CIRCLES4EU
Expanding Circles of Support and Accountability in Europe

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Avans University | Den Bosch | The Netherlands
World Congress on Probation, London, October 10, 2013
I

Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA)

II Circles4EU
Reintegration of sex-offenders:

- Community costs of recidivism are high
- Climate of fear / lack of unbiased information
- Community reactions to release of sex offenders
- Stigmatisation and exclusion
- Social isolation and marginalization
- Lack of monitoring
- Long term risk of recidivism
How we are treating them

New Victims
## Best of both worlds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support → Control ↓</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>AGAINST Punishment</td>
<td>WITH Restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>WITHOUT Neglect</td>
<td>FOR Permission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mission of COSA
Circles of Support and Accountability

“No more victims”

“No more secrets”
professional
co-ordinator
volunteer
core member
COSA: what happens?

- Weekly circlemeetings (phase 1)
  - Establishing a relationship
  - Discussing risk & needs
  - Relapse prevention
  - Social support
  - 24/7 support by telephone
- Individual support (phase 2, after app. 1 - 1.5 years)
- Evaluation of progress (quarterly)
- Safety rules
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle goals:</th>
<th>Social capital formation</th>
<th>Human capital formation</th>
<th>Relapse-prevention</th>
<th>Circle redundancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>Inner circle</td>
<td>Inner and outer circle</td>
<td>Inner and outer circle</td>
<td>Circle coordinator, inner and outer circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle functions:</td>
<td>Social inclusion:</td>
<td>Behaviour change:</td>
<td>Risk reduction and risk management:</td>
<td>Evaluation and improvement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities:</td>
<td>- Be available and offer support</td>
<td>- Hold accountable</td>
<td>- Monitor and discuss risk and problem behavior</td>
<td>- Evaluate and support group process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Model and stimulate respect, openness and trust</td>
<td>- Develop targets and cooperation</td>
<td>- Confront core member</td>
<td>- Evaluate and discuss core member process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Offer and stimulate social activities/pro-social relationships</td>
<td>- Offer advice, guidance and encouragement</td>
<td>- Share information</td>
<td>- Safeguard model and program integrity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Consequences for core member: | Sense of belonging | Engagement | Risk awareness | Effective circle |
|                               | Self-esteem, hope and motivation | Improved life-skills and self-regulation | Offence free life | |
|                               | Trust in others | Improved self-efficacy | |

| Consequences for society: | No more victims | Public safety |

• Circles UK DVD
Not without conditions

- **Core member**
  - Mid to high risk
  - No more victims
    - Accepts responsibility and accountability
    - Motivation to not reoffend
    - Willing to share information about offence and risk factors with volunteers
  - Treatment & relapse prevention plan
  - Mandated supervision (e.g. supervision order)

- **Volunteers**
  - Selection, training, coaching,
  - Material support
  - Prevent citizens turning into pro’s

- **Professionals**
  - Present and supportive
  - Use power if necessary
Circles are values based

• “The first Canadian Circle was rooted in deeply felt beliefs about humanity and compassion of a religious community: because we want no more victims and because no one is disposable.”
  • Circles European Handbook

• “Circles are ‘deliveries systems of resilience’ for offenders and communities who are both trying to put the pieces together again. As circles of unconditional, tough love we can make an incredible impact in restoring wholeness right where we live.”
  • Harry Nigh, circles founder
Circles are science-based

- Four outcome studies report comparisons in the sexual re-offense rate of COSA Core Members versus control subjects:
  - Wilson, McWhinnie, Picheca, Prinzo, & Cortoni, 2007;  
    - < 70%
  - Wilson, Cortoni, & McWhinnie, 2009;  
    - < 83% (p.=055)
  - Bates, Williams, Wilson, and Wilson, 2013;  
    - < 75%
  - Duwe, 2013;  
    - < 40%
II

Circles4EU
Circles are spreading

- **Started:**
  - Canada
  - USA
  - United Kingdom
  - Netherlands
  - Belgium
  - New Zealand

- **Preparing:**
  - Latvia
  - Spain (Catalonia)
  - Bulgaria

- **Orienting:**
  - France
  - Ireland
  - Hungary
The European partners
## The European partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Netherlands:</strong></td>
<td>- Avans University / Circles NL (lead partner)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dutch Probation / Circles NL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tilburg University</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CEP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>England &amp; Wales:</strong></td>
<td>- Circles UK</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nottingham University</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Belgium:</strong></td>
<td>- Justice House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catalonia:</strong></td>
<td>- PGDC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- University of Barcelona / GEAV</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Caixa Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bulgaria:</strong></td>
<td>- IGA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Latvia:</strong></td>
<td>- Latvian Probation Service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Latvian Prison Service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- University of Latvia (Riga)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hungary:</strong></td>
<td>- Ministry of Justice (Probation Services)</td>
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<td><strong>Ireland:</strong></td>
<td>- Ireland Probation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>France:</strong></td>
<td>- ERIOS</td>
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Project rationale

- Both values and science support our intentions to spread the use of the circles model in Europe as a humane and effective approach.
- Circles4EU makes our intentions concrete through management, support and mutual learning.
- Circles are vulnerable: Circles4EU chooses a careful approach.
- Circles4EU is based on our experiences in the Circles Together for Safety project:
  - UK, Netherlands, Belgium (2009-2011)
  - COSA European Handbook
5 workstreams
January 2013 – December 2014

Management

Unifying Circles

Dissemination

Circles research

Circles delivery
Workstream 1: Unifying Circles

- **Who are we, what binds us, what are our common goals and standards?**
- Focus on the most essential elements of COSA, its principles, values, standards and processes.
- Cohesion: CEP as natural workstream leader.
- Objectives:
  - 1. Establishment of a network for training, guidance, support and accountability ✓
  - 2. Defining, unifying and sharing the Circles model: principles, values, standards and processes ✓
  - 3. Strengthening the national context for the Circles model >>
Major outcomes and deliverables workstream 1

- Circles EU Network
- Circles EU International volunteer group
- First and Second European Circles Conference
- Preparing national Circles context in orienting countries
- Register of Experts
- Circles EU Website
- Circles EU Definitions and Standards
  - Model integrity → research based
- Updated Circles EU Handbook 2014
  - Best practices EU-wide → research based
Workstream 2: Circles implementation & deliverance

- **Circles4EU Network supports Circles Projects in Bulgaria, Latvia and Catalonia:**
  - Local recruiting, selection, qualification of circles coordinators ✓
  - Training of circles managers and volunteers ✓
  - Implementation plans and national circles handbooks ✓
  - Sustaining program integrity
  - Getting longer term funding
  - Orienting countries, **France, Hungary and Ireland** will ‘look over the shoulder’ of the starting countries during study visits / seminars
  - Go – No Go criteria

- Leader: Circles UK, working together with Circles NL
Major outcomes and deliverables workstream 2

- Circles EU Network support for national Circles projects
- National Circles projects:
  - Kick-Off seminars
  - Qualified National Circles-managers, Circle co-ordinators, volunteers and core-members
  - Start and 1 year operation of 3 Circles in Latvia, Catalonia and Bulgaria
- National Implementation Plans, Circle Handbooks, Training Manuals
- Circles4EU Auditing Standards & Materials
- Audit Reports (6)
- Study visit reports of orienting countries (18)
Workstream 3: Circles research

- **Deepening and sharing our knowledge of COSA.**
- **Structural implementation/funding needs more factual arguments on top of values.**
- Double focus:
  - Workstream 3 ‘serves and protects’ the two other workstreams
  - Workstream 3 combines current research and opens new possibilities:
    - effectiveness
    - model of change
    - new target groups
    - costs and benefits
    - impact on volunteers and society
- Leaders: Universities Avans / Nottingham / Tilburg
  - Circles4EU research group
Major outcomes and deliverables workstream 3

- Circles research group
- Action research for Governance Code and for Definitions and Standards
- Qualitative research for Circles best practices
- Process studies starting and partner countries
- National Circles Adoption Plans orienting partners
- Shared future research agenda
- 4 EU research applications
- Web-based Circles database and research section
- Circle volunteers and co-ordinators best practices
- Circles EU Future Strategies Report
- European Circles Handbook 2.0
Circles stretching the probation paradigm

Honoring the knowledge base:
• Circles focus on risks, needs and responsivity
• Circles promote desistance
  • Human & social capital, motivation, narrative identity

Opening new territories:
• Circles / citizen initiatives blur the borderline between rehabilitation and natural recovery:
  • Circles show similar results as treatment
  • Results are not a natural process because of a methodical approach
• Circles / citizen initiatives also blur the borderline between evidence-informed and morally-inspired ‘practice’
THANK YOU!

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European COSA Handbook:
- free download: [www.cosa-nederland.nl](http://www.cosa-nederland.nl)
- or sign in on the list at the entrance

Come to the First European Circles Conference: October 28, Den Bosch, The Netherlands

This presentation has been produced with the financial support of the Daphne III Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Avans University of Applied Sciences and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission