



Community Based Health & First Aid in Irish Prisons An Overview

Introduction

Community Based Health & First Aid (CBHFA) *in Action* was originally designed by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to be facilitated globally in communities in a simple and flexible way through the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society of each of the 190 countries where the Movement is present

During the five year period 2009 - 2014, Community Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) was introduced into all 14 prisons in Ireland and was the first country in the world to adapt this programme to a prison context. This was made possible through a partnership between the Irish Red Cross, the Irish Prison Service and the Education and Training Board. Groups of up to 24 'Special Status' Irish Red Cross inmate volunteers train in CBHFA during weekly sessions over a 4-6 month period in each of the prisons and actively contribute towards a healthier & safer prison environment as a result of their CBHFA volunteering.

CBHFA training, see Modules page 5, is delivered by teachers & nurses and other staff employed within the prison and having completed the community assessment module within the CBHFA programme, volunteers with the support of staff, work on a peer to peer basis raising awareness and implementing projects aimed at improving the overall health and wellbeing of prisoners in their community. Their activities are managed through each Prison's Community Health Action Committee which consists of representatives from all partners within the prison and the volunteers themselves and meet on a monthly basis, see Irish Implementation Guide page 24.

In advance of starting the programme in each prison for the first time, there is a one-day CBHFA Sensitization training workshop provided for the Red Cross team who will be working with the volunteers. This gives them an understanding of the programme methodology and content.

Impact

The programme benefits the prisoner community daily plus staff and families of prisoners. Over 1000 Irish Red Cross volunteer inmates have been recruited since 2009 and roughly half of these completed the full course and graduated. The following is an example of projects promoted by IRC volunteer inmates in the different prisons with illustrations of some of their work:

IRC inmate volunteers provide instructions on good hand washing techniques and in many prisons a colour coded bucket & mop system has been introduced contributing to cleanliness and prevention of infection. They complete an accredited First Aid Course and carry out practical demonstrations around the prisons on CPR and the use of a Defibrillator



- Projects on TB, Seasonal Flu, Winter Vomiting Bug, Nutrition, Blood Pressure Checking and Cholesterol Awareness.

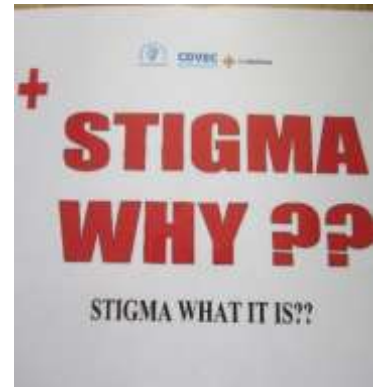
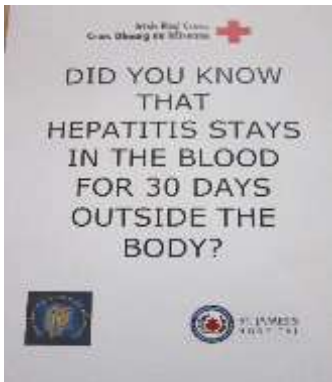
- Following Health Services Executive (HSE) training, volunteers facilitate Smoking Cessation Courses with good success.
- Information leaflets and support to new prisoners, How to Say No to Bullying.
- Awareness of Healthy Lifestyles, Non Communicable Diseases, Mental Health and Wellbeing Campaigns are ongoing



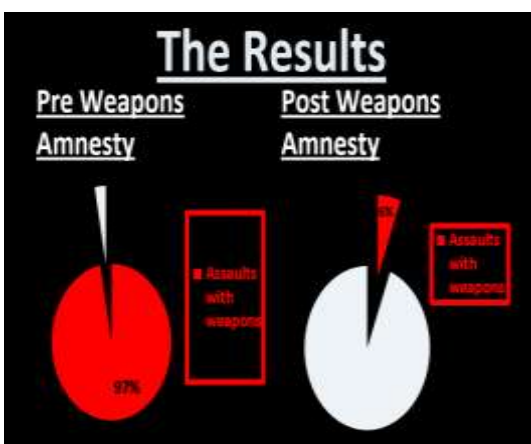
Sun Safe Campaign in association with Irish Cancer Society



- HepC, HIV & AIDs Awareness and Anti Stigma Campaigns are promoted by volunteers with voluntary mass screening taking place in some prisons linked to St. James & Mater Hospitals and prison healthcare staff. Between 55% and 75% of inmates have presented for testing.



- Since running ongoing Weapons Amnesty Projects in a number of prisons, assisting management with an advocacy role through the volunteers, the results have shown over 90% reduction in cuttings with a weapon and 50% less assaults.



- CBHFA volunteer inmates have also assisted staff in designing a peer led 2-day Culture of Non Violence Course for Prison Communities which is associated with the Principles & Values Department of the International Federation of the Red Cross
- Overdose Prevention Programmes in association with Merchants Quay Ireland are facilitated by trained volunteers and other drugs related projects.



Outcome & Evaluations

There is noticeable improvement in trust, communication and relationships amongst prisoners and with staff. The concurrent activities of classroom learning AND the implementation of projects ensures programme impact in the community.

Lessons Learned workshops are facilitated yearly to give CBHFA teams from each prison an opportunity to meet and share projects, learning and personal experiences, see Indicators of Personal Change page 6.

Volunteers provide evidence of impact about their work within their local community by conducting and analysing survey information. There is an awareness of the Red Cross and its Principles that was previously unknown.

Awards for CBHFA in Irish Prisons

- Irish Red Cross Special Status Volunteers Award in 2016, 2017, 2018
- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) 2015 Volunteering Development Award
- Irish Institute of Training & Development Awards 2013, Winner of National Training Award
- Irish Healthcare Awards November 2012, Commendation Award for Best Public Health Initiative
- Bionmis Irish Healthcare Awards May 2012, Won Best Health Promotion Project
- World Health Organisation Award in 2011 for Best Practice in Prison Health

Prison to Community

Following the achievements of the objectives of the first strategic planning period. The goal for the next few years is to strengthen the CBHFA programme in each prison whilst at the same time support the Prison to Community Phase and the reintegration back into society of CBHFA inmate volunteers. In this way, they can continue to volunteer in very specific contexts that best use their training and experience gained as an inmate Irish Red Cross CBHFA volunteer.



Footnote: The Irish Red Cross agrees to have prisoners become special status Irish Red Cross (IRC) Volunteer Inmates within a prison. This is on the condition that on release from prison, if the volunteer wishes to continue volunteering with the IRC, they must apply in the normal way as a member of the public through membership application, and Garda (police) vetting forms. It will then depend on the nature of the criminal offence what action is taken in this regard.

For further CBHFA information & videos see Irish Red Cross website www.redcross.ie/cbhfa or contact
Carrie McGowan, Irish Red Cross CBHFA Programme Manager, Email CMcGowan@redcross.ie
Graham Betts-Symonds, Irish Prison Service CBHFA Programme Director & IFRC CBHFA Master Trainer,
Email GXBetts-Symonds@IRISHPRISONS.IE

Community Based Health & First Aid

Summary of Modules & Topics

Modules 1: 4 topics. The Red Cross in Action Volunteer

- The International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's history and organizational structure, Emblems, Seven Fundamental Principles, National Red Cross Society and Community Based Health & First Aid (CBHFA) *in action* volunteer.

Module 2: 5 topics. Community Mobilization

- Communication and Building Relationships, volunteers identify groups and meet with potential partners for the CBHFA programme, implement an awareness-raising meeting to inform the community, promote CBHFA *in action* activities.

Module 3: 8 topics. Assessment-based Action in My Community (see page 21 for further details)

- Assessment of the community by volunteers through direct observation and Community Mapping, Seasonal Calendar, Community Focus Group Discussions, Interviews of Key Informants to identify and prioritize health, first aid and safety issues. Develop a CBHFA action plan, learn specific skills and knowledge based on needs identified during the assessment, report on activities in the community.

Module 4: 20 topics. Basic First Aid Course

- Volunteers learn how to assess, plan, implement and evaluate first aid for various injuries and illnesses and practice communicating injury prevention messages with members of their community.

Module 5: 2 topics. Health & Mental Health

- Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing, Psychosocial supportive communication.

Module 6: 3 topics. Community Mobilization in Emergency Health Response

- Major emergencies and how that may affect the community, preventing and responding to epidemics.

Module 7: 8 topics. Health Promotion, Disease Prevention & Communicable Diseases

- Health promotion including Nutrition, Acute Respiratory Infections, Tuberculosis, Influenza, Diarrhoea and Dehydration. Disease Prevention through Immunization and Vaccinations Campaigns, Safe water, Hygiene and Sanitation. HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections, Reducing Stigma and Discrimination. Volunteers support the community to adopt healthy behaviours.

Module 8: 5 topics. Healthy Lifestyles

- Non communicable diseases such as Cancer, Diabetes, Chronic Respiratory Infection and Cardiovascular Disease. Assessing NCD risk factors and healthy lifestyles action planning.

Module 9: 2 topics. Overdose Prevention & Violence Prevention

- Volunteers learn about Overdose Prevention highlighting the dangers of taking drugs.
- Preventing violence through partaking in A Culture of Non-Violence & Peace Workshop.

The projects that are undertaken by the Irish Red Cross Inmate Volunteer either emerge from the Community Assessment in Module 3, as a result of a Health Emergency that arises, or linked in with national health educational campaigns

Attachment 2

Indications of personal change through programme participation

Examples of the Guided Reflective Exercise undertaken by IRC volunteer inmates

Think of a time in prison before you became a Red Cross Volunteer What can I see, hear and feel about myself?	Level	Think of a time since you have been working as a Red Cross volunteer in the prison What can I see, hear and feel about myself?
I see a lot of inmates doing Red Cross and they introduce me as well	Goals What are my goals?	I'm proud of myself of being a volunteer of Irish Red Cross and want to continue after prison.
I'm always down, thinking of can I make it in prison?	Identity Who am I?	I have really changed from who I am when I first came to prison.
All my belief is in doing my time and learn something while I'm in prisons	Beliefs and Values What do I believe in and what is important to me?	To make myself available whenever I'm needed for volunteering.
I'm not very bold to express myself to any inmate before	Capabilities What am I able to do?	I'm bold to do some volunteer work, like going to landing telling inmates about the Red Cross.
My behavior was very bad before	Behaviours What am I doing?	My behavior is totally changed at the moment.
I feel not safe when I came into prison	Environment What is this place like?	I feel really safe now with the work of Irish Red Cross

To do this exercise you need to deeply reflect on yourself both before and after becoming an IRC volunteer and make some statements about how you feel about yourself and the place you live in.

Before		After
No goals	Goals What are my goals?	Since starting Red Cross my goal was to complete the course and pass on my experience to other prisoners.
Before starting – didn't know who I was. I was very shy especially talking in front of a group.	Identity Who am I?	Since starting I'm able to speak in front of a large group and not shy anymore.
I didn't believe in getting educated in prison	Beliefs and Values What do I believe in and what is important to me?	Now I believe it's important to learn and get educated whilst in prison because of the Red Cross
I wasn't capable of doing anything	Capabilities What am I able to do?	I'm capable of doing things for myself such as going to school, working and communicating with other people.
Unsure of the unknown	Behaviours What am I doing?	I find myself taking time out to talk and listen to other people
I was on a basic landing.	Environment What is this place like?	I'm on enhanced and the environment is much better

Before		After
To get off drugs. Girlfriend. Settle down within family.	Goals What are my goals?	My past goals are active
Nobody. Drug addict	Identity Who am I?	I have friends who are drug free, keeping fit. Caring person. Not violent anymore
Nothing	Beliefs and Values What do I believe in and what is important to me?	Family, future, staying drug free. Getting a job

None. Drugs Fighting. Waste time	Capabilities What am I able to do?	Read. Live drug free. Talk to people. Have my family back
Violent. Angry. Drug abuse. Medicated	Behaviours What am I doing?	Red Cross. I am drug free. Works in the kitchen
Horrible	Environment What is this place like?	Good because of the Red Cross.

Before		After
No goals	Goals What are my goals?	Get released and now make a difference
Me	Identity Who am I?	Red Cross volunteer
Do your time and get out	Beliefs and Values What do I believe in and what is important to me?	Help people while doing your time and make a difference.
Not been able to make a change	Capabilities What am I able to do?	Give input into changes and have positive results.
Gym / work	Behaviours What am I doing?	Getting involved in projects and interacting more.
Bad, dirty place	Environment What is this place like?	Since the Red Cross it's got a lot cleaner.

Before		After
To get out of jail.	Goals What are my goals?	To improve living conditions
Just another prisoner	Identity Who am I?	Volunteer taken serious by inmates and staff.
Need a cleaner, friendlier place to live	Beliefs and Values What do I believe in and what is important to me?	Achieved cleanliness. Keep it that way.
Very little in relation to movement around the prison	Capabilities What am I able to do?	Free movement. Act as a role model for the lads.
School / Gym	Behaviours What am I doing?	School/gym. Cleaner landing. Helping people.
Bad place. Dirty and violent	Environment What is this place like?	Much cleaner – less hostile.
Before		After
I had no goals when I came to prison	Goals What are my goals?	It all changed for me when I joined the Red Cross. Now I want to better myself.
Confused to everything	Identity Who am I?	Now I know I can do anything with the confidence I have gained through the Red Cross.
Beliefs and values – had few.	Beliefs and Values What do I believe in and what is important to me?	Now I know there's more to life than prison.
Not cooking	Capabilities What am I able to do?	Now working in the kitchen. Learned to cook.
Kept things bottled up.	Behaviours What am I doing?	Now I can talk to others.
Dirty	Environment What is this place like?	Cleaner and more relaxed