RESTORATIVE PRACTICES
EPTA Cross-border training event, May 17th – 18th 2023
Portlaoise, Irish Prison Service College

Speakers	*External speakers:* - Dr Ian D. Marder, Maynooth University (expert on restorative practices in prison settings); - Dr Joe Garrihy, Maynooth University (expert on prison officer culture); - Dr Fionnuala Brennan, South East Technological University (University delivers 25% of the prison officers' training in Ireland). *From the Irish Prison Service College* - John Flavin; - Paraic Rooney; - Padraic Carty; - Fergal Dermody; - Claire Casey; - James Tuohey; - Sarah Jane Craddock.
Abbreviations	RP: Restorative Practices RJ : Restorative Justice CoE : Council of Europe IPSC: Irish Prison Service College SETU: South East Technological University
Report writers	Cédric Le Bossé (Enap), Justina Dzienko (EuroPris), Lisanne Veldt (Netherlands Helsinki Committee)
Programme	**Restorative Practices in Prison Settings?** • What are restorative practices? • What are the principles and skills involved in restorative practices? • How can restorative practices be used in prison settings? **Restorative Practices and Prison Cultures** • What does research tell us about prison culture? • What does research tell us about prison officers' occupational culture? • How important are staff-prisoner relationships? • What is a 'prison social climate' and • What are the implications for the quality of staff and prison life? • What are the implications for restorative practices **Restorative Practices Training** • Restorative Approach • What RP is not • Conscious building of relationships • Fairness • Restorative Language

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- Relationship Window
- RP Questions
- Restorative Meetings
- Restorative Conversations
- Introduction to Circles
- Problem solving circle

Restorative practices as a pedagogical tool
- How can restorative practices be used in educational contexts?
- How have the IPSC and SETU used restorative practices as a pedagogical tool?
- What has been their experience of doing so?
- What would you need to do to use restorative practices as a pedagogical tool in your training academy?

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Organisers	Name	Organisation	Country
	Justina Dzienko	EuroPris & EPTA	The Netherlands
	Lisanne Veldt	Netherlands Helsinki Committee & EPTA	The Netherlands
	John Flavin	Irish Prison Service & EPTA	Ireland
	Cédric Le Bossé	French National correctional administration Academy (ÉNAP) & EPTA	France
Participants	**Mark Delaney**	Irish Prison Service	Ireland
	Andryco Muuga	Academy of Security Sciences	Estonia
	Kraus Kaarel	Academy of Security Sciences	Estonia
	Samih Hutchison	French National correctional administration Academy (ÉNAP)	France
	Lucie Martin	French correctional administration	France
	Sophie Derenne	French correctional administration	France
	Cátia Vera Cruz	Portuguese Prison System (DGRSP)	Portugal
	Mário Casinha	Portuguese Prison System (DGRSP)	Portugal
	Crina Calenciuc	the educational center Buziaș (Centrul Educativ Buziaș)	Romania
	Sebastian Ciprian Sabau	National Correctional Officers Training School	Romania
	Mihaela Petre	National Administration of Penitentiaries	Romania
	Petrut Dinca	National Administration of Penitentiaries	Romania
	Guillermo Diaz Garcia	General Secretary of Penitentiary Institutions	Spain

	Igor Fúska	Remand Prison and Prison Leopoldov	Slovakia
	Lubomír Čornák	Training Centre in Nitra	Slovakia
	Matthias Bastian	Waldeck prison	Germany (Mecklenburg – Vorpommern)
	Eric Schröter	Stralsund prison	Germany (Mecklenburg – Vorpommern)
	Karin Streuling	Neustrelitz prison	Germany (Mecklenburg – Vorpommern)
	Lars Dietze	Main Prison of Bremen	Germany (Bremen)

Summary of the training content

Methodology

Participants were guided by the lecturers and speakers through the two days with a combination of slides, exchanges, exercises and circles in order to facilitate experiential learning. Gathered in a circle, so as to reflect the method of the restorative practices (RP) and the training delivered by the Irish Prison Service College (IPSC), the participants were asked by the group leaders & speakers to open and close each session sharing something about themselves on a given topic or by giving their level of energy from 1 to 10. In addition, the participants had the chance to visit the prison next to the training academy: the Midlands Prison. Participants appreciated this very much and lively discussions took place during these days.

Restorative practices (RP) in prison settings

RP are based on a language that helps us develop positive relationships within communities, understand each other's needs and perspectives, solve problems to prevent conflict from occurring and resolve conflict in a healthy way when it arises. It is different from restorative justice (RJ) but is largely based on the same principles and appears in the Council of Europe (CoE) recommendation on RJ in criminal matters.

The RP principles aim to ask all criminal justice professionals to:

- Invest time in building relationships;
- Use non-judgemental and respectful language;
- Make decisions in ways experienced as fair;
- Use dialogue to help people participate in identifying and meeting their needs;
- Repair harm and resolve conflict in a heathy way when it arises.

In practice, different formats of RP are used, for example: language, conversations, circles, meetings and conferences.

The circle format of the RP and its modalities aim to set a precedent that everyone's voice is equally important and to build relationship for a better group cohesion. It creates a safe area for emotions and points of view without pressure participate. From the discussion with participants, it became clear that some other prisons systems also organized RP circles to build understanding, not only between staff and inmates but also between staff and management, such as the Viru Prison of Estonia.

RP can be used to resolve a conflict or give feedback but also in a proactive way to build and maintain relationships and for decision making. Dr Marder mentioned the work written by Alison Liebling, David Price and Guy Shefer, "The prison officer" (2001), which describes what a safe prison environment is. One of the main ideas is that the work product of prison officers is personal interactions, not security or control. The notion of relationships was also discussed: i.e. how staff relate during sustained periods of interaction (social practice around everyday tasks and relationships developed as a result).

Conflict prevention and resolution being a component of RP, the research carried out by Dr Kimmett Edgar was mentioned as well, stating that the most effective strategies to prevent prison violence are based on resolving conflicts among people in prison before they escalate. His research confronts traditional strategies and conflict centred strategies on security.

Debates ensued in the room on the nature of relationships in prison services and the kind of conflicts that arise. Some participants expressed how similar some of our problems are while others pointed out some major differences in the national contexts making the implementation of RP different (e.g. number of inmates to oversee, number of staff, overcrowding). John Flavin, IPSC governor, stressed that the Irish prison system heavily relies on the principle "every contact counts", especially when dealing with overcrowding. RP are part of the training delivered in Ireland, for example for the following target groups/trainings:
- RP for one to one use;
- Training tutors in RP;
- Staff of the National Violence Reduction Unit (NVRU);
- A Peer mediation programme;
- Focus groups & workshops for service level strategy;
- Training for senior managers.

Restorative Practices and Prison Cultures
A debate was carried out on the issue of prison cultures. They constitute barriers to change as it actively shapes us and lead us to interpret situation.

The way we listen, for example, has an impact on relationship building. There are two types of listening: listening to interrupt and listening to understand. RP does not aim to change the person but rather change how we work. The way we express our expectations and support has an important impact. Our set of skills and value-based philosophy contribute to efficient RP. Different values are considered: respect (each person's voice, aspiration regardless of their past actions), interconnectedness (acknowledging similarities), fairness, personal accountability, honesty, collaboration, problem solving. RP does not abolish or reduce the consequences of one's action or one's responsibility.

Research was carried out in different countries, which proves the benefits of RP, such as improved staff moral and relationships between staff and prisoners, reduced workplace conflicts, disciplinary incidents and reoffending.

Researching applications in prison settings
There is some evidence of the application of RP in prison settings. One example lies in Northern-Ireland. A 'very encouraging' evaluation by Maghaberry reduced 'keep-aparts' by 27% and a

'restorative landing' in which staff facilitated daily staff-prisoner circles and used restorative practice to respond to incidents (Eagleson, 2022).

A EuroPris survey KMS (see here, 2021) showed that prison services in several countries (e.g. Italy, France, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and Spain) used restorative practices to respond to breaches of discipline, to resolve conflict and/or to support pre-release.

A study in England (Calkin, 2021: 92) found 'benefits experienced by both residents and staff when RP is implemented well, that RP delivers and supports a culture fairness, avoiding or defusing confrontation and contributing to constructive approaches to prison and post-release life and relationships.

Restorative Practices Training
A toolkit on RP was designed for different formats and modalities. It varies on its level of formality and target audience (universal or targeted):
- Restorative language (Expressing feelings and needs to promote connection and build relationships);
- Restorative conversations (One to one ; to manage conflict or provide positive feedback);
- Restorative Circles (facilitating groups to build relationships and/or solve problems);
- Restorative meetings (addressing conflict between individuals or groups);
- Restorative Conferences (addressing wrongdoing and repairing harm).

The issue of reluctant participants was addressed (for example, a non-adhering inmate). In prison settings, the behaviour and conversation skills of the prison staff (with RP) will model (through repetition if need be).

The "pyramid of restorative responses" presented by the speakers establishes different levels regarding relationships when it comes to RP: it can repair relationships (when wrongdoing occurred), maintain relationships (minor conflicts and problem solving addressed in restorative meetings) and make/develop relationship.

Another value was discussed, namely that being fair is not equality. It is not an attitude. "It's a professional skill that must be developed and exercised" (Brit Hume). It can be applied through engagement (involving everyone), explanation (shared understanding; what are your needs) and expectation clarity (clear vision for the future). With RP, we understand that actions and behaviours are but the symptoms of needs and feelings.

Restorative conversations
Elements of RP:
- making a non-judgemental observation about what happened;
- Saying how you feel;
- Connecting feelings with needs (observation + feeling + need : "I feel frustrated that I am not being heard because I need us to be able to talk");
- Making doable requests that are clear, concrete, positive and action language ("requests may sound like demands when unaccompanied by the speaker's feelings and needs").

Restorative Questions:
- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about it since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

Principles of RP:
⇨ Observation without blame: we seek understanding rather than blame;
⇨ Keeping the dialogue / relationship sustained;
⇨ Separating the person from their behaviour;
⇨ Objective and respectful;
⇨ Allowing everyone to tell their story;
⇨ Supporting people to listen to each other;
⇨ Take everyone from the past (what happened) to the future (solution focused and repairing harm);
⇨ Support people to empathise with each other;
⇨ Support people to take responsibility for their actions;
⇨ Using them consistently promotes fairness.

Format of the conversation:
- The restorative questions provide the structure and language;
- Prepare what you are going to say;
- Begin the conversation by answering the first five questions yourself;
- If necessary asking the other person all six questions;
- Seeking agreement about what needs to happen next.

Role-play was used in groups of two in order to test these modalities using scenarios (simulating an issue to address using RP). Dr Brené Brown was mentioned as an interesting reference, with works on how we consciously/unconsciously direct blame.

Restorative circles
Aims:
- Build community feeling connected (sense of belonging);
- Engage everyone in the group;
- Promote a sense of shared ownership;
- Promote equality;
- Build trust;
- Encourage development of empathy;
- Promote and practice use of emotional language;
- Develop problem solving skills.

What it can be used for:

- Relationship building (through check- ins /outs, go arounds, shared experiences, explored opinions, exchanged ideas);
- Reinforcing norms (plan and discuss expectations, behaviours and procedures, evaluate work, set goals, monitor progress, give feedback);
- Problem solving (addressing behaviour issues, reflecting on incidents, group and peer problem solving);
- Responding to an incident (healing, support).

Types of restorative circles:
- Go arounds (in sequence, high participation, general topics, responding to prompts, introductions) ;
- Popcorn circles (less structured: not in a particular order, participation encouraged but not mandatory, also with interested parties);
- Highly structured (formal, tightly facilitated, problem solving).

Rules:
- Consider and share the intention when beginning;
- Procedures are in place (listening piece, order of speaking);
- Ground principles: respect, listening, no interruptions, confidentiality;
- In a shape allowing all to be seen and heard by everyone;
- Models with a facilitator; Supporters if necessary;
- Preparing topics beforehand with a layered approach;
- Maintain focus & encourage participation;
- Check ins, and check outs.

"Problem solving fishbowl circle"
It is another version of the restorative circle that tackles individual problems, stressing on the "here & now" with agreed upon rules and a facilitator that keeps the rules.

- Person seeking help has 5 min. to explain the problem;
- Helpers (inner/outer circle) have up to 5 min. to ask questions for clarification or understanding the problem only (no opinions allowed);
- The helpers have then 10 min to make suggestions about what to do to sort the problem out. These are made by beginning with "try....";
- The person with the problem does not respond (no discussion – they write suggestions);
- Person seeking help tells 3 things he keeps (not explaining why);
- Facilitator asks if they need support and how they will celebrate once the issue is resolved.

Restorative practices as a pedagogical tool
Rul-Ilhan's research on the use of RP (2019) was discussed, specifically on group cohesion to illustrate that task (organisational modalities) & climate (social & affective levels) are of equal importance in classrooms.

Small groups were set up to discuss the use of RP in training settings. Tutors have an important role and can use a restorative approach through the demonstration of an understanding of how people

feel, by building, maintaining and repairing relationships and in helping recruits understand the impact of their actions on others.

- Establishing norms for training environments: how should we be when we are together;
- Use circles in classrooms: how do we structure learning conversations;
- Repairing harm in training environments: what do we do something goes wrong.