

# Desistance

Session 4

Desistance and experiencing  
supervision

Why is the subjective experience important in supervision?

Brainstorming – 5 min.

# What research says?

- What good supervision is:
  - Helpful experience (McCulloch, 2005; Farrall, 2002 and subsequent)
  - Active and participatory, PO reasonable, experienced, empathic, treat offenders with respect (Rex, 1999; Ugwudike, 2011)
  - Promote substantive compliance (Robinson and McNeill, 2008)
  - Follow procedural justice principles (Tyler, 2003)
- Good supervision associated with:
  - Substantive compliance
  - Better completion rates
  - Lower re-conviction rates

# The offender's account – 'the silent voice'

- In general as a **positive and helpful** experience – a good opportunity to build up a new life and avoid prison.
- But supervision is also a diverse experience:
  - Supervision was described as **helpful** when the process focused on problem solving, when client welfare was considered important (employment, housing), when the PO was reasonable, open, flexible, trustworthy, provides encouragement and HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP with the user (especially women probationers).
  - Supervision was described as a **negative experience** when there was a lack of procedural fairness (see recall cases), the punitive bite was too painful ('pains of supervision' – too many appointments, too much self-discipline – EM, ) or when PO failed to keep their promises.
  - **Mixed accounts** are coming from the community service which is perceived both as a constructive but also as a demanding sanction.
- Community service
  - Half educational and half "true punishment" (sometimes as a warning)
  - The perception depends on the relationship with the supervisor and the nature of work (if corresponds with the skills they have or like to develop, if interesting).

As McNeill (2009) defined it supervision as a 'helping, hurting and holding' experience.

# Lived experiences of supervision

- It seems that supervision is perceived by users depending first on **how PO construct his/her professional identity and work and his/her personal characteristics** and only afterwards depending on the content of the sanction.
- A few studies looked at users as **a differentiated groups**: ethnic minorities clients, women etc. or as subjects to **different requirements**: drug rehabilitation requirement, community service, electronic monitoring
- Only one or two studies on offenders under voluntary sector's interventions
- It seems that those with **short criminal careers tend to respond positively** to probation and **those persistent tend to need persistent interventions** and therefore generate mixed reactions to supervision.
- The length of the supervision session seems to be important for the client satisfaction – **between 30 min to 1 hour**

# 'Pains of probation' (Durnescu, 2011)

- Deprivation of autonomy
- Pains of re-organizing the daily routine around the sanction
- Deprivation of private or family life
- Deprivation of time
- Financial costs
- Stigmatization effects
- Forced return to the offence
- Live under tremendous threat

# Interview with two special guests

30 min.

Questions from the participants. Careful !!!!

What can we do to reduce the pain and make the supervision more helpful ??

Small group discussions

Presentation of the Conclusions & Discussions

Takes notes as they might be useful tomorrow  
!!!



Questions??!

Thanks and thanks our guests !!