

# Staff Training on Risk Assessment

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# What is Offender Risk Assessment?

- \* Offender Risk Assessment contra Institutional Security risks of estate and building
- \* Education of prison staff can be reduced to the knowledge of how offender risk assessment is done when using best practice methods and more important, how it is done in your penitentiary system
- \* Individual risk factors lead to individual needs as a foundation of sentence planning
- \* Individual risk factors restrict resocialisation planning

# Level of Information for Front Line Prison Staff

- \* Prison staff shall have access to any risk assessment that has been done and their training should enable them to understand its meaning and how the assessment was accomplished
  - \* Enhances dynamic security due to the awareness of individual risk factors (and needs) of the prisoner
  - \* Enhances prison reports due to a better focus on the well established risk factors

# Best Practice

- \* Best practice offender risk assessment is accomplished by an implemented process as early as possible
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment is renewed regularly
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment does not use labeling as «dangerous» or «extremely dangerous»
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment does not use common scales like «low», «moderate» or «high» to classify risk in general

# Best Practice

- \* Best practice offender risk assessment points out individual risk factors and optionally how these can be dealt with
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment is based on the offenders complete case dossier (prosecution, sentence, prison reports)
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment uses
  - \* forensic psychiatric and psychological data including clinical expertise (anamnesis and psychic exploration and application of assessment tools)
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment is done by the method of structured professional judgement

# Who performs Offender Risk Assessment?

- \* Best practice includes an interdisciplinary approach
  - \* Psychiatric / psychological
  - \* Criminological
  - \* Penological
- \* Best practice offender risk assessment is achieved using the method of structured professional judgement

# The Swiss Model

- \* Two separated processes (broad band and extremely dangerous):
    - \* **Part I.:** Low level risk assessment starting at intake in the sense of prisoner placement in a penitentiary institution after conviction/sentence
      - \* automatical screening using FaST as Case screening tool
- Assessment of :
- \* New offence (severity)
  - \* Previous offences (severity)
  - \* Violent offence under 18, sexual offence under 18, more than 2 juvenile sentences, more than three traffic offences, many polymorphe offences
  - \* Risk reduction aspects (older than 50, more than 5 years time at risk without offending)

## \* Classification

- \* **A:** no indicators for recidivism

→ regular treatment

- \* **B:** indicators of risk of recidivism of any kind

→ case report by penitentiary office

- \* **C :** indicators of risk of recidivism in form of violent or sexual offences

→ outsourced criminological/psychological risk assessment



# Expert Committee Advice

- \* **Part II.:** risk assessment by expert committee using interdisciplinary structured professional judgement in the sense of a peer review
  - \* Mostly offenders who have already committed severe violent and/or sexual offences
  - \* Chambersessions: chair, judicial secretary, forensic psychiatric, prosecutor, penitentiary services
  - \* structure used: 12 main item criteria catalogue containing ca. 50 items pro and contra recidivism risk

No one can forecast human behaviour completely , but we are obliged to do our best and seriously analyse, and prepare when reintegrating criminals from prison back into our society.

By doing so we are between Skylla and Charibdis, creating false positives which are wrongly kept in detention or wrongly liberating prisoners, enabling their recidivism.



Thank you for your attention.