Achieving Successful Outcomes with Justice-Involved Women

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To see a video recording of this presentation, visit www.bjatraining.org

National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women
A project of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Institute of Corrections

The National Resource Center (NRCJIW) was recently established by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance in partnership with the National Institute of Corrections.

The NRCJIW will advance evidence-based, gender-responsive policies and practices for all women involved in the justice system.

Ultimately, with the aim of reducing recidivism and improving the outcomes of women involved in the justice system.

www.cjinvolvedwomen.org

Mission and Audience
Provide guidance and support to criminal justice and other professionals who work with justice-involved women.
Such as:
- Criminal Justice Stakeholders
- Law Enforcement
- Courts
- State and Local Corrections
- Community Corrections and Supervision
- State and Local Government Officials
- Service Providers

See our website at:
www.cjinvolvedwomen.org

What Does the Term Gender-Responsive Mean?
"Understanding and taking into account the differences in characteristics and life experiences that men and women bring to institution corrections and community supervision AND adjusting correctional strategies and practices in ways that appropriately respond to those conditions."
Bloom, Covington and Owen, 2003

Primary Activities
- Targeted technical assistance
- Training and webinars on key topics
- Centralized referral for evidence-based, gender-responsive research, knowledge and resources
- Policy and practice briefs, coaching packets
- Professional network

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The Resource Center Partners
The National Resource Center is administered by the Center for Effective Public Policy (www.cepp.com) and its partners:
- CORE Associates (http://coreassociates.org)
- Orbis Partners (www.orbispartners.com)
- The National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (www.samhsa.gov/nctic)
- The Moss Group (www.mossgroup.us)
- University of Cincinnati, School of Criminal Justice (http://www.uc.edu/womenoffenders)
- Women’s Prison Association (www.wpaonline.org)

www.cjinvolvedwomen.org
Why Be Gender-Responsive?
- To achieve the same outcomes that corrections’ systems want for all offenders and for our communities.
- Safer communities: Promote law abiding behavior and reduce recidivism.
- Harm reduction: Improve the physical, social and economic well-being of women, their children and families.

Why Focus on Women?
- More than 1,000,000 women are currently involved in the criminal justice system (1 out of every 109 adult women) and now account for 7% of state and federal prison populations.
- The number of women in prison has increased at nearly double the rate of men since 1985 (404% versus 209%).

The Sentencing Project (May 2007); NCCD (July 2007)

Understanding Women Offender Population Growth
- Mandatory prison terms for drug offenses
- Parole revocation rates, for both new offenses (often drug use) and technical violations
- Similar rates of increases in all corrections’ settings – jails, prisons and community corrections

Question
- What patterns of growth do you observe in your jurisdiction?

How are Women Different from Men?

Different “Pathways” to Crime
- The pathways research looks at women’s life histories in order to understand the connections between critical child and adult experiences and criminal behavior.
- The research of the past 15 years has opened the door to understanding women offenders’ unique risk factors and life circumstances.

Bloome, Dawn & Covington; 2003; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Daly, 1992; Dehart, 2005; Green et al., 2005; Lapidus et al., 2004; Salisbury, 2007

Frequent Pathways for Women
- Women who have experienced childhood victimization resort to drugs as a coping mechanism to numb the pain of abuse and other stressors (adult intimate partner violence, sexual assault, grief over the loss of their children).
- Strong interconnections between victimization, mental illness (depression, anxiety and PTSD) and self-medicating substance abuse behaviors.
- Poverty and economic marginalization.
Example of a Pathway a Woman Might Take into the Criminal Justice System

Child or Adult Abuse → Mental Illness → Substance Abuse → Offending

Differences Between Males and Females in Prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victimization and Abuse</td>
<td>57% past histories of abuse</td>
<td>6-13% physical abuse 2-8% sexual abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>73% report mental health problems 23.6% diagnosed</td>
<td>55% report mental health problems 15.8% diagnosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>60% have a history of substance abuse</td>
<td>53% have a history of substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary caretakers of children/families</td>
<td>2/3rds are parents of minor children</td>
<td>Less likely to serve as primary childcare provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty and Economic Marginalization</td>
<td>50% unemployed prior to incarceration</td>
<td>30% unemployed prior to incarceration</td>
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Substance Abuse
- High rates for both women and men
- Women more likely to suffer from co-occurring substance abuse disorders and mental illness
- Differences in onset and use are critical
- Women who abuse drugs have higher rates of childhood physical and sexual abuse than men

Mental Illness
- Significantly higher rates of mental illness
- Women are twice as likely to take prescription medications for problems
- Women with mental health problems have higher infraction rates in prison
- Different types of mental illness than men: depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, and eating disorders

Physical Health Concerns
- Reproductive health and pregnancy concerns
- Higher rates of STD’s and HIV infection
- Impact of post-traumatic stress disorders on self-harming
- Histories of poor health and poor access to medical services
- Effects of chronic conditions associated with poverty and poor nutrition, such as asthma, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, anemia, seizures and ulcers

Richard Mauery, GW University, 2007

Poverty and Economic Marginalization
- Most women earned lower monthly incomes than men prior to incarceration
- Men are more likely to be employed full time
- 60% of men vs. 40% of women
- Previously employed in low wage, entry level positions
- 2/3 earned a maximum wage of $6.50 per hour
- Financial demands of supporting children upon release

Greenfeld & Snell. 1999; The Sentencing Project, 2007
Family Roles

- Women are much more likely to serve as the primary caretakers of children prior to entering prison.
- 28% of children of female offenders in prison live with the other parent, while 90% of the children of incarcerated fathers live with their mothers.
- Difficulties and barriers of parenting from prison.

Importance of Relationships

-- Relational Theory --

- Females are motivated by their connections with others and develop their identity, self-worth, and sense of empowerment through relationships with others.

The Relational Context is Critical

- Reasons why women commit crimes
- Relationships with abusing or criminal partners
- Substance use and efforts to regain sobriety
- Responses to corrections interventions
- Need to create “family” even in prison
- Relationships with children, families, and significant others
- Past histories (trauma, violence, substance use) often inhibit a woman’s ability to form and sustain appropriate, healthy, and trusting relationships

Gender-Responsive Strategies

- National Institute of Corrections publication: Gender Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders
- Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003
- Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003
- Summary of multi-disciplinary research drawing from literature on physical and mental health, corrections, developmental psychology, employment and legal studies of women.

Gender-Responsive Strategies

1. Acknowledge that gender makes a difference
2. Create an environment based on safety, respect, and dignity
3. Develop practices that are relational and promote healthy connections
4. Address substance abuse, trauma, and mental illness in an integrated way
5. Provide opportunities to improve women’s socio-economic conditions
6. Establish a system of reentry with comprehensive and collaborative services

New Developments in Addressing Women’s Risk and Needs to Reduce Recidivism

A Quick Overview of the Emerging Research, Tools, Programs and Services
How Did We Get Here?

Gender-Responsive approaches are influenced by two models of effective correctional treatment

2. "Feminist/Gender-Responsive Model" Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, Stephanie Covington, Meda Chesney Lind, Joanne Belknap, Merry Morash.

What We Learned

Feminist Model Critique of Canadian Model:
- Most of the research was conducted on men and applied to women
- There are few studies conducted on women
- Ignores pathways theories and research

Canadian Model: What Works?
- Impressive research support
- Developed a picture of what works to reduce offender recidivism

Canadian Model: What Works?
- Risk Principle: Target services to medium and high risk offenders
- Need Principle: Target risk/need factors
  - Programs should address problems (risk/need factors) that lead to recidivism

Canadian Model: What Works?
- Need Principle: Address programs to:
  - Antisocial attitudes, values and beliefs
  - Antisocial peers
  - Antisocial personality
  - Substance abuse
  - Employment
  - Education
  - Family/Marital
  - Financial

Feminist Model Identifies New Risk Factors and Treatment Targets:
- Abuse
- Trauma
- Unhealthy relationships
- Parental stress
- Mental health, especially depression, anxiety and PTSD
- Strengths, e.g., family support, self-efficacy

Two Assessment Instruments were Created

Gender-Responsive Trailer

Canadian Risk/Needs + Gender-Responsive Risk/Needs
- Criminal history
- Education/employment
- Financial
- Family/Marital
- Accommodation
- Leisure/recreation
- Companions
- Alcohol/drug problems
- Emotional/personal
- Attitude/orientation
- Parental stress
- Dysfunctional relationships
- Housing safety
- Mental health history
- Current Depression (symptoms)
- Psychosis (symptoms)
- Victimization
- Strengths: Family support; self efficacy, educational assets

Identify high, medium, low risk AND identify treatment needs
Gender-Responsive “Stand-Alone” Assessment Tool
- Criminal history
- Mental health history
- Criminal thinking (sample variations)
- Depression/anxiety (symptoms)
- Antisocial associates
- Psychosis/suicidal (symptoms)
- Vocational/educational
- Victimization/trauma
- Financial problems
- Relationship dysfunction
- Low family support
- Parental stress
- Housing problems
- Housing safety
- Substance abuse
- And strengths (self-efficacy, family support, parental involvement, and educational assets)

Other Gender-Responsive Assessment Tools
- COMPAS for Women, Northpointe
- Service Planning Instrument for Women (SPIN-W), Orbis Partners
- Promising research emerging on development of gender-responsive pretrial release assessment tools

Risk Factors
- Conclusion: Consideration of both gender-responsive and gender-neutral factors will increase accuracy in predicting misconduct and re-offense, and improve the quality of case plans targeted on the highest risk factors for individual women.

Critical Information to Collect When Assessing Women Offenders
<table>
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<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. History of abuse</td>
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<td>2. Relationship status/issues</td>
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<td>3. Self-efficacy/self-esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Mental health (particularly depression, anxiety, PTSD)</td>
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<td>5. Parental stress (number of children, current arrangements, issues sense of competency in managing children)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Level of family support or conflicts</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Financial status/poverty</td>
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<td>8. Safety concerns (personal safety from violence/abuse)</td>
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<td>9. Strengths and protective factors</td>
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New Developments: Evidence-based, Gender-Responsive Programs and Services
- The field has suffered from a lack of evaluative research on gender-responsive programs.
- However, this situation is changing...

Moving On (Van Dieten)
Program components consider:
- Setting the Context for Change
- Women in Culture
- Stress Management
- Family Messages
- Relationships
- Identifying and Changing Negative Self-Talk
- Problem-Solving
- Assertiveness and Communication Skills
- Moving On
Other Effective Programs and Services

- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (PTSD) (Learner)
- Seeking Safety (abuse, PTSD) (Najavitz)
- Helping Women Recover (Covington)
- Forever Free (California Institute for Women)

Implements the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) guide for treating women offenders, Kassebaum, 1999
- Female Offender Treatment and Employment Programs (FOTEP) implemented within 13 counties in California

Women Offender Case Management Model (WOCMM)

- Case management with wrap around services
- Gender-responsive (strengths-based, trauma-informed, culturally competent, relational)
- Team approach
- Continuity of care
- Individualized; woman participates
- Enhance motivation
- Outcome-based

NIC’s Gender-Informed Practice Assessment (GIPA)

What:
- A detailed assessment process to gauge level of adherence to sound principles of EBP and GR programming and practices...the first of its kind

Objective:
- Build agency and facility capacity to enhance EBP and GR policies and practices

How:
- Conduct intensive multi-day onsite assessment visit
- Review documents and files
- Conduct broad range of interviews and focus groups with staff and women
- Observe of programs, services and operations

GIPA

Assesses strengths and challenges in 12 domains

1. Leadership and Philosophy
2. External Support
3. Facility
4. Management and Operations
5. Staffing and Training
6. Facility Culture
7. Offender Management (Sanctions and Discipline)
8. Assessment and Classification
9. Case and Transitional Planning
10. Research-Based Program Areas
11. Services
12. Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Implications of Emerging Research and Best Practices

- Use evidence-based AND gender-responsive research to inform the development of tools and interventions
- Target women’s risk factors
- Emerging gender-responsive programs are working
- Recognize the low risk women generally present to society
- Create environments that are safe, supportive, respectful and dignified
- Avoid re-traumatization and assure that interventions are trauma-informed

Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003

Implications of Emerging Research and Best Practices

- Recruit staff who have both the interest and knowledge to work with women under criminal justice supervision
- Cross train staff regarding women’s needs, trauma-informed approaches, relationships, risk, mental health
- Acknowledge how relationships affect women’s lives:
  - Motivations
  - Children
  - Dysfunctional relationships
  - Reentry issues
- Build partnerships with a wide range of community organizations to establish multi-dimensional, wrap around services

Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003
Translating Knowledge into Practice

What I Have Learned from Working with Women

- Women are most successful at achieving their goals when the goals are important to them.
- We can help women identify their existing strengths and resources as the foundation for creating their vision for a better life.
- This approach requires that we see women as equals in the dialog about their lives.

Translating Knowledge into Practice

What Do We Do with the Information?

3. Use professional knowledge and experience to develop a case plan
   It’s true that:
   - We DO know what is available in the community and
   - We DO know what is most likely to address the issues that are related to criminal behavior
   BUT, a plan will NOT be viable unless it reflects her priorities and the resources she is able to access

4. Again, talk to women about their goals and aspirations
   When asked, women identify a range of goals that are interdependent, and we must be willing to help them address these goals simultaneously

Working in a Gender-Responsive Way... Pushes Us to Rethink our Roles as Staff

When you meet with a female client, what do you see?
- An offender, an addict, or someone who is too emotional and unstable to make sound decisions?
- Or, do you see a person you can help to meet the same basic needs as any other person?
- Do you feel optimistic that she can make positive changes in her life and end her criminal justice involvement?
- Can you imagine her living in the community, without criminal justice supervision?

A woman’s view of herself is influenced by her relationships with others. She will look for cues from others. If you convey a sense of optimism and possibility, you encourage her.
Supportive Relationships with Staff have a Positive Effect

Pay attention to the language that we use, focus on listening to her, and join her in setting the goals that are important to her.
- Our words are important, and help to set a tone.
- If we are not careful we can alienate and belittle:
  - What's wrong with you?
- Or we can encourage and engage:
  - Tell me about something that works well for you – now or in the past.
  - Is there something about your life that you want to be different?
  - I know that we can figure out how to get you on your way to making the change happen.

Helping Women Develop Supportive Relationships has a Positive Effect

- Relationships with criminal justice staff are powerful, but it is not our goal for these to be her most important relationships
- Explore all of the relationships – good and bad – that are important to her
- Telling a woman that she should eliminate all of the bad relationships is generally not effective and could make her less inclined to be open with staff
- Encourage her to explore what she derives from her relationships – the benefits and the costs to her. Does the balance work for her?

Provide Ongoing Support:

Help her implement her own plan:
- Use opportunities to encourage and support her, but be careful not to take over
- Explain what she can expect when she is in anticipated situations and environments; reducing the mystery will alleviate fear
- Take time to model ways to do things that she may not know how to do:
  - Script and practice phone calls
  - Role-play difficult conversations
  - Offer honest feedback that will help her develop competence and confidence

Provide Ongoing Support

Help her see everyday situations as opportunities
- Allow her to experience approval and disappointment
- Support her as she experiences the usual range of emotions without the aid of drugs to take away the discomfort

Provide Ongoing Support

Help her figure out what works for her
- Encourage her to talk about how things are going.
- Encourage her to explore what worked and what didn't get the desired results. Push her to think about what could work better next time.
- Acknowledge her progress and encourage her to reflect on her experiences as a means for helping her to identify her strengths and the role she plays in her own successes.

How Can I Be More Effective in Managing Women on my Caseload?

- Pay attention to your reactions to women and their stories.
- Remember HOW we relate to her is important to her success:
  - If something makes you uncomfortable, dig a little deeper to figure out why.
  - Be aware of your feelings and find ways – outside of your interactions with clients – to process your own experience. Showing disapproval can be discouraging.
How Can I Be More Effective in Managing Women on my Caseload?

- Look for examples of women who have desisted from criminal activity and are living safely in the community.
- When you have doubts that your clients can change their behaviors, remind yourself of those successes.
- Think of something you’ve done that made you feel ashamed. What if everyone held onto that one moment in your life and judged you by it forever?
- None of us should be judged solely by our worst (or best) act.

Questions?

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