

Making Rights Real for People with Disabilities in Prison

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15 January 2020

Welcome to IPRT Research

- Article 1 of Convention of the Rights of persons with Disabilities
- Hidden Disabilities
- International experience – legal and prevalence data
- Irish Law – Prison rules and Criminal Law (Insanity Act) 2006, Disability Act 2005 and Equal Status Act
- Semi-structured interviews
- Qualitative assessments to identify barriers
- Proposals/recommendations to enhance services

Issues Raised

- Navigating the system – cell environment (physical and sensory access), stairs, accessibility aids, communications (how the system works, rights of prisoners)
- Awareness and understanding by staff
- Health Care
 - Medications discontinued, in-possession policy, analgesia
 - Access to physiotherapy , Speech/language, signing
 - Holistic approach to mental health, use of Seclusion (SOC)
 - Planning for release and availability of community services especially mental health

Recommendations will help IPS to guide:

- CPD training to reflect human rights from a disability perspective
- Equal access to services, programmes and regimes
- Review disciplinary sanctions from a disability perspective
- Review complaints so that prisoners with disabilities have equal opportunities make complaints in accessible ways

Current Services

- Pharmacy, Psychology, Work and Training – 120 workshops, 1330 places – printing, braille, metal working etc. , Education – adult education approach, In-reach – eg Samaritans, MQI, SVDP etc
- Mental Health
 - NFMHS caseload 250, service in all closed prisons (HSE provided in Cork/Limerick), MDT (NCHD, CPN Social work), High Support Units
 - CMH capacity
 - PICLS

Current Services

- IPS Primary Care service
 - GPs and nurses (new GP contract being finalised)
 - Drug Treatment Service
 - i. 9 week DTP programme, slow detox and stabilisation
 - ii. New Drugs Strategy

Health Care response -equivalent to community

- Disability Assessments and Care Planning

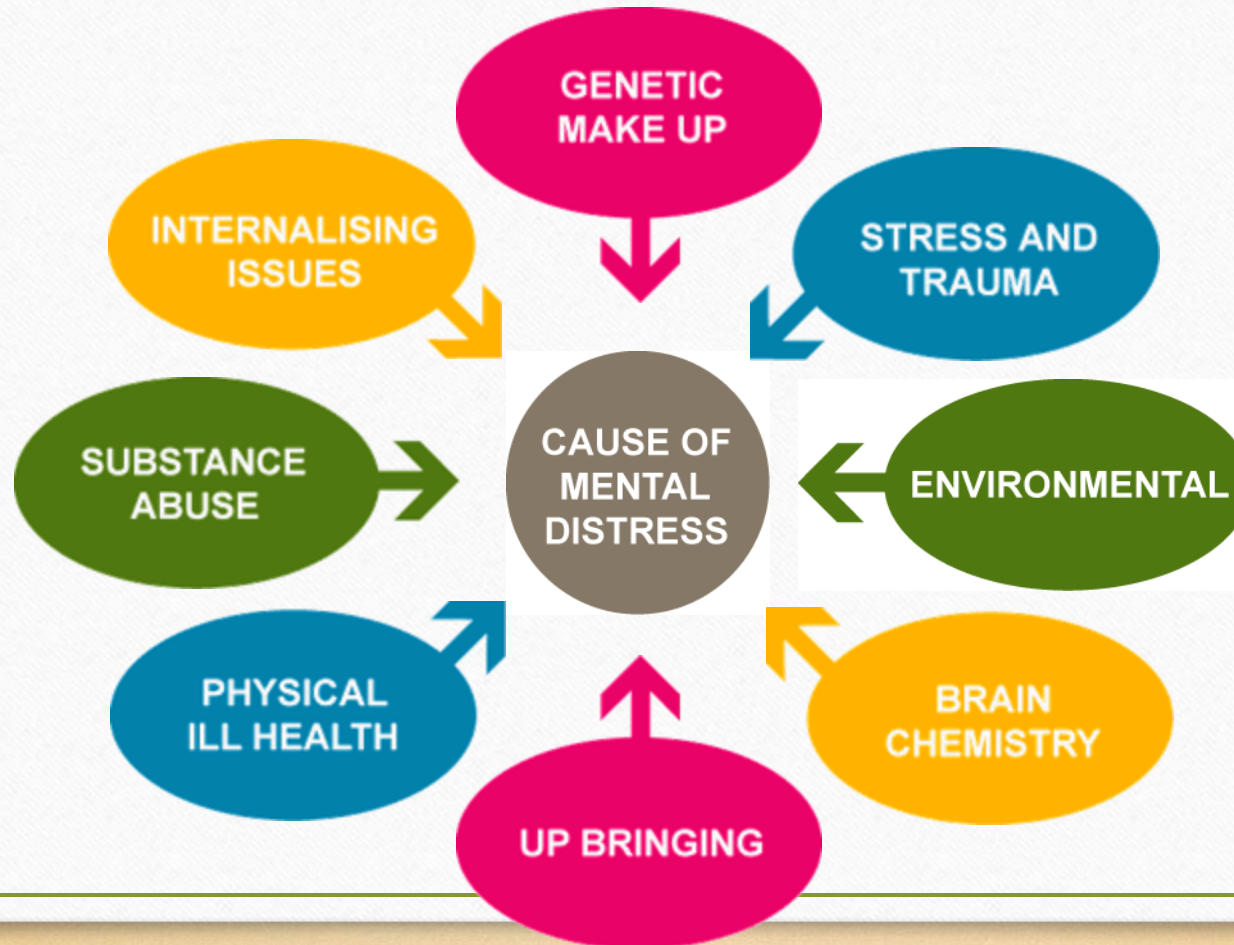
- Advance planning – where possible (from Courts)
- Committal interviews – nursing and GP
- Care dependency assessment – ADL assessment, eg eating, mobility, hygiene, dressing, recreation, communications, daily activities, avoidance of danger, continence => use of a scoring system to plan care
- Care Plan may involve – Health Care Assistants, Cell location (close to services), alerting education/work training, Buddy system
- Use of – Signing (interpreters), Speech & Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy

Training and Communication

- RPO Curriculum
 - Semester 1 – Human rights, Equality and Diversity awareness, Mental Health awareness training. Also topics including older prisoners, learning difficulties, effects of addiction
 - Semester 2 – Health & wellbeing, health care standards, mental health, health needs of groups (women, juveniles, travellers, sexual offenders, chronic disease), Law Policy and practice, Ethical aspects
- Accessible information on Rights, Regimes and Complaints in booklet, audio and visual formats and in different languages

WHAT FACTORS COULD CAUSE MENTAL DISTRESS

Many theories, many factors, complex reasons



What can I do to in my role ?

- Encourage interaction – writing letters, exercise, telephone calls, prison work, personal visits.

- Monitor possible suicide gestures or threats and take them seriously
e.g. ‘I wish I was dead’, ‘it would be better for everyone if I wasn’t around’
- Think about how you are communicating with the offender – step back and reconsider if you need to signpost to other appropriate services.
- Don’t try to ‘talk them out of it’ or be overly cheerful to try and improve their mood. Give them space if you judge that they need it.
- Closely monitor any changes in behaviour and mood.

Physical Environment

- New Builds – Part M of Building Regulations
- Older Builds – Guided by Part M (adaptation)
 - Security issues
 - Transfer if facilities cannot be provided
- Training Unit (Mountjoy) – approximately 100 places, 2 high support cells

Health Needs Assessment

- Crowe Ireland Project Group
- Comprehensive assessment of health needs of prisoners (physical, mental, disability), health care infrastructure and capacity, operations and governance
- Prison comparisons (all, open and closed) and best international practice
- Prisoner and visitor consultation
- Stakeholder consultation
- => Report 2020