

Fondation
Vaudoise de
Probation 

MENTAL HEALTH IN PROBATION PRISON PERSPECTIVE

Fondation
Vaudoise de
Probation 

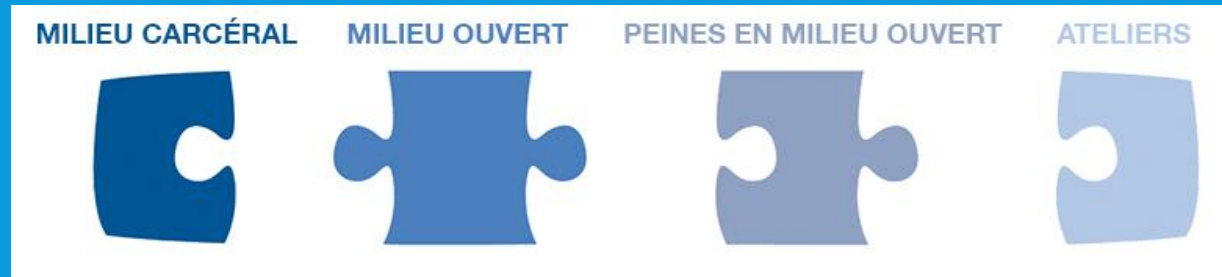
Vaud Probation Service
Switzerland

Mental Health in Probation
Expert Group meeting - Lisbon 2022

Laura Zemlicof, probation officer
Fondation vaudoise de probation
Chemin des Croisettes 28
CP 85 1066 Epalinges
Tel. 0041 (0) 24 557 66 59
laura.zemlicof@fvp.vd.ch
www.probation-vd.ch

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Each autonomous canton (26) has its own Probation Service. The cantons are free to choose the structure of the Service.
- The Vaud Probation Service is a private institution, funded by the canton, created on 3rd October 1895.
- The support and assistance provided by our probation officers fits in four categories : prison environment; probation supervision; community-based sentences; a structure which oversees the execution of the community service sentence.



- The role and mission of the probation officers during criminal proceedings depends on which of the four categories above they are dealing with.
- Their common objective → preventing the probationer from committing a new crime and promoting their social (re)integration.

PROBATION IN PRISON

- 1 manager and 7 probation officers working in 4 prisons of pre-trial detention (inmates in pre-trial detention, as well as those serving their sentence or institutional therapeutic measure)
- 473 files under monitoring, of which 11 inmates admitted to the psychiatric unit, 24 women and 4 young inmates. We provide:
 - Support and information
 - Socio-administrative support
 - Organisation of visits between the incarcerated parent and his/her child(ren) in detention (under a special protocol)
 - Preparing pre-trial and release reports (conditional release)
 - Support in the development of concrete and realistic goals for once they are released, in collaboration with other professionals and the inmate's social network
 - Income support (in pre-trial detention if they meet certain conditions)
- Our care is intended to be personalized and aims to allow each inmate to take responsibility and mobilize their own resources.

POLICY & RESEARCH

- Swiss Competence Center for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions (CSCSP, federal level) has published in December 2021 a guideline that provides recommendations and explanations regarding the implementation of psychiatric care in the context of deprivation of liberty, covering :
 - Organisation of psychiatric care in the context of deprivation of liberty
 - Principles of outpatient and inpatient psychiatric care
 - Prevention in cases of mental disorders and self-harm
 - Admission, stay and discharge
 - Special populations (people with substance use disorders, young people, women)
- No statistics available about the percentage of people on probation estimated to have a current mental illness.
 - Mental disorders are more common among inmates than among the rest of the population.
 - Detention is a risk factor for mental disorders and suicidal tendencies. This issue requires adequate care by professionals trained for this purpose.

TRAINING & EXPERTISE

- Our probation officers have a background in either psychology, social sciences and/or criminology.
- They work in collaboration with the prison's medical service & with all other internal prison services & external services (e.g. law enforcement, adult and child protection authorities etc.).
- A wide range of non mandatory trainings are provided by CSCSP
 - Dealing with inmates with mental disorders: stress, depression, suicidal tendencies, psychosis, personality disorders, substances disorders
 - Suicide prevention
 - Mental disorders presenting risks etc.
- Café Prison → annual meeting between relatives of inmates suffering from mental illnesses and medical, social and judicial professionals in the field

SCREENING

▪ Probation

- Information on the prevalence of mental illness amongst inmates is routinely collected during our initial assessment.
- This assessment is based on the inmate's statements and allows us to adapt our care.

▪ Medical

- Medical assessment is made by the medical service no later than 24 hours after entering detention.

▪ Penal (if a psychiatric report is requested by the authority)

- Diagnosis made by a psychiatric expert.
- Attests to the criminal responsibility of the person and recommends the appropriate therapeutic measure(s) aimed at reducing the risk of recidivism.

TREATMENT

- The principle of equivalence should be the cornerstone in providing psychiatric care.
- The medical services offered to inmates, in particular with regard to basic psychiatric care, correspond to the benefits of basic health insurance in accordance with the law on health insurance.
- Monitoring and care is adapted to the criminal status of the inmate
 - Pre-trial detention (presumption of innocence)
 - Execution of a sentence
 - Execution of a institutional therapeutic measure (art. 59 CPS)

THE PRISON MEDICINE AND PSYCHIATRY SERVICE (SMPP)

- Integrated and independent prison medical service created in 1995, involved in all the prisons in the canton of Vaud.
- **Mission :**
 - meet the psychiatric care needs of inmates, convicted prisoners or those subject to a therapeutic measure.
 - ensure the somatic treatment of inmates.
 - improve the treatment of drug addict prisoners, in accordance with current therapeutic requirements.
 - develop prevention and health promotion activities, and an epidemiological assessment of the pathologies encountered in the prison environment.
 - develop training among prison staff and in universities.
- They attend prisons depending on the specific needs of inmates.

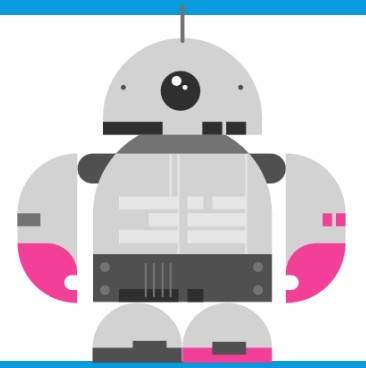
PSYCHIATRIC UNIT IN PRISON DE LA CROISÉE

- Day hospital & institutionnal psychotherapy theory
- Psychiatrist, psychologist, nurses, clinical nurse, occupational therapist, art-therapist
- Intervention of the Mental Development Psychiatry Section (SPDM) if needed
- One responsible probation officer. Individual interviews or in collaboration with the SMPP.
- A weekly session with main prison services involved in care allowing us to review and discuss every situation.
- Working in close collaboration with the medical, security and others prison services, the probation officer supports inmates to :
 - ✓ create, maintain, restore social and family ties
 - ✓ money management and contact with the legal guardian
 - ✓ work around risk and protective factors
 - ✓ the implementation of projects corresponding to their needs and skills
 - ✓ preparing for continuity in care, the transition to the open institutional environment (socio-therapeutic outings, visits to institutions, information-sharing with relevant institutions)

PSYCHIATRIC UNIT IN PRISON DE LA CROISÉE

- Maximum capacity is 13 male inmates.
- Individualized care and group programmes (with the possible participation of the probation officer)
 - ✓ therapeutic gardening
 - ✓ thematic programmes (creative, pastry, music, socialization, free time, health, relaxation, status of the week)
 - ✓ art-therapy
 - ✓ photolanguage
 - ✓ joint therapeutic meal between inmates and prison staff
 - ✓ sport
 - ✓ cell cleaning

MAIN CHALLENGES & PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



Main challenges

- Forensic psychiatry has only become established in Switzerland as a discipline in its own right in recent years (since 2006).
- The increasing number of people under institutional therapeutic measure (93 in 2000 vs. 686 in 2020, according to the Federal Statistics Office) versus the lack of available places in secure forensic psychiatric clinics (especially for prisoners with mental retardation or autistic traits).

Potential next steps for improving psychiatric care

- ✓ Strengthen collaboration with all partners in the criminal, social and medical network
- ✓ Involve the family and the social circle as much as possible in order to secure their support in the rehabilitation process
- ✓ Prevention and treatment of mental disorders as part of standard medical care in order to prevent/reduce the likelihood of committing offenses



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION!

Any questions?