

NESTOR

A National Network of Schools for Parents in Prison
Enhancing Responsive Father Parenting



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<Handbook for coordinators of Parenting Schools in
Prisons>

ABSTRACT

The current document works as a toolbox that included all the suggested exercises along with the corresponding methodology for the implementation of the schools for father-prisoners within prisons

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Definitions

CA	Consortium Agreement
D	Deliverable
DEM	Demonstrator (Deliverable Type)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
IP	Implementation Plan
KOM	Kick-off Meeting
M	Month
MS	Milestone
O	Objective
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Project description

The project NESTOR aims to enhance prisoners' parenting skills by establishing a Network of 30 Schools for Parents in the prison environment. The establishment of the Network of Schools for Parents will support fathers in prison through transnational cooperation, particularly in 20 Greek prisons, in maintaining and enhancing their parental role and will also provide the opportunity for the competent prison personnel to be trained, according to adult education techniques, to assist the developed Schools during the pilot implementation of the Project, as well as in the future. Moreover, it should be underlined that the project is strongly supported and part of the current strategic planning of the Ministry of Citizen Protection and more particularly the Deputy Minister of Citizen Protection, towards the institutionalization of a "Parents Schools Academy in Prison".

Project partners

KEMEA – Center for Security Studies, www.kemea.gr (EL), Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (E.E.T.A.A.) (EL), KENTHEA, www.kenthea.org.cy (CY), VICESSE – Vienna Centre for Societal Security, www.vicesse.eu (AT), LIF – Law and Internet Foundation, www.netlaw.bg (BG).

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Introductory remarks

We attempt to write this toolkit by drawing on our experience from many different clinical fields in which we have worked, from our work in our private offices and from many years of coordinating teams in Thessaloniki and Athens. The contact with the different groups of parents has significantly helped us to develop as professionals, modifying our material according to the target group, enriching our knowledge, our approaches and updating our data each time. The profile of parents who attend in-person or online meetings varies. But it is worth mentioning that this is the first time we have been asked to design groups of imprisoned fathers. For this reason, we thought it is appropriate to reach out to colleagues who work in Prisons. A special mention should be made to Mrs. Antigoni Efstratoglou, Postdoctoral Researcher of the Faculty of Humanities of the EAP and Educator in Prisons, for her valuable contribution, which was of decisive importance. Mrs. Efstratoglou guided us to enrich the sections with activities and content that we hope you will find useful, since she knows the target group very well.

The manual you are holding in your hands is a text made up of 7 sections, divided into 12 meetings (including the introduction and conclusion). Several activities are given indicatively, but you who will coordinate the parent groups can configure them according to the population and the needs that will arise.

You can also introduce other forms of experiential exercises such as role playing, more audio-visual materials if available in the detection centre you work, or anything else you find useful and right for the group. In the context of the meetings, you will see that art is also employed in an effort to encourage critical reflection and the dialogue that can arise from it. We suggest that you also enrich the meetings with other works of art (poems, paintings, abstracts from prose or films) that you love, inspire you, and think, from your experience in order to provoke conversation between dads.

The parents' handbook includes a reference to the content of the meetings, the aim of the units and the way (experiential activities). Due to the language limitations, we thought it is appropriate to keep the language of the text quite simple and use stories and photographs to give them "food for thought" and space to take notes, write letters, record what they consider useful for same from your meetings. At the end, a note is given with the most important days in Greece and worldwide that we celebrate the day of the Father, the Mother, the parent and the Family.

We hope you find it useful, Vicky & Eleni

Applied good practices to strengthen the parenting role of prisoners

Strengthening the parenting role of prisoners, especially fathers, is a major challenge for detention facilities. It is a fact that the implementation of individual actions or even the implementation of holistic central policies concerning women prisoners in general is more common. However, there are interesting examples of good practice at the international level that focus on strengthening the parenting role of male prisoners with the input of state and non-state agencies.

If we seek to categorize good practices, we would say that they move along three different axes. The first axis focuses on an effort to create an environment within Prisons that could accommodate children and partners of prisoners, so that visits and the corresponding interaction are carried out in a way that does not cause reflection and bad memories for the participants and especially children. The second axis focuses on the provision of counselling support on both sides of the interested parties, not only to the prisoners, but also to the other family members. It can be carried out, either inside the detention centres, or outside, that is, through the use of technology. Finally, the third axis focuses on the education of prisoners regarding their parental role.

Some notable examples are presented below:

Germany

Germany seems to stand out among European countries, as it has invested in the implementation of innovative actions regarding the role and relationship of men, fathers and their families.

The legislation adopted by several states is also noteworthy. Indeed, many federal states have included in their basic principles, as regards the formulation of the execution of the sentence, the basic principle of 'openness', which aims to ensure social contacts, the maintenance, that is, the relationship of the prisoner with the social life. In this way, the importance of the prisoner's social environment for his reintegration into society after his release from prison is emphasized.

In particular, the law of the Federal State LandesstrafvollzugsgesetzSchleswig-Holstein – (LStVollzGSH) refers to the fundamental principle of openness, underlining that the interests of relatives of the imprisoned family must be taken into account when shaping the execution of the sentence, in order to achieve the preservation of family and social bonds of prisoners.¹

Equally important is the contribution of people/professionals outside the prison, as well as family members of the imprisoned, which is, where possible, the reason they should be included in the organization/planning.

For example, if an underage child of a prisoner is in the care of the juvenile service, then the relevant regulations of the Juvenile Service must also be taken into account in the way the

¹ https://rsf.uni-greifswald.de/storages/uni-greifswald/fakultaet/rsf/lehrstuehle/ls-harrendorf/Bd58_9783942865616.pdf

sentence is carried out and the opportunities provided to the imprisoned parent to communicate with their child.

Emphasis is also placed on the wider support of the family through social education (§ 25), psychotherapy (§ 26) and also work with the family (§ 24). Care is given, among other things, to the improvement of the prisoner's relations with his family in the context of family counselling and couple counselling, while trainings are also provided to fathers and mothers. For visits and contacts in the context of all these, appropriately designed spaces must be offered.

The head of the detention center may allow overnight visits of children to parents (fathers or mothers) in an appropriate environment, if the prisoner meets the criteria, if the child's best interests are promoted and if the other persons, who are responsible for the care of the child, agree.

It is a fact that younger children are affected to a greater extent. For this reason, the importance of the possibility of overnight visits to areas suitable for children should be emphasized. Support is also given for the cost of visiting relatives who will have to travel long distances. To facilitate communication, the possibility of covering related expenses is provided. In particular, those who receive social support can in special cases apply to the relevant body (in this case the Job center) for an additional alimony. A corresponding special case is found in § 21 Abs. 6 SGB II, where it is specified that there must be an undisputed, current and recurring (continuous) need. This also includes the visit of relatives of prisoners, which practically depends on each individual case. For such decisions it should be taken into account whether additional services, such as those of the management of the marital home or the legal guardianship of alimony and education, are necessary. Jurisprudence provides, independently of Article 6 GG, for the additional travel costs of the spouses.

In this case, a question arises whether a transfer of prisoners to an institution close to their place of origin facilitates the possibilities of communication. At the same time, to further facilitate communication, the federal law - StVollzG (§ 8 Abs. 1 Nr. 1), as well as the majority of state laws, provide the possibility for the prisoner to be transferred to a different competent institution, if this may contribute to his care or integration after release.

There is a corresponding provision regarding the possibility of young children living together with male and female parents in Prisons, as long as this meets the needs of the children. It is characteristic that in 2012 there were ten mother-child prisons in Germany, while fathers and children living together has so far been implemented in the Waldheim prison.

Nevertheless, the emotional well-being of the child is of paramount importance, regardless of whether he is to live with the imprisoned father or the imprisoned mother. Yet, there are objections to this possibility, as the risks of harmful consequences for the child, who lives with the imprisoned parents, increase as he grows older (a child's contact with the outside world is necessary for his socialization).

Because of the dangers such a practice hides, the cohabitation of parents and children cannot function as a regular instrument of family protection. Cohabitation is limited only to cases where it is served as a solution to the significant problem of the separation of the young child from the parent.

Here are some examples of good practice:

- **“Children of prisoners”**

The "KindervonInhaftierten" Network (Netzwerk "KindervonInhaftierten", Kvi), run by Treffpunkte.V., brings together agencies from different sectors, including Non-Profit Organizations, Children's Services, State Ministries of Justice, Associations and Research Institutions.²

The project aimed to create a network of key professionals from various fields who would in turn act beneficially for affected families by assessing the quality of services offered (for families with imprisoned parents), while disseminating relevant material and practically supporting the affected families. In addition, Kvi manages a database of local support activities for children of prisoners. As of February 2021, it lists 287 support efforts; 167 of which target families of inmates (including prisoners) and 89 of which specifically target inmate parents and their children. The types of activities included are:

1. Additional options for incarcerated parents to spend more time with their children, such as Father-Child Afternoons offered by JVA Dieburg in partnership with pastoral care organizations.³
2. Activities aimed at strengthening the bond between child and parent; such as the project "Papaliest" (papareads) supported by JVA Dieburg & Hochschule Dieburg, which helps imprisoned fathers to record audiobooks for their children, identifying the correct book and providing the necessary equipment.⁴
3. Activities aimed at improving existing facilities used by children and their imprisoned parents, such as the effort of JVA Bruchsal.⁵
4. Activities aimed at helping imprisoned parents with parenting, such as the "Kinderblicke" parenting classes offered by JVA Neustrelitz.⁶

The actions listed are largely a collaboration between prison administrations and various NGOs, many of which are faith-based and religious in nature. It should be added that while the Kvi is a

2 <https://www.juki-online.de/partner/#tab-id-5>

3 <https://www.juki-online.de/kvi-angebote/jva-dieburg-vk/>

4 <https://www.juki-online.de/kvi-angebote/jva-dieburg-papaliest/>

5 <https://www.juki-online.de/kvi-angebote/jva-bruchsal/>

6 <https://www.juki-online.de/kvi-angebote/jva-neustrelitz-1/>

notable example of best practice, the local approach in Germany may have disadvantages, as the situation of prisoners may vary from region to region.⁷

- **PapaistaufMontage**

The implementation of this program started in March 2012 in the prisons of the German city of Bützow in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. This is the first internationally recognized training program, which was implemented in German prisons and aimed to help imprisoned parents in raising their children. The triple P -PositiveParentingProgram- imparts knowledge and behaviors for a loving relationship, where parents will be able to individually strengthen their children and at the same time systematically encourage family dynamics. It is addressed to imprisoned men, who have no more than two years in prison. 450 men from completely different family structures participate in the program, with one or two or more children from the same mother or from different mothers as well as single fathers. The program lasted two years and was conducted in four phases in each year and with ten prisoners in each phase. The program is being developed in three phases. In the first phase, which took place inside the prison, the training of the fathers was carried out. The Higher Education Institution assists in this training, where young female students - future educators participate voluntarily, based on their own ideas, formulating their own program, which they offer to the prisoners. Despite all this, the support received by the female students from competent social services is important, as well as their unwavering cooperation for the successful implementation of the specific program. In addition to the usual visiting hours, the family meets once a month for three hours in a beautifully designed and brightly coloured space. Each participant receives a photo album, where the activities with the children are collected. The collection of photographs helps children to have beautiful memories of their parents and contributes to the normalization of the parent-child relationship.

In particular, in the first part of the program they deal with everyday issues, like healthy eating/cooking or what I should do when my child is sick, or a minor accident happens.

The second part of the program focused on how the visiting spaces are designed, what is important to the children and how long the visits should last.

In the third part of the program, social workers visited the wives of the prisoners in their homes, if the latter wished to do so. 60% of women wanted this kind of contact. The rest of the women were contacted at least once by phone, where they were asked about possible future visits to the prison, whether they have any kind of difficulties, whether they have applied for financial

⁷ https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/ANALYSE/Analyse_Kinder_Inhaftierter_barrierefrei.pdf 22-25;33f.

assistance from the state, how their children are doing at school, or whether their children's scheduled medical examinations have taken place. The questions aim to guide them and provide them with the necessary help. The program lasted half a year, but the specific care for women can last two years. Women can in this way come closer with each other.

The advantages of the program are its holistic approach and contribution, as it is supported by different social welfare and social science services, which are favourable for the whole family. In addition, mothers and fathers acquire appropriate skills to better resolve long-term differences that may arise. Finally, children learn to come to terms with the situation at hand and, together with their parents, to plan both their own future and that of the family.

- **Bindungsräume**

The "Bindungsräume" project in the Cologne and Bonn area adopted some ideas from programs implemented in Italy, developing, in part, new practices to facilitate the visitation of children and adolescents in prisons. The initiative for this program was initiated by the Bonn Federal Working Group for Prisoners (BAG-S). Teachers who are specialized in the fields of Pedagogy, painting and participation in the public space participated.

A very characteristic initiative within the project is the creation of child-friendly paths within the premises of the detention centre under the name "Buddy". A teddy bear having the same name accompanies the children at every step; as a large living display welcomes children at the entrance gate. Following his footprints, the children are led to the visiting area and from there again to the outside area. In the visiting area there is an illustrated book. The book shows Buddy's experiences in prison. Also, parents can buy Buddy as a teddy bear and as a souvenir, so that children can take it home. The teddy bear is sewn by the inmates in the detention facility.

Ireland

- **Family Links**

The "FamilyLinks" program was based on a collaboration between national authorities, through the Irish Prison System and some NGOs such as ParentsPlusCharity, BedfordRowFamilyAgency, theIrishPenalReformTrust and the ChildhoodDevelopmentInitiative (CDI). In particular, CDI was responsible for the implementation of a project that took place in Limerick Detention Center from October 2014 to March 2016.

The purpose of the program was to address problems that arise for incarcerated fathers. In this sense, the project implemented actions aimed at both the parent/side of the family and the staff of Prisons. On the parent's side, the project was provided for:

1. The provision of parent training for families

The training had a dual approach. He targeted the imprisoned father as well as the mother who was outside. A modified version of the "ParentsPlus" project was used and lasted 6-8 weeks.

2. Route changes in visit formats

This included efforts made to redirect visits to focus on family communication, outside of the context of safety issues.' And in this way the participating families were entitled to 'two visits to a specially designed family-friendly room inside the prison'.

3. The actions that focused on the prison's staff were:

- Provide security/detention staff training in communication and juvenile protection issues.

Specifically, this meant 4 different training seminars for security personnel. The "Children First" program familiarized the trainees with the "new civil protection of minors that would be applied in Prisons". The Front-of-house program aimed to familiarize trainees with the importance of positive relationships between prisoners/security staff and visiting family. The program "The FamilyLiaisonOfficer" was about outlining the role of the Family Liaison Officer within the prison. Finally, the "ParentsPlus" program covered the implementation of the "ParentsPlus Programme" project, which formed the basis of training for both incarcerated fathers and for mothers who are outside.

4. Indication of the liaison between the family, the prisoner (FamilyLiaisonOfficer's -FLO's) and prison staff.

This program benefited 15 families and 90 security personnel, who implemented at least one training program.

Participation was open to all incarcerated fathers who had no history of child protection or substance abuse issues. Two additional requirements that were raised related to consistent communication between the incarcerated parent and the child and agreement with the partner of the incarcerated parent to participate in the project. Although the evaluation identified some issues with the implementation of the project, the feedback on the project was mostly positive.

Soon after the FamilyLinks programme, the Irish Prison Service incorporated the project as policy and since 2018 it has been implemented systematically in all prisons. It has also been integrated since 2019, as a building block of their services. Additionally, more efforts were made with the completion of FamilyLinks, such as improving structures, feedback mechanisms for families of detainees and training security staff in the FamilyLiaisonOfficer role.

Denmark

Positive experiences have been gathered from the Scandinavian model, such as for example trial programs implemented by the Danish Institute for Human Rights. In one of them (2010-2011), children's officers were appointed in each detention center. This specialized staff of authorized

persons was tasked with formulating appropriate child-friendly meeting conditions and implementing them. For this purpose they had their own financial budget. As a rule, it was staff who had worked in the particular prison in the previous period of time and are familiar with the respective building conditions, the particularities of the staff and the organizational particularities of the prison.

It is admirable to see that in a relatively short period of time the entrance and visiting areas are designed to meet and take into account the needs of children. Emphasis was given on the introduction of appropriate information material. A friendly poster explained to the children the screening process, which exists at the prison entrances, a book with photographic material in the waiting room showed the rooms, which belong to the daily life of the parent, who is in prison (e.g. gym, workshop area, common kitchen area), to which children do not have access. This way the children can get a more realistic picture of their parents' daily life in prison and thus they worry less about them and feel more confident and happy about their visit to it.

Individual actions were the following:

1. Prisoners had recorded their children's lullaby stories on CDs.
2. The children's commissioners also dealt with interpersonal issues, discussion groups and awareness measures for prison staff (information given by prison staff about children and about the best way to associate with them).

- **FamilienhausEngelsborg**

Denmark is the country where the so-called Engelsborg family house (FamilienhausEngelsborg) originated. It is an institution, open to the execution of the sentence, where offenders could serve their sentence or part of the sentence together with their children and their partners. Their stay there was accompanied by intensive family therapy which prepared them in various ways for a free life. Finally, the children's happiness was at the center of therapeutic and socio-pedagogical efforts.

This action was implemented for two years (2010-2011) in two detention institutions and two prisons where the investigations were carried out. The aim was to implement simple measures, which will improve the contact of children with parents, as well as the general visit of children when they visit their parents. The results of this action were very positive and the Institute for Human Rights suggested that it be continued and extended to all detention facilities.

United Kingdom

- **Fathers inside**

One of the good practices identified in the UK is the FathersInside program – an intensive group work program for adult men and young men in prison. The program focuses on parental responsibilities, the education of children, their development and well-being. The FathersInside

program uses drama, fiction, group discussion, games and writing; aiming to mobilize participants to develop a greater understanding of the father's role. According to its website, the program also aims to combat stereotyping, develop skills that are key to successful reintegration and contribute to distancing from crime.

The FathersInside program has been the subject of several independent evaluations, as well as a model of good practice in recent surveys. Justice Data Lab analysis shows how effective the program has been. The result showed that its participants were 40% less likely to reoffend.⁸ In addition, there is information on the journey of six new fathers through a range of services highlighted by FathersInside, as an example of successful release and reintegration intervention. FathersInside is the only prison-based program and is a landmark in the international study of policies and programs that promote or facilitate father involvement.⁹

- **PrisonersEducationTrust – PET**

Another example is the PrisonersEducationTrust (PET), implemented as a case study as part of PET's review of the prisoner's learning experience. It runs over 2000 courses for prisoners every year. The program implemented an initiative where children of prisoners participated with their parents in the creation of an animated film showing the positive effect of education within the prison context.¹⁰ Nine children, two mothers and six fathers, as well as a grandfather, participated in the film. It also includes drawings by the children and the voices of the children and their fathers. PET funds over 3,000 courses a year for people in prison. They focus on the fact that "access to education has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of returning to offending after release", which - on the contrary - helps ensure a better future for both individuals and families. In fact, they cite the experiences of some prisoners who received funding from PET for health and safety certification, highlighting that sharing common knowledge and experience for training helped them maintain a close relationship with their children.¹¹

Italy

- **Children and prisons (Bambini e Carcere)**

TelefonoAzzurro has been promoting and implementing the Children and Prison (Bambini e Carcere) program since 1993, with the aim of protecting the children of imprisoned parents. To this end, the agency has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Justice

8 <http://www.safeground.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Data-Lab-Report.pdf>

9 <http://www.safeground.org.uk/prisons/fathers-inside/>

10 <https://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/2017/12/animation-children-and-dads-help-spread-the-value-of-education-in-prison/>

11 <https://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/>

and the Department of Prison Management, which was renewed in 2019 for three additional years. The program has been divided into two sub-projects with the same purpose:

1. The Playroom Project, set up in facilities where children visit their imprisoned parents to reduce the impact of prison visitation.
2. The Nursery/ICAM project, for children aged 0-6 whose mothers are in prison. The project is coordinated at national level but implemented locally by suitably trained volunteers. Each group of volunteers benefits from professional supervision by experts within the organization.

- **SpazioGiallo (YellowSpace)**

Efforts have been made within detention centres, such as the implementation of "Spazio Giallo" (Yellow Space). This is an integrated social-educational reception area for children who are preparing to meet their parent in prison. The Yellow Space has two elements:

A natural space the "Spazio Giallo" inside the prison, which aims to create a safe space where children feel safe and play before and after visiting the prison.

A route, called Trovopapà, where the child is accompanied by a professional from the entrance to the exit of the prison, helping to go through all the intermediate stages, such as checking documents, handing over personal belongings, etc.

The project tries to make the control easier, the waiting until meeting the parent and the subsequent embarrassment or separation, which is difficult to manage.¹²

Finally, among the most relevant initiatives are the 'parenting speakers in prison' which help incarcerated parents through individual psychological support meetings. Their aim is to raise attention to various aspects of the child-parent relationship and the rights and responsibilities of being a father. In addition, Mothers' Workshops and Fathers' Workshops in prison provide training and information for incarcerated parents.

Sweden

- **Goodnight stories**

The program 'Goodnight stories from the inside', implemented by Malmö's municipal library and Sweden's prison services, aims to encourage relationships between fathers, children and families¹³, through of recording fairy tales or songs for their children on CD.

¹² <https://www.bambinisenzasbarre.org/chi-siamo/>

¹³ <https://www.thelocal.se/20100423/26236/>

- **Fathers and their Children**

The program "Fathers and their Children" aims to improve the living conditions of children, strengthening the relationship between fathers and their children, through the organization of joint activities between fathers and children (e.g. .excursions, food, etc.)¹⁴

Austria

- **Recording Studio**

The creation of the recording studio at the JaSonnnberg penitentiary for prisoners was created to motivate prisoners to record themselves telling stories to children. These recordings were sent on CD to the prisoners' families, and this was done in collaboration with German partners who had previous experience in implementing a similar project in the structures there.

Also of interest is the case of the Men's Counseling Center in Vienna, which is an example of a local organization offering counseling and treatment services to men with violent behavior. Counseling also includes lessons on the role of the father and parenthood. There is also access to the target population, i.e. incarcerated fathers, in terms of implementing violence prevention training for men in prison. The Counseling Center is also responsible for prisoners and those released from prison, as well as parents receiving counseling services during divorce. It is a non-profit organization supported partly by the federal government and partly by the City of Vienna and other project funders. It is run entirely by its staff.

Bulgaria

Programs:

- Formation and development of parenting skills, family counselling and support within the framework of a program under the auspices of the Municipality of Burgas. The project is implemented by the ECIP Foundation and financed by the Operational Program "Human Resources Development". The general goal of the project is to "provide psychological support and counselling to parents and future parents for the formation and development of parenting skills, family counselling and support as well as individual and group work with children and parents". The above initiative is the only one that has been found and is valid at the national level.

- "Active/Positive Fatherhood" Initiative – this very successful initiative has been implemented in Plovdiv prison since 2016 with the cooperation of the "Center for social rehabilitation and integration of adult offenders and persons with refugee status" of the Municipality of Plovdiv. The initiative focuses on prisoners who are fathers of children under the

¹⁴ <https://www.stadsmissionen.org/detta-gor-vi/barn-unga-familjer/pappor-och-deras-barn/>

age of 18. Activities implemented in the framework of the initiative include role plays, exchange of personal experiences etc. They are organized in 10 modules that are implemented twice a week. The project ends with a creative seminar, the products of which are sold at a charity bazaar. The money collected is donated to the Plovdiv Paediatric Clinic (for children with oncological diseases). Social workers and psychologists from the center coordinated the initiative, but during the period of the restrictive measures of COVID-19 they could not enter the prisons – a period during which the program has been stopped. It also worked at Belene Prison, but stopped for the same reason.

- Program "Enhancing parental capacity" - this program will take place in Bulgaria's only women's prison in the city of Sliven and has been approved by the General Directorate for the Execution of Penalties. However, the participants did not have more information about the program, since Sliven prison staff did not agree to participate in the focus group and the program has not yet been implemented (as of this writing).

- Project "PapaPlus" - implemented by the Union for the Child and the Space, started in 2018 and has been implemented jointly with the Directorate General for the Execution of Penalties and the European Union for the Children of Prisoners. The project aims to strengthen the bonds between incarcerated fathers and their children through educational initiatives. Additionally, two training seminars were held with prisoners and members of the respective prison administration in collaboration with the Sofia Central Prison, yet there was no further development of this initiative. The initiative included work with the Sofia Central Prison Art Club and a small exhibition of prisoners' paintings, which was stopped due to a lack of funding from the prison authorities. Furthermore, within the framework of "PapaPlus" criminal judges were trained, with the aim of improving their understanding of the needs of fathers in prison.

- The "AngelTree" project, an initiative of "Prison Solidarity" was implemented by the Bulgarian Prison Solidarity and encourages the relationship between prisoners and their families. The initiative has been running for over 14 years relying on donations from volunteers from the community. The association makes Christmas presents and gives them to the inmates, who then give them to their children during visits. Another relevant initiative implemented by the "Prison Solidarity" of Bulgaria, is the creation of 2 visiting centers, where volunteers (psychologists and educators) work with children of prisoners and take care of them during the visits (in cases where the partners want to visit their imprisoned partners without the presence of the children). Unfortunately, this voluntary service no longer exists.

There are many initiatives in the context of Christian holidays (Christmas, Easter) that include gatherings for families of prisoners and gifts. These are usually organized by representatives of the Church, but similar events include charity initiatives and other sporadic initiatives.

In general, there are only a few initiatives aimed at the parenting skills of prisoners and these are mainly activated by non-governmental organizations but implemented in cooperation with the General Directorate of Penal Execution and the regional prison administration. However, there

is a lack of national actions implemented entirely by the General Directorate for the Execution of Penalties.

Belgium

In Belgium, with the support of members of the organization (NGO) Relais-Enfants-Parents, in a total of 9 detention facilities multi-functional visiting areas for children and their imprisoned parents were created. The program is called "LeTrilieux" and is aimed at the emotional, intellectual and physical needs of each child.

The program is implemented on the basis of three interconnected rooms. The first room offers facilities for motor activities such as climbing, running or classic motor games such as hide and seek. The second room aims to develop artistic skills, such as painting, crafts or other types of construction. The third room is dedicated to quiet activities, for example one can withdraw and read a book.

The child can alternately use all three areas during the visit, provided that the rules of each room are respected. At the same time, employees of the detention centre, as well as volunteers, ensure the proper and smooth implementation of the program.

Greece

In Greece there have been specific and quite successful initiatives in the past that definitely need to be remembered and further studied. Here are some of them:

- **Schools for Parents**

In some prisons (Korydallos, Patras, Agia, Alikarnassos) Parent Schools were operated by the Institute of Continuing Education for Adults (IDEKE) of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education.

Specifically, in Korydallos prison, IDEKE Parenting Schools were implemented for imprisoned fathers during the period 2007-2010 with the contribution of the Second Chance School (SDE) which operates within the prison in terms of meeting places.

While in the prison of Patras, the IDEKE Parent Schools were implemented by the Second Chance School (SDE) that operates within the prison and the action was addressed only to parents of prisoners who were registered students of the school (SDE). In particular, the programs implemented in the context of this action were the following:

- "Psychological Support and Health Education of Socially Vulnerable Groups" (2010)
- "The Family in Modern Times" (2012)
- "Intersex Relations" (2013)
- "Counseling for vulnerable social groups" (2014)
- Support Groups

In some prisons (KATK, Korydallos, Diavaton, Prisoners' Hospital) support groups for fathers of prisoners were implemented, some of which were actions of the General Secretariat of Anti-Criminal Policy (GAP) of the Ministry of Citizen Protection. The aim of these actions was to strengthen the parenting skills of imprisoned fathers and to improve the relationship with their children.

Specifically, with regard to the men's prison of Korydallos, during 2019-2020, support and training groups for parents of prisoners were implemented, one of which was a model of the GAP (Pilot Training Group for Parents of Prisoners). Each group consisted of 9 to 15 participating incarcerated parents and was completed in 9-10 two-hour meetings, the topic of which was about the main axes of the father's role and issues of its fulfillment under the condition of parental imprisonment.

In the therapeutic-type prison KATK (Eleonas Thebes Drug Addiction Center), a program of Parental Counselling was also implemented for incarcerated fathers with a small group of incarcerated male drug addicts that lasted one year. The aim of the action was to strengthen and improve the quality of the imprisoned father's communication with his/her children. This action resulted in the formation of the children's visitation center of the KATK, but in practice very few visits were carried out as part of the implementation of the action, as the number of prisoners who participated was also small.

- **Family groups**

In the therapeutic-type prison KATK (Eleonas Thebes Prison Drug Addiction Center) family groups and family meetings operate with the aim of supporting the rehabilitation work of the prisoners as well as preparing them for their return to family life:

- Family meetings have the main objective of mutual preparation of the family and the prisoner for cohabitation and coexistence upon his return and to avoid relapse (in substance use of drugs), while in general they aim to strengthen communication in the family. Strengthening the relationship of the imprisoned parent with his children is included in the action, if there are difficulties in this area.
- Family groups, in which children over 10 years of age can participate under conditions and if deemed beneficial, aim to inform, relieve and help the whole family to adopt more functional ways of communicating and "relating" in the context of addiction treatment.

Also, since 2010, the activity "play therapy" has been implemented at the KATK with the aim of facilitating the interaction of the prisoner with his children during the visit. The action concerns either the presence of a qualified member of the therapeutic staff during the child's visit or the advance preparation of the prisoner for the interaction he will have with the child during the visit.

- **Electronic Visiting**

In many prisons (about 1/3 of the total) the Electronic Visiting Offices of prisoners with their relatives and friends have been put into operation and continue to operate to this day, especially when it is not possible to visit in person. Electronic visits ensure that parent-child communication is maintained when, for any reason, it is not possible for the child to visit go to the prison.

- **Other actions**

In 2018, with the assistance of the National Printing Office, the General Directorate of the Ministry of Justice translated, published and distributed to all prisons a German book entitled "We will meet in a dream. A story about dad in prison."¹⁵ The action was part of the actions to strengthen the social reintegration of prisoners by maintaining their family ties during imprisonment. The more specific goal was to facilitate parent-child communication around the subject of imprisonment both from the side of appropriate information from the parent prisoner to his child and from the side of facilitating the child's expression.

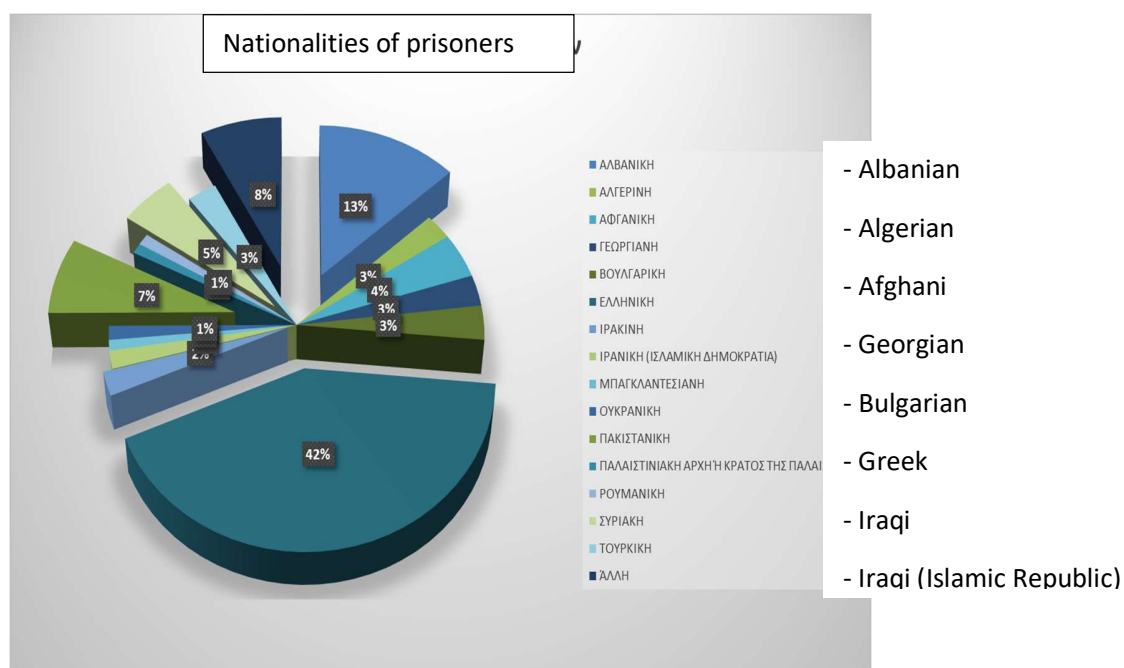
The books were delivered, in all prisons, by members of the specialist scientific staff to the imprisoned parents, providing them with information on the content and the best use of the book, as the inmate parents had the choice whether or not to give the book to their children.

The action was combined with the offer of wooden children's cars of the "CARS - driving children to joy" group, which were given to fathers in prison, to give as gifts to their children.

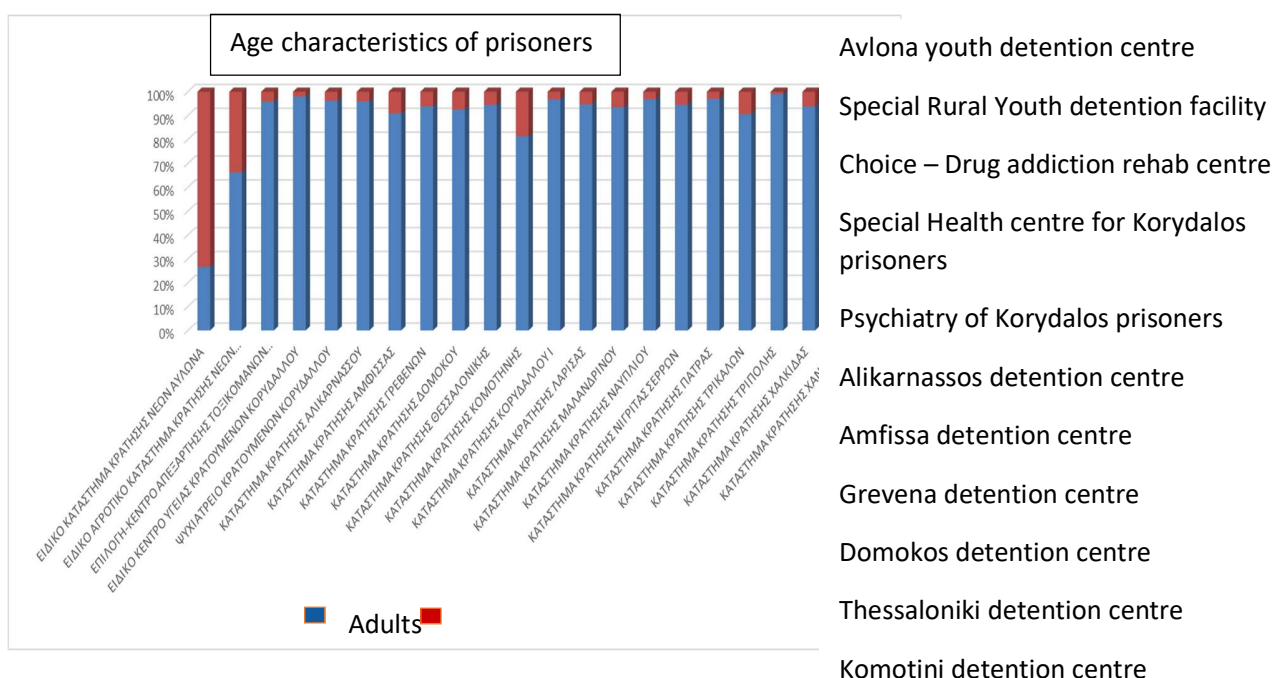
15 <http://www.ekkna.net/index.php/8-ta-nea-mas/331-tha-synantithoyme-st-oneiro-mia-istoria-gia-ton-bampa-sti-fylaki>

Who is the learner and what are his needs?

The population of Prisons is diverse, multicultural and complex, which can actually make it difficult to take action, such as the present one. With reference to nationalities, as can be seen from the data of April, a relatively large percentage concerns Greeks (42%), with prisoners with Albanian citizenship following (13%), being, however, at a great distance numerically. The third most frequently answered nationality is Pakistani (7%).



In terms of age, what is observed in the Prisons, which will participate in the program, is that with the exception of the Special Detention Center for Youth in Avlona, in all the rest the Adult prisoners exceed 60% of the total.



Equally important is the reference to the percentage of prisoners who have some kind of psychiatric disorder. Although recent data are not presented in the modern literature, an estimate could be made from an earlier study carried out in 2006 in the Komotini Judicial Prison, which showed that 78% of prisoners suffer from this type of disorder.¹⁶ Specifically:

- 37,5% were diagnosed with anxiety disorders
- 27,55% with major depressive disorder
- 37,5% with antisocial personality disorder
- 53,8% with drug-related disorders
- 11,2% with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

It is pointed out that mental illnesses, namely those related to stress symptoms, which manifest themselves within the context of a prison, are mainly triggered by social factors, such as the economic and social survival of the imprisoned person's family, while they are enhanced by the

¹⁶ Fotiadou, M., Livaditis, M., Manou, I., Kaniotou, E. & Xenitidis, K. (2006). Prevalence of Mental Disorders and Delibetate Self-harm in Greek Male Prisoners, *Int.J. Law and Psychiatry*, 29, 68-73.

occurrence of exogenous stressful situations such as an impending trial and its financial consequences.

In a corresponding survey in Korydallos Judicial Prisons in 2006, in which 495 prisoners participated, it was recorded that psychosis (the range of schizophrenic and other mental disorders) was two to three times more frequent among prisoners than in the general population (2.63% rate compared to 1% in the general population). At the same time, the research also showed significant percentages for personality disorder (15.96%), while depression (4.44%) and neurosis (3.64%) followed with a difference.¹⁷

These data, which in a first degree give us part of the qualitative characteristics of the population and constitute an initial assessment of the needs that the prisoners are likely to have. The nationality of the prisoners, for example, demonstrates the difficulties they face, both with the language of communication and with the distance from the rest of their family members.

Next, we proceed to a categorization of the basic needs, as recorded by the prisoners themselves after direct communication with them (see O2.2). The categorization is divided into needs related to themselves and needs related to the environment of the reservation store and the available means of communication.

1. Infrastructures

One of the key issues and needs that prisoners themselves place a lot of weight on is communication and counseling issues, combined with the existing infrastructure, staffing and frequency of these services. In particular, most prisoners focus on the availability of free family and child visits, stressing that the suitability of the space for family visits in the presence of children, in which there will be no fear of injury (physical and mental) is an extremely important condition. Indeed, the concern of children being traumatized, either by experiencing the living conditions inside a prison or by learning that their father is incarcerated, seems to be paramount. However, contrary to the conclusion obtained from interviews conducted with prisoners regarding the importance of the availability of suitable spaces for visiting families and children, almost half of the participants have not made use of them, as they have not yet explained and informed their children for their imprisonment or refuse the idea of bringing them to prison. Also worth mentioning is the feeling of shame that prisoners feel regarding the space available for family visits and especially their children.

2. Physical/Online meeting with family members

The recently widely implemented online meetings of participants with their children are considered by prisoners to be useful and helpful in maintaining a strong and stable relationship with them. However, the fathers, in their interviews, said that although online meetings are a

¹⁷Bekiari, E., Katsadoros, K. (2007), "Guide for the Identification of the Self-destructive Prisoner" Athens: Klimaka, p. 17-28.

good solution to meet their family, the calls are very short (20-30 minutes) and very infrequent, as they do not take place more than once a month, while sometimes they are even less frequent. Therefore, the parents interviewed emphasized the need for online calls, which are free, to be made available much more often. The same applies to physical meetings and visitation programs in terms of their duration: child and family visits can last an hour or an hour and a half. However, this time is not enough. In addition, many prisons are very far from the inmates' families, which makes visiting difficult both in terms of time and cost. Most of the participants report that although they talk on the phone on a daily basis, what they miss most is personal/physical contact, such as a hug.

The pandemic itself may be the catalyst to establish online family meetings in more prisons, as well as on a more regular basis. Given the need for communication and the benefits of online communication highlighted by prisoners, this mode of communication may offer them more opportunities to "meet" and communicate with their children, the ability to decide when and how to talk about imprisonment to their children, as well as the possibility of family members participating in the educational actions of parent schools that are likely to be implemented.

The issue of the distance of the families from the detention facilities, in which the convicts serve their sentences, is judged by them to be particularly influential in maintaining family relations, especially for those families facing financial problems. The transfer, that is, to the penitentiary institution where the father is serving his sentence, when it is located at a long distance from the place of residence of the rest of the family, and especially when the family is facing financial problems as well as a lack of means of transport, is an important parameter that prevents the development of bonds. The issue takes on an even greater extent and dimension if we consider that a significant percentage of the prisoners come from third countries.

3. Consulting services

Regarding the counselling services provided in the Prisons, a proportion of the participants in the prisoner interviews (6 out of 15 participants) who have used them, indicated that more individual sessions were needed, to be helped by professionals to deal with "tough" questions about imprisonment, e.g. on how to manage the absence and release of the father from the children. The need for a more targeted focus on family issues was also emphasized. Finally, the lack of professional scientific staff combined with the lack of appropriate infrastructure are two structural challenges that prisoners face over time.

Another observation that could be an opportunity in the context of educational actions, is the request of the participants for individual and family counselling: There was a particular interest in how difficult questions about father absence and parenting can be dealt with. At the same time, many participants reported systemic problems in applying and receiving counselling. Therefore, more systematic help in dealing with such issues, in the context of parenting school, seems to be the most welcome.

4. Economic conditions

Family finances and financial well-being are a key issue for incarcerated fathers as many families' struggle. When the discussion focused on the frequency of family meetings, incarcerated fathers mentioned financial constraints on more meetings, which they argued can affect family relationships. Such conditions make family meetings and even telephone contact more difficult, as it is common for fathers not to be able to afford to call home. Such economic difficulties create a situation where family interactions can be difficult and rare, thus making the process of maintaining good family ties difficult.

The economic status of families after the father's incarceration was also linked to the supportive environment they may have had. For example, relatives could take care of their children while mothers had to go to work. Imprisonment can also impose additional costs on the family. For example, the family may have to spend significant amounts on the incarcerated father's medical care.

5. Education

Prisoners may be attracted to training if something is offered in return (e.g. fewer days in prison, certificates, payment of money). However, due to the nature of the subject and given that many prisoners are fathers, participants felt that there might be a need for this. Therefore, they argued that even if prisoners have not actively called for actions on this issue, they are likely to warmly welcome them.

The Theory of Transformation in Adult Education

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly but comprehensively present one of the most important learning theories in the field of adult education. The Theory of Transformation, first presented in 1991 by the American researcher and thinker Jack Mezirow, is the most complete attempt (to date at least) to formulate a theory of learning that is able on the one hand to justify the motivations of adults to participate in learning processes, on the other hand to support educational practices that promote critical reflection and have as a learning outcome the understanding, reconsideration and possibly the expansion and change of dysfunctional mental habits and views. This particular theory has formed the framework for the development of research and the emergence of new ideas in the field of adult education. In Greece, the development of Transformation Theory is supported by the activities of the Hellenic Open University (see www.eap.gr) and the Scientific Association of Adult Education (see www.adulteduc.gr), in Europe by the relevant network of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (see <https://esrea.org/networks/>) and internationally by the International Transformative Learning Association (see www.intertla.org).

Expected learning outcomes

When you have finished studying the text you will be able to:

- know the main points of transformation theory,
- understand the concept of critical thinking as a learning process of revising dysfunctional mental habits and attitudes, and
- apply theory into practice as adult educators.

Words – Key phrases

- Theory of transformation
- Social interaction
- National consideration – frame of reference
- Mental habits - opinions
- Critical reflection

The phenomenon of learning

Learning is a highly complex and complicated process that is inextricably linked to human development and evolution. The human being learns in various ways either consciously or unconsciously while several studies support the existence of pre-conscious learning (Jarvis, 2022). Attempts to describe, interpret, and control the parameters associated with this process have been the subject of research by scientists and authors from many different fields (eg,

psychology, sociology, biology, neuroscience). However, in recent decades it seems that interdisciplinary and holistic approaches to the learning phenomenon are the ones that are most accepted (see Yang, 2003 · Jarvis & Parker, 2005 · Johnson, 2012 · du Toit-Brits, 2018).

Thus, although attempts to define learning are many, the definition that has stood out as the most complete for the phenomenon of human learning has been given by the English philosopher of learning and adult education, Peter Jarvis (2006, p. 134) who states that learning is:

The combination of processes occurring during a person's life through which the person as a whole – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and sensations) – experiences social situations, whose perceived content is transformed cognitively, emotionally, or practically (or through any combination) and incorporated into the individual biography resulting in a constantly changing or more experienced person.

This particular definition describes, perhaps better than any other, the holistic dimension of the transformative phenomenon of learning. Learning, however, is not a simple phenomenon as we have already mentioned. According to many researchers, the process of learning is differentiated in the different phases of human life for reasons related to the way experiences are perceived in childhood, adolescence, early adulthood and the adult phase of life (Merriam, 2001), with the nature of thinking and especially critical thinking in adulthood (Brookfield, 2000), with the differences in the identity development of children, adolescents and adults (Illeris, 2007) and the differences in the psychology of children and adults (Tennant, 2006). The distinction between learning in adulthood and learning in the early stages of a person's development has been supported by the work of scientists in the field of developmental psychology, with perhaps the most important example being the important contribution of Professor Robert Kegan (1994).

What most learning theorists seem to agree on is that conscious learning is not a random process, something that ... just happens (Jarvis, 2010). Instead, there is always something that triggers it, an initiating event, which can be a cognitive experience or an emotional state, or in some cases both (Koulauzidis, 2019). Jarvis (2012) defines this event as “disconnection” and broadly describes it as “the gap between our biography and our perception of our experience” (p. 13).

Activity 1

Stop reading for a moment and think of events in your life that could qualify as biographical "disconnects."

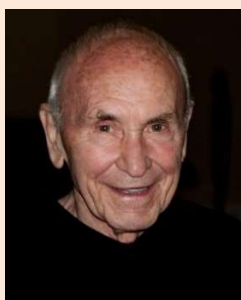
In the field of adult education this fact is defined as a "disorientation dilemma" in the context of transformation theory (Mezirow, 1991).

Transformational theory of learning processes during the adult phase of a person's life posits that when we experience a disorienting experience, then either consciously (through a structured and explicit process of critical reflection) or less consciously (through an implicit personal reflection) we adapt to the demands of the experience, leading either to the adoption of more inclusive and open attitudes (new self), or to the conservative attachment to existing attitudes (old self). In the following sections, we will discuss the transformation theory in more detail in order to understand its basic principles as well as the learning processes it supports.

Transformation Theory and the process of transformative learning

Transformation Theory, like any theory, is based on assumptions. The qualitative differentiation between learning in childhood and learning in adulthood is a central assumption of this theory (Mezirow, 1975, 1977, 1991). In the context of this differentiation, the learning process of childhood is defined as a formative process which includes the assimilation of fundamental concepts (beliefs and roles) concerning the self and the world and which contribute to the process of socialization. On the other hand, learning in adulthood is a transformative process, which includes the possibility to move away from the assimilated and sometimes dysfunctional roles of adult life and to reframe existing beliefs on the basis of new perceptions with a greater degree of self-determination.

A few words about the founder of Transformation Theory



Professor Mezirow was born in 1923 in Fargo (North Dakota) and died in 2014 in New York. He studied Social Sciences at the University of Minnesota and received his Doctorate (Ed.D.) in Adult Education from the University of California. He has worked in many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America as a consultant on adult literacy and community development. He also worked for many years in the extension education programs of the University of California and then (1968) joined Teachers College (Columbia University) as a professor of adult education and continuing education. It was at Teachers College that he developed the bulk of his research and during his career there, he developed the Transformational Theory.

Jack Mezirow has published numerous articles, books and research reports. His best-known books are *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (1991) and *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (2000). Both of these

Jack Mezirow (1923 - 2014)	books are published in Greek, the first by the Scientific Association of Adult Education and the second by METAIXMIO publications.
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The reason, assumptions and types of learning

Mezirow began to show a particular interest in the way adults change their values, beliefs, and life attitudes in the mid-1970s. It was inspired by the experiences of his wife, who participated in one of the special adult education programs implemented by US colleges and universities in the 1970s. These university education "re-entry" programs were sponsored by the US government and were designed specifically for women who wished to continue their education and enter the labour market after a long period of abstinence from both education and work. Their purpose was to equip the women who participated in them with knowledge and skills in order to gain greater personal, economic and ultimately social independence. Mezirow, however, noticed in his wife a deeper change of attitude and meaningful consideration and in 1975 he started a national level survey in the USA, for the specific programs, trying on the one hand to identify the changes experienced by the participants from this experience, on the other hand to create a typology of patterns of personal change. This research was one of the longest-running qualitative studies on learning in adulthood and formed the basis for the formulation of Transformational Theory.

Mezirow (1991) begins the formulation of his theory with the assumption that every adult interprets reality having as a frame of reference a system of perceptions that has been built during the process of his socialization. He even argues that this system, which is ingrained in the personality of every adult, is a result of the cultural context within which the socialization of the adult person took place. In other words, Mezirow accepts the existence of a system of predispositions which is the result of the various socialization processes in which a person participates on the path to adulthood.

Consequently, Mezirow (1977, 1981) deduces the assumption that an adult is motivated to learn when his perception of reality is in disharmony with a particular situation, that is, when either a situation is completely new or when there is no harmony between reality and accumulated experience. This assumption of Mezirow is confirmed by other theorists of adult education who come from the field of sociology and also support the importance of social interaction. Jarvis, for example, states that when there is a dynamic tension between the experiences of individuals and the perceptions held by the agents of reproduction of a society's culture, learning processes at the individual or even collective level are likely to be initiated (Jarvis, 1995).

Activity 2

Have you ever participated in a social process/situation in which you felt that you did not have the "necessary supplies" for your participation to be full and equal with the other participants? What was this process/situation? Did it lead you to learning? How?

Having arrived at a safe assumption about the causes that potentially lead adults to participate in learning processes, Mezirow proceeds to formulate the aforementioned double typology for learning, which we will discuss here in a little more detail.

The basic distinction that Mezirow makes in the types of learning is formative and transformative. He characteristically writes "formative learning in childhood becomes transformative learning in adulthood" (Mezirow, 1991, p.3), arguing that children assimilate knowledge, feelings, and behaviors from various sources of authority in their social environment and that this early learning is for children a necessary socialization process.

In contrast to children and adolescents, adults who participate in learning processes have more need to acquire new semantic considerations that will feed the already existing semantic schemas with which they interpret reality. When an adult person is unable to form meaning and continues to make decisions by repeating patterns of behaviour adopted in the past, then according to Mezirow (1989, 1991, 1994, 2003a, 2007), he may realize the dysfunctionality of his perceptions and is faced with a disorienting experience. This disorienting experience can come from an externally imposed experience, such as the diagnosis of a chronic illness, participation in a social movement, a court decision imposing a sentence, witnessing a criminal act, retirement etc. But it can also be an internal affair of a person and arise from an experience, such as participating in a revealing conversation, reading a poem or a book, or simply trying to understand a different culture (Mezirow, 1990). An experience like the one we have described gives according to the Theory of Transformation the trigger for transformation, that is, for

revising and reconstructing our beliefs and practices towards a new form of perception and existence (Mezirow, 2007).

Clearly influenced by the work of Habermas (1971), who describes three areas in which human interest produces knowledge: the technical, the practical and the liberating, Mezirow (1990, 1991) advances a tripartite division of learning. The first form of learning, according to Mezirow, is instrumental learning. The central idea here is that learning results from solving specific problems and from defining and examining a relationship between cause and effect. As a second form of learning, he defines communicative learning, which refers to the effort to be understood and also to understand others in the context of the exchange of ideas through the spoken and written word, but also all forms of art and creation. Finally, the third form of learning, Mezirow calls it emancipatory learning. This learning involves recognizing and challenging opinions and meanings through a process of critical reflection that leads to a substantial change in our way of life, a holistic revision, related to the way we perceive, believe, feel and act.

Mezirow considers this third form of learning as a form that almost exclusively concerns adults and considers that its uniqueness has implications for the functioning of teachers and adult trainers, especially in terms of supporting learners, the approaches they follow to facilitate learning, research methods and evaluation of educational programs (Mezirow, 1990).

Activity 3

Can you think of learning activities that can be classified according to Mezirow's categorization? Write as many examples as you think are appropriate.

Instrumental learning	Communicative learning	Liberating learning

The Theory of Transformation in educational practice

The learning process of Transformation Theory was defined as transformative learning¹⁸ and its application in practice is based on the following three fundamental elements: experience, critical reflection and communication based on rational dialogue.

The theory of transformative learning asserts that the life experience of learners must be the starting point that will lead to the transformation of cognitive frameworks and consequently its utilization by the teacher or adult trainer acquires fundamental importance (Mezirow, 1991). Like other theorists of adult education, Mezirow argues that the center of the educational process must be the learner and his experiences, recognizing in this way the catalytic effect that the socialization of the individual and his self-determination in the learning process.

For Mezirow the process of critical reflection also holds a central role in transformative learning because it is critical reflection that essentially makes learning liberating (Koulaouzides, 2017). Critical reflection in transformative learning theory is about the careful, insightful and in-depth process of examining the assumptions on which an individual's frame of reference (worldview) rests and investigating their generative sources and consequences. In other words, critical reflection refers to questioning the validity of foundational understandings that have emerged from the assimilative prior learning of one's socialization period (Mezirow, 1990)

But if experience is the starting point and critical reflection is the protagonist of the transformative learning process, communication based on rational dialogue is the catalyst for transformation since through it, learners are motivated and ultimately supported to seek depth in the meaning of their views of the world and to communicate these ideas as a coherent and critical discourse with the instructor and their fellow learners (Mezirow, 1991). Rational dialogue, in the sense Mezirow uses it, is a particular form of meeting in which people rationally exchange and negotiate their views, presenting evidence and arguments, which serve as evidence of their opinion. According to Mezirow (1997), the development of critical thinking skills combined with communication based on rational dialogue are the two elements that lead to awareness.

This awareness is considered the most important goal of transformative adult education, since it allows adults to revise and/or reconstruct their (possibly) dysfunctional perceptions, so that they can proceed to form a more satisfactory, better organized and ordered picture of the world and relationships with themselves and others (Koulaouzidis, 2008, 2019). Mezirow (1991, p.7) characteristically mentions:

“Development in adulthood is considered the adult's continuously enhanced ability to evaluate prior learning through reflective dialogue and to act on the implications arising from this process. Anything that moves the individual toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other viewpoints), and integrated meaning view, the validity of which has been established through rational dialogue, enhances adult development.”

¹⁸ For this reason, the Theory of Transformation is better known as the Theory of Transformative Learning.

The most important advantage of transformative learning for the learner is the development of their autonomy as an individual, which is a defining condition of adulthood. At this point, however, we should point out the different emphasis that the process of transformative learning can have depending on the cultural contexts in which it takes place, since each cultural practice is involved in learning and consequently any form of understanding is facilitated, but also limited by the historical knowledge-power networks as well as from the symbolic codes (language) that are exploited.

Ultimately, what is required from the practical application of the process of transformative learning is to strengthen each adult in a path of integration and self-realization that inevitably involves the challenge and change - if necessary - of fundamental elements of the very structure of his personality. Consequently for Mezirow a responsible adult educator, within the framework of Transformational Theory, must develop a mutual relationship with the learners with the goal of personal transformation and social change. If we consider that the process of transformative learning - like any other learning process governed by humanitarian ideals - creates better individuals, then the hidden hope, or in other words the humanitarian goal behind its application, is to create a better world.

Activity 4

Consider for a few minutes your role as an adult educator based on what you have studied so far about Transformational Theory. Brainstorm some terms that you believe would describe this role within Jack Mezirow's theoretical approach?

Criticism on Transformation Theory

As Kegan (2000) notes in academic research, the formulation of a new term often succeeds in expressing a rich group of new ideas. The introduction of the term "transformative learning" is one such example, since it first appeared in the literature of adult education until today, it has catalyzed the development of a creative dialogue that contributed to a deeper understanding of the learning process in adults. The following paragraphs will present the basic criticism that was made of the theory of transformative learning, which also led to the development of a particularly interesting academic dialogue (see Mezirow, 1989, 1992, 1996, 1998).

Griffin (1987) criticized Mezirow for excluding the dimension of social policy from adult education with his theory. It also challenges Mezirow's assumption that individuals uncritically accept hegemonic ideologies. Griffin considers this above view, where individuals seem to be considered social products of an uncritical production process, to be a form of functionalism. Griffin's criticism concludes that Mezirow with the theory of transformative learning tried more to create the conditions that would secure the profession of adult educator, than to develop a critical theory of adult education. Furthermore, Jarvis (2022) states that the core idea of Transformational Theory that, as individuals grow older, they become more capable of engaging in transformational processes, requires further evidence, as it leads to a perception of 'wisdom of the elders' and the view that the self-awareness of older people is always more mature than that of younger people.

Transformative learning theory has also been criticized for personalizing transformation without taking into account the social effects through direct social action (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Tennant, 1993). Indeed, Mezirow seems to be cautious of the issue of direct social action by learners and therefore believes that the educator should maintain a neutral stance and not urge learners to some form of action. The result of this attitude is that even if individuals are transformed, as long as there is no direct social action, the structures that oppress, as well as the "oppressors", will be able to continue to act unchallenged and thus society will remain unchanged.

Another dimension of criticism in the theory of transformative learning relates to whether it is possible for all social classes to benefit from it, since critical reflection is a central process of it (King, 2005). This reflection is based on the view of Freire (1970, 1973) who argues that the oppressed have lost the ability to question their living conditions and to think about life. That is, they do not have the confidence to act as independent thinkers and, consequently, in this case, critical thinking cannot be achieved. In other words, the alienating effect of hegemonic ideologies is so strong that even if after the process of transformative learning there is a change in perceptions, the new perceptions are equally dysfunctional due to the powerful influence of the cultural context and the ideologies that support them.

To most of the above opinions Mezirow responded with his articles and many of these opinions he used to further develop his theory, thus putting his own theory into practice, while a wide

variety of research, in the context of preparing doctoral theses, dealt with transformative learning and its application in many different learning contexts. In the last collaborative work he edited, Mezirow, having elaborated his theory based on the criticisms he received, ends up with two very important positions on adult education and the function of the adult trainer. Features include:

"The ultimate goal, the purpose, of adult education is to help adults realize their potential to become more emancipated, socially responsible, and self-reliant thinkers... Adult trainers cannot be neutral. They are cultural activists, committed to supporting and expanding the norms, social practices, institutions, and systems that foster fuller and freer participation in dialogue, transformative learning, reflective action, and greater participant empowerment." (Mezirow 2000, pp. 26-31).

Activity 5

Criticism of a theory is never exhaustive. Therefore, if you feel you have something to add to this review after reading this, please use the space below to express your thoughts and ideas.

Final Thoughts on Transformation Theory

Mezirow's theory is one of the most important contributions to adult education. Combining the positions of many critical theory thinkers, Jack Mezirow presented a synthetic theory of adult learning in an attempt to provide adult education with a coherent theory of learning and thereby enhance the distinctiveness and professionalism of the field:

"Adult education has responded to five main orientations of contemporary epistemology: phenomenology, critical theory, hermeneutics, poststructuralism, and feminism. My interest in transformative learning arose out of a particular interest in critical theory which I believe does not sufficiently differentiate its other functions from critical reflection on cognitive assumptions – a process that developmental psychologists have found to be a uniquely “adult” way of learning." (6/14/2006, personal communication with the author).

Although Mezirow's theory, as a learning theory, has received criticism, it is a theoretical approach of particular importance and is an important contribution to the adult education literature (Jarvis, 2022). The primary preoccupation of Mezirow's theory is with the meaning-making structures (beliefs, habits, views) of adults and their transformation, and this emphasis provides the field of adult education with a firm position on how adults learn, while at the same time delineating with very specific way and the function of adult educators as agents of personal emancipation and social change.

Activity 6

According to Mezirow, the stages that can be followed in a learning process aimed at transforming a frame of reference can be the following:

1. The emergence of the disorienting experience.
2. The self-examination of the assumptions related to the above experience.
3. The critical evaluation of the above assumptions (critical reflection).
4. The identification of the sources that cause the disharmony of the assumptions in cooperation with other members of the group.
5. The search for options for new roles, relationships and actions.
6. The design of an action plan.
7. The acquisition of knowledge and skills for the implementation of the plan.
8. The implementation of the plan (testing new roles).
9. Building competence and confidence in new roles and new relationships.
10. The reintegration according to the conditions set by the new prospects.

Can you think of how a parenting program might implement the above ten steps?

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Meeting Content

Meeting 1: Meeting, targeting and framing of fathers in detention

The aim of this meeting is the first acquaintance between the members of the group and the presentation of the purpose of the program; to determine the role of the coordinator, to record the expectations and personal goals of the participants and to co-shape, as much as possible, the framework of the meetings. Connection to Transformational Theory: This encounter corresponds to stage 1 of the 10 stages of transformation that you read in the theory handbook (page 16). Specifically, through the activities, we aim to reveal elements of the disorienting dilemmas that led the fathers to take part in these meetings.

Pre-work: printed out the first names of the participants wrapped in the form of lottery tickets and a large cardboard or paper of the meter.

We welcome and introduce our program and status (15 minutes).

It is important to emphasize that the hours parents will allocate to the groups are aimed at improving the relationship with the family, responding to specific questions and problems they may have, facilitating the fulfilment of the father's role, which is much more difficult in prison.

The coordinator addresses the following two questions:

- What are your own needs, expectations (what do you expect from this group)?
- What goals would you like to achieve during your participation in the team?

We point out that in these meetings they are not going to hear theories, but practical ideas to deal with daily difficulties they encounter as fathers and especially as imprisoned fathers.

We give examples of possible questions for parents to inspire them to think of their own questions they are looking for answers to: "How can communication with my child, which is little and full of obstacles, be made easier and more effective?" "How do we deal with a teenage child with difficult behaviour?" "How could communication with the mother of our child be facilitated?"

We code and record their suggestions in a prominent place.

We explain that the goal is to generate new ideas in each meeting. Through new information, stimuli for thinking, discussions and interaction, we expect new perceptions and ways to be born, where the old ones are no longer satisfactory. We expect such changes to be reflected both at the level of behaviours and at the level of perceptions of the parental role, fulfilling the goal of transformative learning. All work will be done during meetings. In these we will work on parts of the manual that will be given to parents. They have no obligation for any preparation, except for their participation during the meeting.

We inform participants that we can work with their own examples, hypothetical or real. For this reason, it is important that everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating.

We ask that they leave outside the door of the room what they know about prison life and that we create during the meeting a space protected from the violence and institutionalization of everyday life in prison.

Activity 1: contract between the participants in the group (Duration 10 minutes).

Purpose: The configuration of the operating framework. To determine commonly agreed rules that will ensure the smooth operation of the group.

Materials-preparation: Rolled paper, tape, thick markers.

It is necessary that they participate of their own free will, with respect for each one who speaks, but also for the time and the mutually agreed rules. Issues that need to be settled: how long the meeting will last, if there will be a break, the speaker will moderate the discussion, confidentiality will be maintained, when and if they smoke, what is foreseen in case of absences and anything else deemed necessary. We write on the paper 5 simple rules that will emerge from the conversation, which will remain posted somewhere in the following meetings.

Activity 2 (Duration 30 minutes).

Purpose: Getting to know each other, familiarizing yourself with the space and sharing information with the group.

Symbolic place change as a starting point for a deeper empathy between fathers.

Materials - All the first names of the participants in the form of lottery tickets. Rolled paper, tape, thick markers.

Participants are given 5 minutes to think of two characteristics that they can share with the group. The first person from the circle draws a lot and approaches the person whose name is written on the piece of paper he has chosen. After approaching his seat, he is told the two traits he has decided to share with the group out loud for all to hear. The father, whose name was on the piece of paper, answers by matching one of the two characteristics he heard about his interlocutor with his own characteristic (e.g. the first said country of origin, the second can say his own country respectively). He then gives his place to the father who came and draws lots to find which father of the rest he will approach to tell his two attributes. Accordingly, the new father will listen to two and will respond his corresponding characteristic to one of the two he heard. He will give up his seat to leave with a lot for the next one, whom he will approach by repeating the process and so on. Indicative personal information that we can suggest to them is country of origin, number of children, football team, favourite activities etc.

After they have found their new positions, we invite them to present to us one by one and in the order, they want any information they wish for their children. It could be something as small as their gender, some appearance characteristic, the quality of their relationship, something special that someone wants to share with the group about

their child. We keep some typical word from the story for each child and write it somewhere visible. When all the narratives are finished, we have a set of words or names or nicknames associated with the prisoners' children. At the end, those who want can enrich this project with a sign-design of their own, and it will be present in the space during the meetings.

After the activity is complete, we thank them for their participation and the information they entrusted and emphasize how important it is that this information stays between the group members. We explain that by keeping in the group the information that someone expresses there, gradually everyone will feel trust, so that we can work on their real stories, questions, difficulties and thus everyone benefits as much as possible for their family. We explain to them that what we did as an introduction in this 1st meeting is how we will work during the next 10 meetings (the 12th will be the closing of the process). That is, little by little and in his own time, we would like him to get closer to his role as a father. Through this role, to approach the other fathers who are with him and seek to put himself in their place, find their common elements and learn additional things even from them. Parents are enriched by sharing their experience.

(If possible, we recommend the one-minute video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhU5JEd-XRo&t=19s&ab_channel=InfiniteHarmony on achieving solutions through our participation in group processes. After watching it, we invite a small discussion about whether they understood the message of the video and if they want to comment on it).

At the end of the meeting, we ask for feedback on how they felt about their 1st participation, what they think when they see the papers stuck around them, if it was easy or what was difficult for them, if they would change anything from what was done there today in relation to process or their own participation etc. We seek to express themselves, so that we can listen and take into account the particularities of each one.

Meeting 2: Identity / Self-Determination – Part I

The aim of this meeting is for them to think about the topic of identity, to realize where they come from and what legacy they wish to leave to the next generation, to their children; to realize that the concept of identity includes many dimensions apart from that of the offender which probably overshadows the others and to emerge new perspectives. To exchange with each other and share issues and concerns, which may

concern other fathers of prisoners, too. This meeting corresponds to the first 3 stages of transformative learning.

Welcome and introduction to the theme of identity and self-determination (Duration 15 minutes). What really defines them? How do they describe themselves? (we use a small ball that they throw from one to the other to speak and share their thoughts). If someone mentions the identity of the offender/suspect, we ask "other than that what else are you?" There can also be a discussion about whether they believe that someone is born or becomes an offender. We discuss the stereotypes surrounding what others think of a prisoner. What image do they think they give to the world/their family? Is it possible for a story to have multiple perspectives? We read them the following story:

The discredited wolf¹⁹

The forest was my home. I lived there and cared about it. I was trying to keep it tidy and clean.

One sunny day, while picking up some trash left by a camper, I heard footsteps. I jumped behind a tree and saw a little girl coming down the path, carrying a basket. She looked suspicious to me because she was wearing strange clothes, red, and her head was covered with a hood – suspicious for nowadays – as if she didn't want to be recognized. Of course, I stopped her and asked her who she was, where she was going, and where she came from. She told me an awkward story, that she was taking food to some grandmother who was waiting for her.

She actually seemed like a decent person to me, but she was in my woods looking suspicious in those clothes. Thus, I decided to show her how provocative it was for her to invade my space unannounced, dressed strangely.

I allowed her to continue her way and immediately ran to her grandmother's house. I explained my problem to the nice old lady and she agreed that her granddaughter should take a lesson. So we decided she would hide under the bed until I called her.

When Little Red Riding Hood got home, I called her into the bedroom where I was lying on the bed pretending to be Grandma. The girl came over, her cheeks flushed, and insulted me by saying something nasty about my big ears. Having been insulted before, I tried to find something positive. So I said that, my ears may be big, but this way I can hear her better. I wanted to show that I liked her and that I was paying attention to what she was saying.

But she continued to insult me, this time about my big eyes. You understand how I began feeling about this girl, who under the gentle face was so mean. Still, I told her that my big eyes helped me see her better.

But the next insult really annoyed me. He said my teeth are huge. He touched my sensitive spot. I know I shouldn't have lost my temper, but I jumped out of bed and yelled at her that I had my big teeth to eat her easier.

To be honest no wolf would ever eat a girl, everyone knows that. Then the crazy girl started running around screaming and I was trying to reach her to calm her down. I also took off grandma's clothes, but that seemed to make things worse.

Suddenly the door opened with a loud bang and a big guy was standing there holding an axe. I looked at him and realized I was in trouble. There was an open window behind me, I jumped and left.

¹⁹ Filippou & Karantana (2010), p.135.

No one ever told my side of the story. There was only a rumour that I was mean and vicious. Soon everyone started avoiding me and I haven't had a good time since then. So I decided to write my story.

We ask them what thoughts this story created for them - what is its meaning? Is there a chance that they themselves feel discredited in their family or in general in their wider circle? What can they do about it?

We continue by asking the participants the following questions in order to promote awareness of what knowledge they have passed on or want to pass on to their children:

- *Have you talked to your children about who you are? Have you narrated how you were as children (what was your childhood routine like, what games did you play, what friends did you have, etc...)?*

Activity3 – Drawing our family tree (Duration 45 minutes).

Purpose: Self-awareness

Materials: There is space in the parent handbook or you can give them larger A3 papers. Pen, coloured paints.

Clear instructions are given to draw/illustrate their family tree. A "genogram," as family therapy specialists call it, is a kind of "map of the basic biological and legal structure of the family: who married whom, the names of the children, and key events of great importance to the individuals and their relationships." family members" (McGoldrick, 2002, p. 51). We explain that "the family includes the entire emotional system of at least three and four generations, who are developed together in life even if, as is often the case, they live in different places" (McGoldrick, 2002, p. 43). So we capture dates of births, marriages, separations, deaths, names, illnesses, movements/migrations. We can also add characteristics and the level of functioning of the family members, such as education, employment, mental and physical health, if there are any special qualities, talents, successes or failures. Finally, we add the relationships between the members, i.e. who are closest, who have conflicts and who have cut off all contact (closeness, conflict, broken relationships) (McGoldrick, 2002, p. 43). We then provide an explanation of the attached table and how to read it.

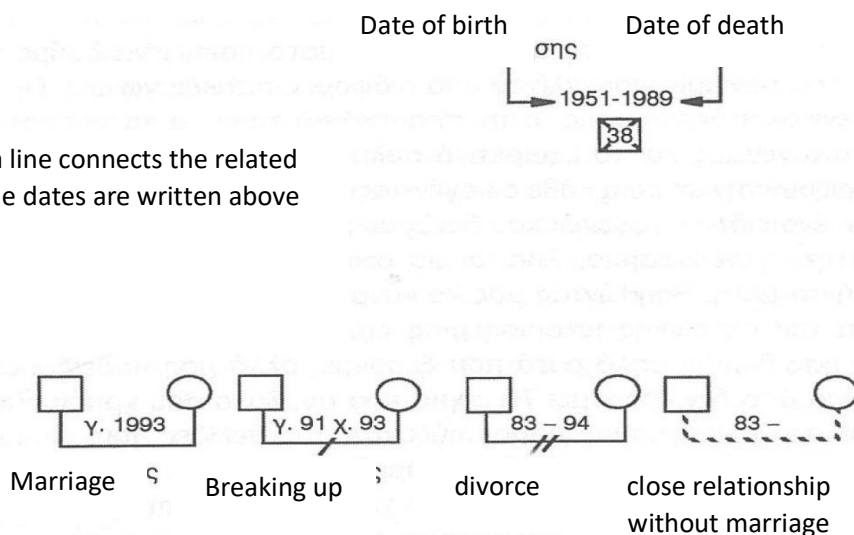
How to read the genogram

The male members of the family are represented by squares and the females by circles

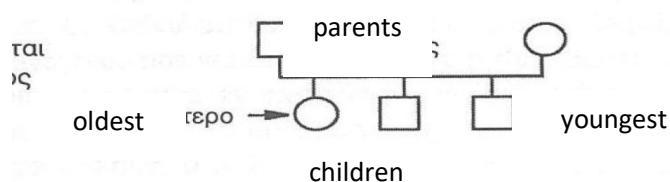
male \square = female \circ

The dates of birth and death are illustrated below each person's symbol. The age is written inside the square or circle. Death is represented by an X within the symbol. When we do not know exact dates, we use symbols; or ~ (~1898 or ;1989)

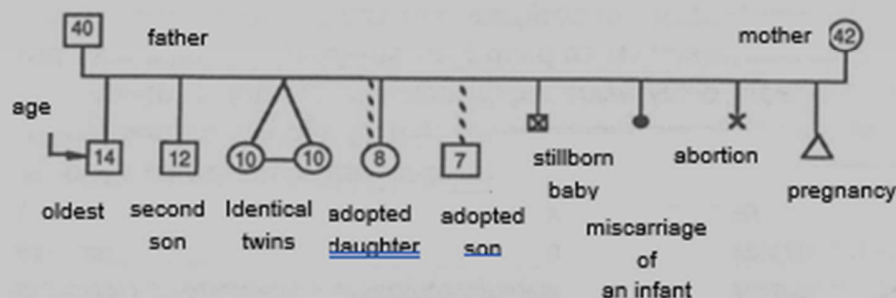
In couples, a line connects the related symbols. The dates are written above the line.



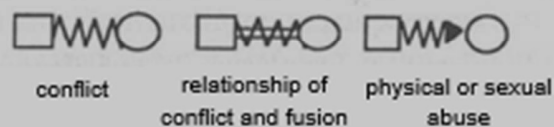
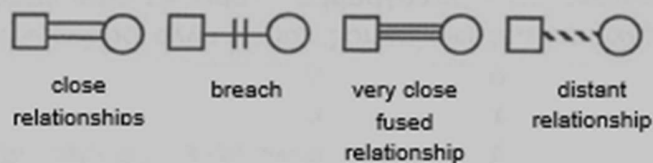
The children are marked from the left to the right and from the oldest to the youngest.



Here is an example with some of the elements that can be presented on the genogram:



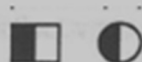
Apart from the lines that show kinship there are also some others that symbolize the emotional relationships between family members



This is the form the lines take in a genogram:



If there is a health or mental health problem the left part of the circle or square is blackened



For drug use or alcoholism problems the lower half of the circle or square is blackened



They are given 30 minutes to plan and observe, during which time we go by each father and help him, or answer any question or observation he may have. We help them by asking more questions to everyone:

- Were there any significant life-changing experiences? Like for example a death, an illness, a move, a change in the family's financial situation? What do you remember from these experiences?
- Did you face difficulties when you were raised (by your parents) and what were the most difficult times? Adolescence? Periods where you may have had financial difficulties?
- Indicatively we prompt them to find and color code who is emotionally closer to whom, how family members view each other, but we leave them free to discover any aspects that may emerge. Observation and discussion follow.

We suggest that instead of an oral discussion of the above questions, we do the activity "**Line of Life**", where the participants mark their birth, the birth of siblings, cousins or children, the death of their loved ones, the beginning of life as a couple or marriage. We also note important events or very important moments in your life that represent a change. For example: change of residence, start or end of studies, work, etc.

Alternative activity 3 – The family tree²⁰ (Duration 45 minutes).

Purpose: Self-awareness

Materials: Large pieces of paper, colored markers, tape.

Instructions:

1st stage – Duration 30 minutes. We suggest working on our family tree. We will plan it going back in time as far as we can remember. We will use the following symbols: (we design the symbol for men and boys ♂, for women and girls ♀, for married couples, for the separated, for those who are no longer living - moderators/wives can use the symbols which seem easier and familiar to them). The design should be large enough so that we can write down some information such as name and occupation or something special for each person present on the tree. We will have 30 minutes. Let's start.

2nd stage – Duration 15 minutes. Let us know each present his family tree. The rest of us, as soon as each presentation is over, we can make our own observations. Who wants to start?

Notes to coordinators:

The coordinators explain how to build the family tree by drawing, for example, a part of their own. They present their drawings themselves, with their comments.

Then we ask the participants if there are any important events in the family they created and if there were any they were not present for. This is followed by discussion and sharing of thoughts about how they

²⁰ Archontaki & Filippou (2003), p.231

might feel present at future important events and moments. We present to them the concern shared by fathers from schools of parents who are separated from their children and rarely see them, either because they are working months away on ships, abroad, or because there is a court order.

Before the meeting closes, we ask them to write the following exercise in their handbook, which they will complete on their own in peace until the next time we meet to discuss.

Activity 4- Family legends & memories (Duration 10 minutes)

Purpose: Self-awareness

We hand out papers (or ideally, they write it in their own toolbox) and we read them the sentences below, which they complete. We clarify that they can finish the sentence as they wish, there is no right or wrong answer.

The family I come from could be described as...

In my family, my mother was always the one who...

In my family, my father was always the one who...

In my family, I was always the one who...

My family's greatest strength was...

I learned from my mother that...

I learned from my father that...

My relatives taught me that...

For me, family events (birthdays, holidays) were...

A myth, a story passed down by my family was...

The meeting closes by asking the parents one by one how they felt about the meeting and with what feeling they leave.

Meeting 3: Identity/Self-identification Part II.

The goal of this meeting is to continue the work they started last time and delve further into the topic of self-determination and identity, encouraging rational dialogue, communication and sharing among

participants in order to reach awareness. This meeting corresponds to the 3rd, 4th & 5th stages of transformative learning.

(Continuity of activity 4- Duration 15 minutes).

We ask them to take out the papers where they wrote the sentences last time and we ask them to comment on them. Is there anything that concerned them that they would like to share? In case they hesitate, we give an experiential example that made an impression on us by doing the specific exercise (it is therefore a condition that we, as coordinators, have also studied and done these exercises). The purpose here is not for parents or moderators to read what they wrote but to realize whether they are making some connections between the past and the present, between relationships, or something else. We give time to expression and discussion.

Then we also ask the following questions²¹ (we can use as many questions as are valid) - Duration 45 minutes. Time is given to the participants to think and discuss these issues and alternatively we can suggest to “work” the questions in smaller groups before the plenary discussion.

- What does becoming a parent mean to you?
- What was it that you wanted to do differently from your parents?
- What do you remember about your behaviour when you were a child?
- Were you easily disciplined?
- What do you remember about the times you or your siblings got into trouble?
- How did you manage a crisis as a family?
- Were the roles in your family defined?
- What rules were applied in your family for each gender?
- What did they think about the ideal man and the ideal woman?
- Were there any in the family who violated traditional gender norms?
- Were there women or men whose symptoms expressed their difficulty in accepting the limitations of the gender role?
- Were there instances in which your mother or other women in the family did not conform to the prevailing stereotypes of the role of mother? Did your mother work? Did she want it? What about your aunts and grandmothers? What dreams did they have? How did they cope with the roles that society at that time defined for women? Were they reacting? How did others react?

²¹ McGoldrick, M. (2002), p.176-177, 275-276.

- Were there times when your father or other men in the family did not conform to stereotypes about the father role? Were they affectionate? Did they take care of you? Were they talking to you? Were they telling you stories? Did they have emotional communication with other family members? Were they showing their sensitivities and weaknesses? How did they deal with the limitations imposed by their time on the male role?
- In your family, do they believe that parents should spend the holidays with the children? Does your family believe that parents and children should share personal thoughts?
- What has been the most difficult for you in your role as a parent?
- Could you turn to your parents and evaluate what they have given you, as well as forgive them for what they failed to give you/ What would you forgive them for?
- Is there anything you would like your children to forgive you for?

Activity 5 (Duration 15 minutes).

Interactive activity: the ideal parent

The **purpose** of this exercise is self-awareness regarding their parental role. By "outlining" the concept of the ideal parent, enable parents to think about what characteristics they have and what they would like to have. Finally, they are relieved realizing that there is no parent who has all the characteristics (ideal).

Instructions: We have brought a large cardboard and all the participants say characteristics that they think the ideal parent has, which we mark on the cardboard. Then we hang the cardboard in a place where it can stay for the duration of our meetings, and they discuss this topic. Is there really an "ideal parent" - what qualities do they wish they had that they don't have or what would they change about themselves as parents?

Review of the day and close by prompting parents to reflect on the themes that emerged and whether they want to keep notes in their toolkit.

Meeting 4: Parental Role & Child

The aim of this meeting is to discuss with the parents what characteristics a good parent has, what are his virtues, obligations and needs. Then analyse the child's needs and come to a discussion where the parents will work out what priorities they want to set for the relationship with their child. This meeting corresponds to stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 of transformative learning.

We start by asking dads what thoughts the previous meeting brought up and if there is anything they want to share (Duration 5-15 minutes).

If there is nothing, then we present Winnicott's theory of the good parent (Duration 15 minutes).

A good enough parent, who according to Winnicott is the ideal, since the perfect is unattainable, is someone who is present with feelings, reason and example. He sets rules and observes them himself.

What it really means to be a parent, according to Sideris (2009), is determined primarily from the perspective of the child and from the perspective of the parent (p. 79). The real virtues of a parent are:

1. *Authenticity*, being what you are, knowing it, recognizing it, accepting it.
2. *Broadness*, to realize, as we mentioned in the previous meeting, that the parent has many identities, he is also an employee and a partner and a son and a friend and a fan of such and such music, etc. Not to cling only to the status of a parent and expect to be happy only because he is a parent.
3. *Empathy* - *to be able to put himself in the place of another. To perceive the thoughts and feelings and actions of the other. To stand close to his child with an open heart and understanding.*
4. *Awareness* – Always keep in mind that even when he plays with his child, who may feel like a child again, he always has the status of a parent.

Sideris (2009) explains that "the parent should not be afraid to be a parent and assert himself when he judges that something does not approve, for example. He should be able to tell his child with reasonable and understandable arguments, explanations and words that something he wants to do is not allowed. However, giving the explanation that this does not mean that he does not love it, he simply denies something because he does not agree" (pp.96-97).

We talk with parents about ways they can avoid "family anarchy" (ie no formal or informal decision-making process). Can you say no without fear to your child? How do you do this? Do you discuss it with the wife? How do you set rules and boundaries? By phone? How do you pass on rules and values to your children?

The good enough parent seeks to meet his child where he is, in the developmental/age and personal

phase he is in, to know his interests, his pursuits, to try to understand what he likes and why, to be informed about the heroes that they are passionate about it, to share their child's world. When he communicates with his child, to exchange meaningful messages, to listen to what the child tells him, to respect that the child may not be ready to tell him personal matters (especially in adolescence) and to make him feel that he is close to him, despite the distance.

Activity 6: What are your needs as a parent? (Duration 20-25 minutes).

Purpose: Self-awareness

Instructions: We guide a discussion to enable parents to think about whether and what needs they have (for themselves personally or for their family or from their family).

We then ask them about their expectations for their children (the so-called dream child). What do they dream for their child(ren)? Are they being forced to do something they don't want to or can't do? What if their child(ren) don't respond to it?

Coordinators can alternatively propose the discussion first in smaller groups before the plenary session.

Activity 7: My child's needs – experiential exercise (Duration 15 minutes).

Purpose: Self-awareness

Instructions: We invite parents to exchange ideas about the needs of their child(ren) (in their current developmental/age phase).

Then, we present the basic needs of the child and give examples for each one²².

- need for unconditional love
- need to be accepted
- need for stability

²² It is worth bearing in mind that parents may ask us about the different developmental stages of their child depending on their age and needs. If there is time you can adjust the meeting and include them.

-need for security

-need for boundaries

-need to have a supportive framework around

-need for recognition, acceptance (to give him the opportunity to feel responsible by letting him take initiatives and assume obligations - to older children).

Then we read the following story (or ask if a parent would like to read it, or show it on a slide if they don't have it printed in front of them so they can watch it).

Story "one hour dad"²³

The father comes home from work late, tired and irritated, to find his five-year-old son waiting for him at the door.

Son: "Dad, can I ask you something?"

Father: "Yes of course, what is it?"

Son: "Dad, how much do you get paid an hour?"...

Father: "This is none of your business. Why do you ask such a thing?" he asked angrily.

Son: "I just wanted to know... Please tell me, how much do you get paid an hour?" insisted the child.

Father: "If you must know, I get €50 an hour.!!!"

Son: Oh, the child did, in frustration and looked down. "Dad, please can you lend me €25?"

The father enraged, "if the only reason you asked is so you can borrow some money to buy a silly toy or something nonsense, then go straight to your room and to your bed. Think about why you are so selfish. I don't work hard every day to satisfy your own pettiness."

The little boy quietly went to his room and closed the door. The father sat thinking about the child's question and became angrier. How dare he ask such a question just to get some money? After an hour or so, the dad had calmed down and started to think: Maybe it's something the little guy should really buy with the €25 because he wasn't used to asking him for money. He got up and went to the child's room and opened the door.

"Are you sleeping my son?" Asked.

"I'm not sleeping," answered the boy.

"I was thinking, maybe I was too tough on you earlier," said Dad. "It's been a long day and I took my tiredness out on you. Here is the €25 you asked me for." The child ran straight to him smiling.

²³ Filippou & Karantana, (2010), p. 125.

"Thank you dad!" he said. He then goes to his pillow and pulls out some crumpled money from under it. As soon as the father sees that the child already has some money, he starts to get angry. The little boy begins to slowly count his money and looks at his dad.

"Why do you want more money when you already have some?" his father moans.

"Because I didn't have enough, but now I do," the little boy replied. "Dad, I have €50 now. Can I buy an hour of your time? Please come home early tomorrow. I would love to eat together."

The devastated father hugged his son and asked him to forgive him.

A discussion follows on the moral of the above story and we invite them to express any concerns. We refer to the importance of quality time. Children do not need a father who is "decorative" at home. (Duration 20 minutes). The section closes by discussing the priorities they themselves want to set for their children (which they can also note in their own toolkit).

Closing meeting

Meeting 5: Communication & Emotions

The aim of this meeting is for them to form a different picture of their relationship with their family and especially with the way they communicate and share their thoughts and feelings, with the ultimate goal of improving these relationships despite the obstacles and limitations of the prison. This meeting corresponds to stages 2, 3, 7 & 8 of transformative learning.

We start by asking parents how they rate themselves as interlocutors and listeners. Then we choose one of the activities given below, lead the participants through an active listening exercise and ask them what they notice.

Activity 8 – Active listening: Speak, listen, observe²⁴ (Duration 20-25 minutes).

Purpose: Communication and non-verbal communication exercise

Instructions for parents: Instructions for parents: Form subgroups of 3 people. You will alternate between 3 roles: the one who speaks, the one who listens and the observer. The speaker will talk to the listener for 5 minutes about something that concerns him. The listener rephrases. In other words, it will use echo, content summary, sentiment restatement, or synthesis. The observer does not interfere and keeps some distance from the other two. It does not focus on the speaker, nor on what he says. He mainly observes non-verbal communication and notes the type of interventions of the listener. He also gives time to change roles. At the end you have another 5 minutes to discuss with each other. Once you have finished, we will gather to discuss the experience without referring to the content of what was said.

²⁴ Archontaki & Filippou, (2003), p. 229.

Activity 9 – Active listening: What rephrasing is not²⁵ (Duration 20 minutes)²⁶.

Purpose: Communication

Instructions:

1st stage: We suggest that they do an exercise to understand what rephrasing is not. Someone will say in one sentence how they feel at this moment. The rest of us will respond to what we heard by giving advice or explanations, by asking questions, judgments or interpretations, or by comforting him. We ask who wants to tell us a phrase and we work with it. (Duration 2 minutes).

2nd stage: We then urge parents to respond to what we heard with some advice. We can also be exaggerated. (Duration 2 minutes).

3rd stage: Let the person who said the phrase tell us how he felt (Duration 2 minutes).

4th stage: Now let's give some explanations and let him tell us again how he felt (Duration 2 minutes).

5th stage: Now let's ask him questions of curiosity, how, why etc. (Duration 2 minutes).

6th stage: Now we continue criticizing him (Duration 2 minutes).

7th stage: Let's give it some interpretations (Duration 2 minutes).

8th stage: We can continue conforming him (Duration 2 minutes).

9th stage: Now we rephrase by repeating as accurately as possible the content of his words, reflecting his emotion and mirroring his body posture, expression and tone of voice (Duration 2 minutes).

10th stage: You can now tell us how you felt about all that you heard. When did you feel that others understood you better? What bothered you the most? (Duration 2 minutes).

Notes for the coordinators:

If we focus on a single person, perhaps their barrage of responses will create discomfort. That is why it is appropriate to close by rewording and continue with someone else.

We emphasize that this exercise can only be recommended if the animator is well aware of what rephrasing is and is not and has briefly developed the basics of rephrasing before the exercise.

Then the coordinators suggest to the parents, after working on the topic of communication, to do an exercise to see if they can recognize the feelings and name them.

Activity 10 – Emotions' mime (Duration 20 minutes).

²⁵ Depending on the cognitive level of the participants, the coordinators explain the term is single words and give an example.

²⁶ Archontaki & Filippou (2003), p. 226.

The **purpose** of this activity is for the participants to realize how people show certain emotions in a different way and to ask themselves if and how they communicate their emotions non-verbally.

Materials: For the preparation: A4 papers, scissors and a box. During the activity, we only need the box and the papers that we have already cut.

Instructions:

We have cut out small pieces of paper on which we write different emotions on each one and put them in a box (we choose from the following list of positive and negative emotions). Then we ask the parents to pull out a piece of paper and try to show the emotion written without speaking (with their facial and body expressions). The other parents try to guess the feeling. Can they name it? Next, discussion is followed about the different emotions - do they know them? We state that all emotions are useful and acceptable. We refer them to the feelings board (see below) which is also in their toolbox. How easy is it to recognize an emotion in others?

Emotions chart ²⁷

Positives	Negatives
Love	Indignation
Optimism	Anxiety
Fellowship	Anguish
Relief	Injustice
Acceptance	Embarrassment
Enjoyment	Insecurity
Confidence	Impatience
Freedom	Rejection
Hope	Desperation
Trust	Cowardice
Excitement	Discomfort
Love	Sadness
Happiness	Irritation

²⁷ Filippou & Karantana, (2010), p. 347-8.

Pleasure	Guilt
Calmness	Jealously
Courage	Grief
satisfaction	Vanity
Understanding	Anger
Courage	Loneliness
Pride	Sadness
Faith	Melancholia
Respect	Shame
Fondness	Chagrin
Emotion	Lack
Camaraderie	Suffering
Tenderness	Trepidation
Happiness	Fear

Facilitators can ask parents from other countries if these words exist in their language and if not, what would be the closest word to it or the closest feeling.

Then we open the discussion further around the feelings they experience during this time and their relationship with their family (Duration 30 minutes):

What are the main emotions that overwhelm you during this time? (they write them on a piece of paper anonymously and put them in a box that passes in front of them and then we read them aloud).

Of these feelings you have written, are there any that you do not express directly and openly?

Do you feel vulnerable expressing feelings to your family? We explain how important it is for their children and their wives to express their feelings and the importance of meaningful real communication, as opposed to a fake that they are always happy, and it seems fake given the circumstances they live.

Can you recognize emotions over the phone or in person at a visit? Facilitators may suggest writing 2-3 sentences on a page of the parent handbook as a diary after their children visit to discuss specific examples.

We make a description of the different forms of communication (verbal, non-verbal: body, expressions...) and the different means of communication and we ask the parents what they find most difficult in their current communication with their relatives.

What topics do you discuss in the time you have with your relatives? (either in person or on the phone?) Are there questions you hesitate to ask? Are there things that you discuss directly and others that you hide? Are there times when you have to lie to protect your family? What attitude do you have with your children? Do you advise / listen to them? Are you stricter with your boys or girls? Are there questions you can't ask or particular words you avoid?

What is your answer to the question "Dad, when are you coming home?"²⁸

- Then the coordinators, depending on the capabilities of the group, make a reference to the relationship with the woman/partner/wife.

The link between the incarcerated parent and the outside world is the child's caregiver, who is most often the mother, the inmate's wife.

Works by female inmates from prisons in Tirana can be seen in the parents' toolbox. They are prisoners because they ended up killing their abusive husbands, since no other legal or social protection existed to stop domestic violence. Female perpetrators and victims make sculptures in prison, instead of sweets for their families. The barred windows they create reflect their narrative of their truth. Some of the bars are

²⁸ We included this question in the topic of communication, because often many parents either haven't told their children where they are or don't know what to answer. According to testimonies from staff who have worked in prisons for years, it is the most critical question and many parents do not know what to answer to their children, for this reason it is worth asking if we believe that the team is willing and able to answer it.

suffocatingly close to each other, others are sawn or bent, thus opening an optimistic prospect for a free future. The narratives of their creators about their present and future are reflected in the works.

The mothers of the prisoners' children may also experience feelings of confinement, loneliness, helplessness and this may resemble a long-term sentence like the father's sentence. Of course, every woman experiences it differently.

Activity 11 (Duration 15 minutes).

Try drawing on a blank piece of paper the window you think your wife would make to express how she feels in the situation she is in.

The meeting closes by analysing the different alternative forms of communication that exist such as mailing, art (painting), recording, keeping a journal, making a photo album, recording a fairy tale, a narrative (the truth through a metaphor/parable) etc and urging them to consider the possibility of initiating some of these forms of communication with their own.

Meeting 6: Non-violent communication

The aim of this meeting is to transmit the technique of Non-Violent Communication. By following the steps of the specific technique, it is easier to have control over your communication and therefore to consciously seek changes in the way you communicate up to now. Motivated by facilitating relationships with family, one can cultivate a skill that will be useful in all social contexts and possibly in a future workplace. This meeting corresponds to stages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 of transformative learning.

We begin by making a bridge with the previous meeting, in which we dealt with the importance of emotion in communication. We answer questions, listen to comments and thoughts, if any, and present the idea that through successful communication, the needs of the people communicating can be mutually met, even if they initially appear to be in conflict. This is how the name of this technique arises, called Non-Violent Communication, because it avoids the imposition of a single solution that only covers one side and leaves the other complaining.

Often there is the need of the "Other" to cover a need of my own. How will communication be achieved so that the other person is willing to meet my need and I am willing to meet his own needs? Starting from such an intention, everyone's needs are met mutually and not out of fear, shame or guilt. (Fear, shame, or guilt are emotions that move us to action, but rob us of freedom, prestige, and dignity. We'll deal with them again in the meetings on empowering prestige through relationship.)

Then we can present the 4 steps of Nonviolent Communication, using a board or large papers where we will write them down combining them with an example familiar to the group of fathers.

1. **Observe** (without judging, without commenting, without interpreting and evaluating). E.g. my brother hasn't been answering my calls lately.
2. **Feel** in relation to what I observe (I recognize the feeling that arises in me and for which no one else is responsible but my own interpretation). E.g.: I feel sad, lonely, worried. and these are feelings for which I am responsible. It is not my brother who does not answer my calls that creates them for me.
3. **Needs** based on my values, my desires, etc. created by my feeling. E.g. To learn about the children.
4. **Requests** specific actions we ask of others to make our lives better. E.g: I would be satisfied with a communication every month with the news the news from home.

Accordingly, we look for these 4 elements in our interlocutor:

- What does he notice? What data does he have from his observation?
- What might he be feeling by making this observation?
- What need might want to be met in this condition?

- What can he proactively expect as an action from me?

E.g. He notices that I always call home at noon.

He feels guilty that he cannot answer at that time because he is asleep.

He needs a morning call since he's up from an all-nighter.

He asks me to call as early as I can so that he tries to wait for me awake.

This communication gives room for the expression of emotion without attributing it to the other, since one realizes that it is an internal matter of one's own how one will feel about what is happening, that is, how one feels about what one observes. This communication does not allow interpretations of the other's actions or omissions. Also, it does not give space to general characterizations that the other is generally something.

It is easy to be drawn into arbitrary interpretations based on what one observes. E.g: "She doesn't care about her husband; she forgot him and doesn't even pick up the phone". The interpretation we make can go even further, there is no end to the arbitrariness of the mind.

"And since that's the case, she's a self-seeker who stayed close to me when she was well and when she was in trouble." Therefore....

"It's very difficult to get along with such a person."

They help in Nonviolent Communication:

- The expression of our needs combined with the feelings that arise
- Empathy
- Accepting the other's right not to cooperate.
- The belief that my request will be fulfilled, along with others.

It is a way to express all our feelings with the responsibility that they are ours. To open up all topics, since our interlocutor does not feel that he can be blamed for something and is much more likely to listen to us, and in this context, it is much easier to touch on "difficult" topics, which are often left unsaid to avoid pain they may cause. The ones that are usually right there in front of us but get swept under the rug and no one talks about them, while we keep tripping over them.

Activity 12 (Duration 30 minutes).

Purpose: Familiarity with the method of non-violent communication and the opportunity to negotiate a difficult topic for them in a safer way.

Materials - Preparation: A large A3 paper where the ideas heard for an imaginary dialogue will be recorded.

We propose to sweep one of the issues under the carpet and give voice to the protagonists of the story by forming a dialogue with the principles of Nonviolent Communication. Example of a dispute with my child's carer.

One of the participants can record the sentences so that the dialogue can be read afterwards.

Activity 13 (Duration 20 minutes).

Purpose: The emergence of subjectivity that defines Non-violent Communication

Materials - Preparation: 2 A3 prints with the phrase "My wife couldn't come to any of the last visits" and the instructions to imagine a dialogue based on the principles of Nonviolent Communication.

Instructions:

The group is divided into 2 having written on a piece of paper the exact same observation: "My wife could not come to any of the last visits".

Each subgroup formulates its own dialogue approaching the specific observation from both sides of the pair.

In the plenary session, the dialogues of the 2 subgroups will be heard and the differences between the two versions will be highlighted.

The meeting could close by challenging them to try the Nonviolent Communication model, in contexts where they feel comfortable doing so, such as at school (if they go) or visiting with family, or even in their cell if the relationship with the councillor allows them. Their experience of such an effort could be shared with the entire group at a subsequent meeting.

Meeting 7: Prestige through relationship, Part I.

The purpose of the meeting is to familiarize parents with the importance of telling their story to their children. The emotion that dominates their story and the perspective it leaves for the future are transferred to the child and affect the identity of the father himself, but also the identity of his child. The narration of our personal history and path affects to some extent the prestige that is exuded by those around us. By taking care of our narrative, we take care of the relationship with our children. Time in prison can become an opportunity to process this narrative. The beliefs we have about our life and the control we have over it play a decisive role in telling our personal story. The ability to transform perceptions that were once functional but no longer work can change the narrative. This encounter corresponds to stages 2, 3, 5 & 6 of transformative learning.

At the beginning of the meeting, it is important to hear if someone has tried the Nonviolent Communication model to convey their impressions to us. So we reconnect to the model and bring back concepts of fear, guilt, and shame as weak motivators for people to act.

We start a group discussion about the photos in the parents' toolbox. What might be the relationship of the parent depicted in each photo with his children? We comment on the distance that exists between them (How small or how large do they think it is? What increases and what decreases this distance?). The team has already done a lot of work and we think they will go into this process with a greater willingness to expand perceptions of distance and proximity. We wonder how each might find their own way to function better within changing distances. The variety of subjective responses expands the boundaries of how you can be a long-distance dad.

We introduce the concept of telling our story as individuals, as members of families and wider social groups and classes. How we tell what has happened to us matters a lot. It is another identity that we build if we complain about it (passive stance) or star in our story actively (what we chose to do and what we avoided). The willingness to take responsibility for our own action is the defining element in the narrative and the way we experience ourselves and reality. It is worth emphasizing that a sense of control over our lives and a conscious effort to self-determine increase our self-confidence and prestige.

Activity 14 (Duration 5 minutes).

Purpose: Familiarizing participants with the concept of prestige and the idea that it is something that is earned and not imposed.

Materials - preparation: Rolled paper, tape, thick markers.

But what is prestige? It is possible that the participants with their answers will be able to give a definition, so it is helpful to record on a large piece of paper, visible to all, what is said in response to this question and stick it on the wall. We seek to understand that enforcement by force is not necessarily linked to the recognition of prestige. The prestige we seek in the relationship with our loved ones is related to the acceptance we enjoy from them. By looking at one's immediate environment, one could identify influential people in one's own family and their characteristics to answer the original question.

Prestige is the ability to influence a person, based on the acceptance he enjoys from others of his personality traits and the way he behaves. Prestige is revealed by the expression of respect and trust one receives.

Activity 15 – Using the pictures from the parent toolkit (Duration 30 minutes).

Purpose: The highlighting of multiple reasons for absence but also multiple possibilities of proximity

Materials - preparation: Using images from the father's toolbox.

The fact of the father's absence from home (for whatever reason), creates the need to make an effort and spend time in order to build the relationship with the child, when they are close again or while they are apart.

What might "near" mean for each different photo? What interpretation of reality forms this sense of "we are close"? How is the narrative shaped by the father, the child, and the family? Are there only "near" and "far" as 2 clear separate concepts? All distances in between? The ability to take care of the relationship to influence the distance created according to the season and circumstances, exists?

We discuss the condition that each photo depicts. We explore the potential limitations to the relationship and how it can ultimately be maintained or rebuilt:

1. With a father in intensive care, without communication with the environment, who may be there even because of his own fault.
2. With a father incapable of many of his duties and with increased needs at home.
3. With a father whose work keeps him away for long periods.
4. With a father who is present, he is close to every step of the child's development, but often in an abusive way.
5. With a father who is present but shows indifference and often neglects the child's needs.
6. With the father who is no longer alive but has left his mark on the life of the family. Who shapes this narrative and determines how the father lives within the child?

The greater the distance to be covered, the more time, persistence, faith and care the relationship with the child needs. Despite a conscious effort on the part of the parent, children may need time, understanding and freedom to approach. Perseverance (without pressure) and believing that your effort will bring better results is an anchor that every child needs.

Children often have a negative view of their father's punishment in their mind as a source of great pain. Probably, a father who understands this stands tenderly towards his child, even if he himself as a person is greatly burdened by this whole adventure. Tenderness, recognition and understanding of feelings and sweet and encouraging words do good first to the one who says them and also to whoever hears them. So the father can become an anchor for his child even through prison.

The anchor is always at the bottom, stable and holding tight the ship-child who grows up and makes his explorations and needs a stability that allows him to move where he wants up to a distance, but not to be lost in a storm (Omer, 2018).

The father's release and return home, however desirable, is a new beginning and has many difficulties, both for the now free father and for the rest of the family. So despite the elimination of distance, the relationship may be tested by new difficulties with proximity.

The closer the relationship the father has managed to keep with his children through prison, and the longer he maintains the prestige he has cultivated, the easier and smoother the family relationships will be, both through prison and after release.

Activity 16 (Duration 40 minutes).

Purpose: The production of speech by each father about the experience of incarceration, punishment, reparation and the simultaneous contribution to the community. Awareness that formalities affect the relationship with children and with the future of fathers. Enriching the narrative with positive roles.

Materials - preparation: The image with the letter from the fathers' handbook as a source of inspiration for the 2nd part of the exercise.

A father, voluntarily, takes the role of the interviewer and sits further forward than the others. The moderator sits next to him and they agree to ask him some interview-like questions about his views on his present and future. The interviewer asks a new question from the proposed ones as soon as he gets an answer to the previous one. The rest of the group watch carefully so they can then say what they heard, what thoughts they made from what they heard about the father himself and his future. The role of the commentator should be taken by more than one person, and if no second person can be found, then the moderator-wife should do the commentary.

Questions: "Was the time of confinement an opportunity for reparation?" "Has the need to pay for one's deed satisfied?" "Get out of debt and start over?" "Some may never recognize the offender's ability to start over. But does he claim it himself?" "One may never recognize his mistake or admit that he has recognized it. Do you recognize your mistakes? Do you admit it?"

There follows a 2nd set of questions which can be asked to the same father or to one of the others who wishes to take on the role of the interviewer. Please note that the questions will be on the same topic, but different.

Questions: "How does he appear to his children? What is his overall narrative?" "What is the perspective he claims for himself in the future?" "What does he inspire in his children with his storytelling and attitude?" "How does one manage to maintain one's status in prison?", "How does one spend one's time?", "What thoughts occupy one's mind?", "Prisoners often attend classes, engage in art, take on roles in everyday life and coexistence. Which role(s) would he say the prisoner has, in the family, in the daily life of the prison, in his life in general?"

With the above exercise, we help parents to recognize these roles, to be aware of them, so that they can tell them to their children, helping them to build the profile of their father as completely as possible. The additional characteristics of each father, (besides being a prisoner) are of equal interest to their children, who are eager to form the image of the father through narratives that will help them to imagine their father and feel proud about the positive elements of his daily life and the qualities he has, even in prison (many times the roles are also informal: the animator, the robust, the resourceful, the good storyteller, the well-read, the solidarity, the one who helps wherever need etc.)"

(A letter from a prisoner in Ikaria in 1947 recounting the skill he has cultivated in prison at washing clothes is published in the parents' toolbox).

Activity 17 (Duration 15 minutes).

Purpose: The active involvement of all fathers who in the previous activity were observers in a process of personal reflection about their habits. Raising awareness about the choice of habits and their importance in telling their personal story.

Materials – preparation: small notepads, pens, a small box.

We are our habits: Each participant writes about himself on notepads what he does consistently that characterizes and expresses him (he can think about it himself and get help to write it). Each habit is written

on a different piece of paper. The papers are collected folded in a box from which we will be able to choose one, after everyone has finished writing. By choosing a piece of paper, one of the indicative habits will be revealed to us at random. For each habit that is revealed we try to reflect on a description of it so that this habit can contribute to strengthening the prestige of a father in his role. Those who wish may try narratives that would highlight abilities possessed by the person who has this habit, or an important purpose served by this habit. Example: i) I don't talk to anyone: I protect valuable information and avoid entanglements. ii) I exercise every day: I love myself or prepare to do even heavy work after release. iii) I see a priest once a year: I keep my faith alive, or I am firm in what I learned as a child is the right thing.

We close the meeting by getting a short feedback on how they are leaving it which we ask them to show us with their thumbs up, sideways or down. We assure them that we will continue the prestige conversation next time with new ideas for them to think about.

Meeting 8: Prestige through relationship, Part II.

The aim of the meeting is to strengthen the parents' repertoire with new perceptions, attitudes and behaviours that will facilitate communication with their children and strengthen their prestige in the family. We explore the efficacy of learned, reflexive responses and introduce ideas that could be redemptive when appropriated. This meeting corresponds to stages 4, 5, 6 & 7 of transformative learning.

We welcome our team and ask anyone who may remember and want to remind us to some of what we covered in the previous meeting. We allow a few minutes to hear questions or comments from the previous meeting, if any, and provide clarifications if requested. We ask if they thought about anything from the encounter as they performed any of their routines. Then we invite them to think about a daughter or a son who wants to be able to imagine how their dad lives in prison and feel that even there the father is fine. At the same time, he needs a father with authority. How can an incarcerated dad provide this to his child? What does it mean to be a person of authority? How do I gain prestige? How do I maintain my prestige? How much does the culture I come from affect me in relation to other people, from other cultures? Do they remember mentioning influential people from their own youth? Did fathers have more prestige in earlier generations than they do today? What changes have occurred in today's society in relation to the authority of parents?

Through the discussion, we seek perceptions of what gives authority to a father (outstanding characteristics, position in the community, self-control, admission of weakness or error, compassion and

enjoyable communication, remorse and forgiveness, interest and presence in children's lives, etc.). We emphasize how important the telling of one's personal story can be in relation to one's status (self-pity or self-respect, resignation or active action, luck or choice, etc.).

Today's social conditions do not want children to grow up with feelings of fear, guilt and shame. But in the past, many more parents resorted to threats and punishments in order to educate their children.

Many parents today find it difficult to accept that love and power can coexist equally in their relationship with their children. For some it seems that one negates the other and they cannot exist at the same time.

Martin Luther King (priest and leader of the black rights movement in America in the 1950s and 1960s) expressed it very clearly.

Martin Luther King

"...one of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites, polar opposites, so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love.

...Now, we got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic.



If a parent sees the power to defend his boundaries as an annulment of his love, then he is giving his children a freedom out of all proportion to their ability to handle it. He equates power with coercion and avoids exercising it in order not to oppress his child, whom he loves.

However, within the family, parents ideally maintain responsibility and have a "leader" role towards their children. They gradually abandon this role as children manage to become independent and can take on more and more responsibilities.

In children's childhood and adolescence, the role of "leader" is maintained by the parents even if they are connected to their family from a distance. The children themselves feel more confident when they have parents who exercise the role of leader with tenderness, love but also strength.

The role of the leader in today's era is not fulfilled as it used to be. Socially, it is no longer self-evident that the father has authority derived from distance, fear and guild, threat and punishment.

The responsibility for the upbringing of the children of the family is borne by the parents PERIODICALLY

The patriarchal model of power has been weakened - challenged.

Because the modern leader cannot...

1. To know everything
2. Be ready to answer any challenge
3. To be enforced

PROTECTION WAS ONCE FOR THE PARENT

On the one hand, parents today can no longer impose themselves with threats and fear, and on the other hand, they cannot easily hide their weaknesses and mistakes as parents, keeping a distance and a role of a holy person for themselves (Omer, 2018). The parent who maintains a direct and honest attitude towards his children effectively fulfils the role of leader.

1. So it helps a lot for parents not to feel obligated to know everything they think they need to know or everything their kids might ask about, but to admit that there might be something they can't answer right away, or that they might have to look it up with their kids, the answer or a related piece of information (e.g. how to solve a math exercise, what do we do to print on the computer, how is food prepared or what should we do in case of gastroenteritis, does Arta have a sea, what specialty should they choose in technical high school, when will they get a new bike, who should we trust, what is an activist, etc.). Parents don't always have the answers to everything, and they can admit that, endure it, and continue to be strong and actively searching for a possible answer at another time.

2. Also liberating is the thought that you can let something "fall down" and come back to answer it later in a calm and considered way. The immediate consequences of a bad act can make a situation worse and make things even more difficult (e.g. the child who messed up, who lied, who stole, who smokes, who was reckless). Situations with children as protagonists that bring parents irritation, difficulty, consequences, frustration, worry, despair, anger, etc. are best discussed when parents have controlled their negative emotions.

3. Finally we now recognize that it is impossible to impose on our children, simply because we are stronger. Even if we succeed it will be temporary and quickly challenged by children. Unnecessary effort and wasted energy. Children will try to escape the consequences, they will question us, they will not listen to us. If we try to impose on them, it is very likely that we will try to thwart their escape from our imposition, resulting in bad situations and feelings on both sides and a decrease in our prestige in their eyes (usually escalating on both sides the unwanted behaviour).

Activity 18 (Duration 30 minutes).

Purpose: The consolidation of the three assumptions that contribute to a direct and honest communication between parents and children.

Materials - Preparation: The 3 admissions should be written down on a place visible to all.

We divide the team into 3 subgroups. Each subgroup finds an example from the child's everyday life that would fit one of the three assumptions discussed earlier: 1. Parents cannot know everything at all times, 2. There is no need for parents to react immediately to every challenge, 3. It is not possible for parents to effectively control their children's behaviour, only their own behaviour. In plenary we discuss the three examples that have been proposed and the whole group together explores possible possibilities that the parent has for each case.

We all discuss together which of the different versions heard in each case increase the authority of the parent, while the moderator summarizes to bring the discussion to conclusions. It is understood that there is no right or wrong and that everything is weighed on a scale of more or less supportive of the parent's authority.

It is obvious that the prisoner father, since he does not coexist in the same house with his child, cannot directly impose himself on him, set limits and guard them, punish him or pressure him.... But what the absent dad can't do, no dad needs to do. If the child does the right thing out of fear of punishment, he will soon find an opportunity to slip away. If he is punished and humiliated, he will feel betrayed by his father, whom he needs as his protector and defender, as his trusted advisor and not as a threatening punisher. The incarcerated father is likely to be able to maintain a stable attitude, not swayed by his emotions and the imperative to react immediately when something happens. The distance from the family and the fact that he learns the news after it happens, gives him the time to calmly choose his reaction and attitude. Thanks to the distance and the time that has passed, the father can enter the conversation and offer another perspective on things, suggesting solutions, providing comfort or giving advice.

The relationship becomes strong and beautiful, and the child believes in his father when he takes care to learn, is interested, remembers the important issues of his child's life and cultivates trust between them. When the father openly discusses and admits his weakness when he cannot contribute or apologizes when he has made a mistake. He tries to think of ways and solutions and ideas and has suggestions in a conversation with the child. He encourages and consoles it for its mistakes and failures. He can bear to listen to his needs, because these are what a child may want to express and finding the space to do so is very important for them to be released, even if they are not fulfilled, even when the relationship with his children is difficult, full of obstacles and bad behaviour. The father, with all his attitude and words, makes sure to convey to them his faith that they will make things right, they will be corrected. He is the one who will actively try to rebuild the relationships.

After giving this perspective, we ask the parents to mention examples of difficulties they face with their children (they could also be hypothetical, if there is no desire to mention real incidents or examples they remember from their own childhood). For the difficulties mentioned, we ask the group for specific suggestions on how a father could face them like those mentioned in the examples. We give positive feedback to the suggestions that come in, enrich the ideas that enter the discussion or argue when there are objections, questions, disagreements, etc.

The group concludes by asking them to say or write in their toolbox the words they usually say to their children, cutting off communication with them from the prison phone. It's been hours of filtering what they will and won't say at the information level. But did they ever deal with saying goodbye? Did they take care of it? Did they prepare him? And the way we hang up determines the quality of communication.

"People may not remember what you did or said to them, but they will always remember how you made them feel."

Mayia Angelou, 1928-2014

African American poet

Meeting 9: Prestige through relationship, Part III.

The aim of the meeting is to introduce parents to the redemptive function of reparation and reconciliation. Both of these concepts ensure continuity and development in relationships, contribute to renouncing the attempt to control the child's behaviour, to freeing the parent from the need to respond immediately to any challenging behaviour of the child, and to realizing that it is the attitude of the same of the parent who fills him with power and prestige and not the submission of his child to the power of his authority. This meeting corresponds to stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 of transformative learning.

The meeting begins with an epigrammatic reference to the ideas we worked on last time. Relevant questions, tests, comments that the fathers are likely to express will act as a bridge between the previous and this meeting, which will deal with the concepts of reparation and reconciliation. We explain that when I actively make amends, I am trying to show that I understand my mistake or the damage I did and I want to make things and relationships as good as possible. When I can't do things the way they were before, I can, to make them better, rebuild the relationship. An example might be the war reparations that one country pays to another to turn the page in their relations after the destruction of a war between them. It is suggested that the interpretation of the word redress be written on the table for easier understanding.

Watch a video of the "remediation", if the technical infrastructure exists, alternatively read the transcript of the video, elaborate on specific questions and provoke discussion:

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch;app=desktop&feature=youtu.be&v=loauPPspNhs&fbclid=IwAR0aZXe_VrYztk7o4D7DSMxqrq4G0Lj3WxPF6vdg8DmKDCS_Sz1eb0wuYreU&ab_channel=ParentingTips

Some parents believe that when the child misbehaves, then he should learn a good lesson so that he does not do it again. That we must threaten him, burden him with shame and guilt, if necessary even punish him, in a way that he will not forget what happened. (question 1: Are you one of those who believe that punishment prevents someone from doing something "bad" again?)

These parents worry that when something bad happens, it doesn't go away because the glass doesn't stick back together. Because the one who did something bad means that he is bad. Even if he apologizes, even if he tries too hard, he will still carry the shame and guilt of the glass he broke, of the mistake he made. Sorry isn't enough.

The metaphor for broken glass exists more or less within all of us. Many of us learned this from our parents. It has become part of our personal history. All of us as children had broken at least one glass and

learned the tough lesson that it doesn't stick again. We all carry shame and guilt like broken glasses in our pocket and we don't know what to do with them. Would we want our children to grow up the same way? (Question 2: Is there another way? What do you think?)

There is another possibility: that if the glass breaks, we can re-glue it and make it stronger than before. In the Japanese art of Kintsugi, broken pieces are glued together, and molten gold is poured over the cracks. Their philosophy wants it to be special and valuable that it has been worn and continues to stand over time.



So we have the option, if the child has done something bad, to help him re-glue the glass. Not as a punishment, we don't need to apply pressure. It is enough to talk to the child about our certainty that he can manage to restore the "bad" he did. Let's talk with him about the importance and the way of reconciliation. Let's suggest that we also help together, because it concerns us as a family. And to express our warmth and respect for all the efforts he can make to rebuild what he broke. For example, he might make a drawing, a craft, or write a letter as an attempt to apologize. Or take on a role of responsibility at home or school that will see to it that he does something proactive to repair the damage he has done. (Question 4: So what is reconciliation? I stand by you, even when you've done wrong, and actively help you make reconstructions. Can one even try this over the phone with their children?)

All this can take time, it needs patience, because if it is done in a hurry, it will not be of special importance. It's a bit like fitting the broken pieces together and dripping gold into the cracks. It needs time, it needs attention and persistence, so that it is done correctly.

Through repair and reconciliation, the child will discover that human relationships can "crack, fall apart, but they can be put back together." That a misunderstanding, a fight, does not necessarily mean that everything is over, but it can lead to a new beginning. That a mistake is not an irreparable evil. It can be fixed in such a way that everyone will recognize and appreciate it. And that in order to learn to distinguish what is right, you first need to make a lot of mistakes. (Question 5: How can such an attitude on the part of the father affect his relationship with his children?) (Question 6: How can the children's mother be affected if their father encourages them to try to fix things when they make mistakes and fix relationships? Could this effort become a habit between the couple as well?)

How would you like your children to grow up? Picking up and carrying broken glasses or putting the broken pieces back together one by one?

Activity 19 (Duration 10 minutes).

Purpose: To provoke critical reflection on fathers' experiences and possibly inspire alternative ideas that could replace dysfunctional assumptions.

They all participate at the same time. It is important to emphasize that everyone will express their personal opinion and not generally what others say, but what everyone personally believes.

A chair in the middle of the room symbolizes reparation and reconciliation. They can stand up and position themselves where they want in relation to the chair. From the distance they have with the chair they show how much they believe in the power of reparation and anyone who wants to talk to us about it can.

In the second phase of the exercise, we refer to the belief that after completing my sentence, I have the right to leave my mistake behind. Therefore, when someone commits a crime against society and serves his sentence, he is now free to claim something better than before. Do you believe in the possibility of someone paying for their mistake and putting it behind them?

To start something new, since he shows that he has regretted his actions? After release, do you think you have a right to a new life, a new association with society? The chair now is the new relationship with society and with life and distance how much you claim that right to make it yours.

In the third phase, the chair becomes the new relationship with the family members and the effort that each one makes to this day to claim it.

The exercise ends by asking them from their position to look around at fellow dads who are each making their own effort.

Activity 20 (Duration 15 minutes).

Purpose: Elaborate on the benefits of adopting new behaviours.

Materials - preparation Three different prints with the 3 “missions” and blank space on the page where each subgroup can take notes.

Parents are divided into three subgroups. Each gets a mission in writing:

Subgroup: Subgroup: The group paper says: “How does the dad who recognizes that he cannot control the child's behaviour win? What does he gain by not forcing the child to do what he tells him, because he has to?” (Indicative: doesn't shout, doesn't argue, doesn't punish, doesn't expose, doesn't abuse, makes responsible children, etc.)

Subgroup: The group's paper writes: “How does the dad who doesn't need distance from the kids win? What does the dad gain who doesn't try to hide his mistake, always looks right and talks to his kids openly about most issues?” (indicative: he does not have the compulsion to impose himself all the time, to know everything and to answer every challenge of the child, he is relaxed, he learns with them, etc.)

Subgroup: The group's paper writes: “How does the dad who gains power from his own attitude and not from the child's submission win? What does the father gain who pays attention to his own behaviour and does not expect his child to be right?” (indicative: avoids escalating tension, admits his mistakes, gives opportunities for correction, strengthens his prestige, etc.)

They all return to the group and a representative from each sub-group conveys the results of their efforts to us. Parents from the other two subgroups can fill in at the end. We then ask if anyone would like to be one of the three winning dads and why.

The group closes with impressions, questions, comments, which can also be left pending for the next meeting, if there is no time with the reminder that it is not always a good time to give the answers and close the topics. It may be better to answer some next time in a better way.

Meeting 10: Setting boundaries

The goal of the meeting is to give parents very specific tools that help in effective demarcation and turn it from a point of friction to a point of contact and interaction. This meeting corresponds to stages 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of transformative learning.

From the previous meetings it has been seen how important it is for the parent to realize that he is responsible for his behaviour towards his child. His reactions and the way he feels are connected to what is happening in his environment, but are not ultimately determined by external events and stimuli. It is the way one sees things, how one connects them and how one understands them. It is his way of thinking, attitudes and perceptions that determine his reaction.

All of us, young and old depending on the way we think and interpret things, do our best to satisfy our needs. How we will behave is limited by the rules and limits we set for ourselves, but also those that have prevailed in the environment we are in. Ultimately, however, our behaviour is a personal decision (Tawwab N.G., 2022).

Within the family, it often helps to have some rules that say what is allowed and what is prohibited, so that children know what they can and cannot do to meet their needs.

Activity 21 (Duration 10 minutes).

Purpose: To show how difficult it is to apply rules, however easy it may seem in theory.

Materials - preparation:

We ask fathers to tell us what rules they think should exist in a family like theirs. It is enough for us to record 5-6 suggested rules in a prominent place. Ideally, it would be if we had a rule from each participant which could be a rule that applies or would like to apply in their family.

We take care to record each father's words verbatim. These rules must remain clearly written somewhere throughout the meeting.

Then we ask them to put themselves in their children's shoes and tell us which of all the rules they would break and why. Next to each rule we record the sentence that was heard verbatim.

We emphasize the importance of the boundaries that parents set in a family and how these can protect children from danger and train them in social skills (boundary negotiation, consistency, correction, etc.).

Boundaries and rules actually help children move safely, predict, learn social skills, and live in organized communities.

While the boundary limits the freedom, it can be done in a certain way on the part of the parents in order to make the children feel the interest they have for them (Bluestein J., 2000). What is this way and how will the children follow these limits more easily and without pressure?

Children are more respectful of boundaries that they have discussed and decided together with parents. There are some children's needs that need to be heard at the same time as the parents' reasons for reaching a limit. When children know that the parent has taken an interest in what they need, has taken it into account and has foreseen that this need will be met in some way, to some extent, then they are more likely to respect the boundary.

Activity 22 (Duration 15 minutes).

Purpose: Let the fathers think about the children's needs which remain unsatisfied by the limits imposed on them.

Materials - preparation: We have written in a prominent place the limits mentioned by the fathers earlier.

We all discuss each of the boundaries we listed earlier together and ask ourselves what the child's need might be related to that specific boundary. For example, the limit that at 21.00 the television turns off, is related to the child's need to watch his favourite show until the end. But it can also be related to his more internal needs, such as being next to his parent on the couch until late. For this reason, it is important that children enter the dialogue and realize that their need has value and we take it into account when deciding on the limit. Through this conversation, the child will also understand what is important to the parents, what they consider necessary and why they set this limit. For example, getting the child to sleep enough is important for parents, for health reasons.

So, before the time comes when a limit needs to be implemented we must have discussed it. In a conversation that takes place earlier, there is no competition between the child's need and what the parent considers important in reality, but only at the level of discussion. So they can negotiate how needs and priorities will be regulated. In such a calm conversation (e.g. about when to turn off the TV) the rule can regulate different cases (e.g. earlier on weekdays and later on days when the child can sleep at noon, since the important is getting enough sleep). Through such a discussion, the child feels respected and understands the reasoning of his parent and the limitations that exist.

When the limit has been agreed upon in advance and the children know it, just a little reminder can be helpful. (e.g. once half time is over it will be time to sleep). The reminder helps children prepare and shows them that it is important to us that the limit is respected.

It is of great value that the limits are respected by the parents as well. When they themselves are consistent in what they have committed to, they are a good example for their children. Also, the consistency and stability they show makes children feel safe, shows interest and gives parents the right to ask their children to be consistent.

To be respected the limits must be realistic and not too many. And the parents themselves are not always able to defend boundaries even though they consider them important. In this case it is better not to set them at all (e.g. when the child goes to the grandmother and the parent will not be there to defend the limit, it is better not to set it). Too many boundaries are very limiting, as are unrealistic boundaries, so the only thing left to do is break them. The child who has many boundaries can be confused, stressed and feel guilty for not being able to respect them. And parents still struggle to defend many boundaries that eventually fade and cease to apply, but in a way that makes parents seem powerless to enforce what they say.

It is helpful for parents to prioritize which boundaries they choose as most important. A child who makes an effort to follow boundaries needs recognition for this. The satisfaction expressed by the parent for good cooperation and the cultivation of trust between them are strong incentives for the child to want to follow what they have jointly agreed upon.

The limits therefore need to be **flexible and adapt to the new data**. A growing child has changing needs (e.g. he will start sleeping later, so he might ask to watch TV later). And in general, depending on the circumstances and the seasons, the boundaries need to be modified and it is good that this is again done with a conversation between parent and child and again earlier, before the time when the boundaries will need to work. Also important is that there are exceptions to the boundaries, which will be justified by a little talk showing that the boundaries were set aside by choice.

Violating boundaries is a message from the child. Some need was more important to him than the deal he has made. It is worth hearing what this need is that prevailed as well as what are the physical consequences of violating the limit in practice, but also in the relationship between the two, parents and child. The opportunity to make amends is important for the child to be able to re-enter the framework that sets the limits soon, to restore trust gradually and to avoid worse behaviours that come as a reaction to punishment.

As children grow older, they begin to question their parents' priorities and boundaries more and more strongly. The way they have learned from a young age to negotiate the satisfaction of their needs, the consistency they have cultivated through demarcation, their familiarity with correction and the prestige that each parent takes care to have through their personal attitude and behavior determines the parent child relationship.

Activity 23 (Duration 20 minutes).

Purpose: Highlighting the central points in children's demarcation.

Materials - preparation: Rolled paper, tape, markers.

We ask that each father *brainstorm* what he thinks will help him to help set boundaries in his family during his detention. We code the answers. Additional ideas are likely to be heard. We fill in at the end of the activity the suggestions for easier demarcation in which the fathers were not mentioned. Practices that have a problematic dimension are important to discuss and, if possible, to discuss them using arguments.

We close the meeting by getting feedback on how helpful the participants found what they heard. Did they get ideas that will serve them in their efforts to help keep the rules in the family, even if they are far away?



29

29 Photograph from a wall painting in Athens, Petraki Street, Eleni Perraki.

Meeting 11: Managing loss, distance & change.

The goal of this meeting is for them to be able to communicate how they feel about the physical distance they have with their children and think of ways to bridge it. This meeting corresponds to stages 4, 5, 6, & 7 of transformative learning.

The meeting begins with an awareness of the changes experienced by themselves and their families, regarding the physical distance but also the emotional lack (the father is missing from his children, the father is missing the children, the husband is missing to the wife and vice versa and also the father is absent from the important moments).

What is it like to be reunited after the curfew amid the Covid-19 pandemic?

Speaking of changes, we read the story below:

Story – The Eagle³⁰



³⁰ Filippou & Karantana, (2010), p.128

The Eagle is the longest-lived of the Birds of Prey. It can live up to 70 years! Yet, he has to make a tough decision at 40 in order to reach this age. Its long and flexible claws can no longer grab its prey to feed on. Its long and sharp beak becomes very curved. Its overgrown and heavy wings, due to the dense feathers, stick to its chest and make it difficult to fly. Therefore, it is left with two choices: die or go through a painful process of change that lasts 150 days.

The process requires it to fly to the top of a mountain and stay in its nest. There the eagle beats its beak against a rock until it cuts it off. After cutting it off, it will wait for a new one to grow and then cut off its claws. After its new claws grow, it begins to pluck its old feathers. After five months, the eagle takes its famous Rebirth Flight and lives another 30 years! But to do this, it must free himself from the burdens of the past.

Messages

In order to survive and make the most of the present, we must get rid of the past.

For the new to come into our lives, we must make room for it by throwing away the old.

In the process of change, we say goodbye to things of the past.

Have they thought of any changes they want to make before they are released or to implement after they are released? Who are they; At what level? (plenary discussion) -Duration 10 minutes.

In previous meetings we talked about the issue of the legacy we leave to future generations. Is there anything they would like to be told in a letter? What do they want their children to remember of them?

Activity 24- I am writing a letter to you... (Duration 20 minutes).³¹

Purpose: Awareness of “open account” coping, self-awareness

After reading the story of the eagle, we suggest that they automatically write a letter to someone, expressing everything they thought or felt and never told him/her.. or what they failed to share with him/her. Start by writing his/her name (e.g. John, Maria, I am writing to you to...) You have 20 minutes.

1st variation – Letter to a loved one (child, wife?)

Think of a loved one and write him/her a letter stating what you would do to show your love in action. Then write the reverse, e.g. how would you like this person to actually show you his/her love?

Then, we do an activity about the change process.

Activity 25- The paper bags (Duration 60 minutes)³².

Purpose: Self-awareness, expression of desires, process of change

Materials- Three paper bags for each participant, colored markers, small pieces of paper.

Instructions – 1st stage (30 minutes)

We suggest taking stock of the things we currently have in our lives, whether it's relationships, elements of ourselves, or material possessions. Each of these will be drawn or written on a separate piece of paper. Then we'll put each one in one of three bags, depending on whether we want to keep it as it is, throw it away completely, or change it. We will have 30 minutes. Let's get the materials we need and get started.

2nd stage (30 minutes) Time's up. Let's get together to present our bags.

We can propose at the end of the discussion a small ritual, in which the members will symbolically “throw away” what they do not want to keep.

³¹ Filippou & Karantana, (2010), p. 268-269.

³² Archontaki & Filippou, (2003), p.200.

Meeting: Closure – Reflection – production of material³³.

The aim of the meeting is see the future through an activity and give parents the time to express themselves, how this experience was in terms of their own personal transformation and then anonymously evaluate the process and content. This meeting corresponds to stages 5, 8 & 9 of transformative learning.

Activity 26: “5-10 years later” (Duration 40 minutes)³⁴.

Purpose: Process of change, self-awareness, expression of desires.

Materials: A4 papers, paints/brushes or colored markers, tape.

Instructions: 1st stage (20 minutes) – We suggest that they draw the way they imagine their children/child from 5-10 years from now (depending on their age). What are they like, with whom, where are they and what are they doing? We will have 20 minutes to discuss this. Let’s get the materials we need and get started.

2nd stage: (20 minutes) Now let’s put our projects/drawings on display for all to see and discuss.

Questions for discussion :

- Do you like the result or not from your child’s perspective?
- Would you like something different?
- Are what you are doing now connected to these perspectives?

Variation: We suggest that they draw themselves as they imagine themselves after 5 years. Who is he with, what is he like, where is he and what is he doing?

Meeting 27: Parent group assessment (Duration 20 minutes).

Purpose: Evaluation and feedback of this experience

Materials: A4 paper

Instructions: We ask the parents to write anonymously on a sheet that we give them in one column what they liked and in another what they didn't like and at the end, at the bottom of the page, suggestions/thoughts etc.

³³ The last meeting intentionally has enough “free” time because very often in parent schools there are topics from previous meetings that have not been totally covered and they choose to discuss them in the last meeting

³⁴ Variation of the exercise “After 20 years” by Archontakis & Filippou, (2003), p.204.

We explain to them that this evaluation helps us in terms of content for future interventions in similar structures.

It is suggested that the same evaluation be done by the coordinators to KEMEA/EETAA so that they can have a feedback of this model phase of the program.

Activity 28: Closing group meeting (Duration 20 minutes).³⁵

Purpose: Group closure

Materials: Small or A4 papers and a box or alternatively a larger cardboard.

Instructions:

We suggest that everyone, with a sentence, or with a drawing (if they don't know how to write) capture on paper how they lived today's experience and the feeling they leave with. We will collect all the papers in the box and read them. The coordinators also participate. This is how we will close our meeting. Let's start.

Alternatively, everyone writes words, phrases or draws on a large piece of cardboard and at the end we photocopy it and distribute it to the participants as a souvenir, which they can keep in their toolbox.

We thank the parents for participating, sharing their thoughts, maintaining confidentiality and perhaps individually each for their contribution to the group.

³⁵ Filippou & Karantana, (2010), p.299.

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