Exit - Leaving Gang Life

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Lisbon

Stine Menander

EXIT

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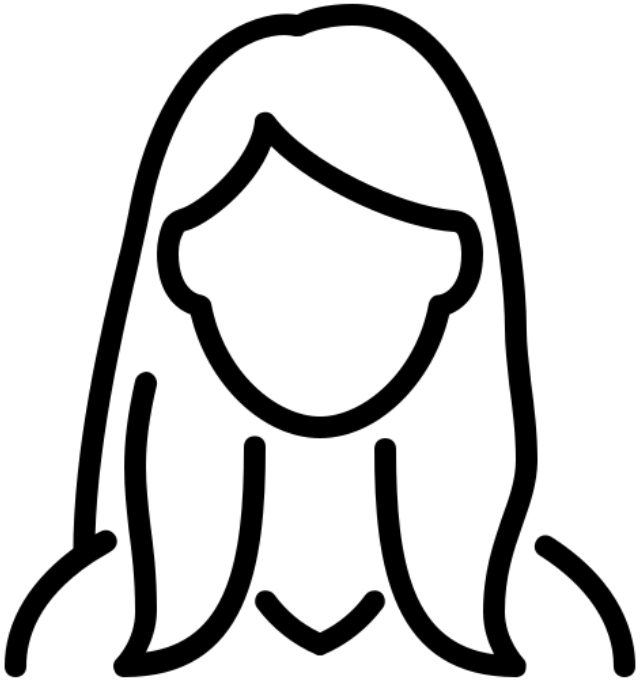
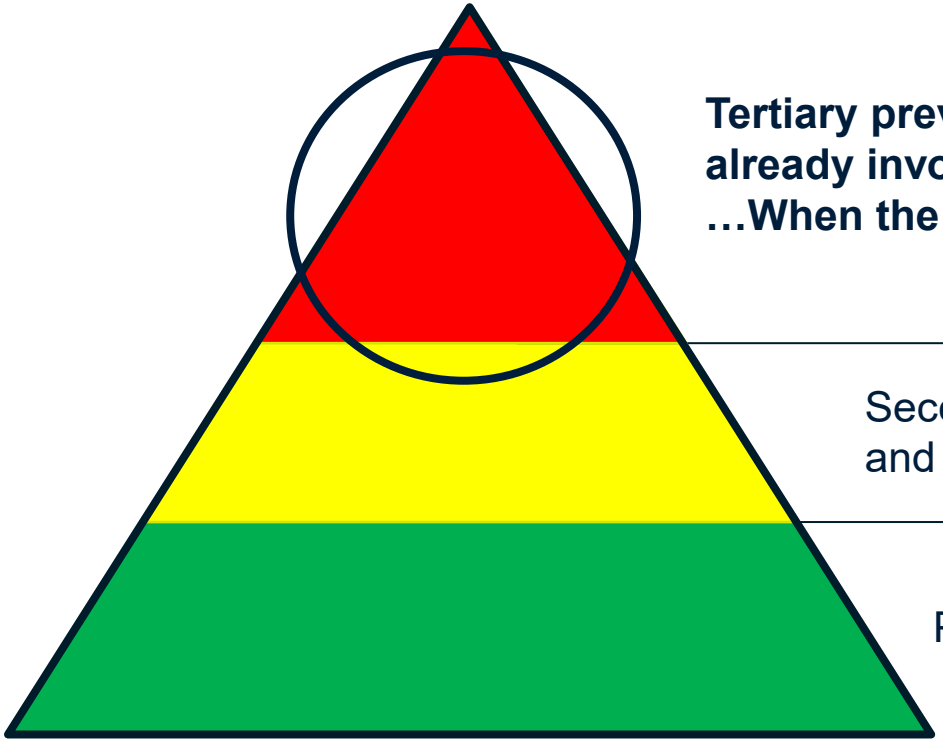
Danish Prison & Probation Service

About me



- Stine Menander Oddershede
- From Copenhagen, Denmark
- Educated Sociologist and Criminologist
- Been working in the field since 2014:
  - In the municipality of Copenhagen
  - Since 2022 as a representative for the Danish Municipalities in *The National Exit Coodination Unit*

The Crime Prevention Triangle



Tertiary prevention - targeting individuals who are already involved in serious and dangerous crime …When the damage has occured

Secondary prevention - targeting individuals and groups at risk of committing crime

Primary prevention - targeting everyone

The typical Exit-candidate

…..Biker – or street gangmembers

Gang-related crime (serious and dangerous felonies

Little or no work experience

Unfinished elementary school – poor reading and writing skills

Problematic use of cannabis or other drugs

Homelessness/couch surfing

Mental health issues
Depression, anxiety, PTSD
Personality disorder
Childhood trauma
Attention deficits

Inadequate social skills, inability to fit into society

Anti-social network/peers

Criminal record, serious criminal history

History of violence/ violence readiness

Poor physical health

Family life challenges

Reduced cognitive abilities, including low intelligence

Inadequate self regulatory techniques

EXIT

- Exit is based on a political agreement
- Primarily funded within existing financials
- Exitcollaboration between authorities

Police

Prison and probation services

The Danish municipalities

Funding resources

Annually approx. 300.000 euro

- Laser treatment and cover up
- Relocations
- ”Other”
- Psychological assistance for candidates and relatives

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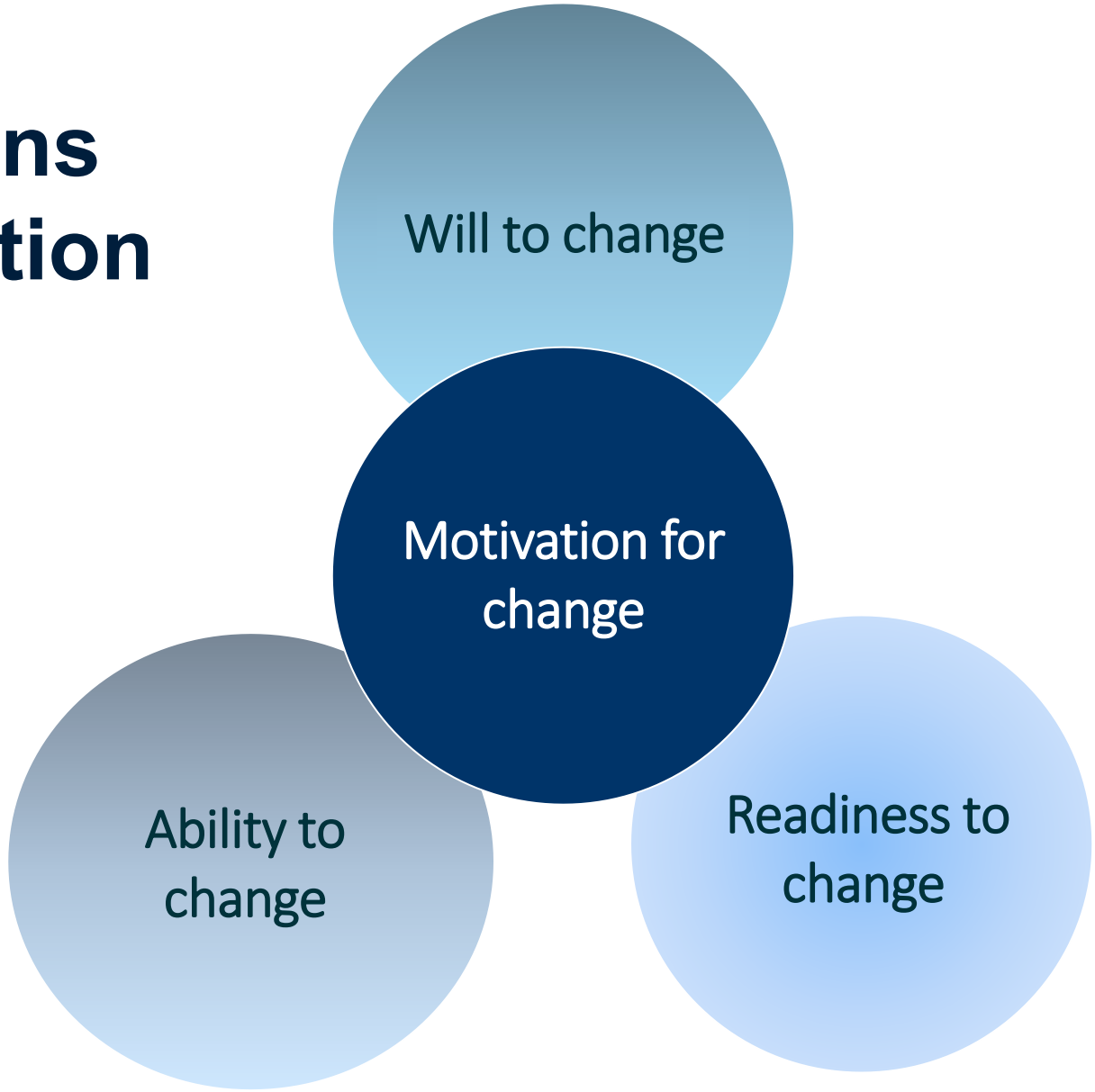
Dimensions of motivation



The exit-process

- One can enter the exit process either through 'from behind bars' (prison exit) or ”from the streets” (voluntarily)
- The local exit unit is established, consisting of relevant authorities (police, municipality, and the prison and probation service)
- Motivation and suitability in the preliminary process is examined
- The Exit agreement is signed by all parties
- …and the work begins…

- **The process lasts on average about 2 years.**

Areas of Focus - Municipality

- Social welfare benefits (in Danish: Kontanthjælp)
- Employment Center (in Danish: Jobcenter)
- Substance abuse treatment
- Housing
- Education clarification
- Etc..

Areas of Focus - Police

- Monitoring their encounters / new charges
- Dialog on who to meet with / who not to
- Applications to the fund:
  - Tattoo removal
  - Psychology treatment
  - In cases of high threat levels - relocation may be sought
  - “Other funding”; e.g Computer for school, help with schoolwork, bicycle, work clothes, name change, etc.

Areas of Focus

- KiF/Probation Service

- The Exit candidate is placed under supervision by the Probation Service
- Here, the Exit candidate must participate in meetings (with physical attendance) at 2-3 week intervals
- A methodical approach is used (MOSAIK), which is a conversation-based cognitive program
- A mentor can be approved during the supervision period
- **…And last but not least, the exit candidate risks re-imprisonment if they violate their supervision and exit conditions**

When is Exit succesfull?

Objectively

When they are not re-registered as gangmembers or getting new charges for serious and/or organized crime.

Subjectively

When they build a ”normal, meaningfull, prosocial life”, with family, friends, steady income (pay taxes), etc.

Few/no new charges or encounters with the police

What does it take to do good Exit-work?

Team spirit

- The Exit-unit showing collective authority and stability

Human perspective

- To meet the Exit candidate at eye level and believe in giving him a fair chance to get back on track
- Showing empathy, respect, and patience – believing in each person's potential for change

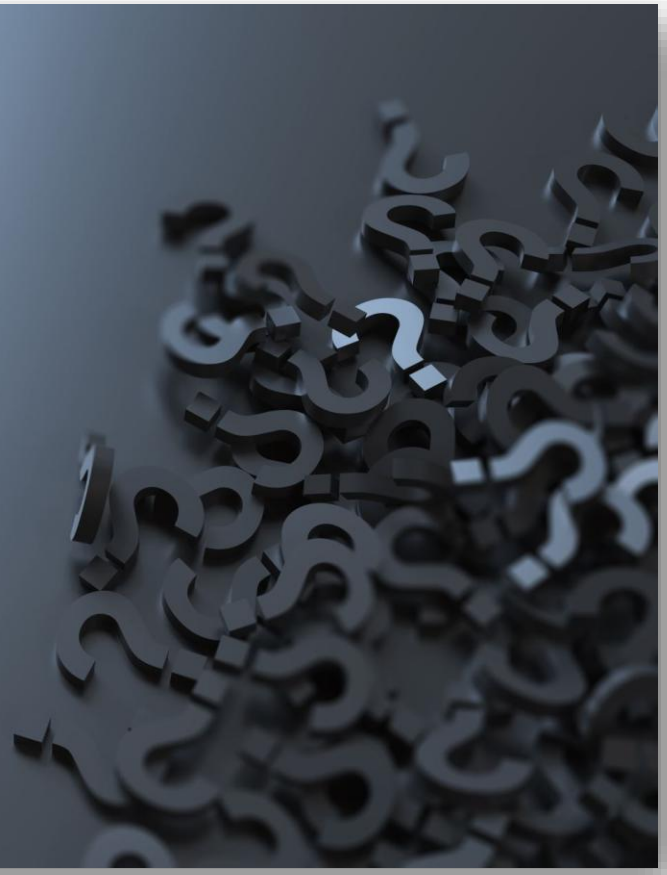
Trust and reliability in the collaboration

- Have respect and curiosity of each other

Knowledge and specialization on Crime Prevention/The Gang environment

…and keeping it within as few (and stable) hands as possible

What challenges?

Societal level	• Public debt • Legislation • Mental health services/Psychiatry
Structural level	• Silo mentality • ”Too many cooks in the kitchen” • Housing
Individual level	• Loneliness • Sustaining motivation

Questions