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# Female Correctional Workers: Perceptions of Sexual Abuse Training

Tanya L. Bracey-Rowlett  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Tanya L. Bracey-Rowlett

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Female Correctional Workers: Perceptions of Sexual Abuse Training

by

Tanya L. Bracey-Rowlett

MA, Coppin University, 2007

BS, Coppin University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

February 2019

## Abstract

Offenders return to the community after having been sexually abused by those who have been entrusted with the responsibility to protect them. The phenomenon of staff-on-inmate sexual abuse has become problematic within the criminal justice system. Research on the topic of sexual abuse in penal institutions reveals a lack of information pertaining to staff-on-inmate sexual abuse, and how correctional workers are trained in that area. Female correctional staff have been implicated in more incidences of staff-on-inmate sexual abuse than their male counterparts. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore sexual abuse training received by female correctional staff who were employed in a Mid Atlantic pre-release center, and to examine their perceptions of that training. The study was centered around the Thomas Theorem adopted by William Isaac Thomas. That theory postulates that an individuals' actions are based on how they perceive a situation. Two research questions were addressed relating to sexual abuse training and perceptions of training. Semi-structured interviews were conducted which provided participants with an opportunity to express and describe new ideas relating to the topic. Data were analyzed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis system because of its ability to address subjectivity. This research has revealed that sexual abuse training is developed for correctional staff as a collective and does not differentiate with respect to gender. In addition, it was concluded that correctional staff sexual abuse training lacks intensity and depth in terms of information disseminated. The results of this research will provide criminal justice scholars with information that could prove useful in future studies on the topic of staff -on-inmate sexual abuse.

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## Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to Rufus and Flora Bracey. Without their guidance and nurturing this project would not have been possible. They were wonderful parents.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank God who provided all that was needed for this project. My sisters each played a part in their own way: Bunny for inspiring me to learn and grow, Licia for reminding me of who I am and Angie for her pep talks. I would like to thank my daughter Jaeda who never seemed to mind waking up in the middle of the night to help me when I experienced technical difficulties. A special thanks to Mr. Lonnie Blue who lifted me up in prayer when I felt discouraged, and to my wonderful mentor Dr. Mary Bold who reminded me of my need to be determined and who walked me through the process with enthusiasm.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Female Correction Workers: Perceptions of Sexual Abuse Training**

The United States penal system has had to contend with the issue of how to punish those who violate the law for some time. Prior to the seventeenth century, those who transgressed in America were forced into exile, banished, or exposed to other forms of punishment Ferndik & Smith (2016). Later, a more humanistic approach was used that would allow the state to have more control over those who infringed upon the laws of the land Ferndik & Smith (2016). The shift from corporal and capital punishment led to the development of prisons in America (Rubin, 2017). At some point America would have to contend with the consequences of the development of penal institutions.

Beginning in 1925 until 1975, rates of prison incarceration remained constant in the United States (Pizzi, 2012). However, towards the end of the 1970s the degree of incarceration of offenders began to escalate and was consistent in its intensity for a period of 40 years (Pizzi, 2012). Rationale for the emergence of elevated rates of prison confinement of individuals is due to the:

1. Deterioration of employment generated from manufacturing companies
2. An increase in illegal drug markets
3. The accomplishment of politicians taking advantage of increased crime rates to win elections
4. An increase in prison construction
5. Public policy with a goal to be more punitive (McCoy, 2017).

Mass incarceration would have a great impact on the criminal justice system. Approximately 12 million offenders are processed each year in America's penal institutions (Lurigio, 2016). The United States currently has more than 1,000 prisons housing more than 1.4 million adult inmates, and employing more than 400,000 staff (Lambert, Barton-Bellessa & Hogan, 2016). The evolution of mass incarceration and the overcrowding of prisons created a dilemma for corrections administrators as to how to keep penal institutions properly staffed. In their quest for equal treatment, women became more useful as employees to the correctional arena.

Women began entering the field of corrections just as mass incarceration evolved. The struggle for equal rights did not come without help from the women's movement. The nineteenth century represents a time when reformist feminists sought to integrate women into roles that were dominated by men (Smith, 2012). One of the feminist's movement's initial goals was to make demands for the employ of female correctional workers (Smith, 2012). Women originally began working in the prison systems as matrons and were hired to address the issues of female prisoners (Nicholas, 2013). In 1972, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was modified to allow women to work in all correctional facilities (Nicholas, 2013). Not only have women been successful with integrating into the field of criminal justice and law enforcement but today, they hold positions in almost all areas within corrections (Shoemaker & Jones, 2013).

At some point this successful merger would be faced with problems. A substantial amount of literature draws attention to sexual abuse as it relates to abuse committed by inmates yet disregards correctional workers as a possible origin (Armstrong, Longmire,

Dretke & Steinmetz, 2014). Over time, as female correctional staff could work with male inmates there developed allegations of sexual misconduct with them as the perpetrators. There is no difference between forced or coerced sexual assault and consensual sex between an inmate and staff. There is a need to understand the positions that culture and leadership have in preventing sexual abuse (Townsend, 2015). The 2011 report of the Bureau of Justice Statistics determined that 54% of documented claims of sexual abuse held female correctional guards responsible (Beck, Rantala & Rexroat, 2014). A nationally conducted survey of youth correctional facilities revealed that 92% of juveniles reported that they had been sexually victimized by female staff (Mazza, 2012). Data on female staff misconduct also indicates wrongdoing in other areas such as trading in favors, the offering of special privileges involving protection, abuse of power and the offering of drugs and alcohol (Beck, 2015).

A substantial amount of literature draws attention to sexual abuse as it relates to abuse committed by inmates yet disregards correctional workers as a possible origin (Armstrong, Longmire, Dretke & Steinmetz, 2014). There is no difference between forced or coerced sexual assault and consensual sex between an inmate and staff. There is a need to understand the positions that culture and leadership have in preventing sexual abuse (Townsend, 2015). It is believed that knowledge derived from this research can be useful to corrections training coordinators. This study addressed the sexual abuse in corrections by focusing on what is taught in correctional sexual abuse training classes and how the information that is obtained is perceived by female correctional workers. I have conducted a lengthy review of the literature and was unable to find much literature that

focuses on sexual abuse training and perceptions of that training. Having knowledge as to how female correctional workers view sexual abuse training will be useful to educators and will aid in the reduction of staff-on-inmate sexual abuse.

### **Background of the Problem**

There has not been enough research conducted on female sexual offending to develop a theory on the on the phenomenon (Gannon, Waugh, Taylor, Blanchette, O'Connor, Blake & Ciara, 2014). The female as a sexual offender in general lacks research and can be accredited to the low incidence of female sexual offenders within the lawbreaking population, which represents 4%-5% of all sexual offences internationally (Almond, Mcmanus, Giles, & Houston, 2015). Improving our understanding of female sexual offending has led to the development of literature surrounding typologies of the female sexual offender, (Gannon et al., 2014). Becoming knowledgeable as to what the literature has reported on the categories of the female sexual offender could be useful in research, as it would assist scholars who have an interest to study female perpetrated sexual misconduct in the workplace.

For example, 16 female sexual offenders were studied in 1989 and a classification scheme was developed to include three categories; (1) predisposed, (2) teacher-lover, and (3) male coerced sexual offending (Almond et al., 2015). The teacher-lover believes that her actions derive from true love and are beneficial to her. The male coerced offender feels powerless in her relationship with her boyfriend and offends children at his request. The predisposed offender has usually suffered abuse herself and often bribes her victims (Almond et al., 2015). These typologies of the female sexual offender do not provide

concrete knowledge relating to this population, but they do set the framework for other studies on that topic which could also be useful in studies of sexual misconduct of women. Although the rates of offending for females are lower than that of males, gaining an understanding of the stringent sexual behavior of women is important in reducing and preventing sexual victimization (Bouffard, Bouffard, & Miller, 2016).

Sexual misconduct is usually interpreted to include a scope of behaviors such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking and other acts of sexual conduct where there is a lack of common consent (Bao, 2012). It occurs in professions such as teaching, clergy, psychiatry, medical and law enforcement.

According to the calculations of the U.S. Department of Justice there are 149,200 to 209,400 incidents of sexual victimization reported annually in prisons and jails (Kubiak, Brenner, Bybee, Campbell & Fedock, 2016). In almost all states, the law constitutes sexual relations or inappropriateness between staff and inmates as sexual assault [abuse] or rape (Ross, 2013). In all 50 states, staff having sexual contact with inmates is against the law; however, despite its illegality; it is still prevalent (Schanbacher, 2015).

Correctional staff contribute to sexual offenses made against inmates, as they fail to properly patrol the housing units of the institution; they are not orientating new prisoners on how to avoid sexual abuse, they are not responding to threats of sexual abuse by inmates, they are providing inmates with precarious housing assignments and they are committing acts of sexual abuse themselves (Schanbacher, 2015). The Bureau of Justice Statistics collected data over a period of ten years and found solid evidence that staff

sexual misconduct in prisons and jails is wide ranging and includes a disproportionate number of women (Beck, 2015).

### **Nature of the Study**

According to GROSSOCHME (2014), qualitative research aims at evoking stories of people. It was chosen for this study because of its ability to address questions that would generate detailed responses that are meaningful to the study participants. It was hoped that the responses to open-ended questions would provide information that was rich in content and functional in assisting the criminal justice community with future studies in that area.

To understand the phenomenon of staff on inmate sexual abuse in corrections, 5 female correctional workers at a pre-release center in a Mid- Atlantic state of the U.S. were interviewed on their perceptions of sexual abuse training using in depth, open-ended questions. The data retrieved was analyzed to identify patterns and themes. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology in detail.

### **Research Questions**

The lack of literature on the female correctional worker and the training she receives with respect to sexual misconduct suggests that the research questions for this study are appropriate and have not been addressed. The research that does exist on staff- on - inmate sexual abuse focuses on the perceptions of the inmates. In response to the deficient research on female correctional workers in relation to sexual abuse training the following research questions were constructed:



1. What are the lived experiences of female corrections workers who have undergone sexual abuse training?
2. What are the perceptions of female correctional workers with respect to sexual abuse training?

### **Purpose of the Study**

In conducting this study, my goal was to gain an understanding of how female correctional staff are trained on sexual abuse and how that training is perceived by them. My plan was to draw attention to what is taught in sexual abuse training in correctional institutions as prescribed by PREA; the Prison Rape Elimination Act and to assess and analyze how that training is understood and perceived by correctional workers.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research adds to the existing body of knowledge on how correctional staff are trained in sexual abuse and sets the foundation for more research with respect to training. In addition, producing data on the perceptions of training can be useful to corrections administrators as they develop sexual abuse training courses.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is sociological by nature and references the work of W.I. Thomas and D.I. Thomas, authors of the Thomas Theorem. The Thomas Theorem posits that actions are a result of how one interprets a situation (Thomas, 1928). The key to understanding this theory is to remember that interpretations determine behavior. This framework was chosen because it deals with how people view meanings. The Prison Rape Elimination Act defines sex between an inmate and staff as abuse

whether the act was with or without consent. Obtaining an understanding as to how the definition of sexual abuse is perceived by staff could be beneficial to corrections educators. The Thomas Theorem asserts that people go through life creating their own meanings of situations (Thomas, 1928). Obtaining an understanding of the meaning of sexual abuse as interpreted by female correctional workers could be beneficial to further research. This being a qualitative study is an asset. The interviews addressed views relating to the sexual abuse training of staff and perceptions of the sexual abuse training courses in general. Gaining an understanding as to the course content and how it is interpreted may prove to be valuable to criminal justice professionals in the future.

### **Assumptions**

The assumptions of this study included the following:

- A. It was assumed that this topic would be valuable to the participants and that they would have a genuine interest in providing information.
- B. Participants would answer all questions openly and honestly. Hopefully employees did not report what they believed the researcher wanted to hear but answered each question with truthfulness.
- C. Participants would have an understanding that participation would be held in strict confidence.
- D. There would be diversity in the responses. It was assumed that the questions would generate different responses.

### **Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations**

In this study I analyzed the interpretations of sexual abuse training of female correctional workers. The interpretations of the employees provide insight relating to behavior when interacting with inmates. The delimitations of this study were that staff who were interviewed were female correctional workers, and not just correctional workers.

Limitations of this study were that the sensitivity of the subject matter may have deterred honest participation. Sexual abuse, especially in the state correctional facilities within U.S. correctional facilities has become problematic over the years. The topic in and of itself is a limitation. Participants needed to have a full understanding of the study and should have known that the researcher was only interested in their perceptions of sexual abuse training and not their views on the incidences of sexual abuse that has occurred in U. S. penal institutions.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the basis of this study, definitions relating to the criminal justice profession were identified and defined in simple terms.

*Bureau of Justice Statistics:* An organization established for keeping track of crime, and victims and perpetrators of crime in the United States.

*Correctional Officers:* Individuals who are given the responsibility of ensuring that offenders serve their time in an assigned institution, and that they are safe from harm.

*Correctional Workforce:* An organization constructed for the purpose overseeing those individuals who have been convicted of crimes.

*Inappropriate Relationships:* Relationships that occur between staff and inmates that defy the rules and policies of correctional institutions.

*Jail:* An institution where a person goes after being arrested and is awaiting trial. The maximum amount of time spent in jail is one year.

*Offenders:* Individuals who have broken the laws of society and have been convicted of breaking those laws.

*Prison Policy:* Rules that govern the prison.

*Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003:* An act signed into law in 2003 by President George W. Bush that is intended to prevent sexual abuse in correctional institutions and protect inmates from sexual abuse.

*Prison Rape Elimination Commission:* An organization that is responsible for auditing the prisons and jails for incidents of sexual abuse for purposes of keeping track of such occurrences.

*Reformist Feminists:* Women who advocated for the rights of women in the nineteenth century. These women sought to change how women were treated in society.

*Sexual Abuse:* Contact with the anus, genitals and other body parts. Sexual penetration that is intentional or unintentional between staff and inmates or between inmates and inmates.

*Sexual Misconduct:* An act relating to ethics where employees conduct themselves inappropriately relating to sexual matter

## Summary

There is a current gap in the literature on the sexual abuse training of correctional workers. The sexual abuse of inmates perpetrated by female correctional staff was explored with the intention of gaining an understanding of the phenomenon, while also contributing to the literature. Female correctional staff are the perpetrators of staff on inmate sexual abuse more so than males and suggests that something is wrong with the leadership in corrections. Addressing the problem from the standpoint of training practices is just the beginning of combatting the issue and supplies the framework from which other studies on women and or correctional training can be developed.

Chapter 2 of the study focuses on the literature review. Topics include perceptions of correctional workers, correctional training practices and topics relating to the supervision of inmates, and sexual misconduct.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methods used in the study. A detailed description of the design is included which will consist of the population, the type of sample used, the survey instrument, and potential threats to validity.

Chapter 4 reports on the data retrieved by the study participants. The descriptions of each of the participants was reported for revealing their insights and perceptions relating to training.

After carefully reading the data several times, I was able to find themes which were analyzed and interpreted in chapter 5.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The investigation of the sexual abuse of inmates committed by correctional workers is a sensitive task as it entails jeopardizing the integrity of some and the pride of others. Correctional workers have authority over inmates and inappropriate intimate relationships formed between the two is justifiably defined as sexual abuse (Buchanan, 2012). Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics within the last decade reflects large numbers of staff misconduct in corrections to include abusing authority and offers of drugs and alcohol which occurs hand in hand with staff sexual misconduct (Beck, 2015). Female correctional officers are responsible for a substantial amount of sexual misconduct allegations. A report on sexual victimization, 2009-2011 revealed that 54% of sexual relationships between staff and inmates were perpetrated by female staff (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). In addition, that report reflects that those sexual relationships were of a consensual nature. Much of the research that has been conducted involving sexual misconduct by staff in prisons focuses on the victim as opposed to the perpetrator. My proposed research sought to take another route concentrating on female correctional staff.

The basis for this literature review is to educate the criminal justice community and other interested parties, on the research that has taken place in sexual abuse training. It was the intention of this review to assess what has been written as well as what needs to be explored on the phenomenon of sexual abuse in corrections. It was also my goal to explore what has been documented relating to how correctional workers are typically

trained and in what areas they generally receive training. It believed that this review has revealed a gap in the literature concerning sexual abuse training in the field of criminal justice.

### **Overview of the Chapter**

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the issue of staff sexual misconduct by approaching it from a perceptions perspective in relation to training practices. Having knowledge as to what information is disseminated in training as well as how this information is distributed and perceived by staff would be beneficial to the criminal justice community, as it would expose deficiencies in areas relating to teaching methods as well as training content. The phenomenon of sexual abuse deserves attention because there is a lack of research in this area and obtaining knowledge would be useful in its prevention. This review provides a summary of specific themes relating to corrections such as training and sexual abuse. It also reflects the strategies used to obtain peer reviewed scholarly articles. Literature on these topics was reviewed and analyzed. The chapter includes a discussion of the following topics:

1. Theoretical framework- The Thomas Theorem was chosen for this study because of its position that an individual's behavior changes over time as he or she matures mentally, emotionally and physically, and that his or her reactions to situations are determined by a variety of preceding experiences (Thomas, 1928).
2. The prevalence of sexual abuse in corrections was examined with an emphasis on staff-on- inmate abuse with female correctional staff as the perpetrators. There is limited literature which focuses on this issue. It is important to discuss victim characteristics of

sexual abuse as this would provide insight that would assist in the prevention of this phenomenon. Other areas of discussion within sexual abuse training are prevention, prediction and reporting.

3. There is much research that explains how correctional workers are trained on various topics as well as what areas they are trained in. These areas were discussed for revealing a gap in the literature with respect to sexual abuse training and for exploring training methods which could be useful in this study. Training practices as it relates to corrections staff was discussed and analyzed in terms of how training is developed, implemented and how often and will include the following topics:

- The mentally ill
- The elderly
- The transgender
- The sexually abused
- The developmentally disabled

Focusing on the types of training that correctional workers are exposed to has also revealed areas of education that are needed but lacking. The method by which they receive training was also important to this project and I intended to reveal how or by what methods correctional workers are typically educated. Obtaining this knowledge could have a significant impact on the study and could serve as a catalyst for further research.

### **Search Strategy**

The peer reviewed search strategy utilized for this study began with the broad area of sexual abuse. Beginning with the concept of sexual abuse in general served as a



catalyst for the exploration of more specific literature on the topic. With the assistance of Walden University library personnel, I was able to seek information from multiple databases such as Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest, EBSCO Host, SOCIndex, and Sage Journals. In Academia Search Premier and Academic Search Complete, terms such as *sexual misconduct AND women, AND corrections, training AND corrections*. Data on National Statistics on sexual abuse was obtained from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2011).

In databases relating to crime such as ProQuest search words such as *misconduct, abuse, rape, coercion AND inmates, sex, AND sexual misconduct* was used and resulted in viable scholarly articles. No articles were pursued that were not peer reviewed. My search also focused on literature provided by NCIC the National Crime Information Center.

### **Theoretical Framework**

An understanding of how and why the phenomenon of staff on inmate sexual abuse evolved is crucial in its prevention. One of the goals of this research was to explore how the definition of sexual abuse is perceived by female corrections workers. Research in staff on inmate sexual misconduct from the employee's perspective is limited. The Thomas Theorem may provide useful information relating to the possible rationale for the perceptions of female correctional workers and how those perceptions may be related to their behaviors collectively. Obtaining this information would not only add to the literature data base but may also explain some aspects of this phenomenon.

The Thomas Theorem postulates that action or behavior is the result of the interpretation of a situation (Thomas, 1928). Correctional staff encounter a diverse and vast amount of issues over time. Scholars, researchers and those with a vested interest in addressing staff on inmate sexual abuse should become knowledgeable as to why certain behaviors of correctional staff occur and more importantly what factors are associated with those behaviors. It would be beneficial for female correctional workers to be understood from a psychological as well as physiological standpoint in analyzing her role as an employee.

The physiological make-up of humans is what assists the behaviorist in his study of manifested through his experiences (Thomas, 1928). Influences of behavior have been in motion throughout our lives; parts of them are innate and some of them are the results of the social domain (Thomas, 1928). Patterns of behavior as well as ones' personality are controlled by the actions (Thomas, 1928). Humans are composed of a system of chromosomes, a variety of nervous systems, enzymes, the composition of blood, and endocrines (Thomas, 1928). Humans, in contrast to some other organisms learn almost everything and develop habits that are types of affairs and the chain of experiences of the individual (Thomas, 1928). Focusing on the correctional workers' experiences in sexual abuse training may provide insight that could be used in the prevention of sexual misconduct. There is constant behavior reaction relating to the entire population and their participation in various situations (Thomas, 1928). Sexual relations occurring in prisons is not a new phenomenon. The study of male inmates having sex in prisons began in the 1930s (Gibson & Hensley, 2013). Employees having inappropriate relations with

inmates are deviating from the policy of their organization and although research is scarce on this phenomenon, it should be acknowledged.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct perpetrated by staff occurs in many professions. From a sociological viewpoint, it is generally interpreted as a scope of behaviors which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence and other forms of sexual misconduct of which there is no agreed upon consent (Bao, 2012). Sexual misconduct as it relates to corrections is any act of a sexual origin by any employee towards an inmate, detainee or resident, or anyone who the employee has authoritative control over (PREA Resource Center, 2013). The professions of education, clergy, psychiatry, medical, law enforcement and corrections have all had issues with sexual misconduct involving staff. A nationwide survey of correctional institutions taken by The National Institute of Corrections in 1996; revealed that few of those institutions provided an explicit understanding to staff and inmates on the issue of staff sexual misconduct (Armstrong, Longmire, Dretke, & Steinmetz, 2014). Research on this phenomenon as it pertains to the field of corrections, has gained some attention from scholars however there is a dearth of literature in that area. My review of the literature reveals that the information that does exist on sexual abuse lacks focus on the staff as the perpetrator of and instead concentrates on the victims [inmates] of sexual offenses perpetrated by other inmates. Other literature relating to sexual abuse in penal institutions focuses on its prevention, reporting of, and prediction. Research in those areas is also limited. There are few studies which address staff sexual misconduct in penal institutions which indicates

that there is a gap in the literature. Obtaining knowledge as to who is targeted for sexual abuse in penal institutions is critical if this phenomenon is to be combatted.

### **Victimization**

Sexual contact between inmates and correctional staff is illegal in all 50 states (Schanbacher, 2015). Schanbacher; 2015 described some of the ways in which correctional staff are responsible for sexual assaults that occur in United States detention centers. Inmates being housed in some of America's penal institutions fall victim to sexual abuse because of correctional staff: producing opportunities for sexual assaults to occur, sexually abusing inmates, providing housing assignments that are precarious, failing to take corrective action following reports of sexual abuse and utilizing reporting systems that are inadequate. To hold correctional workers responsible for their actions, the Prison Litigation Reform Act, The Prison Rape Elimination Act, and the Eighth amendment are utilized to combat the issue of sexual abuse in prisons and jails (Schanbacher, 2015.) Schanbachers' findings seem to reflect that those being victimized are provided with relief as they can file suit against correctional institutions' officials alleging that they have been sexually assaulted. Schanbacher, (2015) said that victims of sexual abuse are not receiving the needed protection, as the success rates of law suits is small, and officials have made it a slow-moving process (Schanbacher,2015). The sexual misconduct of correctional workers has become problematic over the years. Before the 1990s, sexual assault in penal institutions was not readily recognized in the public eye. Professionals have become conscious in finding accounts of the preponderance of the sexual victimization of inmates (Armstrong, Longmire, Dretke, & Steinmetz, 2014).

Between 2011 and 2012 statistics reveal that 2.4% of federal and state inmates reported incidents of sexual misconduct involving correctional staff (Schanbacher, 2015). Sexual victimization as defined by PREA; Prison Rape Elimination Act, 2003 categorizes victimization according to perpetrators (Beck, Rantala & Rexroat, 2014). Inmate on inmate victimization involves sexual contact without consent, whereas staff on inmate victimization includes non-consensual as well as consensual sexual acts initiated by staff (Beck, Rantala, & Rexroat, 2014). The U.S. Department of Justice approximates that annually there are between 149,200 and 209,400 occurrences of sexual victimization in prisons and jails (Kubiak, Brenner, Bybee, Campbell, & Fedock, 2016). The Bureau of Justice Statistics 2011-2012 data on sexual victimization revealed that 4 % of federal inmates reported that they had been victims of sexual misconduct by staff or another inmate in the past year (Schanbacher, 2015).

There is an extensive history of female offenders who have been sexually assaulted. Researchers Gordon, Proulx, and Grant (2012) examined correctional officers to determine what their levels of fear and risk of being victimized were. They also sought to explore if there were differences in attitudes about this issue between male and female staff. Surveys were administered to every adult prison in one State. One thousand two hundred seventy-three officers responded to the survey; 68% male. The results found that female officers felt that they were at risk for being victimized more so than their male counterparts. The researchers indicated that characteristics of the inmates before they entered the institution such as gender, age, offense type and marital status could evoke

impact (Gordon et al., 2012). What the study did not address was how the staff perceived victimization of inmates by staff.

Although women are incarcerated at lower rates than that of men, incarcerated women experience victimization at higher rates than those women who are not incarcerated (Radatz & Wright, 2017). Research was conducted on incarcerated and non-incarcerated women to assess the degree in which polyvictimization affected their lives. The life histories of 266 non-incarcerated women and 158 women who were incarcerated were studied to analyze the extent to which women are subjected to multiple types of victimization, such as sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and traumatic life events, and to assess the differences among the two groups. One of the findings of the study conducted by Radatz and Wright (2017) was that women who are incarcerated experience higher levels of victimization than non-incarcerated women. In addressing incarcerated women who become victims of sexual abuse Moss, (2014) asserted the need for responding to sexual victimization in jails by taking a gender responsive approach to the issue. Gender responsiveness considers the lives of women who are incarcerated by acknowledging the steps leading to their criminal participation (Moss, 2014). The creation of an environment that supports gender responsive tactics to promote sexual safety in jails requires the following: Nationally focused sexual safety, support for staff working with women and gender responsive research that is evidence based (Moss, 2014). Moss's focus on female inmates and their entry into the criminal justice system suggests that the experiences of women in general are different from those of men, which

not only adds to the existing literature on women in the criminal justice system but could also set the foundation for research on women working in the criminal justice system.

Cook and Lane (2016) explored the responses perceived by correctional officers to victims of sexual abuse. Employees of 13 jails in Florida agreed to participate in this study. Surveys were administered, and participants of the study could return them by way of U.S. mail. One thousand one hundred sixty-one surveys were administered, however, only 376 completed surveys were returned. Demographics being one of the variables, the correctional officers who participated in this study were more susceptible to support victims of sexual abuse if they believed that social proximity existed (Cook & Lane, 2016). Age and work experience were other variables that were considered in this research. The study revealed that older, more seasoned correctional officers were more likely to support victims of sexual abuse (Cook & Lane, 2016). This study addressed staff's attitudes about being supportive of victims of sexual abuse and brought clarity as to how officers perceived victims of sexual assault. However, the research did not provide information relating to who the perpetrators of sexual abuse were. Having this knowledge could have changed the outcome of the study.

The risk of victimization or what staff sees as principal when determining risk factors for victimization and perpetration in prison was explored in the research of Gonsalves, Walsh and Scalora (2012). These researchers provided 10 staff with a list of characteristics pertaining to risk and were asked to rate them for risk of victimization. The inmates used in this study consisted of 315 females and 1,842 male inmates. Staff members, 9 males and 1 female were provided with restricted historical information on

the inmates and were then asked to complete the inmate Level of Risk Measure. The results of the study revealed conclusively that officers classified a low number of inmates as high risk or medium for prison sexual abuse. 87.3% of women were classified as being low risk for being victimized. 94.4% of males were perceived to be at low risk for victimization. This study seemed to conflict with a report disseminated by the Department of Justice in 2014 which revealed results nationwide of sexual abuse from adult correctional facilities from 2009-2011. That report reflected an increase in accusations of sexual victimization in prisons, which could mean that having low levels of risk for victimization could prove futile when it comes to sexual abuse; if the data reported by the correctional officers were correct. Limited historical information was provided to the correctional officers on the inmates which could have altered the outcome of the study.

Characteristics of victims were studied in 165 substantiated cases involving male and female prisoners in a Midwestern correctional facility. Morash, Jeong, Bohmert, and Bush (2012) found that male victims were often younger, smaller, European, and new to the criminal justice system. Substantiated cases from victims of staff -on -inmate sexual misconduct would have added to the literature on victimization possibly providing new information on that topic. African American men have excessive rates of incarceration (Rowell-Cunsolo, Harrison & Haile, 2014). Research conducted by Rowell-Cunsolo et al., (2014) involved 134 black males at a large maximum-security prison located in the United States. The intent of the study was to investigate the magnitude to which incarcerated African American men are subjected to sexual abuse and to identify



predictors of that exposure. It was concluded that African American men are a part of sexual abuse in a variety of ways. For instance, one of the questions that was asked involved them “hearing” another inmate being forced to have sex. This study was instrumental in bringing to the forefront other facets involving sexual abuse victims. However, the study neglected to involve staff as possible perpetrators or victims which limits the results of the study. A national survey taken over a 12-month period on the prevalence of sexual misconduct in institutions revealed that 1,283 or 1.4% women reported being sexually victimized by staff (Moss, 2014). Given those statistics it would seem rational for criminal justice scholars to have measures in place that would serve to decrease and or prevent the prevalence of sexual abuse in penal institutions. Although there have been studies devoted to the prevention of sexual abuse, research in that area is limited.

### **Prevention**

PREA, The Prison Rape Elimination Act, was enacted into law by Congress in 2003 and dictated that the Department of Justice quantify levels of sexual abuse nationwide (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Kruse, Gross, & Summers, 2013). One of the goals of PREA is to prevent sexual abuse within the correctional setting. Beck (2015) conducted a study on female staff sexual misconduct which obtained information from national surveys of incarcerated victims of sexual abuse. One of the intentions of the researcher was to determine what PREA needed to do in terms educating or training female staff working in corrections. The types of incidents that took place were examined as well as the characteristics of everyone involved. The study found that many the

victims who reported having sex with female officers were inclined to participate (Beck, 2014, Beck, 2015,). The research concluded that more information surrounding the rationale for the deceit of the prison officers is needed as victimization rates of women are higher than those of men (Beck, Berzofsky, Casper, & Krebs, 2013). Prevention of any issue that is harmful to others is worthwhile. A study was conducted by PREA and focused on inmates and staff responses as to how to prevent sexual abuse. A 1998 survey of Midwestern prisons was taken from 1,830 inmates and 859 staff and used 12 prevention categories: (1) classify vulnerable inmates, (2) allow inmate sexuality, (3) hire more and better staff, (4) improve prison security/management, (5) use inmate avoidance strategies, (6) improve celling/overcrowding, (7) manage sexual predators, (8) improve surveillance: Reduce blind spots, (9) provide inmate training, (10)provide activities, incentives to inmates , (11)improve reporting of incidents and investigations, and (12) improve victim treatment (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Kruse, Gross,& Summers, 2013). The top three prevention categories were classification, inmate sexuality and the hiring of more and better staff, the latter of which reflected that staff were greatly in support of. The over representation of staff in that area also suggests that they are in favor of preventing sexual abuse. The study was focused on areas that are crucial in the prevention of sexual abuse and seems to take the position that training is a necessary component needed to improve conditions in penal institutions. However, the third prevention category of hiring more and better staff should be elaborated upon. The definition of the term “better staff” would be useful if clarified. The sexual exploitation of minors has become problematic over the years.

Youth organizations providing services to children include schools, scouting clubs, sports leagues and residential treatment and correctional facilities (Wurtele, 2012). Wurtele, (2012) produced an article which reports on what is needed to prevent child sexual abuse by staff in organizations that serve youth. The last decade represents a time when those entrusted with the responsibility to care for youth, have been charged with sexually exploiting them (Wurtele, 2012). Child sexual abuse in organizations that serve youth occurs with both males and females (Wurtele, 2012). According to Wurtele, (2012), preventing child sexual abuse would include the following: having policies in place that would protect youth, establishing a code of conduct that would reflect how adults should interact with children on and off the worksite, monitoring and supervision of staff by way of performance reviews, the use of electronic devices by youth to maintain contact with family members, training and education for staff as well youth and their parents, and staff development training programs (Wurtele,2012). Education with respect to staff boundary violations would be beneficial to youth service organizations. Research that addresses sexual abuse training in corrections is scarce. Those employed in youth serving organizations should be properly trained in sexual boundaries to include knowing how to differentiate professional and personal boundaries, knowing how to avoid having personal relationships and having knowledge as to that constitutes staff sexual misconduct (Wurtele, 2012). The prevention of sexual abuse in any organization, as well as in the community should be the first step in decreasing rates of occurrence. Wurtele's literature seems to have education, and training as its focal points and is beneficial in that it adds to the literature on prevention and training on sexual abuse. It

expresses a need for the training of staff on sexual boundaries, an area of which there exists a limited amount of literature. A basic first step in the prevention of sexual abuse is to develop training on the topic (Haley, 2013).

In 1994 the United States Supreme Court ruled that correctional organizations who neglected to protect inmates from sexual abuse were in violation of the eighth amendment, which protects against cruel and unusual punishment (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2013). NPREC; The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission was formed in conjunction with PREA to prevent and stop prison rape (Struckman-Johnson, & Struckman-Johnson, 2013). An important element in stopping sexual abuse in correctional facilities is knowing from where it originated and why (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2013). These researchers elaborated with respect to causes of sexual abuse by referring to the writings and research of humanitarians such as Joseph Fishman (1934) who believed that inmates should be provided conjugal visits and Daniel Lockwood (1980) who asserted that those at risk for being sexually abused should be re-located into community programs (Struckman-Johnson, & Struckman-Johnson, 2013). NPREC developed seven standards for correctional institutions that would assist in the prevention of sexual abuse, one being the training of employees, volunteers and inmates, as well as specialized training relating on various topics (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2013). The researchers do not elaborate on the specifics of training and how it can be used to combat sexual abuse. NPREC has the responsibility to report on prison rape and to report those findings to the United States Attorney general (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, 2013). PREA has been instrumental in the

battle to prevent sexual abuse by working with the National Institute of Justice; NIJ to award grants to correctional facilities in working to end sexual abuse (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, 2013). Another method used to address the phenomenon of sexual abuse would be in knowing when it would likely occur. Research relating to predicting staff misconduct is deficient. The existent literature on predicting sexual misconduct addresses the shortcomings of offenders as opposed to staff.

### **Predicting**

It could benefit the criminal justice community if it were possible to determine what staff was more susceptible to commit deviant behavior. Predicting the sexual behaviors of offenders appears to be a less difficult task. The static 99/99R was used to predict sexual abuse behaviors of male offenders in institutions in a study conducted by Sandler, Freeman, Farrell, and Seto, (2013). These researchers used the Static 99/99R as a tool to predict sexual abuse behaviors of incarcerated individuals. 3,703 male adult sex offenders who had been convicted of a felony took part in the study. It concluded that the Static-99R was effective in predicting sexual abuse and that those offenders who were more susceptible to commit sexual abuse were young in age, more likely to have a criminal background, had mental health issues, were affiliated with gangs, had a low level of education, at some point had been arrested for violent offenses, and were serving short criminal sentences (Sandler et al. ,2013).The study also revealed that those offenders most like to sexually offend were also law violators in other areas (Sandler et. al.,2013). These findings seem to support some of the conclusions of researchers (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014.) Literature on female sex offenders is scarce (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014).

One of the reasons for the lack of literature on this population is because of the failure of professionals to acquiesce that there are women who sexually offend (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014). A study was conducted using static risk factors to predict sexual misconduct in incarcerated women. 1,466 females who were convicted of sexual crimes were studied in New York State as depicted by the Static-99 and RRASOR (Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offender Recidivism), (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014). The three risk factors associated with sexual recidivism included those women who had precious child victims, those who were older, and those who had incurred previous misdemeanor convictions (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014). What the study concluded was similar to what Sandler et al. (2013) revealed; that those women who were more likely to commit sexual misconduct were those who were younger, not formally educated had been incarcerated several times, had reports of more non-sexual behavior, and had not received sexual abuse treatment, or had been terminated from a sex offender treatment program (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014). The main goal of this study was to determine if the main static factors that were used for male sex offenders, could also be effective in predicting behaviors of female offenders (Pflugradt & Bradley, 2014). It is known that some female correctional staff sexually offend inmates, yet this study which addresses women who offend, does not mention what may be needed to predict the sexual behaviors of female staff.

Predictors of exposure to victimization addressed black incarcerated males and the various ways that they may be exposed to victimization. Researchers Rowell-Cunslo, Harrison, and Haile (2014) used the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to

assess the various ways that victimization occurred in black incarcerated males. It was determined that 43% of the offenders reported hearing as sexual assault, and 16% reported that they had witnessed a sexual assault (Rowell et al. 2014). The study also concluded that those exposed to victimization were older, had been incarcerated longer and were serving longer sentences, Although the basis of the study was to provide knowledge as to the various ways that individuals can be victimized it neglected to include staff as potential victimizers.

### **Reporting**

Literature in reporting sexual abuse in correctional institutions is scarce. The sexual assault of males in prisons is a phenomenon that is highly underreported because of inmate cultural norms that are unaccepting of information concerning sexual abuse being reported to correctional authorities (Garland & Wilson, 2012). Reporting sexual abuse from the aspect of prison inmates was analyzed to understand whether they considered reporting rape as snitching. Obtaining this information is crucial in addressing sexual abuse in penal institutions as it would provide an explanation for the underreporting of sexual misconduct perpetrated by inmates and staff. Penal institutions over the years have developed a culture all its own. In correctional institutions, corrections staff are viewed as police officers and being uncooperative with them holds the same value as not providing information to the police (Garland & Wilson, 2012). A study was conducted involving 409 male inmates between 19 and 70 years of age. It was concluded that 65% of the participants viewed reporting a sexual abuse as snitching. The results of his study indicate that correctional institutions will need to

undergo a transformation that would serve to get rid of the prison culture as it stands now. Developing a new and effective culture that would have a positive impact on inmates can only begin by recruiting qualified staff and educating them so that they become instrumental in providing a safe environment for the inmates.

### **Training**

Any organization with an interest in competing with other companies, should take measures to ensure that their employees are properly trained. Assessing how individuals learn is a necessary element for corrections officials in developing training programs. Offenders come from various personal and criminal backgrounds and supervising them will require staff that are trained well. The United States spends billions of dollars each year to educate organizations (Salas, Tanenbaum, Krieger & Smith-Jentsch, 2012). Research on training reveals that it works and that the way in which it is designed, delivered and implemented is pertinent (Salas et al., 2012).

Promoting training effectiveness requires that training managers diagnose what needs to be taught, who needs to learn it and under what organizational system it will be taught (Salas et al., 2012) The training of individuals would benefit from a plan. A Training Needs Analysis is the first step towards training development (Salas et al., 2012). Knowing what the needs of staff are would provide information on what should be learned, provide direction for future training and delivery, assist with ideas pertaining to training evaluation, and would provide information on what works (Salas et al., 2012). Correctional officials are presented with the task of providing training opportunities while also reducing costs (Pearson, 2012). Trainers are faced with the challenge of



seeking a blend of strategies to provide training (Pearson, 2012). Classroom instruction, chat rooms, computer- based training, podcasts, simulations or role playing, social networking and internet training are all cost effective methods of educating staff (Pearson, 2012). Correctional workers receive training in areas that relate to the medical, psychological and educational needs of the inmates. Reviewing the literature as to how they are trained would be beneficial to this study.

**Suicide.** Suicide is one of the problems that correctional workers must contend with. Having staff that are trained in how to prevent any occurrences is necessary to promote a healthy environment in the institution. In the United States, suicide in jails is the leading cause of death and the fourth leading cause of death in prisons (Noonan Rohloff, & Grinder, 2015). Inmates may commit suicide for a variety of reasons. The professionalism of staff, their experiences, characteristics and attitudes may negatively impact inmate suicide risk (Cramer, Wechler, Miller, & Yenne, 2017). Researchers Cramer, Wechler, Miller and Yenne, (2017) assessed the current suicide issue in correctional institutions and found that it would be beneficial to assess the needs of the correctional and mental health staff, in relation to suicide prevention-related attitudes, education, and perceptions of competency. They further reported that a needs assessment could assist management staff in identifying training needs that is specific to facilities (Cramer et al., 2017).

**Mental Health.** Nationwide, individuals with mental health issues are three times more likely to be placed in a penal institution than a mental health facility (Sloan & Efeti, 2017). Offenders who are mentally ill are a challenge to correctional workers. Training

correctional staff to identify signs and symptoms prevents a crisis and promotes referrals to the proper agency (Sloan & Efeti, 2017). CBHCT or Correctional Behavioral Health Certification and Training Program was designed specifically for correctional officers (Sloan & Efeti, 2017). Participants of this training would be able to obtain a better understanding of mental illness by identifying its signs and symptoms (Sloan & Efeti, 2017). Training participants can become certified as a correctional behavioral health professional once they have obtained 40 hours of mental health training (Sloan & Efeti, 2017). This nationally recognized program has been successful in training correctional officers and the teaching approach appears to be thorough and well planned.

However, mental illness in the United States has and will continue to be a part of our environment. Correctional institutions would benefit if certification on mental illness was a requirement for all staff. The field of criminal justice has found that adequate recruitment selection and quality training is critical to the achievements of the organization (Sturdy, 2012). There will undoubtedly always be those battling some form of mental illness. Mental healthcare experiences were explored in several prison facilities located in the Ukraine (Wright, Jordan & Kane, 2014). The name of the institutions cannot be shared for confidentiality purposes.

The rationale for the study was to address the mental healthcare provided by staff and their experiences in providing that care. What the researchers found was that staff providing healthcare in a prison environment is a somewhat daunting task, and that mental health knowledge should be constructed to improve mental healthcare (Wright et al., 2014). Another study relating to mental illness in correctional facilities sought to

assess the effectiveness of a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training curriculum in Memphis. The participants consisted of 179 police officers and 100 correctional officers in several Florida counties (Davidson, 2016). Three of the objectives of CIT were to add to the knowledge base of officers concerning mental illness, to increase their confidence in dealing with persons with mental illness, and to provide de-escalation training that would assist the officers in dispersing a situation (Davidson, 2016). The training was voluntary and included presentations from other agencies such as mental health facilities, advocacy organizations and legal personnel (Davidson, 2016). A pre-test and post-test were administered to determine if any information was learned.

The results of the study revealed that the amount of increase between the pre-test and post-test was significant which is an indication that the training was effective (Davidson, 2016). One limitation of this study was that it was voluntary. Individuals who volunteer usually hold an interest in it which could make learning easier. If the study had been mandatory the results could have been different. Individuals with mental illness quite often go through various systems a few times through the course of their lives (Davidson, 2016). This being the case, employees and inmates would benefit if staff were mandated to receive training. However, public service organizations have taken a downturn economically (Sturdy, 2012). This may explain why mandatory training is not provided in some states. The older mentally ill population also requires attention from corrections professionals. A study was conducted among older mentally ill offenders in Flanders, Belgium concerning the trajectory of care received (Smet, Hecke, Verte, Boekart, Ryan & Vandeveld, 2015). The offenders, age 60 and older, were being supervised by the

Commission of Social Defense (Smet et al., 2015). The results of the study indicated that the older mentally ill offenders believed that they were not receiving the services needed such as psychosocial support (Smet et al., 2015). The researchers concluded that the findings indicate that a challenge exists as to how to meet the needs of the older mentally ill offenders (Smet et al. 2015). What this seems to suggest is that training development in that area may need to be re-visited to determine what is needed.

**Elderly.** Correctional institutions also must contend with how to help those inmates who have grown in age. Currently, 16.7% of inmates in state and federal prisons are 50 years of age or older (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). Correctional facilities within the United States and beyond are challenged with how to address older inmates within a correctional system that was developed for younger inmates (Masters, Magnuson, Bayer, Potter, & Falkowski, 2016). An article was written to reflect on a 2 –day training program designed to introduce the process of aging to staff and administrators of the Nebraska Department of Corrections. This training focused on teaching participants about the physical and mental changes that older inmates experience. The class received input from two geriatricians who also served as co-developers of the training. Participants were asked to take a pre-test to test their knowledge about the aging process and at the end of the class, they took a post-test (Masters et al. 2016). The first day of the class focused on physical changes that take place within the body such as those related to the bladder, lungs, kidney and musculoskeletal system (Masters et al., 2016). The second training was focal on areas concerning mental health such as dementia, and Alzheimer’s disease (Masters et al., 2016). At the end of the study trainees were asked if they found the information

beneficial. 83.7% reported that they found the training to be useful (Masters et al.,2016). However, the authors of the article believe that for training to be effective, it should offer points and tools that can be taken back to the institution (Masters et al., 2016). They also believed that the training should not cease after two days, but should be a continuous process (Masters et al., 2016). Correctional institutions will continue to house inmates over 50 years of age and because of this, the training would be more beneficial if it was mandated. The researchers do indicate that considering concepts that would support older mentally ill offenders is a future option, but they do not go into specifics of what would benefit this population.

**Developmentally Disabled.** Offenders with intellectual and developmental disabilities are over represented in the criminal justice system (Hutchinson, Hummer, & Wooditch, 2013). This population deserves to have access to the services needed to help them lead a more normal and productive life. Research was conducted to explore whether this population was receiving education and treatment options. The study took place in county jails and county probation departments in the state of Pennsylvania. What was revealed in this research was that training did not address the needs of the inmates. 57% of the county jails reported that training was provided to their staff on an annual basis on how to effectively help the intellectual and developmentally disabled (Hummer et al.2013). County probation departments were not as likely to train their staff on how to care for the intellectual and developmentally disabled (Hummer et al., 2013). This conclusion clearly reveals that training staff to take care of this population is not a top priority. The method by which the training was conducted consisted of using various

educators, some of which came from outside agencies which also reflects that the organizations are not equipped or are ill prepared to train staff. Training was offered on an annual basis which is an indication that those organizations believe that educating staff to care for the population of the intellectually and developmentally disabled is not an important issue.

Staff who are employed in juvenile facilities encounter some of the same issues relevant to supervising offenders as those employed in adult penal institutions. Treatment staff employed in juvenile facilities have the challenging task of dealing with externalized and internalized issues of that population (e.g. Teplin et al., 2012). Staff employed at a Sweden juvenile facility were studied to assess if they were being properly trained. Research questions addressed the educational levels and skills of staff and inquired into what education and training the institution offered its employees. Staff who work in correctional institutions have the responsibility to provide security and treatment (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). In order to focus on the needs of all individuals in correctional facilities, staff will need to have the proper education and experiences and will need to work as a unified team (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). Training that is effective is crucial for the favorable outcome of knowledge relating to employees (Huang, Strawderman, Babski-Reeves, Ahmed, & Salehi, 2014).

**Transgender.** Correctional workers interacting with special populations such as transgenders should be well informed in order to address their needs. Inmates who are transgender are susceptible to both physical and mental health issues while in corrections (Routh, Abess, Makin, Stohr, Hemmens & Yoo, 2017). The transgender population is

still fairly new in society. Research as how to effectively approach some of the issues they face on daily basis is very limited. The correctional system has not been strict in protecting transgender inmates (Routh et al., 2017). However, topics relating to the classification, victimization, and deficient medical treatment relative to transgenders have been identified (Routh et al., 2017).

**Aggression.** Dealing with aggressive inmates or those with behavioral issues could be a matter of life and death for correctional workers if the issue is not approached with knowledge on aggression. Research on the training of staff on aggression is limited as this is an area that is usually approached by correctional psychologists. The Florida Department of Corrections, in collaboration with Florida State University developed a program where by offenders were aided in developing the skills necessary to deal with anger management (Tuomisto, Bouyea, Gussak & Aufderheide, 2012). Correctional staff with the exception of psychologists, were excluded from the study but could benefit in learning anger management skills. Researchers have contemplated ways to deal with juveniles with behavioral issues such as aggression, violence, depression and self-harm (e.g. Teplin et.al, 2012). A study was conducted to explore how correctional workers deal with youth with aggressive behaviors on a daily basis, to determine if they are equipped to handle such behaviors (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). A 70% majority of the staff that participated in the study believed that they did not have adequate training to provide the needed services to the juveniles they worked with (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). The researchers asserted that staff lack a basic understanding relative to psychological development and human functions (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). Training in the field of

corrections should not be taken lightly as its effectiveness determines the success of the institution. Respondents to the study indicated by way of questionnaires, that they were deficient in competency skills to work with those with difficult behaviors (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). A training delivery method was assessed in a study undertaken by researchers Huang, Strawderman, Babski-Reeves, Ahmed, and Salehi (2014). Although the study reflects on the experiences of volunteer staff, it could prove useful to others seeking knowledge on how staff are trained. The study related to professional truck drivers and the goal of the program; HWW was to train professional truck drivers to be more alert on the roadways (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). There were several training delivery methods used in this study; video, classroom, audio and online (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). The conclusion of the study revealed that what had been taught in training, had not been remembered (Ahonen & Degner, 2014). This study could serve as a foundation for researchers with a desire to explore training retention. The training of correctional workers entails providing knowledge in specific areas that are based on the needs of the offenders. Educating staff on the topic of sexual abuse would not only benefit those who have been sexually abused but also those who are potential victims of sexual misconduct.

**Sexual abuse training.** Training in the area of sexual misconduct within the system of corrections deserves attention, as sexual misconduct rates involving staff within jails and prisons in the United States have increased over the years. It is imperative that what is taught as well as how it is delivered be explored and assessed. There is a deficiency as to the amount of research that has been conducted on sexual abuse training in corrections.



The PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) is responsible for disseminating information to correctional institutions pertaining to sexual misconduct. Its purpose is to assist correctional institutions within the United States with the detection, prevention and reduction of sexual abuse (Sipple, 2015). One of the ways that this is achieved is by providing various facilities with staff training (Sipple, 2015).

The 2008-2009 BJS (Bureau of Justice Statistics) conducted a national juvenile survey and found that approximately 12% of youth in state, and in large facilities that were not state operated, reported one or more occurrences of sexual victimization by a peer or staff (Mazza, 2012). About 95% of all youth surveyed reported that they had been victimized by staff who were female (Mazza, 2012). Based on what was reported by BJS, public hearings were held on the large amount of sexual abuse involving female staff and determined that there was a need for effective staff training on developing and keeping professional boundaries (Mazza, 2012).

In an attempt to comply with the PREA, correctional practices with regard to sexual abuse training will require a re-assessment (Mazza, 2012). Taking the necessary precautions to deal with the phenomenon of sexual abuse will consist of: taking into account, the experiences of inmate survivors of sexual misconduct, paying careful attention to the statistics provided by BJS, identifying the causes that led to female staff entering into relationships that are inappropriate, provide mentoring and job training relating to how to set boundaries that are professional, offer gender specific training, and involving other criminal justice organizations who have an interest and commitment to eradicating the sexual victimization of inmates (Mazza, 2012).

The PREA is responsible for setting the standards for prisons and jails (Sipple, 2015). In becoming compliant with standards as set forth by the PREA one institution noted two key components of successful compliance; staff buy in and staff training (Sipple, 2015). In order to become compliant, an institution must adhere to the following standards: contractor and volunteer training, employees training, specialized training for investigators, inmate education, and specialized training for mental and medical health practitioners (Sipple, 2015). Facilities in each state are responsible for developing training on sexual abuse. There have not been many studies which address sexual abuse training with respect to how effective the PREA has been in training and setting standards for correctional institutions in the United States. The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission [NPREC] was established in conjunction with PREA and is responsible for keeping track of what the PREA is doing to address the issue of sexual abuse within corrections. The goals of NPREC are to conduct studies that would determine if zero tolerance of sexual abuse is making an impact, hold correctional institutions responsible for sexual misconduct in their facilities, develop zero tolerance for sexual abuse, and making the data available to administrators concerning prison rape (Sipple, 2015). Although institutions are responsible for training their staff there are components that should be included in training as prescribed by PREA. Elements such as an initial training, and a preservice training which has as its focal point, policies relating to sexual abuse is an example of a comprehensive PREA training program and was used at one correctional facility (Sipple, 2015).

That particular training program suggested that correctional staff be offered follow up refresher courses every two years. Given the impact that sexual abuse has had on inmates, participating in refresher courses every two years does not seem sufficient to combat the problem of the sexual abuse of inmates. Also, this particular institution offered the initial training online, another indication that this training related to this phenomenon is not taken as seriously as it should be. Online training gives the trainees the opportunity to look up answers to test questions [if provided] and does not provide a question and answer period.

Changing the climate of institutions is one approach towards combating sexual abuse. Jail administrators should work to change the culture that believes that potential sexual abuse occurring in penal institutions is the norm (Clem, 2016). This can be done by educating inmates as well as staff on a zero- tolerance policy on sexual abuse (Clem, 2016). Zero tolerance, specifically in juvenile facilities should be addressed by setting the foundation that sexual abuse will not be tolerated and must be prevented (Garrity, Klepin & Sayasane, 2016). Organizations have a variety of methods by which to comply with PREA standards. For example, the San Diego County Probation Department created a program whereby posters are created by youth describing what zero tolerance means to them (Garrity et al., 2016). The PREA resource center can be accessed by anyone wanting information on how to prevent, detect and report sexual abuse. PREA training is determined by each institution, but those institutions have to adhere to the standards as set forth by PREA. Studies that address the effectiveness of the PREA are deficient. How

some may perceive sexual abuse training may helpful to scholars who would like to address the effectiveness of training.

### **Summary**

Much of the literature that exists on sexual abuse reports on abuse committed on inmates by other inmates. Topics falling under sexual abuse such as victimization prediction, reporting and prevention, all seem to provide information relating to inmate abuse perpetrated by their peers. Research is deficient in the area of staff on inmate sexual abuse. Literature on the training of correctional staff seems to focus on specific areas relating to offenders, such as the mentally ill, the developmentally disabled, the elderly and the transgender. A review of the literature reflects that research on sexual abuse training is deficient. My study addressed sexual abuse training, its implementation and how it is perceived by female correctional workers. Obtaining this knowledge not only adds to the literature in this area, but it also gives corrections professionals guidance in developing training classes and may provide a catalyst for more research in that area.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Overview of the Methodology**

This chapter covers a strategy for executing a plan of qualitative research. My goal to explore perceptions of sexual abuse training necessitates a research model that would focus on subjectivity. My plan of action will include the components needed for qualitative research such as participant selection, sampling strategy, research design, instruments for data collection, data collection, analysis and interpretation of data, validation of data, procedures for protecting participants and ethical considerations. I conclude the chapter with a review of relevant points.

### **Introduction**

There is solid evidence that would support that staff sexual abuse in corrections is pervasive and involves female staff more so than males (Beck, 2015). Women being disproportionately involved in allegations of sexual misconduct is an issue of which could be addressed from a quantitative approach using variables such as age, marital status and demographics. However, it is not my intent to prove anything but rather to learn new information on this phenomenon.

Initially, the evolution of phenomenology focused on ones 'consciousness in understanding a phenomenon but was later centered on lived experiences as a path to discerning events (Duckham & Schreiber, 2016). It is because of my goal to explore how sexual abuse training is experienced and perceived and then interpreting my findings, that my decision to conduct a phenomenological study is justified.

Qualitative research contributes to the cognitive operation of professionals by providing an understanding of the lived experiences of the study participants (Koch, Niesz, & McCarthy, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female correctional workers as they underwent sexual abuse training and to gain an understanding of their perceptions of that training. It was hoped that themes and concepts would be extracted from the data that could be used to set the foundation for future studies relating to sexual abuse.

### **My role as the researcher**

I followed guidelines with regards to ethical principles as well as state, local and federal laws. I familiarized myself with all aspects relating to obtaining and maintaining compliance. The researcher is entangled into the setting of a qualitative study and to that end is vital in its comprehension (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Having knowledge as to how to conduct interviews, how to effectively document and analyze the data was crucial to my goal. Qualitative investigation is distinctive in that it requires firm interpersonal knowledge in listening to the stories of others and depicting the phenomena using their information (Collins & Cooper, 2014).

## **The Research Design**

Established by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology was observed by him as a way of achieving true meaning by diffusing deep into reality (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). My need to explore perceptions of sexual abuse training led me to contemplate subjectivity and how it would factor into my goal. My intention in conducting this study was to generate knowledge that was rich in content and free from objectivity. It was not in my interest to seek truth relating to an issue, but to explore and describe experiences. Researchers of qualitative research try to comprehend models of similarities and differences in study participants' worlds as they are disclosed in interview transcripts (Erlingson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Taking the qualitative approach was useful in my exploration of the consciousness of female correctional workers in their experience of sexual abuse training. Qualitative research produces information relating to views, circumstances, and techniques and involves using a particular method of skills and tools (Kozleski, 2017). My vision in conducting this research was that I would ask questions that would assist me in describing the experiences of the female correctional worker and her perspectives on sexual abuse training.

A qualitative phenomenological study was compatible with my goal to obtain as much information as possible relating to how sexual abuse training is perceived by female correctional workers. My interest was to address two core research questions: What are the lived experiences of female correctional workers as they undergo sexual abuse training, and what are the perceptions of sexual abuse training of female correctional workers. Phenomenology is used to discern the first-hand impressions of the

experiences of individuals (Newberry, 2012). As the researcher, I used the methodology to unmask elements of responses that could bring about new information.

### **Participant Selection**

The participants of this study were female correctional workers recruited from a pre-release center located in a Mid- Atlantic state in the U.S. All participants had been employed in the field of corrections in any capacity for at least 1 year but there was no length of employment requirement for working at the pre-release center. The stipulation for length of employment is because training is a requirement for continued employment and within that year they will have been required to have had sexual abuse training. Sexual misconduct training mandated by PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) is divided into several sections relating to sexual abuse. Participants must have been informed of or received training in sections 115.00; Zero tolerance of sexual abuse and section 115.6; Standards for prisons and jails as these sections provide definitions of and describes sexual misconduct. The complexity of the study topic and the amount of information sought from each participant is considered when contemplating a sample size (Yin, 2013). It was my goal to obtain a vast amount of information relating to experiences of sexual misconduct training.

### **Sampling Strategy**

The origin of the research question should guide the researcher in the sample description (Grossoehme, 2014). Female correctional workers were chosen as my sample because of the training that they will have obtained on this issue. Purposeful sampling is an orderly fashion of sampling which involves the researcher selecting participants who



have knowledge in the issue being studied (Harrison, 2013). My rationale for selecting this type of scheme is because the members of this population, having had sexual abuse training, are in a position within the institution where they can provide information on the topic. Maximum variation was used because of my aim to obtain information that was detailed, plentiful, and varied. Maximum variation allows the researcher to discover vital features in the sample and then locate cases that differ from each other in as many ways as possible (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). It was harmonious with my interest to explore the topic from all possible angles.

### **Research Procedures**

I obtained permission from Walden University before conducting research. When the proposal was completed in its entirety and approved by my committee, I submitted the IRB application requesting permission to conduct research. In addition, I provided a letter from the pre-release center granting my permission to conduct research using their employees. I used the following methods:

- Letters of recruitment were placed (hand delivered by me) in the mailboxes of all female employees of a pre-release center located in a Mid-Atlantic state of the U.S. My contact information; phone number and e-mail address were provided, and employees were asked to contact me if they had an interest in participating in the research. The pre-release center that was used in this study was small. Five participants responded and agreed to partake in the study.
- Once a response was received, it was confirmed at that time as to whether they met the qualifications that were stipulated in the recruitment letter. The

stipulations required that they had been employed as a correctional worker for at least one year and that they had received one full session of sexual abuse training through the state Division of Corrections. Those who met the qualifications met with me at a meeting place that had been decided by them. At that time the consent form was signed.

Obtaining informed consent from the participants was respectful and assured that participants did not feel obligated to participate. Informed consent should be sought without posing any risk of harm and the participants should not feel pressured to participate (Tyldum, 2012). Once I received the signed consent form, I explained what the data collection procedures would entail. All of the participants with the exception of one met with me in a classroom on the grounds of the pre-release center. The remaining participant met with me in her office. Each interview lasted for approximately 1 hour. The number of interviews in a qualitative study depends on the purpose for the research (Charmaz, 2012). Data collection should cease when no new information can be obtained (Yin, 2016).

My intent in conducting this study was to inquire into the consciousness of female correctional workers on sexual abuse training. It was also explained that I would be using an audio recorder and would be taking notes during the interview. Participants were reminded that all information retrieved would be strictly confidential and that they would have the right to discontinue participation at any time during the study. Once the research process was explained which took approximately 15 minutes, the data collection began. Research procedures consisted of the following:

- Explaining the instruments for Data Collection
- Data Collection
- Data analysis
- Data interpretation
- Validation of data

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

Participants were advised as to what methods were used to collect the data. As the researcher, I was the primary instrument for data collection. My use of semi-structured interviews using open ended questions enabled me to probe and obtain a vast amount of information. I also used an audio recorder to ensure that no information was lost, as well as a journal to document reactions to the interview questions.

### **Data Collection**

Qualitative researchers are not dispassionate strangers who simply observe without interacting with participants, but impact and are impacted by their data (Grossoehme, 2014). In this study data collection began with me meeting with each participant at a time and place that was secure and ensured confidentiality. A rapport was established with the intention of making each participant feel comfortable. The use of an audio recorder enabled me to listen to data several times which was useful in data analysis. Also, a journal was used to document notes pertaining to the interview. As the researcher, I needed to safeguard the data that had been retrieved. Knowing that the data were interpreted correctly was significant to the outcome of my study. Member checking consists of researchers calling on study participants as figures of authority to validate

conclusions (Erlingson & Brysiewicz, 2013). All information that was obtained by the participants was repeated to them to ensure that I had obtained clarity.

### **Interviewing Techniques**

Using the semi-structured interview approach could open new avenues by which new information will be retrieved. Open-ended questions gave the interviewee an opportunity to respond without limitation. My goal was to engage them in the process of obtaining information by listening and probing during the interview. All interviews took place at the educational facility of the pre-release center which is adjacent to the pre-release facility. Each participant had an interview which lasted for approximately 1 hour. My plan was to retrieve as much information as possible without making the interviewee feel as if she were being interviewed

### **Data Collection Storage**

Handwritten folders were constructed for all participants of this project. Each folder had the participants' information on it. However, that information would not place those individuals in a position where they would be identified in any way. For example, folder had Identifiers such as participant A, participant B, and so on. This research being exploratory, it was beneficial to retrieve as much data as possible. A tape recorder was used, and the interviews were given numbers that matched the letters placed on the folder of each participant. Data were kept in a locked storage box located inside of my home. Data will be stored for 5 years and then at the end of 5 years it will be destroyed.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The methodology of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used with the opportunity to gain an understanding of the subjective totality of real events through the meanings attached to experiences (Callary, Rathwell & Young, 2015). It was compatible with this study because of my goal to provide female correctional workers with an opportunity to reveal their perceptions and the origins of those perceptions. IPA is descriptive research and is useful in making sense of experiences from a cultural, social and theoretical perspective. The interpretative component of IPA allowed me to analyze the relationship between the correctional workers cultural and physical environments, and to obtain new and useful information. Using this approach allowed me to construct patterns of meanings, and then use themes to document those meanings. Data Analysis and Interpretation consisted of the following:

- Collecting the data
- Organizing the information into categories and themes
- Interpreting the data using computer-assisted software.

NVivo is a computer software program designed for researchers who are in search of intense levels of information for analysis. It was useful in organizing data, managing ideas, reporting from the data, and posing questions about data analysis

### **Validating Data**

Information obtained from this research was shared with the participants to avoid errors in communication. Participants in this study were given an opportunity to assess whether the analysis and interpretation was accurate, or per what they described. The process of member checking is useful in that it allows participants to validate information

that emerged from the data. To further ensure that the research was well developed, the process of data triangulation was used. Using this method of triangulation increases the likelihood that data are accurate.

### **Procedures for Ethical Protection**

The use of human subjects in a study should meet certain guidelines to protect the rights of those individuals. This study involved asking the participants to reveal their perceptions of sexual abuse training. The issue of ethics involves ensuring that the rights of the participants will be protected and that they will be shielded from potential harm. In this case, harm could manifest itself in the form of retaliation from corrections administration, or coworkers who may not approve of employee participation in sexual abuse studies. Inmates who either may not approve of the attention that the research could bring, or those who may view the study as an opportunity to bring about allegations of sexual abuse against correctional employees, could also be problematic.

Participants for this study were asked to share their thoughts, feelings and perceptions relating to the sexual abuse training that they received. As a Walden University student, I followed the code of ethics as set forth by that institution. The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences' code of ethics Section III, B13 requires that I as the researcher respect the rights of human participants. Those participating in this study had an opportunity to ask questions and have those questions addressed relating to the basis of the research. Participants may come under scrutiny by the corrections administration and coworkers. The threat of job loss, an uncomfortable work environment and physical retaliation from inmates was possible if confidentiality was

compromised. The possibility of physical or emotional risks were discussed. Participants were advised that certain precautionary measures were taken to ensure that any information that was shared would be protected. Human subjects of this study may have shared information that may have needed to have been reported by law. Section III, B19 requires that I as the researcher, treat all information as confidential, but does not legally bind me from sharing that information. In divulging information about themselves, participants may have revealed some things that go against the laws of society. For example: participants may have answered one of the research questions with information that implicates that a crime has been committed. That being the case, I would have been obligated by law to report that information to the proper authorities. This applies to participants who reported offenses made against themselves by others, or crimes that they may have committed against others.

Section III, B18 requires that researchers prepare for potential threats to confidentiality. To adhere to this code, I secured all information retrieved by placing it in a locked box that is located in my home. I will destroy all materials relating to the study after 5 years. To gain the trust of the research participants, I constructed documents that explained the study in detail, guaranteed that identities would not be compromised and provided an explanation of how the results of the study would be shared with them. Also, participants were advised that they were in no way obligated to participate in the study and that they were free to discontinue participation in the study at any time. At first contact with the participants the following measures took place to ensure that this project in no way violated the rights of those chosen to participate:

- A detailed explanation describing the research and my motivation for conducting the study was provided. My personal information such as phone number and e-mail address were provided, and the participants were encouraged to contact me with any questions and concerns.
- A rapport was established that generated feelings of comfort to the participants. It was my intention to have the participants feel that I was trustworthy so that they would feel at ease and would not feel that they would in any way be coerced into participating in the study. The codes of ethics of Walden University, as well as those of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, was read and discussed after which time a question and answer period took place and concluded with a consent form. That consent form addressed issues relating to all codes of ethic that was discussed as well as describing the study in general. The terminology used in the consent form was standard or easily understood. Participants were advised of their right to refuse participation in the study.
- Face to face interviews were used and the participants chose the location of the interviews. I also tape recorded the sessions with each participant and field notes were used as well. Although it was speculated that participants would choose an interview location that would protect their privacy, I would have made any necessary adjustments during interviewing to ensure that privacy would be protected.
- Since this study could have created feelings of frustration and vulnerability that could have caused stress, I provided the participants with information relating to



programs available that would assist correctional employees with work related issues. Also, I was willing to use less stringent interviewing techniques such as adjusting the time limit for the interview.

- Participants were advised as to how the information retrieved would be protected from those not directly related to the study. They were informed as to how the information would be stored. They were also advised as to how the information would be shared with the public and how it would be handled during and after publication. It was hoped and believed that this study would serve as a catalyst for future research. Participants were informed that their permission to use the results from the research, for further research would be needed to not violate the code of ethics of Walden University, as well as The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.
- Participants were advised that any documentation about the study would not have information that could reveal their identities. Data retrieved was referred to the participants by using language such as Study Participant A, B and so on as opposed to using names.
- Participants were advised that information retrieved for analysis would be saved and stored using fictitious headings to protect their true identities.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

Participating in research could involve at least a minimal amount of risk. Those invited to take part in the study were advised of the risks as well as any benefits that would be involved. Appendix C was created for the sole purpose of informing the

participants of the risks and benefits of participating in the study. Appendix C contains information relating to risks such as:

1. The possibility of emotional instability arising from discussing the subject matter.
2. Increased negative feelings towards employer
3. Bitterness towards coworkers

Each participant was given a copy of Appendix C which disclosed the basic premise of the research. This document also advised the participants of their assurance of confidentiality. Also, participants were informed that the information that they provided was obtained on a voluntary basis and that they would have the right to discontinue their participation whenever they choose to do so.

To protect myself as a student as well as the educational institution that I represented it was mandatory that I receive approval from the institution. I contacted the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB), advised them of my research plans and gained their approval before approaching this research. To ensure that I was knowledgeable in all aspects relating to protecting human subjects, I completed an online course offered by the National Institute of Health Office of Extramural Research; Protecting Human Research Participants. Full disclosure about the study was provided to each participant, and they were asked to consider all the risks involved before agreeing to take part in the study.

### **Summary**

My research questions presented the need to obtain data that were rich, detailed and plentiful. A phenomenological qualitative study was best suited to assist in achieving this goal. As the researcher, my intentions were to shed light on a phenomenon that has

received limited attention from the criminal justice community. I followed all procedures relevant to securing permission from Walden University to conduct the study. The procedures for conducting the study consisted of the following:

1. Recruiting participants by way of a formal letter asking them for their help.
2. Providing the participants with information about the study and the goal of the research.
3. Providing assurance to the participants that their rights would be respected.
4. Obtaining permission from Walden University as well as from the correctional institution from which participants were recruited

The study group consisted of 5 participants. Those eligible to participate in the study had the understanding that participation was voluntary and that they could refrain from taking part at any time. Participants were made aware that the results of the study would be shared with them. Face to face interviews as well as recorded conversations were used to obtain data. I also kept a journal to reflect the tone of the interview. The dates and times of the interviews were decided by each participant as it was my goal to provide a setting that was comfortable for all participants. The privacy of the participants was also protected. All data retrieved were kept in a locked area. After the data were collected, they were synthesized, analyzed, interpreted and reported. Information was discussed with the participants to ensure that nothing was misinterpreted. NVvivo coding assisted me in analyzing the data. It is hoped that the results of the study will in some way pave the way for more research and change in policies concerning staff on inmate sexual abuse.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Overview**

This chapter represents the procedures that were used for conducting interviews, the demographic information for participants, and the results of the open-ended questions. Interviewees' perceptions of sexual abuse training received in the workplace were analyzed and discussed in detail. I collected data using an audio recorder. Each interview was transcribed and cited verbatim. In addition, a journal was used to document data relating to body language, facial expressions, and eye contact. Themes retrieved from the data led to the development of subordinate themes relating to instruction, such as methods of training, location, time, and content. Perceptions of training produced subordinate themes to include adequacy, attitude and training deficiencies. The chapter concludes with a summary as well as observations from field notes.

### **Introduction**

My rationale for undertaking this phenomenological study was to explore sexual abuse training as experienced by female correctional workers. My review of the literature demonstrates that information on sexual abuse training in corrections is limited. In order to obtain an understanding of the phenomenon of sexual abuse in corrections, it was necessary to explore the knowledge base provided to correctional staff on this issue. I recruited females employed in corrections for at least one year because they will have completed sexual abuse training. All participants in this study had been employed in corrections for more than a year and could reflect and compare trainings over the years. The procedures as discussed in chapter 3 were utilized. The use of IPA [Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis] provided an avenue by which I could exercise a more intimate focus of each participants' experiences. Information retrieved from the participants was carefully examined, coded, and placed into themes according to importance. Each of the questions posed to the interviewees was structured in a way that would allow responses to be detailed thus rich in information.

### **Demographic Information**

Participants ranged in ages from 35-60 years of age. Ascertaining the ages and marital status of participants was important to this study as it provided an opportunity to explore differences and similarities along age lines. Of the five participants, three were married and two were single. Table 1 reflects the ages and marital status of each of the participants.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Marital Status
1	55-65	Single
2	35-45	Married
3	45-55	Married
4	45-55	Single
5	45-55	Married

Years of experience and the occupation of each of the participants is displayed in Table 2 and was used to analyze the themes of perception and their subordinate themes relating to content and adequacy of training.

Table 2

Participant	Occupation	Length of experience in corrections
1	Case Manager	30 Years
2	Executive director	15 Years
3	Cook	20 Years
4	Secretary	30 Years
5	Cook	20 Years

### **Results of the Open-Ended Interview Questions**

The research questions included: What are the lived experiences of correctional workers as they undergo sexual abuse training? and What are the perceptions of female correctional workers on sexual abuse training? They were asked open ended questions concerning their educational experiences with sexual abuse training. There were seven Interview questions (Appendix A).

### **Teaching Methods**

**Physical setting.** I asked participants to describe the setting of the most recent training that they received. Participant #4 reported that she was in a classroom with approximately 20 other students. Participant 3 reported that she had the training in a classroom, but she could not estimate the number of students in the class. In her description of the setting, Participant 5 reported that she was in a breakroom of the pre-release center with new inmates. Participant 1 reported that staff meetings are held at the pre-release center in the meeting room. When she was asked to describe the setting of the

training she responded, “We do it in a staff meeting and we go over all the points that the standards require us to”. When she was asked to elaborate, she replied: “Yeah, the uh, the OCMS standards. They’re like a guide in operations.

Participant 2 is employed at the management level and reported that she receives her training in a classroom setting with other managers. With the exception of Participant 5, all participants reported that they were afforded an opportunity to ask questions after the training. Each of the participants reported receiving the training at different locations, including a correctional facility, a state police training facility, staff meetings at the pre-release center, PCTC (a Maryland State Police Training facility), and at offender intake meetings at their pre-release center.

**Electronic presentation.** Participant 2 reported that she received the information via a PowerPoint presentation with a substantial number of slides. Participant 1 made no reference to electronic presentations in her description of the training. Participants 3, 4, and 5 reported that they watched a video. Participants 3 and 4 reported that they received a test at the conclusion of the video.

**Instructor.** Participants 2,3 and 4 reported that there were instructors who presented the electronic presentations.

Table 3. Comparison of the methods and physical settings of the last PREA Training received by staff:

Participant	Title	Classroom	Electronic	Test	Inst.
1	Case Manager	N	N	N	N
2	Exec. Director	Y	Y	N	Y
3	Cook	Y	Y	Y	Y

4	Secretary	Y	Y	Y	Y
5	Cook	N	Y	N	N

### **Time Spent in Training and Frequency of Training**

The time spent in training sessions and the frequency of training varied. Participant 5 reported that PREA training for her consisted of watching a 15-minute electronic presentation. She also reported that the training is offered every few years. When she was asked to elaborate, she stated, “We have it every few years, but I see it every day just about every time we have a new inmate.” She also advised that she has not had the training in a classroom setting. Participant 4 expressed that the training class lasted for two or three hours and that the frequency of training is every year.

Participant 1 reported she received her last training at a staff meeting, which is located in the meeting room of the pre-release center. She did not state specifically how long the training lasted but did imply that it lasted close to a half hour when she stated, “There should be a day of it. I mean it shouldn’t be 20 minutes in the lesson plan. It should be a day.” Participant 1 also reported that the training is offered every year at another location.

Participant 3 reported watching an electronic presentation for 20 to 30 minutes, but that the training “lasted at least about two hours.” When Participant 3 was asked to explain what was included in the training she responded, “Like, it’s been awhile since I had the training, so I can’t really pinpoint what was in it.” Participant 3 did not indicate specifically the meaning of the term “Awhile.”



Participant 2 stated that the training lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. She implied that the training should be conducted more often when she stated:

Because even the training quarterly, here, you know the requirement is, it's not like they say you have to do or you know this is something that you want to make sure to do it annually. Sometime throughout the year, you need to make sure, you have a PREA training and everybody signs off on it and understands they re- that this is a zero tolerance.

### **Content of Training**

In order to gain an understanding of what information was being disseminated in training, participants were asked to describe what was discussed in the electronic presentations and at the intake meetings. All of the respondents reported that sexual harassment and professional boundaries were the main topics covered in training.

**Sexual harassment.** Participant 3 stated that the electronic presentation informed them of the different types of sexual harassment that can occur in the workplace such as, "someone calling you out of your name." She also reported that the instructors went over the information with the students. In her description of this portion of the training Participant 2 did not speak about sexual harassment but did talk about victims of sexual misconduct and how they could be identified, "It teaches you how to identify someone who could be vulnerable. They will say that someone who is small in stature would probably be someone who is vulnerable."

Participant 1 described her training as being an open forum where they go over the guidelines and invite anyone to talk about sexual harassment. This is her depiction of the training:

We go through them and talk about it and we leave the forum open for anybody that wants to talk, and then an invitation if anyone needs to see someone privately about it, we are open to doing that and then if there is a complaint, it would be handled through that person, the executive director, and the board of directors.

Participant 4 reported that training taught her that sexual harassment did not have to happen to you to become involved, and that it addressed the issue of sexual misconduct in general as well as the various ways that sexual harassment can be reported. Participant 5 also expressed that the training covers how to detect a potential victim of sexual harassment. She described, "If a guy is in a staff members' face all the time, that's a sign right there, or if a guy is washing other guys' clothes."

**Reporting sexual harassment.** Four of the participants stated that the training consisted of how to report sexual harassment. Participant 2 reported that the electronic presentation consisted of slides containing material on what instruments to use when taking a report from a staff or inmate. Participant 4 mentioned reporting several times when she spoke of sexual harassment such as learning that anyone can report it. She expressed that she had not known that anyone could report sexual harassment, "I learned that anyone can report sexual harassment or sexual misconduct or whatever and can report it and it didn't have to actually happen to you." When Participant 4 was asked to

elaborate on the issue of sexual misconduct towards an inmate this is her description of what the course taught:

That if –if uh, you may not think that it’s sexual abuse but if an inmate feels threatened by that, he can report it”. She mentioned reporting again in terms of who can be involved: It informs us of the types of sexual misconduct, um how to report it, um and that anyone can be accused of it not just a male to a female, but vice versa.

Participant 3 did not specifically state what information was given in the class relating to sexual harassment and talked about reporting sexual harassment in terms of her interactions with the inmates. She described, “As long as they respect me I respect them, and you know if something was to happen, or going on, I know how to calm myself down and take it to a superior you know?”

Participant 1 expressed that in the training she learned that sexual harassment can be addressed by the victim informing the executive director and the board of directors. This is her description relating to the reporting of sexual harassment:

We go through the OCMS standards and we talk about it and we leave the forum open for anybody that wants to talk, and then an invitation if anyone needs to see someone privately about it we are open to doing that and then if there is a complaint, it would be handled through the executive director, and the board of directors.

Participant 5 did not discuss sexual harassment reporting at all in her description of her experience in the training.

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Table 4: Reflections on the discussion of the reporting of sexual harassment as learned through training.

Participant	Inmate on Staff	Inmate on Inmate	Staff on Inmate	Staff on Staff
1	-	-	-	x
2	x	x	x	x
3	x	-	-	-
4	x	x	x	x
5	-	-	-	-

**Professional boundaries.** All respondents expressed that professional boundaries were discussed in the training. Although Participant 5 did not discuss what she learned specifically from the electronic presentation in relation to professional boundaries, her description indicated that she is experienced and educated in this area when she stated, “If someone calls me baby and sweetheart and I’ll come back, I’ll reply back, I’m not your sweetheart and I’m not your baby.” However, she did report that the electronic presentation discussed “unwanted attention”, although she was not specific in her description as to who was receiving the unwanted attention.

Participant 2 did not speak on the issue of professional boundaries and reported that although this topic is discussed in the electronic presentation, it is not “intensified” and not a lot of time is spent on it. Participant 4 reported that professional boundaries were the main theme of the training and how to keep a “professional demeanor” towards the

inmates was discussed. Participant 1 did not speak much about professional boundaries but did say that it was “mixed in” with their regular training.

Participant 3 said, “I can say that it taught me to be more aware, you know, of my environment and the things that are going on around me since now that I am working in a correctional facility.” Participants 3 and 4 believed that the professional boundaries portion of the training contributed to their knowledge base on the subject. Participants 1, 2, and 5 did not report what they learned on this topic. Participant 2 reported that information she received in training was limited.

### **Perceptions**

**Attitudes towards training: adequacy versus inadequacy.** All of the participants interviewed have a significant amount of experience in the field. Each of them was asked to describe how she felt overall about the training she received. Participant 4 indicated that she has a “good” attitude towards the training when she says, “It keeps you refreshed on different policies. People tend to forget things that they learned in class, or they either didn’t pay attention in class or they just forget, so it refreshes you.” Compared to participant 4, participant 2 did not have as good an attitude toward the training. She reported that the training was mundane, not intensive enough and “not taken seriously.

Participant 2 also indicated that incidents of sexual abuse should be shared with the criminal justice community through training. This is her description of the training:

Well I think that they really need to—There is—There have been enough incidents that they should use those as examples, real –life incidents, and –and-

and share their investigation, share, you know, what may—I guess what has occurred, because you can learn from an experience, if that makes sense, as opposed to, you know, this is just the training. It's power point presentations and it's just more so kind of book knowledge as opposed to just real-world situations and not what you've seen on television or, you know, kind of heard through gossip or staff sharing.

Participant 2 also reported that the electronic presentation is not updated, and stated “That's the same video, that's the video that DOJ, everybody uses that video. It's on like YouTube or something, that's how we got it”.

Participant 3 reported that the training presentation was “good” and when asked of her views on the amount of information received she replied, “I believe it was enough information. The session that they gave was really good. It was good you know.”

Participant 1 believes the training is adequate because she has never had any problems with sexual harassment:

For me, it's adequate because I've never had any issues with it, but when I have had it in the past, I've turned around and said to the person, you know Stop it! and when they didn't stop it, I said it again, Stop it! and the third time I said, Okay here's the deal. I'm gonna complain about you and then I'm gonna sue you civilly and I'm gonna take every penny you have, and this person was very conscious about his money and stopped it right then and there.

Participant 5 believed the training was not detailed enough, should reflect women and self-esteem and described the training as “Laxy Daisey”. Participant 5 also expressed that she has watched the same video so many times that she often recites it verbatim.

Table 5. Training Sufficiency as Perceived by Employees.

Participant	Adequate	Inadequate
1	-	-
2		X
3	X	
4	X	
5		X

***Common sense and life’s experiences as opposed to book knowledge.*** The subordinate theme of common sense evolved from the responses of Participants 3 and 4 on sexual abuse training. Of these employees, one has 30 years of experience working in corrections and the other has 20. One has been married for forty years and the other is single. When asked how they felt about the training in terms of the content and the amount of content received they both implied that employees coming to work in corrections should already be aware of the caveats relating to working with offenders. In relation to professional boundaries Participant 4 responded:

You have to act like you know what the boundaries are when you come to them.

You automatically know what the boundaries are. If they say something out of the way, you correct them and say ‘no, you’re not supposed to be saying that.’ And you know not to say certain things.

Participant 3 believes that life lessons should teach staff how to interact with the offenders, “If I can give them some advice or something like that, I’ll do that, but I don’t sit and play with them you know.” When she was asked if she learned that approach in training, she responded “No I learned that through life.”

The theme of life experiences also evolved from the responses of Participants 1 and 2. Participant 2 does not actually say that common sense and life in general prepares correctional employees to work with offenders, but she does imply that experience can become the teacher when she says:

Well, I think that they really need to--, there have been enough incidents that they should use those as examples, real life incidents, and especially share their investigations, share you know, what may what has occurred because you can learn from an experience if that makes sense.

Participant 1 also implied that you need a certain level of common sense and or experience to work with this population:

I think that coming in, they need to be aware of the emotional dangers, the psychological dangers because you have men that watch you or are in the position to think about this all the time, and they’re men. So, you know they know how they can look at a woman and know how to get to her.

Participant 5 indicates that she is experienced when she talks about self- esteem:

The counselors are downstairs, you know if you get an older counselor down there, she might not bark but a young girl and he’s down there talking to her in her face, she may not be as upbeat as I am, she might be inexperienced, and she



looks homely and stuff like that. That's how they try to get you, they try to build you up.

### **Impact of Training**

Each participant was asked how the training has affected her. Two of the participants reported that the training has affected them in a positive way. Participant 3 is a cook and has been employed with the pre-release center for 20 years. She stated that she interacts with the inmates several times per day. She reported that the training provided a great amount of information that was fulfilling and described the training session as consisting of one female instructor who provided a question and answer period and described the training as being "really good." When she was asked if the training affected her interaction with the inmates she responded, "It has helped me in my interaction with the inmates. A lot of these guys, you know are on medication and they are not good with the environment."

Participant 1 who is in the 55 to 60 age range reported that in order to have an impact the training should be able to reach the younger generation. She indicated that not being in sync with the younger generation can be problematic in the long run. Participant 1, a case manager, has expressed that over the years she has witnessed young women who come to work for the agency and they do not take advantage of the opportunities that they are presented with because they are focused on other things. Her response to the theme of impact in general was:

I think to a large part its culture. I'm not saying that it {the training} couldn't help someone, but as a whole these young girls have to be re-directed into their

thoughts about themselves, about you know, what you're going to do because sex is extremely casual now.

When asked if the training has impacted her, Participant 1 responded:

Well for this time in my career, it's kind of so-so, because I've had it for so long, but I think for women—women you know, new hires and women coming into the division it should be a big deal.

Participant 4 was asked what her level of interest in the training was and she reported that it was “high” and that she was “intrigued” by the training session. She advised that the students were given pamphlets, provided scenarios, and were allowed to ask questions. She feels that this affected her in a positive way because she has learned some things that she did not know. In comparison, Participant 2 feels that no new information was learned in the training and reported that the information was limited.

This was her response when she was asked how the training has affected her:

I actually do have the training because we do it here. And we do the same thing all over you know it's repetitive. All you have to do is just do it annually and it comes down to you know, make sure that the training is done, and everybody signs off on it.

She also said that the PowerPoint presentation has not been updated since 2014.

Participant 5 indicated that she has been working at the pre-release center for a long time and she seems to be aware of some of the scenarios that can occur. Although she has not directly stated how the training has affected her, she has indicated that she has witnessed situations between staff and inmates and that the training has taught her some

things that have remained with her. She has even placed a label on some scenarios. For example, she was asked if the training discussed what to look for in terms of inmates seeking out individuals who may appear to be vulnerable or weak and she responded:

Yes, I call it “fishin”, yeah when the person offers you stuff and candy and leaves it on your bed, But I have seen the weaker part. I’ve been working here a long time. I have seen some things, yeah.

### **Training Deficiencies**

All of the participants expressed that the training had some deficiencies. Several subordinate themes evolved from this theme. The general consensus was that the training was generalized and did not address issues relating to women, self-esteem, and culture as it relates to age and sex.

### **Women and Sexual Abuse Training**

All participants were asked what changes they would suggest to management to improve the training if they had the opportunity. The issue of women as they related to the training was a common theme. Participant 1 expressed what appeared to be a deep interest to incorporate the experiences of females into the training as well as disseminating information relating to how society views women. This participant suggests that this information should be obtained before females are hired in corrections which also suggests that recruitment efforts of corrections officials should include an investigation of the past experiences of female applicants. This participant stated that part of the problem of sexual misconduct in corrections involving female staff is that women don’t think highly of themselves. This is her description:

I think that the schools should, you know have girls' day. They should have more than one a year, you know, they should be consistent, you know once a month, 'We're having girls day.' You know, and-and have it in the auditorium, and you know, Dove soap, I think its Dove soap, they have a lot of information about this and they have a video, where they talk about size and how women are always judged by their appearance and stuff and they take these models and they take all the make-up off of them and stuff and they show what they really look like. I just thin-I think that might be where the answer is.

Although Participant 1 is not opposed to the training being held in a staff meeting, she stated that there should be three meetings, one for the women, one for the men and one for both:

I think that perhaps when you're doing the training you might wanna have, like whenever you do it, however-like we do in staff meeting, I think we should have a women staff meeting with just the girls, and we could be open and talk about this and then I think there should be a staff meeting with just the men and maybe they would be more open and stuff like that , and then you know have a third meeting where everybody's together. I think that might work.

Participant 5 also exhibited a strong interest in addressing the issues of women and incorporating them in sexual abuse training. This respondent is an older woman with grown children. One of her children has served time in jail. This participant believes that information relating to how women carry themselves should be provided in the home, but she also believes that the topic of women and self-esteem should be included in the

training. Participant 5 shared that she has raised two children and that she “builds” her daughter up. She also shared the advice that she gave to one of her girlfriends stating, “Tell your daughter she is pretty. Tell her that she is special, she is gifted, so that no man can tell her that she is less and take advantage of her.”

Participant 2 believes that there should be “differentiated instruction” meaning gender specific training. When she was asked to elaborate on the issue of gender specific training or more specifically if genders specific training could be beneficial she responded:

You know what? Yeah. I do think that at some point it could be. I get this from my sister who is a principal. She always talks about differentiated instruction, meaning that sometimes you have to meet students where they are, and that your instruction is based on who you are teaching. So, it’s not one size fits all. You have to differentiate.

Participant 3 did not make any direct comments relating to the inclusion of the experiences of women in the training and implied that this was not an issue for her when she says, “how a person carries their self is how they carry their self.” When she was asked to elaborate, she replied, “You know if you don’t mind, getting involved in stuff like that {sexual misconduct} then your mind, you know or whatever is talking to you instead of your common sense.” Participant 4 views sexual misconduct as “situational” and when she was asked to explain “situational” she responded, “Okay, say like a woman was unhappy in her marriage and she feels lonely. Then, he comin at them, he talks nice and sweet. Whatever has been learned, he’s making them feel good at that moment.”

Participant 4 also viewed the training as lacking in the area of specifics. She believed that the instructors should not be so general in their explanation of who could be a perpetrator. Also, she believed the instructors should state what role women play in the phenomenon. This is her description:

As a correctional officer, they are talking to everybody as a group and not necessarily the men and the women or whatever, like they have to say, they never said a man or a woman, but as an ordinary person you wouldn't automatically think they were talking about you as a woman, could sexually harass a man or sexually abuse a man.

### **Women and Self-Esteem**

Two of the participants would like to see self-esteem as it relates to women included in sexual abuse training. One of the participants reported that it is included in the training but that it not intense enough. In particular, Participant 5 displayed a great amount interest in this area. As a woman with a daughter, she believes that women should raise their daughters to think very highly of themselves so that they would not seek attention elsewhere. This participant recalls staff members who have brought inmates food from home and visiting inmates at their places of employment. When asked how the training addressed self-esteem in general she replied: "No it doesn't get into that, nowhere near that."

Participant 5 also speaks of how her son attracts women on social media by calling them "beautiful" and because these women may lack self-esteem, they respond to his compliments and a relationship is formed. This is how she describes her thoughts

on self-esteem, “You shouldn’t have no man calling you something that you don’t already know about yourself.”

Participant 2 indicates that self-esteem is addressed in the electronic presentation because it identifies vulnerability in potential victims but does not reflect on what those vulnerabilities are or where they have originated. Participant 1’s discussion of the Dove soap company and their interest in building self-esteem in young women is an indication of her interest in the issue. Participants 3 and 4 do not discuss women as they relate to self-esteem.

### **The Culture of Age and Women**

All of the participants in this study were at least 30 years of age. What this study has revealed is that some of the participants believe that training fails to address the culture of age, meaning that it lacks information relative to women and age. Participant 1 believes that young women are not realizing the opportunities that are available for them. This is her description of her position on this issue:

When I was a young woman working I wanted the women coming behind me to notice the opportunities and to prepare for them, to get educated for them because this was going to be a better world for them than it was for me, and mine wasn’t bad, you know as far as achievement and education and stuff, but there’s two roads with young women and they either take the one of achievement and higher learning and employment and all, and there the other ones that they just don’t see it . They just don’t get it.

Participant 2 reported that the younger women coming to work in corrections should be taught and informed of the consequences of sexual misconduct. This is what she reported:

I think you know, one of those things of when you kinda put on the table that, Hey, you know you can go to jail for this you know. That for most people would be a big deterrent, you know. Especially the- the younger ones. for me, you know in my opinion, I think those, the- the younger females that are coming in kinda one of those things of you know, that your supervising them now but if you cross that line you will be on the other side and then have to be supervised.

Participant 4 suggests that trainers should be more politically correct when training young correctional workers. This is how she describes her position on this issue:

when you're in talking to younger people you need to get down in it with them. You have to act like the people you have in that classroom. There's some of them it don't get to em like that. If you are not talking street talk or whatever, and you're talking so professionally, you got on a three piece, nobody's listening to that.

Participants 3 and 5 did not refer to the culture of age in their descriptions of the training.

### **The Culture of Sex**

The culture of sex theme evolved from questions relating to deficiencies in training. All of the participants expressed their personal views relating to the culture of sex, and how this has affected the phenomenon of sexual misconduct in correctional institutions. Participant 2 expressed her views on the culture of sex as it relates to sexual



assaults occurring in institutions. She believes that those responsible for constructing and implementing the training should share what they have learned from incidents of rape and sexual misconduct in correctional facilities. This is her description pertaining to the culture of sex:

There is a culture, you know in corrections, that I should say, that they're really trying to shift the culture because you know they have plenty of people that think, you know, you go to jail you get raped. You know? I mean many people think that, and but I think if someone actually said, "well you know what happens when someone goes to jail and gets raped? Listen, this is actually what it is." Then that would change their mindset of thinking of oh you deserve it because you're a criminal. You know just the regular, every day average Joe. People think, oh yeah, well, they're criminals so they deserve it, which really isn't the case. But even for us as correctional employees, a lot of times, unless you know firsthand you don't know the actual events of what happened, or you know and-and and I do believe that it should be shared information, you know?

Participant 2 also expressed that although the pre-release center is considered to be community confinement that she is sure that sexual misconduct occurs there also. She believes that even though the information obtained relating to sexual abuse may not be what people want to hear, it may be what is necessary. This is her description:

Even though some of it may be graphic, but you know it may be a bit much for some people, but I think that when you actually have, just like, when you watch a documentary as opposed to watching a feature film or you know a fantasy film,

the documentary, you're getting real-life raw, you know actual events and that's what needs to happen so that we know what exactly what's going on throughout the system.

Participant 1 shared her views on women coming into the workforce who really do not have any limitations when it comes to sexual relations and feels that this is part of the problem. When asked what changes she would make to the training program she replied:

My concern is, I'm from the old time, you know. Um, I see these young women not just in DOC (Division of Corrections) but out in the workforce, and there is a problem. You can't always blame it on the men or the inmates anymore. Um, they literally give themselves away to them, and I don't know how to address that. I don't really know because you've got your identity growing up, and the women that you are around and the men you are around.

Participant 1 also believes that women becoming closer as a gender is the key and explains why:

Cause you know you have people here working or anywhere working that maybe didn't come from the best of backgrounds and they've made it this far on their own but there all—I believe in the sisterhood thing, you know, and I would like to see more of that.

Participant 5 implied that sexual relationships today are casual when she says, “Most of these girls right now, their parents didn't look out for them. Their parents are on drugs, so they have to raise themselves and some people think that sex is a “tool”.

Participants 3, and 4 did not refer to the culture of sex as having an effect on the phenomenon of sexual misconduct, and therefore did not view it as a deficiency in training.

### **Respect for Inmates/Proper Use of Authority**

Sexual misconduct is considered abuse because of the authority that correctional workers have over inmates. At the conclusion of the interviews, all of the participants were asked if there was anything else they wanted to say. Participant 3 reported that she thinks that how to use authority should be included in the training:

One problem I have it's the authority thing, you know—if you got authority over people use it correctly, you know? From what I've seen here, a lot of the house managers, they have the authority and they—I see them throwing it in the wrong way towards the inmates, you know what I'm saying?

Although Participant 4 did not express that learning how to respect the inmates was an issue for her, but she does imply that respecting the inmates is necessary when she states, “And see some people don't wanna have nothing to do with them {inmates} standoff or whatever but they are human”.

### **Overall Attitudes of Participants**

Field notes were taken throughout the entire interview for each participant. While three of the participants appeared eager to be interviewed, the remaining two showed some reluctance in providing their descriptions on some of the topics. I wrote in my journal during the entire interview and looked up every minute or so to make eye contact and observe body language. As the interviewer, I tried to establish a rapport with all of

the respondents. I asked each of them to feel as though we were friends just having a casual conversation about the sexual abuse training they received.

The body language of Participants 3 and 4 suggested that they were a not as comfortable in answering the questions as the other participants. It was obvious that I had not convinced them that we were friends. Participant 4 reminded me of a job interview. Her good posture appeared to be forced, hands folded in front of her and her tone suggested that she may have been slightly nervous. However, as the interview progressed, she appeared to be a little more relaxed in responding to the questions, but she made no eye contact with me.

Participant 3 appeared to be apprehensive in the beginning and although I introduced myself as “Tanya” she referred to me as “ma’am”. Her body language was rigid but less than that of Participant 4. She later seemed comfortable in the interview. Participants 1 and 2 appeared to be comfortable, eager and very much interested in the topic. Not much probing was necessary to get these participants to talk and eye contact was made throughout the entire interviews. Participant 5 displayed a warm, girlfriend type atmosphere as she discussed her children, her experiences as a mother, and her experience working at the pre-release center. Her body language was casual. Her legs were crossed, and she always made eye contact. She also laughed and appeared to be motivated by the topic.

### **Summary**

One-hour interviews were conducted for each of the participants and revealed a variety of perceptions on sexual abuse training. The five participants each gave different

accounts of what they believe is necessary to implement a successful training session. Each interview was carefully read and resulted in several themes for analysis. All participants reported that training had deficiencies however, two reported that training was adequate. Training as it relates to method, time, frequency, and content was discussed with the subordinate themes of sexual harassment, sexual harassment reporting, and professional boundaries. The theme of perceptions was discussed with the subordinate themes of adequacy, common sense and impact. Training deficiencies were discussed with the subordinate themes arranged according to importance; time and frequency, women and sexual abuse training: self-esteem, culture of age and women, the culture of sex, and respect for inmates.

All of the participants reported a significant amount of experience working in corrections and all of them were employed with the pre-release center years before the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) training was developed and implemented. All of the participants reported receiving PREA training at different locations and by varying methods. The time range for the class varied for each participant All participants with the exception of participant 3 expressed that a deficiency of the training was a failure to focus on women and their experiences. In Chapter 5 I have provided an interpretation of my findings and a conclusion of my research. I also included implications for social change as well as suggestions for potential policy changes with respect to PREA training.

## Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

Beck (2015) reported that 54 percent of female correctional staff allegedly perpetrated sexual abuse against inmates. According to the 2011 to 2012 Bureau of Justice statistics, 4 percent of state and federal inmates in prison and 3.2 percent of inmates in jail, reported that they had been sexually victimized by other inmates, or employees of the institution (Beck, Berzofsky, Caspar, & Krebs, U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013). The purpose of this study was to learn the experiences of female correctional staff with sexual abuse training, and to ascertain their perceptions on the training received. Becoming educated in this area may explain sexual misconduct perpetrated by female staff. A phenomenological, exploratory study was conducted with the goal of finding themes that could potentially serve as guides and or tools for those responsible for facilitating sexual abuse training in the future. This research was led by two research questions: (1) What are the lived experiences of correctional workers as they undergo sexual abuse training? and (2) What are the perceptions of female correctional workers on sexual abuse training?

Women working in community corrections have similar job duties to those working in medium and maximum- security facilities. Although, more data could have been obtained from a larger state-run facility, data retrieved from a private facility provides the foundation for future studies. Correctional staff encounter a myriad of situations throughout the course of a workday. How they react to those situations depends on how they are perceived. Before undertaking this study, I contemplated the careers of female

corrections workers and why they would risk their integrity and livelihood for a romantic/sexual encounter. It was necessary to inquire into their thought process. I was intrigued as to how they were educated in that area and wanted to know if they perceived the training to be effective. Knowing how sexual abuse training is experienced puts me as the researcher in the position to inform the community, thus potentially causing social change. Obtaining knowledge as to how corrections workers view what they have learned could answer many questions surrounding former and potential sexual abuse infractions. Probing the interviews of the participants on the issue of sexual abuse training led to perceptions of sexual abuse in general.

Interviews of the correctional workers revealed varied accounts relating to how sexual abuse training is received, perceived and understood. As reported in Chapter 2, research explains how correctional workers are trained as well as the types of training that are offered. However, there is limited information on how they are trained in sexual abuse. This chapter will present interpretations of the responses of open-ended questions asked of the participants. Seven interview questions were constructed in order to help me gain an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the correctional workers (Appendix A).

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

Interpretations of my findings is discussed according to how themes emerged from responses from the participants. A total of four themes emerged from the data: (1) content of training with the subordinate themes of sexual harassment, reporting sexual harassment, and professional boundaries; (2) time and frequency of training; (3)

perceptions of training with the subordinate themes of attitude, common sense, impact of training, and (4) training deficiencies with the subordinate themes of: women and sexual abuse training, self-esteem and the culture of age and sex.

### **Delivery Method of Training**

Training facilitators are presented with the task of how to train employees, what to teach them and by what method to teach them. Effectively adapting a training program, involves three steps: (1) providing trainees with a needs assessment, (2) selecting the appropriate tools by which to involve trainees, and (3) measuring the retention of what was learned and measuring effectiveness by offering an opportunity of feedback (Smith, 2017). Training tools are important as they determine if training is effective. For example, taking pictures in a training session creates a discussion among trainees which at some point leads to training content that is effective (Smith, 2017). None of the participants expressed that visual aids were used, but they did indicate that most of training consisted of them watching an electronic presentation.

### **Electronic Presentation**

Most of the participants reported watching a “video” relating to sexual abuse. Two of them reported that the video needed to be updated. They reported that the music in the video was depressing and that no new information was learned. One of the participants laughed at how she can recite the video verbatim. What these descriptions indicate is that this approach may need to be re-evaluated to provide training that is more effective. Literature on training suggests that adult learners do not prefer to be taught, but instead would like to be engaged in the learning process (Smith, 2017). Participants did report



that there were instructors who presented the video and went through the training with them, but there was no mention of them being engaged in the training. Watching a video does not allow the trainees to be included, which jeopardizes the effectiveness of training.

Creativity is key to effectively training staff. Trainees should be provided with the purpose of the training and it should be connected with their daily lives (Smith, 2017). There are various methods of training. Cognitive methods include lectures, demonstrations, and discussions (Miri, Mansor, Chasempour & Anvari, 2013). Computer based training became popular as organizations expanded their companies and the need arose for them to increase the training of their employees at reduced costs (Miri et al., 2013).

### **Content of Training**

#### **Sexual Harassment**

This portion of the training appeared to be enlightening to most of the participants. They expressed that the instructors provided them with the information needed to identify sexual harassment as well as its potential victims. One of the participants indicated that it was a good learning experience and seemed surprised to find that sexual harassment did not have to actually happen to her for her to report it. What this finding suggests is that sexual abuse training is effective in terms of what is implemented. However, this is contrary to the literature. As reported in Chapter 2, a nationwide survey of correctional institutions was taken and concluded that few of those institutions were able to provide a precise understanding of sexual misconduct (Armstrong, Longmire, Dretke, & Steinmetz, 2014). Since that study was taken in 1996, there have been increased allegations of sexual

misconduct perpetrated by both staff and inmates in U.S. prisons and jails. I expected the participants to report deficiencies in this area because of the history that there state has with sexual misconduct involving staff. In their descriptions, I expected to get reports that sexual harassment is prevalent because the information obtained in training was not adequately disseminated. Some corrections workers in the state where this study was conducted became infamous in sexual abuse allegations. Nevertheless, most of the participants were eager to speak on this topic and appeared knowledgeable as to what constitutes sexual harassment.

### **Reporting Sexual Harassment**

Participants viewed this portion of the training as positive. Most of the participants stated that they were taught how to report incidents of sexual harassment, what tools to use for reporting and how to report without fear of reprisal. One of the participants did not discuss this topic. This portion of the training did not appear to be problematic for most of the participants. This is another area where I expected the participants to have reported ineffectiveness in terms of what was learned. Instead, they appeared to have been well informed in this area.

### **Professional Boundaries**

The topic of professional boundaries was viewed as positive by some of the participants who appeared to be knowledgeable in this area. There was the perception by other participants that it was not “intensified enough”. Other reflections of the training were that not much time was spent on this topic. The statistics surrounding the sexual abuse of inmates by staff in correctional institutions are astonishing. The literature

reflects that there is a need for training that is effective on developing and maintaining professional boundaries (Mazza, 2012). A report that was released by the Department of Justice in 2014 revealed that there was a spike in accusations of sexual victimization in prisons. In addition, a national survey taken revealed that 1.4% of incarcerated women said that they had been sexually victimized by staff (Moss, 2014). Given those data, my expectations pertaining to this portion of the study were that all of the participants would have reported that the training was ineffective or that the information received was not useful to them in their daily job duties. It was reported by some of the participants that the electronic presentation had not been updated, which led me to believe that no new information was presented. However, there were participants who perceived the training to be enlightening.

There were also participants who perceived that portion of the training as lacking the elements needed to be effective. All participants provided topics of which they believed could benefit the training. According to the literature, dealing with the phenomenon of sexual abuse consists of providing staff with mentoring and training that teaches them how to set professional boundaries (Mazza, 2012). In their descriptions, some participants referred to having knowledge relating to professional boundaries. However, identifying the causes that lead to inappropriate relationships is another element necessary for effective professional boundary training (Mazza, 2012). For example, there are three types of boundary violations: one that involves special attachment to inmates and involves the staff feeling sorry for the inmate, one in which the staff member does not realize that they are being inappropriate and has no knowledge as to how to set

professional boundaries and romantic attachments, and one in which the staff stalks the inmate for gratification; sexual or otherwise. (Beck, 2015). Few participants revealed being knowledgeable in how to develop professional relationships with the inmates. There were participants who reported that not enough time was spent on the topic. Time spent in training is important and educators should want to provide students with enough time to grasp and retain the information.

### **Time and Frequency of Training**

Time spent in training varied from the participants. Some reported that the training lasted one to two hours, while others stated that it lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Some of the participants perceived the training as not long enough. Some participants reported that they have they training every year, some every few years, and one as often as every month. Most of the participants believe that training should be held more often. A study which researched training as it relates to the amount of time invested , focused on a two-day training in which at its conclusion the students; 83.7% reported that the training was useful (Masters, Magnuson, Bayer, Potter, & Falkowski, 2016). Those researchers reported that training should be a continuous process (Masters et al., 2016).

Over half of sexual abuse allegations in U. S correctional institutions surrounding staff -on- inmate sexual abuse in U.S. prisons and jails involved female staff. I expected to find that training facilitators had invested whatever was necessary to address this phenomenon. In 2013 several, jail guards employed in a Mid-Atlantic state institution were indicted for having sexual relationships with gang members in the jail. One gang member impregnated two of those guards. I expected that time spent in training would

have been intensified and that it would have been on-going, or as one participant put it, “it should be a big deal.” Training on sexual abuse should be frequent so as to possibly prevent and or decrease the phenomenon.

## **Perceptions of Training**

### **Attitude Towards Training**

Organizational commitment entails involving the employee to perform his duties with zeal and enthusiasm (Smith, 2017). Overall, participants perceived the training as providing what was needed for them to remain employed with the agency. They all reported that the training was mandatory. Expressions were such as “we have to watch the video”, “I need the information to keep my job”, or “what it comes down to is signing off on the training every year” were used by the participants. The perception that training was necessary in order for them remain employed could be an indication that the workers were not motivated to learn about sexual abuse. Overall, there was no sense of a commitment from the participants to learn because they wanted to improve themselves to perform better at their jobs.

All of the participants reported that they received their training in a designated setting such as a classroom, breakroom, or a meeting room. Literature pertaining to training reflects that it should not take the direction of a formal training atmosphere but should instead focus on the various routes of learning that the individuals bring with them and how those experiences can inspire others (Poell, 2017). The Learning Path notion can be used to depict and comprehend how the individual employee interprets experiences that are work based (Poell, 2017). There are four elements that make up an individuals’

learning path: (1) the social context or people with whom the employee interacts, (2) the learning theme or what the employee is learning about, (3) learning activities or events of experiences from which the employees learn and (4) learning facilities or support provided by the organization.

Understanding how the learning paths of individual employees evolve would provide professional training developers with the elements necessary to produce training that is specific to the learning path of each employee (Poell, 2017). Participants were asked to describe their feelings on the issue of sexual misconduct as a phenomenon. All of the participants either implied or expressed that they did not condone sexual misconduct. Most of the participants reported that any new hires should already have the mental capacity to not become involved in the behavior.

### **Common Sense**

The evolution of this particular theme was not surprising, but I expected all participants to report common sense as something that new recruits should already have. My expectations are acquired from my professional status in working with offenders in the criminal justice system. My college course work and my experience working with juvenile delinquents prepared me for my position as a criminal justice professional. I was knowledgeable of the culture where the main goal was to survive by any means necessary. Most of the participants reported that employees working in corrections should enter the agency with enough common sense that would assist them in not becoming involved in romantic/sexual relationships with the inmates. Those were the respondents who described themselves as being knowledgeable in the field of corrections and in life

in general. What this seems to imply is that recruiters should look for individuals who can recognize the psychological games that offenders attempt to engage staff in. The participants who presented this theme are older and appeared to be experienced in life and have been exposed to situations involving manipulation by inmates. These participants appeared to be confident in their responses and used descriptions such as “It [[sexual misconduct] should never happen” or “If that’s the way they carry themselves.” which implies that a lack of knowledge of new recruits may be a factor of sexual misconduct.

### **Impact of Training**

Participants were asked about the impact of training and the frequency of training. All had neutral responses. One of the participants provided responses that suggested that the training affected her in a positive way. Considering the responses relating to attitudes of training, I expected that training would have little or no impact on the participants. The literature reveals that experiential learning develops individual knowledge and leads to self-efficacy (Douglas-Lenders, Holland, & Allen, 2016). Experiential learning involves the student becoming involved in the learning process. In the case of correctional staff, experiential learning could involve the practice of building professional relationships with the offenders.

In their descriptions of the training participants provided no indication that the training promoted self-efficacy. Training and development programs that informs the students on a particular topic without encouraging self-efficacy compromises the training effectiveness (Douglas-Lenders et. al 2016). A training program that is designed to

detect, prevent, and decrease sexual abuse should involve the students in their goals, by creating the notion that with confidence those goals can be achieved.

### **Training Deficiencies**

#### **Women and Sexual Abuse Training**

The majority of participants shared views relating to deficiencies in training relating to women. The overall contention was that women should be trained differently and or separately from men. A majority of the participants talked about women and self-esteem and viewed this as part of the problem of sexual misconduct involving women. Participants implied that women are part of the problem of sexual abuse ,yet they receive the same training as their male co-workers. One participant discussed how she feels as a woman in her training group: “As a correctional officer, they are talking to everybody as a group and not necessarily the men and the women or whatever, but just in general. They didn’t say, and women could be charged with this.” [sexual misconduct]. It was expressed during recruitment of this study that women lead men in sexual abuse allegations, which may have assisted the participants with their thinking in terms of the needs of women, however, this is unclear.

**Self-Esteem.** Self-esteem was perceived as a problem relating to women working in corrections by most of the participants who believed that it should be included in the training. This theme was not expected to evolve from the responses of the participants. However, all of the participants appeared to be motivated to speak on the topic. One of the participants mentioned the dove soap project where supermodels removed all of their make-up and went to high schools to talk to teenage girls about feeling good about



themselves. Another participant mentioned the possibility of there being an unpretentious female staff who would welcome attention from the inmates. That participant also spoke about how she builds her daughter up to love herself so that no one will take advantage of her.

Female correctional staff have to contend with the consequences of working in a male dominated field. They are not only subjected to being harassed by offenders, but they have to deal with being treated unfairly. Psychological problems such as depression, child molestation, spouse battery, fear of intimacy or success, and anxiety are linked to low self-esteem (Hill, Cacciatore, Shreffler, & Pritchard, 2017). In addition, women have experiences that men do not. Women are able to bear children, and thus are subjected to the possibility of experiencing post-partum depression, miscarriages, and stillbirth child. They also experience menopause, and the effects of having a hysterectomy. All of these experiences may contribute to having a lack of self-esteem. Research in the area of self-esteem reveals that when individuals are subjected to environments that are stressful, self-affirmation can cushion self-esteem (Spencer-Rodgers, Major, Forster & Peng, 2016). Most of the participants would like to see self-esteem as a focal point in sexual abuse training. Including this topic in training may be beneficial to inmates as there are also men who experience low self-esteem issues. Inmates come from diverse backgrounds and cultures. They are products of dysfunctional families and some have been raped, physically attacked, and mentally abused. Some are developmentally delayed or have learning disabilities, some are trying to make peace with their sexual preference and some need guidance to become productive citizens. The topic of self-esteem could

prove to be an asset to the training program. Several of the participants reported that there is a culture of age that needs to be addressed in training.

### **Culture**

**The culture of age.** Requirements to work in a prison or jail, include a high school diploma, no criminal record, and the applicant must be at least 18 years of age. Females qualify for these positions as they are less likely to have a criminal background compared to men (Smith, 2012). Several participants have referred to age being a concern when considering training development. One of the participants suggested that trainers have to present the information in a manner that relates to the younger generation. That participant contended that those participants who are younger are not listening to those trainers with whom they cannot relate. Another participants notion is that different training sessions based on experience in the field of corrections, could be beneficial. For example, there could be some in the training class who have been employed with the organization for 30 years and then some who are new to the field, are younger in age and thus may benefit from different training approaches. Another participant reflected on the possibility of younger staff being stationed in the basement of the facility where there would be in close contact with the inmates. She indicated that they may not be able to handle inappropriate behavior because of their age and lack of experience. All of the participants have an extensive background in the field of corrections. The general position of the participants is that age should be considered training development programs are developed. The rationale for this position may be related to the experiences

that they have had in working with younger staff of which will be discussed in the next section pertaining to sexual culture.

**Sexual culture.** Literature on boundary violations between staff and inmates is abundant. Recent research has identified a significant amount of female staff involved with inmates (Beck, 2015). Most of the participants revealed that there is an issue with the sexual culture of today, and that this has had a negative impact on women supervising male inmates. One of the participants reflected on a young woman who once worked for the organization and who in her opinion was highly intelligent and could have excelled within the organization. Instead of advancing in the field of corrections, she reported that this young woman provided sex to the inmates for money. Another participant spoke of a time when a young woman presumably became infatuated with a young man [inmate] with whom she was having a sexual relationship with, and when he attempted to end the relationship she stalked him at his place of employment. That participant also recalls witnessing inmates on camera coming from a staff area with their clothes in disarray. This participant suggested that females should not be allowed to supervise male inmates. One other participant reported that sex is situational meaning that if a woman is having problems with her partner she is more susceptible to enter into a sexual relationship with an inmate. Another participant reported that she is sure that sex between the inmates and staff is taking place in the facility [pre-release center].

### **Conclusion**

Although there were areas where some of the participants believed the training to be effective, the overall contention was that training needs changes that should focus on

women. My status as a criminal justice professional may have contributed to my perceptions of the training as described by the participants. My expectations with the data relates to three areas that are of concern to me as a criminal justice professional: The frequency of training, its intensity in terms of the topics covered and the methods of training. There were varied accounts of how often the training is offered. Once a year was the general consensus for PREA training. I expected that the data would reveal that training was offered more frequently or at least on a quarterly basis and that it would be mandatory. My rationale for this expectation is because of increased sexual abuse allegations in corrections. I also expected the data to reveal that training was intensive and that it consisted of the following topics: consequences of sexual abuse convictions such as job loss and or jail, federal and state laws pertaining to sexual abuse, and case studies or real situations involving staff-on inmate sexual abuse. I expected that teaching methods would consist of instructors as opposed electronic methods and that those instructors would involve the students by using role play, and improvisations and other methods that would involve the students.

The data revealed the opposite of my expectations; that training is not on-going, it does not address the consequences of sexual abuse or the laws pertaining to any sexual abuse infractions, it does not involve the student in its teaching methods, and that it is taught mainly by way of electronic presentations. My astonishment with the data relates to the theme of common sense. Some of the participants expressed that they would expect those entering the field of corrections to have enough common sense not to become involved in inappropriate relationships. My expectations were that this theme would have

evolved from the responses of all of the participants. All of the participants have a substantial amount of experience working in the field. Those with years of experience in the field may be less inclined to understand the phenomenon of staff on inmate sexual abuse since they were able to survive in the field without any infractions relating to sexual abuse

The study group for this project was small. A larger group may have produced more themes. I also expected reluctance from the participants as the subject matter is of a sensitive matter. Instead, most of the participants seemed eager to participate and communicated with fear of reprisal. All participants were given an opportunity to make changes to their responses. What was concluded is that sexual abuse training as provided by the PREA was ineffective and that participants needed the information for continued employment. Addressing the training needs of female corrections workers as women as opposed to correctional workers could produce more effective train

### **Recommendations**

There are several recommendations for future studies First, this study should be repeated on a larger scale, preferably at the division of corrections within a state to see if new themes emerge. In addition, no correctional officers were used in this study. Correctional officers work with inmates in a different capacity from that of other staff. Conducting a study with female correctional officers may produce more information. A larger institution would also provide an opportunity to recruit younger female staff. The participants of this study ranged in age from 30 to 60 years of age. A younger age group may provide different responses in the area of perceptions of sexual abuse training. It

would be interesting to learn how they view the concept of sex in general. Finally, no medical personnel were used in this study. Psychologists, nurses and doctors work with inmates on a very personal level. Ascertaining their perceptions of sexual abuse training could be beneficial to the criminal justice community.

Some participants expressed that they received training by a way of a video presentation. It was described as “repetitive” and “mundane.” It may be beneficial if other methods of training were provided, such as lectures in conjunction with visual aids, or perhaps a method where the staff is engaged in the learning process. Participants reported receiving the training at various times throughout the years. There was one participant who expressed that she had the training “a while ago” while another expressed that she has it as often as every week. There seems to be a lack of consistency in terms of when the training is conducted as well as where it is takes place. One participant reported that she received her last training in a staff meeting, while another reported that received hers in the “breakroom” with new inmates. Training in terms of when and where it takes place should be consistent throughout the institution. None of the participants expressed the rationale or the purpose they were receiving the training. Providing a precise purpose for receiving the training would increase the motivation to learn, which would ultimately decrease the behavior of sexual abuse.

### **Recommendations for Policy Changes**

Based on the responses of the participants, women are not a priority in terms of how training is developed in corrections. My suggestions for improvement would be to focus on the needs of female correctional workers as they are currently in a male dominated

field. They are subjected to sexual harassment by inmates as well as their male counterparts. Self-esteem as it relates to women was discussed by most of the participants. The sexual culture of women was also discussed. This indicates that there may be a need for gender-specific training. Concentrating on the experiences of women in and out of the workplace may provide a catalyst in the prevention of sexual misconduct

## Appendix A

**Letter of Recruitment**

Dear Madam:

You are invited to take part in an exploratory study involving how female correctional staff perceive sexual misconduct training. This research will assist me in satisfying the requirements needed to complete my dissertation in Human Services with a concentration in Criminal Justice from Walden University. You are being recruited because you are female, have been employed with Threshold for at least one year and have received sexual misconduct training at least once. The goal of this research is to learn information that can be used to assist administrators in the development and implementation of sexual abuse training programs. As the researcher, I will conduct a face to face interview with you at a time and place that will be decided by you. The interview will be recorded, and the session will last for approximately 1-2 hours. If questions are asked that make you feel uncomfortable in any way, you will have the opportunity to discontinue the session. Your participation in this study will be voluntary and you will not be compensated. If you agree to participate you will be provided with a consent form of which will thoroughly explain the study. You will be given the opportunity to ask questions and will be asked to provide written consent of your interest to participate. If you have any questions or have an interest in participating in this research you may contact me by way of e-mail; [tanya.bracey-rowlett@waldenu.edu](mailto:tanya.bracey-rowlett@waldenu.edu). You may also call me at 443-562-0889. I look forward to hearing from you.

Tanya Bracey-Rowlett



## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

Dear Madam:

You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to understand how female correctional workers perceive sexual misconduct training. Your participation will be voluntary. If you decide to engage you will be free to decline from involvement at any time. You are being recruited for this study because you are a female correctional employee, have been employed in corrections for at least one year and have received sexual misconduct training. Below is information pertaining to the study along with my contact numbers and e-mail address. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask.

**Title of Study:** Female Correctional Workers: Perceptions of Sexual Misconduct Training

**Purpose of Study:** This study will explore the issue of staff on inmate sexual misconduct by gaining an understanding of how female correctional staff perceive sexual misconduct training.

**Procedures:** You will be asked to participate in audio recorded interviews over the course of six weeks. The interviews will take place at a time and location which will be agreed upon by the both of us and will be recorded. Interview sessions will last from 1-2 hours. In order to ensure that the information that you provide is accurate, we will also meet at the decided upon location on a separate date for 30 minutes or less. The interview questions will not only relate to the sexual misconduct training that you have received, but will also relate to your perceptions of that training

**Risks of Discomfort:** You will be asked questions pertaining to your position as to how the training is approached. Depending upon your experiences discomfort may or may not occur. In the event of feelings of discomfort, you will be provided with referrals for help through various organizations within the state of Maryland.

**Benefits:** Information retrieved from this study may provide the criminal justice community with a better insight as to how female correctional staff should be trained on sexual misconduct.

**Confidentiality:** Answers provided during the interview will be audio taped for transcription purposes. Once the interviews have been transcribed, the information will be kept in a locked storage area for five years. No one but the primary researcher (myself) will have access to them. Results of the study may be published in scholarly journals and you will be notified if this occurs. You should be aware that as an officer of the court for the State of Maryland, I am mandated by law to report any suspicions of abuse to the proper authorities.

**Compensation:** There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

**Opportunity to ask questions:** You are encouraged to ask questions at any time by e-mailing the primary researcher at [tanya.bracey-rowlett@waldenu.edu](mailto:tanya.bracey-rowlett@waldenu.edu). You may also call me at 443-562-0889. If your questions have not been answered by the researcher, you may also call the Walden University Research Department at 1-800-925-3368 or contact them by e-mail; [waldenresearch@waldenu.edu](mailto:waldenresearch@waldenu.edu).

**Freedom to Withdraw:** You are free to decline participation in this study. If you decide to partake in this project, you have the right to withdraw at any time.

**Consent:** If you would like to participate you will be provided with a brief screener relating to your gender, length of employment and sexual abuse training status. Your signature is a certification of your willingness to participate in this project. It is also a manifestation of your comprehension of the information provided. You will be given a copy of this signed consent form.

I understand that my interviews will be audio recorded and I give my consent.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions

The introduction of the broad research questions- What are the lived experiences of female correctional workers, and what are the perceptions of sexual misconduct training of female correctional workers will be addressed. My assumption is that based on the experiences of female correctional workers; their interpretation and perceptions of sexual misconduct training may differ. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How is sexual misconduct training implemented? Please describe.
2. How has the frequency of training impacted you? Please describe.
3. How has the length of training impacted you? Please describe.
4. Please describe your level of interest in the training
5. What changes if any would you apply to sexual misconduct training?
6. Describe how the training affected your knowledge base? What changes occurred in your perceptions relating to sexual misconduct?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

Participants will exit the interview session.

## Appendix D

### Letter of Approval

**THRESHOLD, INC.**  
 1702 St. Paul Street  
 Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
 (410) 727-0100 Fax: (410) 727-0103  
 Email: thres1702@yahoo.com

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March 28, 2017

Tanya Lynette Bracey-Rowlett  
 6517 Hilltop Avenue  
 Baltimore, Maryland, 21206  
 tanya.bracey-rowlett@waldenu.edu

Dear Ms. Bracey-Rowlett,

The Board of Directors of Threshold Inc. have reviewed your research application and supporting material and approved your request to conduct a research project at Threshold Inc. The Board has approved female staff to voluntarily participate in the research study.

We feel that the project will be beneficial to project's participants and request that a copy of the study be made available for review upon completion.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please feel free to contact me via email [nvhalsey@thresholdinc.us](mailto:nvhalsey@thresholdinc.us) or telephone at 410.727.0100.

Thank You



Nicole V Halsey  
 Executive Director

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