The Tiny Little Frogs

There once was a bunch of tiny frogs,...who arranged a running competition.
The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower.
A big crowd had gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on the contestants...
The race began...

Honestly, no one in the crowd really believed that the tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower.
You heard statements such as: "Oh, WAY too difficult!! They will NEVER make it to the top."
or: "Not a chance that they will succeed. The tower is too high!"

The tiny frogs began collapsing. One by one... except for those, who in a fresh tempo, were climbing higher and higher...The crowd continued to yell.
"It is too difficult!!! No one will make it!"
More tiny frogs got tired and gave up...But one continued higher and higher and higher...
This one wouldn’t give up!

At the end everyone else had given up climbing the tower. Except for the one tiny frog who, after a big effort, was the only one who reached the top! THEN, all of the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it?

A contestant asked the tiny frog how the one who succeeded had found the strength to reach the goal? It turned out... That the winner was DEAF!!!!
The wisdom of this story is:
Never listen to other people's tendencies to be negative or pessimistic......cause they take your most wonderful dreams and wishes away from you. The ones you have in your heart! Always think of the power words have. Because everything you hear and read will affect your actions!

Therefore: ALWAYS be...POSITIVE!
And above all: Be DEAF when people tell YOU that YOU cannot fulfil YOUR dreams! Always think: I can do this!
Getting to know you!

- If you own a pet raise your hand?
- If you own an exotic pet raise your hand?

- Raise your hand if you are American?
- Raise your hand if you are Canadian?
- Raise your hand if you are not American or Canadian?

- Who has travelled to Canada?
- Next question, isn’t for the Canadians....
- Who knows where Nova Scotia is?
Gender-informed Programming for Women Offenders in Canada: Addressing Women’s Needs

From What Works to What Matters

International Community Corrections Association (ICCA) Conference September 2012

Presenter: Marlene Wells National Trainer, Programs for Women
GOAL of the Presentation

Provide an overview of Gender-Informed Programming for Women offenders in Canada

Topics Covered
History/Women Offender Profile
Gender & Programming
Theories & Intervention Models
Which program? RNR

Women Offender Correctional Programs WOCP
- Continuum of Care
- Circle of Care

How do we know that programs work?
Program Facilitators & QA
Putting it all together-conclusion
• In 1990 a Task Force was mandated to examine the correctional management of Federally Sentenced Women from the commencement of sentence to the date of warrant expiry and to develop a plan which would guide and direct the process in a manner that is responsive to the unique and special needs of this group.

• The Task Force was comprised of a variety of stakeholders: Non-government agencies, Aboriginal agencies, government and Federally Sentenced Women.
5 Principles of Creating Choices

1. **Empowerment:** the process through which women gain insight into their situation, identify their strengths, and are supported and provided the opportunity to take positive action to gain control of their lives.

2. **Meaningful & Responsible Choices:** options provided to allow Federally Sentenced Women to make responsible choices.

3. **Respect & Dignity:** mutual respect among Federally Sentenced Women and staff.
4. **Supportive Environment**: an environment which is supportive and positive.

5. **Shared Responsibility**: integration of Federally Sentenced Women into the community network.
Women Offenders in Canada

• The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is responsible for 1,117 women offenders:
  • 569 are federally incarcerated.
  • 548 are living in the community under federal supervision.

• Women offenders account for 4.8% of CSC’s total federal offender population, the remaining 95.2% being male offenders.

Source: CSC Corporate Reporting System, 2012-09-02. Data does not include provincial offenders, UALs, or offenders on bail.
68% of women offenders have been physically abused;
54% of women offenders have been sexually abused by their family of origin, their partner, or both;
- Higher for Aboriginal women offenders (91% physically abused and 61% sexually abused; CSC, 2007).

About 27% of women offenders are in custody for homicide, 26% for drug offences, 23% for robbery, and 2.6% for sex offences (CSC, 2009a);

The main reason women get involved with property crimes is due to a lack of money as a result of unemployment and an expressed need to provide for children or to obtain drugs (Newburn, 2007);

The highest rates of criminal offending in women occur when they are 15 years old; with a steep decline thereafter.

The average age of federally sentenced women offenders is 37.
• About 77.4% of women who enter a federal institution have children (CSC, 2010);

• Girls and young women often enter the correctional system with low levels of education (many are high school drop outs) and minimal vocational experience (Bloom & Covington, 2001);

• 29% of women offenders self-report having mental health needs at intake (CSC, 2009a);
  • 28% of women offenders had at least one incident of non-suicidal self-injury in their lifetime (Power & Usher, 2011a);
  • 40.5% of women offenders had at least one suicide attempt prior to entering federal custody (Power & Usher, 2011b).
Gender & Programming

What does taking gender into consideration really mean for women’s programming?

• Ensuring an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to corrections.
• Acknowledging the possibility of:
  • A history of victimization, (sexual) abuse and/or trauma;
  • Mental health needs;
  • Physical health needs;
  • Motherhood and family ties;
  • Unstable childhood or adolescence;
  • Alcohol and/or drug use;
  • Poverty or low socio-economic status; and
  • Practice of self-harm and/or suicidal ideation.
• These considerations are met at the program material level and by the staff trained to deliver women-specific programs.
• Correctional programs are based on:

  **Social Learning Theory** (Albert Bandura)


  **Feminist Ecological Model** (Ballou et al, 2002, Bronfenbrenner, 2005)

  **Feminist Therapy Theory** (Ballou et al, 2002, Marecek, 2002)
Applying Intervention Models

- Cognitive Behavioural Intervention
- Self-Efficacy
- Model of Change
- Motivational Interviewing
- Holistic
- Diversity
How Does CSC Decide Which Women Take Which Program?

- Correctional programs cater to a woman offender’s *risk* of re-offending and a woman offender’s criminogenic *needs*.

- A woman offender is referred to a program based on her risk and need; she has the right to accept or decline.
How Does CSC Decide Which Women Take Which Program?

- The *risk* and *need* principles work in tandem with the *responsivity* principle:
  - A woman’s risk and need levels are considered in relation to her responsivity, which specifically acknowledges her position in society as a woman.
  - These principles are applied alongside gender-informed approaches to intervention.
History of women offender programming:

- Women Offender Substance Abuse Program (WOSAP).
  - WOSAP Module 1 Education and Engagement
  - WOSAP Module 2 Intensive Therapeutic Treatment
  - WOSAP Module 3 Relapse Prevention/Maintenance Program (Institution and Community)
- Women’s Violence Prevention Program
Programming for women offenders is based on a continuum of care from admission to warrant expiry.

- Non-Aboriginal women follow the **Continuum of Care**.
- Aboriginal women follow the **Circle of Care**.

Both include the following:

- A program intake interview;
- An engagement program;
- Referral to a Correctional Program targeting women offenders with a moderate or high risk for problematic behaviour linked to crime;
- Transition sessions to consolidate a self management/healing plan prior to release; and
- A self management program.
**WOCP: Continuum of Care**

- **Women’s Engagement Program (WEP)**
  - First correctional program in the *Continuum of Care*, offered after admission.
  - Opportunity to enhance motivation for change.
  - Welcomes women to the institutional community and their transition from the community.
  - Actively engages women as agents of change in their own intervention pathway.
  - Raises the women's’ awareness of problematic behaviours.
- **Women Offender Moderate Intensity Program (WO-MIP)**
  - The WO-MIP provides women with opportunities to continue in their journey towards positive change.
  - The focus of the WO-MIP includes:
    - Changing problematic behaviour;
    - Working towards short and long-term goals; and
    - Self and emotional regulation.
Targeted Programs

• **Women’s Sex Offender Program (WSOP)**

  • Aims to enhance motivation for change and provide knowledge about healthy relationships and problematic behaviours.

  • Addresses possible past traumatisation, victimization, physical health problems and relationship issues.
• **Women Offender High Intensity Program (WO-HIP)**
  - Intended for women who were assessed as a high risk with high needs at intake.
  - Assists participants in preparing for, building and enhancing their ability to live a balanced and crime-free lifestyle.
  - Has a greater focus on emotions management and on nurturing healthy relationships than the WO-MIP.
• **Women’s Modular Intervention (W-MI)**
  
  • Addresses the needs of women housed in maximum security units.
  
  • Addresses risk factors recognised as contributing to women’s criminal behaviour, i.e., criminogenic factors.
  
  • Focuses on developing and improving:
    
    • Healthy communication skills;
    
    • Assertiveness skills;
    
    • Self regulation skills; and
    
    • Making choices for pro-social outcomes through empowerment.
• Women Offender Self Management Program (WO-SMP)

• Provides ongoing support.
• Focuses on supporting participants as they continue to make changes and increase self-awareness.
• Reinforces skills learned in other programs.
• Available both in the institution and in the community.
History of programming for Aboriginal women offenders:

- Circles of Change
- Spirit of a Warrior
- Aboriginal Women’s Maintenance Program
• Programs in the **Circle of Care** are culturally relevant to respond to the specific needs faced by Aboriginal women offenders.

• Programs integrate Aboriginal cultural models and mainstream skills development approaches.

• The **Circle of Care** aims to strike a balance between a healing and a skills based approach.

• The main theme of Aboriginal Women offender programs is grounded on healing through cultural identity.
Meeting Women’s Needs

...and let’s not forget about all the other programs!

- Not all women’s needs are criminogenic in nature.
- There are many other areas of programming that are beneficial to women throughout the rehabilitation process, in preparation for reintegration:
  - Mental health programs;
  - Education programs;
  - Employment programs; and
  - Social programs.
How Do We Know That Women’s Programs Work?

• Correctional programs for women are empirically validated methods of intervention, and gender responsive programs for women show more promise (Blanchette, 2001; Pettway, 2006).

• Participation in women’s programs reduce criminogenic needs in targeted areas (Furlong & Grant, 2006; Hall, Prendergast, Wellisch, Pattern, & Cao, 2004).

• Women who previously participated in community maintenance programs have considerably better results for sustained release in the community (Matheson, Doherty, & Grant, 2009).
• Of those women who participated in a correctional intervention during their sentence, and reached their Warrant Expiry date in 2009-2010, about 5.6% return to federal custody on a reconviction (violent or non-violent) within 2 years (Performance Management, 2012-04-15),

• Using the same definition, about 2.8% return to federal custody on a violent reconviction within 2 years (Performance Management, 2012-04-15),
How Do We Know That Women’s Programs Work?

• In addition to monitoring the reduction criminal re-offending, it is imperative that women’s programs aid in the improvement of the overall well being of women offenders.

• Women offender correctional programs also...
  • Increase interpersonal skills such as trust, support and cooperation;
  • Increase self-awareness, anger awareness, and cultural awareness (i.e., in Aboriginal program streams) (Bell & Flight, 2006);
  • Improve women’s mental, emotional and spiritual healing;
  • Allow women to gain knowledge of the consequences of substance abuse (Grant et al., 2008); and
  • Increase the chance of attaining employment in the community (CSC, Evaluation Branch, 2011).
How Do We Know That Women’s Programs Work?

- **Participant feedback**, although not an objective measure of program evaluation, provides insight into the effectiveness of women’s programs from the participant perspective.

- Nationally, women rated the Women’s Engagement program an average of **3.7 out of 4**, when asked how successful they believed the program was in helping them understand the changes they need to make.
Components of Program Evaluation

- Program evaluation for women offenders includes:
  - Evidence-based formal evaluations by the Evaluation Branch:
    - Measuring recidivism, reintegration, assessment of change against program targets, influence of participant responsivity on outcome, and pre and post assessment batteries.
  - Taking into account rates of participation and completion; and
  - The incorporation of qualitative methods alongside quantitative ones, such as program participant feedback.
Program Facilitators

• All programs facilitators must complete a 10 day Initial Training in either the Continuum of Care or the Circle of Care.
• Programs in the Circle of Care are facilitated by an Aboriginal facilitator and an Elder. Non-Aboriginal facilitators do not deliver Aboriginal programs.
• Program facilitators are rigorously evaluated by certified trainers during the initial training.
• Follow-up evaluations through video and site visits continue until facilitators meet the standards of the Quality Assurance process.
• Once a facilitator is certified they are quality reviewed every three years.
Quality Assurance

Working Alliance
• Establishes and maintains relationships with group participants to enhance attitudinal, cognitive and behavioural change.

Program Delivery Techniques/Skills
• Uses techniques and skills to deliver program content in order to maximize participant learning and skill development.

Analytical thinking/judgment
• Uses knowledge and thinking skills to accurately identify and analyze offenders’ needs and progress.
Planning and organizing
• Effectively manages time and resources to meet program delivery commitments.

Self management
• Is motivated to learn, manages self-learning and has clearly defined boundaries.

Compliance with Policy
• Complies with CD 726, Program Standards (CD 726-1), Program Guidelines and other program specific materials
• Women offenders are provided with integrated models of correctional programming and intervention.

• What are integrated models of correctional intervention?
  • Implies using numerous approaches to correctional intervention.
  • Interdisciplinary influences that work together to produce well-rounded models of intervention;
    • Sociology, Psychology, Criminology.
  • Applying theoretical frameworks to empirically validated programming produces integrated models of correctional intervention.
• We do this by…
  • Acknowledging guiding legislation;
  • Taking into account the principles of Creating Choices;
  • Understanding and considering the concepts of women-centred programming;
  • Considering theoretical frameworks;
  • Developing and implementing a diverse array of program streams that cater to different needs, specifically for women; and
  • Addressing needs outside of programming, such as mental health, employment and education;

• …Appropriate correctional intervention methods that are gender sensitive and gender responsive are successfully produced.
Women’s programs that respond to women’s individual needs are gender responsive.
Questions?

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