

**LIFE WITHOUT
CRIMINALITY.
WE HELP.**



NEUSTART****

Online Counselling:
www.neustart.at

WELCOME TO NEU**START**!

Crime affects us all. Whether it's the concern about ourselves or about our relatives, friends and acquaintances. Maintaining security in our society is the main task of the state. The work of the organisation **NEU**START**** shows, however, that cooperation between the state and an organisation shaped by a commitment to civil society can make an important contribution to countering crime.

In 1957, the state looked for an alternative to simply imprisoning criminal juveniles. The private organisation with its full-time and voluntary staff was the solution. Today, **NEU**START**** is still a partner of the Ministry of Justice, the provinces, municipalities and private supporters. The common goal: more security for our society.



NEUSTART****

Life without crime cannot just remain a vision. That's why the staff at **NEU**START**** help in a very practical way. This help creates security not only for the clients, but also for the population: Repeated offences are avoided, victims receive help in coping with distressing experiences. As an organised association, we can create greater proximity to the people affected and carry out state tasks in a reliable and innovative way.

NEUSTART****'s goal is to offer socially constructive alternatives to sentences and imprisonment. A variety of offers of social work are organised, according to the current state of science and the needs of the referring authority (judges, lawyers, prisons, schools, etc.) and the clients. Together with trained social workers, many volunteers, in particular, show what commitment to civil society can mean in practice.

It is important to us to win you over to our cause. For this reason, we would like to explain our experience in daily social work with criminals and victims to you on the following pages. We are available to answer your questions and look forward to your feedback or even your support!

FAST HELP

We help you ...

- ... if your relatives or acquaintances are charged with a criminal offence
- ... if you have just been released from prison or will be soon
- ... if you have been a victim of crime
- ... if you need support with the police or courts
- ... with many other questions that our Online Counselling service will be happy to answer



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OUR MISSION

We support an approach to crime that puts the focus on treating the causes, rather than on deterrence.

In practice, this means:

- » de-escalation work and constructive regulation of conflicts instead of convictions and punishment
- » preventive work with juveniles and children
- » fast help for victims
- » support in (re-)integrating offenders into society

Another part of our mission statement is our self-perception as a service provider for various stakeholders. For us, dealing with our clients in a respectful and professional way means helping them find individual goals and solutions for constructive crisis management in conflict situations. We help our clients to cope with past, often traumatic, experiences – so that they can cope with the present, find a way out of their isolation and develop a positive perspective on the future. We also help victims of criminal offences to feel safe again in everyday life and receive compensation. Our goal is the successful integration of both victims and offenders.

At the same time, we must focus on the social origins of crime with preventive measures, by making juveniles stronger so that they are fit to cope with crises as they become adults. In this way, we help not only our clients, but also our customers (the courts, politics in provinces and municipalities, etc.) as well as the whole of society.

NEU**START**

» „From our experience of more than 55 years, we know that work with offenders is one of the most important contributions to the protection of victims.“

Prof. Dr. Roland Miklau,
Section Head of the
Ministry of Justice
(ret'd), Chairman of the
Supervisory Board of
NEU**START**

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A PRO-ACTIVE STANCE, A PUBLIC POSITION

An important objective of our work with offenders is to counter the alienation between offenders and society.



NEUSTART

COMMITMENT

To increase offenders' chances of integration, we need the cooperation of committed citizens. This commitment helps the clients locally, in a tangible way and, at the same time, promotes a constructive approach to crime in the circle of family and friends. Experienced social workers support the volunteers in their work. In this way, an idea is conveyed to the population and creates new ways of discussing the topic of security.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Public opinion, via the media, also shapes the image of crime in society. We are convinced that we can have an influence on the country's criminal policies with a public position. Representatives from the media support us in this, through their work. For example, individual cases are used to portray the sociopolitical relevance of crime. Education rather than emotionalisation – continuously. This enables new points of view and the dismantling of prejudices. Countermeasures are taken against the tendency to stigmatise whole groups of the population, and understanding is promoted for topics otherwise avoided by the public.



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PROBATION SERVICES

INTEGRATION INSTEAD OF RETALIATION

NEUSTART probation services is an alternative to a prison sentence or can also help when someone is released from prison without a safety net. Through their presence, the social workers offer trust, practical assistance and physical and social support.

In addition, they have a controlling function in recognising crises and consequently avoiding a repeat offence. By clarifying norms and through help in altering behaviour, we counter the threatening escalation of crime and exclusion. Professional social work also provides support in looking for work and a flat, in contact with the authorities, in coping with debts and in legal matters.

ALTERNATIVES TO PRISON

If a person who has committed a criminal offence is sentenced to imprisonment, there are several possibilities for partial or full replacement with other sanctions. On the one hand, he/she can be provided with a probation officer, and on the other hand, the prison sentence can be replaced through electronic monitoring or with community service.

AFTER PRISON

After a prison sentence, many people find it very difficult to settle down again to a „normal“ life. So that the path from „inside to outside“ is easier, you can make use of **NEUSTART** aftercare, both before and after release. Here, practical help for planning a life without crime awaits you. Social workers support you in cooperation with the prison even before your release. A model for work is developed, housing requirements and entitlements to benefits are clarified, and advice on coping with any debts is provided. If necessary, clients' employment opportunities are increased through educational and training measures. Assisted housing provides a roof over your head and support in coping with everyday life.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE

WORKING FOR PUBLIC WELFARE

As concerns minor and medium offences, there is an opportunity to give the accused community service instead of a conviction. In such a case, **NEUSTART** refers those concerned to appropriate facilities.

In addition, the social worker advises and supports the accused with psychosocial problems and compensation for damages. In this way, they are given a second chance and do not spoil their prospects for the future with a previous conviction. Through work for public welfare, people develop a feeling for right and wrong again, that is, for social responsibility. Sometimes the wish to take part in voluntary work also arises from this work. A trial and conviction are unnecessary if successful community service is completed.

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REPLACING A PRISON SENTENCE

The court also gives convicted offenders the possibility of completing community service. For example, if there is a failure to pay a fine, as an alternative to imposing a prison sentence. Additionally, tax authorities have the possibility of dispensing with prison sentences in favour of community service. Community service has proven itself to be a suitable means in this area; in this way, the first crime is also often the last.

UNPAID, BUT NOT UNREWARDED

Completing community service means performing certain activities in a not-for-profit institution without payment. When fixing the number of hours and choosing a suitable facility to complete the service, the clients' education and training or occupation are also taken into consideration. The population perceives this form of compensation for society very positively.



VICTIM-OFFENDER-MEDIATION

TALKING INSTEAD OF ARGUING

Everyday offences must not always lead to a hearing. Victim-offender-mediation can be offered as an alternative. Here, a **NEUSTART** mediator establishes contact between the offender and the victim and tries to achieve a fair settlement with both of them. Without a trial or conviction.

Victims have the opportunity of voicing their fears and concern. They are compensated financially by the offender and receive a personal apology from him/her. The offender realises the consequences of their actions and provide compensation. In this way, they act in a constructive manner and avoid a conviction that would have a negative impact on their life.

ROUND-TABLE TALKS

At the beginning of the talk, there is the opportunity to get to know and to learn to understand each other. Then a fair and acceptable solution for all those involved in the conflict should be found, outside the lengthy and stressful procedure of the trial. Compensation for damages is essential.

Our experienced social workers ensure that the offender accepts responsibility for his/her crime. The victims' high degree of satisfaction with this regulation of conflicts has also been scientifically proven many times.



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HELP FOR VICTIMS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

People who have become victims of crime do not have to cope alone – we are there for them. Our goal is to reduce the victims' fears step by step and to help them regain security in everyday life.

COUNSELLING: FAST AND COMPETENT

NEUSTART Online Counselling provides fast and anonymous help in the interest of the victims. The many open, painful questions that shape everyday life after a crime, and the confused feelings require sensitive and competent help. Answers are sought – and further assistance.

CONFIDENT AND STRONG IN THE TRIAL

People who have become victims of violence can turn to **NEUSTART** trial support for victims. Here, a social worker is at the victim's side to provide advice and support both during the trial and even when giving a report or during the police's preliminary trial. After an act of violence, victims are usually uncertain – how do I give a report to the police, what happens in court? What about if I see the perpetrator again? Here, the trial support for victims offers valuable help. We accompany the victim to give their report, to the questioning with the police or to the court. If you are well prepared for the trial and informed about the legal possibilities, you feel confident and strong in court.

NEUSTART victim-offender-mediation also makes concrete compensation for damages available to the victim, as well as an apology from the accused.





PREVENTION

LEARNING TO COPE WITH CRISES

Every stage of life involves changes and crises. Timely assistance beforehand helps in a lasting way and avoids painful escalations. Here, fast unbureaucratic help is required.

SOCIAL WORK IN SCHOOLS

Juveniles who learn early on that conflicts can also be settled by consensus can fall back on this experience later. For schools, we offer ongoing advice, crisis intervention, information events, conflict advice, conflict mediation and themed group work.

AVOIDING INSTEAD OF CRIMINALISING

When becoming an adult becomes a scene for conflicts, social workers can advise people in critical situations. In this way, juveniles learn how to resolve conflicts early on. Drug prevention (in Carinthia) and youth support (in Vorarlberg) are also part of the service we offer. We help to prevent people losing hold after a crisis in good time – so that later on, our help is needed less.

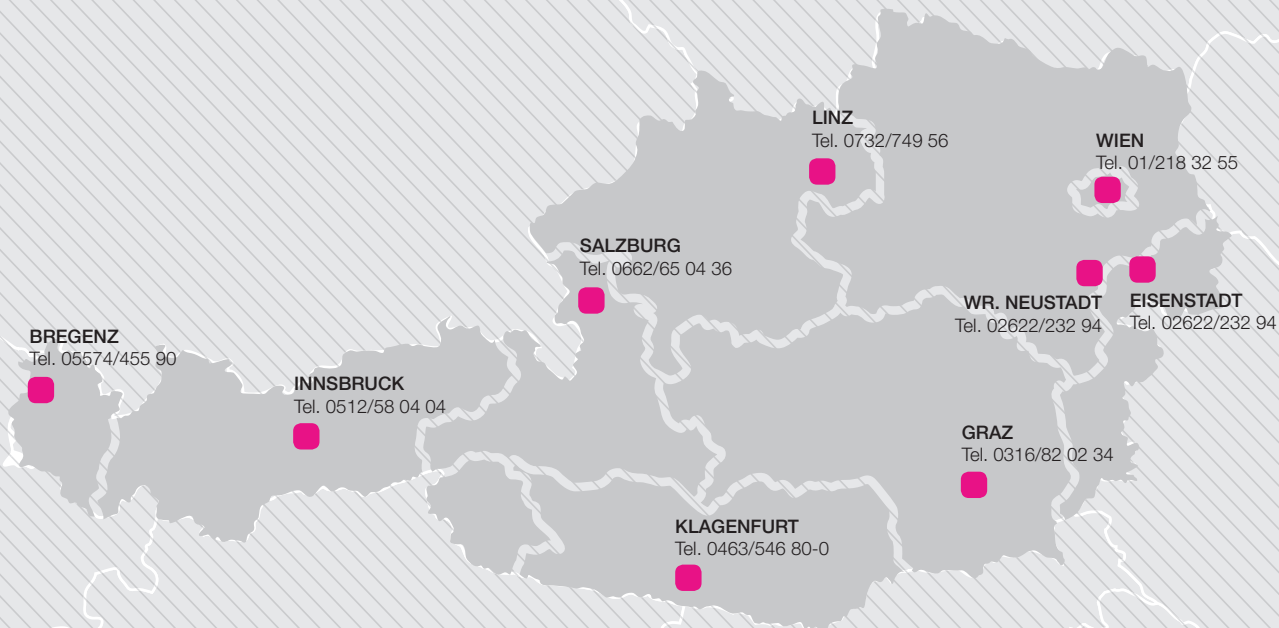
ONLINE COUNSELLING

At www.neustart.at, we provide easily understandable tips and information online – for perpetrators, victims, relatives or anyone interested. With our anonymous Online Counselling, you can also receive personal information from experts, free of charge (by sending an email to beratung@neustart.at). We also answer anonymous questions promptly. After all, sometimes it just does good to get rid of your anger and disappointment in writing. At Online Counselling, we are also ready to listen to that.



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NEUSTART NEAR TO YOU



- » *Around 41,000 clients all over Austria.*
- » *Around 1,500 employees, 950 of which are voluntary.*





LIFE WITHOUT CRIMINALITY. WE HELP.

If you would like to find out more about **NEUSTART**, or if you have any questions or problems, just contact us:

Infoline 01 | 545 95 60

beratung@neustart.at

www.neustart.at

NEUSTART

More than half of the employees at **NEUSTART** are women. The mix of female and male staff makes us an expert organisation in dealing with the consequences and causes of crime. We ask for your understanding: Due to making reading easier we chose male writing style in this folder.