Sexual Violence in the Returning Population

Curriculum 1 in the Returning and Healing Training

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Returning and Healing

Re-Entry Agencies

Formerly Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Violence

Rape Crisis Centers

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Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
Goals for today:

1. What is sexual violence, and what are some common impacts?
2. Why is talking about sexual violence important in re-entry?
Sexual Violence and its impacts
Sexual Violence

Any sexual activity done to someone without their consent.
Traumatic event

- Events outside the range of normal human experience
- Experienced as overwhelming, incomprehensible and senseless threats to one’s life
- The individual is powerless and unable to exert control over their environment
- **Powerlessness and a loss of control** are key components of sexual trauma.
Sexual Violence Reactions

Immediate  
Outward Adjustment  
Retriggering/Resolution
Immediate Crisis Stage

Feelings
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Sadness
- Vulnerability
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Numbness
- Guilt
- Confusion
- Denial
- Disbelief
- Loss of Control
- Others

Behaviors
- Isolation
- Distrust
- High startle response
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Intrusive thoughts
- Others

Thoughts
- Safety concerns
- Physical wellbeing
- Denial
- Confused
- Overwhelmed

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Outward Adjustment Stage

Feelings
- Shame
- Fear
- Sadness
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Denial
- Disbelief
- Others

Behaviors
- Strained relationships
- Distrust of others
- Normal functioning
- Addictions/substance use
- Others

Thoughts
- Moving on?
- Physical wellbeing
- Suicidality
- Self-blame
- Others
Retriggering/Resolution

Feelings
- Can feel good about overcoming experience
- More like self
- Sadness
- Anger
- Others

Behaviors
- Incorporates experience into life story
- Growth
- Healing
- Giving up
- Others

Thoughts
- Can’t “get over it”
- Will never feel “better”/ like themselves
- Re-evaluation
- Others
What else affects the healing cycle?

• Contextual Factors
  – Ongoing stressors
  – Support system
  – Life circumstances

• Cultural Factors
  – How does your culture teach you to handle crisis?

• Personal Style Variables
  – How do you generally handle life?
Triggering

- Traumatic memories are not stored like normal memories.
- Recalling them can trigger physiological effects (release of hormones, etc).
- People remembering trauma can feel like they are re-living the event.
Potential Effects: Sexual Trauma

- Suicidal/self-harming thoughts and behaviors
- Erratic behavior
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Flashbacks
- Mood swings
- Dissociation
- Withdrawn/isolation
- Increased aggression
- Difficulty concentrating or following orders
Sexual violence is about power and control

It’s not about sex

It’s not about desire
Sexual Violence and Re-Entry
Trauma experiences before incarceration: Female Prisoners

Female Prisoners
- Experienced Trauma
- No Prior Experience

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault,
Survivors Behind Bars: Supporting Survivors of Prison Rape and Sexual Assault, 2010.
Trauma experiences before incarceration: Male Prisoners

Male Prisoners

- Experienced Trauma
- No Prior Experience

Sexual Violence to Prison Pipeline

- Girls in juvenile justice system experienced sexual assault at 4x the rate of boys
- 22% were assaulted within 7 days before getting involved in justice system
- Girls with history of sexual violence are 5x more likely to be re-arrested than without.
- Close to 90% of adult women arrested were survivors of sexual violence.

Why talk about sexual violence during re-entry?

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jail</th>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>High-Risk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8-12%</td>
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1 in 10 former state prisoners have reported experiencing sexual abuse while incarcerated.

What does sexual violence look like in prison?

- Debts or obligations
- Protective pairings for protection
- Gang involvement
- In exchange for drugs
- For additional privileges, visitation, or phone usage (especially if staff are perpetrators)
- Malicious searches or retaliation for other incidents
Trauma impacts re-entry success

What do re-entering people struggle with during re-entry?

Where do they have difficulty re-integrating with their communities?
Recent Report

Trauma-Informed Approaches for Programs Serving Fathers in Re-Entry: A Review of the Literature and Environmental Scan

A Special Topics Study of the Parents and Children Together Evaluation

July 2018
Key Findings

“Trauma in fathers who are re-entering society appears to be prevalent. However, compared to what is known about trauma in women, children, and combat veterans, little information is available on the prevalence, experience, and impact of trauma among nonmilitary men, especially low-income men of color.

*Trauma may complicate the ability of men in fatherhood programs to achieve positive outcomes.* Past traumas, the incarceration experience itself, and the return to disadvantaged communities with few resources and job opportunities likely compound the difficulty these men experience in successfully re-entering the community.”

What's more important?
Questions and reactions?
Next Curriculum

- How to talk with returning people about sexual violence
- How to respond if they indicate they want to talk about it