Addicted persons rehabilitation in Polish prisons

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The main objective of the imprisonment in Polish penitentiary system is to make inmates change their attitudes, convictions (believes) and life styles
The main methods of impacting on the inmates

- Education
- Employment
- Therapy
- Contact with families and external world
- Culture and sport activities
Types of the therapeutic wards in Polish prisons:

1. For the inmates addicted to alcohol (alcoholics)

2. For the inmates addicted to drugs and psychiatric medication

3. For the inmates with non-psychotic mental disorders or the mentally disabled.
Steps taken to start the treatment programme

1. Medical and psychological diagnosis of addiction
2. Decision of the Penitentiary Committee
3. Therapeutic ward
We offer...

- THERAPY in the ward
- SHORT-TERM THERAPY
- SHORT INTERVENTION
- PREVENTIVE ADDICTION PROGRAMMES
- ALCOHOLICS ANONYMUS, NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
- AFTER CARE
- RELAPSE COPING GROUP
Addicted persons treatment in Polish prisons

- Prison-based treatment programmes have been conducted in Poland since the 1970-s of XX.
- The first therapeutic ward for alcoholics was founded in 1976 in Wrocław prison, another was in Barczewo (1979).
- The first wards for drug addicts were founded in Warszawa-Służewiec (1984), Rawicz, Wronki and Elbląg (1986).
- The Atlantis Ward was founded in 1993 in Warszawa-Mokotów. This fact was a breakthrough in the prison-based treatment for addicted to alcohol.
Addicted persons treatment in Polish prisons

• At present we are implementing not only the Atlantis programme but also a wide range of other author’s programmes following the Atlantis example.
• A rule of an inmate commitment to recovery process as the common denominator of all programmes.
• All of them contain goals and tasks aiming to quit drinking alcohol or taking drugs as well as to make the inmates learn how to stay sober not only when imprisonment but also in the free-world.
• Most programmes are based on keeping in touch with the Alcoholics Anonymus.
Characteristics of the specific of prison-based treatment programmes in Poland

- three polar therapeutic relationship
- consequences of coercion within prison settings
- consequences of the mechanism of negative selection
- wider scope of prisoners therapeutic needs
- differences within the therapeutic environment

(Majcherczyk A., 2007)
Traditional (bipolar) vs triangular therapeutic relationship
Consequences of coercion within prison settings

• The whole system is based on the rule of the constructive coercion, not on a voluntary basis. It means that an inmate is obliged to undergo a treatment, he is unable to resign or break it off. He cannot choose a therapist, a ward or time of a treatment.

• An inmate diagnosed as an addict should undergo a treatment while in prison. The administrative decision taken on the basis of a specialist’s opinion (not the addict’s registration) starts the whole procedure.

• The inmate’s responsibility is to undergo a treatment while the therapeutic staff’s duty is to treat him, irrespective of his attitude.
How does the coercion influence inmate’s motivation for change?

- There are very few inmates with mature, inner motivation for change.

- There is a numerous group of inmates, who seem to agree to undergo a treatment, but their motivation is strictly instrumental and they count on profits other than therapeutic ones.

- The mature motivation for change should be seen rather as a desired result of prison-based treatment not as an initial condition to open it.

- Only about 5% of the addicted inmates categorically deny to undergo a treatment and have to be obliged to it.

- According to the empirical research the compulsory patients’ therapy is as efficient as the voluntary ones.
Consequences of the mechanism of negative selection

- Prisons are institutions where the most difficult cases are found.
- Most of them are inmates with various deficits, experienced in such treatments.
- Those are usually people who nobody wants to work with.
- Prison therapists must have thorough knowledge as well as practical skills in the area of motivating inmates for change.
- They should be also prepared to work with the so called ‘difficult clients’.
Wider scope of prisoners therapeutic needs

• Prison-based treatment programmes are a part of a wider process of rehabilitation.

• Treatment programmes have to take into consideration all that is known about offender coping and treatment.

• Understanding the interaction between addiction to psychoactive substances and committing crimes is essential while treating addicted offenders.
Differences within the therapeutic environment

• Apart from differences from the free-world patients there are also differences in treating certain groups of inmates: juveniles, women or those with so called ‘double diagnosis’ (addiction to psychoactive substances and mental disorder or disability)

• The value of a stable relationship between a patient and a therapist.
Sources and theories which influenced Polish prison-based treatment programmes

- Minnesota Model
- Strategic and structural therapy by J. Mellibruda
- Cognitive behaviour therapy
- Motivational interviewing
- Harm Reduction Therapy
- The Therapeutic Community
- The Brief Solution-Focused Therapy
- The Alcoholic Anonymous, The Narcotics Anonymous
- Other
Towards integrating different approaches to substance addicted treatment

- One-size-fits-all therapy has not worked well for a majority of the addicts.
- Traditional models of treatment offer little (if any), help to people who may not choose abstinence as a goal.
- The programmes are changing towards growing tolerance of treatment goals other than abstinence.
- The idea of creating individual treatment plan for each client based on available therapeutic theories and methods.
Psychological methods used in prison-based treatment programmes

- Group sessions
- Individual sessions with the therapist
- Psychoeducation
- Psychological advice
- Lectures
- Films
- Mutual–aid communities (e.g. the Alcoholics Anonymous)
What do we find helpful and effective? Sharing our experience...
What is important in the prison-based treatment programmes for the addicts?

• Setting a **real, stable relationship** (alliance) between a patient and a therapist is crucial to succeed.
• **Individual contact** is more significant than in the free-world treatment programmes
• Understanding the **interaction** between addiction to psychoactive substances and committing crimes.
• There are **two main** therapeutic **goals** to achieve: abstinence and further delinquency prevention.
• A multidimensional **diagnosis** as an important part of treatment – helps to understand meaning of using psychoactive substances to the inmate.
What is important in the prison-based treatment programmes for the addicts?

- Therapeutic proceedings have to be well thought-out and individualised.
- Neutralizing the influence of the so called „second life” and the environmental pressure in therapeutic wards as one of the main therapeutic goals.
- The inmates should be offered methods supporting their activity, practical, social skill trainings, role-playing and feedback.
- The therapeutic team as a context for discussing diagnosis, doubts, therapeutic relationship and supporting. Crucial role of intervention and supervision.
Why the therapeutic alliance is so crucial?

- Valued as the context of the therapeutic change.
- Key component is collaboration between a client (an inmate) and a therapist.
- The research and every day practice show that the relationship is far more important for the outcomes than methods used in the treatment.
- A stable, good relationship heals.
A good therapist ...

- is able to create an appropriate relationship with the client (inmate)
- is able to generate a belief in the possibility of change
- instils in the client the expectation that therapy will be beneficial
- provides opportunities for learning
- can emotionally engage the client
What helps the therapist to succeed?

- Empathy
- Respect
- Confidence
- Genuineness
- Support
- Open-ended questioning
What helps the therapist to succeed?

- Directiveness
- Motivate rather than confront
- Flexibility
- Encouraging active participation
- Warmth
- Use of humour
Thank You for Your attention