

Mobile Team Challenge Ltd

Unleash the Potential of Your People

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Opinions on Correctional Education Programs

Emotional Intelligence in Prison

According to theorist Daniel Goleman emotional intelligence is a combination of factors. It is the ability to know what you are feeling and managing those feeling while making good decisions. For example, being emotionally intelligent means “calming yourself when you’re anxious and handling your anger appropriately. It’s maintaining hope in the face of setbacks, having empathy and being able to get along with people”. Several studies have shown by teaching prisoners these abilities and the skill to stop and think before they react resulted in fewer conflicts which are important for the safety of other prisoners, prison staff, and the public once released (Vacca, 2004, p. 297). With the rapid increase in offender populations and high rates of recidivism should an emotional intelligence training program be implemented to help reduce violence in prison and reduce re-entry rates?



According to the official Government Statistics, the re-offending rate in the UK is 42.6% in Juveniles and 29.5% in Adults



The key to any prisoner’s success after release is determined by the offender’s ability to integrate back into the community and by avoiding further convictions after release. There have been several studies conducted on the effectiveness of educational programs and how they contribute to reducing recidivism rates. These studies have shown that prisoners who attend educational programs during their sentencing are less likely to re-offend after being released. Additionally, having the right kind of educational programs available will reduce prison violence, create a positive prison environment and reduce recidivism. Emotional intelligence training is important to the overall prison atmosphere because it will develop the prisoner’s self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills which in turn will reduce recidivism (Livingston, 2009, p. 21).

As Goleman points out in his book *Social Intelligence* (2006) the majority of prisoners seldom get to learn how to correct the behaviours and conditions that keep them repeating the cycle of release, relapse, and prison again (p. 293). This same majority suffer from a

short circuit in their social brain which is essential in expressing empathy and for regulating emotional impulses. Evaluations of current prison rehabilitation programs have found that by targeting the younger and first-time offenders is more successful in preventing future criminal activity after released and reducing recidivism (Goleman, 2006, p. 293). All educational programs in the prison system have one goal in common they all want to help offenders learn to be better people, not better criminals. Emotional intelligence training is the first step in this transformation (Goleman, 2006, p. 297).

References

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Hope in Prison?

By Dr. Ira Katz, Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Supervisor, Department of Mental Health, Salinas Valley Psychiatric Program in Soledad, California.

We have a population of severely psychiatrically impaired inmate patients with long histories of violent, self-injurious, or suicidal behaviours that have often led to disciplinary problems in prison. The majority have life sentences and/or have returned to prison over and over again. Typically for these patients, intense emotions of anger and dyscontrol build up and play out externally or internally.

Externally means fighting with other inmates or staff. Internally means they decide it's just not worth it anymore and attempt to harm themselves. So, a major goal of our program is to address these emotions and behaviours so that the patients can be returned to regular prison or, for some, to life outside.

In the case of most inmates who come into a prison psychiatric program, if you asked them what they would want to change about themselves, they'd answer, "I want anger management." In reality, with the HeartMath techniques and also the Freeze-Framer® program, they wind up getting that and much more. They are getting in touch with their

feelings and learning how to be in their heart instead of their head. As a psychologist, I believe that's very important because when a person can feel, they can begin to heal.

With the help of two assistants, I introduced the Freeze-Framer Interactive Learning System here in June 2003, and in one year, we've had over 250 male patients use the program.

The majority of the inmates had very few skills to deal with their emotions in an appropriate manner, and this is largely behind the reasons that most are in prison.

What the HeartMath System* has done in a fun, but definitely educational way is to give our inmates an opportunity to reduce their impulsivity, manage their emotions, feel their feelings, increase their behavioural choices, and be able to see their progress right on the computer screen.

Patients like watching their heart rhythm waves change on the Freeze-Framer*, practicing downshifting from the head to the heart. They are really experiencing that shift and what managing their emotions feels like.

One of the things that I think is so successful is not just the software, it's the philosophy. The philosophy about using the power of feelings is so strong, when taught correctly, that the men continue using their HeartMath skills after their computer sessions are over. When the lights go out, many practice the Freeze-Frame* technique.

They play anger games to practice managing their emotions, for example asking each other, "What makes you the angriest?" or telling each other situations where they have used the technique. I also give them exercises, for instance, a form that says, "Imagine this situation: somebody disrespects you, and you're ready to knock this guy out. Hold that feeling; now down shift from 5th gear... shift it down to Neutral. Now let's examine what powers and choices you really have to deal with this situation, using the Freeze-Frame* technique." They also write down on cards the people they appreciate. If they're having a bad day, they pull out their cards and start to transform their anger into something more suitable.

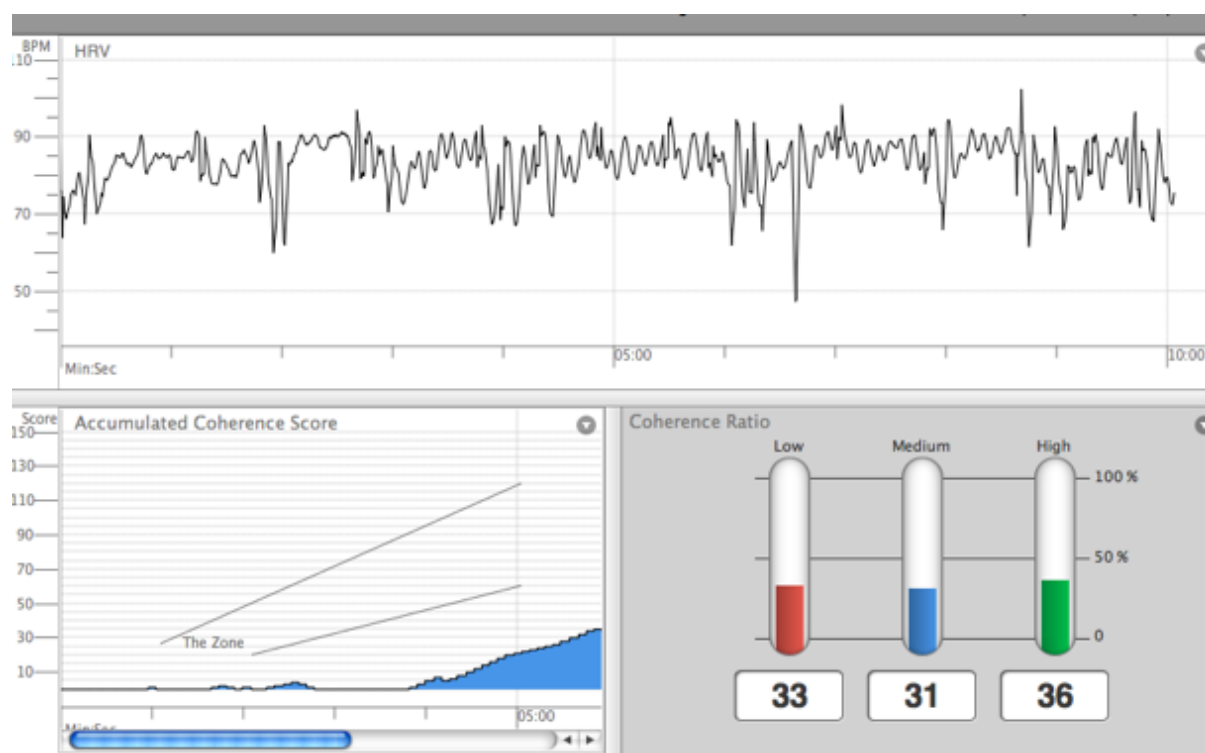
We tend to measure the success of our program in the number of suicide attempts, the number of fights, and the number of self-injurious acts. I can tell you that in this last year we haven't lost anyone to suicide and in terms of violence, there have been maybe five or six incidents in which someone got out of control, but no one got hurt. This is at a level of success beyond what normally occurs in a prison psychiatric program. In addition, of every patient who has been returned to life outside the prison, none has returned. It will be a year or two before I can look at the results of using the Freeze-Framer program on a statistical analysis basis, however, I'm very pleased.

I call this "hope for the hopeless" because men who've never really stopped long enough to feel their feelings are now realizing they can make choices, they can handle their feelings differently, and things seem to work better when they do.

The HeartMath System* represents a really fresh approach to getting our patients engaged in taking more responsibility for their lives.

“It is a very stressful time for me, but the tools, especially, are really helping me through it. After an explosive situation yesterday, I did a Freeze-Frame®. Though it took longer, I did change, and I did feel better.” — Anonymous Prisoner

***N.B. HeartMath / Freeze Framer Software is integral in the MTC Conflict to Collaboration Kit and is also used in the Emotional Intelligence Workshops**



Click Here to see a short video of HeartMath at work

<https://mtceurope.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Inner-Balance.mp4>

Behavioural and Attitudinal Change in Individuals

Mobile Team Challenge has been actively involved in over 50 Prisons and Young Offender Institutes since 2004 where we have been working with offenders to create behavioural and attitudinal change in their lives.

MTC utilise award-winning experiential learning kits and concepts to facilitate lasting change in the individuals we engage with.

Behaviour-Changing Games which deliver Game-Changing Lives

MTC are already actively involved in the setting up of Community Projects focussing on reducing Knife Crime, Street Gangs, Serious Youth Violence and Hate Crimes.

Whether the Young People are looking to develop their Social Skills, such as; Respect, Self-Awareness, Other-Awareness, Empathy, Self Confidence or Self Belief etc. or are preparing for resettlement , MTC's principles, interventions and concepts are making a huge impact and are, quite literally, changing lives and eliminating re-offending.

Mobile Team Challenge is seeing some outstanding results in its "Behavioural and Attitudinal Change" Programmes in Young and Adult Offenders and in its Community / Street Gang Projects across the UK.

A UK Case Study resulting in ZERO re-offending over 3 years

MTC are working with one prison currently where, prior to re-settlement, the prisoners were invited to participate in an on-line Emotional Intelligence Profiling.

These profiles measure the 8 E.I. behaviours, one of which is EMPATHY. On the samples taken from the Group, the empathy scores of the prisoners were very low, almost non-existent; which would explain why these individuals were 'able' to commit such aggressive GBH crimes against others.

During 6 months of re-settlement these prisoners used MTC techniques, activities and concepts to develop their empathy and at the end of the period, just prior to release, their E.I. Profiles were measured again. This time we found that empathy scores, on average had been increased to 7,8 & 9's out of 10.

The Prison actually continued to monitor this sample group and identified that so far, to date (3 years) none of the prisoners who had been on this programme has re-offended.

To say that these concepts are "Life – Changing" is no exaggeration. In every sector from Military (4,500 + RAF, Navy, Army & Tri-Services personnel training by MTC over the last 10 years), Police, Public Sector (150+ Local Authorities and 33 NHS Foundation Trusts) to Corporate Organisations, they are all experiencing "Behavioural and Attitudinal Change" in the individuals who participate in these MTC events.

The link here takes you to our "Prisons Sector" on our web site where you will find more information regarding reducing re-offending. <http://mtceurope.co.uk/sectors/prisons/>

Crime Prevention

Following on from the success of the above Case Study, Mobile Team Challenge have been commissioned by the Home Office to create and deliver a number of Nationwide initiatives to engage with Youth Groups, Schools, Colleges etc in order to reduce and prevent Hate Crimes, Knife Crimes, disruptive Street Gangs etc.

The primary technique, from which we are seeing excellent results, is a variation of the techniques as used in the above case study. In leveraging and heightening Self and Other Awareness through Behaviour-Changing Games we are seeing individuals and communities developing empathy, respect for others, appreciating diversity and positive futures.

Testimonials

"The most enjoyable and thought-provoking course I have ever attended" (David Jordan, Prison Officer)

"The MTC approach shows that the glass is "half full" and not "half empty". It will work within most organisations" (Dennis Griffiths, Prison Officer)

"There are many valuable aspects to the MTC approach that develop communication, flexibility, trust, teamwork, etc. This can all be related, and the lessons learnt transferred to work and life in general" (Stuart Cooper, Prison Education Officer, HMP)

"The MTC Training course was very professional, great fun and packed full of great information" (Simon Folger, Prison Education Officer, HMP)

"Excellent Course – Excellent delivery" (HR Operations Manager: Surrey Police)

"I would highly recommend your equipment and training to anyone interested and would be glad to answer questions about our experience. Thank you again for your work in providing us with the tools and the knowledge to positively affect the world through the children we serve."

(Brian Flemming, Drug Action Council)

"When first approached by Mobile Team Challenge, who introduced us to a complete system that could successfully address Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship, we invited them to come to Ashmole School to run a one hour demonstration with a mixed group of our pupils.

Within that short period, we were amazed to see that through experiential learning all the pupils developed a wide range of core competencies. Mobile Team Challenge not only covers enhanced thinking skills, but we also were very pleased to see that experiential learning can be adapted to meet varying

identified needs, such as communication, team building, leadership, motivation & problem solving, etc. We noticed a dramatic change in a significant number of students.

Mobile Team Challenge also has the additional benefits of being able to be used in all of our classrooms as well as sports hall due to its compact nature and ease of transportability. In support MTC has also been specifically developed with full risk assessments carried out for every activity. This is enhanced by specific programming, which will enable all of our teachers to safely run each of the 100+ activities with a very simple training introduction.

Like most Upper and Middle schools, we also have limited budgets set aside to develop a number of specific programmes.

Fortunately, Mobile Team Challenge offer direct funding support through specific governmental funding schemes for 100% of the cost of Mobile Team Challenge. With this support I strongly recommend you invite MTC to your school to run a demonstration to see for yourself what I can only describe as an invaluable PSHE system for your school."

(Anthony Filby Senior Teacher in charge of Pastoral Curriculum, Ashmole School, Southgate, North London)

"This programme is enjoyed by all the children from year Five through to year Nine and it is something they look forward to a great deal. We have organised adventure-based programmes for the following reasons:

- *To help new pupils coming into the school get to know their staff and fellow pupils.*
- *To cover PSHE and Citizenship specifically relating to teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills.*
- *To organise inter class and inter year teambuilding events.*
- *For staff training and development programmes.*
- *To expand the scope and the positive impact and influence that the school has within the local community.*

In all my time teaching I have never encountered such an effective programme for interactive learning as Mobile Team Challenge.

Keith Pugh, Deputy Head-Teacher, Swanage Middle School, Swanage, Dorset

"What a great way to teach valuable life lessons - by doing enjoyable activities and then discussing how to relate the learning from them back to real life." (Tom Johnson, Carey Counselling Centre)