CASE STUDIES

Collection and Analysis

CONTENT

Introduction

A comprehensive analysis of the narratives provided by participants after each session revealed several key areas of learning and notable benefits associated with the ICS curriculum. One prominent theme was personal growth, with participants reporting enhanced self-awareness, increased confidence, and the development of essential life skills. Communication skills also emerged as a significant area, as participants noted improvements in their ability to interact effectively in both interpersonal and professional contexts. Another important benefit was workplace integration, with the curriculum equipping participants with the skills necessary to adapt to diverse work environments and contribute meaningfully to organizational settings. Emotional management was highlighted as a crucial outcome, with participants demonstrating an improved ability to understand and regulate their emotions, fostering resilience and reducing stress in challenging situations. Additionally, the curriculum supported the development of decision-making skills, empowering participants to approach problems critically and make informed choices. The use of virtual reality training further enriched the learning experience, providing immersive and practical applications that bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world scenarios. These findings underscore the comprehensive impact of the ICS curriculum, showcasing its effectiveness in promoting holistic personal and professional development.

Personal Growth: Self-Awareness, Reflection, and Value-Based Living

Self-awareness and reflection

Many detainees acknowledge that understanding their values, emotions, and behaviours is crucial for personal growth. They see these skills as tools for rebuilding self-esteem, making better decisions, and moving forward in life: "I have realized that my thoughts make me behave in a certain way, and this will help me to think twice before doing something", "Being mindful of relapse, what challenges me and how I might cope when problematic situations arise.", "Honestly, it starts with getting real about who you are. It's like taking a good, hard look in the mirror and figuring out what's driving you—your dreams, your fears, all of it.", "Being able to take a hard look at yourself—sometimes with a bit of humour—helps you understand who you really are. That self-awareness is key when it comes to starting over. It's not just about knowing your strengths but also owning your mistakes and figuring out how to do better."

Values-based living

Identifying and adhering to core values is seen as a guide for making life decisions and fostering a sense of purpose. This is the contribution of ACT background of the program: "I noticed that we don't really know our personal values and it got me thinking about them", "I think this activity will help me realize that even though life can be difficult at times, I am in control of my decisions. If I focus on my values and what I want to achieve, I can move forward without letting problems stop me.". Some detainees noted that understanding their values and the fact that people can have different values would help them remain grounded in their relationships and professional settings. "Values are different for everyone, but they're what give us the foundation to stand strong in society. They're like the rules we live by that help us figure out who we are and how we treat others. Even though everyone's values might not be the same, they're what guide us in dealing with people and fitting into the bigger picture.", "But the thing is, everyone's values and ideals are different. What's important to one person might not mean the same to someone else. Understanding this diversity—why people think and act the way they do—is a big step toward better relationships and communication. At the end of the day, though, it's up to us to decide how much effort we're willing to put into becoming better versions of ourselves. For example, if I value honesty, I need to start by being honest with myself about my flaws and mistakes. Then I can work on fixing them, whether that means apologizing to someone I've wronged."

Communication: Active Listening, Empathy and Conflict Resolution

Active listening and empathy

Detainees recognize the importance of listening to others and understanding different perspectives to improve relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. They aim to use these skills to reduce misunderstandings and build stronger connections: "Active listening is key. This means giving the right eye contact, adjusting our voice to a respectful volume, and making sure we don't interrupt or change the subject. All these little things show the person we're talking to that we respect them and their point of view. Most importantly, we need to listen without immediately paraphrasing or putting our own spin on what they're saying. We have to let them speak their truth and take the time to fully understand their perspective before responding."

Conflict Resolution

Learning to manage anger and resolve conflicts constructively is seen as pivotal for maintaining peace in personal and professional relationships: "I can use what I've learned by maturing and doing a self-check, which helps me handle different situations at work without getting into conflicts. By looking for alternative solutions, I can find ways to solve the problems I face, staying calm and focused on finding a way through challenges instead of letting them turn into conflicts.", "I learned that when we run into a tough situation at work, there are different ways to deal with it. We can use strategies to avoid getting stuck or making things worse. It's all about finding the best way to handle things without letting stress or conflict take over."

Workplace Integration: Professional Readiness, Rights, and Responsibilities

Professional Readiness

Skills like creating resumes, presenting qualifications, and navigating workplace challenges (by setting healthy boundaries, for example) are viewed as key to securing and retaining jobs: "I'll make a plan when I go for an interview", "I can use what I've learned by keeping my resume short, honest, and clear when looking for a job. In the interview, I should focus on my strengths but also be real about my weaknesses, showing I'm open to learning and improving. If they ask about my criminal record, it's up to me whether I want to bring it up or not. If it comes up, I can share it in a way that doesn't sound bad or make things awkward. The key is to be upfront, but also control how I tell my story and keep things positive.", "It will help me to learn to say "no" when something doesn't seem fair or when I can't do something. Sometimes I say "yes" to everything out of fear, but now I know that it is important to take care of myself and to set limits when necessary, and this will help me at work, because sometimes I don't say what bothers me for fear that others will get angry. Now I know that I can say what I feel calmly and clearly, and that it is important for others to respect my boundaries.", "I can use what I've learned by setting clear boundaries with myself and the people around me to build healthy, solid relationships. At work, if I'm honest, respectful, and stay true to my values, I can ask for what I need, negotiate, and get what I'm after— as long as it's realistic. Setting those boundaries helps me stay grounded and focused, while still being able to go after my goals without stepping on anyone's toes.

Rights and responsibilities

Understanding workplace rights and responsibilities helps detainees feel more confident and prepared for employment: "It helps me to know what rights I have at work, but also what my responsibilities are, so I can respect them.", "I can use what I've learned by understanding my rights at work, but also remembering I've got responsibilities. By respecting myself and the people I work with, I can do my part and help keep things running smoothly. It's all about working together, building trust, and making sure everything gets done right. That way, we can create a solid, positive vibe where everyone pulls their weight and things get done efficiently."

Emotional management

Recognizing and managing emotions, particularly anger, is viewed as crucial for maintaining composure and avoiding destructive behavior. Stepping back to assess situations before reacting helps detainees handle conflicts constructively: "Instead of letting my anger take over, I can step back, take a breath, and think things through. By doing this, I can stay calm, avoid unnecessary drama, and handle things in a way that's better for everyone involved."

Decision making

Many detainees emphasize the practicality of using their training to make better decisions in life. Applying learned concepts to make thoughtful life choices, from managing personal data to resolving workplace conflicts. "I can use what I've learned by being careful about where and why I share my personal information. Whether it's for work or in my social circles, I need to think about who I'm sharing it with and if it's really necessary. Protecting my privacy is important, so I should always make sure I'm making informed decisions about what I disclose."

Virtual reality training

VR simulations are particularly appreciated for providing realistic scenarios to practice skills such as job interviews, workplace behavior, and conflict resolution. Detainees see VR as an engaging way to prepare for real-world situations, boosting their confidence and readiness. "The opportunity to use virtual reality (VR) during the training was a game-changer for me. It allowed us to experience real-life

scenarios, such as job interviews and different workplace situations, in a way that went beyond just theory."

Conclusion

The case studies analysed in the project RECOMMIT highlight significant outcomes, showcasing both strong and weak areas while offering valuable insights for future improvement. The findings reveal that the project's methodologies had a profound impact on participants' personal and professional development. Among the strong areas, participants reported substantial personal growth, including enhanced self-awareness, reflection, and alignment with values-based living. These aspects helped individuals better understand themselves, make purposeful decisions, and navigate life's challenges more effectively. Additionally, communication skills such as active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution were significantly improved, fostering stronger relationships and reducing misunderstandings.

Workplace integration also emerged as a key strength, with participants gaining practical skills in professional readiness, an understanding of workplace rights and responsibilities, and the ability to set and maintain healthy boundaries. The innovative use of virtual reality training was another standout success, offering immersive and engaging experiences that bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, boosting participants' confidence and preparedness for professional settings.

However, the case studies also identified areas for improvement. While the program excelled in fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation, some participants noted a lack of follow-up mechanisms to ensure the sustained application of these skills over time. Additionally, although virtual reality training was widely praised, its accessibility and adaptability to the diverse needs of participants, including those with disabilities or limited technological proficiency, were limited. Furthermore, some participants expressed the need for more personalized feedback and tailored support to address their unique challenges, particularly in developing advanced workplace skills. Decision-making training, while beneficial, could also be improved by incorporating a more structured framework for applying these skills in complex, real-world scenarios.

To address these challenges, several suggestions are proposed. First, the development of follow-up mechanisms, such as mentoring programs or regular check-ins, would help participants maintain and build upon the skills acquired during the training. Second, enhancing the accessibility of virtual reality training by ensuring it accommodates diverse needs would enable broader participation. Third, offering

more personalized feedback and one-on-one coaching opportunities would provide targeted support to participants and refine their workplace readiness. Finally, strengthening decision-making frameworks by introducing more robust and realistic exercises would enhance participants' ability to tackle complex problems effectively.

In conclusion, the case studies demonstrate the transformative potential of the project's holistic and innovative approach. By addressing the identified weaknesses and implementing these targeted improvements, the project can further enhance its impact, empowering participants to achieve sustainable personal and professional growth while fostering long-term resilience and success.