MOTIVATION IN REHABILITATION WORK: HOW TO STIMULATE IT?
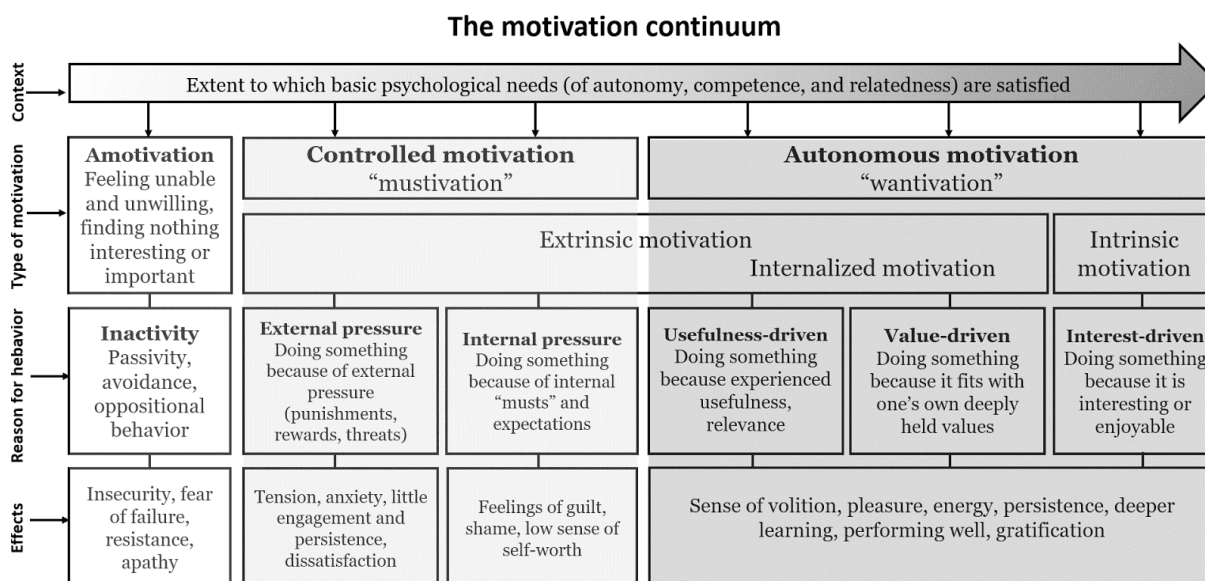
Summary

Stimulating motivation in rehabilitation work involves knowledge of the different types of motivation as well as of relevant contextual factors. For complex individual cases, systemic approaches are needed. In rehabilitation work, affecting behavioural change is paramount, and a number of approaches and techniques have been developed in European practices to stimulate motivation. Establishing trust and individual ownership of the process are some important principles, while a non-judgemental attitude and a focus on the practical issues at hand help individuals stay on course and make their own choices. This conclusion paper elaborates on these aspects and provides a number of concrete examples and practical tips.

Product of the Radicalisation Awareness Network
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Introduction

Whether in the context of probation or exit work outside the judicial system, rehabilitation relies heavily on the availability of individual motivation. The process of distancing from extremist ideologies and behaviours usually takes a long time. Individuals may find themselves in various stages of this process, from initial doubts up to a full-fledged decision to turn their lives around. Regardless of the stage, the efforts of frontline practitioners are to a great extent conditioned by the individuals' genuine willingness to participate in the process. It is therefore important to understand this motivation: how it works, how it can be stimulated, and what the alternatives are in its absence. The newly established RAN Rehabilitation Working Group was convened in its inaugural meeting on 13th and 14th May 2020 to discuss these issues from the perspective of the various Members States, allowing exchanges among different institutional profiles with different professional backgrounds.

Motivation: Basic psychological concepts

As most scientific grand concepts, "motivation" remains highly debated. Conceptual discussions are still ongoing as to how to define it, whether it is primary to emotion or intervenes afterwards, whether it is a state or a trait, and what its basic assumptions might be. Besides psychology, a number of other disciplines have also concerned themselves with these issues, including criminology, social work and medical science. While there is no uncontested grand theory, motivation can be broadly explained as a **fundamental "drive" towards change**. As outlined by Dr Johan Boxtaens from the Centre for Research on Environmental and Social Change (CRESC) at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, motivation has been theorised in a more elaborated manner within the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This model conceptualises motivation as a continuum and as the extent to which the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied. Within this model, several types of motivation are differentiated, with corresponding reasons and effects (see figure below).

The motivation continuum

Context	Extent to which basic psychological needs (of autonomy, competence, and relatedness) are satisfied				
Type of motivation	**Amotivation** Feeling unable and unwilling, finding nothing interesting or important	**Controlled motivation** "mustivation"		**Autonomous motivation** "wantivation"	
		Extrinsic motivation		Internalized motivation	Intrinsic motivation
Reason for behavior	**Inactivity** Passivity, avoidance, oppositional behavior	**External pressure** Doing something because of external pressure (punishments, rewards, threats)	**Internal pressure** Doing something because of internal "musts" and expectations	**Usefulness-driven** Doing something because experienced usefulness, relevance / **Value-driven** Doing something because it fits with one's own deeply held values	**Interest-driven** Doing something because it is interesting or enjoyable
Effects	Insecurity, fear of failure, resistance, apathy	Tension, anxiety, little engagement and persistence, dissatisfaction	Feelings of guilt, shame, low sense of self-worth	Sense of volition, pleasure, energy, persistence, deeper learning, performing well, gratification	

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This figure is based on the work by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci and many other researchers in the field of Self-Determination Theory. The terms mustivation and wantivation were coined by Maarten Vansteenkiste.

At one extreme, a person might be "amotivated", which essentially refers to the absence of motivation. The presence of motivation, on the other hand, might materialise in various types; depending on the driver behind it, motivation might be controlled or autonomous. Furthermore, **motivation might be extrinsic or intrinsic**. The latter refers to situations where an activity is carried out for its own sake, because it is interesting or enjoyable. Translated to our context, a person might genuinely want to disengage for the sake of disengagement; this might be because they see a value in it, rather than being pushed from outside or doing it for material benefit, for example. Intrinsic motivation is an ideal situation that might or might not materialise (yet) in a particular case. Often, this type of motivation occurs at a later point in the

disengagement process; in its turn, disengagement might have been initiated by something completely different, such as disappointment with the group. Extrinsic motivation refers to reasons outside the perceived inherent value of the activity itself. This has been furthermore differentiated as internalised motivation and motivation that acts as internal or external obligations or expectations to do something. Internalised motivation refers to situations where people will do something because they perceive it as useful or in alignment with their values.

A second useful model is the transtheoretical process of change by Prochaska and DiClemente (1982). This model entails **several stages**, covering pre-contemplation, contemplation, determination, action and maintenance. This model has been employed in various other contexts, such as substance abuse and smoking. Importantly, in reality, the model should not be considered as unidirectional or always the same. There can be a relapse even after the action stage, and exit and/or re-entering the process can occur at any stage.

> *There are practical implications to the ability to recognise the types of motivation and the stages of individual change. In order for them to be effective, intervention types and methods need to adapt to these various types of motivation and stages of change.*

Context

Working towards intrinsic motivation

In practical work, it is important to understand that **motivation is but one element in a broader constellation of factors** that in turn might have an effect on it. Some of these factors pertain to the specific constellation of the working relationship, such as the availability of trust or the clarity of rules and regulations. Others relate to the particular situation of the individual, such as previous experiences and demographic, personal or socio-environmental characteristics. A further important general consideration is knowledge about the initial radicalisation process. Disengagement is not simply the reverse of the radicalisation process. At the same time, it remains important to address the kinds of factors and situations that might have contributed to the motivation to radicalise, stay and advance within the extremist environment.

Working on the context

While the manner of directly affecting intrinsic motivation might not be immediately apparent, there are a number of approaches to and techniques for influencing contextual factors and thus creating indirect effects on motivation, such as:

1) Affecting individual situational factors. Based on insights from unaccompanied disengagement processes, it is known that taking people out of the context can lead to their shifting mindsets and perspectives; this can occur through the availability of a new environment and the possibility for a new start. Imprisonment necessarily leads to a dramatic change of context, but so can life-changing events or indeed the active inducement of new settings during the counselling process.

2) Taking care of basic needs such as removing tattoos related to the radicalideology.

3) Establishing early on the terms of the relationship. Confidentiality and trust are crucial elements in this context. Equally important are a number of parameters that should be clarified from the very beginning: clearly setting the power position between client and counsellor; establishing the client's ownership over the process; and having a non-judgemental attitude, as individuals are used to conflict and confrontation.

4) Addressing ideology might or might not be necessary or opportune, especially if the aim is to effect behavioural change; it also generally depends on the individual case.

5) Each individual case is unique and complex; therefore, it should be treated as holistic and as systemic as possible.

6) Involving the family could be a help or a hindrance, it depends on the individual case.

7) The particular characteristics (including gender) of the practitioners are generally not important.

8) Training and internal supervision are necessary for practitioners to develop themselves as professionals.

There are advantages to the involvement of formers in stimulating motivation within exit work. They can connect with clients, understand what they are going through, can relate to similar situations before and during the disengagement process, genuinely empathise and also help them with practical things. This is also an opportunity to exploit a genuine willingness to make good on past experiences, to use them in a constructive way. At the same time, specialised training for this type of work is absolutely essential also for formers. Additionally, they need to have effectively worked on their own experiences first. Being a former is not being automatically an asset.

Key Outcomes: Approaches in selected programmes

The concrete work and the choice of methods and approaches might differ depending on several considerations: the national context; the situation in which the clients find themselves – i.e. prison, probation or exit work outside the judicial system; and the particular skills of the practitioners themselves, as emergent from various disciplinary backgrounds and training. For example, DERAD **Austria** uses knowledge related to Islamist ideologies and shared cultural backgrounds to relate to its clients. In the context of his prior work with EXIT **Sweden** and now in the Transform organisation, Robert Örell resorts to his previous experiences as a former, which have been professionalised through specific academic education and training.

Motivational interviewing is a widely used psychological method; in the context of the mentoring programme of the **Norwegian** Correctional Service, it involves several considerations and concrete steps. Initially, it is important to establish trust and collect information about the individual in order to choose an appropriate mentor. Some of the concrete techniques used in the context of this method are:

- Initiate the first discussion in the absence of information about the clients in order to avoid prejudice and allow them to control how much they want to share.
- Induce the clients to reflect on their ideas, values and life choices.
- Formulate open questions such as: "What would you do differently if given the choice?"
- Give positive alternatives to their negative experiences, for example, in relation to representatives of the "system".
- Challenge their extreme views through counterexamples.
- Refrain from giving direct advice but have clients reach their own conclusions. You can provide guidance, but they must be the "makers" of their change
- Create a sense of achievement.
- Identify needs and connect them with existing programmes.
- Create boundaries and become personal but not private.

The Aarhus approach (**Denmark**) to motivation involves as a first step to "getting them in", getting to speak to people. The complex approach in the background involves the activation of various services depending on the case, such as social services, school and leisure, and employment services. Yet, in this initial stage, conversation skills, empathy and listening are crucial. The formal reasons for contacting individuals are mundane and non-judgemental, such as: "The family is worried", "We are worried that you might be breaking the law", and "We have the duty to check up on you". In concrete cases, establishing contact has turned out to be easier than expected.

> *"Most would like to talk to explain that we are wrong, but we are talking; once we get them talking, they are hooked".*

This approach draws on others in the areas of socially challenged families, gangs or organised crime. The case of radicalised individuals is however more complex, because extremism and extremist groups have a stronger and more encompassing grip on an individual's life. This involves, amongst others, questions about the meaning of life, for example. Importantly, a number of techniques from the methodology of negotiations have also been adopted for this practice.

At the Maison de Justice in **Belgium**, motivational work is focused on the judicial mandate to help the offender respect the probation measure, while focusing at the same time on individual needs. Similar to the Aarhus model, the overall objective is disengagement rather than deradicalisation and it is equally a systemic approach. In order to support and create motivation, a number of principles are followed and involve: individual empowerment; not acting on the offender's behalf; non-normativity (i.e. leaving values and life choices to the individual); and limiting the damage caused by the measure to the offender's life. Within this programme, a number of concrete techniques have been used:

- Strategic alternative: outline the negative consequences of not respecting the conditions of probation.
- 180 degrees: if what you try to do does not work, try the opposite.
- Mirror: help the offenders look at themselves and develop their critical sense.
- Try to build humanity in discussions.
- Do not stigmatise the offender.
- Be high on the framework and low on the relationship – while keeping to a strong judicial framework, allow the individuals to be the masters of their own stories, and the owners of their decisions.

This practice works closely with other colleagues in a multi-agency approach, such as CAPREV (Centre d'Aide et de Prise en charge de toute personne concernée par les Extrémismes et Radicalismes Violents) for issues of ideolgy and the national unit for threat analysis. According to the Belgian experience, discussing the threat analysis with the offenders can be a positive experience, as they can work to change it and learn what the public authorities think about them.

The approach of the City of Copenhagen (**Denmark**) involves among others a holistic risk assessment along nine dimensions and also includes protective factors; it involves multi-agency cooperation as institutionalised in the form of info-houses. Similar to the Norwegian approach, the mentorship programme involves finding the right "match" for the respective mentee; this could mean, for example, individuals working successfully in a particular area of interest. As a specific local feature, this case outlines difficulties in working with the families of left-wing extremist minors. This is due to the fact that the parents are often part of the same environment and affiliation with this type of extremism is not seen as a problem.

Challenges in the work towards intrinsic motivation

What can be done when motivation is missing?

- A number of other things can be taken care of **outside the strict area of motivation** while waiting for it to materialise, such as: maintaining contact; helping out with basic needs; offering a mediating role to other authorities.
- **Go beyond cognitions and use emotions:** by showing empathy; keeping a pulse on emotions and creating common ground: "No wonder you feel like that"; "follow the pain" – reaching out towards traumatic experiences in the past.

- Try to find out what is important for that particular person, their interests, their goals, and then **identify the benefits of change**.
- **Use materials** such as videos and online materials that are close to them.
- **Use specialised techniques** such as motivational interviewing or Socratic questions.
- **Use individual interests and emotional attachments** to stimulate motivation to change.
- **Reach out to external actors**: these can be members of the family or other authorities who might be suitable to deal with particular problems; this can also involve multi-agency meetings.

Dealing with challenges in motivational works

1) While the importance of **multi-agency** and **systemic approaches** has been recognised, their implementation in practice is often lacking. This directly influences the effectiveness of the intervention. Important steps could be working on understanding the different languages used in the various institutions; understanding the specialisation and strengths of the institutions (e.g. NGOs vs state institutions); trainings in the work of other sectors (e.g.: internships to step up cooperation between prisons and exit).

2) Bringing **communities** and **society** on board the intervention remains a challenge.

3) **Barriers to reintegration** (for example, not being able to find a job or changes to legal status) can have a negative effect on rehabilitation or diminish the motivation for disengagement; this underlines the importance of dealing with everyday basic individual needs.

4) People are in a social system that makes it hard to change; this underlines the importance of dealing with **social relationships**.

5) **Mental health issues** create additional difficulties in disengagement work, which often leads to a lack of emphasis on these cases. This demands for finding a good balance between what is needed in the exit process and what is mentally feasible.

6) In anger/frustration there is an element of **desire**; you can find out what it is and **capitalise on it**.

7) **Fake motivation** can be recognised when "you get all the answers you want to hear"; bringing up emotions can help against prefabricated scripts.

What could be further explored?

- Involvement of formers and how to assess them when it comes to being fit for the rehabilitation work (both on ideology as on skills).

- How to work on motivation and rehabilitation in case of mental health issues.

Further reading

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