

THE ROLE OF A SOCIAL WORKER IN THE SECONDARY PREVENTION OF DRUG ADDICTION AT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES: THE CONTEXT OF A REHABILITATION GROUP AS A SECONDARY SOCIAL NETWORK

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Abstract

The article analyzes the scientific problem involving two questions: what is the role of a social worker in the secondary prevention of drug addiction of prisoners when mobilizing the secondary network (a rehabilitation group) and what is the influence of the secondary network on the changes of significant relations of prisoners? The search for the answers to these questions was performed by applying a semi-structured interview for data collection and the interpreted phenomenology for data analysis. The research data disclosed that in the secondary prevention of drug addiction at imprisonment places social work involves *work with a network*. Different roles of a social worker are performed in it as intervention: of a consultant, mediator, mobilizer and capacitor. Participation of prisoners in a rehabilitation group as the secondary prevention of drug addiction changes the important prisoners' relations with their relatives (relations improve, relatives start to trust in a prisoner, friendly relations are renewed) as well as with the employees of an imprisonment institution (employees show more trust in prisoners, prisoners do not react with anger to employees' anger) in a positive sense. The changes of prisoners participating in the rehabilitation depend on their motivation to change (which is not uniform); however, their motivation gets stronger when they participate in the rehabilitation. Personal features of the prisoners participating in a rehabilitation group change: their anger decreases, strategies of decision-making invoke rational deci-

sions, they start to believe in God's help, acquire artistic abilities, want to improve as persons, and the manifestations of their 'criminal' thinking diminish.

Keywords: integration of prisoners, experiences of prisoners, a rehabilitation group, the role of a social worker, social network.

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. The existing discourse of research of social networks is rather fragmentary in Lithuania. Mostly social networks are analyzed by scientists of education science, psychology, ethnology, sociology, information and communication. Jucevičienė (2007) discusses the concept of *network* by focusing on networks of learning in partnership; Janiūnienė (2007) analyzes the application of social networks within an organization for the search of information; Gvaldaitė (2004) discloses intervention of a social network as a method of social assistance. Antinienė et al (2004) defines social relations of Lithuanian students by using the matrix of a social network; Žiliukaitė (2004), Imbrasaitė (2004) and Matonytė (2004) explore social networks as a component of social capital. Foreign scientists analyze social networks from different perspectives as well. Skyrme (2000) analyzes networks among organizations in the context of knowledge management within organizations; Sonnenwald (1999), Choo (2002) analyze the importance of social networks for the information behaviour of a manager; Wenger (1998) explores the relationship of a person and the community in social networks; Putnam (2002) analyzes social networks by expanding the concept of social capital; Norris (2003) investigates the influence of Internet use on social networks as a component of social capital. However, there is a lack of scientific works that deal with social networks in the context of social work: the only studies worth mentioning are the works of Gvaldaitė (2005, 2006) and Švedaitė (2005), which disclose the possibilities of the application of social network intervention method in social work by focusing on the secondary prevention of drug addiction and the context of imprisonment institutions.

In Lithuania, the problem and prevention of drug addiction at imprisonment places are analyzed from limited perspectives; most obvious is the lack of focus on the fields of education and law and, especially, social work. The following aspects of drug addiction are analyzed in scientific studies: prevention of drug-taking at educational institutions (Grudytė 2002; Bulotaitė, 2004); drug addiction as a problem of society security as well as the role of the police in primary prevention of drug addiction (Kestenis, 2002); juridical and medical aspects of drug addiction (Čaplinskienė et al, 2002). The abovementioned pieces of research are limited to the methodologies of quantitative research. The topic of the present article is relevant both for social context in a broad sense and social work in a narrow sense because social workers implement different roles both in secondary prevention of drug addiction and in social networks (by forming them or when they are already functioning) as well as at imprisonment institutions.

Novelty of the research. What regards the *relevance of the topic*, the abovementioned researchers did not sufficiently consider the prevention of drug addiction at imprisonment places in the context of social work; therefore, the present research is new in the issue under investigation as well as its methodological approach (a qualitative research has been carried out). Original is the conceptual direction of the research problem as well: the conception of rehabilitation has been narrowed to the practical viewpoint—a rehabilitation group. In theory the latter has been integrated with the conceptions of social networking (Fratiglioni et al, 2000; Haythornthwaite, 2001; Tolsdorf, 2004) and secondary prevention (Barber, 1989; Winters et al, 2000; Williams, Chang, 2000; Elliott, 2005; Sullivan et al, 2005), and mainly related to two contexts, i.e. the prevention of drug addiction as a process (Peyrot and Smith, 2000) as well as an imprisonment place as a space of person's activity and life (Ryan et al, 2001).

Research problem. What regards the most important means of secondary prevention of drug addiction, the role of a social worker as well as his / her functions at imprisonment places is emphasized; moreover, social work with prisoners facing dependencies on drugs is regulated legally¹. Psychologists and specialists in other fields most frequently perform particular functions at imprisonment places; thus, the role of a social worker in the prevention of drug addiction is not clear. Drug-abusing prisoners live under isolation conditions; therefore, due to the separation from their primary network, a danger for their social network emerges. The environment of imprisonment places as closed systems

¹ The order by the Minister of Justice, the Republic of Lithuania, 'On Prevention of Drug Addiction and Enactment of the Conception of Narcotics Control at Imprisonment Places' No. 1R-27 on January 30, 2004. *Official Gazette*. 2004.;23(709).

is not favourable for the saturation of primary and secondary networks. According to Merkys et al (2002), controlled and narrowed social networks, insularity, isolation and alike are one of peculiarities. This prevents the renewal of broken relations that are important for a prisoner. A social worker has to be able to mobilize the relations important for a prisoner in striving for the change of prisoners in secondary prevention of drug addiction. Antinienė et al points out that the most important in applying prevention and integration of 'weak people' (prisoners, drug-addicted) is 'the work with a network' and 'the work within a network' (2004: 5). Gvaldaitė points out the role of a social worker in concentrating and enlivening the primary network, i.e. 'the relations that make person's history and that make for him / her a symbolic meaning and value' (2004: 3). The target of a social worker is to help people who have been already related by appreciable meaningful relations to meet as well as to encourage them to act for the benefit of a person who needs support. In this context **two questions forming the basis of the scientific problem discussed in this article** emerge: **1)** what is the role of a social worker in the secondary prevention of drug addiction of prisoners in mobilizing a secondary network (a rehabilitation group)? **2)** what is the influence of a secondary network on significant changes of prisoners' (rehabilitation group's) relations? Thus, the **focus of the present research** is the role of a social worker in the secondary prevention of drug addiction at imprisonment places, while the **aim** of the research is to disclose the roles of a social worker in mobilizing a rehabilitation group as a secondary social network by specifying the experiences of prisoners in their participation in social networks as secondary prevention of drug addiction.

1. Roles of a Social Worker within a Social Network as Intervention

Social sciences treat a social network as interdependent relations based on the pursuit of corporate activity (Jucevičienė, 2007). A social network can also be analyzed as an integration system, a communication network, a strategy used by individuals, a form of social relations (Gvaldaitė, 2004). Such a conception of a social network could serve as a starting point for society expression, for example, the establishment of non-governmental organizations which can contribute to the rendering of social assistance due to the immediate relation with a client or, in this case, a participant. In social psychology (Suslavičius, 1998; Suslavičius and Valickas, 1999; Suslavičius, 2000) and educational science (Jucevičienė, 2007), a social network is defined as a network of help and support for emotionally close people. Troll (in Lemme, 2003) defines a social network as a wide circle of interpersonal relations surrounding a particular person and including family members, relatives and other people (friends and neighbours). Kahn and Antonucci (in Lemme, 2003) present the conception of the development of social relations, which is called 'the model of escort', by ascribing for a social network not only immediate people (such as a spouse, parents, friends) but also other people important for a person (Lemme, 2003). This viewpoint is close to the model of social network intervention, which is formed in the practice of social work.

By applying social network intervention, a social worker performs different roles: a) *a social worker-moderator* acts between a client and his / her primary natural network by putting most efforts to consolidate the client's access to necessary resources (Umbrei, 1999); b) *a social worker-mobilizer* engages persons of formal and non-formal support in a collective work by empowering persons to act by themselves (Payerhin, 1996); c) *a social worker-capacitator* finds ways to empower clients to use available resources by helping them to become more independent in solving their problems and adjusting to the present social system (Frans, 1993).

2. Characteristics of a Rehabilitation Group as the Context of Secondary Social Network

Self-support groups are also treated as rehabilitation groups, to which the closeness of participants' relations as well as the encouragement of responsibility of group members is characteristic. Gvaldaitė (2004) distinguishes the following characteristics of self-support groups: *a small group* facilitates mutual identification and gives a possibility for all members to actively participate; *parity leadership* makes premises to consider the contribution of all participants of a group; *mutual assistance* means that every group member is to be active and to help a person who finds himself / herself in a difficult situation. The activity of rehabilitation groups refers to principles of voluntariness and solidarity, and its participants are both providers and receivers of benefit (Elliott, 2005). In rehabilitation groups, self-support is also based on the principle of *subsidiary*, when the dependence of a client on a social worker is not created; it allows clients to not feel alone and helpless in solving their problems and

helps to find relations with the people who face the same difficulties (Petružytė et al, 2004). Family members of people suffering from dependence become *emotionally ill*; they acquire indirect dependence (Braslauskienė, 2004). Indirect dependence is the disease of the loss of one's individuality, personality, which turns into an emotional, social, and sometimes physical dependence on another person (Bulotaitė, 2004). Attendance of rehabilitation self-support groups can help family members to get free from such a dependence.

Because of a closed system of imprisonment places, a social worker faces some difficulties in initiating self-support groups of relatives within them. However, a social worker, when working with prisoners, could cooperate with social workers outside imprisonment places in order to be able to initiate the activity of self-support groups of relatives or to directly contact with self-support groups of relatives of the people addicted to alcohol and drugs which are already functioning in freedom (Woititz, 1999). A social worker, having estimated the relations of a prisoner with the primary and secondary network, will choose who to include into a support network by himself / herself: a prisoner's family, friends, society, religious communities, self-support groups or other relations important for a prisoner.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Sample

When performing the research (in 2008), non-probability criterion sampling when sample units are chosen from population referring to the criteria determined by a researcher (Rupšienė, 2007) was applied because such a method of sampling is efficient when collecting qualitative data (Bitinas et al, 2008). The research participants-prisoners were chosen according to the following criteria: (1) serving their sentence at a penitentiary; (2) ex-drug-takers / drug addicts; (3) participating in a rehabilitation group of the prevention of drug-addiction / in the community of prisoners within a clean zone. Ten male-respondents participated in the research.

Table 1. Characteristics of research participants

No.	Age	Time till the release from imprisonment	Family status	Previous experience in drug addiction	Experience in a rehabilitation group
1.	30	4 years	Lives in a second marriage, has a daughter	15 years	1 year
2.	36	4.10 years	Not married, no children	19 years	1 year
3.	32	2.9 years	Married, has a son	12 years	1.3 years
4.	28	5 years	Not married, no children	Does not name himself as drug-addicted even though uses drugs, but not constantly; does not have relationships with drug addicted prisoners	2 years
5.	39	1 year	Married twice, divorced; has a son	14 years	4 years
6.	29	5 months	Not married, the partner is dead, has a son	8 years	11 months
7.	38	1 year	Not married, has a partner	16 years	10 months
8.	28	8 months	Divorced, has a son	12 years	10 months
9.	31	2 months	Not married	7 years	2 months
10.	31	2.2 years	Not married	2 years, dependence on alcohol – 14 years	6 months

3.2. Methods

A semi-structured interview was chosen for data collection. When applying a semi-structured interview, a researcher freely changes the order of questions, puts additional questions (Rupšienė, 2007). The advantage is that the results obtained during an interview are thorough and systemized though the interview is conducted in a form of a non-formal conversation (Bitinas et al, 2008).

The data analysis was performed by applying interpretative phenomenology. This method allows a researcher to define human experiences related to the studied phenomenon as it is understood and defined by the research participant himself / herself (Žydzūnaitė, 2007), by retreating and dissociating 'from anticipatory attitudes, premises that the analysis would be resumptive and referring to it new definitions and conceptions would be developed' (Bitinas et al, 2008: 64). The data analysis was performed by referring to the interpretive phenomenology (Willig, 2003, in Bitinas et al, 2008): a) *multiple reading of a text*: important places of the interview text (associations, metaphors, questions, generalized statements, etc.) which emerge during the first readings are marked; b) *formulation of topics and ascription of labels*: elements characterizing each part of the text are marked, titles of conceptual topics are formulated; c) *preparation of the structure for the analysis*: groups of concepts are formed by writing out the topics (distinguished in the second stage) and reflecting their interrelationships, entitlements are assigned to the groups of topics; d) *formation of a generalized table*: the table involves structured groups topics that correspond to the respondent's experience related to the phenomenon being explored as well as the citations which illustrate every topic; a summary of the results is presented in a narrative style.

3.3. Ethics

The research participants were acquainted with the topic, content and aim of the research. Each participant gave oral agreement to the recording of his interview into an audiotape. After receiving the agreement, the interview time, place, duration and proceeding were settled with an assistant manager of the Department of Social Rehabilitation. The administration of the penitentiary required to get written agreements of the prisoners who were to participate in the research. Thus, the principle of the right to get precise information, which is pointed out by Žydzūnaitė (2007), was followed: before getting the agreement of the respondents to participate in a research, it is necessary to explain who carries out the research and what its aims are. When speaking with prisoners, confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed by informing the participants that the information they presented would be used only for the research aims and that neither the name (place) of the penitentiary nor the names of research participants would be identified. Following the request of the administration, an application letter to perform the research was written by assuring that the confidentiality of the institution would be maintained. Research participants were acquainted with the research expedience by explaining that the research questions would help to investigate the prevention of prisoners' drug addiction by participation in social networks in the context of social work because so far the analysis of the prevention of drug addiction has been limited to jurisprudence. The research was explained to be advantageous for the participants themselves (who took place in the secondary prevention (rehabilitation) of drug addiction) by pointing out that the results of the research could be usefully applied practically in the secondary prevention of drug addiction at imprisonment places. Thus, several principles of research ethics were guaranteed: goodwill, respect for person's dignity, justice and security of undefended groups of respondents.

3.4. Research Tool

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of six open questions; however, the present article is focused of the discussion of the results related to two particular questions. The main questions were supplemented with additional ones, which emerged during the interview.

Table 2. Characteristics of the research instrument

<i>A question of the interview</i>	<i>Objectives related to the specific interview question</i>
What stimulated to participate in the rehabilitation? How did your relations with your relatives, other prisoners, and employees of the penitentiary change?	To identify the factors influencing prisoners' motivation to participate in rehabilitation as well as the impact of the secondary network on the changes in the relations important for prisoners.
What does the participation of a social worker in a rehabilitation group mean?	To highlight the attitudes of prisoners towards the role of a social worker in mobilizing the secondary social network—a rehabilitation group.

4. Results

4.1. Influence of the Secondary Network on the Change of the Motivation of the Prisoners Participating in the Prevention of Drug Addiction

The topic: motivation of prisoners to participate in rehabilitation. The motives of prisoners to participate in rehabilitation are internal and external: interest in the offer of friends or acquaintances by seeing the proofs regarding successful cases (when a person stopped using drugs); search for a new experience; the experience of compulsory detoxification at an imprisonment place; the experience of inner confusion and the need for help to overcome it; moral crisis stimulating a person to change; strong motivation to change already before rehabilitation after having stopped drug abuse and having realized the difficulties in making positive progress at an imprisonment place; links with the future, i.e. a wish to distance oneself from drug addicted friends, or a wish to get to rehabilitation in freedom in order not to relapse.

The topic: intensification of the motivation of prisoners to change when participating in rehabilitation. The results of the research show that the motivation of prisoners to not take drugs increases due to their participation in rehabilitation. It depends on different factors: the experience of the miraculous help of God to abandon drugs; reading of spiritual and psychological books; the change of the prisoners participating in rehabilitation, which strengthens their hope to abandon drugs; relationship with their relatives (for example, a fear to lose one's own family, a wish to create a better future for one's children). Almost all respondents give priority to the change of their internal, personal motivation. Sometimes a prisoner abandons drugs because of the fear to lose good living conditions at the imprisonment place. The wish to overcome psychological dependence shows the strengthening of prisoners' motivation.

The topic: a rehabilitation group as space for prisoners' advancement. The prisoners point out that environment is of high importance for their change. Group support (the support of prisoners experienced in rehabilitation and other people) helps not to relapse; within a group one learns to solve own problems without coercion. According to the respondents, a rehabilitation group is the space to change the way of thinking by following a clear direction, acquiring knowledge about dependences and the state of mind necessary for changes. This influences the change of prisoners' life goals, increases participation in learning processes and encourages taking responsibility for their environment.

The topic: the change of a prisoner's relation with other prisoners when participating in a rehabilitation group. The prisoners who participate in rehabilitation notice the changes in their relations with other prisoners because of the openness based on trust in each other; the understanding based on the support in the process of abandoning drugs and the ability to adjust to each other; friendliness and humaneness based on mutual acceptance; sincerity (admitting own guilt and apologizing each other); the fear based on peradventures regarding the opinion of others; disappeared non-statutory relationships. The conception of goodwill changes from *obedience to another person* to the conception of *acceptance as well as openness to another person*.

The topic: the change of prisoner's relations with his relatives when participating in a rehabilitation group. The research shows that the relations of the prisoners with their relatives improve—trust of the relatives in the prisoner's change increases, while their relations become more friendly.

The topic: personal change of a prisoner when participating in a rehabilitation group. When participating in the rehabilitation, the prisoners feel less anger, their ways of decision-making change. Most prisoners state that they started to believe in God's help, which enables to make right decisions and to live without drugs. The prisoners point out experiencing joy after abandoning drugs; they want to improve by analyzing own and other people's actions. What is more, the results show that the research participants acquired the experience of communication with people, which they want to use in serving others as volunteers. This can be regarded as an impact of a self-support group.

The topic: the change of prisoners' relations with penitentiary employees when participating in rehabilitation. The research results disclose that due to the participation in rehabilitation, the prisoners' relations with penitentiary employees change positively. Greater trust of the employees in the prisoners, which manifest itself in less control in rehabilitation than in a local sector, is observed. The results also show that the prisoners change: they know how to distance from employees' anger by not reacting in the same way; they strive for good things regardless of the employees' humiliation and distrust in prisoners.

4.2. The Role of a Social Worker in Mobilizing the Secondary Network

The topic: the role of a social worker in a rehabilitation group. The prisoners distinguish the following roles of a social worker in a rehabilitation group: a) *of a social consultant* who carries out the programmes of changing prisoners' thinking, render the knowledge necessary for their changes, support prisoners psychologically; b) *of a mediator* who performs social work with a team of employees and specialists in initiating groups of 'anonymous drug addicts', collaborates with the volunteers (former drug addicts) and supports prisoners; c) *of a mobilizer* who induces prisoners' empowerment to act by doing good things and implements psychological support of prisoners; d) *of a capacitor* who encourages prisoners to use their internal powers to do good, to fight with evil (empowerment in this sense is very important for prisoners because they are dependent on the decisions taken by other people or the administration and they cannot feel able to control their life and act independently).

Conclusions

- The conception of social network intervention based on the theory of social systems, which refers to the systemic viewpoint on a client and his / her problems, is important for social work. The model of social network intervention is also understood as a social assistance network because, after the analysis of a person's social network, possible sources of social assistance become evident. Participants of a social network can provide different assistance, perform different functions and roles, thus, the density of the network determines greater possibilities to meet different needs of a client. Different roles of a social worker can be distinguished in social network intervention: a consultant, a mediator, a mobilizer and a capacitor. This means that a social worker helps a client to get necessary services by strengthening his / her access to lacking resources; mobilizes social networks by creating new services, programmes as well as coordinating them; enables a client to be independent from support and the problem so that he / she can 'move' from individuality to community and from community to independence. Empowerment involves individual empowerment of a client when a social worker stops dominating and controlling him / her as well as the enlargement of community or political power in order to strengthen the client's life control.

- In the secondary prevention of drug addiction at imprisonment places, social work involves *work with the network* by correcting and reconstructing, mobilizing and concentrating it, forming new or maintaining the same networks, because the structure of a prisoners' network is often infringed due to isolation: it is changed, not functioning or there is no relationship between the primary and secondary networks. Thus it is important for a social worker to perform the following steps of network intervention: to find a competitive person in the network who is ready to cooperate; to renew broken or to restore existing relations; to convert the client into a person helping others; to encourage the clients' self-support, to cooperate with volunteers; to involve organizations (non-governmental) of the third sector.

- The participation of the prisoners in a rehabilitation group as the secondary prevention of drug addiction changes the relations important for them. The prisoner's relations with his relatives (the relations improve, the relatives start to trust in the prisoner, ex-friendly relations renew) and with the employees of the penitentiary (the employees trust in the prisoners more, the prisoners do not react with anger to employees' anger) change. The changes of prisoners participating in rehabilitation largely depends on their motivation to change, which is not uniform (some come to the rehabilitation influenced by external factors, others by internal ones); however, participation in rehabilitation encourages an increase in motivation. Not all prisoners experience positive changes in the rehabilitation group (they are closed; do not trust in others, do not want to work). Personal features of the prisoners participating in the rehabilitation group: their anger decreases, strategies for decision-making refer to rational solutions, they start believing in God's help, acquire artistic abilities, want to develop, as well as the manifestations of their 'criminal' thinking diminish.

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SOCIALINIO DARBUOTOJO VAIDMUO ANTRINĖJE NARKOMANIJOS PREVENCIJOJE LAISVĖS ATĖMIMO VIETOSE: REABILITACINĖ GRUPĖ, KAIP ANTRINIS SOCIALINIS TINKLAS

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Santrauka

Pristatomo tyrimo objektas yra *socialinio darbuotojo vaidmuo antrinėje narkomanijos prevencijoje laisvės atėmimo vietose*. Jam tirti išskeltas konkretus tikslas – *apibūdinti socialinio darbuotojo vaidmenį mobilizuojant rehabilitacinę grupę kaip antrinį socialinį tinklą specifikuojant nuteistųjų patirtis dalyvaujant socialiniuose tinkluose, kaip antrinėje narkomanijos prevencijoje*.

Analizuojama mokslinė problema apima du klausimus: Koks yra socialinio darbuotojo vaidmuo nuteistųjų antrinėje narkomanijos prevencijoje mobilizuojant antrinį tinklą (reabilitacinę grupę)? Koks yra antrinio tinklo (reabilitacinės grupės) poveikis reikšmingų nuteistųjų ryšių pokyčiams? Atsakymų į šiuos klausimus ieškota taikant pusiau struktūruotą interviu duomenims rinkti ir interpretuojamąją fenomenografiją duomenims analizuoti. Atlikus tyrimą atskleista, jog antrinėje narkomanijos prevencijoje laisvės atėmimo vietose socialinis darbas apima *darbą su tinklu* (angl. network). Atliekami skirtingi socialinio darbuotojo vaidmenys: konsultanto, tarpininko, mobilizuotojo ir įgalintojo (angl. empowerer). Nuteistųjų dalyvavimas rehabilitacinėje grupėje, kaip antrinėje narkomanijos prevencijoje, pozityviąja prasme keičia jiems reikšmingus ryšius su artimaisiais (santykiai pagerėja, artimieji pradeda tikėti nuteistuoju, atgaivinami buvę draugiški santykiai), įkalnimo įstaigos darbuotojais (darbuotojai labiau pasitiki nuteistaisiais, nuteistieji piktai nereaguoja į darbuotojų pyktį). Nuteistųjų, dalyvaujančių reabilitacijoje, pokyčiai priklauso nuo jų motyvacijos keistis, kuri nėra vienoda, tačiau dalyvaujant reabilitacijoje ji stiprėja. Kinta nuteistųjų, dalyvaujančių reabilitacinėje grupėje, asmeniniai bruožai: sumažėja pyktis, problemų priėmimo strategijos remiasi racionaliais sprendimais, įtiki Dievo pagalba, įgyja meninių gebėjimų, nori tobulėti, menkėja „nusikaltėliškasis“ mąstymas.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: nuteistųjų integracija, nuteistųjų patirtys, rehabilitacinė grupė, socialinio darbuotojo vaidmuo, socialinis tinklas.