

CS29: HMP & YOI PARC CHAPLAINCY

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Context

In 2010 HMP&YOI Parc, located in South Wales was in the middle of a large expansion project to construct new prisoner accommodation and facilities. The Director was establishing a powerful vision to create a purposeful rehabilitative environment based on a progressive prisoner journey through the prison. The building project enabled some of this vision to be realised because of the new and improved facilities, and the Director needed all of her staff to be part of making this vision a reality. The Chaplaincy Team had an important part to play because of the variety of work that they carried out at Parc in areas including safer custody, programme delivery and community engagement, as well as traditional faith services and pastoral care. They also had a large new Faith Centre to take on in November that year.

Prison Dialogue (PD) was asked by the Director to work with the Chaplaincy Team to prepare them to take on a proactive role in the future of Parc. Chaplaincy Teams are diverse groups of passionate and committed people who are individual religious leaders in their own right. They are accountable to their own religious leaders outside of the prison, and report operationally to a manager within the prison. Structurally this is a challenging dynamic to integrate as an effective team, but there are huge advantages if you can do so.

Aims and Objectives

The aim was to establish a strong team that could lead a new Chaplaincy strategy and contribute to the Director's vision for Parc. There was history and diversity to understand and take into account to move forward together, and they would need a clear shared plan to progress.

Method: Activity, Participation and Duration

A two-day off-site meeting was planned for March 2010 at the PD Offices in Chipping Campden to give the team time to slow down their thinking, have high quality conversation, focus on themselves and spend time together in a more relaxed setting. Prior to that PD held individual meetings with all of the

members of the team and their Senior Manager to hear their interests and build a container for authentic dialogue.

Day 1 of the off-site focussed on me, personal hopes, fears, expectations, and us, how we work together as a team, using the Five Question Dialogue Pattern. The five questions were 1, What led you to join the Chaplaincy Team? 2. What has been your most positive or fulfilling experience in the team? 3. What has been your most difficult or futile experience in the team? 4. Why do you stay? 5. What will lead you to want to still be here in 3 years time? Everyone took a turn to answer the first question, then the second, and so on. There was a short conversation between each question, and a Dialogue at the end. The resulting impact was an understanding of each other, the ups and downs, what kept us going, and a picture of the whole team. The final question created a commitment and some concrete ideas for a future together. The Dialogic Modes were introduced (Monologue, Debate, Discussion, Conversation, Skilful Conversation, Dialogue, Generative Dialogue) and helpfully led into a Dialogue about the Chaplaincy's future.

Day 2 focussed on them, the work that the team carry out for staff and prisoners and how they will contribute to the Director's vision for the future of Parc. The Dialogic Leading Energies (Vision, Citizen, Performance, Wisdom) helped to frame the planning work and a framework for setting effective meetings were introduced to support their plans for improved communication. The day ended with requests and offers of support to each other.

PD attended a team meeting at the prison two months later to reinforce the off-site and was pleased to find that they used a check-in at the start.

Outcomes

The team developed a comprehensive action plan to support the direction of the prison. Team identity, teamwork and the ability to talk and think together improved. They worked together to plan and deliver the opening of their new Faith Centre. One guest at the Dedication event said : *" This has been a very powerful moving event in which all the team has collaborated and all have played a part in making this such a successful event. This bodes well for the future development of the team and the service they provide to the prisoners"*.

Learning

PD was encouraged by the take up of the Dialogue skills that were introduced within the context of an off-site team build and planning session. The team both individually and together learned how the use of Dialogue skills could help them talk and think together more effectively.

WORK IN PROGRESS