Justice-Involved Women and Domestic Violence

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Achieving More Effective Outcomes with Women in Jails Summit
October 16-17, 2014
Intimate Partner Abuse

GENERAL POPULATION

1.5 MILLION WOMEN
in the U.S. are raped or physically abused by an intimate partner each year.

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

CJI WOMEN

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.

**CJI WOMEN**

2 in 3 state inmates with histories of abuse,

68% of jail inmates with histories of abuse report that the abuse was perpetrated by an intimate partner.
Histories of Childhood Abuse

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

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

- **WOMEN IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC**
Experiences of Abuse in Lifetime

**GENERAL POPULATION**

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

**CJI WOMEN**

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Abuse</strong></td>
<td>32 – 47 %</td>
<td>6 – 13%</td>
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<td>Experienced prior to</td>
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<td>sentencing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Abuse</strong></td>
<td>22 – 39%</td>
<td>2 – 6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced prior to</td>
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**Key Fact** -- The risk of abuse for males drops after childhood, while the risk for females continues throughout adolescence and adulthood.

CEPP, 2010
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???????