

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

DPA

Work group of project M.E.D.I.C.S. – fourth Training phase

MENTALLY DISTURBED INMATES

CARE AND SUPPORT

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REPORT ON TRAINING COURSE FOR
PENITENTIARY STAFF AND HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL

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Third edition

Turin

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The course: training action and purposes

The Higher Institution for Penitentiary Studies organised – in collaboration with Studies, Research, Legislation, International Relations' office and the Directorate General for prisoners and treatment (Healthcare Service office and Security Measures office) of the Department of Penitentiary Administration and in partnership with the Italian Society for Medicine and Penitentiary Healthcare (SIMSpe) – the very first training event of the European project Mentally Disturbed Inmates Care and Support (Me.D.I.C.S.).

The course is part of the whole project and comes right after the national and transnational study about the inmates with psychic vulnerabilities; the study required the creation of a survey which was then given to different kinds of professionals (healthcare personnel, nurses, rehabilitation officers, penitentiary police..) in order to take into account various sources of observation (and treatment) of this kind of inmates. The outcomes made it possible for the scientific staff to choose proper training inputs to be suggested to penitentiary police staff dealing with the above-mentioned inmates.

The didactic work aims at creating or updating a model for the reception of mentally disturbed inmates (followed by their care and treatment), to be suggested or combined with the *working means* already existing in different Italian penitentiary realities, in order to create a shared education on the best possible treatment opportunities, which systematises the guide lines and suggestions coming from a knowledge updated daily and confirmed by everyday procedures.

The project, co-financed by European Social Funds of the European Commission (call for proposal JUST/2013/PEN/AG) in 2013, is therefore headed by the Department of Penitentiary Administration, whose scientific partner is SIMSpe. The aim is to outline a shared operative and educational model on the multidisciplinary and complete management of inmates with psychic problems.

The initiative took place in three pilot regions of Italy: Emilia Romagna, Sicily and Piemonte (Bologna, Palermo, Turin); they were then compared with the international partners' penitentiary realities: Catalonia, Croatia, UK and the training schools' European network. The collection of data, information and actions was made through a quantitative and qualitative study both within the penitentiary institutions of Bologna, Palermo and Turin and the European ones. Details on both the real and perceived data about mental distress were provided, as well as the acknowledgement of previous studies and the assessment of existing/functioning projects on the management of the problem. The project will last for 2 years and during this period activities aimed at sharing

knowledge, experiences and ways to treat *imprisonment-related psychic distress* will take place both at local and international level.

The training context, addressed to Bologna and Palermo's prisons' penitentiary staff achieved in December 2015 and January 2016, has given shape to the task of the project that is increasing knowledge and raising awareness, systematising useful practices to improve reception, care and treatment of this wide-spread form of vulnerability within penitentiary institutions, with the idea of finding in the multidisciplinary (both educational and operative) meeting an opportunity to come up with complete and less isolated answers.

Course structure

The training course, coordinated by the Higher Institution for Penitentiary Studies, was organised in many editions and was held in: Parma's SFAP, Palermo's and Turin's prisons and Rome's Higher Institution for Penitentiary Studies.

The third session, which took place within Turin's prison, focused on 16 hours of lesson - within a classroom - during the training days of 9th and 10th of February 2016.

The group was made up of 23 students:

12 units belonging to Penitentiary Administration (namely, 11 units belonging to Security Area and 1 Pedagogic-judicial Officer).

11 units belonging to the healthcare system: employees, private citizens involved in social causes, voluntary workers.

In order to easily achieve the objective of the group of participants, once the training in the classroom was over, the participants were divided into three small groups, each of them coordinated by a representative for the production of the final papers. During the following phase, those students who were committed in a daily work with inmates suffering from psychiatric disorders decided to talk about their work and their experiences in the reception and treatment of inmates suffering from psychiatric disorders of the department "Il Sestante" of Turin's prison. As a matter of fact, there was already a work group made up of members of local health service and Penitentiary officers, which has been working for a long time in order to arrange a protocol for this kind of inmates.

The outcomes of the above-mentioned work will then be compared to the papers produced after Emilia Romagna's and Sicily's editions and will be presented in a follow up session, which will be held at the Higher Institution for Penitentiary Studies before the seminar organised in order to debate on the whole training path developed in the three Italian regions.

Organisation of the course

The course was made within Turin's prison of "Lorusso e Cutugno" and it aimed at optimising logistics.

It was coordinated by Doctor D. Schiattone, Director of the Higher Institution for Penitentiary Studies' Office for the training of managers and directors, by 6 speakers among which there were doctors, psychologists and facilitators coming from SIMSpe Society (Doctors De Risio, Ferrara, Giuliani, Monarca, Almasio, Ramirez, Pizzaro) and, as for the training-organisational area, by three facilitators (Doctor Agate, Borla, Caneva).

The training sessions

The learning modules were presented by doctor Schiattone who has delineated the training structure and the contract of the classroom, with the purpose of actively engaging participants with a view to cooperative learning, useful to the creation of a shared operative model, a work protocol for reception and management of mental disorder in prison.

SIMSpe's (*Italian Society of Penitentiary Medicine and Healthcare*) teachers then delineated the path of the national and international research about the number of mentally disturbed inmates, about the more widespread psychopathological categories and about the procedures adopted in the different countries to manage and alleviate the disorder. A theoretical space was dedicated to the forms of mental disorders in prison and to the network management of the mental disorder, using the second part of both training days to work in subgroups, through techniques, shared working tools and training interactive modes with a view to multi-professional recognition and to possible, essential operational integrations.

The second session was opened by sharing an operational model on the care of mental disorder in prison, presented by the SIMSpe teachers and experimented in an area of central Italy. Basics about how to plan and create protocols were taught in the final part of the course, which was aimed at developing a proposed intervention for the reception of mentally disturbed inmates.

Teachers and classroom staff

The course in Turin was coordinated by doctor D. Schiattone, Director of the Higher Institution for Penitentiary Studies' Office for the training of managers and directors, and by doctor Bonfiglioli, Director of the Office for Prisoners and Treatment at the Regional Directorate of the Penitentiary Administration in Turin. The teaching activity was almost completely managed by SIM-Spe company (Doctors De Risio, Ferrara, Giuliani, Monarca, Almasio, Ramirez Pizzaro). Doctor Pellegrino, local health service's representative at "Sestante" section of the prison in Turin, was also involved in the teaching activity. The educational-organizational area was managed by three facilitators: doctors Borla, Caneva, Agate.

Method

The teaching method adopted was mainly characterised by lectures alternating with moments of comparison and discussion about topics covered by the teachers and solicited by the students. The trainers group used audio-visual materials and digital media. Works within subgroups, aimed at the analysis of specific cases and at the preparation of operating procedures, also occurred. Part of the elaborations were shared in plenary session and postponed to a follow up after the remote group work.

Teaching materials and surveys

The students, equipped with folders, will have digital access to the teaching materials of the course. At the end of the course, a satisfaction survey was carried out.

Classroom atmosphere

Since the beginning, during the reception of the students, some moments of tension mainly caused by the following critical issues emerged:

- Not having taken into account the work and the path conducted in this domain by the staff operating within the “Lorusso e Cutugno” prison;
- Not having shared the purposes of the project with the officers before the training;
- Not having involved in the training activity the administration staff who actually works within the sections involved in the project.

Though the participants were animated by an active and interested involvement, they thought that the tone and contents of the lessons were little relevant to the reality of reference and to the students' expectations. During the lessons, a dual atmosphere about relationships developed: part of the class, made up of experienced and qualified staff (see local health service's staff) was gradually demotivated, since these lessons didn't match with their early expectations; the remaining part was instead represented by a staff who had nothing to do with this matter since they came from different sections. These people were interested in the contents of the training interventions which represented for them a first approach to the problem of mental disorder.

Analysis of the training days

First of all, the teachers faced the international research underlining its contents and outcomes and then analysing the kind of treatment of mentally disturbed inmates. They also talked about the concept of psychopathology in prison and local experience was presented. Certainly, the audience showed interest and participation. Disapproval was only caused by a desire of improvement and deepening. However, the most appreciated speech was that of dr. Pellegrino, who reported the story and contents which moved some pioneers to face psychiatric disorders in prison in a completely new way and in marked contrast to the recent past. The atmosphere in the classroom wasn't completely peaceful despite teachers' efforts. The strength was that there were officers with different jobs (penitentiary police staff, local health service's personnel, social

workers and volunteers) who livened the debate and made the assessment of the same problems from different points of view possible. The weak point was the inability to evaluate the kind of audience in classroom and the lack of knowledge about Turin's situation from teachers who appeared to be detached from real-life situations. Working in subgroups was positive and remarkably appreciated by students who highlighted a good organizational ability, a good use of time and energy.

For further information and to provide more food for thought, you can find in the attachments a copy of the report sent from ASL TO2 (local health service) management offices. It is also reported that the above-mentioned ASL TO2 (local health service) and "Lorusso e Cutugno" prison's management offices in Turin wrote a local protocol to prevent and reduce self-harming and suicide risk which is attached to this document.