

APPROVAL PAGE

**Supervising the Female Offender:
A need for gender-specific treatment programming for female offenders**

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TITLE PAGE

**Supervising the Female Offender:
A need for gender-specific treatment programming for female offenders**

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ABSTRACT

Supervising the Female Offender: A need for gender-specific treatment programming for female offenders

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Under the Direct Supervision of Dr. Michael Klemp-North

Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that there are few gender-specific programs for women, the programming that is available have provided a small glimpse into the effectiveness of gender-specific programs. These limited amount of programming have addressed needs for female offenders in the areas of recovering from past trauma, substance abuse, mental health, parenting, and relationship issue. Further, the importance of these groups has spawned the analysis of whether the groups have provided a reduction in female offender recidivism rates. Unfortunately the limited programming models do not have extensive research for program developers to access.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between the years or 1997 to 2007 the number of females on probation increased from 524,200 to 987,427. This is an 88 percent increase as opposed to only 21 percent for male offenders on probation supervision. (Gehring, Van Voorhis, and Bell.) The vast increase of female offenders on probation and the limited number of treatment options available to female offenders that would focus on their needs have prompted criminal justice professionals to develop “gender-responsive” programming (Gehring, Van Voorhis, and Bell: Bloom, 2002.) These programs have already been implemented, but the main concern remains that there is just not enough to account for the vast number of female offenders in the system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to expand on the need to reduce recidivism through educating female offenders on how to manage issues such as stress and family or relationship issues in more positive and effective means other than using illegal substances or turning to alcohol. The treatment programs will be gender-specific to women and their treatment needs and address all aspects of the lives of women in the Criminal Justice System. This study would examine several gender-specific treatment options such as *Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility Treatment Program* and *Women-at-Risk Program (WAR)* to understand the needs of female offenders to better assess the components of successful programming. Understanding the issues that plague women in our society is the foundation to implementing programming that will allow women to become educated in areas such as coping with hardship, employability skills, and parental responsibility. By comparing several treatment groups for women that have already been implemented, it will enable the facilitators of the newly developed group to pinpoint the issues related to women's lives and result in decreasing recidivism rates when applied.

Methods of Approach

The majority of this paper will be based on secondary sources and experts in the field of community corrections, case studies in female reformatories and statistical analysis. These sources will come from accredited journals, textbooks, the National Institute of Corrections and data provided by the United States Department of Justice. This paper will reference several programs already implemented in the communities around the United States such as the *Moving On Program* in Ohio. It will be imperative for this paper to provide the reader with information in regards to quantitative analysis and qualitative data allowing for the understanding of how the

criminal justice system, specifically community corrections, has changes due to the ever changes demographics of its population.

Anticipated Outcome

It is anticipated that by identifying strengths and weaknesses of already established gender-specific programs it will provide Criminal Justice professionals with foundation to develop a program that will provide female offenders with substance abuse and mental health treatment as dual diagnoses. The outcome of the research paper is to provide the Wisconsin department of Corrections with effective and theoretically sound information to provide female's with appropriate gender-specific treatment in order to promote rehabilitation, success in their personal lives, and lower recidivism rates among female offender.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION: SUPERVISING THE FEMALE OFFENDER: A NEED FOR GENDER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS

For nearly three decades, the knowledge and understanding of women's lives have grown and perspectives have changed. New information and theory have surfaced that help to provide better services for women in the areas of mental health, employment and vocation, substance abuse, parenting and family, and trauma treatment. It has become apparent that there is a severe need to bring experts from many different career fields to provide knowledge in developing new treatment options for females involved in the Criminal Justice System. According to Covington 2001, until recently, research and theory have been spotlighting male offenders. Traditionally, most programs have been solely modelled around the male offender and the male criminality. These types of programs allow for women to get the treatment needed in some areas of need, but these programs are not culturally or gender sensitive to the specific needs of women offenders.

The limited amount of gender-based programs had a large part to do with the notion that female offenders accounted for a very trivial percentage of individuals in the Criminal Justice System and females committed less severe or heinous crimes as opposed to their male counterparts. Risk and needs programming such as cognitive behavioural, educational and vocation, and trauma recovery have already been a part of the Community Corrections System for some time now. Unfortunately, these programs have basis in research done on male offenders. The treatment needs of male and female offenders are vastly different. Gender-specific treatment groups have already been established. However, the scarce amounts of research providing information as to the success rates of these programs are leaving criminal justice professionals with little basis for what works in reducing recidivism rates for female offenders.

History has shown that the study of crime has been directed towards male criminal behaviours. Most empirical studies have utilized data from male offenders and early theorists constructed theories based on explanations of men and boys' criminality. "Part of the neglect of females stemmed from the disproportionate involvement of males in crime, especially serious offense, and from the overwhelming maleness of the prison population" (Cullen and Agnew, 2006.) Moreover, women's criminal behaviours were seen as peripheral to the crime issue. These criminal behaviours were not worth the time to investigate and as irrelevant to the understanding of male illegality.

This research paper will provide the Department of Corrections and professionals in the Criminal Justice field some insight into why community supervision and the prison systems around the United States are lacking in providing female offenders with adequate mental health counselling, cognitive behavioural group treatment and substance abuse counselling. The research found also will enable treatment providers to understand what female offenders need and how to best provide the treatment to them in a way that will evoke the greatest response and decrease recidivism for female offenders.

SECTION II: LITERATURE REVIEW: FAVORITISM OF FEMALE OFFENDERS, HYPOTHESIS IN DETERMINING THE GENDER GAP, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND ITS AFFECT ON FEMALE CRIMINALITY, COMMUNITY-BASED TREATMENT NEEDS FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS, AN ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE GENDER-SPECIFIC TREATMENT OPTIONS

Early theorists assumed inherent differences between the genders when understanding men and women's tendencies to commit criminal acts. Portraying men as naturally more aggressive than women was a way to explain why men commit more crime than women. Some hypothesized that men commit more criminal acts due to socialized differences. Men are taught throughout their lives to be more aggressive and women are believed to be passive. More recently, gender structure has been a topic of discussion in terms of criminality among the sexes. The structure is determined by associating with a "division of labour between male and female, men's domination of the power structure and gendered differences in sexuality" (Conklin, 2010.) Prior to the 1950s theoretical perspectives of why females committed crimes were solely based on psychological and biological factors. Although these psychological and biological factors dominated theory until the mid 1930s, progression began to move theorists and researchers into a more sociological framework when understanding female criminality. More social and cultural factors began to popularize the ideals of theorists in terms of answering the question of why females commit crime.

Favoritism of Female Offenders

Into the nineteenth and twentieth century's the theories of female criminal behaviours sparked interest in the idea that women who committed crimes had more masculine psychotically and biological factors. Further, theories indicated that social and cultural elements of criminal behaviour normally being indicators in male criminality were also indicators for female criminal behaviours as well. According to Pollak and his book *The Criminality of Women* written in the

1950's, "The extent of female crime probably approximated that of males, but due to its masked character female crime was more likely to go undetected" (Steffensmeier and Schwartz, n.d.) Further, crimes such as prostitution, shoplifting, perjury, and abortions were not included in crime statistics. These crimes are easily concealed and very seldom reported to police. Even when these crimes were reported women had much less of a chance of being arrested or prosecuted compared to their male counterparts. This was mostly due to women playing more of the accomplice role rather than the more active role. Law enforcement had an unspoken favouritism for women and felt chivalrous in terms of treating women in criminal situations.

The discussion of whether this favouritism is determined by the idea that gender poses a difficult perspective on criminality is an issue among theorists and feminists alike. According to Kathleen Daly and Meda Chesney-Lind there are three main problems that gender poses in terms of criminology. The first is *generalizability problem*. This problem states that theories of crime, which were developed based on statistics of male offenders can easily be applied to female offenders. This is an obvious inequality in statistical readings of crime. Conklin (2010) states that "in 2006, 69 percent of suspects arrested for serious property crimes were males, 82 percent of those arrested for serious violent crimes were males, and 93 percent of prison inmates were males" (pg. 158). These statistics show the sheer neglect of female criminality and that men do commit more violent crimes than women. Eileen Leonard (1982) has analyzed theories such as Merton's anomie theory and found that female offending has long been neglected and very arduous to explain in rational terms (Conklin, 2010, 158).

A second problem is known as the *gender rational problem*. Many feminists criticized the criminological studies because all of the studies were based on male offenders. The question of why females committed offenses and whether there was a comparison among male and female

criminals was diluted with sexist responses portraying women as passive and lacking ambition. Freda Adler author of *Sisters in Crime: The Rise of the New Female Criminal* (1975) indicated that the reasons behind this problem of gender ratio is due to the change for a traditional role of a women in a domestic setting into a more progressive setting in society. Women were finding new opportunities to commit crimes while being in another environment such as a career field. This change produced a “convergence” in rates of crime (Conklin, 2010, 159.) Since the end of World War II the increase of women in the workplace has attributed to the feminist movement and changes in gender roles. Women are pushing out of the domestic roles of their mother’s and providing outside the home for their families. The change are leading to crimes such as passing worthless checks, welfare fraud, and shoplifting. Women now-a-days have a sense of entitlement and deprivation, according to Conklin, 2010. “This sense of deprivation could also develop if women, whether in the labour force or not, compare their own position unfavourably with that of men.”

Lastly, Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988) states that sexism of female criminality and the treatment of females in the criminal justice system is the third problem that theorists and criminal justice professionals face. This is described in terms of the strain that is posed on men in comparison to that of women. Men’s strain comes from financial issues going back to the idea that men were supposed to support their families through leaving the domestic environment and finding work to supplement for the women’s domestic roles. Further, men’s strain is derived from severe interpersonal conflict leading to violent crimes. Women’s strain comes from experiencing high levels of social control and restrictions to opportunities. These sorts of strains lead to more self-destructive behaviours such as illegal drug use or violence against the family

members (Conklin, 2010.) In essence, the differences in strain environmentally have determined different access to criminal activities.

The patterns of criminality of men and women can be very similar in some criminal acts and, also, be very different when discussing other crimes. For instance, men and women have similar when looking into property or substance abuse crimes, but when understand the paradigms of more serious or violent offenses this may not be the case (Steffensmeier and Allen, 1996.) Men offend at a much higher rate than women do across the board. The differences in criminal behaviour may have to do with socialization and differences in the roles men and women play (Conklin, 2010.) According to Campbell (1993) and Muncer (1994) men and women may differ in aggression due to the different attitudes learned in regards to aggressive behaviour. Men are taught to understand aggression as a practical way to establish control and to assume authority over others. “Women, on the other hand, learn to regard aggression as a personal failure to control their impulses and therefore something to avoid” (Conklin, 2010.) Conklin gives an example of a male serial killer using sex as a means to control his victim or a battered wife resorting to violence in order to try to control her anger.

Hypotheses in Determining the Gender Gap

This gender gap in research has converged and has many lawmakers and criminologists questioning this issue. Many hypotheses have identified reasons behind this sudden change in statistics and patterns. One such hypothesis is the marginalization hypothesis. This hypothesis states that “when women become more economically disadvantaged *as compared with* men, women’s rates of crime *as compared with* men’s rates will increase” (Heimer, 2000).

The idea of marginalization specifically identifies the economic instability of women more than that of men. This instability is allowing for women to be more disadvantaged than

that of men. “Conventional crimes committed by females have increased considerably over the last decade in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The most plausible reason for this is that more women have become economically marginalized” (Heimer, 2000.) This hypothesis, according to Heimer (2000), is most closely related to the anomie theory. Blau and Blau (1982) as discussed by Heimer (2000) believe that the implication of high levels of inequality such as race and gender discrimination produce a sense of deprivation and frustration. As a result crime is a natural response.

According to Messerschmidt (1986) equates the idea of the feminization of poverty having in large part to do with the family wage system in the 19th century. Men would leave the family home and conduct their lives as providers of the family in an external environment; while women would stay at home to provide as caregivers to the family producing “... the separate spheres of paid labour by men and domestic labour by women” (Heimer, 2000.) Messerschmidt (1986) contributes the emergence of family wage as a need by capitalism to provide sustainability through generation and to continue male dominance across economic classes. After World War II, the family wage system began to decay and women had to provide for the family and supplement their husband’s wage through work. Unfortunately, women in the workforce were seen as helpers or secondary to their male counterparts and thus were paid less. Single mothers felt the hardship of the changing economy and had a very difficult time trying to support their families on a lesser wage. This was the breeding grounds of feminization of poverty in recent decades. “Messerschmidt (1986, 87) concludes that this economic context is fertile breeding ground for increases in women’s property crime, such as fraud and embezzlement” (Heimer, 2000.)

The second hypothesis is the liberation hypothesis which states that the increase in female crime rates are largely due to the women's increasing economic and social independence from men. It is believed that the gender gap in crime is larger in countries that the social and economic inequalities are greater. "Simon and Adler proposed that increases in female offending between the 1960s and 1970s could be attributed to the increasing liberation or emancipation of women that paralleled the women's movement of the 1960s" (Heimer, 2000). However, most empirical research does not support the hypothesized cooperative between the women's movement of the 1960s and increases in female offending. Steffensmeier and his colleagues have provided information proposing that Alder and Simon are in correct in the assumption that the increase in criminal activity among women is primarily due to the women's movement of the 1960. Steffensmeier et al showed changes in the female criminal rates changed prior to the 1960s when the women's movement was impactful.

An issue related to emancipation and liberation hypothesis is in terms of whether the image of female crime increases reflects that of the "liberated" female. Simon's idea that of the liberation hypothesis is due to the influx of females in the work force subsequently given females more of an opportunity to commit crimes such as larceny, forgery, fraud, and shoplifting was confirmed to be inaccurate by Steffensmeier and his colleagues. Crimes such as larceny are more likely due to shoplifting which is described as an offense that is a "traditional role of women as family consumers and caregivers." Consistent with this assertion, Giordano, Kerbel, and Dudley (1981) report that the analysis of Toledo police blotters shows a large majority of women arrested for embezzlement and fraud in the 1970s had passed bad checks rather than committed a work-related crime" (Heimer, 2000.)

A second concern in regards to female crime rates and the idea of women's liberation is in regard to their statistical relationship. There are few statistical time studies and inconsistent finding in research about this. Canadian research from the 1930s to the 1960s indicate that women's participation in the workplace and postsecondary degrees play a substantial role in the conviction rates of theft among females. Interestingly enough, the fertility rates of women have an adverse impact on their criminality among all crimes including theft. Steffensmeier and Streifel (1992) also shows that the increase amount of women in the workplace also reduces the magnitude of larcenies and embezzlements accounted for by women in the United States from 1960 to 1985 (Heimer, 2000.)

The third hypothesis that would explain the reason female crime has been converged in comparison to male crimes rates is the decaying of chivalry hypothesis. This hypothesis shines a light on the change in criminal justice practices in the Unites States. "Specifically, with changing gender roles and attitudes over the past few decades, law enforcement may have become less "chivalrous" and thus more likely to arrest women than it was in the past" (Heimer, 2000.) Empirical evidence from a British study showed that the change in female crime has been impacted by the addition of females on the police forces from the years 1950 to 1980s. In the United States in terms of police force the studies show that the amount of law enforcement officers on the streets has impacted both male and female offending rates between the years of 1965 and 1986. However, these findings measure the gender ratios versus the criminal activity not necessarily the changes in behaviours and protocol among policing agencies.

Another argument within this hypothesis is that the growing number of female law enforcement officers has increased the chances that female offenders will not be "off the hook" due to a gender bias. Ideally, the decay of chivalry hypothesis would predict that sudden

increase of female arrests due to this change in gender of law enforcement officers, but this is not the accurate. In fact, the increase in female arrests is not as dramatic of an increase as this hypothesis would denote. Further, it is difficult to rule out the idea that the changing behaviours and ideals of the police officers may change the ratios of arrests among the genders, but to say it has a bulk of the reasoning is lacking.

Violence Against Women and its Affect on Female Criminality

Violence against women has finally been recognized as a persistent issue among criminologists. The affects it has on the victim, the family, and the community is dire and, fortunately, the research is well documented.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are two crimes against women that pose a dire threat to the increasing female offender rate. The first is domestic violence. “Recently conducted survey revealed that one in every three women reported having been physically attacked by an intimate partner at some time in her life” (Richie, Tsenin & Spatz - Widom, 2000). Even more shocking is that over half of Americans reported that someone they know was a victim of domestic violence. Richie, Tsenin & Spatz -Widom (2000) note that women are twenty-eight percent more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than their male counterpart. Previous research found that women across the board are experiencing this type of abuse regardless of their race or ethnic background. However, recently, research has shown that socioeconomic status, cultural background, and age may have a more dramatic impact on the domestic violence victim. Further Richie, Tsenin & Spatz --Widom (2000) state, “Factors that include the limited availability of crisis intervention programs, the extent to which weapons are used differentially during an assault, and lack of trust in law enforcement agencies may heighten some women’s vulnerability to intimate violence.” A small amount of research also has shown

comparisons in this information in terms of same-sex relationships as well. “Studies indicate that from 25 percent to 30 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people are abused by their intimate partners and that social discrimination and marginalization may complicate their attempts to seek help, thus increasing the risk of serious abuse” (Richie, Tsenin & Spatz - Widom, 2000). According to further studies on this subject the children in the family of a woman experiencing domestic violence are also being victimized by their perpetrator. This poses a huge threat to generations because studies have shown that this form of abuse is intergenerational. Children who witness physical abuse are more twice as apt to utilize violence as adults. Even though most of this research does shed light on physical abuse as showing profound detrimental effects on women and their children; studies also point to emotional abuse as having just as serious of consequences as the physical abuse. Such that four out of five battered women seek psychiatric treatment and these women are five times more likely to attempt suicide as women who have not experienced this in their relationship.

The second crime against women that has causation in women’s criminality is sexual assault. Similar to domestic violence statistics, sexual assault has comparable and daunting statistics identifying that eighteen percent of women eighteen and older have been victims of rape or attempted rape. Further, younger women and girls sixteen to nineteen are three times more likely than the general public to be the victims of sexual assault, rape, or attempted rape. These statistics are appalling and this is partly due to the fact that for many years this form of victimization went unreported. Only about one out of six sexual assaults are reported to police. This makes sexual assault the most unreported crime. According to one study as identified by the National Institute of Justice, eighty-four percent of sexual assault victims did not report the victimization to police.

The psychological consequences of sexual assault can be just as traumatic and catastrophic as domestic violence. “Thirty-one percent of all rape victims develop rape-related posttraumatic stress disorder, and rape victims are three times more likely than non-victims to experience a major depressive episode in their lives” (Richie, Tsenin & Spatz -Widom, 2000). The rate at which victims of sexual assault attempt suicide is thirteen times higher than those who have not experienced this type of victimization. Moreover, women who have experienced sexual assault are ten times more likely to turn to illegal drugs or alcohol to numb the pain.

In accordance with the affects of victimizations of women, researchers link this issue with female criminality. Female victims have shown to not utilize treatment options and law enforcement because of the marginalization and uncertain legal status. Research relating to workplace violence has identifies a lack of reporting and all around lack of trust in terms of feeling like something will be done to resolve the situation and aid the victim. This is true for women working in prostitution or the sex industry. Further, if a woman is hurt in circumstances that have an element of criminal activity such as a woman being sexually harassed in the same place that stolen goods were taken it is very unlikely that this victimization would be included in statistical finding or official reports in research. This lack of interest and women’s inability to feel comfortable in reporting these types of crimes have left them in a state of unrest. Women have become bitter and deprivation has set in. Researchers believe that this is one factor behind why women offend.

It is no secret that female offenders in the criminal justice system have increased dramatically in the last decade. In the 90s there were 300,000 women on community supervision and in jail or prison around the county. The rate at which women are being convicted of crime is increasing, however far less than their male counterpart. “The numbers of women imprisoned in

the United States since 1980 has increased at a rate nearly double the rate for men.” (Covington & Bloom, 2003). Despite these statistics the numbers do not reflect the stagnant rates of female criminality. The question that seems to leave researchers in the dark is not only the issues of females in the criminal justice system, but what outside entities are providing them with the need to commit crime.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics conducted a study on women offenders and why women commit crimes. In earlier discussion, it was understood that women are more likely to commit white-collar crime and crimes that are less violent than crimes committed by men. In this study the Bureau of Justice Statistics look at violent crimes committed by females. Based on the years of 1993 to 1997 women accounted for approximately two million of the violent crimes committed between those years. Furthermore, “Women accounted for 1 in 50 offenders committing a violent sex offense including rape and sexual assault, 1 in 14 robbers, 1 in 9 offenders committing aggravated assault, and more than 1 in 6 offenders described as having committed a simple assault” (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999.) Characteristics of these types of female offenders, as described by victims, are over half Caucasian and a third of these females are African American. “Black and white offenders accounted for nearly equal proportions of women committing robbery and aggravated assault; however, simple assault offenders were more likely to be described as white” (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999.)

To understand the factors that would evoke a woman to commit crimes can be determined by the characteristics of victims a female perpetrator chooses to victimize. According to Greenfeld and Snell (1999) approximately eleven percent of the victimizations by women were perpetrated on other women and eight percent of victims were male. “...violent offenders most often victimized persons of the same gender” (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999.) In

terms of relationships to the victim, sixty-two percent of the female offenders victimized an intimate partner, relative or former partner. Thirty-six percent of the victimized intimate partners were male and eight percent of the victims were female. If the victims of violent offenses by female offenders were strangers, the percentage was a little less than forty percent.

As it is understood victimization by women are more frequent when the victim is female. Greenfeld and Snell (1999) determine that about thirty percent of the victimization by women happened at or near the victim's residence. "According to victim self-reports female offenders account for about 1 in 4 offenders committing violence at a school." Four out of ten of these offenders were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Post-victimization, reports by Greenfeld and Snell (1999) state that men are much more likely to utilize a weapon in their offense. When the perpetrator was a man, victims were more likely to have serious injuries such as concussions, broken bones, and wounds related to gunshot or knife induced cuts. If a victim is hospitalized due to wounds, oddly enough, perpetrators were male and female.

After victimization occurs female offenders are convicted of the criminal offense and sentenced. One of the possibilities of a condition by the judge is to be placed on probation or also referred to as community supervision. For decades men have dominated the criminal justice system. Logically, available treatment options were geared toward the criminogenic needs of male offenders. Now, with the growing female population being placed on probation or being released from prison, the need for gender- specific treatment options are at an all time high. "The vast majority of female offenders are under community supervision. In 1999, 830,192 women were on probation, representing 22 percent of all probationers (up from 18 percent in 1990); 85,524 women were on parole, representing 12 percent of all parolees (up from 8 percent in 1990)" (Covington, 2000, BJS 2000a.) According to Covington (2002) women have very

different risks and needs that should be addressed. For example, women in the criminal justice system are more likely to be convicted of property and drug-related crimes. A study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 1999, indicated that female drug arrests have increased ninety-five percent as compared to male drug arrests increasing by fifty-five percent. Covington (2002) conveys that women are more likely to commit crimes such as property crimes and prostitution in order to receive money to buy illegal drugs.

The differences between men and women in reference to treatment is evident when discussing treatment options provided to, both, men and women in the correctional setting. The majority of these differences were in the fields of employment histories, substance-abuse problems, criminal involvement, psychological functioning, sexual and physical abuse histories, and child support activity prior to incarceration. In addition to women offenders reporting more co-occurring psychiatric needs, lower self-esteem, and reported more sexual and physical abuse that were not as evident in the male offenders (Covington, 2002.)

One of the more prevalent issues amongst women offenders is their children. Women and men have very different relationships with their children. Portrayals of mothers on probation and in correctional institutions have been as inadequate and incompetent mothers who do not care about the welfare and livelihood of their children while they are in the system. However, this is not the case. Realistically, the separation of their children weighs heavily on and is very damaging for female offenders. This issue is aggravated more by the limited contact and the change in custody of the children. Covington (2002) specifies that about seventy percent of women in the criminal justice system have young children. Covington (2002) looks to (Bloom and Steinhart 1993; BJS 2000b) for statistics reporting that the majority of mothers in the criminal justice system were single parents with at least two children. Prior to their time in

the system, these female offenders were the primary custodian for their children. “Currently, it is estimated that 1.3 million minor children have a mother who is under correctional supervision” (Covington 2002; BJS 2000b.)

Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Past Trauma

Three other prevalent and inter-related issues that may have an impact related to rehabilitation for female offenders when they release into the community are mental health, substance abuse, and life trauma. These issues have a very distinct traits based on a person’s gender. For female offenders their emotions are turned inward. Female offenders tend to be more depression, self-mutilating, have suicidal thoughts, and have more verbally abusive or disruptive behaviours as way to self-medicate. “Female offenders are also more likely to have used serious drugs (e.g. cocaine and heroin), to have used them intravenously, and to have used them more frequently prior to arrest. They are also more likely to have a coexisting psychiatric disorder and to have lower self-esteem” (Covington, 2002.)

The evidence of co-occurring conditions among women is overwhelming and when it comes to treatment options can be very dramatic in terms of understanding issues relating to criminality. A study conducted by Blume (1990) found that female offenders have a compelling rate of co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues. According to Blume (1990) “A study by Blume (1990) found that major depression co-occurred with alcohol abuse in 19 percent of women (almost four times the rate for men); phobic disorder co-occurred in 31 percent of women (more than twice the rate for men); and panic disorder co-occurred in 7 percent of women (three and a half times the rate for men)” (Covington, 2002.)

Over the past decade the information and research that has come out of the medical field is related to individuals that experienced a severe traumatic event and how it relates to their

psychiatric and physical health. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that 1999 nearly eighty percent of female offenders were victims of physical or sexual abuse. Further, a study conducted in 1994, found that twenty-two percent of women in the United States jails have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. All adolescents are at risk of abuse at some point in their lives, but females are much more susceptible to abuse than males to be victims of interpersonal abuse. According to Messina et al, female offenders in prison report abuse, being witnesses of abuse, and the stigmatization of gender, race, and poverty in their lives twice times as often as men in similar environments (Covington 2002; Messina et al, 2000.) Overall, women who have experience trauma and use illegal drugs and alcohol are at a much higher risk of mental health disorders.

Importance of Positive Environmental Stimulus

As Criminal Justice professional become more familiar with issues associated with female offenders, the need for gender-specific treatment options has become paramount in providing rehabilitative services for these women. Previously, women have had the obligation of seeking help for their additions, psychiatric and psychological needs, and traumatic events. They have also been pressured to personally fulfil the recommendations of the treatment providers on their own; thus placing a very heavy burden on these women. “There is a lack of gender-responsive intervention for women in the criminal justice system who suffer from the closely linked issues of mental health, substance abuse and trauma; the limited programming that is available is based on program models developed for males” (Covington, 2002.)

A study conducted by Gil-Rivas et al have found that female victims of sexual assault, physical abuse and post traumatic stress disorder along with these receiving treatment for these services, should also have drug abuse treatment as well. It has been shown that women who

receive several services such as mental health and drug and alcohol treatment are more likely to participate in the treatment. Covington (2002) believes, “If women in the system are to change, grow, and recover, it is critical that they be in programs and environments in which relationships and mutuality are core elements.” Therefore treatment providers and criminal justice professional have the obligation to create an environment and setting that promotes healthy relationships with staff and other offenders. Covington (2002) finds that the criminal justice system discourages these female offenders from associating with other female offenders, trust other, even speak about personal issues, or forming bonding relationships. Any treatment atmosphere that promotes dysfunction may mimic the issues that these female offenders are used to such that it eliminates the ability to help these women understand that what was originally normal has caused them harm.

This research paper will provide readers a chance to understand the importance of gender-specific treatment for female offenders and why developing these kinds of programs will decrease and, eventually, eliminate recidivism rates. Female offenders are not like male offenders both in how they view themselves and how they deal with pain. It is our struggle, as criminal justice professionals, to understand these issues and to design programs and treatment strategies aimed at undoing some of the prior damage (Covington 2002; Bloom 2000.)

Community-Based Treatment Needs for Female Offenders

Community-based supervision or probation, as it is most notably recognized, is a condition of the court that allows individuals to remain in the community while still providing the court with adequate means of punishment, protection for the community, and allowing the victim to feel whole again. As discussed earlier, women in the criminal justice system is somewhat a nuance that has sparked many hypotheses in terms of questioning female

criminality, determining appropriate punishment, and providing female offenders with adequate treatment options that will allow for proper rehabilitation. Probation as a means of punishment and means to proper rehabilitative services seem to be something that is not so new in terms of male criminality. However, probation supervision for women is something that poses some concerns in terms of treatment availability and limited abilities to properly supervise due to differences in gender, race, and even class. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2012) article “A new report shows that women aged 18 to 49 on probation or parole are nearly twice as likely to experience mental illness as other women.” Further, this article stated that almost half of the women on probation or parole experienced some sort of mental illness issues. This is why, according to the SAMHSA that gender-specific treatment options are so important for women and their families. Gaarder, Rodriguez, and Zatz (2004) conducted a study of Probation and Parole Officers and their female offenders. The study tried to understand how female offenders on probation are perceived by their probation officer and how their treatment needs are being met.

Gender differences in the criminal justice system are most noted in the status offenses. “While self-report data show that girls and boys commit status offenses in roughly the same numbers, the proportion of girls arrested and referred to juvenile court for status offenses is higher. To build upon these findings, we suggest that hypotheses addressing the treatment of girls by police, probation officers, and the courts must also consider the impact of social factors such as race and class.” (Gaarder, Rodriguez, and Zatz, 2004.) Gaarder, Rodriguez and Zatz (2004) found that other research of this subject individuals on probation especially if they are younger, are depicted automatically by gender or race. The authors give an example of Rosenbaum and Chesney-Lind (1994) discovered that many probation officers routinely

addressed a girl's physical appearance and sexuality in the case file notes, but did not do this for boys. Second, in Kempf-Leonard and Sample's (2000) study, Gaarder, Rodriguez, and Zatz (2004); identified the idea that "manipulative and deceitful actions" were a determining factor of a court hearing for girls, but was not a weighted factor for boys in the similar criminal hearings.

Gaarder, Rodriguez and Zatz (2004) believe that "Properly assessing the risk factors associated with girls' delinquency and recidivism is extremely difficult given the relatively few programs designed to serve girls' needs." This has posed very important issues in the community supervision division of the criminal justice system. If more women and girls are being sentenced to probation, what and differences in treatment are necessary; what kinds of treatments are available in order to provide for the growing number of female offenders. Very little funding has been provided for gender-specific treatment options. Only about five percent of the federal, local, or private funding goes to gender-specific treatment options for women and girls (Gaarder, Rodriguez, and Zatz, 2004). Many probation officers who work with females find it very difficult to work with them due to the limited availability of treatment options and the overall issues associated with female offenders. "The perceived difficulty in working with girls may be attributed to the lack of training in identifying girls' needs and the lack of appropriate programs to meet these needs" (Gaarder, Rodriguez, and Zatz, 2004). Moreover, correctional officers in a female prison setting were not given specialized training to help them understand and work with these women and girls. In fact, many of these officers found it very difficult to work with the girls who were in the "under twenty-one" units. Many of these correctional facilities do not offer sexual abuse treatment for their offenders. The fact that these female offenders were not receiving adequate recreational time, education or career opportunities further exacerbated the need for better gender-specific programming.

Gaarder, Rodriguez, and Zatz (2004) conducted a study on females on probation. This study tried to discover how important gender-specific treatment programming is in terms of rehabilitation and lowering recidivism rates. The study was conducted on juvenile females on probation in Arizona. The researchers utilized case files to interpret three ideas. First, was to discover how the court officials presented the female offenders' cases in court. Second, these files provided background information into the female offenders' lives. This would include parents and/or guardians, siblings, and extended family members. Lastly, since the study is trying to understand why there are limited gender-specific treatment options, the case file can provide assessments and other information into what kind of treatment these offenders were referred or recommended to complete. The girls that were interviewed were between the ages of twelve and seventeen. They were of different backgrounds and ethnic upbringings.

The results of this study found three very important themes after reading case files and interviewing probation officers. First, there is a disconnection between probation officers and the court officials in the belief that young female offenders are manipulative and the reality that girls' past sexual abuse, teen motherhood, and substance use. Second, there is a disconnect about court officials' beliefs that young women's families are irresponsible and "trashy" as opposed to the idea that many families are impoverished and may have histories of abuse. Lastly, the findings identified that probation officers have a very limited understanding of cultural and gender appropriate treatment options and overall, the limited ability for the probation officers to refer these young offenders to appropriate treatment programs.

An Analysis of Effective Gender-Specific Treatment Options

Giordano and Rockwell (2001) conducted a study of 127 young women at an Ohio State Correctional Institution for Girls. After interviewing these women, they found that many of

these women, although they may have had outside influences such as friends who associated with gang members, most of their influences came from their caregivers. Further, these young women, not only, were influenced by what their caregivers did, but developed and internalized a set of certain attitudes that promoted acceptance of criminal behaviour. It is not accurate to state that these young women's caregivers specifically tried to make their children drug users, prostitutes, or criminals in general, but the caregivers did not shield or protect their children from the lifestyle they were already exposed to. These women learned early on in life that this criminal lifestyle was "acceptable under certain conditions" (2001). Further Giordano and Rockwell (2001) found that "the deviant behaviours of family members seem to be a critical casual factor in understanding the paths taken by these young women. It might be that, in these types of families, the children are literally engulfed in deviant modes of expression; that is we suggest a type of 'total immersion' theory that might account for the onset of their antisocial behaviour."

With the onset of females in the criminal justice system, the need for gender-specific programs is essential in maintaining a low recidivism rate while protecting the communities where these female offenders live. Many offenders are provided few options of treatment while serving time in prison due to the extensive waiting lists and limited availability due to funding issues. Many programs are small, owned by correctional agencies, and not for profit organizations. This may mean that the source of funding may be coming from many different places. It is important that these facilities provide female offenders with the opportunity to received treatment based on their issue relating to substance abuse, mental health, physical or sexual abuse, motherhood, employment and vocation opportunities, and release programming. "While many have explained the necessary components of gender-responsive treatment for

female offenders, few researchers have conducted outcome evaluations of programs considered to be ideal” (Brennan, 2007).

Evaluation of the outcomes of effective gender-based treatment options for female offenders is severely lacking. This is due to the severe lack of community-based treatment options for female offenders. Further, the programs that are available, many of them are very small and do not have the computer-based program management capabilities as other larger organizations. Even, if there is a computer-based data analysis system few less developed organizations are able to consistently record research and data entry in order for policymakers to be able to provide for further gender-based treatment that is effective and will lower recidivism rates.

Women’s Huron Valley Correctional Facility Treatment Program

As discussed above many women have turned to self-destructive behaviours and criminal activities for many different reasons. Some feel they need to numb the pain of a history of physical and sexual abuse; others are trying to provide for themselves by committing property and financial crimes. One theme is prevalent among women in the criminal justice system; the limited amount of gender-specific programs have left many women to not get the treatment that is needed and many continue cycling in an environment that is not providing them with positive outlooks on their future. Comb (2010) utilizes a female prison in Ypsilanti, Michigan in order to understand what is needed in order to provide all women in the criminal justice system proper gender-specific treatment options in order for them to succeed. Women’s Huron Valley Correctional Facility is the only female correctional institution in Michigan. This multi-level facility provides female offenders the ability to utilize many programs including Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED), pre-release and life skills instruction,

vocational training in such disciplines as mechanics, building trades, business education technology, horticulture, food technology, and custodial maintenance. According to Combs (2010) these programs are all gender-responsive and specifically designed to meet the needs of female offenders. Correctional staff members also have complete specific training to increase their effectiveness in supervising the female offender population. Within the walls of this female correctional facility there is a ninety-four bed sub-unit that is devoted to providing modified therapeutic treatment to offenders who have substance abuse and dual diagnoses related treatment issues. This program's offender's volunteer to undergo this program to better assess their treatment needs. These women are housed separately from the general population in order allow for optimum treatment possibilities. The concept mottos and objectives of this treatment option are based on the 12-Step philosophy. "The intense treatment design seeks to provide a therapeutic process whereby the women are able to address their past issues—frequently riddles with childhood abuse, neglect, and violence—so that they emerge with the skills and insights to maintain a productive life outside of the prison walls" (Combs, 2010.) This treatment options provides treatment for a minimum of six months (seven or eight groups a week depending on the treatment being given), and engage in other treatment-based activities that promote positive treatment-specific community objectives such as morning meetings and conflict resolution. This program has a very high rate of positive outcomes including a 86% of women remained in the community after being released from prison and 77% have never tested positive for a controlled substance three years after being released from prison (Combs, 2010.) With the success of this program the state of Michigan is saving about \$110 dollars for every day a female offender does not return to this facility (Combs, 2010).

These prison based programs are not a new feature in correctional treatment options. What makes the program at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility so unique is the primary focus it has on women and their criminogenic needs. "One of the program's most important developments is the implementation of a treatment track designed to meet the needs of the dually diagnosed" (Combs, 2010). The idea that "dual diagnoses" program can provide for the substance abuse need as well as the mental health need can eliminate two very primal issues that women in the criminal justice system face. This program, according to Stephanie Covington, is the most successful program and has the most focus on treatment options specifically for women's needs. Covington states, "I have visited a number of corrections-based programs across the nation, and the dual-diagnosis program at WHV is one of the best I've seen" (Combs, 2010.)

Women-at-Risk Program (WAR)

The WAR treatment program is a sixteen week intensive community-based treatment program for women in the state of North Carolina. In fact, this is the only community-based treatment program in this state specifically geared towards women. This program serves as an alternative to incarceration for female offenders on probation supervision. "Gender-responsive treatment is provided to help participants break the cycle of abuse and wrong choices that lead to criminal behaviour" (Brennen, 2007). The group therapy sessions are co-facilitated by two license psychologists. This therapy provides participants a chance to discuss and learn how to combat the cycle of abuse and victimization. Further, the participants are provided with substance abuse treatment, job searching opportunities, educational outlets, and affordable housing. Those female offenders who have committed violent offenses will stay for an additional ten weeks to complete a "Deciding Against Violence" Program (Brennen, 2007).

Brennen (2007) studied the recidivism rates of women who did not complete the program and analyzed whether those who did not complete the program still benefitted from the objectives and still chose to turn their lives around. The study was conducted on women who exited the WAR program from July 2003 to June 2006. All of the data derived for this study was retained from case files that were started at the time of the intake. The information included substance abuse history, family background, demographic information, and criminal history. The licensed psychologists were on hand to diagnose any mental health issues and chemical dependency problems. After each participant exited the program, a check of whether or not the participant obtains new criminal charges was checked through a secure North Carolina criminal database.

According to Brennen (2007), findings from this research discovered that “Results from multivariate analyses showed that WAR graduates were less likely to be re-arrested, re-convicted, and re-incarcerated than participants who did not successfully complete the Program.” Moreover, participants who had past histories of substance abuse and domestic violence convictions were more likely to reoffend. However, mental health issues did not show to be a factor in the recidivism rates of those who did not successfully complete the program.

Without a doubt female offenders in many states do not have the opportunity to obtain gender-specific treatment for many different issues related to their criminality. A few treatment programs include the Huron Valley Correctional Center treatment program and the WAR program. These few treatment programs have proven to be successful by providing treatment with objectives that contribute directly to female offenders’ needs. Unfortunately, many issues remain in regards to funding for the programs in the community and continued knowledge of female offenders’ criminogenic needs and risks. Through theoretical analysis female issues will

be able to move to the forefront and eliminate the issue that many criminal justice professionals deal with in that women can flourish with the same treatment options as men.

SECTION III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FEMINISM, TRADITIONAL THEORIES AND FEMALE OFFENDING

According to Steffensmeier and Allan, (2006) traditional theories are helpful in that they explain overall patterns of female and male criminality and these theories give a small glimpse into why female levels of offending is much lower than that of a male offender. However, these theories do not delve into other small and exceedingly differences in female and male offense patterns. In describing the reasons female offending has increased over the last decade and why these female offenders are treated so differently from their male counterparts several theories have delved into this issue. Before the 1970s and the movement towards women's rights theories of female criminality were primarily based upon stereotypes. According to Tibbetts & Hemmens (2010) Most of the attention of theorists in the area of female criminality could be divided into two main issues: "gender ratio" and "generalizability." Gender ration issue is understood as the theorizing and research analyzing why female offenders commit less serious and less violent crimes than males. Many experts felt that this area of study was not nearly as important as other aspects of gender-specific research, but it became clear that if the degree of criminal activity was studied in terms of female committing crimes at a lesser severity than males; this could potentially help to understand and reduce male criminality. The generalizability issue is consistent in that many theorists simply could utilize the research and findings from male related criminal behaviour and generalize it to female offenders. However, given that women have very different issues in terms of mental health, physical health, and life stressors that this would not properly predict or describe female offending patterns.

Feminism

The first initial impact of feminism occurred in the signing of the Constitution allowing women to vote in the United States. Again in the 1960s, women's rights hit like a title wave reaching beyond the right to be able to choose, but the right is equal to that of their male-counterpart. Feminist complained that women were not receiving the recognition and equality in social, political, or economic realms. This movement promoted equal education and employment opportunities, improved child care, and reproductive freedoms. In 1972, the United States House of Representatives and U.S. Senate passed the Equal Rights Amendment into the Constitution allowing equal rights regardless of gender differences, but failed to ratify it. The liberation movement became a very popular discussion in the social media bringing to light women's issues including that of female criminality. The theories that were previously established were brought to the forefront and criticized and intensely examined stating that they were reflective of the male dominated criminal justice system and generalized to female perspectives.

According to Adler, after this movement women were beginning to enter the work force and political areas. This began to bridge the gap between pay grades, power, and overall social standards. From the 1950s to the mid-1970 the amount of women in the workforce almost doubled. "At the same time, The U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence issued a Staff Report publicly proclaiming that the gender gap in criminality was decreasing as cultural differences narrowed (Mulvihill, 1969)" (Hamilton, n.d.). During this time, the social media was profiling high profile female offenders including the Manson Women and Patty Hearst and her associates with the Symbionese Liberation Army. With the influx of media attention, women and their criminality broke through the mold and the thought that

women could have their own frame of mind and thought process was contrary to what was initially understood. Further, social changes, not biological changes, influenced the reversal from understanding and accepting physiological and psychology motives behind female criminality. Adler believed that the emancipation of females and the increased number of women in the workplace became a vital implication for increased female criminality. Property and public order crimes were typical crimes committed by female who may have not benefited from such amenities as education and employment experiences.

According to Freda Adler, women have come very far in the realms of family, marriage, and political areas. Women are moving out of the modest lifestyles and into the more progressive workforce. Prior to this movement, women had the same ideals as their husbands and fathers. They wanted to make something of themselves and become more, but like many of the other oppressed groups of individuals, women had a very difficult time fulfilling their goals and aspirations in a legitimate means. The road to success was very strenuous for women in the United State. Women were seeking refuge under the stereotypical ideals of what feminism was as defined by men. When the Liberation Movement became mainstream women no longer had to worry about conforming into what society and their male counterparts thought it meant to be a women or feminine. It had transformed into a society where women could choose to become a mother and women were able to become educated in male-dominated employment and vocation opportunities.

This theory also had a somewhat of a dark side. Alder agreed that this movement shaped the way women were viewed in all elements of their lives, but it also provided for women to become more violent and their criminal behaviours increased. “According to Adler, no longer confined to lesser crimes suiting the low ranks of the domestic women, a new breed of female

criminal had emerged with aspirations and skills to engage in major crimes with higher rewards and notoriety” (Hendrickson, n.d.).

When discussing feminism and how it related to criminal behaviours it is wise to discuss the different elements of feminism. The first being liberal feminism. This form of feminism states that the differentiations between men and women are mostly due to the lack of opportunities given to women in such areas as education and employment. As more females were given these types of opportunities their criminal behaviours began to increase a well; inevitably resembling that of male offending patterns (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010.)

The second form of feminism is critical or radical feminism. This form of feminism states that societies such as the United States have a very strong patriarchal structure. This hold true by realizing that although women have begun to hold very important positions in society in professional, white-collar careers, men, on average, still get paid significantly more. In the United States government, the dominance of men holds true because primarily al political positions such as president and vice present are positions held by men.

Third, Marxist feminism is defined as emphasizing the role men play in the economic productivity of the United States and thus concentrating exclusively on economic structure. This feminist perspective focuses on men as the primary controllers of economic success; further, epitomizing capitalism. One of the points of capitalism is the idea of “survival of the fittest.” This assumption seems to benefit women. According to Tibbetts and Hemmens (2010) Studies have shown that women in the U.S. are far more productive then women in other countries despite this capitalist mentality. Regardless of whether someone believes in this Marxist perspective, it does not properly justify the reality of female criminality.

The socialist feminist viewpoint states that women must take control of their reproductive abilities and their bodies in general in order to take control their criminality. This feminist perception moves far away from the prior economic outlook and places the control or decision in the hands of women. However, it is very unclear as to how women are suppose to take charge of their reproductive roles and how that relates to increased or decreased in criminal behaviour. “Although no one can deny that data show females who reproduce frequently, especially in inner-city, poor environments, ten to offend more offend than other females, it appears that other facts mediate these effects” (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010.) Women to decide that they want a good and successful future tend to be much more cautious when it comes to pregnancy. Oddly enough, the women who should be taken the most precautions when it comes to pregnancy never do in spite of the growing amounts of contraceptives available. It is unclear how much socialist feminism has contributed to the comprehension of female criminality.

Lastly, postmodern feminism is to grasp and understand women as a whole is difficult or almost impossible, even for women, because ever perspective is very unique. If this is a true perspective then everything in the world should not be studied or understood because everyone may comprehend the idea of that particular practice so subjectively. This feminist perspective is based on “anti-scientific” mean and has not provided any reasoning into why females commit crimes.

These feminists’ perspectives focus on different ideals that could describe female criminality, but many fail to understand or root anything into generational or family background issues. It is still clear that women are treated very differently from men. Men are told to compete and do their best; while women may be told to do the same, the outcome and how it is dealt with is very different.

Traditional Theories and Female Offending

Along with the development of gender-specific theories on female criminality, there has been an effort to apply traditional theories to rationalize for female crime and the gender gap in crime. Many of these theories have discovered that the reason behind male criminality may also be associated with female criminality. Some of these associating factors including socializing with anti-social peer groups, beliefs that are favourable to a criminal lifestyle, low social and self-control, stressors and strains, the possible gain and cost of a criminal lifestyle, and criminal opportunity. “In fact, reviews of the research have found that there is a great deal of overlap between the leading causes of female and male crime” (Chesney-Lind, 2006). Furthermore, the conditions that foresee the successful reduction of crime for males are similar for that of female” (Chesney-Lind, 2006). Studies have shown that the gender gap is wedged because males are much more likely to associate with anti-social peer groups, have lower self-control, and limited social control than females (Chesney-Lind, 2006.) In contrary to this theory, other theories believe that there are certain factors that affect one gender more than the other. Some of these factors may include gender identity, experiences with discrimination by gender, differences in physical size and strength, disputes with romantic partners, timeliness of menstruation, and if sexual abuse has occurred (Chesney-Lind, 2006.) There are so many theories that identify certain factors that pertain to female criminality or male criminality specifically, but many do not explain why certain factors or character traits are more popular in the identification of criminality in one gender over another. According to Moffitt et al (2001), Chesney-Lind (2006) has been the most prominent in trying to contribute to the gendering of traditional theories. “They find that most of the gender difference in crime is due to the fact that females are less likely to possess the personality traits of low constraint and negative emotionality.” These factors are influenced in

both biological and social outlets. This could include biological inheritance and severe head trauma. Typically, in females, these factors are influenced by societal experiences. For example a female who endure puberty at an early age are more likely to engage in delinquent acts such as drinking, truancy, and disorderly conduct, according to Chesney-Lind (2006). This is due to the maturity of the females and their wanting to engage in more grown up activities such as romantic relationships, associate with delinquent peers, and conflict with their parents.

Broidy and Agnew (1997) try to apply the concept of General Strain Theory in examining females' criminality and gender differences in crime. As indicated by Chesney-Lind (2006) Broidy and Agnew (1997) though empirical and theoretical literature, states that "the gender gap in crime cannot be explained by arguing that males experience more strains than females. Males and female experience similar amounts of strains; in fact, some studies indicate that females experience more strains than males."

Other theorists have applied a social learning theory, Sutherland's (1939) Differential Association Theory, to explaining gender and crime. Heimer and De Coster (1999) state that men are more likely to learn violence because their parents are less likely to directly control them and at what point they associate with aggressive peers. For females violence is connected to the closeness of interpersonal relationships and patriarchal beliefs. In keeping with the idea behind this theory, females will learn violent techniques and characterization when there is a collapse of parental relationship or bond. Females who believe and conform to the patriarchal values of a family are less likely to become violent.

Lastly, Chesney-Lind (2006) explores Costello and Mederer (2003) apply the control theory to the understanding of gender differences in terms of criminality. Costello and Mederer (2006) do not ask why males commit crime because they see this as a natural for people to

“pursue their self-interest in the most expedient manner available”, but they do ask why women commit less crime than their male counterparts. They believe that the answer lies in the idea that women are much more controlled. Women are educated at a young age to be self-controlled and to show nurturing behaviour towards others. They are supervised more closely and are more likely to heed the consequences of misbehaviour or expressing aggression. Further, the ability to remain controlled stems from the ability to give birth to and raise children. Historically women were the primary caregivers to children, thus tying them to the home. Costello and Mederer (Chesney-Lind, 2006) argue that this arrangement has become dysfunctional for women with women entering the work world and men having to take half of the constraints of caretaking. Women, now have the ability to pursue their goals in the work force and other outlets; bringing the men back to their homes.

General Strain Theory and Gender

Agnew (1992) and his General Strain Theory identifies and conceptualizes three types of strain including actual or anticipated failure to achieve a particular goal, actual or anticipated removal of positively valued stimuli, and the actual or anticipated presentation of negative stimuli (Jang, 2007.) Agnew (1992) also provides a distinction between two areas of strain. The objective strain is strain experienced by all people in a given group, while subjective strain is strain experienced by people who are experiencing the strain. This is an important concept because experiencing objective strain can be very different for each person.

According to Jang (2007) Agnew (1992) strain can be dealt with in many forms including criminal activity and delinquency. Agnew (1992) provides two ways to emotionally understand and deal with strain. The two ways are self-directed strain and other-directed strain. “...suggesting that the latter are more likely to result in other-directed deviant acts, such as

interpersonal aggression and violence, rather than self-directed acts like drug use” (Jang, 2007). Of course not all individuals choose to deal with strain by committing criminal acts and violence. Agnew (1992) states that there is a sort of point that probability is providing a person with the internal and external factors that become the determining how to deal with the strain.

In terms of how General Strain Theory relates to gender differences in criminality, Jang(1992) states that Agnew (1992) formulates that men experience external strain from work and are far more interested in material wealth determining success than women. Women have internal strain and sees interpersonal relationship as a determination of a wholesome lifestyle. “As a result, males are more likely to have financial and work related strains, whereas females are more likely to experience interpersonal or relational strain. ... females are more likely to have strains related to gender discrimination and gender roles at work or home, whereas males are more likely to experience the strain of criminal victimization and interpersonal conflicts due to competitive relations with peers” (Jang, 2007). In relieving strain, men utilize more other-directed strain through deviant acts and violent crimes. Women choose a more self-directed strain through utilizing escape, avoidance tactics or other non-deviant acts. “Broidy and Agnew suggest that gender differences in the emotional response to strain help explain gender differences in deviant coping behavioural response to strain” (Jang, 2007).

How men and women formulate and face anger emotions is very different. Recent research state that women experience more anger than men. The difference is in how men and women cope with this form of emotional stress. When a woman experiences anger it is often correlated to feelings of fear, guilt, and shame. For men anger is handled through moral outrage. Thus, women’s anger is expressed with other non-violent emotions; while men’s anger is consistent with other-directed strain such as deviance and criminal behaviours. It has been noted

that women often times internalized their anger while men immediately direct the emotion outward onto another. Jang (2007) believes this occurs because “women are socialized to turn their anger inward and blame themselves for adversity (which GST posits to decrease the probability of engaging in other-directed deviance and crime), whereas men are socialized to outwardly express their anger.” Further women become worried more often than men that their expression of anger may hurt someone else or jeopardize a relationship which would be contrary to the ideals of a women’s supportive and nurturing role in society.

A study completed by Sharp, Terling-Watt, Atkins, & Gilliam (2001) analyzed the deviance of a sample of ninety- six female college students. The study utilized the dependent variable of purging or vomiting after one eats. The mediating variables were anger and depression. Strain we measured in terms of stressful life events and how these stressful life events affected the women. According to the general strain theory, strain is cumulative so that team of researchers decided to add another variable of strain. This variable measured how successful the young women were at reaching their academic goals, athletic goals, health related goals, and money related goals. Lastly, the team added chronic stressors to the variables. Parental hostility was the additional variable that would measure chronic stressors.

The finding of this study states that the loss of positively- valued stimuli through parental divorce, feelings of inadequacy, failing to achieve set goals should affect purging behaviours due to effect of negative emotions. This study identifies two very important aspects that Sharp, Terling-Watt, Atkins, & Gilliam believe still needs more analysis. The first, the general strain theory has some relevance in the study of female deviance. Second, the correlation between strain, negative affective states, and different variations of deviance is multifaceted. Traditional general strain theory believes that strain leads to anger and the anger expressed promotes a high

probability that someone may become deviant. However, in terms of this study and the negative effect of purging is much more complicated. “The negative affective states of depression and anger are interwoven, and their association with deviant behaviours may be quite intricate” (Sharp, Terling-Watt, Atkins, & Gilliam, 2001). Within this study anger was positively associated with purging behaviours, but only when depression was high. However, this was the opposite with the correlation of delinquency and anger. Therefore, depression and anger seem to predict different types of criminality and deviance in women. So, when anger in conjunction with high levels of depression, this may lead to self-destructive behaviours. On the contrary, when anger in conjunction with low levels of depression are detected this is when the frequently research deviant behaviours exist. According to Sharp, Terling-Watt, Atkins, & Gilliam (2001) state that this may be the reason why males are seen as much more deviant and criminal than females.

Differential Association and Female Offenders

Social learning theories are based on the hypothesis that criminal behaviour is a learned behaviour just as any other behaviour such as how to brush your teeth or how to tie your shoes. One example of social learning theories is Sutherland’s (1939) Differential Association Theory. This type of theory emphasizes that family and the peer groups are a potential influence of a person’s criminality. Sutherland (1939) states that a person’s to be considered an offender and an example of differential association theory she would need to learn attitudes and values that may induce offending behaviours and also she would have to learn specific behaviours that would elicit criminal offenses. Sutherland (1939) states, “The people that surround a developing child will demonstrate a range of attitudes towards the law and crime, some favourable and some unfavourable. Sutherland argued that if the child acquires more attitudes that are favourable to

crime than unfavourable ones, the result will be that they regard criminal behaviour as acceptable” (Sammons, n.d.). The individual may also begin to learn methods on how to commit criminal behaviours.

Studies conducted in regards to Differential Association Theory have great influenced programming and rehabilitation for many male offenders, but when studies are conducted with female offenders in mind, some issues arise. The first is that there are so few serious, violent female offenders that the duration of analysis is limited. Second, the subjects in the study are usually teenagers or young adults that are considered serious offenders if they have reported high rates of criminal activity for over a year of the study. Using these criteria, only two females in the testing group qualified as high risk offenders. A similar study was conducted in Sweden with over 1300 subjects by Stattin, Magnusson, and Reichel (1989) found that out of the over 1300 subjects analyzed only 15 females as compared to 165 males were assessed as high risk offenders (Giordano & Rockwell, 2001). “Perhaps the most important think to learn from these types of surveys is that gender socialization is very powerful; the average female adolescent is just not that criminal” (Giordano & Rockwell, 2001). However, there is always a small subset of females who act in a way that is anti-social and disruptive. This category of females is brought to the limelight because they act significantly more distinct from their peers. According to Giordano and Rockwell (2001) theorists know very little about these young women.

McCarthy (2011) studies adolescents who live on the streets of Toronto, Canada in 1987 and 1988. Social services workers established that at this time nearly 10,000 adolescents lives on the streets or in group home settings. His analysis focused primarily on crime and three concepts of Sutherland’s differential association theory. These concepts include deviant associations, symbolic elements that support offending, and guidance leading to criminal

activity. He explored these concepts based on two types of criminal behaviours; drug dealing and theft. In terms of selling drugs, McCarthy utilized the frequency of selling marijuana and also the frequency of selling other hallucinogens, heroin and cocaine. In measuring the criminal activity of thefts. He utilized several types of thefts including motor vehicle theft, shoplifting, possession of stolen property, and breaking and entering. He used frequency and priority as variables for this study. He found that gender, family, relationships, and school experiences impacted the frequency of selling drugs. This study also found that the association with deviant individuals also heavily impacted this kind of criminal behaviours even before the adolescent moved from their parental home. Also, deviant desires and attitudes had an impact on drug trafficking. In terms of thefts, the data showed similar results to the drug selling data. Moreover, once tutelage was introduced the data changed. Showing that if a person is protected and shielded from negative peers, then they are less likely to engage in criminal behaviours and activities.

Sutherland differential association theory was the theory that brought sociology to the forefront. However, over time this theory has fallen from grace. Very few empirical studies were in existence after 1980. “None the less, recent studies’ exclusive focus on deviant attitudes and motives has contributed to the current confusion of the education importance of others’ behaviour” (McCarthy, 2011).

Women have gone through many hardships in terms of trying to be successful in a male-dominated world. The beginning of the Women’s Movement has spawned many theorists to begin to look at the differences in treatment needs of men and women. It was determined that men and women have very diverse issues related to their criminality. Many theories including Social Control Theory, General Strain Theory, and Differential Association Theory were adapted

in trying to determine what objectives are needed in order to offer female offenders appropriate treatment options. Much has been done in terms of equal rights and research, but one issue remains, the idea that numbers of gender-specific treatment programs are very scarce and more treatment groups are required to continue the positive outcomes that the limited treatment groups have shown.

SECTION IV: RECOMMENDATIONS: BARRIERS OF TREATMENT, GENDER-SPECIFIC TREATMENT NEEDS FOR WOMEN, TREATMENT OUTCOMES

Women are more likely than men to be confronted with barriers in finding gender-specific treatment options and they are less likely to seek treatment. Women are more likely to seek help in mental health and general practice settings rather than gender-specific treatment settings. According to Carla Greene (n.d.) this could be the cause for poorer treatment outcomes. When treatment responses are measured it tends to favour women as opposed to men. “Limited research suggests that gender-specific treatment is no more effective than mixed-gender treatment, though certain women may only seek treatment in women-only programs. Future health services research should consider or develop methods for (1) improving care for women who seek help in primary care or mental health settings, (2) increasing the referral of women to specialized addiction treatment, (3) identifying subgroups of women and men who would benefit from gender-specific interventions, and (4) addressing gender-specific risk factors for reduced treatment initiation, continuation, and treatment outcomes” (Greene, n.d.).

In the 1970s and 1980s many researchers began to delve into the idea of gender-specific treatment options for females. Around this time, the attention really focused on how men benefitted from substance abuse treatment and the fact that many treatment providers were not equipped in the terms of providing for women. In response to this issue the government began to

fund research projects that focused mainly on understand female needs and how this would relate to treatment access, treatment provisions, and outcomes of treatment. “Researchers began examining the characteristics and social circumstances of women with substance abuse problems, identifying factors that interfered with detecting and diagnosing women who needed help. They also studied the barriers that prevented women from entering treatment and gender-specific issues related to women’s success in treatment” (Greene, n.d.).

Today, many treatment programs provide gender-specific or gender-sensitive treatment groups for female offenders. These programs have established female facilitators, female-male co-leaders, and female specific content. “Many programs also provide ancillary or wraparound services, such as child care and parenting groups, which facilitate women’s treatment entry and continuation. In addition, significant numbers of treatment programs serve women only, target pregnant women or adolescent girls, or offer specialized parenting services for women and their children” (Greene, n.d.). This change in how providers utilize treatment in order to facilitate rehabilitation for such issues as substance abuse and parenting, many researchers have questioned whether the latter research and findings are applicable now.

Barriers of Treatment

Once a female offender has decided that she is willing to accept the treatment that is available. The offender must still overcome several barriers that may limit her from accessing and getting the appropriate treatment. “Many studies provide evidence for gender differences in the type, strength, and number of barriers people encounter as they consider and attempt to access treatment. For example, Brady and Ashley (2005) reported that women are more likely than men to experience economic barriers when seeking treatment” (Greene, n.d.). Further, it is the ability to go to the treatment groups may be difficult because of prior family responsibilities

that arise and many of these women experience an issue with finding and maintaining consistent transportation. This may be a bigger issue in rural areas where a public transportation system is not available. Both men and women have to try to overcome these struggles, but women are much more susceptible to the stereotypes and stigmas.

Gender-Specific Treatment Needs for Women

According to Covington (1998), it is important to understand that gender-specific treatment has not been around long enough to report or maintain data on the longevity and effectiveness of such programs. Covington (1998) continues to utilize Austin et al (1992) stating, “The most promising approaches to community The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines gender-specific services as those that are designed to meet the unique needs of female offenders; that value the female perspective; that celebrate and honor the female experience; that respect and take into account female development; that empower girls and young women to reach their full human potential; and work to change established attitudes that prevent or discourage girls and young women from recognizing their potential.” This perspective was first addressed with girls in the Criminal Justice System, but Bloom (1997) states that this perspective can also be relevant for adult female offenders as well. These programs focus on the multidimensional problems of women offenders. These include gender-specific substance abuse treatment; parenting and family preservation; economic survival and life-skills training; sexual abuse and domestic violence counselling; and safe, affordable housing.” Lastly, Covington (1998) adds that Bloom (1997) found that “The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines gender-specific services as those that are designed to meet the unique needs of female offenders; that value the female perspective; that celebrate and honor the female experience; that respect and take into account female

development; that empower girls and young women to reach their full human potential; and work to change established attitudes that prevent or discourage girls and young women from recognizing their potential.” Bloom (1997) understands the need for gender-specific treatment services need certain elements when providing services to female offenders. Several of these vital factors are as follows:

- It is delivered in a setting compatible with females’ interactional styles, such as their need for and responsiveness to social relationships
- It takes into account gender roles and female socialization
- It does not allow sexual harassment
- It supports active, interdependent roles for women and girls
- It addresses females’ unique treatment issues, such as trauma, parenting skills, coping mechanisms, and self-worth

Bloom (1997) found that female offenders should be in the least restrictive environment when undergoing any intensive treatment. However, the treatment facility should still determine security need based upon the need for public safety. Within the same-gender environment, Bloom (1997) affirms that learning in an environment where trusting relationships are promoted and help the female offender recognize “that they can be professionally and emotionally successful in life and still have strong relationships (Belknap et al., 1997, p. 24)” (Covington, 1998). The kinds of issues that the gender-specific treatment options would address during the program include:

- Development of a sense of self and self-esteem
- Establishment of trusting, growth-fostering relationships
- Physical health
- Sobriety—clean and sober living
- Sexuality
- Mental health
- Physical fitness and athletics
- Pregnancy and parenting skills
- Decision-making skills

- Trauma from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse—treatment and prevention
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Spirituality

One of the best programs that have been established in female institutions and in the community is mentoring programs. These programs have taken individuals who have gone through some of the issues that the program covers and partners them with someone who are just starting the program. It seems that women have the ability to utilize what they learned to teach others and provide rehabilitative services. Peers have such a huge impact on young women. “Interviews with team members and those they counselled revealed that both groups were significantly helped by the peer counselling program (Pollack, 1993)” (Covington, 1998.)

Treatment Outcomes

Treatment outcomes are a very important part of gender-specific treatment and the effectiveness. According to Schneider, Kviz, Isola, and Filstead (1995) abstinence cannot be the only determination of effectiveness in a gender-specific program. It is also important to consider “consumption patterns, fluctuations in abstinence, number of days abstinent, amount of alcohol consumed post-treatment, and improvement in the following areas: physical symptoms, role performance, legal problems, and relationship and family problems” (Covington, 1998). Recent data has shown that only providing same-gendered programming does not significantly improve the lives of female offenders post-treatment (Covington, 1998). In a study completed by Dahlgren and Willander (1989) found that women who were in a gender-specific treatment group as opposed to a mixed-gendered program have a better chances of staying in the group longer. “Thirty-five percent of the women in the gender-specific program reported improved relationships with their children, compared with 12 percent of the control group” (Covington, 1998).

Treatment is very limited in this field, but this limited treatment has shown that gender-specific treatment options are in dire need throughout the United States. Further, the gender-specific treatment has provided female offenders with reduced rates of relapse and reduced rates of continued criminal activity. “Martin and Scarpitti (1993) found that women who relapse are seven times more likely to be rearrested as those who do not relapse. Therefore, treatment that reduces the likelihood of relapse will significantly affect rates of recidivism” (Covington, 1998).

Women face many barriers in relation to finding appropriate gender-specific treatment. Women’s issues including motherhood, self-esteem issues, and mental health allow for women to undergo many different experiences and issues that lead them to become criminal. Treatment outcomes are vital to allow for effectiveness of treatment for women. Many things have to be considered when determining not only what kind of treatment is necessary for females, but how to develop this treatment so that the female offender can benefit and dissolve the rate of relapse and recidivism.

SECTION V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

For many years the need for gender-specific treatment has increased due to the increased number of females in the Criminal Justice System. Female offenders in the Criminal Justice System have been exposed to very diverse experiences and they have distinct needs compared to their male counterparts. The development of gender-specific treatment can provide for this difference. The treatment will eliminate increased recidivism rates and female offenders’ criminal activity could potentially be non-existent if they are provided with the proper treatment services. Due to the criminal offenses that women tend to commit, usually non-violent offenses, the need for public safety is not as dire of an issue or concern as it is for male offenders. Further,

Covington (1998) states that “this population presents a unique opportunity to implement and expand corrections alternatives and intermediate sanctions without compromising public safety.”

In determining appropriate treatment options it is important that issues such as racism, sexism, substance abuse issues, parenting skill needs, and poverty are discussed and utilized in the treatment development. Successful interventions have to consider the realities that these female offenders are exposed to and eventually will have to return to. The treatment, also, must provide awareness and a deeper understanding of cultural expectation and alternative treatment approaches. Female offenders have been overlooked and the ideas of mixed-gender treatment objectives have long been the norm for therapeutic options. The idea that gender-specific treatment is very new; however, the limited research has provided many treatment facilitators and treatment developers with a glimpse into the real issues that plague female offender and how essential it is for treatment be concentrated in areas that affect female criminality.

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