

Case Drinks and relationships

PO21 Learning Resources



Credits

TECHNICAL TEAM

Ana Nascimento
Carolina Pereira
Dorin Muresan

DEVELOPERS

Bart Van Den Langenbergh
Cozma Rares Andrei
Dima Mirabela
Raphaella Menger

Case – Drinks and relationships

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

Marie works as a PO in the local prison. She has problems in her home situation and has been alone for a long time caring for her child and struggling with mental health problems. Because of her condition, she has started abusing the medication. Periodically, she also uses alcohol. She is also not in a strong position financially. More recently, she has been in a new relationship with Kevin. He also works in prison as a doorman. He also drinks a lot periodically and reinforces Marie in her behaviour. Kevin is aggressive when he drinks too much. The difficulties Marie experiences begin to have a more significant impact on her work and surroundings. A doctor's certificate always covers her absences.

Why is it complicated/difficult/challenging:

- As a manager, you see changes in an employee. However, you have little insight into the elements at play in the background. You know her partner works within the prison but do not know them.
- As a supervisor, you must consider your employee's right to privacy despite the changes you see.
- In practice, you see her losing control at work. She is less involved at work. There are elements with which you, as a supervisor, can start a disciplinary case. However, there are underlying elements that point to a broader problem situation. In other words, we see the symptoms of a problem situation in which she is not necessarily the cause but possibly the victim. What do you do as a manager?
- Her partner, who works within another division, will notice the steps taken towards her as an employee. It automatically makes this second person an element to be considered.

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: Marie

Name - Marie

Professional description – PO - Wing A

Personal/psychological description – 29 years, she married early, at 20. She was unexpectedly pregnant and decided to marry. The situation forced her to leave her home and live with her new husband. However, her partner was uncommitted and left the family less than five years later. Marie was left with many challenges.

Working in a shift system, caring for a young child and bills were challenges that sometimes were too high for her to bear. Gradually, she sought refuge in the medication prescribed by her doctor. It made her sleep better. Periodically, at those times when she was struggling, she combined this medication with alcohol. Marie has always been involved in her work.

She started to work as a prison officer when she was 21. She is committed to her little daughter and has always been a loved and loving person. Over the last year, her involvement at work, as well as outside, has deteriorated significantly. Periodically, she oversleeps and arrives late to work. More recently, she met a new man at a café.

He promised her a better future and helped in rebuilding her life. However, he enjoys going to bars. Marie, who has been drinking more for the last year, struggles to hold off the temptations and drinks more and more. Under the influence of medication and alcohol, she flirts with other men and sometimes becomes hysterical.

Within her household, there is some neglect of her obligations and care for her daughter. Her new boyfriend rages aggressively when drunk. However, Marie also sees the better periods and his financial contribution to the newly formed family.

Main function/hierarchy – PO – She works in Wing A

Character 2: Kevin

Name - Kevin

Professional description – PO - Entrance

Personal/psychological description – Kevin is 34. He has set many goals in his life. However, he only achieved a few of them. He dreamed of becoming a lawyer and studying at a major university. However, he failed to maintain discipline. His results were not good, and by necessity, he went back to live with his parents.

He worked in construction, a restaurant, and a bar and eventually found a job within the prison system. In his relational history, there is fickleness. He has had several relationships, mostly with women he met in bars. He makes many promises but ultimately fails to keep them. Recently, he met Marie, with whom he wants to build a new life.

He moved in with her and supported her financially. He enjoys going out with her. However, under the influence of alcohol, he has a bad temper. He is jealous and fears he will lose his partner. He lost control several times in which he hit Marie. He works at the entrance of the prison.

Main function/hierarchy – PO – entrance

Secondary characters or witnesses

Character 3: Paul

Name - Paul

Professional description – Head of shift

Personal/psychological description – Paul is 52. He has worked his entire adult life inside the prison. He lives in one of the government houses. He is firmly committed to work and cares deeply about his colleagues and the working environment. Colleagues can always call on him. He is involved in the circle of friends that serves the staff and organises the annual festivities. Because of his close involvement, Paul likes to solve problems himself. He believes that through commitment and involvement, you can solve many issues.

Main function/hierarchy – Head of shift, as a team leader, Paul is responsible for organising the work on Wing A.

Character 4: Abdel

Name - Abdel

Professional description – PO

Personal/psychological description – Abdel is 38 years old. His parents emigrated when he was 3 years old. Since he was young, he desired to work for the government. He is disciplined and punctual. From his background, he also stands up for others. His work has an important place in his life. For his colleagues, he would do anything.

Main function/hierarchy – PO Wing A

Character 5: Peter

Name - Peter

Professional description – Inmate

Personal/psychological description – Peter is 22 years old. He was convicted of theft and dealing drugs. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment. He thinks he deserves his sentence and wants to serve his time and start over. He tries to avoid trouble and has an immense sense of injustice.

Main function/hierarchy – NA

Description of the situation

Time

9 A.M., Sunday morning

Duration

4 minutes

Location

Inmate cell

Description of the situation

Marie went out Saturday night with her new boyfriend, a PO who works at the porters. They drank a lot. They got home around 3 am.

On Sunday morning, **Marie** had to be at work at 6 am. She had eventually overslept and arrived at work at 7 am.

She received an unfavourable report because of being late from her team leader **Paul**, who also forwarded this report to management.

Marie was upset. Although **Paul** had seen that she might have been drinking, he did not speak to her about it or mention it in his report to management.

Paul is aware that **Marie** has problems.

He believes he can help her in his way. He shields her problems from management.

Reaction of each character

Marie

Since she is drunk, she cannot do her job correctly. She also does not react appropriately and enters into a conflict with a detainee who has done nothing wrong per se. She gets angry and yells at the inmate to be more careful and take his tray better.

During this event, she swings her arms and almost runs into the doorframe. Her colleague Abdel escorts her to a desk. Marie waits in the bureau for 15 minutes and then wants to return to work.

Abdel

Intervenes and can avoid further escalation. Abdel quiets his tempers and closes Peter's door. Abdel saw that Marie was not herself and probably had been drinking. He guides her towards a desk.

Abdel informs the control centre by phone that Marie has dropped a plateau but that the situation is under control. He reports that the incident has not escalated. Abdel does not mention the fact that Marie is drunk.

Peter

After all, Peter feels attacked and is convinced he has done nothing wrong. He shouts at Marie that she is a drunk and better off working in a pub.

Paul

Paul had noticed when Marie arrived that she had been drinking. He did not name this at the time, partly because he would address this problem later and engage with Marie. Ignoring this element allowed Marie to start her shift. After the incident and Abdel's notification to the control centre, Paul is informed. He knows Marie is in Wing A's office and is no longer working. As a result, he takes no immediate action. After 15 minutes, he sees on the monitor that Marie wants to return to work.

Result of each action

After the incident, **Marie** is upset.

She takes a seat in the office under **Abdel's** guidance.

She feels she is not fulfilling her obligations and wants to make amends.

She drinks a cup of coffee and leaves the office with the intention of returning to work.

Abdel sees **Marie** leaving the desk and notes that she is removing the food car from the wing

He notes, to his reassurance, that she seems to be walking straight and decides that he will take no further action.

He thinks to himself that he will speak to her later.

He thinks he handled this situation well and feels somewhat proud.

Paul sees on the control centre monitor that **Marie** is returning to work. He senses that he has failed.

He has already had two opportunities to provide an intervention but has failed.

He decides that this cannot and should not happen again.

He walks out of the control centre and heads towards Wing A.

Arriving at Wing A, he calls **Marie** into the office. He confronts her and states that he suspects she has been drinking.

Marie, however, denies it. **Paul** cites in the conversation that he knows **Marie's** husband wronged her.

Marie completely loses it on this, starts crying hard and eventually runs away from the wing and leaves the prison.

Paul feels that he has finally taken steps to name the problem. Satisfied with the result, he decides to discuss the situation with his superior.

From the start, he did not tell anyone he saw **Marie** was drunk.

Dilemmas

01 DILEMMA

From his personality, **Abdel** tends to stand up for his colleagues.

He views the team as a whole, tackling problems together.

From this idea, he removed **Marie** from the incident.

Since the situation is under control, he feels it is behind him.

Fifteen minutes after the incident, **Marie** wants to return to work.

However, **Abdel** sees that she is unable to do so.

However, he has not informed anyone that Marie is drunk.

What can or should **Abdel** do in this situation?

02 DILEMMA

Paul serves as the team leader.

He could already see when **Marie** arrived that she had been drinking.

However, he only made a report that **Marie** was late.

He wishes to help **Marie** because he has known her for many years.

He sees the positive sides of **Marie**.

He also suspects **Marie** is being abused at home, so he does not see her as the real culprit (vinovat).

Paul is informed that there was an incident on the wing where **Marie** dropped a tray.

He learns that she has lost control.

Paul is annoyed with the situation.

He neglected to report that **Marie** might be drunk and let her start her shift.

What should **Paul** do now in this situation?

03 DILEMMA

Paul knew **Marie** had been drinking but allowed her to start her shift.

After the incident, he thought the situation was under control, given **Marie** was no longer at work.

As a result, he again took no immediate action.

After 15 minutes, **Paul** sees on the monitor that **Marie** wants to return to work.

What can or should **Paul** do in this situation?

04 DILEMMA

From the situation that has arisen, **Paul** faces yet another dilemma.

Now that there has been an incident with **Marie**, he is afraid that Marie will be considered irresponsible.

He fears that a disciplinary file will be started.

However, he strongly suspects **Marie** is being mistreated and rather victimised.

Within this view, he sees alcohol consumption as a symptom rather than a cause of the problems.

What can **Paul** do in this situation?

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.