



Training Center of
Justice of Georgia



Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid



Summary: EPTA Training on Occupational Stress Management for Employees of the Penitentiary System

On 4-5 December 2024, the EPTA training on Occupational Stress Management for Employees of the Penitentiary System was conducted in Nieuwegein, The Netherlands. The event, co-hosted by the Georgian Training Centre of Justice and the Dutch Training Academy of the Ministry of Justice, welcomed 23 participants from 15 jurisdictions across Europe.

Day 1 Highlights

The training commenced with welcoming remarks from the organisers. Participants' expectations were gathered, revealing a preference for practical and interactive methods over theoretical approaches.

Key sessions focused on:

- Understanding stress as a subjective experience and its dual nature—both as a motivator and a challenge.
- Exploring the responsibilities of individuals and institutions in managing stress, highlighting the necessity of stress-sensitive policies.
- Addressing the physical, mental, and social dimensions of stress, with an emphasis on creating a workplace culture that values boundary-setting and encourages seeking help.
- Discussing international perspectives on psychological services and mental health awareness in correctional environments.

Interactive activities underscored the physiological effects of stress and introduced tools for recognising alarm signals. Group discussions addressed daily stressors, coping mechanisms, and strategies to foster resilience within prison services.

Day 2 Highlights

The second day began with a self-assessment activity that enabled participants to develop personalised self-care plans. Practical techniques, such as short-term stress reduction through breathing exercises and grounding methods, were introduced.

A stress mapping exercise illuminated the impacts of stress and its consequences, particularly ineffective communication stemming from unmet expectations or feelings of disrespect. The session concluded with actionable tips for improving communication and fostering a supportive work environment.

Conclusion

The training provided a valuable platform for exchanging best practices and exploring the complexities of occupational stress within prison services. Participants left equipped with practical tools, a deeper understanding of stress dynamics, and actionable strategies to enhance well-being in their institutions.



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