

## **Increasing the capacity for Correctional Officers to play an active role in prevention: A Co-designed Harm Reduction module for NSW prison staff**

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**Background/Approach:** Up to 50% of people in the NSW custodial setting have a history of injecting drug use and there is evidence of ongoing Hepatitis C transmission within centres. A report completed by the NSW prisons Harm Reduction Reference Group in 2018 recommended workforce development for correctional officers on prevention strategies be strengthened. This Commentary explores the production of a Harm Reduction Online Learning Module (OLM) for officers through a co-design approach to meaningfully engage from both a health and security orientated perspective.

**Analysis/Argument:** An external design and research company was engaged to develop an OLM on Harm Reduction and a mixed member advisory group of senior Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) staff was appointed to work with Justice Health NSW to oversee the project. The co-design process was extensive and included community consultation, a co-design workshop, focus interviews and groups, content review and user testing with frontline correctional staff. A series of videos were also created to be embedded in the OLM with current officers and external experts discussing Harm Reduction in prisons.

**Outcome/Results:** Between July 2022 and February 2023 a 25 minute online learning module for officers titled *Harm Reduction: A guide to safe practices in prison* was completed and endorsed by the CSNSW advisory committee. The final OLM is a short mixed media module with a tone that reflects a mix of real world CSNSW staff experiences and external expert opinions. Key themes that emerged to support officer engagement with the concept of harm reduction where workplace and community safety, professional practice and how harm reduction can support rehabilitation.

**Conclusions/Applications:** The OLM is currently being uploaded onto the CSNSW Learning Management System and an implementation plan is being finalised. Health and Correctional Services can engage meaningfully around harm reduction to create education framed appropriately for officers.

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