



GENDER-RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES

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FOR WOMEN OFFENDERS

The Gender-Responsive Strategies Project: Jail Applications

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Introduction

This bulletin informs jail administrators about current research regarding women offenders and introduces strategies for administrators to consider as they evaluate current operating procedures.¹ At midyear 2002, 77,369 women were incarcerated in U.S. jails,² compared with 588,106 men held in jails.³ The number of women inmates in the nation's jails increased nearly 50 percent from 1995 to 2002.⁴ The absolute number of women inmates is much lower than the absolute number of men; however, their impact on jail operations is significant, raising concerns about the adequacy of the physical plant, medical and mental health services, privacy, and crowding of women's housing units. Often, jail administrators are challenged to address the needs of women inmates. Although the body of research regarding women in prison has grown, little research has been conducted about women in jails or meeting the needs of these women inmates.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the past decade, the number of women involved with the criminal justice system has increased dramatically. This growing number has revealed that women's pathways to crime, their programming and service needs while under supervision, and their needs when they reenter the community are significantly different than those of their male counterparts.

This bulletin on gender-responsive strategies and their implications for jail operations is part of a 3-year study and report: Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders. As agencies and systems examine the impact of gender on their operations, policy-level changes are a primary consideration. Acknowledging that gender makes a difference and improving services for women offenders will improve overall jail management and increase the likelihood that offenders will be more successful following their release.

—Morris L. Thigpen, Sr.

Administrators of jails of all sizes may have concerns about addressing the needs of women offenders. To help them do so, this bulletin—

- Summarizes *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*,⁵ the report on which this bulletin is based, and reviews the guiding principles it proposes to help administrators assess and improve current practice.
- Describes how the guiding principles are relevant to, and can be implemented in, a jail setting.
- Outlines approaches for jail administrators to consider as they decide whether to implement some or all of the guiding principles.

Resources for administrators who want to further explore gender-responsive strategies are presented in this bulletin. The thoughts and recommendations of jail administrators regarding implementation of the guiding principles are also presented. Where available, jail-based data are used to describe the issues of women inmates.

Through leadership in their agencies and communities, jail administrators have an opportunity to improve services to women offenders. This bulletin provides ideas, presents data, and suggests important first steps toward enhancing the administrator's leadership role by implementing gender-responsive strategies.

Women in Jail: Their Numbers and Characteristics

- More than 1 million women are currently under the supervision of a criminal justice agency in the United States.
- The number of women inmates held in the nation's jails increased nearly 50 percent from 51,300 in 1995 to 76,817 in 2002.
- The total number of adult women arrested increased 17.8 percent between 1992 and 2001, according to the FBI. Arrests of women for violent crimes increased 24.1 percent during these years, while arrests for property crimes decreased 12.7 percent. Drug arrests increased 51.4 percent for the 10-year period.
- Women constitute 17 percent of the total number of offenders under supervision.
- The number of women under criminal justice supervision has risen disproportionately to arrest rates.
- Offenses committed by women have not become more violent as a group.
- Women are more likely to be convicted of crimes involving property or drugs.
 - Drug offenses represent the largest source of increased convictions for women, as opposed to violent offenses for men.
- Incarcerated women typically—
 - Are women of color, undereducated, and unskilled; have low incomes and sporadic employment histories; and are disproportionately represented.
 - Are eight times more likely to be African American than white.
 - Are in their mid-30s.
 - Have histories of fragmented families, with other family members involved in the criminal justice system.
 - Are survivors of physical and/or sexual abuse.
 - Have significant histories of substance abuse.
 - Have multiple physical and mental health problems.
 - Are the unmarried mothers of children, accounting for almost 250,000 children whose mothers are in jail.

Gender-Responsive Strategies Project: Approach and Findings

Recent research about women offenders has revealed specific findings relevant to jail operations. Although the findings presented in *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders* are summarized in this bulletin, jail administrators are encouraged to read the full report.⁶ The report, the culmination of 3 years of work funded by NIC, was written to help jail and prison administrators to more effectively manage women offenders. The application of this research can improve a jail's response to the specific needs of women inmates. The report describes the following:

- Characteristics and profiles of women in jail (see “Women

in Jail: Their Numbers and Characteristics”).

- Effects of existing criminal justice practices on women offenders.
- Theoretical perspectives pertaining to women in the criminal justice system.
 - Pathways perspective.
 - Relational theory and female development.
 - Trauma theory.
 - Addiction theory.

Characteristics and Profiles of Women in Jail

Data gathered on the women held in jails across the country support what most jail administrators already know about women offenders. These arrest data can be useful as a jail administrator considers systemic changes in operations.

As shown in table 1, arrests of women for drug-related offenses increased more than 50 percent in the past decade. Of women held in jails in 1998, 12 percent were held for violent offenses, 34 percent were held for property offenses, 30 percent were held for drug offenses, and 24 percent were held for public order offenses.⁷

Socioeconomic Level. Women in jails are disproportionately persons of color. Most of those who were employed before their incarceration held low-skill, entry-level jobs with low pay.⁸ Fifty-five percent of women in jails have a high school diploma. Sixty percent of women inmates reported they were unemployed at the time of their arrest, compared with 40 percent of male inmates.⁹

Physical and Sexual Abuse. Physical and sexual abuse have been shown to be significantly

TABLE 1: TEN-YEAR ARREST TRENDS

Offense	Males			Females		
	1992	2001	Percentage (+ or -)	1992	2001	Percentage (+ or -)
Violent crime	330,267	278,652	-15.6	46,952	58,285	+24.1
Property crime	885,529	611,057	-31.0	312,782	273,007	-12.7
Drug abuse violations	489,209	671,271	+38.1	99,126	150,089	+51.4
Sex offenses	54,908	45,437	-17.2	4,140	3,568	-13.8

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2002). *Crime in the United States 2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, p. 239.

correlated with substance abuse.¹⁰ Girls and young teenagers who are victims of physical and sexual abuse often turn to drugs and alcohol to mask their pain. Violence in their lives is an unfortunate fact for women offenders. In addition to exposure to violence in their families and neighborhoods, these women are often abuse survivors themselves. Sixteen percent of women held in jails have been physically or sexually abused before their recent admissions; 25 percent of women held in jail report they have been raped.¹¹ Between 7 and 16 percent of male offenders report physical or sexual abuse before age 18; the percentage for women is between 40 and 57 percent.

Health and Mental Health. Jails have reported that incarcerated women are higher consumers of health and mental health services than incarcerated men.¹² Research confirms this, noting that the level of women's poverty, their lack of access to health care, and their histories of substance abuse contribute to their overall lack of wellness.¹³ Reproductive health issues also are critical, and pregnancies are generally high risk. Incarcerated women often are diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases; approximately 3.6 percent of women in prison are HIV positive, compared with 2 percent of men in prison.¹⁴

Studies show that 12.2 percent of women in jails have severe psychiatric disorders, and fewer than 25 percent of these women receive mental health services while incarcerated.¹⁵ Twenty-five percent of women in prison are diagnosed with mental illness.¹⁶ This finding may be compared with a reported level of mental illness of 6.4 percent for men in jails. The major diagnoses for women are depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse. Psychotic disorders are mental illnesses that center on abnormal thinking and perceptions. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Substance Abuse. About 40 percent of women inmates reported that they had been under the influence of drugs when their crimes were committed, compared with 32 percent of men.¹⁷ Jail-based research indicated that 53.3 percent of women had a substance abuse disorder, compared with 29.1 percent of men.¹⁸

Children. Seventy-nine percent of women in jail are mothers of young children. Most often, they are single mothers.

The preceding data are important to jail administrators, who have found that analyzing this information—

- Allows for better planning of gender-appropriate and effective services.¹⁹
- Assists in improving management through gender-responsive screening, medical and mental health care, security, communication, staff training, and housing.
- Helps educate staff about the offenders under their supervision.
- Helps the community understand the impact of holding women inmates.
- Assists in identifying existing and needed community-based services to help inmates as they are released from custody.

Effects of Existing Criminal Justice Practices on Women Offenders

The preceding data provide a snapshot of women in custody, but other issues also define women offenders. Most jails have few specific policies and procedures to manage women offenders other than those addressing basic issues, such as searches, housing, and, perhaps, transportation. Women offenders often have been an afterthought in jail design, and their presence in the jail is often a strain for staff.²⁰ Because distinctions are rarely drawn regarding the different in-custody behaviors of men and women inmates in jail management, operations, and staff

training, some corrections officers perceive women inmates as demanding and difficult to manage.²¹ When experienced staff convey their negative and incorrect stereotypes of women inmates to newly hired employees, these stereotypes often become reality.

The jail is not the only component of the criminal justice system that is struggling to cope with the increased number of women arrestees and offenders. The effects of current criminal justice practice (and practices in jails) on women include the following:

- Pretrial incarceration due to women's inability to raise even low bonds.²²
- Overclassification of female arrestees because they are evaluated using male-based classification systems that often make them ineligible for pretrial release programs and other jail-based programs.²³
- Medical, mental health, and inmate programs that do not specifically match women's needs for care.²⁴
- Operational practices that do not address women's issues, such as lack of visiting hours that coincide with the times children can visit the jail; lack of appropriate jail-issued clothing, hygiene supplies, and recreational opportunities; and lack of appropriate work training programs, inmate

worker positions, and posttrial alternatives-to-incarceration programs.²⁵

- Few efforts to link inmates being released from custody to a community's programs and services that might help prevent reoffending.

The jail administrators who helped develop this bulletin and those who have participated in gender-responsive research suggest that because of some agencies' historic perceptions of women inmates, staff learn early in their careers that working with women inmates is not valued. This historical bias perpetuates the conflict that is often present between the jail's staff and women in custody, which is also strengthened by the fact that few jail staff receive information and training on how to manage women effectively.²⁶

The information and guiding principles presented in *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles* provide jail administrators with a different way to think about women offenders and raise an important question: How can jails use information about the women in their custody to improve their management of the women, add to the operational effectiveness of the jail, and improve outcomes for the women? Reducing recidivism by even a small percentage will have a great impact on these women and their children.

Theoretical Perspectives on Women in the Criminal Justice System

Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles and the research cited in this section document the different ways in which men and women enter the criminal justice system and the differences in their in-custody behavior. Insights into the lives and characteristics of incarcerated women can give administrators, jail staff, and stakeholders a data-driven foundation for more effectively reviewing their operations and managing the women in their care. The full report identifies four theories that together explain how these factors shape the lives and behavior of women offenders: pathways perspective, relational theory and female development, trauma theory, and addiction theory.

Pathways Perspective. Understanding how women enter the criminal justice system helps jails improve their responses by providing a perspective rarely considered when managing women inmates. Women in jail often have histories of sexual and/or physical abuse and substance abuse and are consumers of mental health services. Their family members or friends often are substance abusers, have histories of violence, and are themselves enmeshed in the criminal justice system. These women typically are unskilled, earn low

incomes, and have sporadic work histories. They typically are also single parents. These data point to the need for targeted interventions that address these issues.

Relational Theory and Female Development. Relational theory helps describe the different ways in which males and females develop, ultimately affecting whom they become as adults. An important difference suggested by the research is that “females develop a sense of self and self-worth when their actions arise out of, and lead back into, connections with others.”²⁷ How women make connections with others in their world is also related to how they learn to communicate—both how they provide information and how they listen. Women offenders often grow up in situations that do not promote functional relationships with others and, in fact, are highly dysfunctional. For example, 48 percent of women in local jails reported being physically or sexually abused before age 18.²⁸ Another result of the need to connect with people is that many women offenders are drawn into criminal activity because of their relationships with others.

Such a simplistic restatement of this theory is important to jail administrators because it helps explain why staff often perceive that communicating with female inmates is more difficult and time consuming than communicating with male inmates. Because many

women offenders have not developed appropriate communication skills, they frequently try to establish relationships, even dysfunctional relationships, with those around them, including other offenders and staff. Sometimes staff, who may lack the training or life experiences needed to assess what they are hearing or seeing, label this behavior as provocative or manipulative.

Trauma Theory. “Trauma is the injury done by violence and abuse.”²⁹ The cumulative impact of trauma on women inmates results in behaviors during incarceration that, if misunderstood, may be the root of the struggles between staff and the women in jail.

Understanding past trauma and its effect on current behavior is critical in the jail environment. Out-of-date or insensitive jail procedures, such as using restraints and shackles, can often retraumatize women inmates. Trauma affects women in complex ways, but the impact of a lifetime of trauma is largely unrecognized by the women offenders themselves. Also, staff are rarely trained to recognize the symptoms of trauma, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or do not know how to manage inmates who manifest the symptoms. An array of mental health services is needed to respond to trauma.

Addiction Theory. Research on female substance abusers supports

a holistic approach to treating them in both community-based and in-custody programs. Substance abuse treatment programs for women inmates often are modified interventions developed for male offenders and are, therefore, less effective than programs designed for women would be.³⁰ When addiction is combined with additional factors (mental illness, trauma, abuse), jail-based treatment programs for addiction should address the range of the pathway factors. Because relationships also have been shown to be important for women substance abusers in their recovery, addressing relationships is central to the long-range success of addiction treatment.

Awareness of Women’s Pathways Into the Justice System

Gender-responsive research provides critical and useful information for jail administrators to consider as they evaluate their current operations and review how to manage the increasing number of women in custody. The research helps explain the connections in women offenders’ lives among crime, substance abuse, violence, mental illness, and trauma. These factors explain why many women inmates behave the way they do. Awareness of women’s pathways into the justice system will help jail administrators consider how to adjust policies and procedures and how to assess and improve services to women in jail.

Gender-Responsive Guiding Principles: Implications for Jail Administrators

Six guiding principles grounded in empirical research and the input of corrections practitioners address concerns in all phases of the corrections system regarding managing, supervising, and treating women offenders.

Guiding Principle 1: Acknowledge That Gender Makes a Difference

Jail administrators strive to ensure that inmates receive equal treatment and attention during their incarceration based on their classification and unique needs. Women offenders' needs are often viewed no differently than those of male

inmates. However, research suggests that treating incarcerated women as if they were men fails to acknowledge the clear distinguishing aspects of how women enter the criminal justice system and how their behavior, once incarcerated, differs from that of men.³¹

The nature and extent of women's criminal behavior and the ways in which they respond to supervision and incarceration reflect the following gender differences:

- Women's participation in crime differs from that of men in their motivation for committing the crime and the degree of harm caused by their criminal behavior.
- Crime rates for women are lower than for men, and women's crimes tend to be

Few research studies on female inmates have been conducted, but most of those conclude that women exhibit differences in the severity and uniqueness of certain needs compared with male inmates.

—Brennan and Austin (1997), p. 4

less serious and significantly less violent.

- Family violence, trauma, and substance abuse play a significant role in women's criminality and influence their pattern of offending more so than for men.
- Women's responses to community supervision, incarceration, and treatment differ from those of men.
- Women have higher rates of jail disciplinary infractions for less serious rule violations compared with those of men but demonstrate less violence during incarceration.

Guiding Principles

Principle 1: Gender. Acknowledge that gender makes a difference.

Principle 2: Environment. Create an environment based on safety, respect, and dignity.

Principle 3: Relationships. Develop policies, practices, and programs that are relational and promote healthy connections to children, family, significant others, and the community.

Principle 4: Services and supervision. Address substance abuse, trauma, and mental health issues through comprehensive, integrated, and culturally relevant services and appropriate supervision.

Principle 5: Socioeconomic status. Provide women with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions.

Principle 6: Community. Establish a system of community supervision and reentry with comprehensive, collaborative services.

- Women’s behavior is influenced significantly by their concern for their children and their relationships with staff and other offenders during incarceration.

What Does This Principle Mean for Jails?

Acknowledging that gender makes a difference opens up many possibilities and can lead to a reexamination of the underlying premises regarding how a jail manages women offenders. Administrators are concerned that managing incarcerated men and women differently may lead to complaints that services are unequal. However, as discussed on page 12 under “Implementing the Guiding Principles in a Jail Setting,” a difference exists between equality and parity with relationship to jail operations. Thoughtful analysis that leads to implementing programs that meet the needs of all inmates is the best approach to addressing any concerns about equality and parity of programs or services. Acknowledging that gender makes a difference allows administrators to reevaluate policies and procedures with the goal of improving the entire jail’s operation by more effectively managing women inmates—a population often considered to be one of the most difficult in the jail.

Guiding Principle 2: Create an Environment Based on Safety, Respect, and Dignity

Understanding how the jail environment affects women inmates is one of the first steps in improving both

In the words of one jail administrator, “Once we acknowledge that gender makes a difference, it is empowering . . . [it] frees you from having to worry about treating people the same . . . [and] it is more logical.”

their behavior and the worklife of staff. Jail administrators frequently notice, and the research supports, that inmates’ behavior is often correlated with their environment, which includes the physical plant, the professional demeanor of staff, and the quality and relevance of programs, services, and work opportunities. This is especially true for women offenders, who often come from less-than-optimal family and community environments and who typically are more sensitive to their environments than incarcerated men.

Safety is a critical factor in a gender-responsive correctional environment. Safety includes a setting in which women offenders are free from physical, sexual, and verbal abuse. If women feel safe,

their in-custody and postcustody outcomes will be more positive. Safe and supportive environments include those in which programming is based on women’s life circumstances (pathways) and on treatment approaches focused on their specific needs rather than on male-based models.

Compiling and analyzing data related to the profiles of incarcerated women can spark a review of jail operations. For example, because most jail classification systems are based on, and validated by, data about incarcerated men, the process potentially overclassifies many women offenders. This overclassification may lead to a more restrictive incarceration status, which may limit access to programs and directly influence women offenders’ pre- or posttrial release to community supervision. Jails may want to review their classification systems and collect data that will help them change the system (see sidebar “Jail Classification and Gender-Responsive Strategies”).³²

What Does This Principle Mean for Jails?

The core mission of most jails is the protection and safety of those under their care, custody, and control. Jail administrators accomplish this by providing an appropriate physical plant and security procedures, staff training, and relevant inmate programs and services. Addressing women’s needs, including their needs for privacy, clothing, hygiene supplies, medical care, and mental

health care, will improve their incustody lives. Also important is the jail administrator's attitude toward jail policies and practices regarding cross-gender supervision, shackling, and searches and the impact of these practices on women inmates. Understanding the histories of women inmates and their relative lack of dangerousness will help administrators ensure that jail policies provide for a safe environment that does not further traumatize this population.

Guiding Principle 3: Develop Policies, Practices, and Programs That Are Relational and Promote Healthy Connections to Children, Family, Significant Others, and the Community

Women's critical relationships include those with other inmates, staff, and people outside the jail, especially their children. Understanding why women inmates seek to establish relationships during incarceration and the importance they place on these relationships is key to better management.

Corrections staff are often unprepared for the relationship-building and relationship-seeking behavior of incarcerated women and are, therefore, uncomfortable with it. They recognize that more time is needed to respond to women inmates' questions and to engage in routine communications than is needed for incarcerated men. Problem solving with women inmates generally is more challenging, too,

because relationships are usually at issue. One officer said: "Women inmates just can't take 'no' for an answer. They always want to know why. They keep talking, trying to get me to change my answer." That these women build relationships with officers by talking and asking

questions more than male inmates do is a good example of why gender matters. Staff who are trained to expect these differences and who are given skills to improve their ability to communicate with women offenders also improve their own worklife and their

Jail Classification and Gender-Responsive Strategies

If a jail uses a traditional classification system, women inmates may be overclassified. Considering this, correctly classifying women based on valid data, and moving women to less restrictive housing, may provide benefits in terms of staffing ratios, fewer disruptions, availability of higher level custody beds for male offenders, and increased access to programming for women. Combining appropriate classification with improved programming for women may result in an improved and safer working environment for staff and better institutional and postrelease outcomes for women. This is one example of how analyzing jail operations with an eye toward gender-responsive principles can improve the entire jail operation.

Brennan and Austin (1997) propose the following eight steps for designing classification systems that are appropriate for female inmates in jails:

1. Obtain institutional support and commitment.
2. Establish an implementation team of key stakeholders.
3. Establish performance requirements, goals, and purposes.
4. Finalize a provisional technical design.
 - Specify the classification goals, purposes, and organizing principles.
 - Select risk and needs factors.
 - Select a classification scoring system.
5. Conduct a pilot test and validation study.
6. Finalize the classification system.
7. Implement the classification system.
8. Evaluate, monitor, and revise the system.

Source: Brennan, T., and Austin, J. (1997). *Women in Jail: Classification Issues*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, p. 15.

management of the women's housing unit.

With these issues in mind, administrators who review jail policies for women inmates may identify ways to improve procedures. For example, they may reconsider rules that limit women's access to visitors or visiting hours that are limited to times when family members cannot bring inmates' children to visit. Maintaining relationships outside the jail is critical to inmates' successful behavior in jail, their successful reentry into the community, and their ability to avoid future behaviors that may result in rearrest and reincarceration.

What Does This Principle Mean for Jails? Giving jail staff a new perspective about women inmates helps all involved. Jail administrators who understand the importance of relationships to women offenders and amend practices when possible support healthy relationships that can promote positive outcomes for

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According to one jail administrator, "Improving services to women in jail improves the jail's operations overall."

these women and for the officers working with them. Improving staffs' communication skills and their understanding of how the characteristics and pathways of female inmates contribute to their behavior during incarceration is also needed.

Guiding Principle 4: Address Substance Abuse, Trauma, and Mental Health Issues Through Comprehensive, Integrated, and Culturally Relevant Services and Appropriate Supervision

Women offenders often simultaneously experience substance abuse, trauma, and mental illness. Their response to the jail's environment, its staff, and inmate rules is influenced by these factors, which present challenges to the jail in terms of both the physical environment and the provision of health, mental health, and other treatment services. Jail staff trained to recognize behaviors resulting from substance abuse, trauma, and mental illness are better prepared to manage women offenders effectively. Providing women inmates with access to medical and mental health services and programs that appropriately and comprehensively respond to their specific medical and mental health needs produces positive results.

What Does This Principle Mean for Jails? Jail is often the place where inmates receive significant medical, mental health, and dental

care that they are unable to receive in the free world. As previously noted, the needs of women offenders should not be viewed in the same framework as those of incarcerated men. Short periods of incarceration rarely offer the opportunity to assess an inmate's needs and develop a comprehensive approach for providing medical and mental health services. In addition, medical, mental health, and dental care costs are a significant part of most jails' budgets and represent a cost growing out of proportion to other expenses. This perspective should lead an administrator to appreciate that the jail needs to integrate its medical and mental health services with the community's resources. Looking at the jail as part of a continuum of services, implementing coordinated treatment plans, and ensuring that all community resources are coordinated can help achieve this principle. As one jail administrator noted, "Improving services to women in jail improves the jail's operations overall."

Guiding Principle 5: Provide Women With Opportunities To Improve Their Socio-economic Conditions

Most women offenders are disadvantaged economically. This reality, compounded with a history of substance abuse, trauma, and mental illness, leaves many struggling to care for themselves and their children. In jail, opportunities to

participate in educational programs, job training, basic life skills training, and other activities connected to the real-life needs of women offenders might affect their opportunity for success after release. Such programs are realistically within the mission and grasp of many jails. Also, a woman's ability to leave jail with already identified suitable and safe housing, links to community services, and a plan for continued medical and mental health treatment might be a key to keeping her family intact.

Although many inmates do not stay in jail long enough for a concentrated effort to address all of the problems that brought them there, jails that incorporate this guiding principle into their mission can, at the very least, begin the process for some of them.

What Does This Principle Mean for Jails? The jail that understands its role in the larger community and sees itself as an integral part of the community's continuum of care for inmates has built or will build partnerships that will help improve inmates' opportunities for success when they are released. Additionally, programs that address inmates'

specific needs (e.g., learning how to locate, obtain, and keep jobs and life skills and how to negotiate the world of community services) are substantial assets to those leaving jails and returning to their neighborhoods. A jail that identifies community resources to serve this population and builds partnerships with the business community, housing services, and human service organizations provides a first step to implementing this principle.

Guiding Principle 6: Establish a System of Community Supervision and Reentry With Comprehensive, Collaborative Services

Jails are just one component of a community's spectrum of services for its citizens involved with the criminal justice system. The jail is often a final stop for individuals who have failed in other programs, who have had unsuccessful treatment outcomes, or who have had little family or community support. Women inmates are potentially consumers of a wide range of community services after incarceration. Helping a woman offender establish or maintain ties with community services or individuals in her community who are available to help following her release (e.g., mental health centers, substance abuse programs, family service agencies, vocational and employment services, health care professionals, self-help groups) is not a traditional jail responsibility,

but it does make sense. Helping any offender successfully avoid future incarceration, separation from children, loss of a place to live, or loss of a job will improve public safety and reduce costs for the community. This is especially significant for women offenders because they generally provide the care for their children. The impact of breaking the cycle of incarceration for these women has tremendous potential.

What Does This Principle Mean for Jails? Linking inmates with even short periods of incarceration to community services is a compelling objective. Some inmates cycle through the local jail many times over their lifetime and are well known both to jail staff and the community's service providers. Particularly for women with mental health needs, the recommended approach is to link these offenders to community services.³³ Partnering with the community can shape the programs delivered to inmates in custody and identify resources to provide these services. Not all inmates are interested in or receptive to referrals following their release, but this may be the critical impetus that some women offenders need.

Although inmates, when free, often exist on the fringe of the community, their return to that community is almost inevitable. The community can partner with the jail to help

It is not all or nothing—
even if you do only part of
it, it's better than nothing.

create a different future for offenders by collaborating on programs that address economic, health, and family needs of women offenders.

Benefits of Implementing the Guiding Principles

Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders presents a new way of thinking about how jails are managed. It is crucial to collect and analyze data, evaluate risks and needs inmate by inmate, and understand how different thinking about women offenders may result in improved practices. The far-reaching implications of this approach may present advantages to administrators who understand how their jail operations and community will benefit from implementation of the guiding principles. Debate about the guiding principles will be a healthy process among jail leadership as updated information is considered. Implementing the guiding principles in a jail setting may be a challenge but, ultimately, jail administrators, jail staff, and the community will benefit.

Implementing the Guiding Principles in a Jail Setting

Implementing gender-responsive principles and strategies in the day-to-day jail environment presents an exciting challenge to jail

General Strategies for Implementing the Guiding Principles

- Adopt each principle as policy on a systemwide and programmatic level.
- Provide full support of the administration for principle adoption and implementation.
- Evaluate financial and human resources to ensure that implementation and allocation adjustments are adequate to accommodate any new policies and practices.
- Provide ongoing training as an essential element in implementing gender-responsive practices.
- Include oversight of the new policies and practices in the management plan.
- Conduct routine reviews to ensure that procedures are consistent, adapted, deleted, or written for new policies.
- Conduct ongoing assessment and review the culture and environment to monitor the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behavior of administrative, management, and line staff.
- Develop an evaluation process to consistently assess management, supervision, and the effectiveness of services.

Source: Bloom, B., Owen, B., Covington, S., and Raeder, M. (2003). *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, p. 76.

administrators (see sidebar “General Strategies for Implementing the Guiding Principles”).

- Will staff accept a new vision of managing women inmates that is different from past practice?
- Will legal challenges be presented?
- Will the sheriff or other elected officials embrace gender-responsive concepts?
- Will needed financial and other resources be available?

- How can operations be amended to implement these strategies?

Jail Operations

Analyzing jail operations in the context of gender-responsive principles is the first step toward assessing a jail’s options. Questions to consider when reviewing and analyzing operations include the following:

- Is the management of women inmates seen as a priority?

- What resources are currently allocated to the management of women offenders?
- Are the issues of women inmates taken into account in the jail's written policies, procedures, programs, and operational practices?
- Are the programs for women inmates specifically designed for them, based on models and the needs of women?
- Does the housing for women inmates take into account classification, privacy, and related needs?
- Is the jail's classification system based on male offender data and, if so, what are the possible impacts on women offenders?
- Is information collected about the specific needs of the women offenders at intake and during their incarceration and then used to develop jail programs and conduct release planning?
- Are the staff aware of, and trained to respond effectively to, the inmate population in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and special needs?
- Do staff members see working with women inmates as less desirable than working in other assignments?
- Are procedures in place to ensure that reports of staff misconduct are investigated and inmates are protected against retaliation?

- Does the jail systematically plan for the release of inmates to the extent possible, coordinating with community service providers to try to ensure a successful reentry?

All of these concerns are valid. With analysis and planning, these barriers may be effectively addressed and overcome. Strategies to overcome barriers and challenges to implementing gender-responsive principles are presented in “Overcoming the Challenge” (page 14).

Challenges in Implementation

Jail administrators who have considered how to implement gender-responsive programming for women inmates have encountered challenges in the following areas:

- Funding.
- Legal issues (see sidebar “Parity and Equality in Programming” on page 19).
- Politics.
- Medical and mental health services.
- Facility crowding.
- Staff training.
- Involvement of stakeholders.
- Lack of programs or access to programs.
- Defining program goals, objectives, and outcomes.

In designing and implementing jail programs, administrators must consider linking the anticipated

goals or objectives of jail programs to legitimate purposes, such as institutional safety and successful reentry into the community.³⁴ By defining the inmates' needs that a program seeks to address, collecting program data to support the needs and outcomes, and supervising programs appropriately, all inmate programs will benefit from the opportunity to document relevance and, potentially, enhance their impact on jail operations.

Reviewing the challenges and opportunities presented in table 2 (page 14) will help jail administrators begin to assess strategies as they consider implementing all or some of the gender-responsive guiding principles.³⁵

Strategic Plan Development

Jail administrators may apply the proposed framework when analyzing jail operations to determine their application of gender-responsive principles.

Considering the jail's current practices in light of these challenges and opportunities may identify areas of potential change and improvement. Improving services to women inmates will improve overall jail management and increase the probability that offenders will be more successful following their release (see sidebar “Improving Jail Operations” on page 20). Implementation can be achieved by developing a strategic plan that includes gaining buy-in from staff, stakeholders, and

TABLE 2: OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE

Issue	Challenge	Overcoming the Challenge
Funding	Jail budgets are always strained. Any new initiatives face scrutiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reallocate resources from existing services that may not be meeting women offenders’ needs to women inmates’ programs. ● Seek grants from locally based foundations or community organizations.^a ● Use inmate funds for program startup costs. ● Ensure collaboration with organizations and agencies already delivering services to this population in the jail or in the community. ● Recruit volunteers and their programs based on an assessment of women offenders’ needs. ● Educate women’s organizations and advocacy groups about the needs and specific areas of assistance required, and seek their support. ● Pursue funding from new federal initiatives, such as faith-based initiative funding.^b <p>When any funding is sought, a concise statement of the needs to be addressed, measurable objectives, and evaluation methodology will provide potential funders with a clear picture of the potential benefits to the community.</p>
Legal issues	Jail administrators operate facilities with the mandates of ensuring the safety and security of those committed to their care and providing relatively “equal” services for all inmates. Their additional challenge is to ensure the constitutional rights of a mostly pretrial population. In considering gender-responsive programming, will there be challenges that different and/or better programs and services are provided to women inmates than to male inmates? If gender-specific positions are established, will staff assigned to those positions or excluded from them threaten legal action?	<p>Do homework about the legal issues associated with parity and equality in a jail environment to educate those who may be concerned about any consequences of implementing gender-responsive strategies.^c</p> <p>Document why programming or services may be different for men than for women.</p> <p>Explore with legal counsel the understandable concerns of some administrators that adopting gender-responsive strategies might open the jail to challenges of these practices.</p> <p>Examine responses to the question of whether the same programs must be offered to all inmates. The courts have generally recognized that women inmates bring different issues to their incarceration than do men. (Refer to the discussion of pathways on page 6.)</p> <p>Consider the issue of whether the establishment of gender-specific posts is a concern in the jail work environment that generally tries to support inclusion and seeks to overcome past employment discrimination. Blanket policies that exclude male staff from working with women inmates and/or prevent female staff from working with male inmates for all posts may be problematic.</p> <p>Understand why some agencies have sought to justify the establishment of gender-specific posts. Such reasons include, but are not limited to, the following:</p>

(continued)

TABLE 2: OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Issue	Challenge	Overcoming the Challenge
Legal issues (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent sexual and other forms of misconduct. ● Ensure privacy of inmates. ● Make staff more comfortable in the workplace where they are not involved with cross-gender interactions. ● Prevent inappropriate or illegal searches. <p>Document the reasons for gender-specific posts and provide convincing data. This requires careful thought and review of options. For example, because staff misconduct occurs on all four quadrants,^d the justification for prohibiting cross-gender supervision to prevent misconduct may be hard to support. Improved supervision, a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct, clear definitions of what constitutes misconduct, staff training, effective avenues for reporting misconduct, and thorough investigations may be options rather than blanket policies preventing cross-gender supervision.</p> <p>Keep gender-specific staffing at the minimal level to achieve or support legitimate jail interests, and potentially disadvantage as few staff as little as possible.^e That means there is no cookie-cutter answer. The best decisions are the result of review and analysis of the data compiled by the jail administrator to justify gender-specific posts.</p> <p>Review and consider other recommendations to overcome legal issues. These include the presentation of a clearly defined program, development of a pilot program with specific and limited proposed outcomes, and education in the community regarding the benefit of gender-responsive programming to the community. Gaining the support and commitment of top criminal justice leadership, including judges and prosecutors, may also help mitigate concerns about legal impediments to implementing gender-responsive strategies.</p>
Politics	<p>Jail administrators are concerned about political support for implementing gender-responsive principles. They see political support not only from their management team but also from the sheriff or others who may oversee the jail’s operations as critical. How the community and other stakeholders (judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and police) will look at the jail’s adoption of gender-responsive principles is also a concern.</p>	<p>Begin this discussion by educating the community about the jail’s mission as well as the costs, in both dollars and human terms, of adopting gender-responsive principles.</p> <p>Generally, the functions and roles of the jail are not understood, and often are misunderstood, by the community, which results in a lack of support.</p> <p>The support of those in the community who deal with the aftermath of ineffective interventions for women who become involved with the criminal justice system can help the jail’s administration point toward alternatives and options discussed in the full report.</p> <p>Establishing a local criminal justice coordinating council or jail advisory committee composed of stakeholders, citizens, and community leaders is another success strategy. A community-based advisory group can help</p>

(continued)

TABLE 2: OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Issue	Challenge	Overcoming the Challenge
Politics (continued)		<p>the jail administrator disseminate the message about the jail’s mission and identify and broker resources. These leaders can be part of a gender-responsive analysis.</p> <p>Designate a high-level position in the organization with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of gender-responsive strategies, updating the stakeholders, and involving the staff as the process moves forward. This does not need to be a full-time position or a new position. Assigning the responsibility for these activities demonstrates the jail administrator’s commitment to gender-responsive issues and provides a level of accountability.</p>
Medical and mental health services	<p>Improving medical and mental health services for women offenders will, in most jails, have a fiscal impact as well as a programmatic one.</p>	<p>Document the medical and mental health needs of women offenders.</p> <p>Collaborate with community mental health services. If needed services are not available in the community, jail staff become the front line of mental health intervention. Asking potential partners to develop and provide training to help staff recognize the symptoms of mental illness may require some ingenuity on the part of the jail administrator, who may need to gain buy-in and commitment from the mental health community. Smaller, rural jails report that local hospitals, privately practicing mental health professionals, and public mental health agencies have helped design and conduct training for their jail staff.</p> <p>Seek the cooperation and support of consumer-based mental health advocacy groups, the local medical association, and child health organizations.</p> <p>Learn about the services of public hospitals.</p> <p>Community stakeholders have interests similar to those of the jail in ensuring appropriate care for all inmates. Educating and involving these stakeholders from the ground up to gain support is critical. Development of, or collaboration with, a communitywide approach to medical and mental health services will benefit the community.</p> <p>Review any existing medical services, including contracted services, for inmate medical and mental health care. Ensuring that providers and contractors are complying with their contracts in terms of services to women inmates may result in gaining additional, more focused services at potentially little increase in costs. During renegotiation, determining the enhancements needed for women’s health and mental health needs based on the inmates is an additional strategy.</p>
Facility crowding	<p>As of mid-2002, 93 percent of all jails were at capacity.^f But this number does not tell the whole story. With the increase in women inmates, the crowding is reported by jail administrators to be most acute in women’s housing in many jails.</p>	<p>The implementation or expansion of pretrial services programs and the use of alternatives to incarceration for offenders may significantly assist in addressing jail crowding.</p> <p>Rethinking the jail’s classification system may result in women offenders being eligible for release under pretrial supervision or posttrial probation, permitting them to return to their children while not endangering public safety.</p>

(continued)

TABLE 2: OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Issue	Challenge	Overcoming the Challenge
Facility crowding (continued)	This crowding may limit the flexibility for implementing gender-responsive strategies.	Use the many resources available from NIC to help jail administrators and local governments examine crowded jails and develop plans of action. These strategies help define the nature and causes of crowding and will yield a wealth of information and data about all inmates, including women offenders, providing options to both the jail administrator and the community. ⁹
Staff training	Providing staff with the knowledge and skills to work more effectively with women offenders is essential to the success of implementing gender-responsive strategies. Most current jail training, preservice and inservice, does not contain relevant information or transfer the necessary skills. Training is usually one of the first areas cut during tough budget times. Covering mandated training topics strains the jail's ability to add new elements, no matter how worthwhile.	<p>Educate staff about a variety of gender-responsive issues. This is critical to improving jail operations. Training can include information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pathways that bring women into jail, and how these pathways affect their behavior during incarceration. ● Communication styles of women and men (both offenders and staff) in the workplace. ● Actual skill development in communicating with and managing inmates. ● Medical and mental health needs of women offenders.^h <p>Develop a training plan to achieve both short- and long-term objectives of improving staff knowledge and skills. This will be needed if resources (either time or money) are scarce.ⁱ As staff training begins, it is important for the administrator to gain the buy-in and support of staff for moving toward gender-responsive strategies. Incentives can include participating in the planning for implementation, assisting in updating policies and procedures, training colleagues and peers, receiving formal rewards for achieving benchmarks, and acting as community liaisons.</p> <p>Without staff support, even overcoming external challenges will not ensure a smooth transition. New jail officer training programs need to ensure that new employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to work with women offenders. Roll-call training to provide small segments of training on a continual basis provides other opportunities to educate staff. Additional resources to improve training include local service providers and the jail's mental health staff.</p>
Involvement of stakeholders	How best to involve the community's stakeholders in the jail's initiatives to support implementation of gender-responsive strategies can be a significant obstacle.	<p>Involve stakeholders at the initial stage of considering gender-responsive strategies. This will help identify supporters and clarify issues that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Stakeholders are those in the community, including the criminal justice system, who can influence the direction and priorities of the jail. Commitment of stakeholders can help convince the community's power brokers that gender-responsive strategies are in their best interest, and they can also provide "political cover" for those wanting to step forward with a new initiative.</p>

(continued)

TABLE 2: OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Issue	Challenge	Overcoming the Challenge
Involvement of stakeholders (continued)		The jail administrator may have to “sell, sell, sell” the advantages of gender-responsive strategies. This may be a longer term process, depending on the current level of education in the community about women offenders, and the interest in improving the outcomes of jail for women. Administrators may need to demonstrate to the stakeholders “What’s in it for me?” Citing successes elsewhere to these stakeholders, and ensuring that their concerns are met, also may be part of the plan to implement these strategies.
Lack of programs or access to programs	Rural jails may be hampered in implementing relevant programming for women offenders because of the lack of community programs and resources.	Enlist the support of volunteers from the community who have the skills to develop and deliver programs and services. Staff also represent a resource to oversee or instruct in a program. Check with neighboring jails or state prisons to identify potential resources and people who can be shared. Colleges and universities are also resources for revised inmate programming and staff training. Overcome this challenge with creativity and by thinking “outside the box.”
Defining program goals, objectives, and outcomes	Jail administrators point to the need to clearly define the goals, objectives, and outcomes of any new initiatives in implementing gender-responsive strategies.	Establish a mission statement for a gender-responsive initiative, defining realistic outcome measures and identifying who will collect the data. This is an essential step and will add credibility to the planning and implementation process. Using this systematic approach, the administrator, stakeholders, staff, inmates, and community will see the program’s impact for themselves. This process also will allow the administrator to make midcourse modifications in the program to ensure that the outcome measures are met.

^a For example, see *The Foundation Director*, <http://fconline.fdncenter.org>.

^b See www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/01/20010129-3.html for more information on faith-based initiatives.

^c Collins, W.C., and Collins, A.W. (1996). *Women in Jail: Legal Issues*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections. <http://nicic.org/pubs/1996/013770.pdf>. See also www.nicic.org to view other information regarding women offenders.

^d Misconduct occurs between male staff and female inmates, female staff and female inmates, male staff and male inmates, and female staff and female inmates.

^e Bloom, B., Owen, B., Covington, S., and Raeder, M. (2003). *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, p. 76.

^f Harrison, P., and Karberg, J.C. (2003). *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, p. 9. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pjim02.pdf.

^g Robertson, J. (2003). *Jail Planning and Expansion: Local Officials and Their Roles*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections. www.nicic.org/Library/017831.

^h Bloom, B., Owen, B., Covington, S., and Raeder, M. (2003). *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, p. 76.

ⁱ See NIC’s Web site (www.nicic.org) for more information on mental health issues in jails, training programs, and other resources.

Parity and Equality in Programming

A jail may want to provide a parenting program based on the number of inmates' children younger than age 16. The program's objectives may vary. They may include improving parenting skills, gaining custody following release, increasing parent literacy to help children in school, learning about child development, or finding housing. If data show that most of the women inmates with children will have custody following release but that few men will have custody, different programs may be appropriate and justified. The same may be true with substance abuse programming. The level of dependency, the drugs of choice, and the level of co-occurring disorders may point to different programs.

This type of analysis and documentation of inmate programming may result in a jail not having identical programs for male and female inmates but, rather, having programs that are relevant and equitable for the inmate population.

Parity: "Equality, as in amount or value."

Equity: "Something that is just, impartial, and fair."

Source: *American Heritage Dictionary*.

the community (see sidebar "Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed" on page 21).

Next Steps for Jail Administrators

What are the steps for jail administrators who want to implement all or some of the guiding principles for gender-responsive strategies? Jail administrators who reviewed gender-responsive strategies for this bulletin recommend the following:

- **Be a leader.** Take a leadership role. Inform staff, criminal justice system partners, and the community that adopting some

or all of the guiding principles will improve jail operations, respond to the unique needs of incarcerated women and their children, and enhance public safety.

- **Develop a plan.** Define which guiding principles will be incorporated into operations. Define goals and objectives for this potential change in the agency philosophy and mission. Develop measurable objectives and address political implications. Involve and educate the staff in the review and revision process. Involve and educate stakeholders and the community, identifying "what's in it for them."

- **Identify operational issues.** Analyze operations and identify operational issues in the facility. Revise policies, procedures, and post orders, and implement staff education and skills development.
- **Develop funding strategies.** Develop funding strategies or reallocate existing resources. Broadcast your program, objectives, expected outcomes, and the specific funding and support needed.
- **Implement, refine, and evaluate.** Change in any organization is a long-term process. The role of the jail administrator is to implement the plan for gender-responsive strategies. This will improve the jail's overall operation and involve staff and stakeholders in this new thinking so they can meaningfully strive for that vision.

Gender-responsive strategies provide a different view of how change can be achieved for women offenders. A concern in some jails is the perception that implementing gender-responsive strategies diverts energy from the jail's core mission, reallocating scarce resources to a small number of inmates. Examining gender-responsive strategies to amend procedures to better reflect the needs of women offenders in jail, defining options for how to most effectively manage women during their incarceration, and setting a course for,

Improving Jail Operations: How Jail Administrators Benefit From Considering Gender-Responsive Strategies

What are the advantages for a jail administrator who implements all or some of the gender-responsive guiding principles? Here is what jail administrators say:

- **Improve facility operation.** Improving medical and mental health services to women inmates, improving staff's skills to effectively manage women, making programs relevant to the needs of women offenders, and involving stakeholders all combine to improve the facility's operation.
- **Improve community relations.** Implementing gender-responsive strategies, along with educating and involving stakeholders and the community about the importance and relevance of these strategies, will improve the jail's relationships with the community.
- **Decrease jail population.** Updating the classification system to be responsive and valid for women offenders increases women's eligibility for pretrial programs and postsentence community options and may decrease the number of women held in jails. Additionally, a jail's analysis about women offenders in its custody will provide insights into ways in which population management and control can be achieved for all inmates—potentially reducing the overall population.
- **Improve alternative sentencing options.** Most judges welcome more sentencing options that allow for flexibility in holding offenders accountable and ensuring public safety. Providing even a few more options for pre- and posttrial alternatives for women will enhance judicial options and positively affect women offenders and their children.
- **Improve staff morale.** The vast majority of corrections professionals want to perform their jobs to their best ability, but they sometimes lack the skills and knowledge to do this. Increasing staff training about women offenders, providing the skills needed to work with them, and ensuring professionalism all combine to increase the staff's capacity to work with inmates and improve staff morale. A high level of support for the jail's mission from the community will translate into higher esteem for workers, helping with morale and employee retention.
- **Improve risk management.** Now that the data are readily available describing the pathways that bring women into the justice system and their histories of substance abuse, trauma, and mental illness, jail administrators need to address these facts in their day-to-day operations. Acting on this information will improve operations, lowering the risks to vulnerable populations and enhancing facility security.
- **Enhance professionalism.** Incorporating state-of-the-art research about women offenders into everyday jail operations will improve the professionalism of the entire agency.

These jail improvements may yield different results in different jails. However, jail administrators who consider and adopt all or some of the gender-responsive strategies will experience forward movement and positive results.

Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed: Alameda County Sheriff's Office, Oakland, California

Alameda County's Santa Rita Jail applied gender-responsive strategies to create Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed (MOMS). The goals are as follows:

- To promote the healthy development of children by increasing the capacity of their incarcerated mothers for self-sufficiency and, accordingly, prospects for successful parent-child bonding.
- To promote the healthy development of children by increasing parenting skills, with an emphasis on successful parent-child bonding.
- To reduce recidivism among incarcerated pregnant women and incarcerated mothers of young children.
- To demonstrate a replicable, community-oriented criminal justice model for assisting incarcerated pregnant women and incarcerated mothers of young children toward self-sufficiency, family reunification, and reversal of previous adverse behaviors.

The services offered as part of MOMS, both in and out of jail, include intensive individual and group case management, commitment to a continuum of care, community-based postrelease services, and attention to program staffing both for officers and civilian staff. The program includes educational training for offenders and provides a bridge to community-based services and individualized action plans.

It is important to note that the program sought and received the support of a wide range of community services, including housing, substance abuse and mental health services, and other supportive, essential elements to help women improve their parenting skills and not return to jail. Funding for the program's operation comes from the Sheriff's Office Inmate Welfare Fund through Alameda County Behavior Health Care grant funds and the state legislature. Community partners include the Oakland Housing Authority; Second Chance, Inc.; and Eden Information and Referral.

The program's success is inspiring. Since 1999, the MOMS program has served more than 680 women. During 2002, 214 clients were served, representing 537 children, 114 of whom were under age 5. MOMS was responsible for 29 residential treatment placements, 44 placements to outpatient treatment services, 14 referrals to mental health services, and 19 reunifications of noncustodial parents with their children. In terms of recidivism, of the 214 MOMS participants in 2002, 191 clients were not rearrested or returned to custody—a recidivism rate of only 10 percent.

For more information about the program, contact Elizabeth Belzer, Women's Program and Services Manager, Alameda County Sheriff's Department, Alameda County Jail, Santa Rita, 5325 Broder Boulevard, Dublin, CA 94568, or e-mail EBelzer@co.alameda.ca.us.

Source: Plummer, C. (2003). *Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers To Succeed (MOMS) 2002 Annual Report*. Alameda County, CA: Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

MOMS Mission Statement

Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed (MOMS) is dedicated to promoting the healthy development of children by increasing the capacity of their mothers for self-sufficiency and parent-child bonding. Empowered with new knowledge, treated with respect and dignity, and assisted by community sources, incarcerated women can reverse adverse effects of previous behaviors and life circumstances and build solid foundations to fulfill futures for themselves and their children, avoiding repeat incarcerations.

Recommended Web Resources

Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents

www.e-ccip.org

The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents (CCIP) was founded in 1989 by Denise Johnston and Katherine Gabel. Their mission is the prevention of intergenerational crime and incarceration. CCIP's goals are the production of high-quality documentation, and the development of model services for children of criminal offenders and their families.

Faith-Based Initiative Information

www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/01/20010129-3.html

This White House Web site details information about faith-based initiatives and available funding.

Family and Corrections Network

www.fcnetwork.org

The Family and Corrections Network (FCN) is an organization for and about families of prisoners. It offers information, training, and technical assistance on children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, incarcerated fathers and mothers, hospitality programs, keeping in touch, returning to the community, the impact of the justice system on families, and prison marriage. With more than 150,000 visitors a year, FCN is a gateway to practice, policy, and research on families of prisoners.

Directory of Community-Based Programs for Women Offenders

www.nicic.org/Library/016671

This directory presents correctional programs in the United States that have been developed specifically to meet the needs of women offenders. It is the result of research conducted in 2000 by the National Institute of Corrections Information Center in cooperation with the National Institute of Corrections Community Corrections Division.

Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners, Child Welfare League of America

www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/cop_03.htm

In September 2001, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) received a 3-year cooperative award from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (NIC), to create the Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners. CWLA will operate the Resource Center for Children of Prisoners in collaboration with NIC and its partners, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and the American Correctional Association. The Resource Center's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of information available about children with incarcerated parents and to develop resources that will help create better outcomes for these children.

Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Women's and Children's Health Policy Center

www.jhsph.edu/wchpc/overview.htm

The Women's and Children's Health Policy Center (WCHPC) was established in 1991 to address current policy issues found in national legislative initiatives and evolving health system reforms that affect the health of women, children, and adolescents. WCHPC operated during its first 5 years as the Child and Adolescent Health Policy Center. Its mission is to draw on the science base of the university setting to conduct and disseminate research and to inform the field about maternal and child health policies and programs.

National Institute of Corrections

www.nicic.org

The National Institute of Corrections Web site is a source for many documents and referrals regarding services for women offenders.

perhaps, their not returning to jail is ambitious but within the scope of many jails' management philosophies to return offenders to the community in better condition than when they entered jail. Thus, these activities promote the core mission of most jails.

Conclusion

More women are being held in local jails. For the most part, jails do not have on hand the up-to-date research that may assist them in more effectively managing women inmates. Data pertaining to these women clearly define their histories of physical and/or sexual abuse, substance abuse, and mental illness. These factors influence their behavior while in jail. All these facts translate into the need to review services and programs delivered during incarceration. More responsive medical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment designed for women, and supervision and management philosophies that take into account the effects of trauma in the lives of women inmates and their relationship needs can make jail management more effective and may be pivotal to the offender's success after incarceration. The future for many of these women may well hinge on the jail's commitment to treat them with respect and link them to the community services that will help them provide for themselves and their children and positively affect

reoffending (see "Recommended Web Resources").

Although the prospect of addressing the needs of women offenders may be daunting, considering gender-responsive strategies provides a starting point. A step-by-step review of the jail's operations philosophy and mission, along with specific procedures, is within the grasp of jail administrators. This can be accomplished while maintaining a safe environment. Improving the jail's management of women offenders will improve operations for all inmates.

Endnotes

1. The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) awarded a cooperative agreement to the Center for Innovative Public Policies, Inc., to develop a bulletin to inform jail administrations about the research report published by NIC entitled *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders* (June 2003).
2. Harrison and Karberg (2003), p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 8.
4. The average daily population of female inmates rose from 51,300 in 1995 to 76,817 in 2002, an increase of 49.7 percent. See Harrison and Karberg (2003), p. 8.
5. Bloom et al. (2003).
6. The full report is available online at <http://nicic.org/pubs/2003/018017.pdf> and may be obtained by contacting the National Institute of Corrections Information Center at 1860 Industrial Circle, Suite A, Longmont, CO 80501; 800-877-1461 and 303-682-0213; or asknicic@nicic.org.
7. Greenfeld and Snell (1999).
8. Greenfeld and Snell (1999), p. 8.
9. Ibid, p. 8.
10. Browne, Miller, and Maguin (1999), pp. 301-322.
11. Harlow (1999).
12. Brennan and Austin (1997), citing Burke, P., and Adams, L. (1991). *Classification of Women Offenders in State Correctional Facilities: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.
13. Bloom et al. (2003).
14. Maruschak (2000), tables 2 and 3.
15. Teplin, Abram, and McClelland (1997), pp. 604-609.
16. Beck and Maruschak (2001).
17. Greenfeld and Snell (1999), p. 8.
18. Teplin, Abram, and McClelland (1997), pp. 604-609.
19. In Hampden County, Massachusetts, a profile of 156 women inmates revealed, among other

findings, that 90 percent were addicted to drugs or alcohol, 89 percent had multiple and often chronic experiences of physical and sexual violence, and 85 percent were mothers. See Kate DeCou, "A Gender-Wise Prison? Opportunities for, and Limits to, Reform," in *Women and Punishment: The Struggle for Justice* (2002), edited by Pat Carlen, Portland, OR: International Specialized Book Service, Inc., p. 101.

20. Brennan and Austin (1997), p. 8.
21. Rasche (2000).
22. Bloom and Covington (2000).
23. Hardyman and Van Voorhis (2004); Brennan and Austin (1997), p. 7.
24. Stohn and Mays (1993).
25. Ibid.
26. Morash and Bynum (1998).
27. Miller (1976).
28. Greenfeld and Snell (1999).
29. Bloom et al. (2003), p. 66.
30. Kassebaum (1999).
31. Bloom et al. (2003), p. 76; Brennan and Austin (1997), p. 4.
32. Ibid, pp. 6–7.
33. Steadman and Veysey (1997).
34. Bloom et al. (2003), p. 83.
35. Jail administrators who were part of the focus group identified other important issues related to

implementing the guiding principles, including the following:

- Staff attitude toward change (including morale, apathy/cynicism, gaining staff buy-in, staff attitude about working with women offenders, staff feeling they are continually being asked to do more with less, sexual misconduct/harassment, politics, and flexibility for jails that hold small numbers of women).
- Gaining the understanding and support of the community at large.
- Ensuring consistency in shift operations.
- Maintaining volunteer programs for a small number of inmates.

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