

Understanding the Principles of Gender Responsiveness and How They Go Hand in Hand with a Reentry Model

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Six Principles of Gender Responsiveness: Implications for Supervision and Case Management of Women Offenders

- Gender matters!
- Create environment based on safety, respect, & dignity
- Programs are relational
- Treatment focused on past trauma and abuse
- Improve economic and social conditions
- Comprehensive, integrated transition and reentry

Principle 1

Gender

**Acknowledge that
gender makes a
difference**

Principle 1

Implementation

- **Make women's issues a priority**
- **Allocate both human & financial resources to create women-centered services**
- **Designate a high-level administrative position for oversight of management, supervision, & services**
- **Recruit & train personnel & volunteers both interested in & qualified to work with women under CJ supervision**

Principle 2

Environment

**Create an environment based
on safety,
respect, & dignity**

Principle 2

Implementation

- **Conduct a comprehensive review of the institutional or community environment in which the women are supervised to provide an ongoing assessment**
- **Develop policy that reflects an understanding of the importance of emotional & physical safety**
- **Understand the effects of childhood trauma in order to avoid further traumatization**
- **Establish protocols for reporting & investigating claims of misconduct**
- **Develop classification & assessment systems that are validated on samples of women**

Principle 3

Relationships

Develop policies, practices & programs that are relational & promote healthy connections to children, family, significant others, & the community

Principle 3

Implementation

- **Develop training for staff & administrators in which relationship issues are a core theme**
- **Examine mother & child programming through the eyes of the child & enhance the mother-child connection**
- **Promote supportive relationships among women offenders**
- **Develop community & peer-support networks**

Principle 4

Services & Supervision

Address the issues of substance abuse, trauma, & mental health through comprehensive, integrated, culturally-relevant services & appropriate supervision

Principle 4

Implementation

- **Service providers need to be cross-trained in substance abuse, trauma, & mental health**
- **Resources, including skilled personnel, must be allocated**
- **The environment in which services are provided must be closely monitored to ensure emotional & physical safety of the women being served**
- **Service providers/criminal justice personnel must receive training in cultural sensitivity**

Principle 5

Economic & Social Status

Improve women's economic/social conditions by developing their capacity to be self-sufficient

Principle 5

Implementation

- **Allocate resources within both community & institutional correctional programs for services that focus on economic, social, & treatment needs of women**
- **Provide traditional & nontraditional training, education, & skill-enhancing opportunities**
- **Provide sober living space in institutions & in the community**

Principle 6

Community

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

Principle 6

Implementation

- **Create individualized support plans & wrap the necessary resources around the woman & her children**
- **Develop a “one-stop shopping” approach to community services**
- **Use a coordinated case management model for community supervision**

Challenges

- Overall resistance to change
- View of supervising women offenders
 - High demand
 - Burdensome
 - Needy
 - Manipulative
- Primary duty to monitor compliance vs. providing support
- Women have more demands
 - Children
 - Child protective systems
 - Mandates from welfare providers

Challenges (con't)

- Trauma & Victimization
 - Officer may be uncomfortable
 - Minimal training in response to victims
- Unavailability of women-specific substance abuse treatment
- Earn less wages
 - Serious impediment to complying with payment schedules
- Women's needs for connection & attachment
 - Burdensome
 - Time consuming
 - Uncomfortable with level of intimacy

Overcoming Challenges

Implementation of gender responsive programming for women offenders will require both agency and individual changes. It will also require cooperation and collaboration with justice and non-justice agencies and organizations at management and individual levels. The following are suggested steps for community corrections agencies and individuals to begin addressing the needs of women offenders:

Envision the Future

Be forward thinking and proactive in anticipating and planning implementation of gender responsive programming for women. Each practitioner should approach the concept of gender responsive programming with an open mind and should have an expectation that each woman will succeed.

Assess Current Policies and Practices

Objectively evaluate each current policy and practice for its gender responsiveness: was it designed for women offenders, has programming norm for women offenders been established, does it offer parity, has it been evaluated with women offenders?

Develop a Strategic Plan

Figure out what can be done immediately, what can be done in the next six months, and what can be implemented within one year, two years, and beyond to achieve programming that is fully gender responsive.

Resource Allocation

Make development of gender responsive programming for women a priority by allocating sufficient funding to develop resources within the system. Identify gender responsive strategies that can be implemented with limited or no increased funding. Women offenders are already being supervised on caseloads. Individual officers' thoughtfully considered modifications of their supervision protocols can increase gender responsiveness.

Collaboration

Community corrections agencies and personnel should be proactive and creative in forming multisystematic linkages to provide a comprehensive array of services for women offenders and their children. Most collaborations begin with one committed individual or agency who champions the cause; be that champion.

Find a Champion

Someone with skills, enthusiasm, and passion is needed to overcome the initial inertia that works to maintain the current status and to maintain ongoing forward progress in developing gender responsive strategies for women offenders. Empower and support the champion.

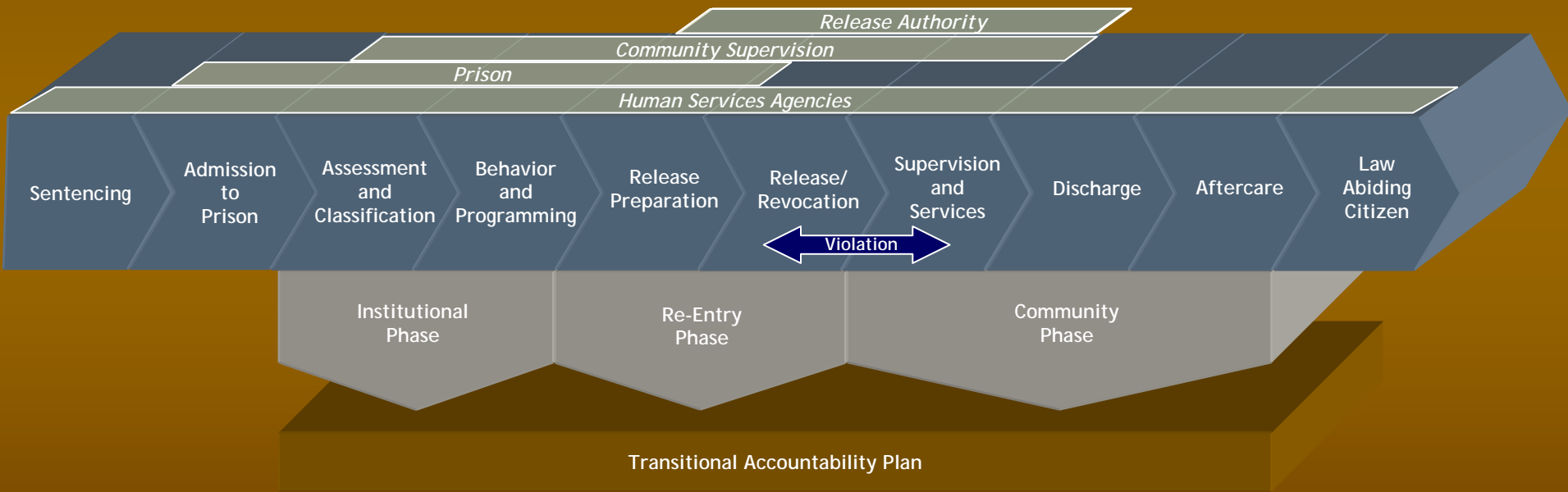
Encourage Support and Agency Buy-In

Fully embracing the goal of implementing gender responsive programming includes garnering support from administrators and from individual staff. Develop education and training to provide knowledge to secure support.

“Implementing gender responsive programming for women is not a women’s issue, it is a management issue.”

Reentry and Gender
Responsiveness...How Do
They Go Hand in Hand?

The TPCI Model



Women and Reentry

- Assessment and Classification
 - Staff Training
 - Confidence in the assessments to use during the planning process
 - Information sharing between agencies
 - Identification of assets and liabilities
 - Strength based approach
 - Must engage women in the planning process

■ Behavior and Programming

- Develop a Transition Accountability Plan

- ✓ Should include programming intended to modify specific dynamic risk factors
- ✓ Specifies behavioral expectations and consequences

Transitional Accountability Plan

- A means to achieve continuity within and across agencies and over time as the woman moves through all phases of the reentry process
- Requires cross-divisional communication and planning
- The TAP in relation to a baton in a relay race – solid communication, hand off to the next phase

■ Behavior and Programming

- Review of all administrative directives, policies and procedures for gender responsiveness
- Institutional policies supporting transition?
- Trauma sensitive policy and procedures
- Gender responsive programming
- Offender driven programs
- Staff sexual misconduct policy

■ Release Preparation

- Survival, stability and self-sufficiency
- Partnering agencies involvement
- Continuity of care
- Focus on critical issues
- Releasing authority matches special conditions with need
- Family involvement
- Updated assessments/TAP
- Identification of potential barriers

■ Release

- Case management to reconcile competing demands
- Community involvement
- Transportation
- Clothing
- Child Care
- Continuity of care – plan of action

■ Supervision Services

- Are we setting them up to fail?
- Conditions must be realistic, relevant, research based
- Consideration must be taken for childcare, transportation, housing, past trauma, mental health, medical, and substance abuse
- Staff sexual misconduct policy in place
- Caseloads – mixed or specialized?

■ Supervision Services

- Staff training on gender issues
- Utilize community partnerships
- Provide graduated responses to violations
- Continued TAP process
- Discharge policy

■ Aftercare

- Connection with continuing support
- Prosocial relationships
- Identification of a help line

■ Key Factors to Remember

- Case management approach is key.
- Gender differences must be addressed in reentry/transition discussions.
- Staff must be trained on gender differences.
- Women offenders must be involved in the case planning.
- Identify barriers early into the process.
- Collaboration with the community is a must.