A Place of their own:
The use of art making and creative interventions with incarcerated survivors

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Statistics

Sexual abuse to prison pipeline

Incarcerated females –
• 30 – 50% - mental health issues
• 75% - relationship violence
• 75% - addiction issues
• 85% - earlier sexual assault
  • 60% - low income
• 60% - have a child under the age of 18
Sexual abuse to prison pipeline

Incarcerated males –
• 1 in 6 males report childhood abuse – (physical & sexual)
• Over 50% report physical abuse or violence
• 1 in 5 incarcerated for drug offences

Trauma

• Results from an event, series of events or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well being.
Trauma to incarceration pipeline

Positive correlation between:

• Trauma/ Sexual abuse
• Mental health issues
• Substance abuse

Trauma history issues that can lead to incarceration

• Low self esteem
Trauma history issues that can lead to incarceration

• Historical/ generational trauma

Trauma history issues that can lead to incarceration

• Mental health issues
Trauma history issues that can lead to incarceration

- Poor coping/addictive behaviors

- Gender influenced issues
Trauma history issues that can lead to incarceration

- Unhealthy relationships/
  poor social skills/
  inability to empathize

Prisoner Post Traumatic Stress
Dynamics of incarceration that can increase trauma

• Real or perceived loss of safety/loss of control

Dynamics of incarceration that can increase trauma

• Boundary Issues
Dynamics of incarceration that can increase trauma

- Relationship issues

Dynamics of incarceration that can increase trauma

- Suppression of affect
Dynamics of incarceration that can increase trauma

• Altered reactivity and arousal response

Dynamics of incarceration that can increase trauma

• Altered sense of identity/sense of self
Treatment Issues

- Gender responsive – Must address issues related to gender experiences and responses
- Trauma informed care –
  Safety, choice, collaboration, trust, empowerment
- Re-entry/ future oriented – skill building
- Sense of community

Advantages of Art Therapy

- Imagery
- Decreased defenses
- Objectification
- Permanence
- Spatial Matrix
- Creative and Physical Energy
  (Wadeson, 1980)
Goals of creative interventions with incarcerated populations

• Provide space for safe, non-verbal expression of affect
• Decrease sense of isolation and increase social skills through group participation and interaction
• Increase sense of control through choice making
• Increase sense of mastery and competence
• Increase impulse control and practice boundary setting
• Provide a container for emerging traumatic memories and affect
• Increase self esteem and positive sense of identity
I need to find some focus in my life and get my life back together. Everything will open up when I get my counseling out of the way. Remember me to go back to my family and a job.
My biggest fear is allowing people to take advantage of me. Always putting other people's needs and wants ahead of my own. I find it hard to focus and keep my focus. I can't help anyone unless I'm 100% focused.