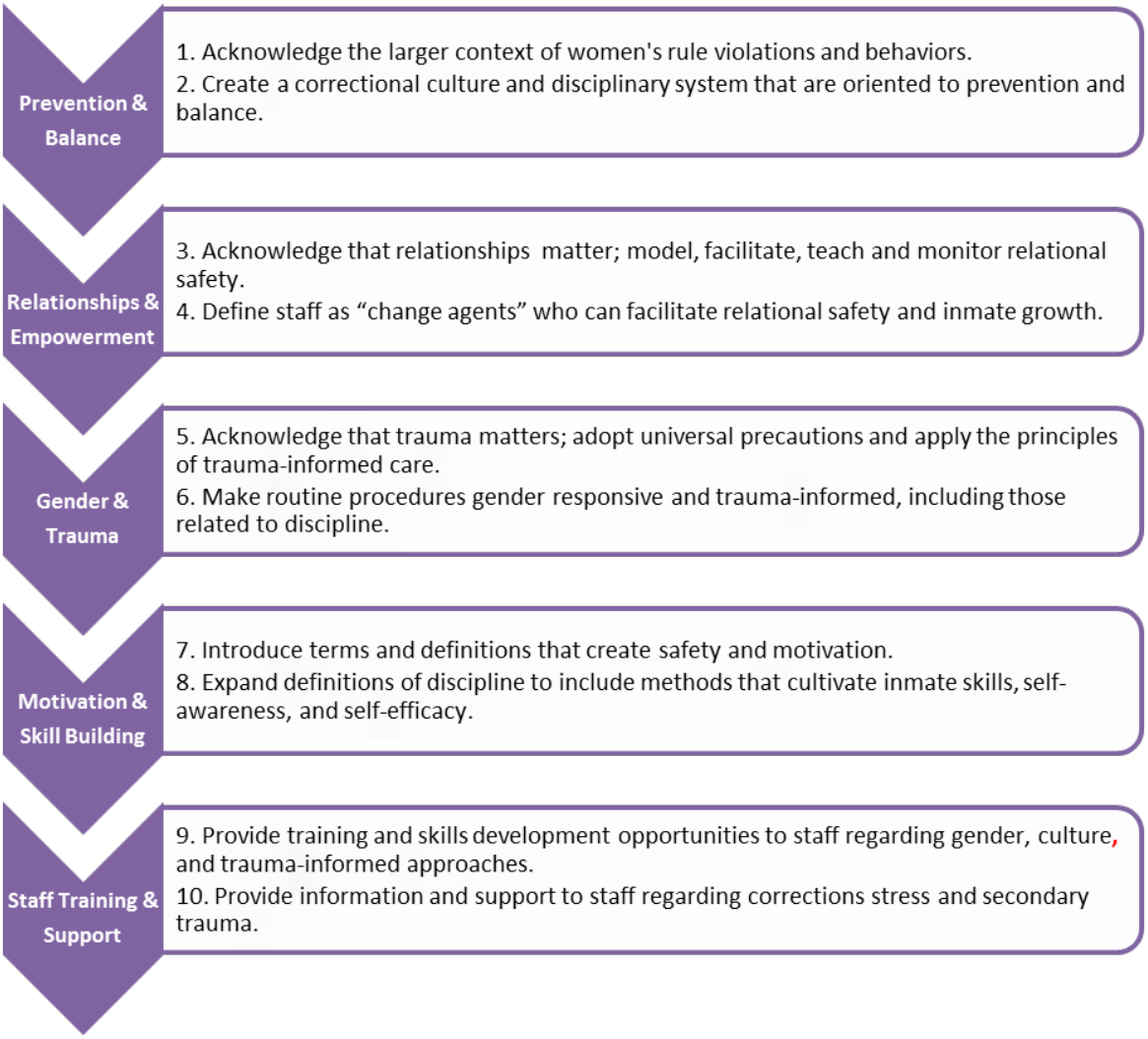
Section 3: Ten Implications of the Research on Women for Discipline and Sanctions[1]

Multidisciplinary research provides critical information that can guide the review and revision of policies and practices regarding discipline and sanctions with women inmates. This section summarizes ten implications from that research and connects them to important facility values: prevention and balance; relationships and empowerment; gender and trauma; motivation and skill building; and staff training and support (see Figure 1). Leadership and staff can create safer facilities if they attend to these values.

Figure 1: Implications of the Research on Women and Facility Values



[1] Readers are encouraged to read the Appendix of the Guide for a review of the research on which these ten implications are based.

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Prevention and Balance

1. Acknowledge the larger context of women's rule violations and behaviors.

Research shows that early traumatic experiences and the mental health challenges tied to those experiences can lead to criminal activity, as well as emotional and behavioral difficulties within facilities.[2] When these behaviors are addressed without consideration of past victimization, women inmates can experience further disconnection, trauma, and associated mental distress, and ultimately continue to engage in maladaptive behaviors. To stop this cycle, the following strategies may promote inmate learning and growth, enhance facility safety, and improve the overall facility culture.

- Work collaboratively with women inmates to address risks, strengths, and needs as part of disciplinary practices, not just in the context of inmate assessment and classification protocols.
- Reframe women inmates' behaviors as their best attempts to: (1) survive the circumstances of their lives, including those related to trauma and oppression; (2) overcome the challenges and disruptions of incarceration; and, (3) exercise their need for safety, connection, and healthy control over their lives.
- Avoid making distinctions between women inmates that have "behavioral" problems and those that have "mental health" problems/needs. All behaviors reflect an underlying psychological and physiological state, including those that involve manipulation, defiance, and aggression.[3]
- Ensure that all inmates have access to services, interventions, and disciplinary approaches that support mental health, not just those who may be housed in a specialized mental health unit.

> "There is a need for a holistic understanding of [women inmates'] experiences and needs which encompass physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and material needs, as well as a need for relationships and connectedness to families. If needs are not understood in the context of past, present, and future life experiences, if a [woman inmate] is not seen and treated as a total person, programs and policies designed for [women inmates] will continue to be inadequate…" (Kelly Hannah-Moffat in Carlen, 2002, pg. 206)

[2] For a review of this research, see the Appendix.
[3] Benedict, 2010.

- Acknowledge that behavior patterns do not change overnight, that "relapse is part of recovery," and that discipline is designed to impart skills and encourage healthy, effective, and supportive inmate behaviors over time.
- Use gender responsive, trauma-informed, culturally responsive and evidence-based approaches to motivate and respond to women inmates' behaviors.
- Use a multidisciplinary approach to discipline: engage custody, mental health, medical, assessment, case management, and program staff.

2. Create a correctional culture and disciplinary system that are oriented to prevention and balance.

One of the best ways to approach facility discipline is to create an environment—or facility culture—that meets women inmates' needs for *safety, healthy connections, and self-control*. This includes creating a facility environment that is prevention-oriented and designing a disciplinary system that prevents problems, versus responding or reacting to problems after they occur. It focuses on creating safety (physical and psychological), motivating inmate behavior, building inmate skills, and encouraging inmate self-management. Creating a culture of encouragement and motivation in times of relative stability and crisis does not mean that women inmates' accountability is an afterthought. It does mean that staff members motivate women inmates before challenges arise and while holding the women accountable through gender- and trauma-informed disciplinary methods.[4] For example, it is not uncommon for the facility culture to shift when one or more new inmates are admitted. New inmates can create anxiety for existing inmates and threaten existing friendships and alliances. In this case, prevention can involve staff talking with women inmates about the fact that one or more new inmates will be entering the facility, encouraging adherence to rules and expectations, and providing them opportunities to share any concerns they may have.

Disciplinary methods work best when they exist upon a foundation of prevention and skill building. One strategy for creating a safe and motivating environment for staff and inmates is to adopt the CORE Principles of Facility Safety and Behavior Motivation[5] shown in Exhibit 1.

Principle 1 involves implementing routine procedures and practices that help women inmates experience safety, and healthy connections with self and others. An example of this principle is having regular morning meetings (or morning announcements) that provide important information and inspiration to women inmates. Staff can create an environment that cues the very behaviors they want to see and creates opportunities throughout each shift to build women inmates' skills and resilience. Principle 2 involves facilitating interactions within the environment that create safety—interactions between women and between staff and women—in a manner that is gender, trauma, and culturally responsive. An example of Principle 2 is the use of conflict resolution techniques to resolve a minor argument. Principle 3

[4] Benedict, 2010.
[5] Adapted from Benedict, 2010.

involves responding to all behaviors—those that are rule violations/unsafe as well as those that are safe—using a gender responsive and trauma-informed behavior motivation approach.

Exhibit 1: Prevention Strategy: CORE Principles of Facility Safety and Behavior		
CORE Principle 1: Actively create an environment that meets women inmates' underlying needs.	**PREVENTION**	*Proactively create daily living experiences that provide opportunities for women to learn about themselves, make healthy connections with others, and experience safety and stability.* *Examples:* Unit meetings where inmates can interact in healthy ways with staff and peers; procedures that are specifically designed to facilitate inmate regulation and motivation
CORE Principle 2: Facilitate interactions that meet women inmates' underlying needs.	**PREVENTION/ INTERVENTION**	*Facilitate interactions that are trauma-informed, relationship-centered, strengths-based, holistic, and culturally responsive.* *Examples:* Population debriefs after a critical incident; staff-inmate interactions that are safe and calming; concrete supports for inmates who are struggling; mechanisms for women to communicate strong feelings effectively
CORE Principle 3: Respond to women inmates' safe and unsafe behaviors using a gender responsive and trauma-informed approach.	**INTERVENTION**	*Respond to safe and unsafe inmate behaviors using methods that create safety, regulation, and resilience.* *Examples:* Temporary removal of privileges in response to an unsafe behavior while also engaging the inmate in relevant skill building; Reinforcement of healthy behaviors with recognition and/or access to additional privileges.

When disciplinary systems underutilize prevention and early intervention strategies, staff may spend more time on responding when problems arise or escalate. Additionally, successful inmate behaviors may not be reinforced. Therefore, improving discipline and sanctions in women's facilities requires equal attention to all three principles in policies and practices. This will allow leadership and staff to create a culture wherein women inmates can:

- Get basic needs for safety and connection met;
- Cultivate awareness of personal strengths and challenges (including trauma triggers); and
- Develop adaptive coping strategies that can be implemented to prevent problems, and respond appropriately to challenges, when they arise.

This type of facility culture leads to inmate self-management—an essential ingredient for success upon release.

Finally, enhancing traditional approaches to discipline and sanctions requires that staff adopt a balanced approach. A common misconception about both gender responsive and trauma-informed approaches is that they involve being "soft" with women inmates and not holding them accountable. Staff do not have to choose between holding women accountable (e.g., setting limits, delivering a consequence) or being supportive (gender responsive and trauma-informed). Providing women inmates with support and not holding them accountable when necessary can be ineffective; similarly, holding women accountable without also providing support can be equally ineffective. For example, when staff administer a consequence without exploring the underlying dynamics of the situation, the opportunity to work with the inmate to solve the problem is lost and her psychological safety can be further compromised. In the absence of staff support, a woman inmate may attempt to regain a sense of safety using the only survival skills available to her, and ones that may threaten facility safety and security.

> Opening the dialogue and exploring the roots of women inmates' behaviors can lead to important insights that pave the way toward useful problem solving. Often, simple, helpful conversations are enough to encourage the compliance staff expect and are seeking.

Support and accountability are best seen as interwoven concepts.[6] Staff can communicate a consequence (e.g., loss of recreation for that shift) with support and encouragement versus judgment and criticism. If an inmate needs to be escorted to a time out space, staff can reassure her that she will be safe, and use calming/grounding and encouraging words and phrases. In this way staff can ensure that safety continues to be a priority even when a problem behavior is being addressed. Instead of lecturing an inmate about why she is on cell restriction, a staff member can encourage her to reflect and remind her of the past behaviors she exhibited that were safe and helpful. Some strategies to consider include:

- Respond to safe and unsafe behaviors using a gender, trauma, and culturally responsive approach.
- Integrate support and accountability; design disciplinary responses that hold women accountable while also addressing risks, strengths, and needs.
- Respond to all violations swiftly and fairly.
- Use positive reinforcement and implement the 4:1 rule; give 4 affirmations/reinforcers for every correction or sanction.[7]
- Use interventions that hold inmates accountable while also providing supports that are essential for behavior change (e.g., time to process with staff, clinicians, or case managers).

[6] Benedict, 2010.
[7] For a review of the research that supports to 4:1 rule, see the Appendix.

Relationships and Empowerment

3. Acknowledge that relationships matter—model, facilitate, teach and monitor relationship safety.

Barbara Owen's pioneering book on women in prison, *In the Mix*[8], captures the complex dynamics that can exist in women's prisons. These dynamics are easily oversimplified and often pathologized; women can be viewed as more difficult to work with because they are women. In reality, the various behaviors women inmates exhibit develop in the context of their life experiences and the specific characteristics of their life in prison. At any given moment, women inmates may be experiencing fear, including psychological and physiological distress related to past traumas; concerns about physical, emotional, and sexual assaults from other inmates and staff; distress related to separation from children and loved ones; and confusion about how to navigate the complexities and relational demands of prison life. Their behaviors, and their dynamics with one another, are rooted in this larger context.

> Simply stated, relationship safety is feeling safe (psychologically and emotionally) and respected within relationships with others (i.e., inmate-inmate, staff-staff, and staff-inmate).

In correctional facilities, staff can view relationships between women as negative or as a threat to facility safety and security. This is understandable given the complexities of correctional environments. For instance, staff are often managing large numbers of inmates with various personalities and behaviors, often with limited space and resources. The use of concepts such as "connection" and "relationship" in a correctional environment can be challenging for staff, who are trying to maintain safety and security as well as professional boundaries. However, "relationship" and "connection" are concepts that govern all human interactions. They are operating at all times at multiple levels, and they have a significant impact on the form and function of a facility environment. They can be healthy or unhealthy; safe or unsafe; supportive or unsupportive; effective or ineffective. They exist between inmates, between staff, and between staff and inmates. Ultimately, the quality of relationships that exist in a facility among and between all its members has a huge impact on safety and security.

Women inmate dynamics are often different than those observed in male facilities. Sometimes women's behaviors reflect great resiliency and resourcefulness, while others involve replicating behaviors that they have been socialized to exhibit (e.g., competition, dependence, mistrust of other women, putting others first). For example, a woman inmate who may have endured

[8] Owen, 1998.

years of emotional abuse as a child may have organized her communication with others around those experiences; every interaction may pose a threat, and her communication and behavior with others may reflect the survival skills she has developed. Providing her with the opportunity to develop and practice healthy communication and interaction skills is important, and can make a difference in her interactions within the facility and upon her release. Because of this, women inmates need the opportunity to talk about and understand relational safety, as well as learn and practice healthy communication and interaction skills.

Some strategies to consider include:

- Introduce practices and programs that help women inmates cope with their disconnections from the loved ones and supports (e.g., children, partners, community) that incarceration produces.
- Define and support safe and healthy interactions between inmates, between staff, and between inmates and staff.
- Expand definitions of facility safety to include relationship safety—feeling safe and respected within relationships (i.e., inmate-inmate, staff-staff, staff-inmate).
- Implement programs that offer structured time for inmates to connect with one another and staff in healthy ways (e.g., team building and other activities that can develop skills and meet basic needs for connection).
- Ensure that various components of safety (relational, physical, psychological/emotional and sexual) are well defined, understood through staff training and inmate education, and represented in discipline systems (e.g., policies, handbooks, behavioral).
- Explicitly define what safe, professional interactions are; provide training and coaching to staff, and skills training to inmates, regarding healthy relationships and communication.
- Define physical, psychological and sexual boundaries.
- Teach skill-based communication to staff as part of orientation and skills training.
- Use terms such as "respect," "civility," and "rapport building" that may be more easily applied in a correctional environment if there is a concern about using terms such as "relationship" and "connection."
- Provide relational supports as part of inmate accountability (e.g., time to process with officers, clinicians, or community providers).
- Acknowledge the importance of independence and interdependence as healthy traits for women.
- Ask women inmates about the relationships that are important to them and offer opportunities for women inmates to discuss, define and practice healthy relationships and boundaries.

- Avoid withholding contact with family and key supports as part of sanctioning unless a clear safety issue has been identified.

4. Define staff as "change agents" who can facilitate relational safety and inmate growth.

New research (including emerging research on brain function) and a better understanding of the importance of relationships in women's lives[9] offer an important and exciting opportunity to expand the traditional role of staff in women's correctional facilities. This has significant implications for how corrections staff relate to women inmates and requires a departure from "command and control tactics" as the primary method used to maintain facility safety.

Women inmates often define safety in relationship terms. That is, they correlate safety with how psychologically and emotionally safe and respected they feel with those in their immediate life space. Therefore, security must include an emphasis on "relational safety." Relational safety—feeling respected and psychologically safe in interactions with other human beings, including those in a position of authority—is an important complement to physical safety. In fact, relational safety can impact physical safety in women's facilities. Consider the following examples: A woman inmate has concerns about a newly admitted inmate and, when she informs staff, is told "don't worry about it"; she subsequently "acts out" aggressively as an act of self-protection. Another woman inmate feels targeted by a staff member; she does not inform anyone and engages in self-injurious behaviors as a way to relieve anxiety. In both these examples, relational safety is a core issue to identify and address skillfully.

> Staff members have the power to create relational safety. An atmosphere of relational safety engages and motivates all human beings and encourages them to try new behaviors.

In many cases, simple, skillful staff interventions can increase relational safety and, in turn, facility safety and security. For example, starting the shift with control tactics such as yelling, lecturing, and reminding women inmates that they are subject to staff authority can create fear and anxiety. Depending on the inmate, this fear and anxiety can turn into withdrawal, aggression, self-harm, or other negative behaviors designed to help them cope. Starting the shift with a clear reference to rules and expectations, as well as an invitation to learn and have a safe and productive day or evening, sets a very different tone and has a very different impact on the minds and bodies of the inmates and staff. Exhibit 2 provides some examples about how staff can facilitate relationship safety.

[9] For a review of this research, see the Appendix.

Exhibit 2: Facilitating Relationship Safety		
Concept	**Example of Inmate Behavior**	**Staff Do's and Don'ts**
The need for connection is a powerful factor for women inmates, and their behavioral violations within facilities are often related to relationships and disconnections.	A woman refuses to go to group to avoid an inmate that has been bullying her.	Do: Explore underlying issues while imposing any necessary rules. Don't: Administer a consequence without exploring the underlying dynamics of the situation.
The disconnections women experience in facilities (i.e., from family or loved ones, peers or staff) can be traumatic and precipitate rule violations.	An inmate becomes upset and increasingly angry about not having more time on the phone with an intimate partner.	Do: Acknowledge her frustration and help her cope with the disconnection she feels. Don't: Impose a rule or threaten her to "calm down."

Actively facilitating, teaching, and monitoring physical and relational safety in the facility is an important time investment that can reap many benefits for staff and inmates. Additionally, staff need to experience relational safety in their interactions with one another and facility management. Therefore, creating a culture where healthy interactions are taught and modeled at all levels creates consistency and stability in the facility culture.

Finally, creating relational safety requires that staff work with women in a way that will allow them to experience a healthy sense of personal power and control. Experiencing healthy power and control have been identified consistently as essential aspects of recovery from trauma. When staff offer women healthy choices and options within the parameters of facility safety and security, they are helping them to cultivate a sense of empowerment that is essential for success within and outside of the facility. For example, while staff manage inmate movement within the facility, they can invite a woman inmate to announce the next activity and where it will be occurring. Simple acts like this can have far reaching positive effects on inmates and the facility culture.

Gender and Trauma

5. Acknowledge that trauma matters; adopt universal precautions and apply the principles of trauma-informed care.

Trauma-informed care in correctional environments can provide essential stability for inmates and staff.

Experts recommend that all systems (e.g., medical, mental health, corrections) be trauma-informed, and that professionals in these systems adopt "universal precautions" when working with individuals. The notion of universal

precautions requires that we assume a trauma history is present and interact with all individuals in a trauma-informed manner.[10] The principles of trauma-informed care offered by Fallot and Harris[11]—Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration and Empowerment—have important applications in all correctional settings, and are essential prerequisites to the experience of safety within facilities. Exhibit 3 provides examples of how trauma-informed principles can be used to promote inmate growth and positive behavior.

Exhibit 3: Implementing Trauma-Informed Principles in a Correctional Setting

Principle	Example Strategies
Safety	• Review the facility environment for potential trauma triggers and make a plan to address them. • Introduce operational practices such as regular unit meetings that are designed to foster physical and psychological safety and inmate self-regulation.
Trust	• Maintain basic regard and professionalism in administering discipline and sanctions. • Establish rapport and respect (which translates into trust and reduced resistance).
Choice	• Offer women inmates opportunities for healthy control and choice whenever operationally feasible, even when administering a disciplinary response (e.g., "Would you like to sit in your cell?"). • Develop Individualized Behavior Plans with inmates that address their specific needs and include personalized self-regulation techniques.
Collaboration	• Ask inmates what policies or practices would increase their sense of safety. • Facilitate discussion about inmate safety and accountability, as well as how staff can be more helpful, especially when inmates are struggling.
Empowerment	• Introduce comfort items (e.g., stuffed animals, stress balls) that can be used for de-escalation and relaxation. • Give women inmates a voice in programming and other decisions that affect their lives in the facility.

Correctional practices that apply the principles in Exhibit 3 increase an inmate's coping skills, capacity to self-manage/regulate, and ability to view herself and others positively. This creates an environment that can reduce the number of violations and fuel the development of more trauma-informed responses when incidents occur.

Some trauma-informed strategies include:

- Identify and reinforce inmate strengths.
- Use trauma-informed de-escalation techniques (e.g., maintain an even and respectful tone, use inmates' names, use short encouraging phrases such as "you can do this" and "you were so skillful last week").
- Process with inmates after a restraint, room search, or other event has occurred that might be traumatic.
- Train staff on trauma-informed interactional skills that create inmate stability and avoid

[10] For more information see Benedict, 2014.
[11] Fallot & Harris, 2006.

trauma triggers (e.g., using tone of voice effectively, avoiding words and sounds that can function as triggers).

- Ensure that staff know how to respond skillfully when an individual discloses to them privately or in a group context.
- Utilize interventions that hold inmates accountable while also minimizing trauma triggers.
- Use restraints and seclusion as a last resort and only after other interventions have been attempted; when restraints are used be sure that the protocol utilized minimizes trauma and when seclusion or segregation is used ensure that the time is very limited.
- Offer psycho-education on trauma and recovery groups for women inmates who are interested in exploring trauma and its effects more deeply.
- Provide opportunities for women inmates to practice coping and self-regulation skills (e.g., practice relaxation breathing at the beginning of each shift).
- Assess trauma triggers that preceded behaviors/violations, including the relational context within which the negative behaviors occurred.

6. Make routine procedures gender responsive and trauma-informed, including those related to discipline.

Creating safety as part of day-to-day facility operations can prevent inmates from becoming triggered, and as a consequence prevent them from resorting to unsafe and ineffective behaviors that may help them regain a sense of safety but possibly lead to sanctions. For example, it is common for correctional facilities to search inmates' rooms for contraband and weapons. For safety and practical reasons, these searches are often conducted unannounced. The simple act of reaffirming the inmates' safety, ideally before and after staff members enter women's rooms, can bolster psychological safety among the inmates. Virtually all correctional procedures, including the wide variety of disciplinary responses, can be delivered in a gender responsive and trauma-informed manner. Exhibit 4 includes some elements of a gender responsive and trauma-informed procedure that can be used in multiple situations.

Exhibit 4: Elements of a Gender Responsive and Trauma-Informed Procedure for Individuals and Groups

1. Tell her what procedure needs to take place and why.
2. Briefly describe what the procedure entails (e.g., order of tasks). If there are different ways the procedure can be done safely, offer choices.
3. Reassure her that you will conduct the procedure in a way that maximizes her safety and comfort.
4. Invite her to ask any questions and answer them before you begin.
5. Let her know that you would like to begin.
6. Conduct the procedure with trauma in mind; use verbal cues along the way such as "Now I am going to place the items from your purse onto the table."
7. Let her know that the procedure has been completed.
8. Ask her how she is doing.
9. Thank her for her cooperation.
10. Let her know what the next activity is.

Source: Benedict, 2013

Some additional strategies that correctional professionals can utilize to encourage inmate safety and effective behavior include:

- Implement routine procedures such as searches, pat downs, movement within the facility, and change of shift protocols in a more gender responsive and trauma-informed manner.
- Introduce procedures that promote inmate safety and avoid "triggering" or "re-traumatizing" inmates who have survived traumatic events (e.g., ways to say goodbye to an inmate who is being released).
- Work with inmates to create a "community" mission statement or set of community values that outline and promote self-respect, effective interactions with peers and staff, and personal responsibility and growth.
- Hold regular unit meetings to start and end the day; ensure that these meetings are productive. For example, staff can talk with inmates about safe boundaries and focus on the importance of healthy and skillful interactions and boundaries within the facility and in the community upon release.
- Create an "Inmate Council" where women inmates can connect with each other in healthy ways with staff support (e.g., they can share ideas about correctional programs or plan holiday observances).
- Introduce "Peer Support" initiatives to encourage healthy and skill-building inmate interactions.
- Implement protocols that cultivate a productive reporting culture.

Motivation and Skill Building

7. Introduce terms and definitions that create safety and motivation.

The effects of negative socialization messages and trauma are ever present for women inmates. Removing disempowering terms from disciplinary language and practices can set an important tone of safety for women inmates; this translates into engagement and growth. Terms such as "inappropriate" and "negative" can be limiting and lacking in cultural sensitivity. For example, if a woman inmate tends to talk loud such that other inmates are intimidated, asking her to "reduce her volume" to "create safety" may be more effective than telling her that using a loud voice is "inappropriate." It may be that this is exactly how she and her family and friends talk in her community, and the volume reflects excitement about the topic, not any intent to cause harm. Using words such as "safety" allows staff to address the behavior without using judgmental terms. Additionally, when implementing procedures or administering a consequence, it is important to avoid terms that trigger the abuses that so many women inmates have experienced.

To introduce terms and definitions that create safety and motivation, consider the following:

- Use descriptive terms to describe inmate behavior, such as "safe" (versus unsafe), "effective" (versus ineffective), "skillful" (versus not skillful), and "supportive" (versus unsupportive).
- Use empowering terms to discuss consequences and privileges, such as "earning" and "working toward" (versus losing or taking away).
- Avoid terms that have violent undertones or connotations (e.g., "lugging" an inmate; "shaking down" a cell; "throwing" an inmate "in the hole"; "booking" an inmate). Say "You need some time away from the group" versus "I am kicking you out of the group."
- Use terms to describe women inmates that encourage staff (and others) to avoid damaging stereotypes and view women inmates as individuals capable of self-efficacy versus "needy," "manipulative," or "catty." Such language can undermine relational safety and effective interventions, and worsen problem behavior.
- Use terms to describe facility spaces that promote safety and engagement such as "community room."
- Consider using terms such as "inmate motivation" internally at staff meetings, debriefings and shift changes; such terms encourage effective approaches to discipline versus traditional punishment strategies.

8. Expand definitions of discipline to include methods that cultivate inmate skills, self-awareness and self-efficacy.

Given the research on punishment and its limited impact on behavior change[12], corrections professionals should consider expanding discipline and sanctions in women's correctional facilities to include the following additional components:

- **Teach and reinforce skills and strategies:** Identify and harness existing skills, and teach new ones, including those that are particularly important for women. Teaching new skills can occur during organized groups and unit meetings, or in the midst of a challenging situation. Skill development is particularly important when administering a consequence. For example, if a woman inmate needs to be removed from the general population for seriously unsafe behavior, officers can remind her of a skill she can use to manage her current situation.
- **Increase self-awareness:** The more self-aware women inmates are, the more they will be able to navigate their own internal experiences, the

Discipline comes from the Latin word "disciplinare," which means to teach.

[12] For a review of this research, see the Appendix.

complex environments of facilities, and the communities to which they will return. Using *productive consequences* as part of discipline and sanctions is an excellent way to build women inmates' self-awareness. Productive consequences are those that encourage inmates to reflect on the situation, develop insights about their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and hone important life skills. They can include completing thinking and feeling reports, creating an action plan, or processing an incident with staff.

- **Build self-efficacy:** Because self-efficacy is built upon belief and successful action, an inmate must not only believe that she can change but have opportunities to make and practice change. Providing women inmates with opportunities to build self-efficacy is an important part of enhancing both the facility culture and discipline and sanctions. Even a series of failures should not be viewed as cause to abandon belief in the practice opportunities provided to her and her ability to change. Rather, failures should be expected as part of the overall process of change. Building women inmates' skills and self-efficacy go hand in hand.

Some strategies for expanding definitions of discipline include:

- Emphasize inmate strengths as part of day-to-day interactions; celebrate small and large successes; display empowering messages about women.
- Adopt a strengths-based approach to discipline and sanctions by building on women's existing skills and teaching new skills.
- Recognize (e.g., in policy, handbooks, training) the limitations of punishment-oriented strategies.
- Make rules and expectations clear, and state them in a positive manner (e.g., "build healthy relationships" versus "no gossip"). Use rules/expectations to address concepts that are particularly important for women in and out of the facility, such as "build healthy relationships/rapport"; "maintain safe boundaries"; "practice assertiveness"; and "practice self-advocacy."
- Work with women inmates to design real and effective solutions to problems. This enhances facility safety (i.e., inmates will not be left to design their own solutions) and offers inmates the very experience of personal value and capability that their socialization likely did not provide.

Staff Training and Support

9. Provide training and skills development opportunities to staff regarding gender, culture and trauma-informed approaches.

Staff members should have the opportunity to become familiar with the research on women inmates[13] and learn the skills and strategies necessary to work effectively with them. Often, staff may be unclear on what types of women inmate behaviors are safe versus unsafe; therefore, providing the time to discuss and therefore understand women inmates' behaviors in the larger context of their psychosocial development and life experiences can be extremely helpful. It can also help staff to classify appropriately gender-specific behaviors, determine the best responses to those behaviors, and create opportunities to teach and reinforce healthy behaviors. Ultimately, staff education in its various forms is critical to the implementation of enhanced approaches to discipline and sanction with women inmates.

> A facility that acknowledges corrections stress, secondary trauma and burnout and provides clear support strategies will experience greater staff health and productivity.

Some staff development strategies include:

- Provide leadership and staff with sufficient training on women's pathways to offending; women's risks, strengths and needs; and skillful approaches and interventions.
- Ensure that staff members receive regular supervision, coaching, mentoring and professional development opportunities.
- Ensure staff communication through meetings, emails, and memos.

10. Provide information and support to staff regarding corrections stress and secondary trauma.

It is essential to support staff as they do this incredibly challenging and important work. In the field of corrections, the term "corrections stress" has emerged as an important phrase that captures some of the unique impacts that working in a corrections environment can have on all staff. Corrections stress and secondary (or vicarious) trauma are very real, different from "burnout," and can impact managers and staff at any time.

- **Corrections stress** can result from giving high levels of energy and/or consideration to those who are suffering, often without experiencing the positive outcomes of seeing individuals improve.[14] Staff may experience various behaviors and emotions (e.g.,

[13] See Appendix.
[14] See McHolm, 2006.

anger, hopelessness, apathy) that arise from knowing about others' traumatic histories, and/or working with traumatized persons and the behaviors that stem from their trauma (e.g., aggression, self-harm).[15]

- **Secondary trauma** is a state of tension and preoccupation with the traumatic experiences or reactions of an individual or individuals. It can manifest in one or more ways (e.g., re-experiencing the traumatic events, avoidance) and can combine with the added effects of cumulative stress or burnout.[16]
- **Burnout** is a response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job and can include exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished feelings of self-efficacy in the workplace. It reflects a form of "energy depletion".[17]

Indeed, most managers and staff experience some form of corrections stress and/or burnout and many have or will experience secondary trauma. All are natural byproducts of working in complex environments with individuals who have trauma histories. For the health of staff, the health of the women inmates they work with, and the health and effectiveness of facilities, there is a critical need to prevent and respond to corrections stress, secondary trauma, and burnout. They are silent factors in corrections work, and many staff are not even aware that they are struggling.

Creating a safe, efficient and productive environment for all staff, and teaching staff essential self-regulation skills, can go a long way to preventing and attending to corrections stress, secondary trauma, and burnout. Such skills can help staff to navigate the realities of working in facilities with greater effectiveness, including their work with and recovery from high intensity situations.

Corrections stress and burnout also may affect the quality of interventions provided to inmates, contribute to high turnover, and impact the safety of the facility.[18] Building and strengthening individual staff coping strategies and strengthening work environments makes a difference. A facility that acknowledges corrections stress, secondary trauma, and burnout, and provides clear support strategies, will experience more staff health and productivity and improved outcomes with women inmates.

Some strategies for addressing staff stress, secondary trauma, and burnout include:

- Orient toward improved facility functioning and organization so that staff have a safe and predictable work environment (e.g., sufficient staffing, designated office space, interdepartmental collaboration).

[15] See Figley, 1995.
[16] See Figley, 1995.
[17] See Meichenbaum, n.d.
[18] See Brower, 2013;

- Define, discuss, and assess corrections stress, secondary trauma, and burnout as part of staff supervision.
- Encourage staff to create self-care plans to prevent and effectively deal with corrections stress, secondary trauma, and burnout.
- Have employee assistance protocols (e.g., relationships with an organization that can provide on or offsite support and counseling).
- Address the realities of corrections stress, secondary trauma, and burnout as part of staff orientation and training; make sure staff members have a clear sense of what support options are available.
- Provide staff with the stress management and self-regulation skills that will be essential for effective work in a corrections setting.
- Ensure that staff have opportunities to discuss (with confidentiality) any level of corrections stress, secondary trauma, or burnout they may be experiencing.
- Create opportunities for staff to de-escalate as part of routine practice; offer staff sufficient breaks and debrief after a critical incidents.

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