



Managing Difficult Inmates

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SIG 3: Who are we?



What was the function of the group?

The group's function was to work together to deliver three documents

1. A document comparing the models of practice currently employed by European countries in managing difficult inmates.
2. A document outlining minimum standards that should apply for training staff to work with this cohort.
3. A handbook/practical guide outlining how training for staff can be implemented.

How did we create the documents?

- Two face to face meetings in March and October (2 days each time)
- Three virtual meetings (a half day each time)
- Plenty of discussion; **we had more in common than not!**

Who are difficult inmates?

“Difficult inmates are a particular cohort of people who present serious problems to prison management, prison staff, other prisoners and themselves, through (repeated) violent behaviour. The focus is on those prisoners who display such high levels of violence that require them to be removed from general population, and placed in a more secure location and with higher staffing levels in an effort to address their violent and disruptive behaviour”

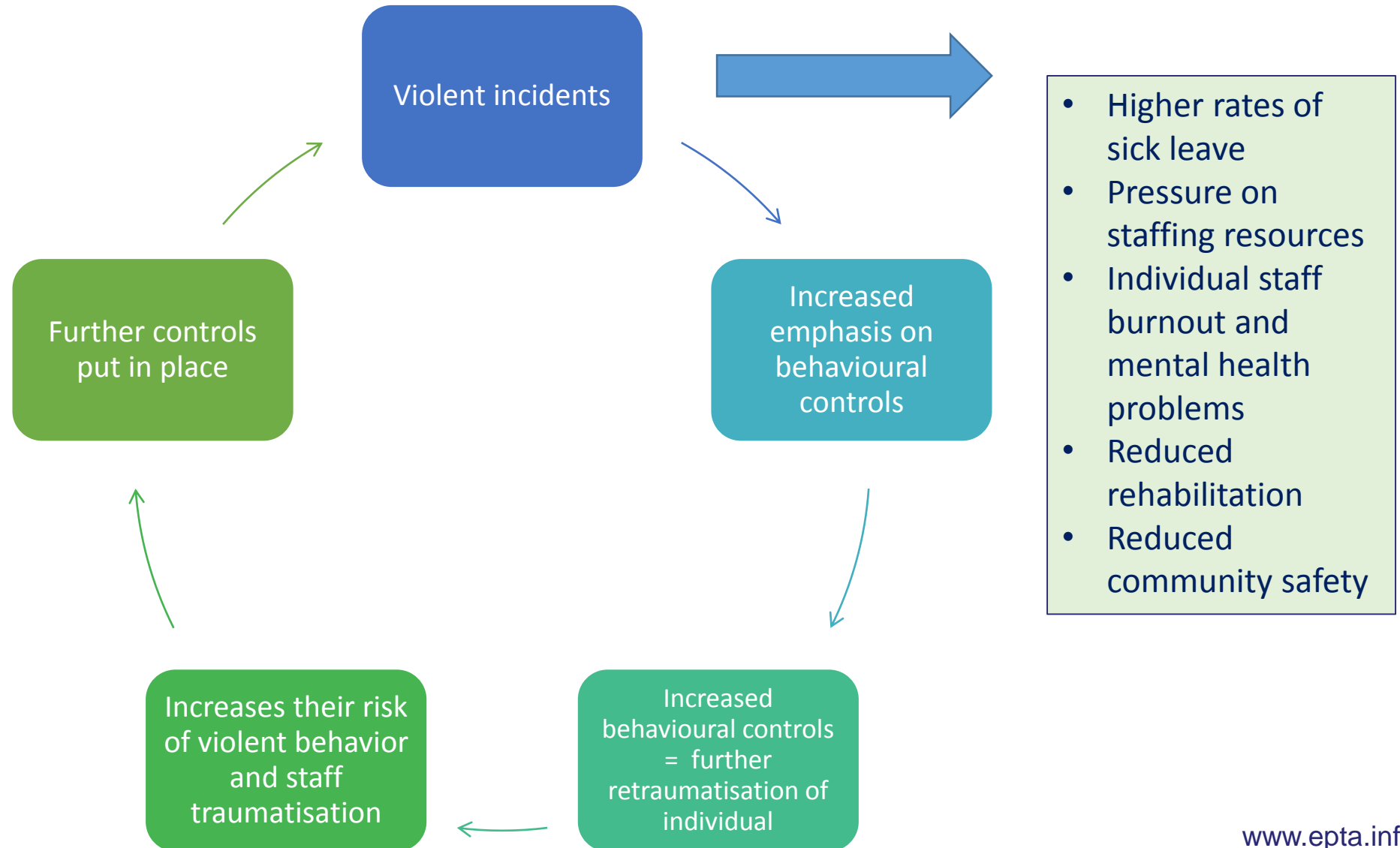


What are the challenges of working with difficult inmates?

For the organisation...

- Decreased safety in the workplace leads to increased stress and burnout among staff.
- Increased number of staff injured through violent incidences.
- Both contribute to increased numbers of staff on sick leave and the amount of money spent on sick leave payments
- Increased resources required to manage the person safely e.g. numbers of officers during out of cell time, time taken up changing in and out of PPE if required.

What are the challenges of working with difficult inmates?



Why is specialist training necessary?

- Improved skills in dynamic risk assessment
- Improved skills in security procedures (relational, physical, procedural).
- Improved skills in effective communication.
- Increased self awareness and staff supports = improved stress management, lower levels of sick leave and costs for the organisation.



Safer working environments for staff working with high risk prisoners

Improved rehabilitation

Safer communities

Document 1: Cross European comparison of current practices



What did we have in common?

- Emphasis on integrating security (dynamic, relational, procedural).
- Emphasis on an MDT approach.
- Understanding why individuals become violent.
- Building awareness of the impact on staff and supporting them through supervision, debriefing etc.



Document 2: Minimum standards of specialist training

A blue-tinted photograph of two people walking up a staircase. The person in front is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants, and the person behind is wearing a dark jacket and dark pants. The staircase has metal railings and a textured surface. The background is a bright blue sky. A solid orange horizontal bar is positioned below the text.

Minimum standards recommendations

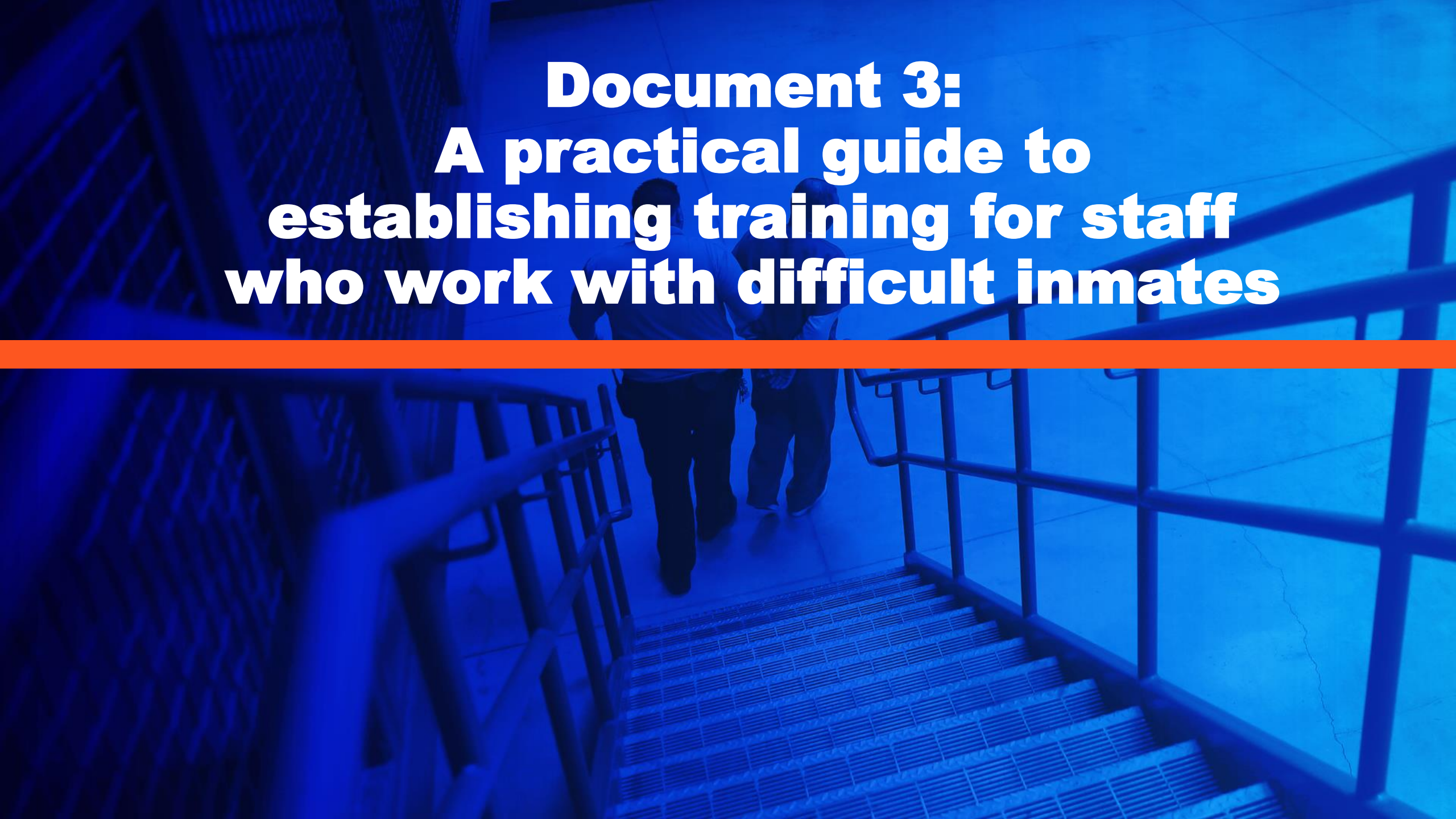
- Staff selection – CoE and UNODC guidelines
- Code of Ethics - CoE Code of Ethics, European Prison Rules, UNODC Handbook on the Mgmt. of High Risk Prisoners,
- Staff support – training, supervision, peers support, rotation
- Equality, diversity and inclusion – an important reminder!!



Minimum standards recommendations (cont.)

- Trauma informed custody - ACES, prison as a traumatic working and living environment
- Communication and interactions with difficult inmates – building understanding
- Accreditation of trainers and evaluation of training, participants
- Risk – holistic assessment and mgmt.
- Security procedures – physical, relational and procedural





Document 3:
**A practical guide to
establishing training for staff
who work with difficult inmates**

The Handbook

Identifies additional components to be incorporated into training by jurisdictions that have resources to do so in areas of

- Staff selection
- Training objectives/pedagogy
- Methodology
- Evaluation

2 examples of full training programmes from Ireland and France are included



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Example Training modules from Irish Prison Service	
Introduction to the unit/service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture & ethos • Overview of operating manual(s) • Policies and procedures • Staff Wellbeing Strategies
Understanding violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors, protective factors and functions of violence • Recognising signs of aggression • Attachment theory • Trauma informed Care (impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences – ACEs)
Effective communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-escalation techniques (preventing and managing violence) • Non-Verbal Communication • Active Listening • Empathy • Officer/Prisoner Relationships • Avoiding re-traumatizing
Risk assessment and risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating information (security and operational information, psychological knowledge)

Example from the French Prison Service

Understanding institutional framework and procedures of the unit

- Welcome and introduction
- Understanding violence
- Trauma and personality disorder among offenders
- MDT care plans for violent prisoners
- Dynamic security
- Prevention of critical incidents

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

- Non violent communication
- Stress management
- Physical intervention techniques to control and restrain



THANK YOU!



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