

**1. In what ways do you think correctional services could benefit from greater involvement of individuals with lived experience?**

Individuals with lived experience can play a critical role in correctional services, particularly in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. Their first-hand knowledge of the challenges faced by offenders allows them to connect with incarcerated individuals in ways that traditional service providers may not. Peer mentors can offer guidance, emotional support, and practical solutions based on real-life experiences, fostering trust and motivation among offenders.

A significant challenge in rehabilitation programs is the psychological resistance that many offenders develop toward professionals working in correctional settings. Many offenders perceive that their criminal behaviour was shaped by their unique life experiences—poverty, trauma, addiction, or social marginalization. Consequently, when a rehabilitation expert or counsellor who has never shared similar hardships tries to engage with them, offenders often exhibit internal resistance, believing that these professionals cannot truly understand their struggles.

However, a peer mentor who has undergone a similar journey—struggled with crime, addiction, or social exclusion, and successfully rehabilitated—offers a completely different perspective. They serve as living proof that change is possible, which makes their guidance significantly more credible and effective. Offenders are more likely to listen, engage, and trust peer mentors who have walked in their shoes. This dynamic fosters a therapeutic relationship that supports behavioural change far more effectively than conventional intervention models.

There is a well-known Turkish proverb: “Hekimden sorma, çekenden sor,” which roughly translates to “Don’t ask the doctor, ask the one who has suffered”—emphasizing the unique value of those who have personally faced and overcome adversity. This philosophy strongly aligns with the idea that individuals with lived experience bring a perspective that is not only practical and empathetic but also highly effective in helping others navigate the rehabilitation process.

**2. Are you aware of any programs that you would consider ‘best practice’ for supporting the engagement and work of individuals with ‘lived experience’ in your jurisdiction?**

Yes, Türkiye has developed structured peer-support programs that integrate individuals with lived experience into both probation and correctional settings. The most prominent initiatives include:

**1. PPROMPT Peer Support and Life Skills Program (in Probation System)**

The PPROMPT (Peer Pro-Social Modeling in Probation) Program was designed as part of an Erasmus+ KA204 project and implemented within the probation system. This program:

- Trains individuals with lived experience as peer mentors to guide others in rehabilitation.
- Focuses on life skills development, including problem-solving, addiction recovery, and relapse prevention.
- Is structured around pro-social modeling, where those who have successfully reintegrated serve as role models for others in the probation system.

**2. Prison-Based Peer Support and Addiction Recovery Initiatives**

Türkiye has also begun integrating peer-support models within correctional facilities, particularly focusing on substance addiction recovery:

- A specialized correctional facility has recently been established in Adana, aimed at rehabilitating individuals with a history of substance dependency. This facility does not exclusively house individuals convicted of drug-related crimes but provides targeted rehabilitation and therapeutic interventions for offenders struggling with addiction.
- Collaboration with Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is component of this initiative. NA follows a 12-Step Recovery Model that encourages peer-to-peer support in addiction rehabilitation.
- The initiative aligns with a recent legislative change, allowing for expanded rehabilitation-focused incarceration models within the correctional system.

These programs leverage lived experience as a key tool in rehabilitation, providing structured guidance and mentorship for offenders seeking to reintegrate into society.

**3. Have you made any recent policy or legislative changes to support or expand the engagement of individuals with lived experience (e.g., allowing for the hiring of individuals with a criminal record)?**

While there has not been a recent legislative amendment specifically for employment policies, Türkiye's probation and correctional systems already provide a strong legal framework for integrating individuals with lived experience in rehabilitation programs.

Key legal provisions include:

- Article 77 of the Penal Execution Law – Allows correctional institutions to collaborate with NGOs, foundations, and volunteers to support offender rehabilitation.
- Article 107(9) of the Penal Execution Law – Permits the appointment of mentors and experts to guide and monitor offenders during probation, emphasizing support for rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Article 22 of the Probation Services Law – Explicitly permits volunteers to participate in probation services, granting them legal protections similar to public officials.

These laws facilitate the integration of peer mentors into both probation and prison rehabilitation programs, ensuring that individuals with lived experience play an active role in the correctional system.

**4. Is there anything that you are planning or considering for the future in supporting the deployment or employment of individuals with lived experience?**

Future initiatives include:

- Expanding the PPROMPT program to reach more probation offices and increasing the digital resources available for peer mentors.
- Enhancing Narcotics Anonymous (NA) support in correctional facilities, ensuring regular peer-led sessions for inmates struggling with addiction.
- Developing a structured mentoring system where peer mentors formally contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders within specialized units.

- Evaluating the impact of the new Adana-based correctional facility on addiction recovery, with the potential for replication in other regions.

**5. Do you believe there is a role for individuals with lived experience to provide feedback on new legislative, policy, or program development?**

Yes, their insights are invaluable for:

- Shaping probation and prison rehabilitation policies, ensuring they reflect real-world challenges and solutions.
- Improving the design of reintegration programs, particularly in areas like employment support, addiction recovery, and mental health services.
- Enhancing community perception of alternative sentencing models, reducing the stigma around probation and rehabilitation.



Both PPROMPT peer mentors and prison-based support groups regularly provide feedback to refine these programs.

**6. Do you see any particular obstacles or concerns that might interfere with the greater involvement of individuals with lived experience (e.g., trust or acceptance from existing staff)?**

Several challenges exist:

- Staff Resistance – Some correctional staff may hesitate to fully integrate peer mentors, fearing conflicts or professional boundaries.
- Legal Barriers – While peer mentors can work within rehabilitation programs, hiring individuals with criminal records for official positions remains legally complex.
- Sustainability – Expanding these programs requires consistent funding and long-term policy support.

Despite these concerns, Türkiye's structured legal framework and ongoing policy discussions continue to strengthen the role of peer mentors in rehabilitation.

	<b>REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE</b> <b>MINISTRY OF JUSTICE</b> <b>General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses</b>	
<b>Subject</b>	P-PROMPT Peer Support-Based Life Skills Programme	
<b>Supplied to</b>	Director General	
<b>Prepared by</b>	Department of Probation	

In 2018, within the scope of the reintegration of probationers into society at the Ankara Probation Directorate, it was necessary to develop new practices such as the peer education model, which is frequently used in today's adult education, in order to ensure the rehabilitation and reintegration of the probationers at the desired level and to provide education in a formation suitable for their own learning steps, perception levels and learning styles.

Peer education refers to a process in which a positive role model, selected from within a group that shares similar difficulties, issues, emotions, age, education level, status, interests, and needs, provides training to other group members. Since peer groups involve higher levels of modelling, identification, and interaction, social learning occurs more effectively within them. To establish an effective rehabilitation process for probationers, the “Peer Pro-Social Modelling in Probation (PPROMPT)” Project was developed under Erasmus KA204. Within the scope of this project, the Directorate-General for Reintegration and Prison Services of Portugal (DGRSP), Innovative Prison Systems (IPS) (Portugal), European Strategies Consulting (ESC) (Romania), and the Ankara Probation Directorate partnered to identify best practices in peer pro-social modelling education in the project partner countries. Expert personnel from the Ankara Probation Directorate and specialists from partner countries collaborated to develop booklets outlining the implementation stages of the programme, as well as a curriculum consisting of ten sessions that peer trainers would use as a basis for their instruction.

**The session topics of the programme are as follows:**

- 1) Our Excuses and Us
- 2) Make Your Own Choice!
- 3) Social Behaviours
- 4) Planning for the Future
- 5) Family

- 6) Effective and Competent Parenting
- 7) Marriage and Divorce
- 8) Problem-Solving Skills
- 9) Use
- 10) Leisure Activities

The Peer Support-Based Life Skills Programme consists of a peer trainer's guide, a trainer's training manual, and resource books detailing the content and methodology of the sessions. The PPROMPT Life Skills Programme book includes session contents, activities, and exercises. The Peer Trainer's Guide and Trainer's Training Manual provide detailed information on pro-social modelling, adult and peer education, learning methods and techniques, group management, creating an effective training environment, and communication. Additionally, based on insights gained from workshops and pilot applications conducted by experts, key aspects of the programme's implementation were reviewed. These included the duration of the programme, criteria for selecting eligible probationers, considerations for selecting peer trainers, and the formation of a dedicated PPROMPT working team to facilitate programme execution. The Trainer's Training Manual also details the preparatory work required before training, as well as specific guidelines for planning and conducting training sessions.

From 10–14 February 2025, the Directorate of Probation participated in the trainer's training held at the Ankara Penal Institutions Staff Training Centre. During the training process, feedback obtained from both practitioner and trainer sessions revealed certain deficiencies in the existing programme guidelines and instructions. Consequently, it was agreed that the slides and manuals would be updated accordingly, and necessary revision efforts were initiated.