishments and the jobs they are seeking to fill;
- They also vary according to the offense committed by the offender and whether any meaningful work experience has been obtained since release; and
- Employer tendency to check backgrounds is far from universal, but has risen over the previous decade.

On a national level the state can balance such problems by offering employers incentives to hire inmates both during imprisonment and following imprisonment. Introducing inmates to a number of NGOs in order to identify how they can use their time well is crucial in this matter.

- Financial Issues

While serving their sentence inmates should be supported and encouraged to save money during the incarceration period. Work should ideally be provided for them, with parts of their earnings

going to the prison, part to support themselves and their family, and part as savings. Financial advice should be offered to inmates. Ex-prison inmates need support in order to plan to have a bank account, apply for social funding, children allowances and other financial benefits etc. In some cases former inmates have debts and they need to develop, before release, a debt rescheduling plan. This means involving debt relief assistance and social banking. Identifying such needs and planning on how to tackle these prior to release definitely supports resettlement in society. Ex-inmates mostly need support within the gap when they are released from prison up to when they receive their first benefit payment if they are entitled for one. A short loan system could be a solution to fill in this gap during this most crucial period – the first months following release.

**REFLECT ON THIS:**

Reading the above issues of inmates’ re-entry, do you think they are present for the inmates you work with?

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What other challenges do you think inmates face?

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Remember the story from Annex 1 of this section? What tools do you think would have helped the young man upon his release?

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What about the attitude and support of the prison staff from the story, did it help?

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And were the papers he developed in his pre-release period put to use?

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**OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU:**

Bring the story to the inmates and analyze it from the perspective of what support was there for the inmate to go through the release period.

Ask the inmates to change short sequences / events from the story that they believe can trigger a positive outcome rather than relapse.

In the end try to make the outline of a new positive story for that young man, with all the changed events your inmates proposed.

**OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:**

Analyze the list of possible challenges with your inmates and together select the ones that will hit them first upon release.

Then, through dialogical circles, talk about the most stringent ones and try to get answers on what information they need to better cope.

Put the information together in a simple and clear format that the inmates prefer. Make this their tool, developed while preparing for release.

## 4. Dialogue for family

### OUR MESSAGE TO YOU:

In the previous section we talked about the list of challenges an inmate faces upon release. One of those challenges is reconnecting with family.

A prisoner returning to his/her family has to make many difficult changes as he/she readjusts to family life. This is true for parents, sons, daughters or partners. Life in a prison is highly structured. There are few decisions to make and little need to deal with other people's feelings and choices. Prisoners have described life in a prison as being quite 'black and white'. Family life is much more complex. It isn't possible just to focus on yourself. Although prisoners are usually keen to leave the prison, they may find it very hard to settle back into the family.

Studies show that many offenders tend to end up back in prison when they can't find employment or if they have strained family and marital relations. Research also shows that offenders fare best on the outside when they run through some of the sticky situations they'll encounter ahead of time — such as talking about their prison time with a potential employer — and learn some problem-solving and social skills to help them navigate their new lives.

### OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU:

In order to have this exercise in challenging reconnection with the family, we propose that you organize a "Preparing for Release Dialogue" with a group of inmates and family members.

As it will be a challenging and full of emotions event, we propose that you work with the inmates in advance.

Get them together in one or two "training" sessions to make them aware of the importance in reconnecting with the family.

As tools we can give you some examples:

#### 1. Game for identification of supporting circle

A sheet is distributed to participants with two images of four concentric circles. On the first image they are required to write on the central circle their name and in the next spaces made by circles, the names of three loved persons in order of importance. Each will present three reasons why they chose these persons.

Proceeding to the second image, they are required to put in the middle also their name and in the next spaces made by circles, the names of three persons who, they believe, will support them after release. Each participant will present who are these persons and how, they think, they will help. Inmates compare these two images and discuss in a group about this.

#### 2. Role-play- CHILD VISIT IN PRISON

This role play involves three actors: the person deprived of liberty, his/her child that came to visit the parent in prison (a doll) and grandmother that cares for the child. In the role play inmates complain all the time, criticizing the grandmother about how she takes care of the child, grandmother criticizes the inmate about his/her crime and highlights the aspect that he/she is in prison. The child is moved from father's arms and grandparent's arms and reverse. In a group inmates talk about what was good and what was not well in the behaviour of the person deprived of liberty during the visit.

### 3. Study case

Mary is a woman of 25 years, not married but in a relationship, has a child of 5 years and was in detention in the last 2 years. Now she was released. In the home where she returned live the parents of the boyfriend, her boyfriend and their child. In the past family has visited Mary in prison monthly because they hardly had enough money to be able to cope. When Mary returned home she observed that her son treats her as a stranger and always runs to his grandmother who took care of him during the last 2 years. The parents of her boyfriend argue and complain that they were struggling with their child these years. Neighbours say to Mary that when she was in prison her partner had a new relationship. He is indifferent to her. Because of money problems all consider Mary like "another mouth at the table".

You can ask inmates questions like:

- Why is the situation difficult?
- For what reason?
- Do you know similar situations?
- What do you do if you are in similar situation like Mary?

### 4. Questionnaire

You kindly ask the inmates to respond in writing (within 30 minutes) to the following questions and then discuss them:

1. How would you characterize your relationship with your family?
2. Do you think you can do something so that your family relationship is better than it is now?
3. What differentiates a true friend from one who is Insincere?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses that you can take to a friend?
5. What do you consider that is important for successful couple relationships?
6. Is it important that when you are released, you will be near the persons who can help you?

After having one or two meetings with the inmates you can together start to think about a "Preparing for Release Dialogue".

Why "Preparing For Release Dialogue"?

- All changes cause stress and this is a big change for everyone involved.
- Everyone includes: the inmate, spouse or significant other, children, their caregivers, other friends and relatives. Even pets are affected.
- "Preparing for Release Dialogue" will make everyone more relaxed. The entire family will have a better idea what to expect.

- An inmate's feelings may be very intense both immediately before going home and for quite a while after being home. The joy may be powerful and exciting, but disappointment and fear may also be present.
- It will take several weeks and maybe even months for the entire family to adjust to having the loved one home.
- “Preparing for Release Dialogue” provides an opportunity for self-discovery and growth for each family member.

Explore with them what benefits can a dialogue session with family members bring.

Ask inmates who would they like to invite and why.

Keep in mind that around 20 persons is a good number for dialogue. But you can keep the numbers lower if the conditions require it.

Because of the limitations placed on a relationship when a partner is in a prison, both prisoners and their partners outside can have quite unrealistic expectations about what the relationship will be like after prison.

Prisoners have a lot of time to daydream about how things will be, with little opportunity for ‘reality testing’ these fantasies. In this dialogue circle you will deal with two sets of concerns:

#### Inmate Concerns

There are many concerns when someone comes home after a long absence. For inmates the stakes are higher. A few of these concerns are listed below:

- Getting a job
- Staying clean and sober
- Building positive new relationships
- Often the inmate's role was not healthy prior to arrest and incarceration. What is the new role going to be?
- Fear of failing (this is huge)
- Trust will have to be re-built and will take time
- What are the expectations of each family member and how can **these** be prioritized?

#### Family Concerns

For families the stakes are also high. A few concerns that families might have are listed below:

- When will he/she get a job?
- What if he/she does not remain clean and sober?
- What remains of our relationship before incarceration? Will I/we recognize him/her?
- Will he/she go back to their old lifestyle and friends that were prevalent prior to incarceration?
- What is his/her role in the family going to be?
- When can I trust him/her again (chequebook, discipline, intimacy, etc.)

There will be a lot of mixed feelings and you need to have a really good grip on this dialogue circle, so you get a positive outcome from it.

A HAMK University of Applied Sciences team (Helena Aarnio, Jouni Enqvist, Tommi Sukuvaara, Mikko Kekki and Matti Kokkonen) drew up 25 dialogue scenes and definitions of key terms and expressions used during the process. It would be advisable to read through them and adopt and adapt according to the exigencies of the prevailing context and situation.

Dialogue scenes

<b>Dialogue scenes</b>	<b>Connection to collaboration and learning</b>
<b>I State of mind for engaging in dialogue</b>	
1: Symmetrical participation	Every participant's opinion is necessary for collaboration
2: Active participation and encouragement for it	Everyone ought to be involved in problem solving
3: Engagement to dialogue	Perseverance enhances collaborative thinking
4: Reciprocal activity, trust	The golden rule
5: Letting go of egocentricity	Egocentricity should be curbed in collaboration
6: Open, sincere expression	Relate the important matters
7: Respect for self and others	Respect in a group
<b>II Preparatory orientation to dialogue</b>	
8: Taking and giving a turn	Every speaker takes a turn during collaboration
9: Being present and concentrating	I am present in collaborative thinking
10: Word-for-word reception and coding, listening	Be alert and pay attention while listening
11: Staying on the other's speech	Everything has not been said yet
12: Awareness of one's preconceptions and assumptions	The role of preconceptions in collaborative thinking
13: Regulating the expression and withholding one's preconceptions and assumptions	Preconceptions ought to be set aside or expressed
<b>III Creating a dialogical moment</b>	
14: Opening one's incomplete thinking	Do not be afraid to express incomplete thinking
15: Compact expression	Compact, concise speech

16: Forming unbiased open questions, opening the other's thinking	Problems concerning feedback in collaboration situations
17: Direct inquiries as means of information retrieval	Tools for Internet meetings
18: Focused continuation from previous statement	Imprisoned by preconceptions
19: Word-for-word continuation from previous utterance	Deep learning
20: Responding to an inquiry	Different kinds of knowledge
21: Recognizing key utterances	Common tune in team work
22: Opening key utterances	Find peer help near you

#### **IV Building a general view through dialogue**

23: Weaving a synthesis	A synthesis organises and clarifies matters
24: Revealing gaps in thinking and activities	Bridging the gaps in collaboration
25: Opening new paths for dialogue	Even deeper learning

#### **Vocabulary**

Active participation	A participant wants to be involved in dialogue and therefore voluntarily and enthusiastically contributes to the dialogue by expressing their thinking.
Answering an inquiry	A participant answers the questions in an open, sincere manner and opens their thinking to others. They also answer inquiries when they know that their thinking is only under development.
Appreciation	Participants are aware of and recognise the uniqueness of other participants, thus enabling every participant to fully actualize in a dialogue.
Awareness of one's preconceptions	Everyone has certain preconceptions (assumptions and/or anticipations) concerning the matters that are talked about. A participant becomes aware and recognises these preconceptions which can be based on suppositions or knowledge. Becoming aware of their preconceptions enables a participant to clear room in their mind for different points of view.
Being present and concentrating	Being present and concentrating have an important connection with listening and information reception. A participant consciously turns down the "inner noise" in their own mind by silencing all other thoughts and reflections except those that are focused on



	receiving and listening to another participant's speech. That is, attention is focused directly and solely on what another participant says.
Binding	When a participant in a dialogue binds their turn to a previous utterance, it means that they return to a matter that was brought up earlier in the dialogue but from which they wish to continue and to which they thus bind their own turn and the continuation of their thinking.
Caring	If a participant in a dialogue cares about others, they want to behave in a friendly manner and so through their own actions influence the others' participation, learning and psychological well-being.
Checking interpretations	In a dialogue, a participant explains their conclusions, that is, their interpretations, of another person's thinking and actions. After this the participant asks the other participant whether their interpretation was correct and so makes certain that he/she truly understood what the other participant said.
Closed question	The structure of a closed question is such that it limits the answer to certain alternatives. A closed question can be a question where the only possible answer is either yes or no. A closed question can also be a so-called multiple choice question where the answer is chosen from among a certain number of alternatives. In the discussions of everyday life, closed questions tend to be loaded questions and contain strong suggestions by the person asking the question; therefore, they are not "pure" questions. In a dialogue, an attempt is made to turn closed questions into open questions whenever possible.
Common understanding	Common understanding means that the participants are aware of each others' thinking, that is, they understand how the other participants see the matter that is being processed. Therefore, common understanding is not the same thing as general agreement (consensus).
Compact expression	A participant expresses their thinking in a compact, concise manner. They avoid rambling and so-called empty words.
Conscious action	An individual's actions are either conscious or unconscious. When a person engages in an activity consciously, they concentrate and focus their attention and observe the activity. Therefore, they can explain and describe their actions aloud.
Deep learning	Deep learning means that learners try to understand the thinking, phenomena and principles related to a certain topic of which they are attempting to form a logical whole. In addition, deep learning means that learners make an attempt to apply what they have learned into practice. Collaborative thinking saves time and takes understanding and knowledge to a whole new level.

Deep-oriented learning	Deep-oriented learning means that a learner tries to extend his/her understanding of things, phenomena and principles deeper than the surface. This enables learners to make logical connections and apply what they have learned into practice. The opposite of deep-oriented learning is surface oriented learning.
Dialogical actions	Dialogical actions are concrete procedures that help create a dialogical moment (for instance, inquiry, word for word reception, focused continuation and recognising key utterances).
Dialogical "container"	A dialogical "container" refers to the conditions where productive interaction is possible. These conditions thus form a "container", as it were, where profound listening that results in changes takes place. In a "container", people can function and express even heated opinions trustfully in a safe environment.
Dialogical field	A dialogical field refers to a certain kind of state of intellectual interaction where people have an opportunity to expose their thinking for scrutiny. At its best, a dialogical field can begin to develop and shape into a dialogical "container".
Dialogue	Dialogue (from the perspective of learning) means collaborative thinking and familiarisation with a certain matter or activities that is based on equal participation. The word dialogue is derived from the words dia (through) and logos (words; speech; meaning of words). Monologue, which emphasises an individual's own speech and thinking, is the opposite of dialogue.
Egocentricity in dialogue	An egocentric participant talks much without regard for others, does not pay attention to other participants' views and acts without caring about others.
Encoding into a "mental whiteboard"	An individual pays such close attention to information that it is "engraved" into their brain piece by piece exactly as it is presented. What is important is that undivided attention is focused on the information that is being presented, whether that be in a spoken or written form.
Engagement to dialogue	A participant has a serious, earnest attitude towards dialogue and does not easily give up even when difficult situations are encountered but persistently continues to process the matter.
Facilitation	Facilitation means helping another participant, supporting and providing assistance through various means.
Feedback	In a collaborative learning situation, feedback (from outside) refers to all the information that an individual receives from others concerning his/her own behaviour. Feedback informs its receiver about the stage of development that they are currently in and how they should improve their behaviour. Feedback is meant to be reflected on and scrutinized, not to be directly believed.

Flow	We talk about flow when a person's activity has a strong positive energy and the person engaged in that activity is fully immersed in it. Therefore, the person has shut out everything that is not relevant to the activity. Enthusiasm and spontaneous experiences of joy are important aspects of a flow experience.
Focused continuation	A participant receives and codes another participant's/participants' speech word-by-word and then continues the dialogue from a point that was brought up by another participant. The participant making the focused continuation also uses their own thinking to bind their turn sufficiently well to the previous utterances.
Giving a turn	The principle of equality dictates that every participant in a dialogue has an equal amount of time and space to express their thinking. This means that the participants must limit their own turns in order to consciously give the turn to others so that all participants also take the roles of listeners.
Hasty interpretation	A participant makes unwarranted guesses and assumptions about another participant's thinking and actions. These assumptions are made hastily and based on insufficient information. This is one of the gravest pitfalls of dialogue.
Hope of common understanding	Participants in a dialogue relate to each other in good faith which encourages them to allow dialogue sufficient time to prosper. It is a fundamental feature of human nature to desire and strive for common understanding.
Incomplete thinking	A participant is aware that their thinking change and develop dynamically and continuously, which means that there are very few so-called absolute truths. Awareness of this fact makes a participant more willing to expose their own thinking for experimentation and scrutiny.
Inquiry	In a dialogue, thinking is opened by means of inquiry, which means that participants ask each other (open) questions. Inquiries whose purpose is to open thinking make another participant sincerely reflect on his/her thinking and to open them for others in his/her own, unique way, which is essential for dialogue to be established in the first place.
Keeping dialogue going	Participants in a dialogue support the dialogue and keep it going in various ways so that the dialogue continues and "stays alive" even through difficult and challenging moments.
Key utterance, "hot words"	Key utterances ("hot words") are parts of a participant's speech that another participant considers particularly important from the perspective of the theme of the conversation, further clarification and elaboration and understanding. These key utterances and hot words are precisely those points of a dialogue that often require further opening and clarification which in turn enhance the dialogue. Key utterances in each particular turn are dependent on

	the situation as well as on the speaker and the listener; therefore, they are clearly subjective.
Learning through dialogue	Learning through dialogue refers to collaborative thinking and collaboration that is powered by a common goal. Learning through dialogue can also be regarded as knowledge construction through dialogue.
Limiting one's turn in dialogue	A participant uses their turn in a dialogue to explain only a certain aspect/amount of the matter that is being processed, because they do not want to shackle, "empty" or kill the conversation by excessively talking about their own view.
Listening	A participant pauses and pays attention to another speaker's turn, turning down their own inner voice. They receive the information from another speaker's turn word-for-word and accept it as something shared by another participant. Listening requires the listener to quiet down their own mind.
Word-for-word reception	A participant receives another participant's speech literally, word for word, without adding anything to it or deducting anything from it. In other words, the listener "codes" the other participant's turn into his/her own memory so precisely that in principle they ought to be able to repeat it word for word.
Metacognitive knowledge and skills	Metacognitive knowledge is knowledge about one's own knowledge and learning. Metacognitive skills are skills of learning how to learn; skills that are used to monitor and regulate one's behaviour.
Open expression	When thinking is expressed openly, no one has hidden agendas. A participant opens and shares their incomplete thinking in a direct and clear manner.
Open question	An open question begins with an interrogative (what, how, what for etc.). The respondent has a completely open range of options for proceeding in their answer. In a dialogue, open questions are used to achieve as "pure" a starting situation as possible, that is, a situation where the person asking the question makes no attempt whatsoever to influence the answer.
Opening a key utterance	A key utterance is an utterance that includes information that might increase a listener's understanding of the matter or of another participant's thinking. Therefore, when engaged in a dialogue, a listener makes an inquiry about a key utterance and requests more information from the person who expressed the key utterance. The inquiry can be performed by, for example, forming an open question about the key utterance.
Opening one's thinking	A participant shares their current thinking with others openly and sincerely. A participant also expresses their thinking because they are aware of the fact that every word spoken in a dialogue provides the other participants' thinking with input.

Pausing	A participant clears room in their own mind for thinking expressed by another participant and spends a moment reflecting upon those thinking. This is how another person's thinking is taken into account as the dialogue proceeds.
Positive wondering	A participant asks a question whose purpose is to open the topic that is processed for dialogue. What is essential is that processing the matter is supported through these questions. This guarantees the continuation of an inquiring, curious approach which is important for problem solving.
Reciprocity	Participants respect one another and look after each other. They observe the so-called golden rule, that is, they treat others as they would like others to treat themselves. They do not "leave a friend behind".
Recognising a key utterance	A participant codes and receives another participant's speech word-for-word. He/she observes another participant's speech and recognises parts that ought to be opened more thoroughly in order for him/her to better understand the other participant's thinking and to acquire more knowledge about them. Recognising and identifying key utterances is influenced by a participant's general understanding of a given topic.
Regulating the expression of preconceptions	A participant delays expressing their preconceptions and anticipations and considers in which stage of processing the matter it might be appropriate to expose those preconceptions to scrutiny and questioning.
Respect	Every individual is equally valuable as a person, which means that everyone has a right to think the way they do. In dialogue that means that everyone can share their thinking with others as an equal. When you respect yourself, respect for others follows automatically.
Sincere expression	When a participant engages in a dialogue, they have good intentions. They express themselves in an open, sincere manner.
Staying on topic	In a dialogue, participants pay close attention to the conversation to make certain that the topics being processed are sufficiently dealt with. This means that the participants ought to feel that the matter has been handled as thoroughly as can be in that particular situation or considering a particular goal. Staying on topic is based on focused continuation and frequent binding of one's utterances to statements occurring earlier in the conversation.
Suspending	In a dialogue, a certain topic or theme can be left suspended, that is, no final conclusions are made or solutions decided on. In other words, wrapping up a certain matter can be delayed if the participants realise that the dialogue is still under development and incomplete.

Symmetrical participation	Each participant contributes to the dialogue with roughly the same number of turns and everyone's turns are about the same length.
Synthesis	Synthesis is a general view of the participants' thinking at a given moment.
Taking a turn	The principle of equality dictates that every participant in a dialogue has an equal amount of time and space to express their thinking and that every participant has a right to be heard and have their opinions regarded as equally important with those of others. Every participant consciously and without prompting actively engages in the dialogue and takes a turn to express their thinking.
Targets of inquiry	Participants can use inquiries, for example, to ask from one another facts and information, about values and beliefs, impressions, experiences, feelings, or to ask questions related to activities and questions related to an individual's characteristics.
Trust	Trust in the context of dialogue means that a participant feels safe enough to open and express their thinking and understanding about the matter that the group is talking about even if that thinking is under development (incomplete).
Understanding each other in dialogue	The goal of dialogue is genuine understanding of another person's thinking and speech, that is, understanding what the other person really means by what they say or think. Deep down this means pursuing human understanding.
Weaving a synthesis	The participants Weave a synthesis, a general picture, of thinking that emerged through dialogue and activities corresponding to them. During a dialogue, smaller syntheses are built at the end of each stage and finally used by the group in weaving the final synthesis.
Word-for-word continuation	A participant begins their own turn by using words or concepts expressed by another participant, after which he/she elaborates or deepens the matter.

## **Annex 1** Life After Prison - The Road Home, Vanishing Dreams

A story by Andre Norman at <http://www.projectfootprints.com>

The basic trauma of being locked inside of a penal institution is often overlooked. The effect this system has on a person is very hard to imagine. Along with the institutional scars, each inmate carries his own internal wounds from his personal sense of suffering and loss. The average prisoner has several weeks notice before he is released. During this time he daydreams of spending time with his children, eating "real food" surrounded by family and friends. Some even fantasize about a parade waiting for them upon their release. No more counts, lockdowns or being told what to do. In a few weeks he will show the world how wrong it was for sending him here in the first place.

The average prisoner holds onto the dream of starting his own business, helping at-risk youth, and travelling the world first class. For the next several weeks all of their thoughts are positive and productive. Never a mention of being strung out on drugs, being in any kind of trouble. Nor a thought of anything other than complete success. There are far too many horrid memories of this place to ever want to come back. As the day approaches the family encourages him constantly that all his dreams are plausible. Having been less than nothing the last ten years of his life there is nothing he wouldn't do to maintain his freedom. Taking a walk around the big yard, he looks at the walls that cast a shadow over his life during his time here. Blocking out all the death here because it no longer belongs to him. Trying to recall the young boy who first walked in here ten years ago yet unable to reclaim his innocence. That's alright though, I don't need that boy because it's over now. I beat the system; I lived to walk out of here.

The countless people who went out before him and failed are not in his mind, nor are any other negative thoughts. Life is all good from this day forth. If he can survive ten years in this place, then he can survive freedom.

The loud speaker sounds and his name is announced. The yard becomes motionless, and nobody says a word. It's a strange happening when a man's name is announced on the speaker. We're all interconnected, everyone says a silent prayer for the departing whether friend or foe. Through this brief moment the entire population becomes connected.

Walking down the hall to the gatehouse towards the front lobby the mind overloads and goes blank. Far too many things moving to grasp. Then the last door slowly slides open and you're free. No more handcuffs, no gun tower, no numbers on your chest, just silence.

You search yourself looking for that something which is different. Only to discover that you are the same man who was minutes ago standing in the big yard looking at the other side of the wall. But how can he be the same man? Freedom is a reality now. There has to be something different that comes with being free. Wait a minute--the parade isn't here either.

When the officer drops him off at the train station he gives him the customary "See you soon," and a smirk. The first ten minutes of the train ride is spent with hateful thoughts towards the officer and his smirk. How dare he say I would be back? "F- him, he don't know me."

The people on the train all know where I am coming from. They stare at me from under their newspapers not speaking, but thinking I am a bad person. I try to look like I belong, but I am the only black man on this train. Sitting in the parole office waiting to be seen, I attempt to put that guard's smirk and those people from the train out of my thoughts. I remind myself that I survived and made it. My parole officer starts by reading me the riot act. He has seen it all, heard it all and knows it all. So when I decide not to obey any of the two million rules he just sped-read me, I will be return to prison--end of story. After listening to how the drug testing system works and my need to find a job yesterday, I am allowed to ask a question. I have so many things running through my mind. "How do I go about getting a business loan? Where are some good substance abuse programs?" Most of my thoughts are about doing good and making it. After being yelled at by this man for the last forty minutes, I come up with the only question that matters, when do I get off parole (and away from you). After some paper shuffling I get some crazy date. I try to explain that

the date is wrong. This sets off a bitter dispute between us. It ends with him telling me he is right because he says so. Walking out of the parole office I throw his card in the first trash can I see.

Home at last, the house looks to be in a lot worse condition than I remember. I am glad to be here but at the same time it feels strange too. The last time I was here I was a kid heading down the wrong path. I convince myself that simply being older makes a difference. We do the family thing for a few days. Then they go back to their own lives. Out just walking I run into the old gang. They do the "you dog that was a long ten years I meant to come see you but you know" and I respond "yeah I know. "Now they pick me up daily, head to the liquor store and weed spot. They assure me that I won't get violated for the urine test. There is stuff at health store that can beat the test. I skip on the weed but have a few drinks with them, reminiscing about old times and me telling prison war stories.

It's been a week now and I can't sleep. Sitting awake in my room I think about my life, recalling my time inside and all my friends who are still there. Sleeping on this twin bed half way reminds me of prison. I pull out my yellow folder I came home with. I look at my business plan that I wrote inside. That van service was a great idea. I read over it admiring the concept before putting it away and focusing on finding a woman again. It's been a touchy issue since I got out, ten years is a long time. I will call my partner and have him hook me up. My first time was faster than I wanted it to be or thought it should have been. It was all good though. I stay in touch with her for another date. Before long she somehow became my girlfriend. The fact that she doesn't work, smokes weed and drinks is not a serious issue for me. The bottom line is she will have sex with me and I feel comfortable with her. She has bad habits and I have a bad history sounds fair to me.

Trying to find a job is driving me crazy. I honestly filled out at least forty applications with zero call backs. They always ask about my prison time. My parole officer suggested a place but I remember how that guy in the movie Heat got jerked by his parole officer. Besides I am not trying to hear from my slave master about anything. I know his sole purpose in life is to send me back. My girl hooks me up at a day labour spot. Now my day is set. Work all day moving rocks and sweeping dirt floors, go home and change clothes then spend the rest of the night at my girl's apartment, we drink, she smokes, have sex and another day done. The job got my slave master off my back. My mother is not happy about my girl but she is happy I'm home and have a job. I finally got into the union now which means better pay. Now instead of taking the bus I ride in my own car to and from work. I change clothes at my mother and go to my girl's apartment, we drink, we smoke, have sex and another day is done.

On the weekends I chill with my boys cruising the town. Local bars nothing too far out. We had a few run ins with other crews but nothing serious. It was all about relaxing and enjoying life. When the police pulled us over I didn't think anything of it. When I felt those handcuffs against my wrist, that little boy inside of me cried. I didn't feel outraged, truthfully it felt normal. It was like they had never been taken off from before. The judge gave me no bail because of my parole situation. The district attorney wanted the gun to be mine, even though I was in the back seat. I screamed the police had no probable cause to search the car. They lied about smelling weed but nobody heard me. Why should they I was born for this right. The arrest alone was enough to violate my parole and the dirty urine didn't help. As my parole officer signed the papers I couldn't even pick my head up.



Walking towards the transport car I should have known it be him. Only this time instead of a smirk, he had the "told you so look". There wasn't much I could say on the ride back. He started telling me what has been happening at the prison. I didn't want to be listening to this. I told him my probable cause story and he just shook his head. He couldn't help but to tell me his daily routine. First he drops all new parolees off at the train station in the morning. Then in the afternoon he picks up parole violators from area courthouses.

Back in the block I tried to make sense of my 90 day tour of the street. I told everyone who would listen about the lame probable cause story. I blamed the police, my parole officer and I found enough parole failures to bash the system with. I asked my mother to mail me my folder because it had all my legal papers in it. I had found an old timer willing to help me with my case. I gave the old timer the folder when it came in the mail so he could research my situation. Talking with my girl I find out she is one month pregnant and is still smoking, drinking and having sex. Now I have to get out of here for the sake of my seed.

Sitting in the big yard thinking of a way out of this mess, the old timer helping with my case came over. He gave me some papers saying they were mixed in with my legal folder. I looked at them and it was my business plan for the van company. I hadn't seen these in forever. I read over it admiring the concept before tossing it in a trash can, thinking to myself it was a great plan though.

# **SURVIVAL SOURCEBOOK**

. . . a living skills guide

This section is an add-on to the DIACEN Dialogue Toolkit. The Toolkit is the basis of the program to help staff, inmates and others communicate effectively from the time an inmate enters the system to long after release in order to help effect a successful transition from prison.

This Survival Sourcebook is a prototype of an individual manual each inmate might use to identify and catalogue resources and information to use when transitioning or living within the community.

Even for people who have never been in prison and who are familiar with their own community, life can be complicated. It seems new questions come up every day. For those who are familiar with computers, the internet and search engines, answers to most questions are not hard to find. For those who have been deprived of those tools, finding answers becomes more complicated.

Information and help are available for just about every question or problem there is. From problems that you feel are yours alone, to problems that everyone faces, information and help are there, if you just know where to look.

By using this Manual as a template, each inmate can develop their own Survival Sourcebook. If they begin the process, with help from prison staff and others, during the dialogue sessions presented earlier, by the time they are released they will have a good idea of what exists within their community that can be of help to them and how to access them. Further, they will have a much better understanding of the various procedures required to access community resources.

## **RESOURCES**

As you put together your own Survival Sourcebook or Resource Directory, look beyond the obvious – for example:

### **CHECKING OUT THE LIBRARY**

Especially for those who are not familiar with computers or do not have access to the internet, you will find that Libraries are not just for checking out books. In the public library, after release, you can find information on almost everything, like:

- what is a fair price for a used car
- Aunt Mimi's phone number in Miami
- how to dress for a job interview
- what refrigerator is the best for your money

In fact, you can find the majority of the information contained in this book in your local library.

However, this book, better yet – one you create for yourself gets the information into your hands quicker.

Depending on the size of the library, you can also find books for all ages and interest levels:

- children books
- how-to books
- reference books
- newspapers & magazines
- telephone directories
- "talking books"

"Talking books" are actually audio-cassette tapes or dvds and are great for the blind, visually impaired and anyone wanting to read a good book, but who have limited reading abilities.

You may also find:

- records and cassettes
- maps
- magazines
- flms
- city bus schedules
- computers
- voting information
- audio-visual equipment

Many libraries may also have materials for delivery to homebound individuals.

Help is very simple. Just ask for the reference desk and then tell the librarian what information you're looking for. He or she will be able to direct you to the right section and also will tell you how to use the materials in the library to find what you need.

THE TELEPHONE BOOK (this service and the sample phone numbers listed below will vary from country-to-country and from city-to-city). You should assemble your own list of important phone numbers and addresses.

The telephone book usually contains:

- local services
- telephone use information
- people
- street locations
- crisis lines
- governmental agencies
- emergency numbers
- businesses and organizations
- churches
- consumer goods and services
- libraries
- associations
- clubs
- schools

Many phone books have additional information, such as:

- maps of the city
- parks and recreation
- street directory
- information about the city

- Information about your phone bill and long distance calling

Many city phone books have a special section, listing various social and health care agencies.

## NEWSPAPERS

City newspapers provide a lot more than information about current events:

- houses to rent or buy
- local farmer's markets
- garage sales
- local entertainment
- coupons
- a variety of goods and services
- apartment rentals

Ads placed by local businesses are worth reading, too. By consulting weekly grocery specials you can really stretch your food dollar (see chapter 6). Newspapers also have listings of events and activities going on in the city like concerts, movies, sports and club meetings. If you don't subscribe to a newspaper you can read the newspaper in your local library.

## LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

A community is more than just a place to find somewhere to sleep and eat and work and play as was discussed in some of the diali

## GETTING INVOLVED

One person can help make things better, whether it's by helping to reduce crime in the neighborhood, or by helping to choose the next president. The first step is to keep informed.

The easiest way to keep informed about what's going on in the world around you is to:

- read the newspaper
- listen to news broadcasts on radio and television
- read news magazines

• Current events can directly affect you and your family, and sometimes can help to make a difference if you know what's going on.

Most politicians and political groups present only one side of an issue - their side. This does not mean they're wrong but that there is usually more information, and other ways of looking at that information. You'll never know the whole issue if you only listen to one group.

It's important to keep an open mind and listen to both sides.ry to listen "behind the words."

In addition to current events, it is important for you to understand how the government works and what the Constitution says about your rights and responsibilities. A copy of the Constitution can be found in your local library.

Find out if you are eligible to vote – if you are DO SO!

## CREATE YOUR OWN SURVIVAL SOURCEBOOK

### INCLUDE ITEMS SUCH AS:

#### EMERGENCY AND TEMPORARY SHELTER

Almost all communities provide emergency shelter for people who need a temporary place to stay:

- abused men, women and children
- low-income families and individuals
- homeless families and individuals

To find a place to stay temporarily or in an emergency, look in the your local telephone book under "housing." If it's not listed there, call the personal crisis line, and they can refer you.

#### *Other temporary living quarters:*

- hotels and motels
- boarding houses

#### FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE: RENTING A HOUSE OR APARTMENT

Most people have two housing choices - rent an apartment or rent a house. To help you decide which is best for you, consider these factors:

##### HOUSES

- are quieter.
- provide more privacy.
- have more outdoor space for recreation, children and pets.
- usually are larger and there is more room for storage.

##### APARTMENTS

- have cheaper rent
- have cheaper utilities.
- have fewer utilities.
- are less work with no lawn to mow or snow to shovel

#### PAYING THE RENT - WHAT CAN YOU AFFORD?

When deciding whether a house or an apartment is best for you, the most important thing to consider is "how much can I afford to pay?" As a general rule, your rent or house payment should be no more than 25% of your income.

When you rent, you will have to put down a deposit usually one month's rent. The deposit is protection for the landlord in case the tenant damages the property, or moves out without paying the last month's rent. When you move out, you will get your deposit back, if you didn't damage the property or break the lease. You may request an itemized list of repair costs taken out of your deposit. Sometimes utilities may be included in the rent. They might include:

- water, gas, electricity
- garbage removal

If so, your rent will be a little higher. If you expect to have high utility bills, look for a place where utilities are included. If not, you might save money by paying them yourself.

Before deciding to rent a place, call the utility companies to get an estimate of how much the utility bills have been running.

You may also be responsible for your telephone installation and monthly service. If there isn't already a phone in the house or apartment, you will either have to buy one, or lease one from the telephone company. Today, many people use only a mobile phone and do not have a permanent phone in their home.

If you pay any utilities, you may have to put down a deposit before you get service. In some places, you don't have to make a deposit if you have someone to co-sign for you. A co-signer agrees to pay the bill, if for some reason you can't.

The amount of gas or electricity you use is different from month to month, so the amount of your bill changes too. Many utility companies have "budget plans." You are billed the average monthly amount of the bill for that particular place. These plans enable you to do a better job of budgeting your monies, since you know exactly how much the bill will be each month. When you call the utility company to have your gas or electricity connected, ask about a budget plan.

If the house or apartment is unfurnished, the rent will be less, but you will have to provide your own furniture, and in a few cases your own stove and refrigerator.

After you've decided how much you can afford for rent, utilities, deposits and moving expenses, you're ready to start looking for a place.

Here are some things to check out before you decide to rent:

- How can the landlord or apartment manager be reached?
- Does the house or apartment have adequate laundry facilities?
- Is there a safe and convenient place to park your car?
- Are there signs of roaches and mice? Check for them in drawers, under the sink and in their other hideouts. Look for roach or mouse traps left behind by previous tenants and for mouse droppings.
- Look for signs of leaks, are there water stains on the ceiling or walls? Is the paint or wallpaper bubbly or ripply? Has the wall been re-plastered?
- If there's a basement. check it for leaks and flooding.
- Is there enough room for you, your family and your things?

Before You Rent check:

- Is there enough storage space?
- Are pets allowed?
- Test everything testable. Turn the lights on and off. Check the water faucets. Flush the toilet. Be sure the doors lock properly.
- Are there good locks on the doors and windows?
- Is the neighborhood relatively safe?
- Is it located near public transportation, schools, parks, stores, etc.?
- Does the building look clean and well kept?

- Check the condition and age of the furnace, water heater, refrigerator, stove and air conditioner.
- Are there enough electrical outlets? Are they conveniently located?
- Is the ventilation adequate?
- Is it well insulated? Do the windows and doors close snugly?  
Are there storm windows for winter? If you pay for your own heating and cooling, can save money on utility bills?
- Check for fire exits, fire extinguishers and smoke alarms.

## APARTMENTS

- Does the landlord or apartment manager live there?
- Try to see it at night when the other tenants are home to find how noisy it is.
- If the landlord pays utilities, look for heat and air conditioning controls inside the apartment so you can control your own temperatures.
- What kind of condition are the hallways and other areas in?

## LEASE

A lease is a legal agreement between landlord and tenant

It says that you can live on the landlord's property in exchange for the rent. It also establishes other conditions. Be sure you get a lease. It can protect you if the landlord doesn't live up to his/her end of the deal.

The lease usually includes:

NAME AND ADDRESS of the landlord and tenant

2) AMOUNT OF RENT. The landlord cannot raise the rent during the time that the lease is valid, unless the property is subject to certain rent control laws.

3) DATE the rent is due.

4) LENGTH of the lease: In other words, how long you agree to pay rent and the landlord agrees to let you live there. A lease can be any length of time, One year leases are common. If you break the lease, you will have to pay a penalty. Don't obligate yourself for any longer than you think you'll be living there.

5) MOVING NOTICE. You need to inform the landlord if you plan to move, even if the lease is going to end anyway. The lease will explain when you have to tell him/her. Some leases renew automatically if you don't tell the landlord that you plan to move, so be careful! The lease should also state penalties for breaking the lease.

6) DEPOSIT. This includes the amount of the deposit and any conditions about getting your deposit back

7) UTILITIES. The lease will state who will pay the utilities.

8) The lease may also contain clauses about pets, children, subletting (if a tenant rents out a place he/she's renting) the condition of the place when you first moved in, or just about anything else.

Do not sign any lease that

- Allows the landlord to get back at you by turning off the water or heat, padlocking your doors, etc. because you made do-it-yourself repairs, reported violations to the authorities or are involved in a renter's union.

- Allows the landlord to force you to continue paying rent for a building ruined by fire, tornado, etc.
  - Frees the landlord from responsibility for negligence in case of injury to you or your guests.
  - Allows the landlord to take your personal possessions if you don't pay the rent
  - Says that you will pay the landlord's legal fees in case you ever go to court.
- Remember that you can negotiate the lease. You don't have to take whatever the landlord offers you. You can make any changes that both you and the landlord agree on.

**The above is meant to give you an idea of how detailed you can and should make your Survival Sourcebook.** The dialogue between staff, inmates, others can help develop a detailed and effective booklet for the inmate (and you will find that much of the information will also be helpful to staff). The above only touched the surface of issues. Others would include:

- Landlord/tenant rights
- Renters Insurance
- Other options on finding places to live (Trailer homes for example)
- Buying a home (finances, mortgages, tax and insurance, legal considerations, etc.)
- Safety in the home (fire, "child proof" a home, storms, tornado, etc.)
- Personal and household records

Other sections of the personal Survival Sourcebook can include (each as detailed as shown above):

#### EMPLOYMENT

- Self-assessment tools
- Where to look
- Getting a job
- Keeping your job
- Employee rights
- Labor unions
- Volunteering (for experience or internships)
- Starting your own business

#### EDUCATION

- Your child's education
- Adult education
- Continuing your education
- Financing your education
- Study tips for students of all ages

#### FINANCES

- Take a look at your take home pay
- Budgeting
- Banking
- Loans
- Credit
- Debts and debt collection
- Public assistance



- Wills, Powers of Attorney

#### BECOMING A SMART CONSUMER

- Smart shopping
- How to return unwanted purchases
- Getting the most out of your food dollars
- The art of coupon shopping
- Emergency food programs
- Other food programs

#### YOU AND YOUR CAR

- Buying a car
- Buying a used car
- Car insurance
- Maintaining your car
- Saving gasoline
- Driving safely
- In case of an accident

#### FAMILY

- Marriage
- Domestic violence
- Divorce
- Birth control
- Pregnancy
- Adoption
- Child care

#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE (alcohol, other drugs)

#### HEALTH

- Doctors and Dentists
- Medications
- Health insurance
- Your health
- Diseases

#### SPECIAL POPULATIONS

- Ex-offenders
  - Parole
  - Police
    - If you are stopped and questioned
    - If you know of a crime
    - If you are arrested
- Elderly
- Veterans
- Immigrants and refugees

Electronic copy of a full Survival Sourcebook can be obtained by contacting Contact Center, Inc.

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