

National Resource Center 
on Justice Involved Women

Effective Strategies to Meet the Unique Needs of Justice Involved Women

Developed February 2016



Women are entering the criminal justice system at an alarming rate.



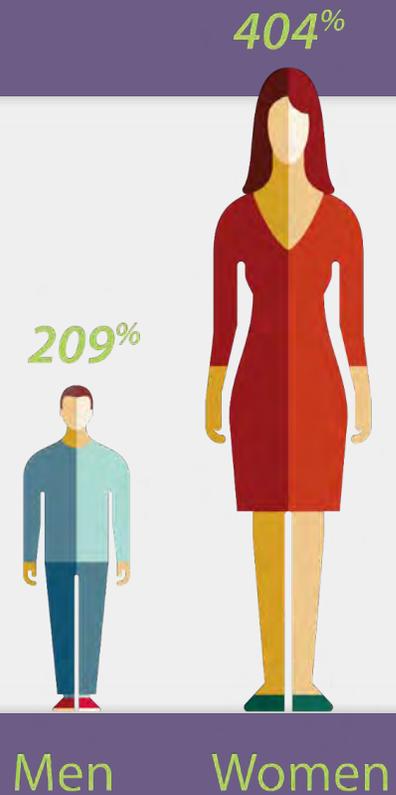
FACT: Since 1985, the number of women in prison has increased at a faster rate than men, 404% as compared to 209% by men

Over 2 million women were arrested in the United States in 2013.

As of 2013, approximately 1.2 million women were under the authority of the criminal justice system, with the majority under probation supervision.

Women in local jails has increased 44 percent between 2000 and 2013.

Since 1985, the number of women in prison has increased at a faster rate than men



Who are

JUSTICE INVOLVED WOMEN?

CRIME CONVICTIONS

Most justice involved women are arrested for non-violent crimes



26%

Drug Crimes



3%

Violent Crimes



20%

Property Crimes

Percentage of all arrests of women in 2013

LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

Many justice involved women share similar life circumstances that are unique from men



77-98%

of incarcerated women have experienced trauma (including interpersonal violence and/or physical/sexual abuse)⁶

73%
of women in prison reported a mental health problem⁷



60%

of women in prison reported using drugs just prior to their offense (compared to 56% of men)⁸



Up to half
of women who are incarcerated were homeless in the month before incarceration⁹



[Looking Beneath the Surface: The Nature of Incarcerated Women's Experiences of Interpersonal Violence, Treatment Needs, and Mental Health](#), Heath, Nicole M., April Fritch, Shannon M. Lynch, Feminist Criminology, Published April 2012, Revised Oct. 2012

[Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates](#), Bureau of Justice Statistics, Published Sept. 2006, Revised Dec. 2006

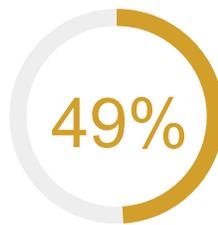
[Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004](#), Bureau of Justice Statistics, Published 2006, Revised 2007

[Gender-Responsive Strategies for Women Offenders](#), National Institute of Corrections, 2010

DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity

In 2013, percentage of women in state or federal prisons



White



Black



Hispanic

Employment and Income



Not employed full-time



Income under \$600/ month



Received welfare benefits

[Prisoners in 2013](#), Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sept. 2014

[Women in the Criminal Justice System: Briefing Sheets](#), The Sentencing Project, 2007

EDUCATION

42%

of women in state prisons
have not completed high school





Maternal Incarceration

Significantly Impacts Children

147,700 children had a mother in prison in 2007, up from **131%** from 1991

64% of mothers in state prison lived with at least **one** of their children just prior to imprisonment

Working With

JUSTICE INVOLVED WOMEN

Utilize a Multi-Faceted **APPROACH**



Relational

Develop policies, practices, and programs that are relational and promote healthy connections

Strengths-Based

Create an environment based on safety, respect, and dignity

Trauma-Informed

Address substance abuse, trauma, and mental health issues

Culturally Competent

Provide women with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions

Holistic

Establish a system of community supervision and reentry with comprehensive, collaborative services



Pregnant Prisoners

Consider the needs of pregnant women in correctional facilities and provide special privileges



Limited or non-use of restraints



Bottom bunk assignments and light work duty



Additional snacks/milk to meet their nutritional needs



Ongoing obstetric appointments, prenatal vitamins, social support and counseling, birth education, and transportation to and from the hospital

Hurdles to Success

Whether during pretrial, incarceration or parole, criminal justice practitioners and their partners can help justice involved women overcome hurdles and navigate their way to success.



Housing



Financial



Medical



**Education &
Training**

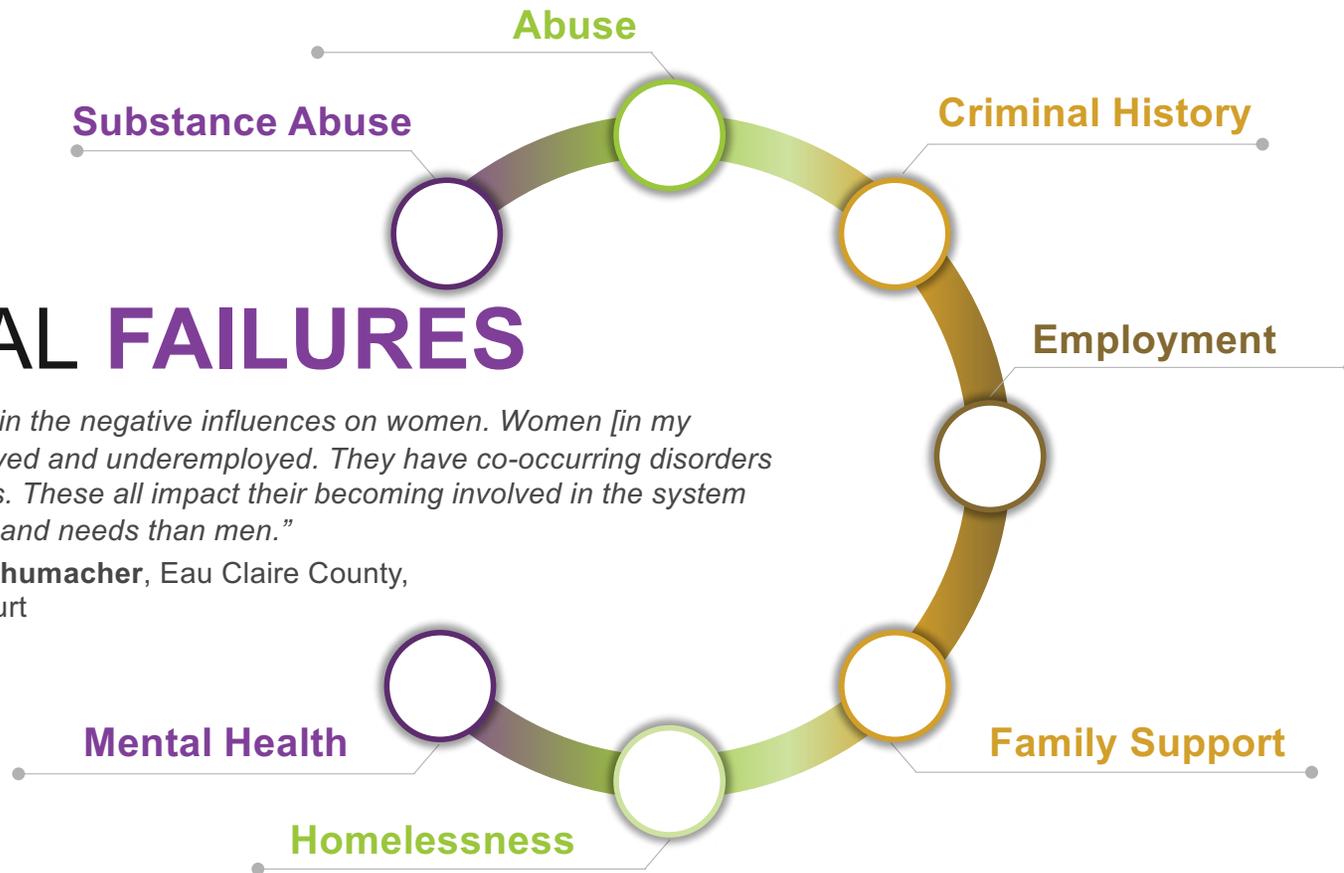
Gender-specific Responses for **COURTS**

Determine Unique Needs and Risks during Pretrial and Sentencing

PRETRIAL FAILURES

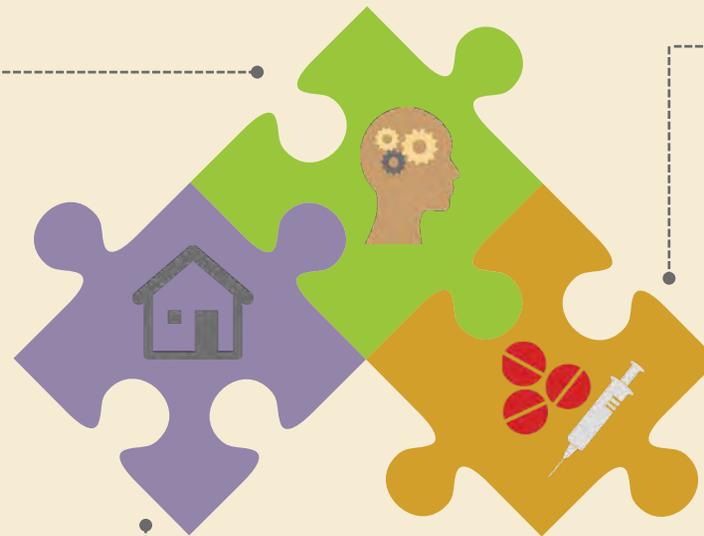
"I see over and over again the negative influences on women. Women [in my courtroom] are unemployed and underemployed. They have co-occurring disorders and mental health issues. These all impact their becoming involved in the system and having different risk and needs than men."

— **Judge Michael A. Schumacher**, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin Circuit Court



CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

Mental health assessments and services



Drug rehabilitation treatments and counseling

Home-based incarceration alternatives

Develop Women-Centric **PROBLEM SOLVING & TREATMENT COURTS/DOCKETS**

- Courts/dockets and treatment groups should be women-only
- Offer individual assessments
- Provide highly focused services
 - Cognitive behavioral treatment
 - Trauma services
- Maintain contact with “treatment team”
 - Judge
 - District Attorney
 - Court Coordinator
 - Jail/work release captain
 - Treatment provider

[Innovator Profile: Eau Claire County, WI, Alternatives to Incarcerating Mothers \(AIM\) Court](#),
National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women, 2014



Gender-specific Responses **For INSTITUTIONAL CORRECTIONS**

Work With WOMEN In A GENDER-INFORMED Manner to ENHANCE SAFETY and SECURITY, and HELP WOMEN BECOME MORE SUCCESSFUL

- Offer individual assessments
- Provide highly focused services
 - Cognitive behavioral treatment
 - Trauma services
- Maintain contact with “treatment team”
 - Judge
 - District Attorney
 - Court Coordinator
 - Jail/work release captain
 - Treatment provider

[Innovator Profile: Eau Claire County, WI, Alternatives to Incarcerating Mothers \(AIM\) Court](#), National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women, 2014

[Innovators: Lynn Bissonnette, Massachusetts Correctional Institution- Framingham](#), National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women



Case Study: The Women’s Village

After implementing a gender-responsive program in the Washington Corrections Center for Women called “the Women’s Village,” the warden reported witnessing benefits such as increased offender accountability, women with enhanced self-esteem and a greater sense of civic responsibility, less tension between offenders and staff, and an increase in participation in classes and programming.



Interact with women in a more gender-informed way

- ✓ Anticipate and explore reasons for her actions
- ✓ Acknowledge what might she be feeling
- ✓ Validate her experience
- ✓ Reflect on what you hear her saying
- ✓ Reflect her position
- ✓ Reflect/explore relevant parameters/limits
- ✓ Brainstorm solutions with her
- ✓ Stay positive and encourage her to pick an option and then remain involved and supportive by checking in with her

Using the Relational Language Skill Steps to Engage, Connect and Collaborate with Girls and Women, CORE Associates, Inc.

Trauma-informed Approaches Can Improve Safety and Reduce Stress

One year after adopting a trauma-informed approach, the Massachusetts Correctional Institution for Women at Framingham saw a significant reduction in:

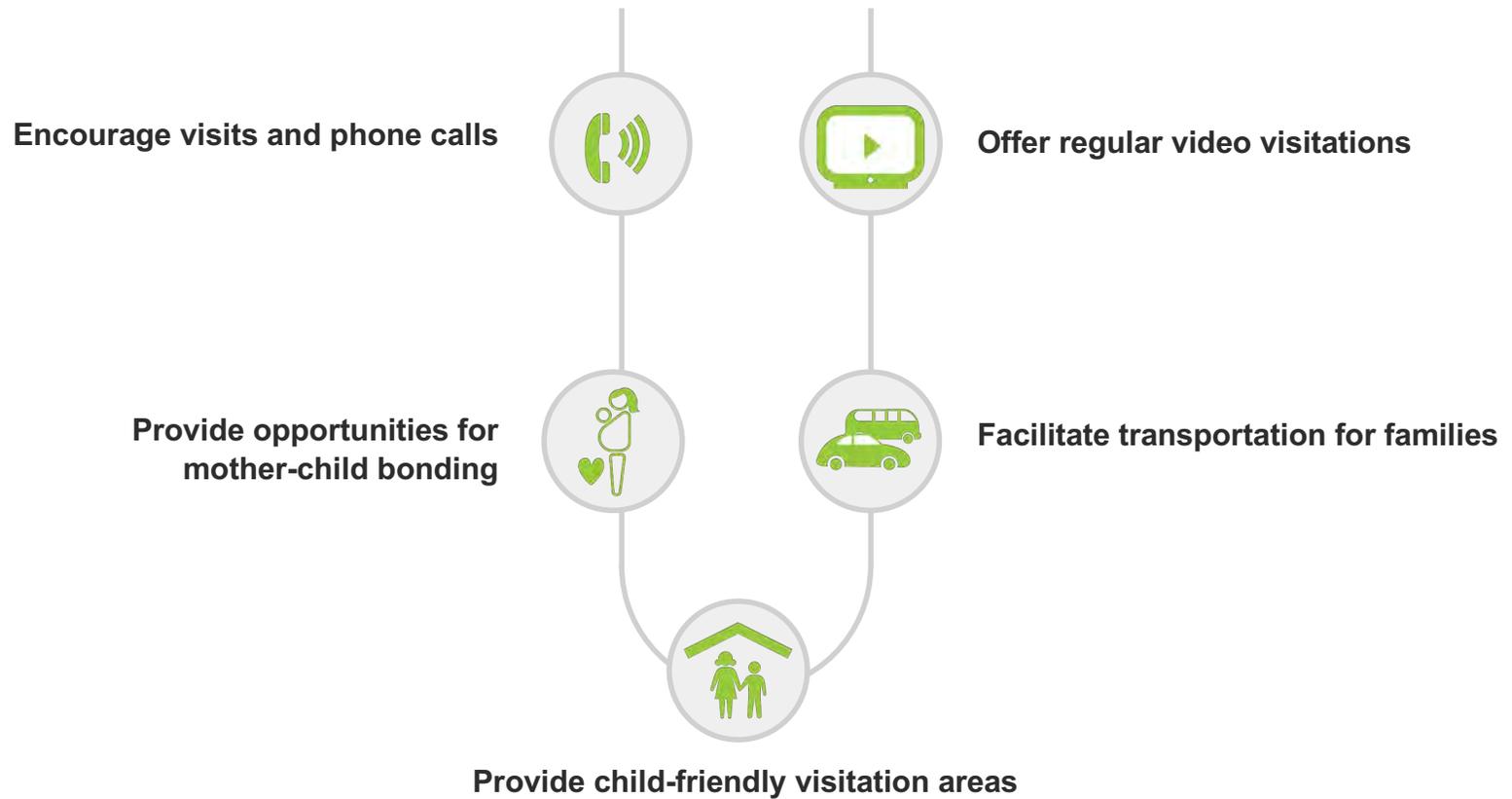


"Many women do not even recognize the role that past trauma has played in their pathway to crime. Our staff must recognize [the importance of trauma] before we can expect the women to."

— Jane Parnell, Former Superintendent, WCCW

[MA Correctional Institution for Women experience and results](#)
[Innovators: Lynn Bissonnette, Massachusetts Correctional Institution- Framingham,](#)
National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women
[Innovator: Superintendent Jane Parnell and Washing Corrections Center for Women: Progress in Implementing Gender-Responsive Action Plan/Women's Village Concept,](#) National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women, 2013

SUPPORT STRONG FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS



Gender-specific Responses for COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

FOCUS ON NEEDS FOR COMMUNITY REENTRY AND SUCCESS

Ability to Support
Children

Safe Housing

Livable Wage



Be Active in **SUPPORTING GOALS**

Consider the important role community corrections and supervision staff play in supporting women to achieve their goals and remain crime free.

- Demonstrate empathy and respect, while maintaining professional boundaries
- Focus on strengths and challenges, and provide encouragement and feedback

CASE STUDY: Probation Officers participating in the Women Offender Case Management Model (WOCMM) – now called Collaborative Casework-Women (CCW) – in Connecticut had more successful caseloads when they focused on the women’s strengths and challenges and provided encouragement and feedback.

[The Truths that Matter When Working with Justice Involved Women](#), 2012
[Women Offender Case Management Model: Outcome Evaluation](#), National Institute of Corrections and State of Connecticut Judicial Branch/Court Services Division, 2010

ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL'S UNIQUE NEEDS

Partner with Community Service Providers

Improved
Outcomes

Community
Corrections Staff

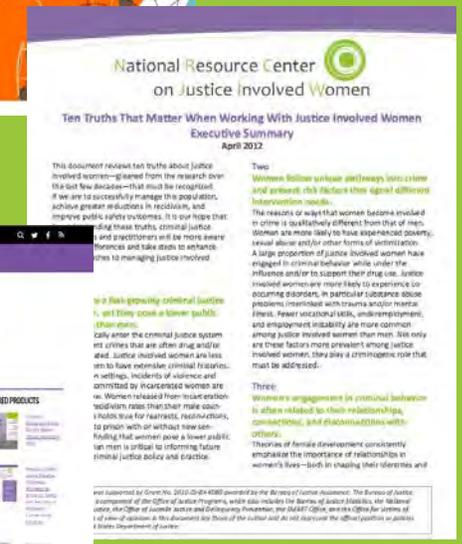
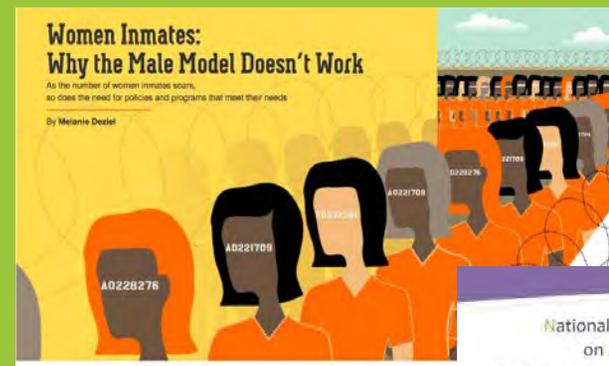
Mental Health
Providers

Probation and Parole
Authorities

Substance Abuse
Counseling

Take advantage of available resources.

NRCJIW provides resources and tools to support practitioners within courts, correctional facilities and community settings to achieve successful outcomes with justice involved women.



To learn more, visit www.cjinvolvedwomen.org

THANK YOU

National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women

NRCJIW provides resources and tools to support practitioners within courts, correctional facilities and community settings to achieve successful outcomes with justice involved women.



Address

8605 Cameron Street,
Suite 514
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone

(301) 589-9383

Website

www.cjinvolvedwomen.org

The NRCJIW is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance in partnership with the National Institute of Corrections

National Resource Center 
on Justice Involved Women

Effective Strategies to Meet the Unique Needs of Justice Involved Women

Developed February 2016

This project was supported by Grant No. 2010-DJ-BX-K080 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

