



Gender Responsive Programming for Female Offenders

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The Problem:

Female offenders evidence differences from male offenders in their journey into the criminal justice system, their risks and needs within the system, and re-entry into society. Despite evidence supporting critical gender differences in criminal behavior, the criminal justice system has failed to provide gender-responsive programs addressing the distinct needs of females. *How can gender-responsive programs help women achieve successful, crime-free lives?*

Research Evidence:

Research by criminologists and sociologists have identified key differences between male and female offenders. These findings concern the etiology of criminal behavior, characteristics of offenders, and specific programming needs. Addressing these differences improves treatment programs, services, and success upon re-entry.

Proposed Solutions:

- Design and implement programs considering women's needs, life trajectories, and victimization histories.
- Examine and implement alternatives to incarceration.
- Dedicate at least 7% of government research funding to researching female offenders' histories, social and cultural factors contributing to criminality, and pathways to crime.
- Create a National Coalition or Task Force with the sole purpose of designing a successful, sustainable gender-responsive program model.
- Establish a federal government position to monitor correctional facilities to investigate, evaluate, and implement appropriate gender-responsive programs.
- Fund the utilization of gender-specific assessment and treatment within incarceration facilities, community corrections and post-release.
- Create and sustain educational programs to increase the awareness of government officials, employees of the criminal justice system, and the general public.

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