



PPROMPT

Peer Pro-Social Modeling in Probation

PEER-SOCIAL MODELING IN PROBATION CURRICULUM



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Foreword

This Peer-social Modeling in Probation Curriculum was developed by was developed by Ankara Denetimli Serbestlik Müdürlüğü, a partner in the project Peer Pro-Social Modeling in Probation – PPRMPT – No. 2017-1-TR01-KA204-046684, financed by ERASMUS + programme.

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PPROMPT – Peer Pro-Social Modeling in Probation – project (more details on www.prosocial-modeling.org) is co-financed by the European Commission under the “ERASMUS+ KA2 - Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education. It brings together state and private actors working in the criminal justice field, to improve the offenders’ rehabilitation by developing new, innovative and integrated approaches to the adult education field in probation settings.

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Background

The project Peer Pro-Social Modeling in Probation (PPROMPT) aims to structure a peer pro-social modelling, through the development and implementation in probation systems enhancing both the competencies of management and probation experts to address offenders' needs.

This project **seeks to explore and implement an approach that builds social capital and resilience** within people that are under probational measures. **Specific goals include:**

1. **To develop andragogical materials** (manuals and programme contents) that support training for both staff and management in the field of peer training and pro-social model interventions;
2. **To develop and pilot a "train the trainer" course for probation workers in each country**, giving them the ability to train, continuously, selected well-behaved offenders on peer training and pro-social modelling;
3. **To train the selected poll of inmates in each country on pro-social modeling and peer training**, under the supervision of the probation trainers
4. **To analyse the pilot sessions and revise the manuals** accordingly before disseminating the programme.

PPROMPT project aims to develop the following Intellectual Outputs:

IO1 - Literature review on best practices of adult peer training in probation systems;

IO2 - Meta-analysis on best practice of pro-social modeling in probation systems;

IO3 - Preparation of the Peer-Social Modeling in Probation Curriculum;

IO4 – Preparation of "Peer Trainer's Manual";

IO5 - Preparation of "Pro-Social Modeling" Manual;

IO6 - Preparation of the Train the trainer course material for probation experts;

IO7 - Train the trainer course for the offenders.

Introduction

In order to decrease levels of offending, it is necessary to recognise the methods that are effective in achieving this goal. Many studies were conducted to gain an understanding on how offending can be reduced. If punishment is being used to reduce crime through deterrence, then there should be empirical support for this method, which actually is not the case. Doll (1936) suggested that it is necessary to address not only the criminal's character defects and mental complexities, but also practical skills and spiritual attitudes before releasing them into society. To elicit a change in pro-criminal attitudes, skills development are necessary to desist from offending in the future.

A range of accredited cognitive behavioural programmes aimed at reducing re-offending by addressing offender thought processes and behaviours. However, as clearly noticed by field workers, even accredited programmes do not work for all offenders all the time (Andrews & Bonta, 1995; Marshall et al., 2003). For example, reductions in reoffending were not found for low risk or high risk offenders in Friendship et al.'s study (2003) and medium-high risk offenders who participated in a programme were found to be significantly more likely to re-offend than their medium-high risk counterparts (Falshaw et al., 2003).

Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

“What Works?” approach in the rehabilitation of offenders has received attention in the last few decades. Improvements in treatment effectiveness have been found with the use of Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principles (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). The Risk principle (Andrews & Bonta, 2010) highlights the need to match the duration and intensity of treatment to the risk level of an offender and the need principle states that treatment should address an offender's criminogenic needs to reduce the likelihood of a re-offence taking place. The risk principle refers to the intensity of intervention required; the higher the risk an offender is thought to pose, the greater the intensity of treatment that should be provided. The need principle refers to addressing the criminogenic needs of the offender, which are potentially changeable, demonstrated predictors of recidivism.

The general responsivity principle within the RNR model (Andrews & Bonta, 2010), states that the delivery of treatment programs should be tailored to the abilities and learning style of an offender which has a power of reducing the risk of re-offending (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

There is a need to assess offender characteristics in order to match the treatment provided to the offender (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). For example, characteristics such as learning difficulties, mental health problems, social skills deficits, personality traits, and pro-crime needs should be considered when making decisions about the interventions and the order they should be provided to the offender should be planned (Ward et al., 2004). Level of motivation to change should be considered as the major factor when delivering treatment. In accordance with the responsivity principle the suggestion is made that, when sequencing interventions, a lack of motivation should be addressed prior to a specific criminogenic need (McMurrin & Ward, 2010).

The responsivity principle proposes that it is essential to consider “which methods work best, for which types of offenders, and under what conditions or in what types of setting” (Palmer, 1975). In short, the principle indicates a need to match the delivery style of treatment programs to the individual offender (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

General responsivity highlights the need for cognitive-behavioural and cognitive social learning strategies in the treatment of offending. Specific responsivity states that certain offender characteristics are likely to impact on how willing or able an offender is to take part in a treatment program and how effective the program will be for him or her. Andrews and Bonta (2010) cite cognitive/interpersonal skill level (e.g., empathy), interpersonal anxiety, antisocial personality pattern, weak social support for change, gender, age, ethnicity, mental disorder, motivation, and strengths as factors that need to be addressed in rehabilitation.

Andrews and Bonta (2010) provide a summary of risk/need factors associated with offending known as the Central Eight comprising of The Big Four (considered to be the major risk/need factors) and The Moderate Four thought to have an impact upon recidivism but to a lesser extent. The Big Four (found to have the greatest predictive value) are: a history of antisocial behaviour (e.g., a high number of preconvictions, young age of first offence, and criminal versatility); antisocial personality pattern (e.g., a lack of self-control and difficulty coping); antisocial cognition (e.g., procriminal beliefs and attitudes); and antisocial associates (e.g., friends and/or family members who support criminal activity). The Moderate Four risk/need factors are: family/marital issues (e.g., relationship difficulties); education/employment difficulties; substance abuse (i.e., misuse of drugs and/or alcohol); and leisure/recreation (i.e., a lack of participation in non-criminal activities).

Table 1. The Central Eight risk/needs factors

	History of antisocial behaviour – this includes early involvement in the offending behaviour, early age of onset, history of probation or parole violations etc.	Needs to be addressed- Build noncriminal alternative behaviour in risky situations
The Big Four	Antisocial personality pattern – being impulsive, adventurous, pleasure-seeking, restless, aggressive, callous disregard for others etc.	Build problem-solving skills, self-management skills, anger management and coping skills
	Antisocial cognition – includes attitudes, values, beliefs, rationalizations and personal identity that are favourable to crime. Cognitive-emotional states associated with crime are: anger, resentful and defiant.	Reduce antisocial cognition, recognize risky thinking and feeling, build up alternativeless risky thinking and feeling adopt a reform and/or anticriminal identity
	Antisocial associates – if the person is surrounded by the so-called ‘social support for crime’.	Reduce association with criminal others, enhance association with anti-criminal others
The Moderate Four	Family/marital circumstance – important to assess the key parenting variables if juvenile (caring, monitoring, supervising, disciplinary practices, the importance of the parent’s opinion) or the quality of the marital relationship if adult (mutual caring, respect and interest).	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, enhance monitoring and supervision

School/Work – stress on the quality of the relationship with the school or workplace; The risk is in low level of performance and involvement, low level of satisfaction and reward.

Enhance performance, rewards, and satisfactions

Leisure/Recreation – stress on low level of involvement in alternative ways of spending time apart from crime.

Enhance involvement, rewards, and satisfactions

Substance abuse – problems with alcohol and other drugs.

Reduce substance abuse, reduce the personal and interpersonal supports for substance-oriented behaviour, enhance alternatives to drug abuse

The identification of a variety of static (i.e., factors which do not fluctuate such as number of prior offences, age of first offence, gender) and dynamic risk factors (i.e., changeable factors such as substance misuse, employment status, criminal peers) for general offending has been instrumental in the development of offender assessments intended to determine the risk that an offender may pose in terms of the likelihood that they will re-offend (Craig, Browne, & Beech, 2008; Robinson, 2003). In addition, the identification of dynamic risk factors has been instrumental in informing practitioners of the areas in an offender’s life which, if addressed, could lead to a reduction in the likelihood of re-offending or a decreased severity of subsequent offences (Robinson & Crow, 2009).

Research findings supported the effectiveness of interventions with offenders to assist them in gaining employment on release (Hurry et. al, 2006). Offenders who gained employment skills were less likely to re-offend in the year following release, and if they come back to prison it takes longer for them to re-offend. Additionally, providing educational programmes for offenders is thought to be beneficial in terms of reducing levels of offending. Offenders who made greater educational achievements were less likely to re-offend.

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Drug and alcohol misuse is highly seen among offenders (Fazel, Bains, & Doll, 2006). The majority of studies show a significant reduction of re-offending for offenders who completed such programmes (Holloway, Bennett, & Farrington, 2005). However, they note that the severity of an individual's substance abuse and additional individual needs are also associated with reconviction.

Peer-Social Modeling in Probation Curriculum

Identifying key risk factors of crime while acknowledging that offender behaviour can be changed through appropriately intensive and matched services; General Personality and Cognitive Social Learning Theory by Bonta and Andrews (2006) were selected to be used as a basis for the curriculum of PPRMPT Peer Prosocial Modelling in probation.

a. Methodology

Project partners agreed that not only the hard skills and soft skills, but also risk/protective factors should be covered within curriculum of the newly developed programme. The curriculum was decided to consist of comprehensive and structured course material that will be a guideline for the peer trainers and supervisors of prosocial peer trainer offenders. The target group of this curriculum was decided to be the probationers who would be attending the programme as a part of their rehabilitation measures. The curriculum was decided to provide practical recommendations, new skills to be used while trying to stay away from criminality.

Also a brainstorm was made in order to cover the main topics of the sessions of this intellectual output and the following results were obtained: principles of pro-social modeling, recruitment, peer work, training support, accountability, personal data, motivational support should be covered within the programme. The partners also agreed that, besides from the hard skills and soft skills, risk/protective factors should also be covered by the curriculum.

Thinking and behaviour are linked; offenders behave like criminals because they think like criminals; changing the thinking style is the first step towards changing behaviour. Cognitions need to be addressed prior to addressing specific offending behaviour (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). So the newly developed programme will use cognitive behavioural approach trying to address cognitive distortions related to the risk factors listed above.

Good cognitive-behavioural programmes not only teach offenders positive behaviours, but also provide them with opportunity to practice and rehearse these behaviours in increasingly difficult situations. Correctional work is most effective when offenders are “active collaborators” in their rehabilitation plans, being able to control their own futures. So PPRMPT Project Partners decided to structure an interactive programme, where pro-social model peer trainers are able to easily give the instructions. The feedback session has a crucial role in interactive exercises where the skill is decided to be taught to peer trainers during the training of the trainer’s session by the partnership.

An offender’s level of motivation to change (McMurran, 2009; McMurran & Ward, 2010) and the relationship between therapist and offender (Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000) have been found to affect the likelihood of an offender to benefit from a programme. The perception held by prisoners that treatment programmes are beneficial, however, they also believe that the repetitiveness of material, coercion to participate, treatment facilitator characteristics and difficulties in participating in group work decrease the motivation to attend these programmes. Social interactions the offenders encounter within the prison or probation setting are expected to have some kind of effect on the individual. So the PPRMPT Project aimed to use this opportunity to model and teach pro-social skills to the offender group by peer trainer offenders and let them practise these skills in a secured setting before trying to use them within the society.

The group work has found to have a positive power in achieving positive change among the prisoner group. Clarke et al. (2004) found that the majority of inmates found group work to be useful and enjoyable. They also found it helpful to be listened to, to receive encouragement from others, and to hear other people’s views. The technique of role-play in which offenders have the opportunity to practice behavioural responses to the potentially challenging situations they may face and to play the role of the victim was also found to be helpful by the offender group (Hudson, 2005; Vennard, Sugg & Hedderman, 1997). Therefore the programme was decided to be designed in the form of a group work, where each session covers the techniques of lecturing and interactive exercises including the role-plays.

PPROMPT Project partnership decided to take programme recommendations into account where the level of risk an offender thought to pose should define the intensity and the duration of the programme tailored to that offender (the greater the risk, the higher the intensity and duration of programmes) and offenders are expected to attend all sessions tailored to them. The specific criminogenic needs of an offender will be addressed by the newly structured programme in line with the RNR principle.

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So, the programme is decided to be structured in a way that will address all criminogenic needs; however, to be tailored to the offender by skipping some sessions if they do not address the criminogenic needs of that offender. So partnership decided that the programme will have an answer for all criminogenic needs; however their selection of them will be done according to the specific needs of that individual.

The responsivity principle highlights the need to match the delivery style of treatment programmes to the individual offender (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). The specific responsivity principle stresses the need to consider any offender characteristics which may impact upon how effective an intervention is for the particular individual. Partners from Portugal (IPS and DGRSP) believed that it will not be possible to conduct the programme in group settings, but individual use of the programme could be an alternative. The partnership decided to prepare the programme in a way that is also adaptable to individual treatment settings where peer trainer probationers will study one-to-one with their peers.

b. The Peer-Social Modeling in probation curriculum

Project partnership decided to structure the curriculum of the newly developed PPRMPT Life Skills Peer Training Programme in the format given below, in the light of the above explained methodology.

Antisocial personality pattern – **Helps the probationers to understand the impact of emotions in our behaviour and how to communicate effectively**
Developing Social Behaviours

Antisocial cognition – **Helps the probationers to acknowledge criminal beliefs and take responsibility for their own actions.**
Session: Our Excuses and Us

Antisocial associates – **Refers to procriminal associates, peer pressure and the capability to say “No”.**
Session: Choose Yourself!

Family/marital circumstance Session: Family	Helps the probationers to understand the importance of family life and the importance of good communication in familial contexts.
Session: Marriage and Divorce	Refers how to maintain a happy marriage (how to be a good partner), how to identify and manage conflicts in marriage, how to deal and minimise the damage of divorce both on the couple and on the children.
Session: Efficient and Competent Parenting	Aims to teach probationers basic parenting skills, to show them how to communicate with children/adolescents, basic skills on how to identify and manage problem behaviour in children/adolescents and how to deal with sibling jealousy.
School/Work – Session: Planning the future	Helps probationers to understand the importance of having goals and setting SMART objectives for its achievement.
Leisure/Recreation – Session: Leisure Time Activities	Helps probationers to learn constructive ways that enhance well-being and how to find purpose in different areas of our lives.
Substance abuse – Session: Substance Abuse	Provides more information about the vast variety of addictive substances and its dangers, how to cope with urge and recovery
Problem solving – Session: Problem solving	Helps probationers to learn and practise problem solving steps, and manage stressors in life

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