

Case Blackmail with medicine

PO21 Learning Resources



Credits

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Case – Blackmail with medicine

This case was developed within the PO21 project¹, based on the critical incidents approach and the experience of the Prison Officers involved in the project. It can be dynamised using several strategies², according to the training and trainers' objectives.

Case Script:

Summary

Main situation

During the night shift, an inmate of the wing B (cell 405), Patrick Omers, is asking for extra medications (Methadone); according to the legislation it is not allowed to give him anything, because only the medical team (doctors or nurses) have the authority to give medication. Patrick threatens the surveillance PO Sofie Palaver: "I need the extra medicine or I'll kill myself"; he threatens with a deadline of 15 minutes. There is another inmate in the cell; Igor Lutsenko. He is a foreigner (ex-Russian mafia member) and doesn't speak the national language (it's assumed that he only speaks Russian), he's lying in his bed.

Why is it complicated/difficult/challenging:

- Unexpected situation
- Unexperienced Prison Office
- The inmate is blackmailing the PO
- The inmate is threatening to suicide
- The difficulty to manage the situation without escalation
- The need to respect the rules and hierarchy

¹For more information: <http://www.prison-officers21.org/>

²Detailed information on cases dynamisation and development can be found in the Guide for developing cases, produced under the PO21 project

Main Characters

Character 1: Patrick Omers

Name - Patrick Omers

Professional description – Inmate

Personal/psychological description – 45 years old, new in the prison and there is not much information about him, but he seems to be aggressive, addicted (has a cold turkey?), used to be a gang-member, has psychologic (mental) problems, lives alone (solitary).

Main function/hierarchy – NA

Character 2: Sofie Palaver

Name - Sofie Palaver

Professional description – Surveillance Officer of the wing B in that specific night.

Personal/psychological description – 22 years old, for six months on duty, highly motivated, eager to do her job very well, knowledge of legislation/ rules, she was not involved in many contact with the inmates yet, so, not a lot of experiences, she's very nervous and rather insecure.

Main function/hierarchy – Surveillance Officer

Secondary characters or witnesses

Character 3: Igor Lutsenko

Name - Igor Lutsenko

Professional description – Inmate

Personal/psychological description – 35 years old, in good physical shape, he is quiet and will not involve in this situation; opaque, no record in criminal activities before.

Main function/hierarchy – NA

Character 4: Freddy Ruyskesfield

Name - Freddy Ruyskesfield

Professional description – Chief of the night shift

Personal/psychological description – 40 years old, and 15 years of relevant experience, has a problem with new and especially female PO's.

Main function/hierarchy – Prison Officer

Character 5: Sleepy Joe

Name - Sleepy Joe

Professional description – Prison Officer, works on the A wing during that nightshift.

Personal/psychological description – 52 years old, divorced, grumpy, wants to sleep as much as possible, above all doesn't want to be disturbed.

Main function/hierarchy – Prison Officer

Secondary characters or witnesses

Character 6: Gino Writers

Name - Gino Writers

Professional description – Prison Officer, works on the C-wing

Personal/psychological description – 38 years old, not the most collegial (reliable) one, wants to do his job in a proper way, but nothing more. He has a strong opinion about PO-work: everyone should take care of his own work (everybody should mind his own business).

Main function/hierarchy – Prison Officer

Character 7: Frank Goots

Name - Frank Goots

Professional description – Prison Director

Personal/psychological description – 35 years, a bit insecure but likes his job, may be the only one who can authorize entrance of special services, for example, police assistance, medical team, especially during night (this may vary according to national prison rules).

Main function/hierarchy – Prison Director

Description of the situation

Time

At night, around 2 o'clock

Duration

1 hour

Location

Wing B, Cell 405

Description of the situation

During the night shift, an inmate of the wing B (cell 405), **Patrick Omers**, asked for extra medications (Methadone) to the surveillance officer on duty that night, **Sofie Palaver**.

However, according to the legislation, she is not allowed to give him anything, because only the medical team (doctors or nurses) have the authority for it.

Patrick starts to get more aggressive and demands the medication.

Having no response, he starts to threaten the PO **Sofie Palaver**: "I need the extra medicine or I'll kill myself"; he threatens with a deadline of 15 minutes.

There is another inmate in the cell; **Igor Lutsenko**.

He is a foreigner (ex-Russian mafia member) and doesn't speak the national language (it's assumed that he only speaks Russian), he's lying in his bed and does not appear to be concerned with the situation.

According to legal national legislation/rules, the shift leader has to inform the director and ask permission to open the door and relocate the inmate in the isolation cell, (after the inmate is seen by a specialist (medical doctor)).

POSSIBLE REACTIONS 1

Reaction of each character

Sofie Palaver

Sofie Palaver starts a dialogue with the inmate

- Ask him, what's the problem.
- Present him a legal way out.
- Tells him, what are the consequences of not taking the legal way.

Sofie Palaver informs the shift leader (Freddy Ruyskesfield) about the situation.

Freddy Ruyskesfield

Freddy Ruyskesfield comes to the incident place (cell 405) and gives the order to the other members (Gino Writers and Sleepy Joe) to go to the incident place.

Patrick Omers

Patrick Omers is relocated safely in the isolation cell

The other PO's are on the incident place and only help to relocate Patrick Omers into the isolation cell.

Result of each action

| The situation was managed without further escalation.

| The actions allow to bring back the silence in the wing and the safety of the PO's and the inmates (especially ***Igor Lutsenko***).

The worst case scenario: the death of ***Patrick Omers***.

POSSIBLE REACTIONS 2

Reaction of each character

Sofie Palaver

Sofie Palaver wants to start the dialogue with Patrick Omers but he doesn't want to listen. He only wants his medication. He gets more and more aggressive. He begins to throwing stuff in his cell, causing a lot of noise.

Sofie Palaver (in panic) informs/alarms the shift leader (Freddy Ruyskesfield) about the situation (cry for help).

Freddy Ruyskesfield

Freddy Ruyskesfield sends the more experienced colleagues to the incident place (cell 405) (Gino Writers and Sleepy Joe). He hopes they will manage to de-escalate the problem.

Patrick Omers

The more experienced colleagues also can't get through Patrick Omers (not a good contact). Even worse: they see him starting to barricade the door.

They decide they cannot afford to waste more time and have to intervene urgently (Patrick Omers threatens that the time (15 minutes) is almost over).

According to national legislation/rules, the shift leader (Freddy Ruyskesfield) has to inform the director and ask the permission to open the door and relocate the inmate in the isolation cell.

Patrick Omers is relocated (with a lot of problems) in the isolation cell. The other PO's are on the incident place and only help to relocate Patrick Omers into the isolation cell.

Result of each action

They didn't manage the situation without further escalation (in worst case scenario: several PO's were (lightly) injured).

Finally they succeed to bring back the silence in the wing and the safety of the inmates (especially Igor Lutsenko).

How to apply this case?

This case can be used in several ways, there is no prescriptive, specific strategy, and the trainer shall choose the specific themes to highlight by applying the case. However, making the best of this resource in terms of promoting debate and stimulating reflection among trainees, common strategies can be:

Brainstorming:

Create a question about the case and promote group discussion. Remember that in brainstorming is particularly important to register all contributions and to make a summary of all contributions. It is suited to initiate a new theme.

Role-play:

In the training room, arrange the scenario according to the case description. The trainees should perform the characters as close to the description possible to create a real-life situation. After the presentation, group discussion can be promoted. It is suited to deepen a situation or theme.

Problem-Solving:

Present the case without providing information on how it was handled and ask the trainees, individually or in groups, to describe how the situation should be handled. Then, dynamise a debate around each new ending for the situation. It is suited to applying theory to practice.

Dilemma:

Create a dilemma by designing a new development of the situation. Organise a debate around which was the best solution and why. It is suited to explore complex situations.

Pros and Cons:

A debate can be used in any strategy. If used as the main strategy, one idea may be to organise the group in two sectors: one, arguing in favour of the resolution and the other, arguing against it. This can be improved by providing other learning resources that support the arguments of each sector. It is suited to deepen a situation or theme.

To learn more about the creation and application of Critical Incidents, you can consult the Critical Incidents Technique Application Guide.