

National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women

Building Gender Informed Practices at the Pretrial Stage: Lessons Learned about Implementing the Inventory of Needs (ION) in Dutchess County, New York

Generally speaking, risk assessments were created to address a predominantly male population. While gender neutral risk factors such as criminal, substance abuse, and failure to appear (FTA) histories are relevant for both male and female populations, we are learning that gender neutral tools may miss critical gender specific risk factors that, if addressed, can achieve more successful outcomes with justice involved women. For example, we know from recidivism and assessment validation studies for sentenced female populations (Van Voorhis, Wright, Salisbury, & Bauman, 2010) that:

- Many assessments over classify women
- Current assessments, while valid, ignore needs specific to women
- Studies of gender responsive tools such as the Women's Risk/Needs Assessment (WRNA) have been found to be more valid for female populations than gender neutral assessments
- The female correctional population as a whole reflects a group of low risk but high needs women who may be more successfully addressed by taking a more gender responsive approach.

Examples of Gender Neutral Factors Used by Pretrial Staff to Make Release Recommendations

- Outstanding warrants at time of arrest
- Pending charges at time of arrest
- Active community supervision at time of arrest
- History of criminal convictions
- History of failure to appear (FTA)
- History of violence
- Housing stability
- Employment stability
- Community ties
- History of substance abuse

Despite what we are learning about gender responsive risk assessments at the sentencing and supervision stages of the justice system, very little is known about these assessments at the pretrial stage. Since research suggests that implementing gender responsive policies and practices can contribute to positive outcomes for justice involved women (Gobeil, Blanchette, & Stewart, 2016), it is logical to believe these practices can also benefit female defendants negotiating the pretrial phase of the justice system.

Why Adopt Gender Responsive Practices at the Pretrial Stage?

The concept of gender responsiveness acknowledges the realities of women's lives and how they differ from men's. Gender responsive policies and practices are designed to address social and cultural factors in women's lives, such as violence, abuse, family relationships, substance abuse, trauma, parenting, intimate relationships, poverty, and mental health, at each stage of the justice system.

In the past three decades, there have been advancements in research on gender informed approaches to managing and intervening with justice involved women. These advances inform the development of gender responsive guiding principles, policies, and practices. Research from such disciplines as psychology, substance abuse, mental health, family violence, health, trauma, employment, and education has been used to formulate best practices for justice involved women that have resulted generally in more gender and trauma informed approaches, gender responsive treatment programs, gender informed risk and needs assessments, and gender responsive case management strategies, as well as specialized training for staff working with justice involved women. Not surprisingly, these developments have coincided with a rapid rate of increase in the number of justice involved women over the past 30 years. As such, gender informed strategies are more necessary than ever to effectively address the needs of this growing population.

"Gender responsive" (also referred to as "gender specific" and "gender informed") means understanding and taking into account the differences in characteristics and life experiences that women and men bring to the justice system, and adjusting strategies and practices in ways that appropriately respond to those conditions.

Bloom, Owen, & Covington (2003)

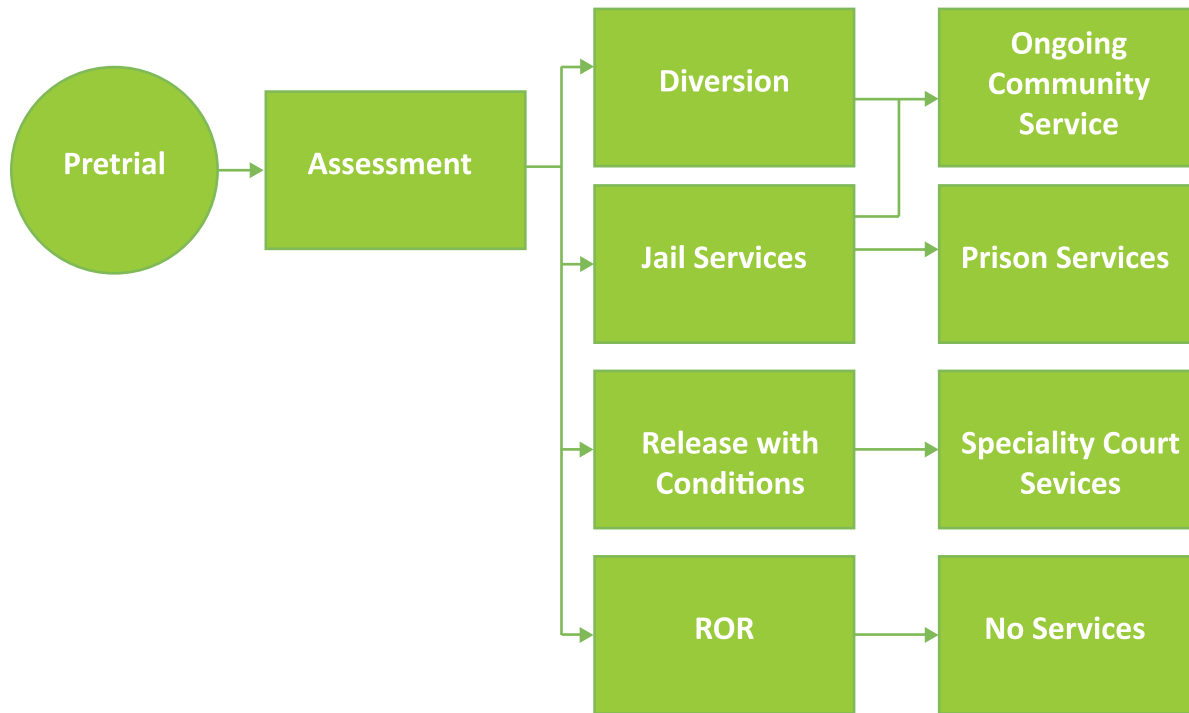
Pretrial agencies are, by design, in the business of gathering information. They typically collect information related to an individual's risk to commit crime or fail to appear in court if released pretrial. Knowledge of an individual's needs can also provide a number of opportunities for constructive community problem solving (see Exhibit 1). For some justice involved women, this may involve diversion to more appropriate social services or to alternatives to jail such as specialty courts. A clear picture of a woman's needs may also facilitate the provision of effective jail and community interventions. In some instances, it may encourage decisions to avoid any further interventions. Regardless of the option, it is likely that valid and accurate measures of risk and needs lend confidence to decisions to advocate for pretrial defendants. Simply put, there are costs to ignoring needs early in the justice system.

Understanding gender responsive research is an important place to start when exploring whether to adopt gender informed practices at the pretrial stage.

Gender Informed Research and Practices at the Pretrial Stage: The Hamilton County, Ohio, Experience

Very little research on the impact of gender informed strategies and assessment instruments has been conducted at the pretrial stage; however, efforts are underway to change this. Some more progressive pretrial agencies have begun to adopt and use assessments that identify issues other than static factors that contribute to risk. For example, a survey conducted by the Pretrial Justice Institute found that of the pretrial programs surveyed (N=151), many reported using additional assessment tools for distinct populations. Forty-two percent of programs used a separate tool for substance abuse, 27% for mental health, 13% for those charged with domestic violence, and 5% for both women and for juveniles charged as adults (Pretrial Justice Institute, 2009).

Exhibit 1. Assessment-Based Pre-entry Model



Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Ohio, a jurisdiction long focused on effective pretrial practices and improving responses to women defendants at the pretrial stage, created a multidisciplinary policy team in 1999 to study the circumstances of women defendants and to develop policies that would improve their chances to successfully complete pretrial supervision and sentencing conditions. Hamilton County’s policy team committed to a systematic planning process to learn what brought Hamilton County women into contact with the justice system, what happened once in the system, and what could be done differently to help women get out and stay out of the system (Berman, 2005). The policy team learned that pretrial women were:

- More likely than men to plead guilty to certain crimes, such as forgery, receiving stolen property, and credit card theft
- Less likely than men to make bond, even when bond levels were the same amounts
- Likely to lose custody of their children (60%) by the time they were placed on probation.

The Development of the Inventory of Need (ION) Pretrial Screening Tool

In the decade following those initial efforts of the Hamilton County policy team, the work continued to develop and evolve. In 2010, Hamilton County engaged in a project with the University of Cincinnati and supported by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to draft a gender specific pretrial assessment tool, called the Inventory of Need (ION) Pretrial Screening Tool. The Hamilton County, Ohio Department of Pretrial Services used the ION to guide referrals to health and human services. The ION was administered to both female and male defendants to assist with case management in various ways¹ : 1) case management of diversion participants; 2) release planning for individuals who could not afford bail; 3) determination of supervision requirements for individuals

¹While the ION was developed as a gender-responsive tool for women as part of University of Cincinnati’s development of a post-conviction risk assessment tool, the Women’s Risk/Need Assessment, Hamilton County

released on “own recognizance” bonds; and 4) triaging defendants who experienced significant and immediate mental health issues to the Court Clinic, where mental health services could be secured.

A later empirical test of the tool noted important differences between male and female defendants (Gehring & Van Voorhis, 2014):

- Women were far less likely than men to incur any pretrial failures (10% vs. 27%, respectively) and were less likely to incur new arrests (6% vs. 18%) in the 6 months following arrest.
- Women were also significantly more likely to be assessed as low risk (51%) than men (33%).

This study also gave further insight into the types of needs that predispose women to adverse outcomes while on pretrial supervision:

- Women who were cited for failures to appear were significantly more likely than their successful counterparts to score high on measures of criminal history, abuse, trauma, mental health, substance abuse, unemployment, limited family support, and homelessness. Thus, troubled women incurred a greater risk of further justice system processing.
- Although the new arrests were few in number, criminal history, unemployment, substance abuse, mental health, abuse, and homelessness were significant risk factors.
- Adding needs, particularly gender responsive needs, to the prediction of adverse outcomes created a much more valid assessment instrument for women than one that contained only static criminal history items.
- Pretrial services lacked critical information about women defendants when they entered the system at jail booking.

The Inventory of Need Pretrial (ION) Screening Tool for Women

The ION is a 70-item assessment instrument designed to gather information about defendants’ risk, needs, and strengths. Needs include issues pertaining to:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Residential stability | 7) Child abuse |
| 2) Homeless status | 8) Adult abuse |
| 3) Children | 9) Personal safety |
| 4) Education | 10) Mental health |
| 5) Employment/financial | 11) Substance abuse |
| 6) Trauma | |

Strengths measured focus on relationships, specifically with the defendants’ family of origin and significant other. Portions of the instrument provide space for notes to guide case management decisions. A Scoring Sheet for Case Planning is used by case management staff to determine the areas of greatest need, the level of services required, and the areas of strengths upon which women defendants can rely in their lives. Demographic variables, which are helpful to create a clear picture of the pretrial defendant population, include the client’s name, date of birth, and marital status, as well as information about the current offense (i.e., felony or misdemeanor; violent, property, drug, public order).

A more in-depth discussion about the ION can be found in “Needs and Pretrial Failure: Additional Risk Factors for Female and Male Pretrial Defendants,” by K. Gehring and P. Van Voorhis, 2014.

Implementing the ION in Dutchess County, New York

In 2013, the National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women began working with the Dutchess County Office of Probation and Community Corrections (OPCC) to develop a more robust pretrial process for women. Like many pretrial programs, the OPCC Pretrial Services Unit facilitates individuals' release without financial conditions by identifying defendants appropriate for release on recognizance (ROR) or release under supervision (RUS). The ROR/RUS structure includes an interview with the defendant, verification of information provided by the defendant, and application of the COMPAS pretrial screening tool² to determine the risk of reoffense and failure to return to court.

The OPCC has developed or participated in programs to address crime and delinquency, and has embraced evidence-based, trauma and gender informed strategies. They have nurtured a number of community collaborations to enhance their efforts, such as:

- Participating in the Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council (CJC)—an advisory body to the County executive and legislature
- Working closely with the CJC's Committee on Women Involved in the Criminal Justice System to focus on the specific needs of women through gender responsive strategies that are most effective in reducing their recidivism
- Inviting CJC members and other community stakeholders to participate in an informational session about the ION pilot project
- Partnering with the newly established Women's Center in an effort to meet the specialized needs of an increasing population of justice involved women and address the factors that contribute to their recidivism.

The Key Elements of Successful Implementation Planning

From the beginning, Dutchess County's implementation of the ION included a careful strategy to:

- Set clear goals for the effort
- Establish an implementation team to guide the effort
- Cultivate buy in from staff, stakeholders, and the women
- Obtain well informed, expert guidance
- Examine agency specific factors that could support or prevent implementation of a gender informed strategy
- Implement the ION and accompanying strategies with fidelity
- Design a data plan to measure results.

The following provides some greater detail about the implementation steps listed above.

Dutchess County, New York Office of Probation and Community Corrections (OPCC)

Dutchess County is a large county with a population of 293,395 residents that is mostly suburban and rural. It has two cities, Poughkeepsie and Beacon.

Pretrial services are administered by the OPCC. The mission of the OPCC is to "protect the community through intervention in the lives of those under supervision by facilitating compliance with court orders and serving as a catalyst for positive change."

In 2012, the Pretrial Services Unit of the OPCC screened 2,669 cases and interviewed 2,116 people booked into the Dutchess County Jail. Of those individuals interviewed, 1,012 were released to the OPCC, and 76.87% successfully completed the pretrial program.

The Dutchess County Jail has a current capacity of 292 beds. In 2007, justice involved women represented 17.7% of jail admissions and approximately 10% of the average daily population.

Interventions with special populations, including justice involved women, have been designated as a priority for the County.

² For more information on the COMPAS pretrial screening tool, visit <http://www.northpointeinc.com/pretrial>.

Set Clear Goals

At the time Dutchess was selected as an ION pilot site, the County had been experiencing severe jail overcrowding and was required to house some detainees out of the County. OPCC also knew from a 2012 snapshot of the jail population that a majority (81–97%) of the women booked into the jail had mental health or substance abuse issues, or both. In addition, 33% of the female inmate population had major mental health diagnoses (Eckert, 2012). This was more than twice the national average for the general jail population. A 2013 needs assessment (RicciGreene Associates, 2013) to address jail overcrowding and housing issues also highlighted the need for improved gender responsive approaches for women in the jail transitioning to the community.

In consideration of these and other factors, the OPCC established the following goal: *Make use of research and assessment tools that will identify pretrial needs and gaps in services in order to improve outcomes for women at the pretrial stage and throughout the Dutchess County criminal justice system.*

Establish an Implementation Team

OPCC assembled a working group of probation officers responsible for case management, service referrals, and data management, and solicited the input of the County’s Office of Computer Information Services (OCIS). All were involved in initial discussions, attended presentations, participated in trainings, contributed to the development of the pilot process, and oversaw its implementation.

Cultivate Buy In from Staff, Stakeholders, and the Women

Early on, Dutchess County recognized the need to collaborate with stakeholders who had:

- A shared desire to address issues specific to women defendants
- A willingness to make internal agency changes that have systemwide impacts
- The ability to collect and analyze data, or access data collection and analysis resources, in order to monitor changes resulting from the new strategies.

External Stakeholders: Prior to applying to participate in the ION pilot project, OPCC shared information with, and invited involvement and received commitments from, critical local stakeholders. These stakeholders were brought to the table at the earliest possible occasion, thereby increasing the likelihood of their buy in and commitment to the project. These stakeholders included CJC members, including the County executive, jail administrator, chief of the Department of Mental Hygiene, district attorney, and head of the public defender’s office. OPCC staff also invited involvement from members of the community, service providers, elected officials, and other local stakeholders.

The Women’s Center

Connecting women to community services was a critical component of the ION process. The Women’s Center was a primary referral source. The Center was established in 2014 and was an immediate partner to OPCC in the pretrial pilot project. An OPCC liaison was established so that when referrals were made, ION documentation accompanied the referrals and informed service planning and delivery.

The referral process for the Women’s Center included transmitting information on the identified ION risk/needs for each client. The Women’s Center’s response would include a list of programs and participation levels for the client. The OPCC liaison was essential to assuring that the client successfully connected to desired services.

Internal Stakeholders: Preliminary work to educate and seek input from staff on gender responsive strategies promoted staff buy in early in the implementation process. Staff were receptive to and saw the benefits of implementing the ION. They agreed that the most effective way to implement the ION was to centralize its administration with a few staff members, although all pretrial staff would be

trained to use the tool. OPCC staff used the training provided by the NRCJIW team to guide them in setting up a process that: 1) engaged women defendants in providing the information necessary to complete the ION; and 2) ensured staff administered the instrument with fidelity.

Get Expert Guidance

The NRCJIW provided OPCC with access to experts in the fields of gender informed, pretrial research and gender responsive and evidence-based program implementation to guide their implementation of gender informed strategies. They participated in informational meetings, teleconferences, and strategy sessions throughout the process.

Examine Agency Specific Factors

In determining an effective implementation strategy, OPCC recognized that they needed to examine factors specific to their agency that could support their transition and those that could prove to be barriers. They especially needed strategies to address those factors that could hinder success. Some of the potential barriers included:

- Internal and external costs, workload, and resources
- The characteristics of justice involved women in Dutchess County
- The risk assessments and pretrial release decision matrix already in use
- Current administrative strategies (i.e., policies, procedures, practices)
- The current service referral process.

OPCC staff identified and implemented a wide array of administrative strategies in order to integrate the ION with existing pretrial case management. At staff meetings, the Pretrial Services Unit brainstormed policies that would need to be revised or implemented, identified staffing and workload requirements, and determined the data collection strategies needed to ensure consistent implementation of the ION.

Key Decisions as a Result of Examining Agency Specific Factors

- Centralized the ION implementation process to a few staff during the pilot process so the staff could focus on quality assurance and consistent procedures
- Developed a protocol to ensure consistent administration of the ION by all staff
- Identified key decision points within the existing structure to allow for individualization of interventions and services
- Identified existing community resources, networks, partnerships, and program inventories that could address specific gender responsive risk and needs

Develop Documentation to Guide the Process

Dutchess County created a Pretrial Administration Guide that detailed each step of the process. The guide was easily modified when circumstances warranted change.

Implement with Fidelity

From the beginning, OPCC decided that not all pretrial women coming to the attention of OPCC would be interviewed. A woman defendant would be flagged for an ION interview if she was determined to be medium to high risk according to their COMPAS Pretrial score (both those women held in jail pretrial and those released on their own recognizance within 24 hours of arrest).

During the first appointment with justice involved women, probation officers described what the ION interview entailed and informed the women that the information collected would help staff make better court recommendations and service referrals. The officers would also:

- Notify the women that their participation was voluntary and not a condition of their pretrial supervision
- Inform the women that the referrals for service would be to agencies that were familiar with gender informed practices

- Seek permission to share redacted information with NRCJIW and others to contribute to research, increase gender responsive services for women, and improve outcomes for justice involved women overall.

It was important that staff consider the ION interview as the first step in case planning, case management, and the service referral process. In comparison to other (gender neutral) risk/needs assessments, the gender responsive items on the ION requested more personal information (e.g., regarding trauma, relationships, and parenting) and required more trust from the women. After becoming aware that many of the ION questions covered personal experiences that women may not feel comfortable disclosing, probation officers brainstormed ways to help women be more trusting and comfortable with the assessment. One way of reducing women’s stress or anxiety associated with the ION interview was to offer clients the choice of being interviewed by a female or male officer.

At the conclusion of the ION interview, probation staff scored the assessment and identified those needs that should be addressed through service referrals. Services were available to address employment and financial needs, mental/medical health, and substance abuse issues. Once those services were identified, the service provider information was given to the women, and staff assisted them in scheduling service appointments before they departed the office. Staff also assisted the women in making transportation arrangements, if necessary, to ensure clients could attend their service referral appointments.

Design a Data Plan

When determining what data to collect to monitor process and outcome measures, OPCC considered the following:

- What questions were they trying to answer and what data would help answer those questions (e.g., snapshot data, individual profile data, population analyses)?
- What was the best way to collect the needed data given the options and resources at their disposal?
- What agencies and organizations within the Dutchess County justice system and outside of the local system could help collect the data?
- What were appropriate data collection, extraction, and analysis methods?
- Did they have the resources to automate data collection or would manual (pen-and-paper) collection be a better option?
- What was the best way of storing and accessing the data for analysis?
- What pretrial outcomes would be included in the analyses (i.e., FTAs and new arrests)?

OPCC implemented gender responsive, assessment-driven case management that featured:

- Using the ION to assess women’s needs
- Prioritizing gender responsive services
- Matching specific interventions to identified needs
- Developing linkages and referrals based on the identified needs
- Removing barriers to service delivery
- Individualizing services so that referral sources were not reinventing the wheel.

In addition to the ION results, demographic information, additional risk assessment information, and offense-related data were collected on defendants in order to build a broader context for the analysis of results.

A critical component of the successful implementation and data collection effort was the OPCC's relationship with the Dutchess County Office of Computer Information Services (OCIS). OCIS staff provided guidance on available data support, helped identify and acquire necessary internal and external data permissions, and assisted in developing protocols for data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting. The plan included collecting data pertaining to the ION risk assessment scores, criminal histories, and outcomes (risk of rearrest and FTAs). These data were collected to learn if the instrument correctly identified the needs that are most relevant to pretrial women. Lastly, OCIS had the capacity to automate the ION, prepopulate data from existing databases, and import data from state criminal databases to build a comprehensive profile of the women OPCC assessed and referred for services.

Purposes of the ION Data Plan

- Monitor the implementation process in order to learn if the assessment tool was being used as intended so that mid-course corrections could be made
- Learn more about the risk and needs profiles of the women defendants to determine whether the necessary types and quantity of services were available to address their pretrial needs
- To the extent possible, contribute to the research on the predictive validity of the ION itself

Implementing the ION with Fidelity

To measure the performance of the ION in Dutchess County, a template was developed that captures the data desired to inform process and outcome measures. Data has been collected since June, 2014.

In addition, OPCC developed monthly progress reports, which were designed to document the implementation process and identify issues to be addressed by staff and areas requiring additional technical assistance. The reports provided information on the benefits and challenges of the ION project, including lessons learned and recommendations for other agencies interested in implementing a gender responsive pretrial process.

OPCC staff also used the monthly progress report as a quality assurance measure that resulted in frequent reviews and revisions to the process. The monitoring strategy involved reviewing completed IONs to be certain that:

- Assessments were complete
- Assessments were scored properly
- Determinations of risk were made appropriately.

Staff also discussed whether interviewers followed good interviewing practices.³ Staff were encouraged to use Motivational Interviewing techniques to elicit the most comprehensive information possible. As a result of completing the ION, many women came to appreciate the connection between the trauma they had experienced in their lives and their justice system involvement.

In terms of linking women to appropriate resources, the monthly reports considered whether the referrals:

- Were driven by the assessment results
- Were prioritized appropriately by risk factors
- Addressed barriers to women's success
- Addressed women's identified strengths.

³ Prior to this effort, all OPCC staff had been trained in Motivational Interviewing.

The ION was designed to encourage a collaborative relationship between the women, probation officers/case managers, and service providers. It was important for staff to ensure that the women played a collaborative role in the process. Preparing monthly reports was particularly beneficial to staff in identifying issues that may have gone undetected. For example, staff noticed that it was important to complete the ION as early in the pretrial process as possible in order to avoid overscheduling the women with service referral appointments. Staff also appreciated the need for creativity in case planning: the ION process helped staff focus on the individual needs of the women rather than creating identical case plans for everyone.

Lessons Learned from the Dutchess County Pilot Project

Overall, staff reported that gender informed strategies and the ION have become integrated into their routine daily office functions. They believe they have collected quality data that has been instrumental in making appropriate service matches; have improved service referrals overall because they are now capable of accurately identifying needs as well as risk; and have linked needs to services that result in positive outcomes. Some of the more significant lessons learned are highlighted below.

Implementation of the ION in Dutchess County: Preliminary Results

Dutchess County is in process of collecting data to determine if the ION is accurately identifying needs of the pretrial women population. Data collection began in June, 2014. As of May, 2015, they have collected data on 97 women. Preliminary findings thus far indicate:

- The average age of the women was 31, and the sample ages ranged from 17 to 59.
- Sixty-three percent of the sample was white, 30% was African American, and 7% was Hispanic/Latina. A little over half (51%) of the sample had children 18 years or younger.
- Regarding education and employment, 19% of the sample did not graduate from high school and 65% were not employed at the time of the interview.
- The women appeared to have significant experiences with abuse, trauma, and mental health issues.
 - Fifty-eight percent had experienced physical abuse over their lifetime (as children and adults) and 37% had experienced sexual abuse over their lifetime.
 - Forty-nine percent of the women had experienced abuse (either physical or sexual or both) as children and 43% had experienced abuse as adults.
 - When asked items that tapped into symptoms of PTSD, 63% of the sample indicated experiencing one or more symptoms of PTSD.
 - Sixty-five percent of the women had been diagnosed with a mental illness. Of those reported diagnoses, 42% were for depression, 39% were for anxiety, 22% were for bipolar disorder, and 16% were for PTSD.

Leadership is important to success.

The OPCC Director believed that educating and involving as many staff and stakeholders as possible in the process was essential. The Director communicated strong support for integrating gender informed strategies into existing pretrial procedures and communicated that this strategy was not to be considered optional. Staff input was encouraged throughout the process and resulted in greater buy in and acceptance of the new process.

Planning is key.

Dutchess County realized several benefits from careful planning:

- Centralizing initial use of the ION among a few key staff members was important for achieving consistent outcomes.
- Ensuring that one of the officers conducting interviews was Spanish-speaking allowed the County to accommodate Spanish-speaking women.
- Planning effective ways to engage the women appeared to make the assessment process more comfortable to them. Probation officers all agreed to take the same approach during their initial meetings with the women in terms of describing the ION and explaining the potential research benefits of the women's participation.
- Pre-planning of potential data needs prevented the OPCC from having to retroactively obtain data elements as the project progressed.
- Taking a careful approach to designing a long-term strategy for using gender informed strategies that included staff input was critical to their buy in.

"Many of the women who were interviewed expressed gratitude for being 'heard' during the interview process and interest in being part of a process that may result in research and strategies that will assist other women."

OPCC Director Mary Ellen Still

Quality assurance is vital.

Implementing a quality assurance process that included monthly documentation of efforts and frequent communication was found to be extremely helpful to the implementation process. As issues arose, they were quickly addressed. For example:

- When staff initially scheduled appointments, they did not allow sufficient time to complete the ION interview and had to reschedule appointments. Once they realized that increased time was required, adjustments were quickly made to accommodate the ION interviews.
- Four months after implementing the ION, staff realized that transportation to the Women's Center was an obstacle for many of the women. For women who wanted to follow up on their referrals immediately, OPCC staff made arrangements to have the Women's Center van transport them directly to the Women's Center after completing the ION interview. For women with later appointments and for ongoing services, staff helped secure transportation from OPCC offices to the Women's Center.
- Due to an OPCC procedural issue, staff realized that women on higher risk pretrial caseloads (i.e., electronic monitoring, transitional housing) were not being interviewed using the ION. This procedure was revised to accommodate this population.
- When women failed to keep their ION interview appointments, probation officers notified supervisors immediately so that problem solving strategies could be implemented.

Collaboration and communication is critical.

Having a supportive community environment and an educated and properly trained staff with effective and frequent communication was critical to achieving positive outcomes.

- Regular communication with the OCIS staff resulted in developing an ION database that had the potential to be connected to the County's information system.
- Interoffice feedback loops helped ensure that everyone was working together.
- Staff meetings became problem solving sessions which effectively addressed challenges.
- The OPCC Director's position as Chair of the CJC resulted in regular communication with the CJC, the Women's Center, and other stakeholders to discuss how the ION had impacted their operations and to share successes.

- As mentioned above, an OPCC liaison to the Women’s Center assured information sharing and problem solving and ensured that women followed through on their referrals.
- Establishing a script for approaching the women about the ION ensured consistency in communication. Every staff person delivered the same message, which encouraged participation.

Staff education and training ensures that all are informed and knowledgeable about the process.

Because of the buy in by OPCC officers and stakeholders, educational and training sessions were well attended. During training sessions, probation officers:

- Were encouraged to use existing strategies such as Motivational Interviewing to improve their interactions with the women
- Discussed strategies and practiced assessment and case management skills to ensure they were gender responsive
- Practiced scoring and utilizing the ION to make case management decisions.

Training was also expanded to include others, such as data entry staff, Women’s Center liaisons, probation officers not involved in the ION pilot and intake staff.

Conclusion

The primary goal of the Dutchess County Office of Probation and Community Corrections was to offer more gender responsive services to women under pretrial supervision. Overall, planning was key to meeting this goal, successfully implementing the ION, and incorporating a gender responsive case management approach. At the conclusion of the pilot project, OPCC had met this goal. The ION has become a “one stop” resource for referrals and other information in the OPCC. The ION provides probation officers with a clear assessment that is the basis for a case plan. Using the ION encouraged probation officers to continue gaining knowledge about women’s pretrial needs and how best to meet them. An added benefit from this process was that the OPCC’s partner, the Women’s Center, adopted the ION as a basis for their case planning as well. Using the ION to determine needs has been a great benefit to the women and has served to reinforce the importance of identifying and addressing their needs early in their justice system involvement.

By participating in the project, the Dutchess County justice system put more focus on the needs of women. The project reinforced the importance of gender responsive strategies and changed the County’s referral and service delivery system while benefitting the women. While it is too early to assess the impact of the ION on recidivism outcomes, OPCC believes they have used the data, training and technical assistance, and ION to improve outcomes for women who come into contact with the Dutchess County justice system.

“The ION has become a ‘one stop’ resource for referrals and other information. It contains all that you want to know, enables early identification of needs, and helps target referrals to ensure we’re addressing those need areas.”

OPCC Director Mary Ellen Still

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