



x/x/2017

Supporting your psychological wellbeing

A resource for Irish prison staff

IRISH PRISON SERVICE

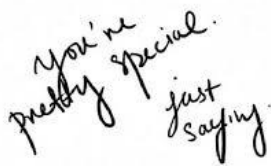
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Disclaimer: if you have been affected by anything discussed during the programme please speak to one of the facilitators and/or consult with the appropriate support service listed in the appendix of this workbook

Introduction

It is well documented that working in a prison is a complex and challenging task. Everything we do involves interacting with and developing people, sometimes in difficult circumstances. Prisoners often present with a broad range of complex problems that mirror contemporary challenges in the community. Yet, relations between staff and prisoners remain at the heart of the Irish prison system. Safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation of prisoners flow from getting that relationship right and our prison teams are very skilled at balancing their obligations of security and care on a daily basis.

A handwritten note in black ink that reads "you're pretty special. just saying." The text is written in a casual, cursive style.

As prison staff, we know that prisons cannot be run by coercion; they depend on us having a firm, confident, humane and ethical approach, which enables us to maintain close positive contact with the people in our care. Yet, our role is unique in the respect that we are frequently required to face situations where the risk lies in the unpredictable outcome of encounters with other people. Similar to police officers, we also have a unique role in society as we are occasionally placed in danger mainly because we have authority and are expected to enforce it. These elements of danger and authority contribute to determine aspects of our working personality – for example, when an alarm goes off we all respond immediately and we stand together when one of us is faced with danger.

Prisons are also essentially closed environments, where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time lead enclosed, formally managed lives. As prison staff, we often spend long periods of time with the same prisoners, many of whom have suffered addictions, obstacles and personal traumas during the course of their sentences. It's also evident that some of us spend a far higher proportion of our lives in this environment than the prisoners in our care.

In many ways, prisons are essentially emotional places for both prison staff and prisoners; perhaps the most compelling reason for this is that our core function is to deprive large numbers of people of their liberty. It's a complex challenge and to achieve good order we have to manage the emotions of prisoners on a daily basis. Irish research indicates that we keep our own emotions 'in check' whilst doing so. Yet, the emotions generated by working in a prison are many and wide-ranging so perhaps it is not too surprising that working in a prison has an impact on prison staff. This situation is further complicated by four key dimensions of our work, namely 'danger, routinisation, desensitisation and contamination' (we'll talk about these elements later in this workbook). This combination creates a situation where role engulfment is high, and this minimises our ability to come 'out of role' when not in work. The reality is that

many of us are impacted by the work we do, and sometimes the changes that occur in us seep into our private lives and personal interactions.

Within our prisons, as a prison officer, you are one of the most important mechanisms of order, care and control within your workplace. It's also clear that prison work is demanding and requires highly skilled, resilient staff. We spend a large amount of resources and time ensuring we are prepared and trained to deal with conflict, and ensuring we are equipped to deal with our physical security by employing control and restraint techniques for example. Yet we spend less time and resources in ensuring our psychological safety and wellbeing. It is clear though that to undertake such a complex task we need to be mentally resilient as well as physically fit.

This workbook is designed as a resource that is aimed to compliment some of the topics you will cover in the workshop. It also contains some information and supports that we hope will be of use to you in minimizing some of the negative impacts that doing prison work can have on us.

Finally, all of the quotes in this document were provided by serving Irish prison staff with different backgrounds and locations. We are very grateful that they shared their knowledge and experiences. We hope the programme will be of benefit to you and that you will engage positively with the facilitators and your colleagues. After all, this programme is about you, for you and only you can decide on the impact this course will have on your personal and professional life.

We hope you enjoy the programme.

Don't forget the good stuff!

It's all too easy to forget about the positive aspects of our work. For example, many Irish prison staff speak about their relationship with their colleagues as a positive aspect of prison work. Others value job security, some like challenging work, some mention our pay and other tangible benefits.

... I am in a position to hopefully assist someone during that day to make a decision that may affect their lives...literally every time I talk to someone, every time I meet a prisoner, all those interactions...it will also influence hopefully some aspect of some person's life, whether it's another officer or whether it's a prisoner.

Activity One: Please stop and reflect on a time when your work went particularly well and that you were proud of your contribution. You will not be asked to share this with the class (unless you want to!) so take your time and be honest with yourself. You can record your reflection in the space provided below.

Can you leave your work at the gate?

Before I joined this job I lived in the black and white world, but now it's like I can see the grey. Let's face it, most people live in the black and white and don't see half the things we see outside...I suppose I'm just more security conscious than the usual punter. In many ways its good...I'm much less likely to get caught out. It's not paranoia; I'm just switched on all of the time,

Irish research focussed on prison officers indicates that there are four key dimensions of prison work that lead to a situation where 'role engulfment' is high. It is clear that consistently being aware of danger, the reliance of following routines when doing prison work, desensitisation and a sense of being socially isolated by the job, can minimise our ability to leave the job at the gate.

As prison officers we often hear our colleagues refer to their private lives as 'my real life' or 'my outside life' thus endeavouring to separate their professional working lives from their private, domestic worlds. However, many Irish prison officers talk about being 'changed by the job'. Notwithstanding that, it is important to state at the outset that not all officers acknowledge that they bring the job home and a small number of staff describe the relative ease in which they can switch in and out of 'prison mode'.

I can switch in and out of prison mode when I need to. It's a handy skill to have because it means I don't bring work home with me. It's good to keep my real life and jail life separate. It's not always possible though.

I think I view people outside work in a different way than I used to. It's all about their body language, well, it's everything about them really. It doesn't matter to me who they are, they could be a priest or the local bank manager and I still won't trust them...Well, not until I have figured them out you know? Like when I've figured out their motives and stuff.

Despite our best efforts to leave work at home, our increased levels of suspicion and mistrust, increased levels of cynicism and 'hardening' when off duty can impact negatively on relationships and can potentially lead to a reduced social circle and social bonds.

Some officers say they occasionally apply work related processes to their family life, such as searching their children's rooms on a frequent basis, and some continue to perform the role of prison officer when they are at home by having unrealistic expectations of authority.

I lost it with my kids one night. I got home from a hard day and the kids were running amok and wouldn't go to bed. I went into jail mode, you know, and shouted at them...Off with the pants there now! Off with the top! Now get into bed! I was roaring at them... the way you'd shout at a seriously non-compliant prisoner. I just stopped and thought Jesus, it was like I was...still in work or something...

In work

Think back to when you started in the job, when you were trying to 'join the ranks' and trying to understand the working norms and culture of the prison you were assigned to. The working personality of prison officers, the way we walk, talk, our posture, jargon, values and beliefs takes time to learn. It is our experience that while new recruits form a good idea of what kind of officer they 'want to be' during their basic training, their attitude and ideas *change* when they witness and encounter established officers going about their work.

Within this environment, as new officers we have to quickly learn the mannerisms associated with *being* a prison officer. It is not an easy task, as although new entrants appear to realise that 'first impressions' last, at first they inevitably find it difficult to even look confident.

I'll never forget starting in (names prison), it was mental, a real human zoo. I was shitting it. We were told in training if a prisoner asked us were we new to say we had worked in another prison. Sure they had us sussed in a heartbeat, they could see the shiny shoes and sharp uniform and they had us. The staff were the same, no one wore the uniform like a rookie so we adapted to that. I haven't polished my boots since! We had to...you know...fit in.

Some officers describe quickly developing a default approach of cynicism and mistrust towards the organisation and prisoners shortly after their initial training.

Early on I realised that if you show compassion they'll just lie to you, you know like, my mother isn't well and I need an extra phone call...and then I check and he's phoned his sister to bring in drugs? They can all lie for Ireland but they rarely catch me out now.

Sometimes our initial views of how to interact with people are changed by the behavioural expectations of more senior colleagues, other staff talk about being changed by their initial interactions with prisoners.

It is clear that the pathway to becoming a prison officer takes time, can be problematic and can often involve significant challenges to personal views, attitudes and values. Over time most officers change and adapt to the social norms of their colleagues in the prison they are assigned to, but it can be a difficult journey for a new entrant to the job. The pressure to 'fit in' with everyone else is very strong.

I quickly realised that if you were to think that they were all the dregs of humanity like some of the senior officers and still come into work every day, well, how could you? I know that everyone, myself included, is just one step away from being in prison themselves and I didn't need to be told that in training, I often had felt sorry for them. But you quickly learn that you can't show that when you're in the group you know? I think some of them [the prisoners] are okay but you just can't show that, the other jailers would lash you out of it!

Look, it's quite simple. You need to fit in when you start in this job because if you stand out in any way your working life won't be worth living. In fairness, we need to stick together; there are more of them than us. No one else really gets the job anyway, except for your colleagues, no one else gets it. It's hard to explain, we might not get along but we need each other.

Activity Two: Please reflect on how your work has impacted on you. Have you 'changed' since you joined the job? For example, some prison staff report that they have found themselves not being true to themselves and say that they have to mask their real values and characteristics because they're trying to fit in.

Others state they now use inappropriate humour or depersonalise everything in order to cope with the strain of their work. Others still say they tend to 'circle the wagons' against all non-uniformed visitors to their workplaces. Some of the changes reported are positive, many officers speak about increased confidence levels and communication skills they have developed, so it's not all negative!

Try and reflect on any changes that have occurred and record them in the space provided below. Try and think of a specific example of how any changes in your attitudes or values, either positive or negative, have manifested themselves or impacted on your work or home life.

At Home	At work

Stress - personal and professional

So what is stress?

Stress is how we *feel* when we are facing demands that we are not sure we can meet. It is a normal part of everyday life and can be both positive and negative. For example, a small amount of stress can be healthy as it can motivate us and help prepare us for challenges in life. However, when this balance tips into high stress levels it can cause you to feel unwell.

Talking about stress in prisons is a tricky business. Often it is hard to figure out whether the stress we experience is work related or not. Many personal issues can trigger a stress response - relationships, money, work, exams, the expectation you put on yourself or the expectation you feel from others – the list is endless. Whatever the reason, stress can affect how we feel; how we think and behave; how confident we feel; and our energy levels. It is very difficult to measure stress levels as different people react to events in their lives in different ways – so what you find stressful may be motivating for someone else.

Stress symptoms can include:

- Rapid heartbeat
- Tense muscles
- Headaches
- Feeling irritated/agitated
- Sleeping problems
- Breathlessness
- Sweating
- Loss of appetite
- Upset stomach
- Difficulty concentrating
- Racing thoughts



Yet we are all impacted by it, it's an entirely natural phenomenon. Whilst it is often challenging to figure out whether our stress is driven by personal events or issues, there is some research into the impact that occupational stress has on Irish prison officers that we can draw upon.

Prison officer occupational stress

The limited Irish research available indicates that we, as prison staff, can suffer from high levels of stress, partly due to the environment in which we work and partly due to relations with managers, other staff members, the organisation and prisoners.

When I started I'd never take a slagging from the older lads, I'd stand up for myself. I think I've paid the price for that over the years, you know, because I'm not one of the lads. If you let it, it would break you but I don't care what they think, I just shut off from it you know?



Most Irish prison officers identify a number of sources of occupational stress; the first is related to our occupational tasks, the physical conditions of our workplace, the nature of our individual tasks, and whether they are straight forward or intricate. The second is associated with role characteristics, such as role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

Role conflict: From a prison officer's point of view, we know that role conflict can become an issue for some of us, especially if there is a gap between our views and our employer's views about the expectations of our role.

I can't understand why we are moving in this hug a thug direction. Prison is not a deterrent anymore. They don't care and why would they? They are warm and dry and can sit on their arses all day...Everything is served up to them. If I had a choice I'd go back to hard labour, it's got to get tougher for them.

Role ambiguity: Role ambiguity can also be a significant source of prison officer stress, particularly if there is a lack of information in relation to the expectations associated with a role; and a system to ensure those role expectations can be met.

Sure you can't go from disciplining them one minute and holding their hand the next. It's hard to get the balance right because they are always looking to take advantage of you. I'm just not sure of my place in the organisation these days, you know, where do I fit in? It's a head wrecker.

Role overload: The day to day stress levels of Irish prison staff of all grades can be significantly impacted by role overload. Role overload is generated when we perceive that we have too many responsibilities, or insufficient time or resources to fulfil our daily tasks.

With today's volume of work, my assistant, my deputy, they're swamped with work, they're swamped. So, we're all running faster, we're all told we need to do more with less and that's grand, but we're running faster just to stand still, just to keep up with the basic day to day issues.

These factors have significance for all of us because high levels of role conflict and ambiguity can lead to low productivity, work dissatisfaction, strain and psychological withdrawal from the organisation.

Emotional stress

As well as these factors, we all know that working in a prison can be *emotionally* draining - the emotions stimulated by working in a prison are many and wide-ranging.

Sure you know yourself, sometimes this job is like an emotional rollercoaster. One minute you're having a laugh in the class office, the next you're involved in a row on the landing. You have to flit between one to the other, I'm kind of used to that now.

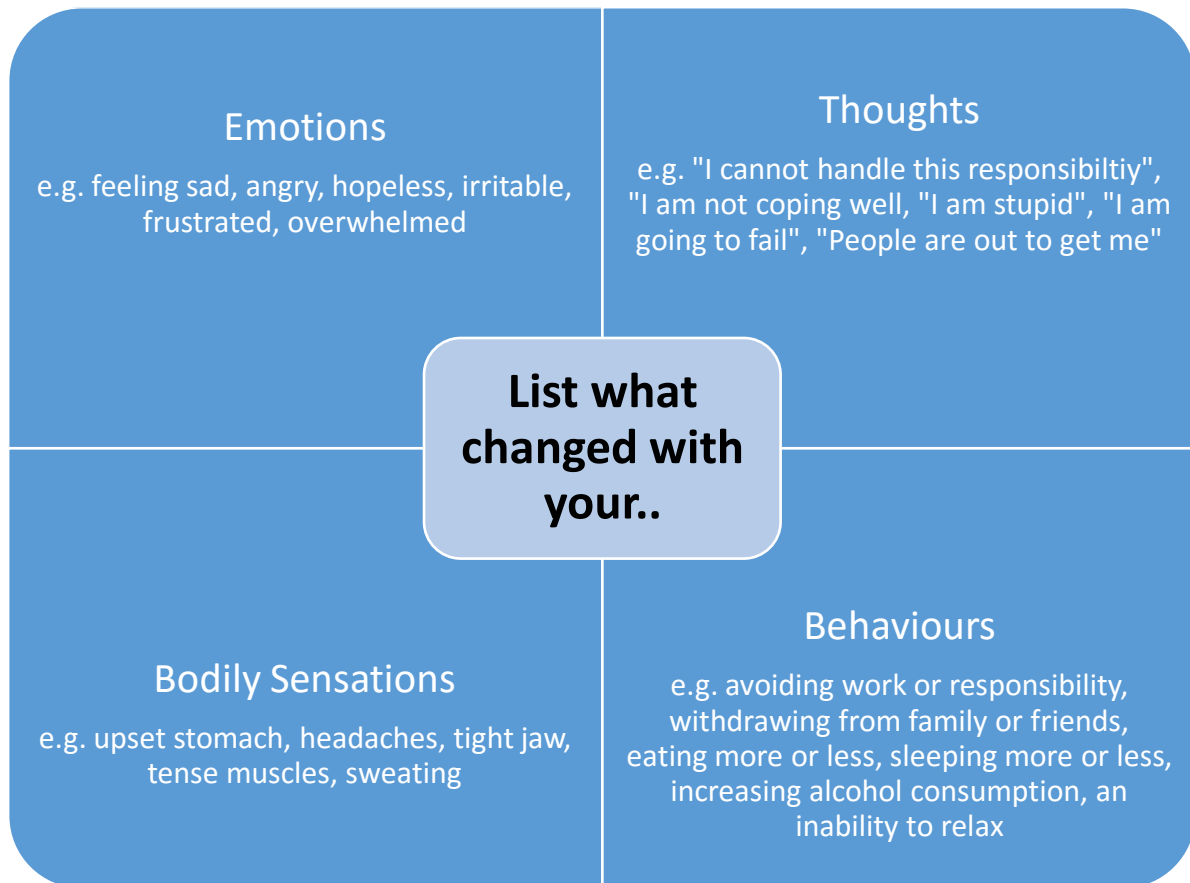
We also know that Irish prison officers are members of a social grouping that strongly upholds shared behaviours – we all tend to stick together and present a united front. Within this complex environment our actual *felt* emotions are not often expressed. That means that we are confined by our cultural norm to display a certain calm detachment from whatever situation or person we are dealing with, no matter how we actually feel.

Over time I suppose I just kind of accepted that was the way things were done here. I just went with the flow you know? You can't buck against the big blue machine man; you need them on your side and it just gets the job done.

Yet, we know that from time to time we have all felt scared, out of our depth, angry, disgusted or emotional. But we don't often show those emotions, we just suppress them because we are trying to fit in with what we think is expected of us. Whilst we do have to maintain professional boundaries, that's not healthy!

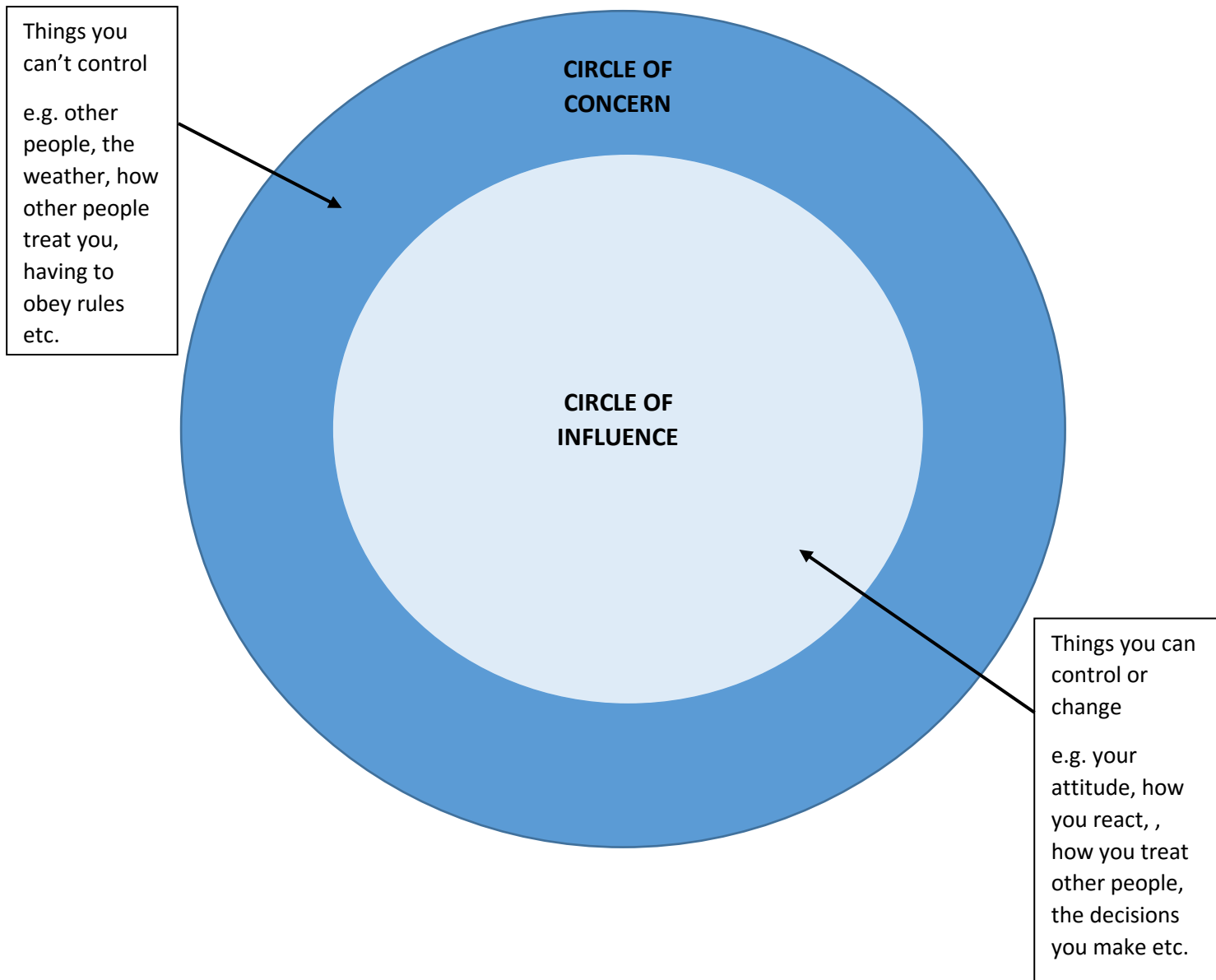
Activity Three

Please reflect on a time you were stressed, either personally or in work. How did the event impact on your emotions? What were you thinking at the time? Were there any physiological changes? Were there any other associated behaviors that you can recall?



Different people will feel the effects of stress in different ways so it is important that you develop a picture of what you feel like when you are stressed. This will help you to recognise the symptoms early, so that you can find ways of reducing stress. Recognising and managing stress early will help prevent it leading to more serious problems such as anxiety, depression or high blood pressure.

Circle of Concern and Circle of Influence



***You have the freedom to choose your response.
Focus on the things you can control or change***

Stephen Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1989)

Activity Four – Case study

Consider the case study below. Try and identify the stressors (personal and professional) and the related emotions, thoughts, bodily sensations and behaviours and consider how you would advise Tom....

Tom is a 40 year old member of staff who has worked in the prison service for 15 years. He works in a prison which is a 3 hour drive from his family home. His typical week means travelling up Monday morning at 5am and returning home Sunday night. When working he stays in a small bedsit. At home he has a wife of 10 years, teenage daughter and an 8 year old son with suspected autism. They re-mortgaged the house in 2006 but with the wage cuts the last number of years the repayments have put a financial strain on the family.

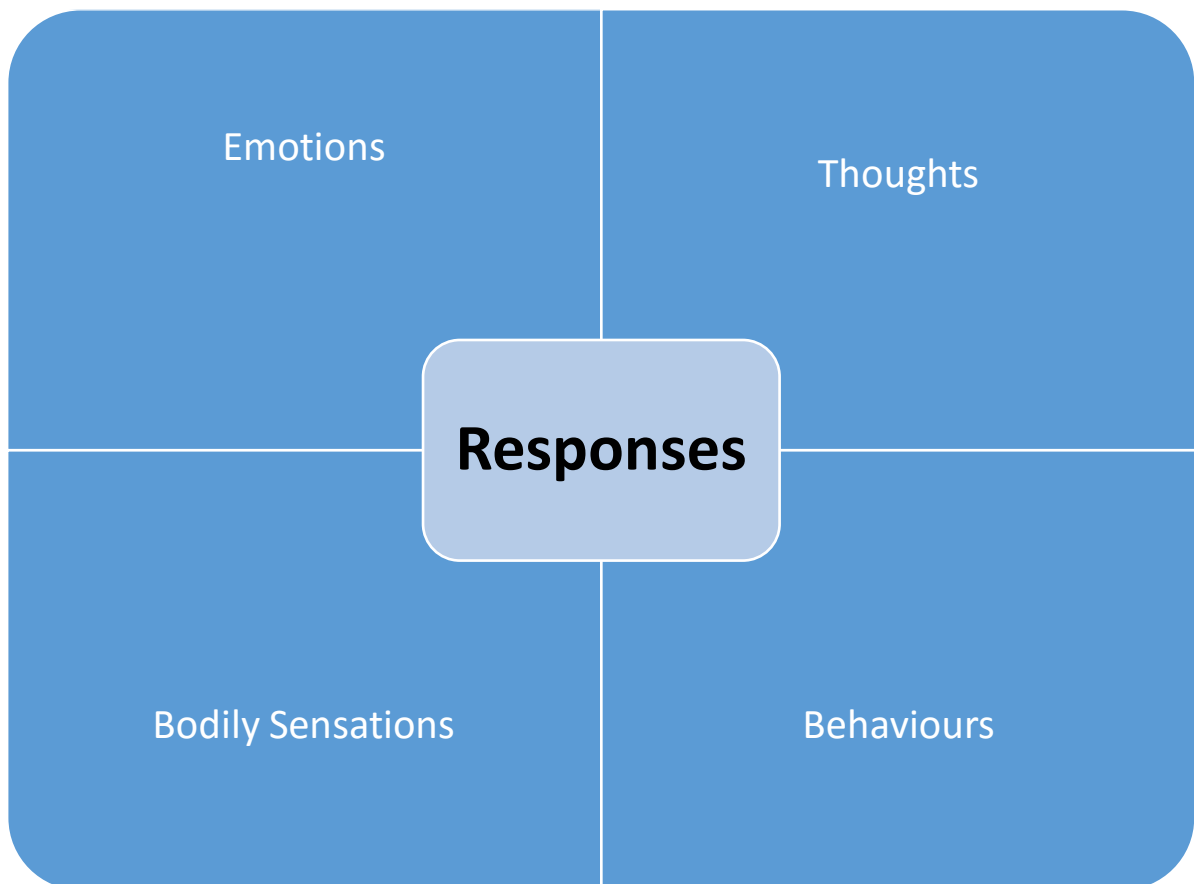
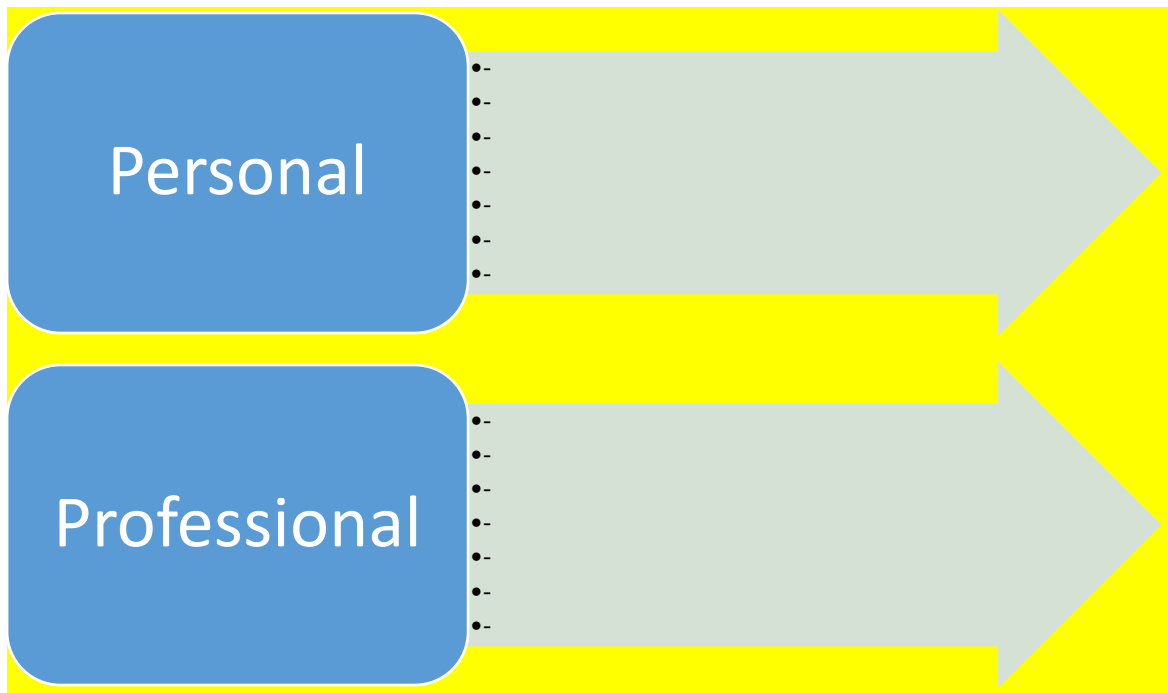
He has been on the transfer list to move to a prison 20 minute drive from his home since he joined the service but the last time he checked he has dropped 3 places back on the list. He went for a promotion last year in an attempt to get a transfer closer to home but was unsuccessful. His wife is getting increasingly frustrated and wants him home more often as their son is becoming hard to manage on her own. He has also an elderly parent in a nursing home and whom he finds it hard to make time for with work and his own family life.

The prison he works in is short staffed and additional hours are mandatory and while the extra money is helpful the long hours are becoming increasingly difficult with the current situation at home. He tries to get nights so he can get home earlier in the week but the last three times he hasn't been able to get them.

In the last few months he has finds himself waking up multiple times a night worrying about money, his family and his elderly parent. He feels tired during the day and has stopped going to the gym at lunchtime as a result and instead finds himself having a nap in the mess. His appetite has also reduced lately leading to him feeling sluggish and he's been getting regular headaches.

During his working week he always enjoyed heading to the local pub with some other prisoner officers to play some pool and have a few pints after a long shift but lately it has become 3-4 evenings a week. He feels like everything is getting on top of him and worries that it will never improve; the pub relaxes him and gives him a "break from his head". Last week during his shift he started feeling a tightness in his chest coupled with a shortness of breath.

Tom's Stressors



Healthy coping mechanisms

Healthy techniques

Reflect on what we have discussed in the workshop. Our work has certain impacts on us and so does our personal life. As complex as life can get, there are a number of coping strategies that have shown to work well, with most people.

- **Identify the problem:** If you are feeling stressed, try to identify the causes. Some causes of stress will have a practical solution. However, there are other stressful situations that we cannot prevent (such as a bereavement or relationship difficulties). In these situations, it might help to look for support from someone else such a family member or a friend, a support provided by the organisation (a list of IPS supports are included at the back of this resource) or your G.P.
- **Talk to someone:** Keeping the stressful thoughts in your mind can cause them to intensify, whereas if you are able to put words on these thoughts then they can begin to feel more manageable. Even if you don't feel able to talk to someone, writing out the stressful thoughts is a way of putting them into words, which can help you to figure out what exactly is causing you to feel stressed.
- **Keep your wellbeing in mind:** Being proactive and doing things that are good for your wellbeing can help manage feelings of stress. Go to the **good mental health section** at the back of this resource for lots of practical tips on how to cope with everyday stress. Things that will help include: relaxing; exercising; eating well; getting enough sleep; breathing exercises; and avoiding too much alcohol or drugs.



Activity Five – Introduction to Meditation and Mindfulness

Facilitator led demonstration and discussion.

Meditation has been shown to reduce daily stress and perceived stress

Mindfulness of Breathing- Guidelines

1. Sit in a comfortable posture, back straight, shoulders relaxed.
2. Close your eyes, if it feel comfortable
3. Bring your awareness to parts of your body in contact with the chair
4. Notice the sensation of your belly rising on the in-breath, falling on the out-breath. Like ocean waves ebbing and flowing, the in-breath, the out-breath.
5. When your mind wanders off the breath, gently notice that and come back. When your mind wanders from the breath a thousand times, bring it back a thousand times. That is the task.

Kabat-Zinn (1993), p.58. Edited

The Three Minute Breathing Space

1. Acknowledging

Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately adopting a dignified posture. Then ask: "What is going on with me at the moment?" Notice and acknowledge your experience, whatever it is, without running away from it. Accept all your experiences, your bodily sensations, emotions and thoughts.

2. Gathering

Then gently focus your full attention on your breathing. Experience fully each in-breath and each out-breath as they follow one after the other. See the breath as an anchor to bring you into the present and to help you be aware and still.

3. Expanding

Expand your awareness around the breathing to your whole body, and the space it takes up, as if your whole body is breathing. Have a sense of the space around you in the room. Hold everything in awareness, all the sensations, emotions, thoughts- without doing battle with them in your mind.

The Breathing Space provides a way to step out of automatic pilot and re-connect with the present moment. The sequence is like an hour-glass, a wide focus followed by narrow focus followed by wide again.

The easiest way to relax is to stop trying to make things different. Struggle comes from not accepting what is here.

Download Headspace:
mindfulness made easy
<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

Activity Six – Personal plan: Be the best you can be!

What are your three main stressors:

1.

2.

3.

What can you do to reduce them:

Method	I will (how)	Actions needed	When by
Diet			
Exercise			
External interests			
At Home			
Reflection			

Appendices

Appendix I - List of available organisational supports

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - You don't have to go it alone

If something is causing you concern, whether it is prison work related or personal, and is affecting your well-being and quality of life it is a problem. Teasing out a problem with someone it may give you an insight on how to respond to it.

The EAP is a short term confidential support and referral service for staff and management, dealing with issues such as

- Addiction
- Bereavement
- Marital/Family Problems
- Financial
- Work Related Issues i.e. bullying/harassment, stress, sick leave
- Information re social welfare, pre-retirement concerns
- Health related concerns

Contact: Bernie McHugh, John Guiney or Shane Kitson

IPS

EAP, 1st Floor, 31-35 Bow Street, Dublin 7. Telephone: 043-333 5316 or E mail:

eapsupport@irishprisons.ie.

Alternatively contact any staff support officer.

Staff Support Officers

Staff support officers have been appointed and are available in all prisons. Their role is to:

- Provide advice and guidance to staff which will help build their resilience, enhance their wellbeing, and mitigate the risks of stress impacting on them;
- Act as the initial confidential point of contact, on behalf of the organisation, for members of staff who need support in coping with stress or other emotional challenges which are impacting, or are likely to impact, on quality of life and performance at work;
- Confidentially refer staff who are suffering from stress and/or other emotional challenges to the most appropriate supports and mechanisms which are available either within the organisation or externally.

Under the Employee Assistance Programme, referrals can be made to a Staff Support Officer by:

- Self-referral;
- Governor or supervisor, local staff, association official, SCS Directorate; and
- Concerned others (e.g. colleague, family member, etc.).

Inspire Workplaces

It helps to talk!

At one time or another we can all experience difficulties that leave us overwhelmed.

Issues at work, relationship worries, family pressures, bills piling up, they can all make us anxious and reduce our sense of purpose and wellbeing. Sometimes just talking to family or friends can help, but other times it may be better to talk to someone who is trained to listen who can offer support, guidance and a fresh outlook.



That's where Inspire Workplaces come in.

The Irish Prison Service has selected Inspire as an independent source of support. This service is free to you. Take the first step, lift the phone and contact Inspire to talk to someone who can help you access specialist support and information.

You can call them anytime, 24/7, 365 days a year).

They are fully committed to protecting your confidentiality and anonymity.

For free, confidential and immediate support call **1800 817 433**.

If you prefer, they can be contacted by email on **workandstudy@inspirewellbeing.ie**

IPS Anti-bullying, harassment and sexual harassment policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- Achieve a work environment where dignity and respect are to the forefront of our values
- Create an environment where bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment are not tolerated in any form
- Ensure that each individual is aware of his/her responsibility to behave in a way that reflects a culture of dignity and respect
- Provide awareness regarding the steps which individuals may take if they feel that they have been bullied

What is bullying?

Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

What is harassment?

Harassment is defined in Employment Equality legislation as any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The nine discriminatory grounds are:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community

Harassment may consist of a single incident, or repeated inappropriate behaviour.

What is sexual harassment?

Any form of unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Sexual Harassment may consist of a single incident, or repeated inappropriate behaviour.

Complaint Resolution Process

The steps outlined are an overview of the potential steps involved in resolving complaints

- Steps do not need to be followed in a linear fashion, e.g. can proceed directly to Designated Person, or be resolved by Local Resolution.

Where can I seek general advice on the Dignity at Work Policy?

Staff and Corporate Services Directorate, HR Governor, Staff Support Officer, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), IRIS, a Trade Union representative

What role does the Staff Support Officer play?

The Staff Support Officer is an individual who can provide general information regarding the Dignity at Work Policy, and other matters related to bullying, harassment and



sexual harassment. This service is available via the EAP, but if unsure, please speak to your HR Governor.

What is the Designated Person?

The Designated Person is a member of HR, who will initially oversee complaints which have been referred to Staff and Corporate Services Directorate.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary confidential process that allows parties resolve their conflict in a mutually agreeable way with the help of a neutral third party, a mediator. The mediator does not impose a solution but rather works with all parties to create their own solution.

CISM

What is critical incident stress management (CISM) ?

Critical Incident Stress management (CISM) :is a specialised package of actions and interventions carried out by peer support workers (PSWs) before, during and after a critical incident to provide early support to colleagues. These actions and interventions are linked to each other and blended together to alleviate the reactions to traumatic experiences.

What is a critical incident?

Critical incidents are unusually challenging events that have potential to create significant human DISTRESS and can overwhelm one's usual coping mechanisms. (Mitchell, 2006, p20)

Who provides CISM interventions?

Each prison has appointed a number of Peer Support Workers (PSWs) who have undergone specific training in group and individual interventions to International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) standards and thus, are well equipped to recognise when staff members are experiencing stress beyond their coping abilities and assist colleagues.

PSWs have rapid access to the CISM Co-ordinator and CISM Director for advice/support should they require it. All staff support officers (SSOs) are trained peer support workers but not all peer support workers are Staff support officers.

CISM team members will mobilise CISM interventions following a critical incident as required in line with best practice.

However, requests for CISM interventions can be made by:

- A. Line manager/Governor
- B. An individual employee/colleague via
Peer support worker or any CISM team member
EAP

The decision to mobilise any CISM intervention rests with the CISM team locally and centrally.

CISM aims to;

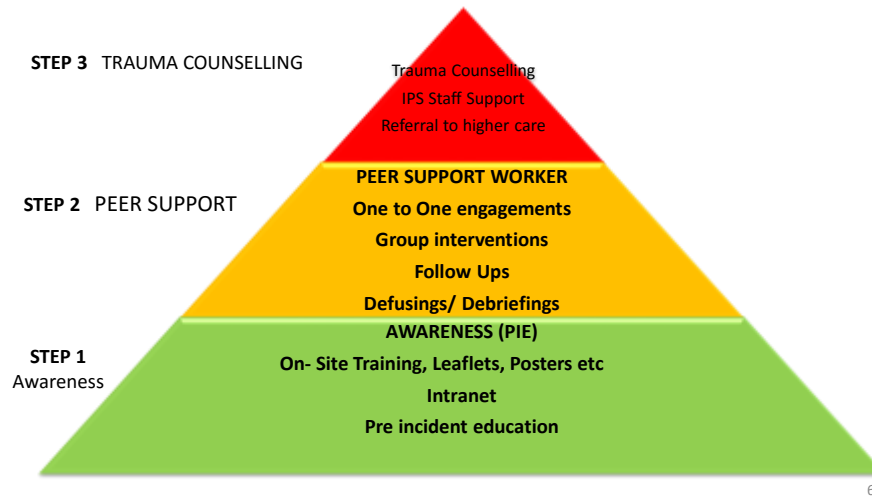
- Minimise the emotional impact of critical Incidents on IPS staff,
- Increase the resistance, resilience and recovery of Irish Prison Service staff to harmful stress,
- Prevent harmful effects on Irish Prison Service staff by working with and supporting Irish Prison Service staff at the time of Critical Incidents,
- Aid in preventing any chronic effects such as Acute Stress Disorder or Post-Traumatic Stress through the use of good education, follow up care, prompt identification and referral to EAP as required

*CISM comprises a continuum of care and targets the **response** of individuals and groups of individuals to traumatic events rather the incident or event itself.*

Most Prison officers will cope with Most of the Incidents they see and experience, Most of the Time.

IPS CISM

TRIANGLE OF CARE

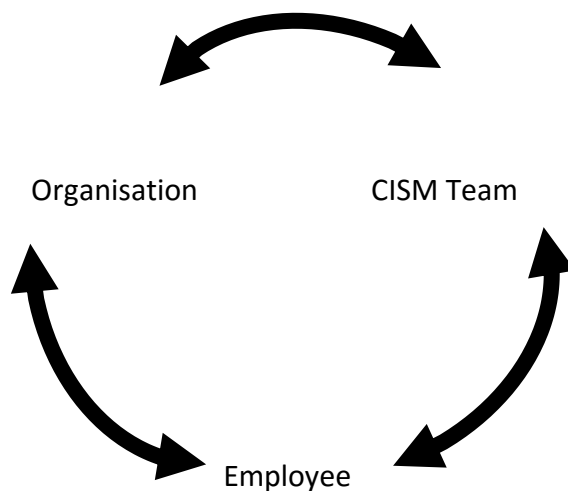


6

The type of intervention mobilised is dependent on the type of incident which has occurred, the responses of individuals and/or groups to that incident and is a collaborative effort between the CISM team and the individuals and or groups involved.

Participation in any CISM intervention is voluntary and not mandatory. It is however recommended that all staff members exposed to critical incidents avail of recommended CISM interventions.

CISM RESPONSIBILITIES



Appendix II – External Supports

Name of Organisation	Services Available	Contact Details
Aware – Defeat Depression	AWARE provide emotional support and information to those who experience depression, and their families	Address: 72 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2 Tel: 01 661 7211 Helpline: 1890 303 302 (7 days, 10am - 10pm) Email: info@aware.ie Web: www.aware.ie
Bodywhys	Bodywhys is the national voluntary organisation supporting people affected by eating disorders.	Tel: 01 283 4963 Web: www.bodywhys.ie Email: info@bodywhys.ie
GROW	GROW is a mental health organisation which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems	Web: www.grow.ie Email: info@grow.ie
Mental Health Ireland	Mental Health Ireland aims to promote positive mental health and to actively support persons with a mental illness, their families and carers by identifying their needs and advocating their rights.	Address: Marine Terrace, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01 284 1166 Web: www.mentalhealthireland.ie Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie
Recovery International Ireland	Recovery International Ireland is a self-help group for improved mental health and for control of nervous symptoms.	Address: Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10. Tel: 01 626 0775 Web: www.recovery-inc-ireland.ie Email: info@recovery-inc-ireland.ie
Samaritans	Samaritans Ireland provides 24-hour emotional support to anyone struggling to cope	. Helpline: 1850 60 90 90 (24 hours per day 365 days a year) Web: www.samaritans.org Email: jo@samaritans.org
See Change	See Change (The National Mental Health Stigma Reduction Partnership) is an alliance of organisations working together to bring about positive change in public attitudes and behaviour towards people with mental health problems	Address: c/o 38 Blessington Street, Dublin 7 Tel: 01 860 1620 Web: www.seechange.ie Email: info@seechange.ie
Shine	Shine supports people with mental ill health and their families and friends	Shine – supporting people affected by mental ill-health
Health Service Executive (HSE)	The HSE provides public health and social services in hospitals, health facilities and communities across the country. Some services are nationwide while others differ according to location.	Health Service Executive (HSE)
National Office for Suicide Prevention	Functions of National Office for Suicide Prevention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the implementation of ‘Reach Out’ the National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention • Co-ordinate suicide prevention efforts around the country • Speak regularly with agencies and individuals interested and active in suicide prevention The NOSP works closely with the HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention.	National Office for Suicide Prevention

Living Links	Living Links provides assertive outreach support to the suicide bereaved	Living Links
Alzheimer Society of Ireland	The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is a national voluntary organisation that aims to provide people with all forms of dementia, their families and carers with the necessary support to maximise their quality of life.	Alzheimer Society of Ireland
Pieta House	Pieta House Pieta House provides a free, therapeutic approach to people who are in suicidal distress and those who engage in self-harm.	Pieta House
Bereavement Counselling Service	The Bereavement Counselling Service offers support and counselling to enable people deal with their grief. This applies not only to those directly bereaved through death, stillbirth, miscarriage, abortion etc., but also to those whose lives are affected by the losses of those near to them.	Bereavement Counselling Service
Irish Hospice Foundation	The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) is a national charity dedicated to all matters relating to dying, death and bereavement in Ireland.	Address: The Irish Hospice Foundation, Morrison Chambers (4th Floor), 32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 679 3188 Fax: 01 673 0040 Web: www.hospicefoundation.ie Email: info@hospicefoundation.ie
Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS)	The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free, confidential, independent and non-judgmental service for people in debt, or in danger of getting into debt, in Ireland.	Helpline: 0761 07 2000 operates Monday to Friday from 9am to 8pm Web: www.mabs.ie
Public Service Friendly Society (PSFS)	The aim of the Public Service Friendly Society is to provide relevant financial advice and assistance to Civil servants and staff employed in approved Public Bodies as well as retired staff and their dependants.	Address: Public Service Friendly Society, 1st Floor West, The Plaza Centre, Belgard Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24 Tel: 1 800 778 787 Fax: 01 421 2891 E-mail: info@psfs.ie
Civil Service Credit Union (CSCU)	To provide high quality financial services to the members of the Civil Service Credit Union in accordance with the operating principals of the credit union movement.	Address: Civil Service Credit Union Ltd., St. Stephens Green House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 662 2177 Fax: 01 662 2861 Web: www.cscu.ie
Prison Service Credit Union	To provide high quality financial services to the members of the Prison Service Credit Union in accordance with the operating principals of the credit union movement.	Address: Prison Service Credit Union Limited, P.O. Box 11666, FREEPOST F5145, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-885 8901/8306 262 Web: www.priscu.ie E-mail: info@priscu.ie
HSE Addiction Services	Support the provision of an integrated range of preventative, therapeutic and rehabilitation services care.	Drugs and Alcohol Helpline: 1800 459 459 Web: www.hse.ie

Alcoholics Anonymous	Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.	Web: www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie
Al-Anon	Al-Anon offers understanding and support for families and friends of problem drinkers in an anonymous environment, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.	Address: Al-anon Information Centre, Room 5, 5 Capel Street, Dublin 1. Opening Hours 10.30 am - 2.30pm Mon - Fri. Tel: 01 873 2699 Email: info@al-anon-ireland.org
Alateen	Alateen is part of the Al-Anon fellowship and is for young people, aged 12 - 17 inclusive, who are affected by a problem drinker.	For Al-anon/Alateen - Ireland information for Co. Cork Please contact: PO BOX 55, Togher, Co. Cork. Tel: 021 431 1899
Adult Children of Alcoholics	Adult children of alcoholic/dysfunctional families is an anonymous 12 steps self-help fellowship of men and women, who identify with common characteristics, as a result of growing up in alcoholic/dysfunctional families	Web: www.acoadublin.com
Gamblers Anonymous	Gamblers Anonymous (G.A.) is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling	Dublin: 01 872 1133 Cork: 087 285 9552 Galway: 086 349 4450 Tipperary: 085 783 1045 Waterford: 087 185 0294 Waterford: 086 268 3538 Web: www.gamblersanonymous.ie Email: info@gamblersanonymous.ie
Narcotics Anonymous	Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is a non-profit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.	Address: Irish Region of Narcotics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous Ireland, 29 Bride Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 672 8000 (information line only) Web: www.na-ireland.org Email: info@na-ireland.org
AIM Family Services	AIM is a voluntary organisation which offers a nondenominational couple & individual counselling, family mediation and legal information service to people experiencing marital, relationship and family problems.	Address: 64 Dame St, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 670 8363 Web: www.aimfamilyservices.ie
Family Mediation Service (FMS)	Family mediation is a service to help married and non-married couples who have decided to separate or divorce, or who have already separated. It is also a service for parents who have never lived together but have a child between them and need to agree parenting arrangements.	Address: Head Office, Quay Street, Cahirciveen Co. Kerry. Tel: 066 947 1000 LoCall: 1890 615 200 Fax: 066 947 1035 Email: info@legallaidboard.ie
ACCORD	ACCORD offers a professional counselling service for couples and individuals to explore, reflect upon and work to resolve difficulties that arise in their marriage & relationships	ACCORD operates 58 centres throughout Ireland, offering a comprehensive range of support services. Visit the ACCORD website for further details. Web: www.accord.ie

Treoir	Treoir is the National Specialist Information Service for unmarried parents and their children providing clear and up-to-date information free of charge to parents who are not married to each other and to those involved with them.	Address: 14 Gandon House, Lower Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1. LoCall: 1890 252 084 Tel: 01 670 0120 Web: www.treoir.ie Email: info@treoir.ie
Tusla	The Child and Family Agency is the dedicated State agency responsible for improving well-being and outcomes for children.	Address: Child and Family Agency, Block D, Park Gate Business Centre, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8. Tel: 01 635 2854 Web: www.tusla.ie Email: info@tusla.ie
Miscarriage Association of Ireland	The Association offers telephone and email support to bereaved parents. In addition, it holds monthly support group meetings and their website provides a wide variety of information.	Address: Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01 873 5702 Fax: 01 873 5737 Web: www.miscarriage.ie Email: info@miscarriage.ie
Gay & Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN)	GLEN is a Policy and Strategy focused organisation which aims to deliver ambitious and positive change for lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) in Ireland, ensuring full equality, inclusion and protection from all forms of discrimination.	Tel: 01 672 8650 Web: www.glen.ie Email: info@glen.ie
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Helpline (LGBT)	The LGBT Helpline provides access to a network of trained volunteers who provide a non-judgemental, confidential, listening support and information service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people as well as their family and friends.	Address: National LGBT Helpline, 8 Roden Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth. Phone: 042 932 9816 Info Helpline: 1890 929 539 Web: www.lgbt.ie Email: info@lgbt.ie
Multiple Sclerosis (MS)	Society of Ireland MS Ireland aims to enable and empower people affected by Multiple Sclerosis to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential.	Address: Multiple Sclerosis Ireland's National Office, 80 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01 678 1600 Fax: 01 678 1601 Email: info@ms-society.ie MS Information Line: 1850 233 233
Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland	Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland (HDAI) provides consultation, information and individualised support to those diagnosed with Huntington's Disease (HD), their families and their health care team.	Address: Huntington's Disease Association of Ireland, Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01 872 1303 Email: info@huntingtons.ie Web: www.huntingtons.ie
Headway	Headway provides support and services to people affected by brain injury	Address: Blackhall Green, Off Blackhall Place, Dublin 7, Ireland. Tel: 01 604 0800 Fax: 01 604 1700 Helpline: 1890 200 278 Web: www.headway.ie
Irish Wheelchair Association	A provider of quality services to people with limited mobility throughout the country.	Visit the website for contact details. Web: www.iwa.ie
Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association (IMNDA)	The IMNDA is the primary support organisation in Ireland providing care for people with Motor Neurone Disease, their families, friends and carers.	Address: Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association, Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7. Tel No: 01 873 0422 1800 403 403 (freefone) Fax No: 01 873 1409 Email: info@imnda.ie

Arthritis Ireland	Arthritis Ireland is dedicated to eliminating arthritis as a major health problem and to improving the lives of those living with the condition.	Address: Arthritis Ireland, 1 Clanwilliam Square, Grand Canal Quay, Dublin 2 Tel: 1890 252 846 Fax: 01 661 8261 Email: helpline@arthritisireland.ie
National Council for the Blind Ireland (NCBI)	NCBI, the national sight loss agency, is a not for profit charitable organisation which provides support and services nationwide to people experiencing sight loss. We also provide a range of services to public and private organisations to make sure that their services are accessible to people who are blind and vision impaired.	Address: NCBI Head Office, Whitworth Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Tel: 01 830 7033 Fax: 01 830 7787 Web: www.ncbi.ie Email: info@ncbi.ie
General Practitioner	A wide range of services are provided by your local GP. The GP is usually the first port of call for medical issues. Where necessary, the GP can refer you on to other specialist services.	Make enquiries locally
The National Disability Authority	The National Disability Authority is the independent state body providing expert advice on disability policy and practice to the Minister, and promoting Universal Design in Ireland.	Tel: 01 608 0400 Web: www.nda.ie Email: nda@nda.ie
Citizens Information Board	The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services	Tel: 0761 07 4000 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm) or you can visit your local Citizens Information Centre. Web: www.citizensinformation.ie
Health Promotion Unit	There are Health Promotion and Improvement Offices serving all counties.	Web: www.healthpromotion.ie
Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)	FLAC is an independent human rights organisation dedicated to the realisation of equal access to justice for all. To this end it campaigns on a range of legal issues but also offers some basic, free legal services to the public. FLAC currently concentrates its work on four main areas: Legal Aid, Social Welfare, Credit & Debt and Public Interest Law.	Address: Free Legal Advice Centres, 13 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin 1. Information & Referral Line: 1890 350 250 Tel: +353 1 874 5690 Fax: +353 1 874 5320 Website: www.flac.ie
Irish Prison Service Employee Assistance Service	The EAP provides a wide range of free and confidential supports to staff and management of the Irish Prison Service designed to assist employees to manage work and life difficulties which, if left unattended, could adversely affect work performance and/or attendance and quality of life	Address: 1 st Floor, 31-35 Bow Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 04-3-3335316
Prison Officers Association	The Union provide employee representation in the workplace and can provide staff with information and advice.	Address: 18 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 Tel: 01-6625 495/6768 501

Appendix III – Irish Officer related Articles

Dr. Richard Roche, Assistant Governor, Irish Prison Service College.

Changed by the job – bringing prison work home

Mirroring Elaine Crawley's (2004) work in England, my 2016 study of Irish prison officers indicates that there are four key dimensions of prison work that lead to a situation where 'role engulfment' is high. It was clear that perceptions of danger, the heavy reliance of following routines when doing prison work, desensitisation and a sense of being contaminated by the job, minimises many Irish prison officers' ability to come 'out of role' when not in work. During the course of the study, prison officers frequently referred to their private lives as '*my real life*' or '*my outside life*' thus endeavouring to separate their professional working lives from their private, domestic worlds. However, many of the prison officers involved in my study described their perceptions of being 'changed by the job' and subsequently discussed how these changes penetrate into their personal lives.

It is important to state at the outset that not all officers acknowledged that they bring the job home and a small number of staff described the relative ease in which they can switch in and out of 'prison mode':

I can switch in and out of prison mode when I need to. It's a handy skill to have because it means I don't bring work home with me. Although I find from time to time I find humans look at me strangely when I crack a joke sometimes...I mean a joke that my colleagues would find funny and I look around me and see the astonished faces....Then I realise, boy, do I have the wrong audience here! It's still good to keep my real life and jail life separate though.

However, despite their frequently cited endeavours to keep home and work life separate, it is not always possible for them to do so and many discussed incidents when their work persona intruded into their home life. Many of the participants described incidents that suggest unrealistic expectations of obedience and authority, even when they are not in the prison. For some the intrusion of their work persona into their domestic lives came to them as quite a surprise:

I lost it with my kids one night. I got home from a hard day and the kids were running amok and wouldn't go to bed. I went into jail mode you know and shouted at them...Off with the pants there now! Off with the top! Now get into bed! I was roaring at them... the way you'd shout at a seriously non-compliant prisoner. I just stopped and thought Jesus, it was like I was...still in work or something.

It also became evident that some officers also occasionally applied work related processes to their family life, such as searching their children's rooms on a frequent basis, and some continued to perform the role of prison officer when they are at home:

My dad was also a prison officer and when I was a kid I just couldn't understand some of the things he would do...I understand now though [laughs]. He'd wake us up by standing in the doorway of our room and he'd kick the end of the door and say 'right, up you get, get your breakfast', all the time kicking the end of the door. If we didn't get up straight away he'd come in shouting. I found myself doing the same thing a while ago...It's like you can't understand why they don't comply straight away...I suppose it's not normal...The job tends to follow you home.

While most officers expressed that they had been changed by the job and that the various changes extended to their personal lives, few expressed a wish to talk about their work with their families. Perhaps related to their occupational requirements to suppress any emotions regarded to be traditionally feminine, many of the officers in this study consistently spoke about their reluctance to discuss the nature of their work at home:

The wife would say I bring the job home with me from time to time...I'd be cranky...She picks up on that, she picks up on my humour. I'd think about what happened during the day and I'd be dissecting it...Why didn't I do this...Why didn't I say that? I don't like talking about work at home though...I don't want her to see how much it gets to me sometimes. Sometimes it gets very depressing...only other jailers would get it.

The often quoted 'only other jailers would get it' by participants reflects prison officers' sense of isolation and detachment from people who do not work in prisons. In this respect, a constant theme during the course of this study was that 'no one understands us'. There was also a sense that this aspect of their work compounds and fuels their sense of social isolation as it also impacts on their view of strangers:

Working as a prison officer has definitely changed how I view people. I used to be fairly happy go-lucky but now I'm careful who I mix with. You have to be careful in this job and know who you're talking to outside of the job. To be honest I really only hang around with other officers because they're the only ones who really get it. I suppose I'm a bit suspicious of outsiders, even if they are friendly.

In many ways, their sense of isolation and mistrust of strangers further fuels a suspicious, cynical and risk aware approach that extends beyond the gate of the prison.

Paranoia or a heightened sense of awareness?

Reflecting the 'danger' dimension of their work, when asked whether they had been changed by the job most of the sample initially referred to a heightened sense of security awareness, especially when out in public:

I think I've changed and I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. My brother and I were walking down the street and all I could see was junkies, thieves and handbag

snatchers...All he could see was people going about their business on a lovely sunny day...but he's a civvie, he wouldn't see what you or I can see would he?

It became clear that the majority of the participants viewed this element of change in themselves as a positive attribute. Most of the sample portrayed a sense of pride in the enhanced way they could spot danger when compared to people who do not work in a prison environment:

Before I joined this job I lived in the black and white world, but now it's like I can see the grey. Let's face it, most people live in the black and white and don't see half the things we see outside...I suppose I'm just more security conscious than the usual punter. In many ways its good...I'm much less likely to get caught out. It's not paranoia; I'm just switched on all of the time, even when I'm not in work.

However, whilst most participants referred to their security consciousness as a '*heightened sense of awareness*' and a useful skill that had evolved during their working lives, others referred to how their partners or spouses considered this as a negative impact of their work:

...the last thing I do at night is check all the doors, it's no good if herself tells me she's done it, I have to check myself before I set the alarm. It drives her cracked; she really gets on my case about it. Before I started in this job it never bothered me but I couldn't sleep now if I didn't check myself. Even if my young fella was in late, I still have to go down and check myself. I think it's just a natural thing for us though isn't it? I don't think it's a bad thing; it's just me being safe.

Impacted upon by the security dimensions of their work, and by a commonly cited requirement to *always* be alert for danger while in work, it seems that this element of prison officer work also influences their behaviour outside the prison wall. Echoing their reluctance to directly discuss if they were ever afraid in their place of employment, it is apparent that while prison officers obviously need to be aware of *danger*, *fear* as an emotion must be suppressed at all times, even when off duty. The prevalent attitude amongst prison officers may be partially explained by Skolnik's (1975) assertion that danger is '*is so integral to the policeman's work that explicit recognition might reduce emotional barriers to work performance*'. It may also be impacted upon by prison officers internalising their occupational norms that dictate that prison officers should suppress any fears or anxieties, primarily through displaying what they perceive to be a masculine 'front'.

Suspiciousness, trust and inurement

It also became apparent that their constant awareness of potential dangers when off duty impacted on their levels of suspiciousness, particularly when interacting with strangers:

I'm definitely more suspicious now. I could be sitting in my sitting room and a car could drive past slow...and I'd have to get up and look out the window. I'd just have to know, in

my mind I know it's probably someone looking for an address, but I have to get up and look.

A majority of the interviewees attributed their increased suspiciousness and wariness of outsiders directly to their work and principally attributed their lack of trust to their interactions with prisoners during the course of their service:

I don't trust anyone, or expect anything from anyone inside or outside work. I suppose it's because of years interacting with prisoners, they'll always try and get one up on you if you let them. Well the public is the same isn't it? No one cares, they're all out to see what they can get. Human beings are capable of anything and at least in work you know what you are dealing with. Outside work you don't know who you are dealing with so I don't trust anyone, well at least until they've proved me wrong.

Reflecting the quote above, many of the officers interviewed described indicators of increased levels of suspicion and mistrust since joining the IPS. Most participants referred to how they automatically access any social interactions they may have and indicated that their preliminary approach to exchanges with strangers was one of mistrust. Perhaps impacted by their mistrust of the organisation and the people in their care, many officers articulated that establishing a person's 'trustworthiness' outside work was an imperative for them. In order to explain how they went about establishing whether or not they could trust someone, most interviewees responded by saying they 'weigh them up' or 'suss them out':

I think I view people outside work in a different way than I used to. It's all about their body language, well, it's everything about them really. It doesn't matter to me who they are, they could be a priest or the local bank manager and I still won't trust them...Well, not until I have figured them out you know? Like when I've figured out their motives and stuff.

As with their proclivity for constantly being aware of risks and for spotting danger, most officers in the sample regarded their increased suspiciousness and wariness of outsiders as a positive facet of their character:

So I don't trust people, so what? My girlfriend doesn't get it but she's so naïve she'd trust anyone. Fair enough I suppose but I won't be the one that gets caught out. They have to earn my trust and that can take a while, but no one will get one over on me easily.

Despite viewing their increased levels of mistrust and viewing that change as a positive benefit, several participants described how their lack of trust occasionally impacted negatively on their relationships with people outside of work:

Yeah, I'm suspicious, but sure what warder isn't? I'm definitely more suspicious than the average Joe Soap. My starting point is that they're lying to me and I work backwards from there. It drives my partner crazy, he can't understand it. He says that's why I have so few friends, because I always expect the worse from people. It really pisses him off.

While most participants regarded the change in their levels of mistrust and suspiciousness as positive, there are indicators that suggest that the spill over from their work can occasionally be damaging. Many staff indicated that the requirement to 'weigh people up' in work has also made them more suspicious of their partners and children:

I constantly have to weigh up people in work, especially the ones who are trying to condition or manipulate me. When I think about it, I think my default mode in work has become my default mode at home, it's like I've developed a routine of analysing everything that is said at home now as well. Well, maybe that's normal is it? Everyone has their motives and opinions. Just because they're family doesn't mean they aren't like everyone else.

Participants frequently referred to having to 'distance', 'switch off' or 'shield' themselves from prisoners. When talking to them about how this facet of their work impacted on their home life, most referred to a sense of getting 'harder' or 'tougher':

My wife and family would say I've changed, no doubt about it. The often tell me I've got harder, but I think that's just me you know? Well maybe they're right but it's not such a bad thing is it? To be tougher?

During the course of my study participants consistently stated that to deal with self-harm, fights, deaths and other critical incidents in their work, one had to put ones felt emotions aside in order to take charge of the situation. Informed by many conversations with prison staff, it is evident that this aspect of their work also carries into their interactions in their private lives. Many participants linked their increased level of inurement to a loss of naivety or innocence when they took up their roles:

Sure when I took up the job I was a red raw country boy, sure I'd rarely been out of [names town]. I'm a right different buck now though, some of the things I've seen since. It definitely makes you harder; sure you wouldn't survive for long in this job if you didn't toughen up. You see things in this job, it definitely changes the way you think.

In this regard participants also frequently referred to how the process driven nature of their work impacted on their approach to dealing with challenging incidents outside the prison environment. Several officers referred to instantly switching to 'operational mode' and subsequently emotionally detaching themselves from the situation, particularly when dealing with family bereavements:

Well, I don't think it's that I've got harder. It's more like switching to jailer mode and just dealing with the matter at hand. You know, the process. When Mum passed away I treated it the same way you do in work, you know, the process bit, organise the undertaker, organise the church and the flowers and all that. It's not that I didn't care, of course I did, but she was gone and there's no coming back from that. I looked up in the church at one stage and I was the only person in my family who wasn't crying. I suppose it's something I've developed over the years in work. It allows you to...cope

with the situation. I think if I wasn't like that it would have been much harder for me than it was.

Many Officers in the sample associated dealing with incidents in their personal lives with dealing with incidents in their work place, in that they approached both in a detached, process driven manner. A number of participants cited examples of how their partners viewed their detachment and inurement from emotional events as a negative facet of their personality:

My eldest girl didn't get into the college course she wanted and she was devastated, I mean, really torn up about it. I was telling her to brush it off and get on with the next one, you have to be resilient you know? I looked up and my husband was looking at me, like in surprise and...almost shock. I just stopped talking and I had to stop and search really deep to find empathy for how she was feeling...and approach her in a more sympathetic way. It made me realise that I have zero compassion at times, I just haven't got the patience for it, you know, it's like I've used it all up.

When given time to reflect, most of the officers related their detachment from personal events to their need to manage emotional incidents in work. While they recognised that they had become adept at reacting to critical events from a default position of detachment, and had become process driven in their approach to dealing with these situations, nearly all acknowledged that most people who do not work in prisons would generally respond emotionally to emotionally charged situations.

It is clear that while Irish prison officers considered that they were changed by their work, they view those changes as a set of *skills* they have developed and refined as a critical requirement of their profession. Furthermore, they view these alterations as a considerable advantage to them as private individuals in that the majority consider that their professional experience has provided them with an insight to human behaviour that others do not possess. In many ways however, it is evident that their increased levels of suspicion and mistrust, increased levels of cynicism and inurement can foster a situation that may lead to an ever reducing social circle and social bonds. Notwithstanding this potential hazard, the majority of the sample considered that the skills they had developed over the years, particularly the often cited insight they had developed into understanding human behaviour, was worth the associated costs.

It is clear that working in a prison is a complex task that requires a huge amount of personal resilience if the more damaging impacts of prison work are to be mitigated. Whilst a great deal of resources are utilised to ensure prison officers are trained to protect themselves from physical danger, there is less focus on protecting their psychological well-being. In Ireland this is changing and the dialogue is re-focussing on how we might care for the carers and a number of innovative strategies have been implemented to achieve this objective.

The use of Humour in Irish Prisons

Dr. Richard Roche, Assistant Governor, Irish Prison Service College.

A striking aspect of the prison environment and one which 'outsiders' frequently comment on, is the sense, and *use* of humour by both prison staff and prisoners. During the course of my study of Irish prison officers in 2016, it became evident that humour is a central strategy employed by prison officers for managing, communicating, disguising and expressing their emotions. Humour is also used as a tool for conveying values and sustaining group culture amongst prison officers. The use of humour is not only important for maintaining staff morale and solidarity, but also serves as a tool for 'surviving' demanding encounters and events. In this regard, understanding the use of humour in prisons can illuminate and provide clues as to how prison officers approach and feel about aspects of their work.

The use of humour in prisons is, like other dimensions of prison work, complex and uniquely shaped by the prison environment. It is interesting to witness recruit officers during their initial training, and particularly when they return from their 'familiarisation' period in a prison. Perhaps informed by their first experience of working in a prison for a short period, on return to the training centre recruit officers start to subconsciously 'practice' using humour with one another in preparation for 'real' confrontations with prisoners and staff when they return to the prison. This is a real need, as when new recruits take up their posts after initial training they undergo 'socialisation rites' and 'pranks' before they are accepted by the group. My study indicates that new entrants to the job have to quickly learn how to verbally joust with their colleagues, that is 'to be able to take it and give it back'. This element of their initiation is crucial, as it informs more established officers perceptions of the new entrant becoming 'one of them', and becoming an effective prison officer.

Much of what passes for 'slagging' in a prison environment can be viewed as an interactional exchange, as Irish prison staff tend to illustrate their intentions as either harmless amusement or serious by displaying verbal and non-verbal clues as to how their humour is to be interpreted. The often witnessed use of dark humour has been described as 'ritual insult exchange' where the humour deployed is a humour of cynicism and ridicule rather than light hearted jesting. The common use of 'put-down' humour generally manifests itself in exchanges between staff-staff, and occasionally staff-prisoners, in an attempt to derive amusement at the expense of someone else. In this respect, the more destructive use of abrasive humour, sometimes employed by experienced officers to 'get at' and 'test' new recruits, can have a very damaging effect upon the recipient. The use of put-down humour in prisons can also manifest itself in insulting nicknames and recruit officers are often judged by their more experienced colleagues as to how they cope with or 'take it' – if they get upset or angry, experienced officers may suspect their ability to deal with prisoners. In many ways, although humour in prisons can contribute greatly to staff morale, it can also be divisive and destructive.

However, the use of humour in Irish prisons is not confined to negativity. It is also used by prison officers as a defence mechanism to protect against the emotional distress generated by

the more challenging elements of their work. In this respect humour is used as a morale raiser, a pre-shift 'gee up' and a tool for releasing tension as staff leave the prison gate. When humour is employed by officers with prisoners, I found it interesting to witness how the use of humour often facilitates 'social spaces' where officers can briefly meet prisoners as equals. When humour is deployed in an appropriate way in officer-prisoner interactions it contributes to conflict avoidance and smoother daily relations between the two groups. Consequently, the use of humour allows prison staff and prisoners to briefly let their 'shield' down and expose *unofficial* features of themselves. In many ways this reduces the inequality that typifies their relationship. This aspect of their work requires a high level of emotional intelligence as prison officers have to be particularly careful in their 'verbal jousting' with prisoners. However, most Irish prison officers appear to be able to gauge which prisoners can appreciate this form of 'slagging' and which cannot.

My study indicates that the social norms and officer culture in Irish prisons requires prison officers to maintain a professional distance from prisoners, and consistently disguise their *felt* emotions in order to express their loyalty to the officer group. Nevertheless, the deployment of appropriate humour appears to allow prison officers to connect positively with prisoners without transgressing their accepted social norms for interaction.

The Emotional Domain of Irish Prisons

Dr. Richard Roche, Assistant Governor, Irish Prison Service College.

Deprivation of liberty is an indisputably weighty sanction and the 'pains of imprisonment' have been well documented. Goffman's (1961) depiction of a total institution illustrates some of the difficulties prisoners face, such as being isolated from the rest of society, losing their autonomy and being restricted from sustaining relationships with family and friends. In this respect, prisons are essentially *emotional* places for both staff and prisoners; perhaps the most compelling reason is that the primary function of the prison is to deprive large numbers of people of their liberty. Unlike police officers, prison staff often spend long periods of time with the same prisoners, many of whom have suffered addictions, obstacles and personal traumas during the course of their sentences. Consequently, staff-prisoner relationships are emotionally charged due to the degree of intimacy involved in working with prisoners. In this respect, prison work can be very challenging and the emotions generated by working in a prison are many and wide-ranging.

Within Irish prisons, prison officers commonly present themselves as authoritative, self-assured and emotionally detached. This totemic presentation infers that they engage in a number of emotion-work strategies in order to control the impressions they convey of themselves, both to their colleagues and to the prisoners in their care. This is perhaps understandable, as within the relatively small confines of Irish prisons almost all daily tasks undertaken by prison officers are

witnessed by the entire prison community. The impact of the inexorable prison wide focus on an officer's working image is compounded by their occupational requirement for a common approach and the preservation of prison staff solidarity. Pressured by the need to conform, when Irish prison officers do display emotion, they are cognisant of the prison's emotion display rules and only do so in areas and situations that are considered appropriate. By adapting to the norms of their occupational group over time, Irish prison staff develop strategies to manage their emotions. In this regard, the majority of officers manage their *felt* emotions by deploying coping stratagems such as the use of humour, suppression of their felt emotions, depersonalisation and detachment.

Prison officer culture also transfers to prison officers' interactions outside their work as the emotions that working in a prison generates are difficult to leave at the prison gate. Four key dimensions of their work, namely danger, routinisation, desensitisation and contamination lead to high levels of role engulfment and minimises their ability to come out of role when not in work. The majority of participants in my study stated that they have been 'changed' by their work. Most officers indicated that their levels of suspicion, mistrust, cynicism and inurement for example, have increased as a result of the work they do. Interestingly, the majority of officers I interviewed view the changes that have occurred to them as a distinct advantage, that is, changes to be celebrated rather than regretted. Whilst the majority of officers expressed that their partners, spouses, friends or children frequently viewed their role engulfment as a negative phenomenon, they portrayed a set of *skills* they have developed and refined over a number of years. Notwithstanding their positive views, my study illustrates that many Irish prison officers are deeply impacted by their job.

Utilising the concept of emotional labour as an investigative lens to view and understand their world has furthered my understanding of the sociological realm of Irish prison officers. The men and women who work in Irish prisons have my deepest respect.

The working norms of Irish prison officers

Richard Roche

During the course of my 2016 study of Irish Prison officers and their work, it became apparent that there are a number of specific working norms that Irish prison officers are *generally* expected to observe; always go to the assistance of a colleague if they are in danger; never inform on a colleague or provide evidence against them; never censure a colleague in front of a prisoner; always support an officer if they are in disagreement with a prisoner; always back officer sanctions against a prisoner; maintain solidarity against all outside groups and demonstrate concern and/or provide practical assistance to a colleague who needs it. However, as with everything within the prison environment, not everything about prison officer work behaviour is straight forward. Prison officers are a heterogeneous group and subsequently

there are often limitations to individual officer's adherence to the norms outlined above. For example, the working norm to always go to an officer's aid when in danger, while on the surface appears to be a given, has certain limitation, particularly if it places the respondent to an alarm in danger:

...this is a given in most circumstances but you always have to think that it might be a situation when you'd have to consider that you could become part of the problem...like being taken hostage, otherwise it's just yes, of course.

Of course you are going to run to an alarm, you have to. But I don't run in like John Wayne you know? You have to weigh up the situation first and make sure you don't get hurt as well.

This element of prison officer working norms was consistently cited by prison staff as the most important requirement of a colleague. Whilst it was observed that some older officers, or officers that were unfit or overweight, knew they would not and could not be the first 'on the scene', it was imperative to them that they were *seen* by their colleagues to respond. Similarly, the working norm of not giving evidence against a fellow officer is also generally regarded as a key expectation of prison officer behaviour:

...there is a big taboo about breaking ranks, even when there might be serious sanction involved. Most officers would probably be reluctant to 'spill the beans' on a colleague they were in conflict with, even if they were the injured party or facing discipline.

This dimension of prison officer working norms also has limitations however, particularly if the accused officer was considered to have '*gone over to the other side*':

Well, not ratting may be the expected norms for less serious issues but staff here have a zero tolerance for issues like trafficking of contraband and other similar very serious breaches of discipline. If someone trafficked drugs for example they'd just hang him out to dry.

Most staff related the next three working norms; to never admonish a colleague in front of a prisoner; always support an officer if they are in disagreement with a prisoner and always back officer sanctions against a prisoner, to a need for officers to present a 'united front' against prisoners:

The main reason why we back an officer when he is in disagreement with a prisoner is based on showing support and unity in front of the prisoner rather than to support the officer's argument or view. In many cases where an officer exaggerates an incident, his colleagues will openly criticize his claim, but only when away from prisoners. You have to present a united front. You might tear a hole in em later though!

However, some officers cited examples of when this working norm was breached, and usually related it to officers attempting to 'get one over' on their colleagues:

Never censure a colleague in front of a prisoner? Well, I have witnessed over time the erosion of this statement. In my view it could be construed as an act of bullying in attempt to belittle the officer in front of prisoners. This says more about being unprofessional and possibly ignorant individuals. It may also be of course that individual stress levels have increased.

Notwithstanding these statements, the majority of the officers in the sample consistently articulated their need to stand 'together'. It was evident that this element of prison officer working norms helps sustain the occupational group's solidarity. Most of the officers related this requirement to them not being 'understood' by outsiders, or to the 'danger' element of their work:

...we tend to feel that unless you do the job you don't really understand it. Imagining what it's like to work in a prison and actually working in one are light years apart...we need to stick together, you have to feel safe and know that your buddies have got your back.

Echoing the quote above, it was observed throughout the course of my research that Irish prison officers 'look after each other', even when they may not personally like the officer who is need of their help. This element of prison officer working norms contributes greatly to their solidarity and sustains the culture of the occupational group:

...as you know the jailer will take up a collection or donate leave or in the case of one man I know the staff worked his Sundays for him while he was on compassionate leave so that he would still get his allowance. The colloquialism "we look after our own" probably sums it up.

Their collective display infers that Irish prison officers engage in a number of emotion-work strategies. My study illustrates that the emotion-work strategies Irish prison staff employ to cope with the demands of their work can negatively impact on their approach to their role, and seep into their private lives through their social interactions, family life and friendships.