

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TOOLKIT

FOR PRISON
MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



Mental Health Awareness Toolkit:

For Prison Health Professionals

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Justice Project Pakistan is a non-profit legal action firm representing the most vulnerable Pakistanis facing the harshest punishments at home and abroad.

JPP investigates, educates and litigates on their behalf.

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Introduction

*“the federal government (for Islamabad Capital Territory) and all the provincial governments **shall immediately launch training programs** and short certificate **courses** on forensic mental health assessment for **psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers, lawyers, prison staff, police personnel, court staff, prosecutors** and **the judges of trial courts**”.*

✦ *Mst. Safia Bano vs Home Department, Government of Punjab
Judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan .¹*

People with mental illnesses are among the most vulnerable group of individuals in society, yet their vulnerability is seldom recognised or afforded the appropriate level of protection in the criminal justice system. The prevalence of major psychiatric disorders is high in prisoners in low and middle income countries compared with general populations.²

In 2020, 598 prisoners were diagnosed and are under treatment for mental illness in jail in Pakistan³. 3,831 prisoners are currently on death row, and it remains unclear how many of these are mentally ill or have become so while in detention.⁴

Mental health professionals in prisons face the consequences of supervising people with mental illness on a daily basis, yet frequently do not receive the necessary training or support. Identifying this need, the Supreme Court gave a landmark judgment providing broad guidelines for managing offenders living

with mental illness. Issued on 10th February 2021, in the case of Mst. Safia Bano vs Home Department, Government of Punjab, the court prohibited capital punishment for prisoners with mental illness. It also directed Federal and Provincial authorities to set up special forensic mental health facilities and institute training and awareness programs on forensic mental health for medical personnel, social workers, police, prison staff, lawyers, judges, magistrates and other court personnel.

In order to help health professionals and mental health workers in prisons to imbibe this change in the care of the mentally ill in prisons, Justice Project Pakistan has compiled a handbook, designed a toolkit and organised training opportunities to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the aforementioned individuals.

This toolkit has been compiled to aid in the improvement of skills in managing the mentally ill in prisons. It provides a series of questionnaires in order to aid prison medical and mental health professionals to know what, when and how to ask about issues pertaining to mental health. The aim of this toolkit is to be a quick guide for clinical interactions with those at risk of or suffering from mental illness.

This toolkit is to be used in conjunction with the Manual on Mental Health for Prison Mental Health Professionals

- [1] Case title: Mst. Safia Bano vs Home Department, Government of Punjab
Citation: 2021 PLD 488 Supreme Court
- [2] Baranyi G, Scholl C, Fazel S, Patel V, Priebe S, Mundt AP. Severe mental illness and substance use disorders in prisoners in low-income and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prevalence studies. *The Lancet Global Health*. 2019 Apr 1;7(4):e461-71.1
- [3] Prison Reform Report, Ministry of Human Rights, (January 2020)
- [4] Death Penalty Database, Justice Project Pakistan, (2021)

Mental Health in Prison

10 million people are currently in prison, **worldwide.** ^{1, 2}

All mental health issues are far more common in prisoners than the general population.

According to the Lancet,

“Prisoners are also at increased risk of all-cause mortality, suicide, self-harm, violence, and victimisation.” ^{1, 2}

[See Table 1]

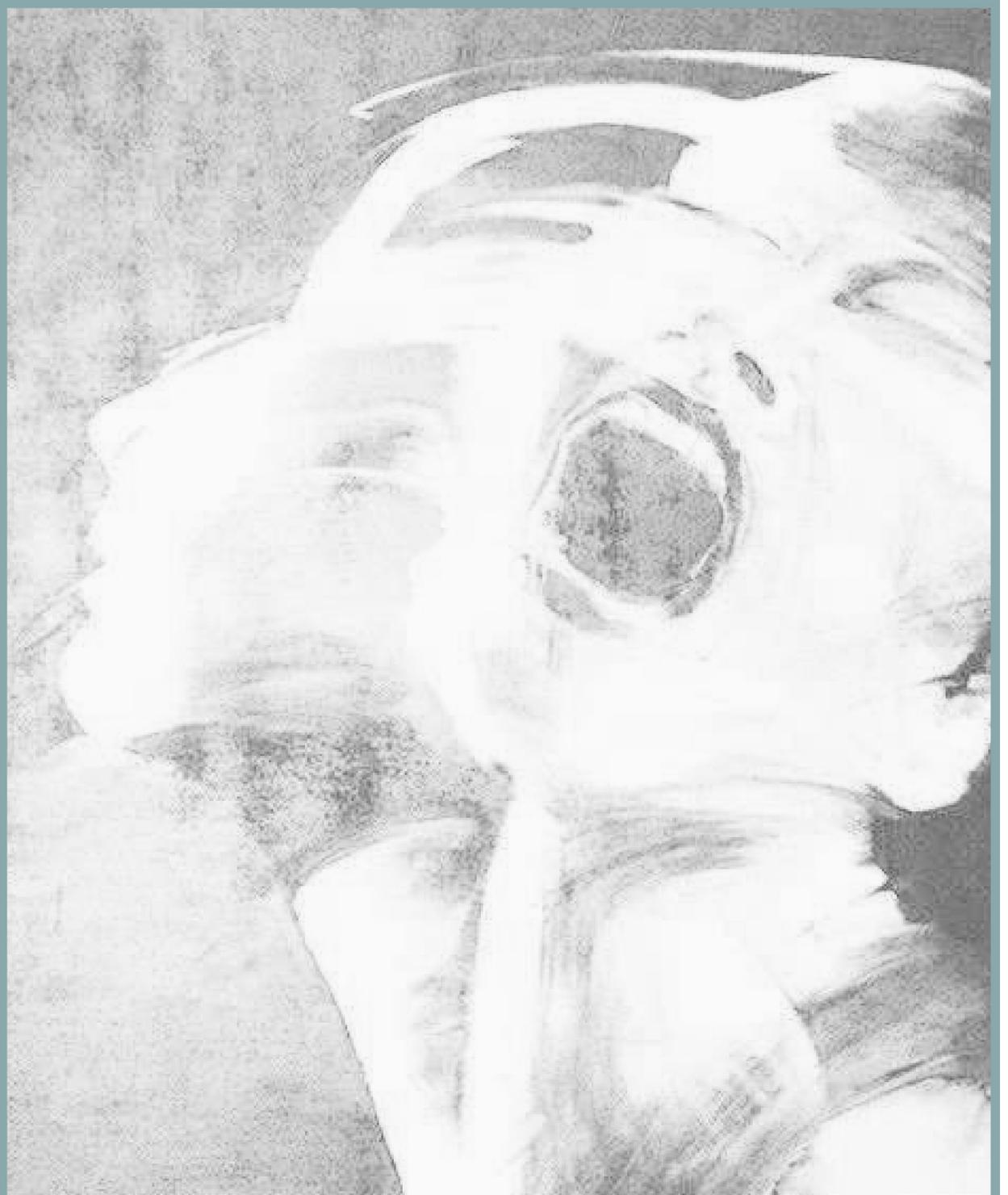
Imprisoned individuals often have a low socio-economic background, belong to minority groups, and have histories of childhood victimisation and substance abuse, which make them vulnerable to psychiatric disorders. While in prison, poor living conditions, physical assault and psychological abuse can further contribute to mental health disorders.

	MALE	FEMALE
PSYCHOTIC ILLNESS	4% (3-4)	4% (3-5)
MAJOR DEPRESSION	10% (9-12)	14% (10-18)
ALCOHOL MISUSE	18–30%	10–24%
DRUG MISUSE	10–48%	30–60%

Data are % (95% CI) or %.

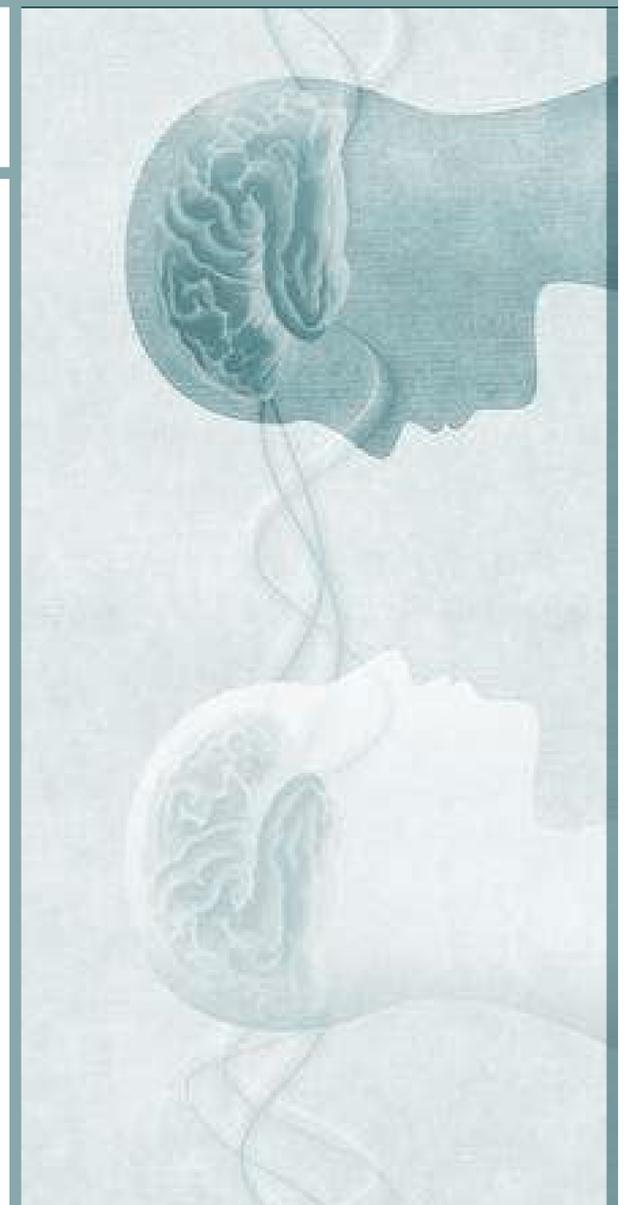
Table 1: Prevalence of different psychiatric diagnoses in adult prisoners based on systematic reviews ^{1, 2}

Risk Factors for Mental Illness ³



Biological Factors

- + Genetic Predisposition:
1st Degree Relative w/ Mental Illness
- + Genetic Disorder:
Affecting Physical/Mental Health
- + Intellectual Disability
- + H/O Head Trauma
- + Substance Misuse
- + Maternal Age at Time of Birth



Psychological Factors

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- + Anxious Avoidant
- + Dependent
- + Antisocial
- + Emotionally Unstable Personality Traits
- + Schizoid
- + Paranoid

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

- + Physical, Emotional, Sexual Abuse
- + Parental Neglect (Physical/Emotional)



Social Factors

- + Unemployment
- + Poverty
- + Migrant status
- + Stressful Life Events
- + Major Trauma
- + Urbanization
- + War
- + Political unrest



Symptoms and Signs of a Mental Disorder



Self Neglect



Social Withdrawal



Excessive Fears, Worries And Anxieties



Inappropriate Emotional Responses



Confused Thinking



Self-Harm, Suicidal Thoughts / Attempts



Strong Feelings Of Anger



**Prolonged Depression
Or Irritability**



**Numerous
Unexplained Physical
Symptoms**



**Irrelevant Talk Or
Talking To One's Own
Self / Self-Muttering Or
Smiling**



**Unprovoked,
Unexpected Anger
And Violence**



**Inability To Cope With
Daily Problems And
Activities**



**Seeing Or Hearing
Things That Those
Around Cannot
(Hallucinations)**



**Feelings Of Extreme
Highs And Lows, Or
Fluctuations Of Mood**

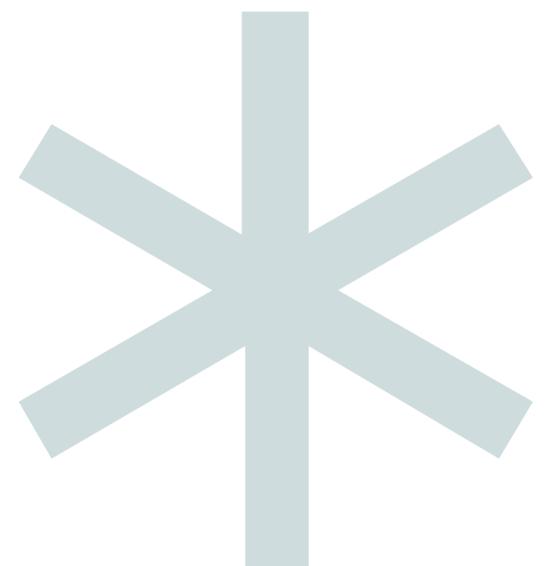


**Strange And Bizarre
Strongly Held Beliefs
(Delusions)**

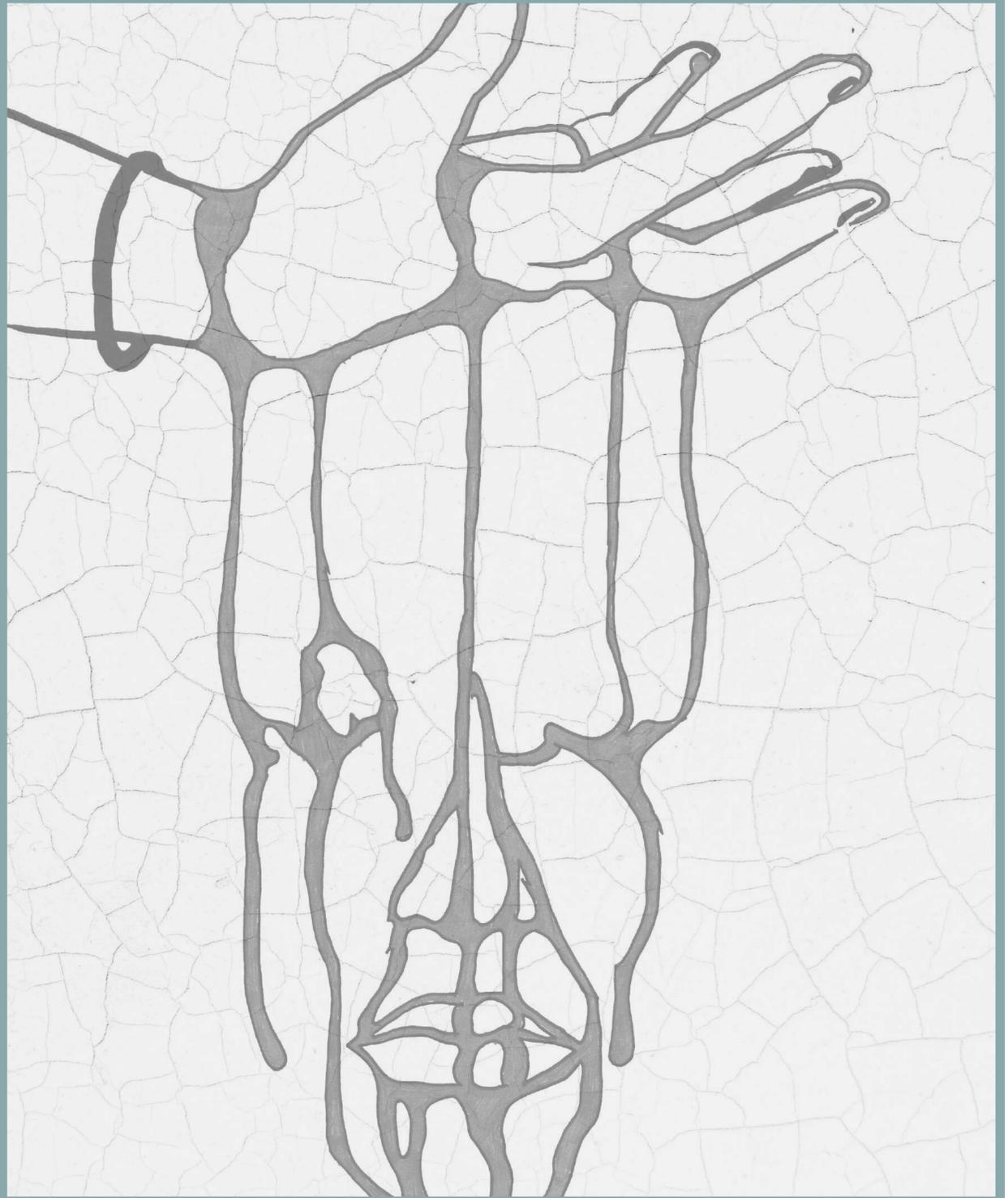


**Dramatic Or
Consistent Changes
In Eating Or Sleeping
Habits**

If these indications are seen and persist for over a period of 2-4 weeks,⁴ the prison staff should make a referral to the medical staff, who can then undertake the forensic mental health questionnaire.



Suicide and Self- Harm



Prisoners are **upto 10x more likely to die of suicide** than people in the community.⁵

This may be as a result of mental illness that is treatable.

Suicide^{1, 2, 5}



Risk Factors

- + Suicidal Ideation
- + Single Cell Occupancy
- + History of Attempted Suicide
- + Current Psychiatric Diagnosis
- + Psychotropic Medication
- + Detainee or Remand Status
- + Life Sentence
- + Murder or Manslaughter Offence
- + Violent Offence
- + Substance Abuse Problems
- + Past Contact with Mental Health Services
- + Being Married before Prison

Protective Factors

- + Length of Sentence <18 months
- + Sentenced Compared with Remand



Sexual Victimization



Risk Factors

- + Mental Disorder
- + Female
- + Minority Ethnic Group

Protective Factors

- + None Reported



Self-Harm^{1, 2, 5}



Risk Factors

- + Younger Age
- + Sentence Length <12 Months
- + Life Sentence
- + Detainee or Remand Status
- + Previous Violent Offence (Women Only)

Protective Factors

- + Residing in Less Secure or Open Prisons



Near Lethal Self-Harm



Risk Factors

- + No Educational Qualifications
- + Prior Prison Spell
- + <30 Days in Prison
- + Mood Disorders
- + Anxiety Disorders
- + Psychoses
- + Drug Use Disorder
- + Past Psychiatric Treatment
- + Previous Self-harm in Prison
- + Previous Self-harm Outside Prison
- + Two or More Psychiatric Disorders

Protective Factors

- + Educational Qualifications
- + Contact with Family/Friends in Past 3 Months
- + Visits from or Speaking with Family/Friends in Last 7 Days



Prison Violence ³



Risk Factors

- + Younger Age
- + Minority Ethnic Group
- + Less Formal Education
- + Shorter Sentence
- + Gang Affiliation
- + Prior Arrests
- + Prior Incarceration
- + Prior Poor Incarceration Adjustment
- + Dual Diagnosis
(Mental Illness And Substance Misuse;
Substance Misuse)

Protective Factors

- + Older Age



- + Aggression
- + Psychopathology
- + Less Social Support
- + Major Mental Illness
- + Psychopathy

Physical Victimization



Risk Factors

- + Mental Disorder
- + Younger Age
- + White Ethnicity
- + Sexual Offence
- + Past Victimization
- + Gang Involvement
- + Dissatisfaction With Officers

Protective Factors

- + Involvement in
Work Programmes



Violence Risk Assess- ment³



Serious mental illness, especially when coupled with substance misuse, can lead to violence. This may lead to prisoners being placed in solitary confinement, punished or handled violently or an increase in their prison sentence, all of which can lead to worsening of mental illness. If mental illness is identified as the causative agent, or a prisoner is known to be mentally ill, the following algorithm may help in managing violence.

A history of violence is the best predictor of future violence.

Among the illness factors, **psychotic disorder** and **drug or alcohol misuse** are important, and the combination of **psychosis, substance misuse,** and **personality disorder** is associated with the highest risk of violence.

Alcohol and Drug With- Drawal



The **mortality rate** from severe alcohol withdrawal and delirium tremens (DT) historically has been **as high as 20%** if untreated.⁶

Effects of Withdrawal

- + Tachycardia
- + Sweating
- + Tremors
- + Vomiting
- + Seizures
- + Confusion
- + Hallucinations
- + Agitation
- + Insomnia



Risk Factors for Harm to Others ⁵



Personal Factors

- + Previous Violence To Others *
- + Antisocial, Impulsive, Or Irritable Personality Traits
- + Male And Young
- + Recent Life Crisis
- + Poor Social Network
- + Divorced Or Separated
- + Unemployed
- + Social Instability
- + Parent With History Of Violence



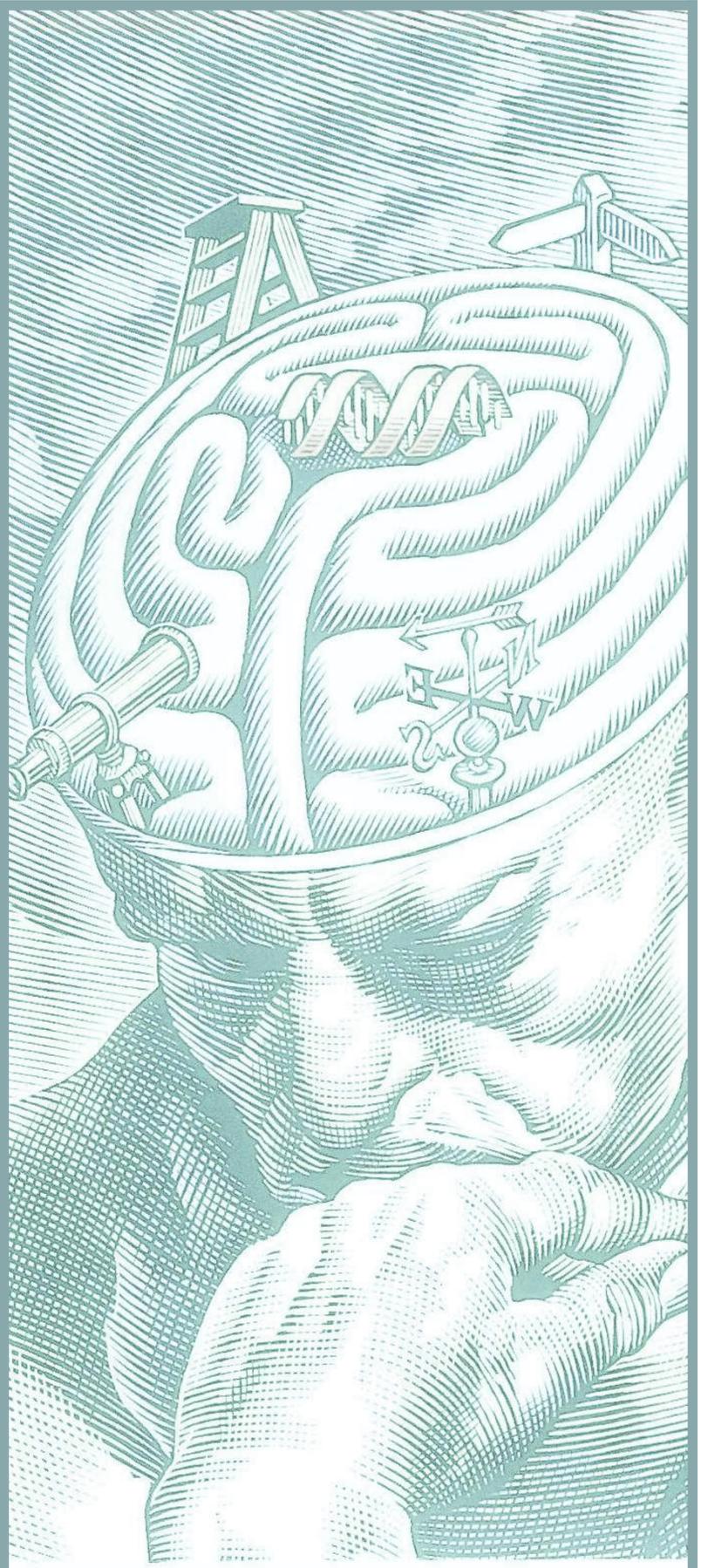


Illness Related Factors

- + Psychotic Symptoms *
- + Substance Abuse *
- + Treatment Resistant
- + Poor Compliance With Treatment
- + Stopped Medication Recently

Mental State Factors

- + Irritability
- + Hostility
- + Anger
- + Suspiciousness
- + Thoughts Of Violence Towards Others
- + Threats To People To Whom Patient Has Access *
- + Planning Of Violence *
- + Persecutory Delusions
- + Delusions Of Jealousy
- + Delusions Of Influence
- + Hallucinations Commanding Violence To Others
- + Suicidal Ideas With Severe Depression
- + Clouding Of Consciousness
- + Lack Of Insight About Illness



Situational Factors

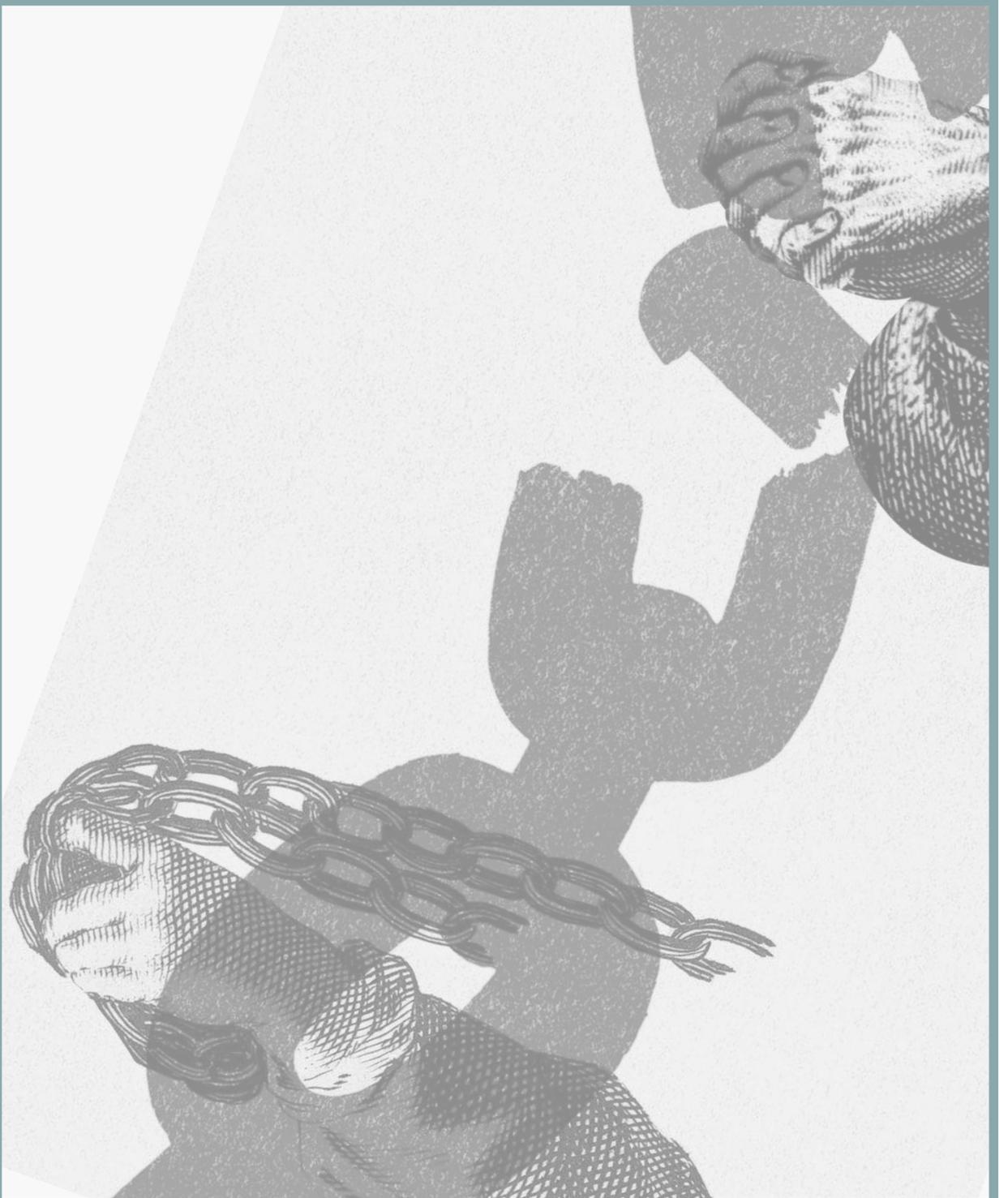
- + Confrontation And Provocation By Others
- + Situations Associated With Previous Violence
- + Ready Availability Of Weapons



* Asterisks Denote The Most Important Factors In Each Category

List Reproduced From The Shorter Oxford Textbook Of Psychiatry, Seventh Edition⁵

Management of Violence



Establishment Of Verbal Contact



Avoiding Being Provocative



Being Concise



Listening Closely To The Prisoner



Offering Choices And Optimism



Setting Clear Limits



Debriefing The Prisoner And Staff



Respecting The
Prisoner And Their
Personal Space



Identifying The
Wants Or Feelings Of
The Patient



Negotiating And
Trying To Agree Or
Agreeing To Disagree



Proactive
De-Escalation
Planning

In the event that verbal de-escalation has failed, oral medication may be used. In the event that a prisoner is unable to take oral medication, injectibles may be used.⁷

Forensic Mental Health Screening Questionnaire:

DETAINEE
VERSION
(FMHSQ-D)

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
A. PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY/ SUICIDE RISK			
<p>+ Has The Detainee Ever Been Hospitalised For Psychiatric Treatment?</p>			
<p>+ Is The Detainee Currently Receiving Any Psychiatric Treatment?</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Take Any Medication? (Psychiatric Or Otherwise)</p> <p>If Yes, Enter Names In Comments Column</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Use Alcohol, Drugs, Or Both?</p>			
<p>+ Has The Detainee Ever Attempted Suicide? When? How?</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Feel Suicidal Now?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
+ Is There A History Of Prolonged/Severe Medical Illness?			
+ Does The Detainee Have A Past Criminal History?			
B. PAST HISTORY OF ADVERSITY, ABUSE, & INJURY			
+ Is There A History Of Delayed Developmental Milestones?			
+ Is There A History Of Learning (Intellectual) Disability?			
+ Is There A History Of Head Injury? If, Yes, Was This Followed By A Loss Of Consciousness?			
+ Is There Childhood History Of Physical, Emotional, Or Sexual Abuse?			
+ What Is The Detainee's Family Psychiatric History?			
+ Is There A Family History Of Substance / Alcohol Use?			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p>+ Is There History Of Fits Or Change In Consciousness, Or Feeling Of Being “Possessed By A Jinn” Or “Under Influence Of Evil Spirits” (Ask Both Detainee And Family)</p>			
<p>C. MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION OF DETAINEE</p>		<p>(To Be Assessed By A Mental Health Professional Or Using Their Assistance)</p>	
<p>+ Is The Detainee Oriented In Time, Place And Person?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Do You Or Other People Find That Your Mood Changes Frequently Or You Are Excited, And Too Emotional?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Do You Get Easily Irritable, And Find Yourself Shouting At People, Or Starting Fights And Arguments?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Have You Ever Felt Depressed And Unable To Cope, Most Of The Day For At Least Two Weeks?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Lately Felt Like You Were Useless, Worthless, Or Sinful?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Been Troubled By Repeated Thoughts, Feelings, Or Nightmares About Something You Have Experienced Or Witnessed?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Recently Felt That Your Thoughts Have Been Directly Interfered With, Or Controlled By Another, In A Way That People Would Find Hard To Believe?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have There Recently Been Times When You Felt People Were Plotting To Cause You Harm?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Do You Currently Believe That Someone Can Control Your Mind By Putting Thoughts Into Your Head Or Taking Thoughts Out Of Your Head?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Do You Currently Believe Other People Know Your Thoughts And Can Read Your Mind?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Recently Heard Voices When There Was No One Around To Account For This?</p> <p><i>Ask The Family (Or Fellow Inmates/ Prison Staff):</i></p> <p>+ Have You Noticed Him Or Her, Self-Muttering Or Making Gestures When No One Is Around?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have Your Friends Or Family Noticed You Are Currently Much More Active Than You Usually Are?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Are You Currently Taking Any Medication For Any Emotional Or Mental Health Problems?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Been In Hospital For Emotional Or Mental Health Problems?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p>+ <i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Been In Hospital For Emotional Or Mental Health Problems?</p>			
<p>+ <i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Are You Currently Seeing A Psychiatrist Or Psychologist?</p>			
<p>+ <i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Been Seen By A Psychiatrist Or A Psychologist In The Past?</p>			
<p>+ <i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Self-Harmed?</p>			
<p>+ <i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Do You Currently Feel The Need To Self-Harm?</p>			

Forensic Mental Health Screening Questionnaire:

PRISONER
VERSION
(FMHSQ-P)

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
A. PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY/ SUICIDE RISK			
<p>+ Has The Detainee Ever Been Hospitalised For Psychiatric Treatment?</p>			
<p>+ Is The Detainee Currently Receiving Any Psychiatric Treatment?</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Take Any Medication? (Psychiatric Or Otherwise)</p> <p>If Yes, Enter Names In Comments Column</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Use Alcohol, Drugs, Or Both?</p>			
<p>+ Has The Detainee Ever Attempted Suicide? When? How?</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Feel Suicidal Now?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
+ Is There A History Of Prolonged/Severe Medical Illness?			
+ Does The Detainee Have A Past Criminal History?			
B. PAST HISTORY OF ADVERSITY, ABUSE, & INJURY			
+ Is There A History Of Delayed Developmental Milestones?			
+ Is There A History Of Learning (Intellectual) Disability?			
+ Is There A History Of Head Injury? If, Yes, Was This Followed By A Loss Of Consciousness?			
+ Is There Childhood History Of Physical, Emotional, Or Sexual Abuse?			
+ What Is The Detainee's Family Psychiatric History?			
+ Is There A Family History Of Substance / Alcohol Use?			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
C. MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION OF DETAINEE		(To Be Assessed By A Mental Health Professional Or Using Their Assistance)	
+ Is The Detainee Oriented In Time, Place And Person?			
<i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Do You Or Other People Find That Your Mood Changes Frequently Or You Are Excited, And Too Emotional?			
<i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Do You Get Easily Irritable, And Find Yourself Shouting At People, Or Starting Fights And Arguments?			
<i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Have You Ever Felt Depressed And Unable To Cope, Most Of The Day For At Least Two Weeks?			
<i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Have You Ever Been Troubled By Repeated Thoughts, Feelings, Or Nightmares About Something You Have Experienced Or Witnessed?			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Lately Felt Like You Were Useless, Worthless, Or Sinful?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Been Troubled By Repeated Thoughts, Feelings, Or Nightmares About Something You Have Experienced Or Witnessed?</p>			
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<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Do You Currently Believe That Someone Can Control Your Mind By Putting Thoughts Into Your Head Or Taking Thoughts Out Of Your Head?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
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<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have Your Friends Or Family Noticed You Are Currently Much More Active Than You Usually Are?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Are You Currently Taking Any Medication For Any Emotional Or Mental Health Problems?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Been In Hospital For Emotional Or Mental Health Problems?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
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<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Are You Currently Seeing A Psychiatrist Or Psychologist?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Self-Harmed?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Do You Currently Feel The Need To Self-Harm?</p>			

Forensic Mental Health Screening Questionnaire:

PRE-EXECUTION
VERSION
(FMHSQ-E)

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
A. PSYCHIATRIC HISTORY/ SUICIDE RISK			
<p>+ Has The Detainee Ever Been Hospitalised For Psychiatric Treatment?</p>			
<p>+ Is The Detainee Currently Receiving Any Psychiatric Treatment?</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Take Any Medication? (Psychiatric Or Otherwise)</p> <p>If Yes, Enter Names In Comments Column</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Use Alcohol, Drugs, Or Both?</p>			
<p>+ Has The Detainee Ever Attempted Suicide? When? How?</p>			
<p>+ Does The Detainee Feel Suicidal Now?</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
<p>+ Is There A History Of Prolonged/Severe Medical Illness?</p>			
<p>B. PAST HISTORY OF ADVERSITY, ABUSE, & INJURY</p>			
<p>+ Is There A History Of Delayed Developmental Milestones?</p>			
<p>+ Is There A History Of Learning (Intellectual) Disability?</p>			
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<p>+ Is There History Of Fits Or Change In Consciousness, Or Feeling Of Being “Possessed By A Jinn” Or “Under Influence Of Evil Spirits” (Ask Both Detainee And Family)</p>			
<p>+ What Is The Detainee’s Family Psychiatric History?</p>			
<p style="text-align: right;">CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE</p>			

QUERY	YES	NO	COMMENTS
C. MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION OF DETAINEE			(To Be Assessed By A Mental Health Professional Or Using Their Assistance)
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<i>Ask The Detainee:</i> + Do You Or Other People Find That Your Mood Changes Frequently Or You Are Excited, And Too Emotional?			
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<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Have You Ever Self-Harmed?</p>			
<p><i>Ask The Detainee:</i></p> <p>+ Do You Currently Feel The Need To Self-Harm?</p>			

Forensic Mental Health Screening Questionnaire By:

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Dr. Roop Z Rana (Registrar In Psychiatry, Rawalpindi, Pakistan)

Dr. Mowadat H Rana (Professor Of Psychiatry And Behavioural Science, Rawalpindi, Pakistan)

Mst. Safia Bano vs Home Department, Government of Punjab⁸

In the event that detailed examination of the prisoner and the Forensic Mental Health Questionnaire yields symptoms of mental illness, the prisoner must be isolated within the medical wing, and a referral must be made to a consultant psychiatrist.

*"...the Court must get the accused examined by a Medical Board, to be notified by the Provincial Government, consisting of qualified medical experts in the field of mental health, to **examine the accused person and opine whether accused is capable or otherwise to understand the proceedings of trial and make his/her defence.**"*



References

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