

Hidden Healers

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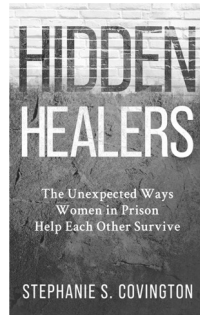
7th Covington Curriculum Conference
June 7, 2023
Minneapolis, MN

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Why This Book?

- History



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What do you...we...
know about women in prison?

Invisibility

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Just the Facts

- In 2019, 92% of all incarcerated people in the United States were male
- Since 1980 the number of incarcerated women has grown by 700 percent—double the rate of men

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Just the Facts (cont.)

- Incarcerated women are:
 - 53% White
 - 29% Black
 - 14% Latina
 - 2.5% Native American or Alaska Native
 - 0.9% Asian
 - 0.4% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander

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Just the Facts (cont.)

- For women within state prisons:
 - 45% are serving time for a violent offense
 - 20% for property offenses
 - 25% for drug offenses
 - 10% for public order offenses
- Of incarcerated women, 53% did not finish high school
- 58% of incarcerated women are parents of minor children vs. 46% of incarcerated men

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Just the Facts (cont.)

- 39% of incarcerated mothers with minor children live in single parent-led households vs. 21% of incarcerated fathers with minor children
- 52% of incarcerated women lived with their children prior to their imprisonment vs. 40% of incarcerated men
- 12% of incarcerated women report homelessness before they turned eighteen
- 19% of incarcerated women were in the foster care system

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Just the Facts (cont.)

- 43% of incarcerated women came from families that received welfare or other public assistance
- Almost half (45%) of incarcerated women had been arrested by age eighteen

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Just the Facts (cont.)

- Before the arrest that led to their incarceration...
 - Over a quarter of women (26%) experienced homelessness vs. 16% of men, in the year before their arrest
 - Over half (53%) of women were unemployed in the month before their arrest
 - Over half (58%) of women met the criteria for a substance use disorder, a significantly higher rate than for men, in the year before their arrest

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Just the Facts (cont.)

- Before the arrest that led to their incarceration...
 - Over three quarters (76%) of women had some indication of a past or current mental health problem, a significantly higher rate than for men, in the year before their arrest

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World Rates for Women's Imprisonment

- More than 740,000 women and girls are held in penal institutions throughout the world
- The number of women and girls in prison worldwide has increased by nearly 60% since 2000, when the total was estimated as approximately 466,000

(Fair and Walmsley, 2022. *World Female Imprisonment List*, 5th Edition. London, United Kingdom: International Centre for Prison Studies.)

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U.S. Incarcerates more Women than any other Country

211,375	United States
145,000	China
42,694	Brazil
39,120	Russia
32,952	Thailand
22,918	India
3,206	England & Wales

(Fair and Walmsley, 2022. *World Female Imprisonment List*, 5th Edition. London, United Kingdom: International Centre for Prison Studies.)

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United States and Women

- 5% of women in the world are in US
- 30% of incarcerated women in the world are in the US

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These are the Numbers

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Who are the Women?

- Most marginalized, vulnerable women
- Economically disadvantaged
- Families with domestic violence and addiction problems
- Histories of substance misuse
- Physical and mental health problems
- Minimal education and work experience
- High rates of physical and sexual abuse

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Who are the Girls?

- Families struggling with poverty, domestic violence, and substance misuse
- Low rates of serious and violent crime
- Higher risk for status offenses – promiscuity, truancy, running away
- Run away to survive abuse
- High incidence of physical and sexual abuse
- High incidence of substance misuse

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Women and Girls in the CJ System

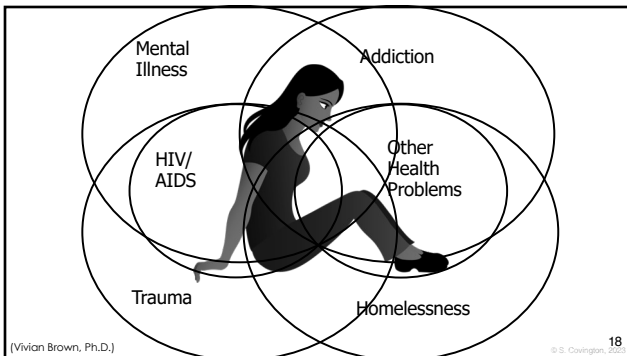
Compared with men and boys, they...

- Are typically primary caregivers for minor children
- Have limited education and employment histories
- Respond differently to treatment and CJ supervision
- Commit fewer violent crimes

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What are their stories?
How do they survive?

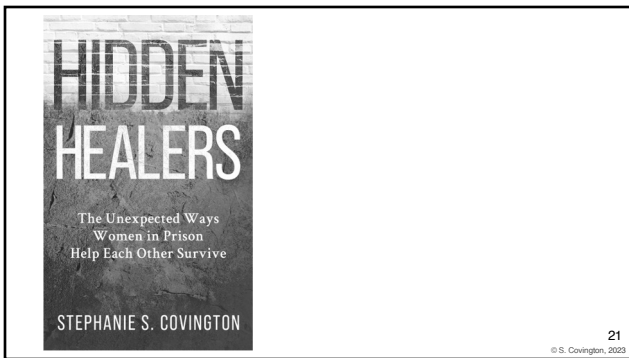
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Not Like TV

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Part 1: Entering the System

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Part 1: Entering the System
Introduction to the Criminal Legal System for Women in the US

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No Single Criminal Legal “System”

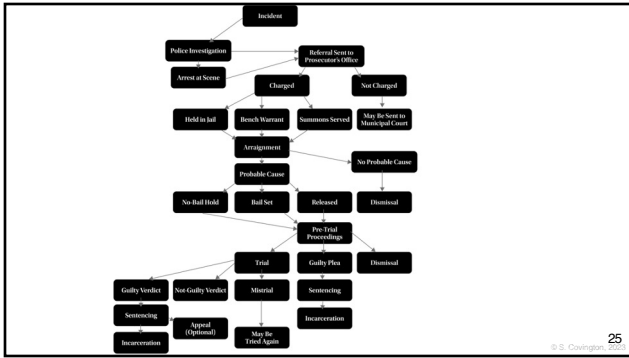
Plethora of autonomous systems:

- Federal system
- Fifty state systems
- 18,000 local systems

90% of cases that end in conviction are the result of a plea bargain, not jury trials.

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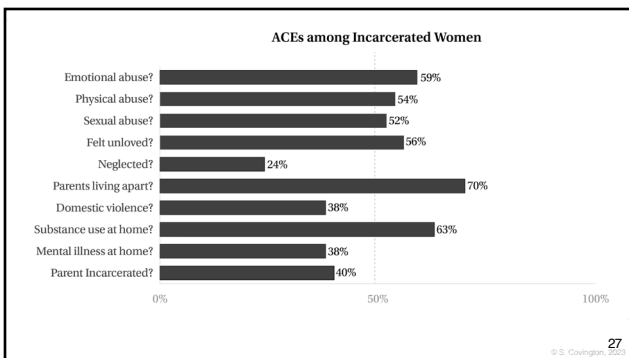
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Part 1: Entering the System

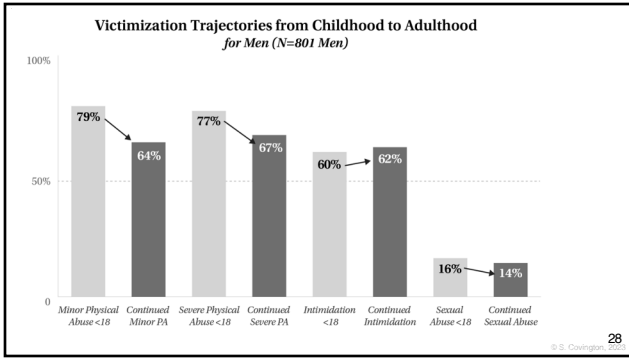
Introduction to the Criminal Legal System for Women in the US

Pathways to Prison: Understanding Trauma and Addiction

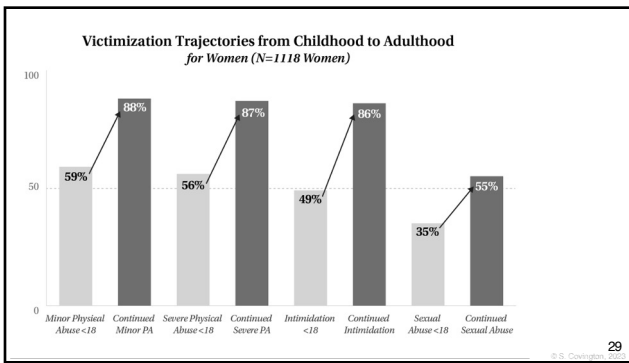
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Part 1: Entering the System


Introduction to the Criminal Legal System for Women in the US
 Pathways to Prison: Understanding Trauma and Addiction

First Days

- The Transfer to Prison
- Strip Searches

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Breaking Down the Bars
New Arrival



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[insert video]

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Part 1: Entering the System

Introduction to the Criminal Legal System for Women in the US
Pathways to Prison: Understanding Trauma and Addiction
First Days

- The Transfer to Prison
- Strip Searches
- **The Revolving Door**
- **Learning the Rules**

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Part 2: Living Inside

Culture and Environment

- Physical space
- Language
- Safety
- Visitation

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Part 2: Living Inside

Culture and Environment

- Physical space
- Language
- Safety
- Visitation
- **Restricted housing units**

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Secure Housing Unit, CDCR

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Secure Housing Unit, CDCR

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Part 2: Living Inside

Culture and Environment

- Physical space
- Language
- Safety
- Visitation
- Restricted housing units
- **Trauma-informed prison** (Limerick, Ireland)

Working Inside the Culture of Corrections

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Part 2: Living Inside
Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
Finding Your Program

- Programming as privilege
- Culture clash
- Substance use disorder programs

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Part 2: Living Inside
Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
Finding Your Program

- Programming as privilege
- Culture clash
- Substance use disorder programs

Food

- North Carolina, etc.
- Ireland
- Creative solutions
- United Kingdom

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Part 2: Living Inside
Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
Finding Your Program
Food
Mothing from Inside
• **Mother-child units**

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Hindelbank
Women's Prison in Switzerland
• Mother and child unit

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Světlá nad Sázavou Women's Prison in Czech Republic

- Mother and child unit

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Part 2: Living Inside
 Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
 Finding Your Program
 Food
 Mothering from Inside

- Mother-child units
- **Pregnancy**

Grief and Loss

- **People they loved**
- **Aspirations**

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Part 2: Living Inside
 Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
 Finding Your Program
 Food
 Mothering from Inside
 Grief and Loss
Developing Relationships

- **Sense of family**
- **Mentors**
- **Romantic bonds**

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Part 2: Living Inside
 Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
 Finding Your Program
 Food
 Mothering from Inside
 Grief and Loss
 Developing Relationships
Medical and Mental Health Care
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The scariest thing in jail and prison is to get sick.
~personal interview

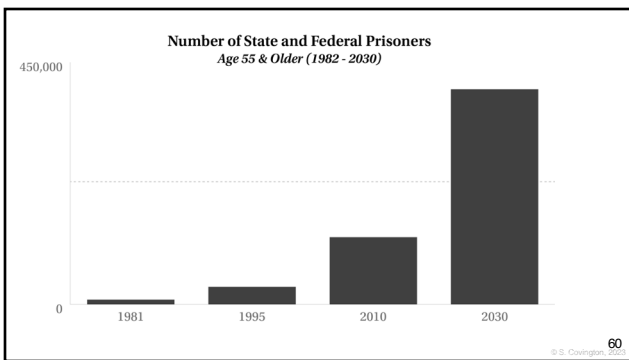
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Part 2: Living Inside
Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
Finding Your Program
Food
Mothering from Inside
Grief and Loss
Developing Relationships
Medical and Mental Health Care
Aging in Custody

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Part 2: Living Inside

Culture and Environment
Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
Finding Your Program
Food
Mothering from Inside
Grief and Loss
Developing Relationships
Medical and Mental Health Care
Aging in Custody
Celebrating Special Days

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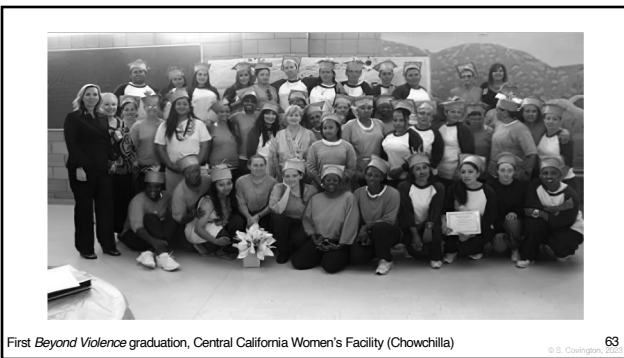
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First *Beyond Violence* graduation, Central California Women's Facility (Chowchilla)

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The Best Christmas Ever



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Part 2: Living Inside

- Culture and Environment
- Working Inside the Culture of Corrections
- Finding Your Program
- Food
- Mothering from Inside
- Grief and Loss
- Developing Relationships
- Medical and Mental Health Care
- Aging in Custody
- Celebrating Special Days

Remembering Those Who Don't Survive

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Part 3: The Journey Home

Gate Fever

- **The dream**
- **Parole**

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Part 3: The Journey Home

Gate Fever

- The dream
- Parole
- **Mid-west jail**
- **Leaving a California prison for a community program**

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Part 3: The Journey Home

Gate Fever

The Work of Reentry

- The word "reentry"
- **What is needed...but not prior to incarceration**

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Part 3: The Journey Home

Gate Fever

The Work of Reentry

- The word "reentry"
- What is needed...but not prior to incarceration
- **Maslow's hierarchy of needs**
- **Inadequate services**

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Part 4: What We Can Do
Envisioning Alternatives

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Reform
vs
Transformation

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Can we be inspired to
transform our criminal justice
system?

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Deeper Questions

What does justice look like?

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Norwegian Model

- People go to court to be punished.
- They go to prison to become better citizens.

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American Way

Serving justice through punishment

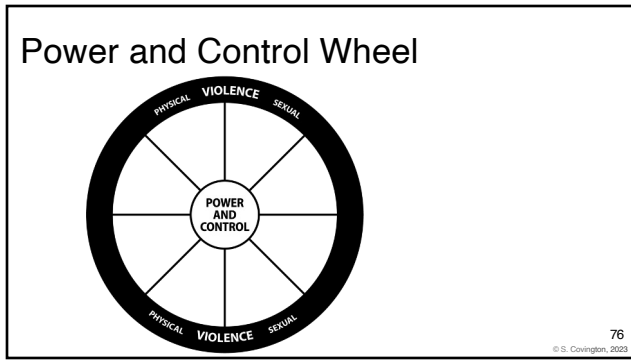
Ignoring deeper structural issues

- Racism and violence connected to class and wealth disparities
- Absence of resources

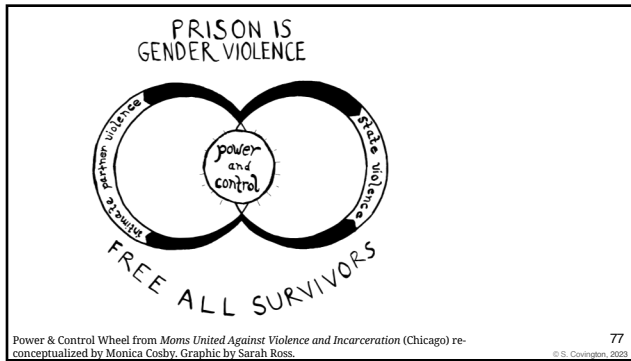
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- ### Intimate Partner Violence and State Violence
- Emotional Abuse
 - Isolation
 - Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming
 - Using Children
 - Using Privilege
 - Economic Abuse
 - Coercion and Threats
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Part 4: What We Can Do

Envisioning Alternatives

Do One Small Thing

- Engage in further learning
- Make a direct connection
- Hold elected officials accountable
- Work on policy change
- Make consistent donations
- Use what you already have

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*The degree of civilization in a society
can be judged by entering its prisons.*

~ Dostoevsky

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*Women's prisons carry more pain and
suffering than any other place on earth.*

~ Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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