Confidentiality and Risk Assessment:

Working in Prisons or Secure Environments with Prisoners and Vulnerable People at Risk

Guide Booklet for Training Session Planners

The Research Centre for Therapeutic Education
London
Important Note

This booklet should be used as a guide for the production of PIP partner’s individual training plans which focus on confidentiality and risk. The booklet is not intended for use as a training manual.

All training session plans provided to participant learners must be produced individually by each partner country as each country/prison may vary in their official practice with regard to confidentiality and risk.

The guidelines and information within this document must not replace any current prison/penitentiary/secure environment guidelines for assessing risk or confidentiality contracts/statements.
**Introduction to Guide Booklet**

This guide booklet is intended as a support document to be used in conjunction with the RCTE sample lesson plans document provided to Phototherapy in Prisons: Europe partners. This booklet can be used by trainers to guide their production of their own individual session 1 lesson plan and activities to familiarise all participant learners with confidentiality, confidentiality contract clauses and risk assessment. It was produced in response to partner requests for further information and guidance concerning training other professionals in phototherapy with regard to confidentiality and risk.

Partners are required to provide all of their own trainees with full details of their country’s own prison environment guides to confidentiality, risk and ethical working practice with people in prison. These should be provided to all trainees in the first training session and it is suggested at least three hours training should be focused on ethical working with respect to risk and confidentiality in secure environments.

**Required Materials and Documents**

Each partner country should source the following documentation to guide their planned sessions on risk and confidentiality and familiarise themselves and their trainees with them before proceeding with any phototherapy skills training:

- A copy of a standard confidentiality contract with clauses
- A copy of any risk assessment documents used
- A copy of prison rules and regulations for workers (where possible)
A sample confidentiality statement with clauses

Confidentiality statements and their clauses may vary in different environments and countries and in respect of different populations. The statement below is a basic sample.

Before any trainees work with prisoners they should ensure the prisoner is aware of confidentiality boundaries and specific times that confidentiality may have to be broken. Trainees should also be made aware of possible breeches of prisoner confidentiality.

Sample Statement :

During our phototherapy sessions I will respect your confidentiality. This means during our sessions what you tell me will remain confidential between us. However, there are some specific times when you may tell me something and I will be obliged to break my confidentiality with you and report some of what you have told me in those sessions.

Times I may have to break confidentiality would be:

- If you reveal that you may harm yourself
- If you reveal that you may harm another person
- If you reveal any possible future or past risk to a minor
- If you reveal specific details concerning criminal actions or deeds (future or past)
Explaining Confidentiality Statements and Clauses to Vulnerable People

Some people we work with may be particularly vulnerable to misunderstanding confidentiality statements and agreements and some prisoners/offending populations may fall into this category. Prisoners are also more likely to talk about crime and risk than other people and these are usually the most common reasons confidentiality agreements may have to be broken in any form of therapy with any population.

For this reason it is imperative that all trainees are aware of specific presentations who may require extra guidance with regard to confidentiality during phototherapy sessions. Some examples of these are:

- Prisoners with learning disabilities
- Prisoners with psychiatric diagnoses
- Prisoners with cognitive and memory deficits
- Prisoners with high-risk presentations (i.e. those who may self-harm or are suicidal)
- Young offenders

In these cases trainees may be advised to:

- Repeat the confidentiality statement and clauses at the beginning of each session
- Provide examples of times when confidentiality may have to be broken
- Discuss why confidentiality may be broken in more depth
- Ask the prisoner/vulnerable person to demonstrate their understanding by explaining back to you the confidentiality agreement and clauses

Trainees could practice delivering the statement to each other and to practice giving examples to prisoners to aid understanding.
Training in Confidentiality:  
Suggestions & Sample Activities

One way to begin training in confidentiality is to introduce reflective/reflexive practice exercises into your training plans to encourage trainees to think about the importance of confidentiality to them. Trainers could have discussions or formulate activities which explore:

- Trainees definitions of confidentiality
- Trainees experiences of confidentiality (at work, at home, with friends, in business....)
- Places where confidentiality is expected
- Places where it is not
- Everyday confidentiality (between friends or colleagues for example)
- Experiences where confidentiality has been threatened or broken
- How it might feel to have confidentiality broken

Suggested ways to do this

- In a large group with flip charts
- In small groups, each doing one factor each and feeding back to the whole group
Exploring Confidentiality Issues in Training Groups:  Sample exercise

To explore participant learners experiences and perceptions of managing confidentiality within phototherapy work in prisons trainers should provide several exercises and activities for this.

The following is a brief example:

Provide the groups with different statements on cards, for example:

- A prisoner tells you that they have had issues with drugs in the past and they have