

Well-being Training in France (ENAP – National Correctional Administration Academy)

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The French penitentiary administration faces growing challenges that affect staff well-being, as evidenced by increasing sick leave and suicide rates. Staff are often reluctant to discuss their difficulties, highlighting the need to train management personnel in supporting their teams and managing their own well-being.

Training on Psychosocial Risks

This course introduces prison administration staff to mental health concepts. It helps identify psychosocial risk factors in the workplace and understand how they may manifest.

While this awareness training is available to all staff, it is more in-depth for trainee directors. It encourages reflection on potential prevention strategies and introduces evaluation tools such as the “Document for the Assessment of Occupational Risks” (DUERP - Document Unique d’Évaluation des Risques Professionnels) and “Prevention of Occupational Risks and Improvement of Working Conditions” (PAPRI Pact - Prévention des Risques Professionnels et d’Amélioration des Conditions de Travail), which can support them in these efforts.

Initial Mental Health Support

This new ENAP course targets prison service directors and directors of Insertion and Probation. Its objectives are to:

- Acquire basic knowledge of mental health disorders and crises, and how to identify them
- Develop interpersonal skills: listen without judgment, reassure, and adopt appropriate supportive behaviour

- Provide information on available resources and encourage seeking professional help; in crisis situations, refer to the most appropriate service
 - Better manage aggressive behaviour
 - Master an action plan for providing immediate mental health support
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Conducting Mediation in a Professional Context ([ENAP link](#))

Mediations are conducted by volunteer staff who have completed qualifying training at ENAP. Participation is voluntary and not mandatory.

Mediators operate independently of their institutional roles. They may be contacted by their own or neighbouring institutions within their Interregional Directorate under an agreement.

Mediation involves several stages, including individual interviews with the parties involved to help them find solutions. The initial preparatory interview explains the mediation process, allowing participants to opt out if they wish.

Contrary to common belief, a joint meeting between parties is not required and only occurs if it benefits the situation.

Key Principles of Mediation in a Professional Context (MCP)

- The mediation framework is non-negotiable
 - Mediator training is mandatory
 - Participation is voluntary, and withdrawal is always possible
 - All parties must be fully informed about the process
 - Active participation is required from all involved
 - Specifications may be adjusted by mediators if necessary
 - Communication about the program must remain discreet
 - Mediators work with a network of professionals (doctors, social workers, occupational physicians, etc.)
 - ENAP management is responsible for overseeing the mediation framework
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Guidelines for Management Staff to Support Staff and Third-Party Victims of Incidents

In recent years, prisons have experienced serious incidents that endangered lives and caused physical and psychological trauma. Some staff also faced difficult legal proceedings.

It is crucial to distinguish between incident management and victim support. The latter involves actions to individually support and accompany affected staff, partners, or stakeholders over time.

This includes diagnosing, assessing, and treating both physical and emotional injuries. Psychological, emotional, and material support is essential to aid recovery and prevent long-term mental health consequences for victims and their colleagues.

The document titled *“Guide for Supporting Prison Staff, Partners, and Stakeholders Affected by Incidents”* provides clear, essential guidelines for supporting recovery. It is part of the national strategy to combat violence.

There is no fixed threshold of violence that triggers the guide’s protocol, as experiences vary by individual. Management must adapt to each case. However, the guide’s measures apply regardless of context or timeline.

Support includes assistance during arrest, preparation for return, and long-term follow-up. Annexes detail steps based on the role of the person in charge, with the first section focused on direct or indirect victims.

To simplify the process, the guide includes copies of necessary documents.

Continuous Professional Training

The prison administration offers ongoing training for directors to strengthen their knowledge and confidence in supporting individuals with psychological needs and in applying prevention techniques.

- **Mental Health First Aid** – International training open to all
- **T.O.P. Training (Techniques for Optimizing Potential)** – A set of mental strategies to manage stress, reduce fatigue, and improve efficiency

Additional specialized courses can be organized based on the specific needs of an institution, especially following incidents.

Supporting Tools

Case studies are used in training to help future directors work through real-life scenarios and develop management strategies.

Discussing mental health can be difficult, especially for those unfamiliar with the topic. Tools like the **Wellness Action Plan** are introduced to facilitate conversation and build confidence.

Learners are also encouraged to develop a prevention plan based on their field experience, helping them create practical, workplace-appropriate strategies.

Finally, websites like **Mental Health First Aid** provide accessible information and resources for everyone.