Sustainable Health and Justice: Connecting Nature, Wellbeing and Inclusion

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In this session...

➢ Exploring biophilia: nature, health and wellbeing connections in the prison context;
➢ Present prisons as a setting for health
➢ A rationale for using horticulture to support prisoners with more complex needs;
➢ An overview of the Greener on the Outside for Prisons (GOOP) Programme;
➢ Present some observations from a female prison engaged with GOOP;
➢ Takeaway messages.
"Health is created and lived by people within the **settings of their everyday life**; where they learn, work, play, and love" (The Ottawa Charter, 1986).

Prison as a setting for health?

Settings of every day life

- Communities
- Schools/Universities
- Villages/Cities
- Workplaces
- Hospitals
- Prisons

"Health is created and lived by people within the **settings of their everyday life**; where they learn, work, play, and love" (The Ottawa Charter, 1986).
Healthy Settings: What?

“The settings approach means combining healthy policies, in a healthy environment with complementary education programmes and initiatives.”


“The settings approach facilitates health promotion interventions to focus more on the broader determinants of health rather than simply addressing individual and/or population behavioural risk factors.”

Health Service Executive (2011) *The Health Promotion Strategic Framework*
Healthy Settings: Why?

- Whilst important, health services are only one factor influencing health – and have traditionally focused on ‘illness’
- Health determined by range of economic, environmental, organisational and cultural circumstances – which have direct and indirect influences
- Health promotion requires investment in the places in which people live their lives

Source: Adapted from Grossman & Scala, 1993
Prison- a health opportunity?

➢ Under UK health policy, and international human rights policies, prisoners and other people legally detained by the Criminal Justice System, are entitled to the same quality and range of healthcare services as those received by the general public (HMPS/NHS executive, 1999; Council of Europe, 1998; United Nations, 1990).

➢ Therefore, detention settings can represent an opportunity to positively engage with people often classified as ‘hard to reach’ and identify and manage health problems.

➢ Furthermore, because most people in detention settings spend the greater part of their life in the wider community, health gains made inside can have positive ‘ripple’ effects on their families and wider social contacts.
Making the Case…

➢ Poor physical and mental health is strongly associated with offending behaviour

➢ One third of the prisoner population is overweight or obese

➢ Prisoners have poor eating habits and a poor understanding re: healthy diet

➢ Prisoners have a poor understanding of the benefits of physical activity

➢ 90% of prisoners have a mental health or drug dependency problem or both

Viewing Nature:

• Enhance recovery rates (hospitals))
• Decrease stress levels (prison, workplace)
• Enhance concentration, performance (university)
• Reduce reported illness and headaches (workplace)
• Decrease crime and fear of crime (public housing)

Contact with Plants:

• Increase community cohesion (community gardens)
• Restoration and recovery/healing (habitat regeneration)
• Exercise/physical activity (various – participatory)
• Social capital (community gardens, retirement communities)
• Mental/emotional wellbeing (various)
A supervised programme of exercise can be equally effective as antidepressants in treating mild to moderate depression (Halliwell, 2005; Richardson et al, 2005);

People living near green space experience fewer health complaints/better physical and mental health than those living in an urban environment (de Vries et al, 2003);

Nature Deficit Disorder highlights how lack of contact with nature can have negative impacts on people in terms of their broad wellbeing (Louv, 2005);

Prisoners in Michigan whose cells overlooked farmland and trees had 24 per cent fewer sick visits than those in cells facing the yard (Moore, 1981);

Physical health is directly linked to improved mental health because it improves mood and self-esteem, reduces stress, enriches quality of life and reduces vulnerability to depression.
Behind the Wall....... ‘A World within a World’
Greener on the Outside for Prisoner [GOOP]
‘Greener on the Outside for Prisons’ [GOOP] is an innovative prison-based horticultural programme. Proving an effective mechanism to engage prisoners with their health and wellbeing as well as connecting them with the natural environment.

A whole systems approach acknowledging that prisoner’s health cannot be addressed in isolation of the health of the general population – there is a constant interchange between prison and community.
Greener on the Outside for Prisons

➢ Provide opportunities to increase physical activity levels through practical activities
➢ Increase knowledge and understanding of food and the food growing process
➢ Increase measures to build competence and encourage learning, training and employment
➢ Build capacity to increase health literacy
➢ Address the poor lifetime employability prospects of those with few qualifications and skills
➢ Build social and interpersonal skills and competence to maintain family relationships
➢ Promote models of good citizenship for all participants for their future roles in society
➢ Develop collective, collaborative and sustainable approaches to delivery.
Creating a Learning Environment
GOOP:
More than just gardens...

A WHOLE PRISON APPROACH
‘I’ve lost a lot of weight and I feel fitter than I did when I came in’

‘To interact with the public and actually sell stuff to them was quite good…I enjoyed that’

‘I’m sleeping a lot better’

‘I’ve learnt such a lot about growing…’

‘…I don’t even see that fence...to me, most of the time…I forget where I am’

‘all the stuff you learn you, can take with you’

‘I wish I’d have done this at school...it has been the making of me...I absolutely love it’

‘I didn’t really like veg but now I grow it and see what it does, I know a lot of veg’

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Women in Prison
Women in Prison: Why?

➢ The number of women in prison in England and Wales stood at 4,020 on 7th July 2017. This rise meant that the women's prison population exceeded 4,000 for the first time in almost half a decade.
➢ A total of 8,447 women were sent to prison in 2016.
➢ Women entering prison are more likely to have been imprisoned for non-violent offences.
➢ Women in prison are highly likely to be victims as well as offenders. More than half (53%) report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child.
➢ 37% have attempted suicide at some point in their lives;

➢ In 2010, there were a total of 26,983 incidents of self-harm in prisons, with 6,639 prisoners recorded as having injured themselves. Women accounted for 47% of all incidents of self harm despite representing just 5% of the total prison population;
➢ There were 95 self-inflicted deaths of women prisoners between 1990 and 2011; 12 in 2016.
Women in Prison: Why?

➢ Women in custody are five times more likely to have a mental health concern than women in the general population;
➢ 46% of women in prison report having suffered domestic violence. (80% of the women WIP works with have reported experiencing domestic violence);
➢ 53% of women in prison report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood;
➢ 31% women in prison have spent time in local authority care as a child;
➢ 6% of all women in prison have no previous convictions;
➢ Women serve prison sentences for minor offences; most women entering prison under sentence (84%) have committed a non-violent offence and theft offences accounted for nearly half (48%) of all custodial sentences given to women in 2016;
➢ Most women entering prison serve short sentences. 70% of sentenced women entering prison in 2016 were serving six months or less.
THE FUTURE
Future plans are to see a wild meadow in an L shape which will lie on the edge of the wildlife area and develop the new Reflection Garden which is situated at the back of the chapel and laundry.

The garden is designed with a figure of 2 pathway with a touchscreen which represents the different choices we face in life. There will be a stream constructed out of blue slate under a wooden bridge, an information station representing your journey through life’s new beginnings. An up-to-date with weather zone will represent time to contemplate the past, present and future. There will be a quiet area where prisoners and staff who have experienced loss, can find some time to thoughtfully reflect. Memory to be kept simple yet thought provoking, a gateway for understanding create vibrations for these.

Allotments for Young Offenders
The young offenders have been working very hard preparing their own allotments. They have used reclaimed soil, stone and time to make healthy plots. They have been growing flowers, rhubarb, peppers and rhubarb to come away. They have also been growing redcurrants which grow to the height of the polytunnel. Tomatoes were also grown in one of the polytunnel which the young offenders have immense pride in. On average there are 6-8 young offenders working in the allotment area at any single time.

BEE KEEPING PROJECT
The Bee Keeping Project started during the winter of 2009. The bee keeping course was held with Graham Royal (Founder of The Charlton Bee Society) from November 2009 through to the end of February 2010. A total of 16 people were trained made up of staff and prisoners. As soon as the hives were identified the 25-30 hives began work to populate the area where the hives would be situated and a pen was set up. The area around the prison in May 2009. The first queen has been named Elizabeth and the new queen is called Ann. The first extraction of honey from 2010 was given to HM Prison Forest Whitlock (October 2010). The hives were sold within 24 hours to staff with the money being put back into the garden for regeneration.

WE ARE WINNERS
The project won the 5th H. Local Heroes award for the project of the year (2009) second place in the Waste Management Awards for Excellence (2013). Richard Largy has an individual commendation in the Westminster Rally (2010) and Governor Sally and Lita. Every single metric made food and alcohol consumed from the Kitchen Trust which will result in Buckingham Palace.

www.healthysettings.org.uk
Skills – Numeracy and Literacy
Nurturing...

‘I look forward to coming to work, they’re my babies (*plants*) - I can’t be off work sick or anything, they need watering and feeding’.
A View from the Glass House...

‘when I come to the gardens I feel like I’ve been away from the jail a bit as well.’
Through a Different Lens…

• ‘This [being on the gardens] has changed my life this has…’

• ‘Its sorted my head out…I never looked at my life before and being on here [gardens] I have’

• ‘You get to see things...I saw a butterfly today, it was beautiful...you see things change, the seasons...I’ve never noticed that before’
Quotes From the Field...or rather, the Polytunnel...

➢ ‘I wouldn’t be able to do my sentence if it wasn’t for the gardens...’

➢ It’s an amazing place to be in prison...you cant see the fence...it would kill me to go back to another prison...like the high secure one I came from’.

➢ ‘I’ve learned loads up here (polytunnel/gardens), since I’ve been here...some people never have the chance to try stuff...’

➢ ‘I would do anything to be on the gardens at the weekend, time passes more quickly, better to be focused on a job....something interesting’.

➢ ‘it’s the variety I like...I’ve never dreaded coming to work’.
Future Directions
Takeaway Messages...

- Systemic
- Inclusion
- Justice
- Participation
- Comprehensive
- Holistic
- Whole
- Equity
- System
- Sustainability
- Empowerment
- Salutogenic
- Ecological