

Probation Officers' Resilience: *A critical need for a critical profession*

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Sustaining Probation Officers'
Resilience in Europe

*Why is probation a **critical** profession?
Why do we need **resilient** probation officers?*



1. Short, common sense answer

2. Longer answer, looking at the **expectations and challenges** that PO's face



The short answer:

Probation work is critical in the eyes
of

- ... society, with a focus on victims;
- ... the offender;
- ... the probation officer.

To meet these expectations and
challenges, PO's must be resilient.



Expectations

- Probation goals
 - Person, offender oriented
 - Society oriented
- PO competencies



Person / offender oriented probation goals

The R-Quartet

- Rehabilitation / behaviour change
- Restoration / healing damage and broken trust through actions
- Re-integration / practical, basic matters
- Risk-reduction / preventing re-offending & harm

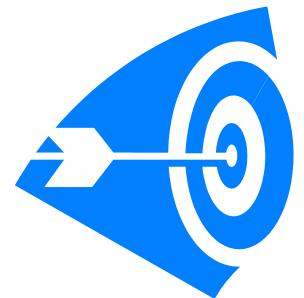
Offender changes (desistance research):

- Agency / self-assuredness
- Generativity / life goals now include helping & supporting
- Attributions / a new look at crime, victims, responsibility
- Narrative twist / finding purpose in the past



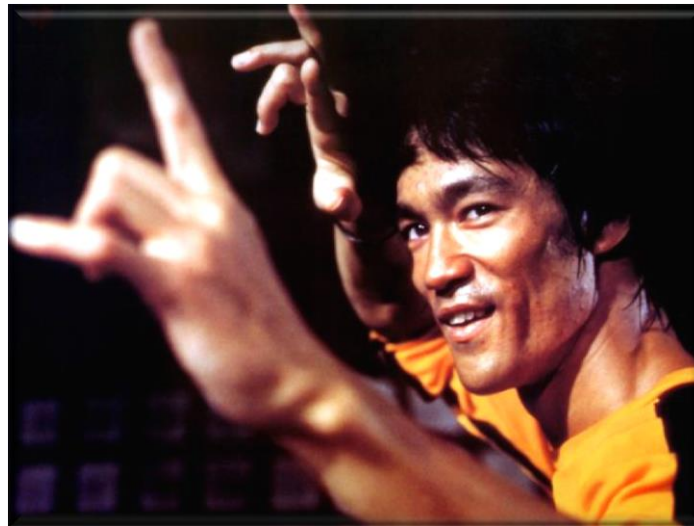
PO competencies

- Professional: Law, assessment, psychiatry, addiction, motivation, de-escalation, behaviour change, practical support, advocacy, reporting ...
- Personal: honest, direct, committed, personal disclosure, caring, installing hope in the offender
 - These are competencies... but also strong moral professional convictions, the soul of probation work, the point of gravity in the offender – officer dialogue.



The challenges

Hoping that life will treat you well just because you are a good person, is the same as hoping that a tiger will not attack you because you are a vegetarian.



Bruce Lee

- martial arts master and moviestar -



Challenges:

- Vision and mission
- Clients
- Method
- Organization
- Quality management and research
- Facing reality
 - ... letting go from *make it happen* to *help it happen*, or even to *let it happen*
 - ... dealing with frustration and disappointment apart from celebrating success



Conclusion:

We need resilient PO's to do their critical job because ...

1. ... without awareness, skills and the experience of growth, PO's cannot deal with the expectations and challenges ... and this mix can be defined as resilience (*a meta-competence*),
2. the PO showing and using his own resilience as a life-changing tool is promoting desistance
 - The development of both resilience and desistance is *interactive* in nature
 - Resilience and desistance can *reinforce each other* when supported by PO competencies, the PO team, and the probation organisation



Thank you for your attention!
Enjoy the conference!

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