

Case

The Kitchen Incident

PO21 Learning Resources



Credits

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Case – The Kitchen incident

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

Inmates were prepare the food for staff in the kitchen under a PO supervision. The PO went to the toilet. One inmate offers to replace the supervising PO. Inmates start to fight, and one inmate was stabbed. Another PO triggers the alarm, and the prison goes under lockdown. Another PO entered and protects the inmate who was stabbed. The officers separated the inmates and lead them to their cells. The situation calmed down, and the medical staff is called to take the stabbed inmate. The next day there was a debriefing on the situation.

Why is it complicated/difficult/challenging:

- An inmate was stabbed and almost died
- The supervising PO left his post
- Inmate's life in danger
- A PO entered alone to protect the inmate – a situation that goes against the rules – to save the inmate. And the moral question of saving the inmate from being murdered even if not following the rules?
- Should the debriefing include the PO who broke the rules?

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: Lars

Name - Lars

Professional description – Inmate

Personal/psychological description – 50 year old offender in prison for robbery, with a sentence of 7 years. He has good relations with the prison officers but has problems with the other inmates.

Main function/hierarchy – NA

Character 2: John

Name - John

Professional description – Inmate

Personal/psychological description – 24 year old offender with drug addiction problems and usually a troublemaker.

Main function/hierarchy – NA

Character 3: Geoffrey

Name - Geoffrey

Professional description – Prison officer, a junior officer

Personal/psychological description – 30 years old, very generous but impulsive; many colleagues don't like him because he doesn't follow the traditional culture of more senior officers.

Main function/hierarchy – Prison officer

Character 4: Christian

Name - Christian

Professional description - Prison officer

Personal/psychological description - A 20 year senior official and experienced, knows every inmate and usually trusts his colleagues without checking facts.

Main function/hierarchy – Senior Prison officer

Character 5: Victor

Name - Victor

Professional description – Prison officer

Personal/psychological description – A 10 year official who knows every inmate and usually trusts them, but sometimes he is careless.

Main function/hierarchy – Prison officer

Secondary characters or witnesses

Secondary Characters

- *Troublemaker inmates*
- *Peaceful inmates*
- *Other POs*
- *Medical Team*
- *Psychologist*

Description of the situation

Time

10:00 A.M.

Duration

1h30m

Location

Prison Kitchen

Description of the situation

Near lunchtime, the inmates were preparing food for staff in the kitchen by **Vitor** PO supervision. **Vitor** needs to go to the toilet and ask the inmates to keep working.

One inmate named **Lars** self-proposed to **Vitor** to supply him, in the meantime, leading the other inmates to prepare the food.

John, another inmate with older problems with **Lars**, insulted him for collaborating with the officers, always informing and instigating others to punish him.

Some inmates get angry and go after **Lars** to hit him, while others wanted to defend him. The involved inmates started a fight.

Geoffrey, the PO, heard the noises, triggered the alarm, and entered the kitchen to order the inmates to stop fighting because he saw that **Lars** had been stabbed.

The security centre alerted the colleagues. The prison went under lockdown, and the colleagues/the special team went to the alarm location.

Arrived at the alarm site, the officers, commanded by Team Leader **Officer Christian**, saw how several prisoners fought and other prisoners tried to bring them apart.

They saw how **Geoffrey** tried to protect **Lars** with the support of other inmates.

Lars was seriously injured and bleeding heavily, and **Geoffrey** saves **Lars** from being murdered while other Officers separated the inmates.

Then, the officers take the aggressors to the cells or security cells according to their behaviour.

At the same time, they looked for injured inmates or officers and call for medical help, namely for **Lars**.

Christian called the security centre and informed them that the incident stopped without PO and inmates injured except **Lars**; he also announced that the prison inmates could be unlocked.

At noon, **Christian** and the support team ask **Geoffrey** to speak to him to see how he felt.

The other PO was also requested a debriefing meeting – to discuss the incident (with or without **Geoffrey's** presence).

After **Christian's** first report, all people involved (inmates who worked in the kitchen, PO **Victor**, supervisors for each inmates station, security manager chief, medical team, etc.) are called to collect all the information to prepare a final report for prison administration and future discussion on the incident.

Reaction of each character

Victor

Victor left his supervising post.

Lars

Lars offered to assist him.

John

John offended Lars.

Geoffrey

Geoffrey goes into the situation alone to protect Lars.

Christian

Christian and other officers lead inmates to cells.

Result of each action

Lars is separated for protection.

The aggressor inmates must be separated from all other prisoners until the situation is resolved (and a disciplinary measure is taken). The prison administration will discipline aggressive prisoners.

When it is clear who hurt **Lars**, additional criminal charges will be filed.

The inmates who helped stop the fight were proposed rewards, and other inmates were sought to work in the kitchen.

For the PO who leaves the kitchen, a warning was proposed.

For the inmates who were sanctioned: banned from work in the kitchen (for XYZ months/year etc.)

Resolutions

Proposed measures further on:

- Place two officers to supervise the inmates in the kitchen.
- Not allow any PO to leave the post without being replaced by another colleague first.
- Look for a private catering collaboration.

ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION

01

1. **Geoffrey** behaved well because he saved **Lars'** life/ It was not according to the rules but he acted.
2. **Geoffrey** will participate in the debriefing.

ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION

02

1. **Geoffrey** misbehaved because he didn't follow the rules.
2. **Geoffrey** will not participate in the debriefing.

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.