Good practice standards for exit work
and
inter-agency cooperation –

with reference to
a current controversy on confidentiality

Harald Weilnböck

Preface

An exit program is not only about (de-)radicalizing individuals

"It's democracy, stupid!"

How we set up the instrument of exit counselling, is key!

Exit work is about (re)building democracy and resilience of society/ communities

Luca/ research: "the more PVE policy – the more civil society shrinks" ?

Hence, inter-agency cooperation is key

Because (de-)radicalisation is always systemic (family, community, society, geopolitics)

Yet, policy making treats exit work mostly as a particular program/ service.

Content

- Good practice in exit work
- Good governance in policy making/ program design …
- Inter-agency collaboration
- A controversy about

    cooperation between security agencies and civil society exit workers

Good practice in exit work should …

The level of attitude/ habitus of practitioner:

- … provide *trust* – and focus on building *personal trust* throughout the process

- *…* implement professional *relationship work* (personal, with commitment + delineation)

- … provide a "safe space" / <u>uncompromised</u> <u>*confidentiality*</u> (right to privacy)

- … employ *external NGO* practitioners (independent, no reporting, across institutions)

- … needs to be *voluntary / personal motivation* ("incremental buy-in"/ commitment)

  no incentives, no sanctions about drop-out

- … provide *safety* (client and society)

- … focus on personal *resources* and *capacities* of the client (vs. risk assessment)

- *…* in sum re attitude: *respect, eye's level/ equality, safeguarding, participation, empowering*

Good practice in exit work should …

The technical level/ method:

- … be *open-process, open-ended*, i.e. proceed without session plans/ modules

- … but with a *mutual work agreement* with the client about *objectives*,
    aimed-for personal changes, and *next steps*

- … follow a *narrative mode* of communication, deemphasizing arguments/debate, counter-speech; focus *biography*, *family history*, life-world *experience*

- … focus on *social skills* and *emotional intelligence* (in the area of conflict, anger/ rage, shame/ guilt, and anxiety)

Good practice in exit work should …

The technical level/ method:

- … follow the *triangular* exit work methodology (tandem teams)

- … consider *group settings* as much as possible (accompanied by one-on-one settings),

- … pick up on issues of *gender identity* – also on sex/ sexuality

- … pick up on issues of *extremism* and *group hatred*

- … pick up on *political* and *religious issues* – in perspective of personal grievances

- … consider and include *social context* and *family* of the client

Good practice in policy making/ exit program design should …

The policy level

• … muster *all-partisan* state support for prevention – and *de-politicize*

• … follow a *cross-extremisms* approach (non-stigmatizing/ non-polarizing)

• … provide *community embedded* exit programs

         within a local framework of *universal prevention (drugs, mental health…)*

• … give highest priority to the *protection of personal data* and confidentiality (cf. the controversy)

The policy level

- … provided independent *peer-review quality assurance*

  policy makers, stay away from quality assurance: no top-down quality control!

- … refrain from over-emphasizing the *online domain* (counter-narratives don't work)

  however, explore online street work and online counselling

- … put in place a mitigation plan against *risks of quality backlash* (there always is backlash when activity and spending levels rise starkly)

- … also mitigate against risks of *industrialisation* and *bureaucratisation* (ombud's office)

Good practice in policy making… and <u>inter-agency</u> collaboration

- … provide a framework of <u>*inter-agency collaboration*</u>

- … observe the *division of functions* and the *division of powers* in democratic society

- … (I) provide *inter-agency* collaboration <u>between social services</u>

  - e.g. exit work, youth/ family service, probation, employment, mental health …

  - <u>case conferences</u> ("purpose based"/ with a specific reason)

  - informed consent by client (be always transparent)

  - any written notes and oral exchange using *pseudonyms*

… (II) provide *inter-agency* collaboration between <u>exit practitioners </u>and <u>security/ intelligence</u>

- getting to know/ *trust each other* – and learn about the other's work field

- *referral* through security / intelligence,

- *clear protocols* of interaction and exchange:

security can share all information, exit practitioners *should not have to share* <u>any information –</u>

Good practice in policy making… the controversy

… (II) … a controversy on information sharing/ case conferences with security agencies

>> information sharing should be a "one-way street" only !

- no joint case conferences, not even with high-risk clients

- no joint risk assessments with security or judicial authorities

The singe most important requirement:

- provide the law granting exit practitioners the right to refuse giving witness in court about their clients (as physicians, priests and psychotherapists have it)

"Exit Counselling, Confidentiality, the Right to Refuse to Testify…"
http://www.cultures-interactive.de/de/fachartikel.html

Five basic concerns about joint case conferences

Civil society practitioners have five basic concerns

(1) The protection of the rights of the <u>clients</u> and their <u>families</u> (data and personality protection)

(2) The <u>functionality</u> of exit work – does the nature of the intervention prevail

(3) The <u>trustworthiness</u> of exit work/ outreach – will the target group be reached effectively

(4) The division of powers/ functions in <u>democratic society</u> ("A Prevention-Police State"?)

(5) Is there much benefit for <u>public safety</u> from the joint case conferences?

>> Possibly more preferable: practice double security, but separately:

>> Both key partners (security agencies and exit practitioners) professionalize their own means of risk assessment and security precautions

Contact

Harald Weilnböck: harald.weilnboeck@cultures-interactive.de

Literature:

http://www.cultures-interactive.de/de/fachartikel.html (forthcoming)

- "The Policy Brief of the EXIT Europe project"

- "The Evaluation Report of the EXIT Europe project"

- "RAN Derad Declaration of Good Practice – Principles of Sustainable Interventions in Disengagement and Rehabilitation (Deradicalisation) … "

- Various essay on inter-agency cooperation (forthcoming)

"Security can share all info., exit workers should not share any info. – one-way!"

https://www.deutschlandfunknova.de/suche/ergebnisse?q=clan%20ausstieg;

Jörg Unkrig, director of a criminal police section in Germany explains the „one-way-street" principle of cooperation between police and exit worker, in Podcast minute 9.