

www.cjinvolvedwomen.org

Justice-Involved Women and Domestic Violence

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**Achieving More Effective Outcomes with
Women in Jails Summit
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National Resource Center 
on Justice Involved Women

A project of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Institute of Corrections

Intimate Partner Abuse

GENERAL POPULATION



1.5 MILLION
is equivalent to the
entire population of
PHILADELPHIA
...

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75%
of incarcerated women

OR

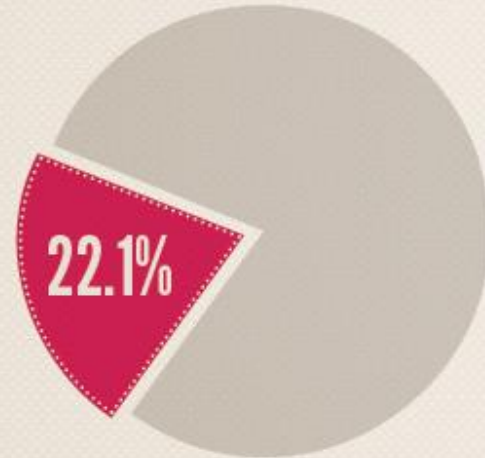


3 IN 4

have experienced **severe physical violence** by an intimate partner.

Histories of Abuse

GENERAL POPULATION



22.1% of women reported being **physically assaulted** by a current or former **spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, or date** in their lifetime.

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2 IN 3

state inmates with histories of abuse

AND



68%

of **jail inmates** with histories of abuse report that the **abuse was perpetrated by an intimate partner.**

Histories of Childhood Abuse

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Women prisoners are at least **twice as likely** as women in the general public to report childhood histories of **physical or sexual abuse**.

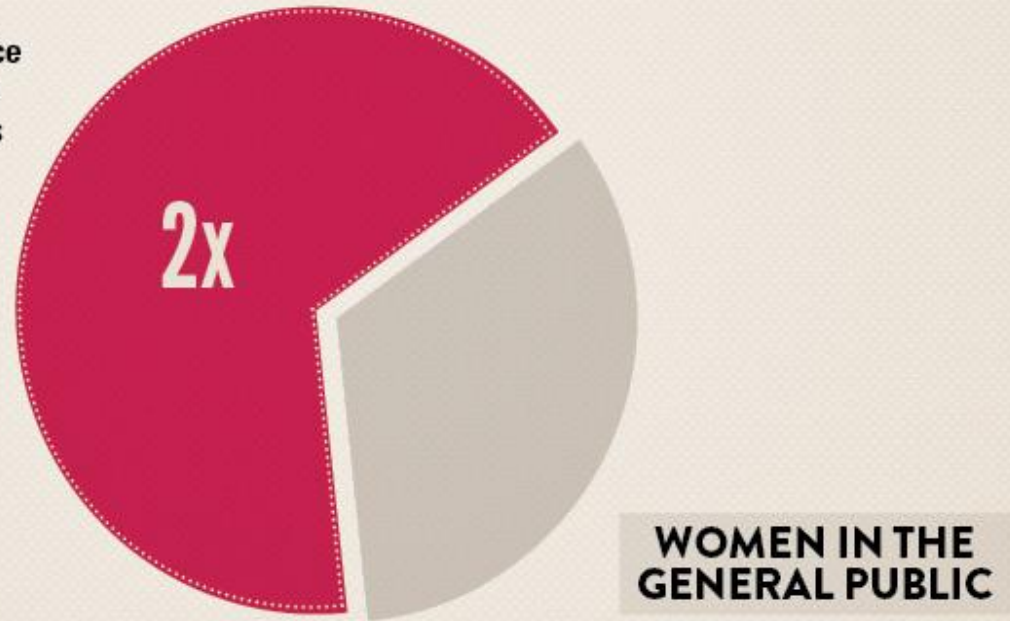


Fig. 3: Likelihood of being physically or sexually abused in the past

Experiences of Abuse in Lifetime

GENERAL POPULATION



More than **50% of women** have been **assaulted** at some point during their lives.

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90%

of **incarcerated women** have endured **physical or sexual abuse** in their lifetimes.

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

Victimization and Abuse

	WOMEN	MEN
Physical Abuse experienced prior to sentencing	32 – 47 %	6 – 13%
Sexual Abuse experienced prior to sentencing	22 – 39%	2 – 6%

Key Fact -- The risk of abuse for males drops after childhood, while the risk for females continues throughout adolescence and adulthood.

Criminalizing Women's & Girls' Efforts to Escape Violence

- Girls are more likely to be incarcerated for running away, truancy or deemed in need of supervision
- Early juvenile involvement in the CJS is highly predictive of adult involvement



Criminalizing Women's & Girls' Efforts to Escape Violence

- Homeless women are at greater risk of arrest for offenses such as solicitation, loitering and disorderly conduct
- Homeless women have often been displaced as a result of being abused, running away or forced onto the streets due to poverty, loss of housing, loss of benefits, escape from abusive intimate partners, mental illness and/or substance abuse



Criminalizing Women's & Girls' Efforts to Escape Violence

- Addiction and drug offenses can be a coping response to abuse and violence
- Efforts to support drug addiction can lead to CJJ High rates of addiction among incarcerated women

Criminalizing Women's & Girls' Efforts to Escape Violence

- Women are left with few or no resources and turn to economic crimes such as larceny, forgery and fraud to support themselves, their children, self-medicating behaviors etc.
- Abuse may force women into poverty and homelessness and may result in the commission of crimes

DV Survivor-defendants

- A 1996 government study found that 93% of women convicted of killing intimates partners (husbands, boyfriends or girlfriends) had been physically or sexually abused by an intimate.
- In 2005, more than half of women in New York's prisons for homicide offenses had experienced abuse in their lives. Nearly one-quarter reported abuse by the victim of their crime.

New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, 1996); New York State Department of Correctional Services, 2007
(Female Homicide Commitments: 1986 vs. 2005)

Issues Related to Domestic Violence and Jails

- Addressing/managing women with victimization histories (and current domestic situations)
 - Programs, Services and Referrals
 - Transition and Reentry
- Women charged with domestic violence crimes (as perpetrators, mandatory arrests for any involvement)
- Collateral consequences of criminal record
- Impact on children
- Others??????