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Negotiating Education 'Inside and Out': A Feminist Analysis of Educational
Programming for Previously Incarcerated Women in Canada

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Abstract

In this Major Research Paper (MRP), I report on findings from a literature review I conducted on educational programs available to women who have been incarcerated in Ontario, Canada. I use a feminist lens to analyze literature and program documents to understand the educational opportunities available to women who are facing the challenge of reintegration into communities, after incarceration. Specifically, I examine transitional programs offered by Correctional Services Canada, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Ontario), and other key prison programs. I also review various programs offered to women upon release, through the John Howard Society (Ontario), The Elizabeth Fry Society (Ontario), the Walls to Bridges Program (Ontario), the Canadian Family Correctional Network, and the Ontario Halfway Housing Association. In this review, I explore the processes of stigmatization and criminalization that inform women’s educational programming opportunities. I also highlight various gendered challenges and barriers that influence women’s access to, and experience of, educational programming post-release. My goal is to identify the state of existing educational programs for women who have been previously incarcerated and to generate discussion for future program development.

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Introduction

In November 2016, I attended a Restorative Justice Conference (November 2016/APA Conf ref) in Toronto, Ontario. As an adult education student specifically interested in women's education and marginalization, I was curious to learn how the educational needs and opportunities for previously incarcerated women would be discussed. Although there were many speakers, including previously incarcerated offenders and professionals working in corrections, not one speaker commented on the role of education in community reintegration and recidivism, despite research that highlights the importance of education for previously incarcerated women (Doherty, Forrester, Brazil, & Matheson, 2014). My research provides an analysis of educational offerings and opportunities for previously incarcerated women. I define offerings as any formal or informal educational curriculum, as well as any vocational training or skills program, whose purpose is to better prepare women for reintegration into the community post-release. I contend that education itself does not automatically pave the way to successful reintegration; rather, several key issues may inform individual opportunities in programming upon release from prison. My goal is to understand the role of education in the lives of previously incarcerated women and analyze what educational programming is currently available to such women in Ontario. My research also focuses on program efficacy, as well as women's participation, experiences, perceptions, and interest in these programs.

Previous research suggests that access to accredited educational programming and skills training is essential for women's reintegration into society (Monster & Micucci, 2005) and that these women should have opportunities to develop certified marketable skills (Squires, 2004). The mandate of Correctional Services Canada (CSC) states that

correctional programs within prison are a key component of correctional strategies that promote the safe and successful reintegration of offenders into the community (Usher & Stewart, 2011). However, the Auditor General Report (2017) emphasizes the continued shortfall of CSC's delivery of educational programming, highlighting that the current protocol does not allow many women the time needed to complete the programming before parole or early release. Often, women are not given the educational preparation they are entitled to before reintegration into the community. As Cobbina (2010) suggests, education influences women's recidivism rates and negative educational experiences may lead some women to choose not to continue with their education.

Schiller (1998) argues that it is necessary to address women's criminogenic needs so they may successfully reintegrate into the community and reduce their chances of reoffending. Institutions tend to address gender difference by treating women as a homogenous group, which does not account for women's diverse experiences, lives or contexts (Turnbull, 2016). An independent review of Ontario Corrections (Sapers et al., 2017) identified that there are insufficient connections and transitions between institutional programs and community services and organizations.

A variety of educational and vocational programs are offered both in prison and in the community; however, I examine programs available post-release, as well as transitional programs from prison to community. My goal is to explore the rationale behind the programs, including why the programs were developed and how they intend to support the reintegration of women during incarceration and post-release. Additionally, I analyze how government institutions develop and implement programs within the current infrastructure and protocols of incarceration. Furthermore, I consider how programs are

carried out and enforced by government personnel and supported by community organizations during the transition process. I also review how community organizations structure their programs and how these programs are offered to previously incarcerated women. Lastly, I investigate the impact of these programs on the reintegration outcomes of previously incarcerated women and their participation in these programs.

Specifically, I examine programs offered by Correctional Service Canada (CSC – federal corrections), the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS – provincial corrections), Ontario Halfway Housing Association (OHHA), John Howard Society (JHS – Ontario chapters), Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS – Ontario chapters), Walls to Bridges/Walls to Bridges Collective program (W2B/W2BC – Ontario), and Canadian Families Correctional Network (CFCN – Ontario programs). Throughout, I draw upon previous research to gain additional insights into educational offerings and their impact on the reintegration of previously incarcerated women. By executing an analysis of the program offerings in Ontario through a feminist perspective, I discuss the state of existing programs and generate discussion for future program development.

Background to the Problem

“When thee builds a prison, thee had better build with the thought ever in thy mind that thee and thy children may occupy the cells.” - Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845)

(CAEFS, 2015)

The first independent prison for women was established in 1934 as part of the Kingston Penitentiary for Men (later becoming the Prison for Women). Before then, women who were “too few to count” were housed alongside men in abusive and deplorable conditions (Arbour, 1996b, p. 239). The Prison for Women remained the only

federal penitentiary for women in Canada until 1995; closing in May 2000 following the construction of four regional federal institutions and one healing lodge (MacDonald & Watson, 2001). Women unable to serve their sentence in any provincial institution were transported to Eastern Ontario. This distance often contributed to the women's alienation from family, support networks, and their community.

As Parkes and Pate (2006) highlight, programs and correctional policies for women were adapted from male policies, which disadvantaged and discriminated against women in the correctional system. Grace (2014) asserts that knowledge is socially and historically constructed. CSC research (2017a) has found that historically, male-based correctional models do not meet the needs of diverse women. This research suggests that programs need to be developed specifically for women, rather than duplicating those designed for men. Accordingly, the educational environment needs to be established in a way that fosters women's learning and provides applicable learning transactions (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Kincheloe (2008) argues that it is important to be concerned with those in society that are marginalized as education is rarely neutral, but inherently political, and cannot be a standard formula unilaterally applied to everyone. Education cannot be imposed and expected to be successful; it needs to adapt to the conditions, problems, and environments where it takes place (Giroux, 2017). In regard to previously incarcerated women, their viewpoint towards education and how they learn, is based upon life experiences and their understanding of the social world. Understanding the learning needs of previously incarcerated women suggests that the learning process should be student-centred and collaborative (Stevens, 2001).

Creating Choices: The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990) included a comprehensive review of women's correctional facilities and set mandates to steer reform based upon women's needs and experiences. The task force was comprised of CSC members, CAEFS representatives, representatives from various national women's and Indigenous organizations, and supported by the Solicitor General. The report argued that it is the responsibility of the government, as well as private and voluntary sectors, to support programs for women during and post incarceration, with the goal of ensuring their successful reintegration into society. The CSC highlights that women's prisons are based on the five key principles outlined in *Creating Choices* (1990): empowerment, meaningful and responsible choices, respect and dignity, a supportive environment, and shared responsibility. Gaetz and O'Grady (2006) suggest that re-entry programs can assess risk factors and identify challenges that are particular to individual women, while providing the supports necessary for successful reintegration. The foundation of prison education upholds the assumptions that education will reduce recidivism and lead to improved employment opportunities (Fortin, 2004). Previous research reports the effectiveness of prison education, concluding that high school education equivalency programs lead to a 30% decrease in recidivism and a 13% increase in employment potential upon release (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles, 2013). According to Berman (2005), female offenders that transition into the community may have complex needs due to parental obligations, history of domestic violence, substance abuse, and/or lack of confidence and support. If female offenders are to find value in participating in educational opportunities, the programming needs to attend to and recognize the range of women's complex needs. Institutional and government protocols,

personal obligations, and support systems are factors that may influence women's educational opportunities. Community organizations such as Inside-Out Canada (later renamed Walls to Bridges) stress that educational programming must be relevant and address women's unique and individual needs as they re-enter society (Davis, 2013). They also emphasize the need for continuity between prison education and academic support upon release (Davis, 2013). However, program developers must also take into account the reasons why women may not aspire towards education.

Purpose and Importance of Study

The purpose of my research is to examine program offerings available in federal and provincial correctional institutions, and those offered by community agencies for incarcerated and previously incarcerated women. Although previous research has explored prison education, there is a gap in the literature on program structure and implementation, including how these work in unison with and in opposition to each other. My review of program offerings reveals a range of potential benefits and negative educational outcomes for previously incarcerated women. By exploring correctional government policies and the private sector that shapes educational programming practices, I unpack the limitations, problems, and possibilities afforded to previously incarcerated women. These findings provide insight into the existing educational climate that surrounds previously incarcerated women.

Gouthro (2011) argues that women are disadvantaged in accessing and participating in educational contexts due to structured gender inequalities. Women who have been incarcerated face a multitude of factors related to: gender, stigmatization and criminalization, marginalization, education and employment, family and community

supports, reintegration, Indigeneity, and geographic considerations (Carlton & Segrave, 2016; Cobbina, 2010; Hannah-Moffat & Innocente, 2013; Leverentz, 2014; Mahoney, 2011; Wardrop & Pardoel, 2018). Taking into account these factors, I analyze the availability and accessibility of these programs. My findings highlight the reasons that may affect the participation of previously incarcerated women in educational programming.

It is the disparity between the intended goals of stakeholders (namely the organizations or groups who have a political stake in the outcome) and the actual results of educational programming for the women involved in the correctional system, which led me to explore the literature surrounding educational opportunities for previously incarcerated women, and how these opportunities are applied in day to day life.

Statement of the Problem Situation

Stevens' (2001) study of female offenders found that there is a positive correlation between providing education during incarceration and lowering recidivism. The CSC research report *Program Strategy for Women Offenders* (Fortin, 2004) also identified women's need for additional family and community support in correctional programming post-incarceration. The research found that although the need for educational program development was rated high at 93%, programs and facilities were rated at only 67% with some communities having no facilities at all. This report highlights some of the inadequacies of government-sponsored educational programs, which can have a negative impact on women's experiences and views of educational programming.

Gaetz and O'Grady's (2006) research on discharge planning found that the majority of inmates leave prison with minimal work readiness skills and no financial means. A cause and effect situation may begin to develop, where one factor precipitates the next: no prospects → no employment → no housing → homelessness → re-engagement in criminal activity in order to survive → recidivism. However, the CSC *Ten-Year Status Report* (2006), finds that incarcerated women also have high educational needs, as 66% do not have a high school diploma. In a study exploring the post-release experiences of Canadian women, Hannah-Moffat and Innocente (2013) found that only one-third of the participants had formalized plans for education. Overall, the post-release plans were inadequate with non-specific community assessments, and nominal information about program availability or suitability, thus setting women up for failure. The discrepancy between the intended goals of CSC and the personal realities of the women who move through the correctional system raises concerns about the educational supports available to these women.

Rationale for the Study

Previously incarcerated women experience stigmatization, which can negate their educational credentials and limit their prospects upon release (Leverentz, 2014). Mahoney (2011) found that in 2008/09, incarcerated women were less likely to have a high school diploma, potentially adding another barrier to the complexity of marginalization and multiple levels of oppression experienced upon release. The transition process is dependent upon a transition plan developed to provide previously incarcerated women security and safety when leaving prison. Additionally, access to post-release services and a strong support network are crucial for successful reintegration

(Cobbina, 2010). I questioned why previously incarcerated women continued to have difficulties surrounding post-release education and training. I also was curious about which programs were successful in the reintegration process. While attending the *Symposium for Women on Punishment and Prison Abolition* at Brock University (March 2017), I had the opportunity to listen first-hand to someone's experiences and noted some thoughts in my journal:

I had the most eye-opening conversation over coffee with 'Jane' today at the conference. She told me about her experiences after prison and it was so amazing to hear her story. I can't include her experiences – it was a private conversation – but it has given me a lot to think about and great perspective. (Personal Journal – March 6, 2017)

I sought to analyze the program offerings, alongside literature reporting on the practical functionality of such programs. Although community programs do not differentiate between women that have been federally or provincially incarcerated, availability of the program does not always provide the same opportunities to different groups of previously incarcerated women. Dependent on geographical location of the program, wherein a greater number of programs are offered in larger cities or cities with correctional institutions, previously incarcerated women living out of this area have limited access to post-release programs.

Although previous research has explored prison education, there is a gap in the literature focusing on women's personal experiences, perceptions, and realistic opportunities surrounding educational programming. A review of the programs highlights the current issues previously incarcerated women face in relation to education, while offering insight that might inform future practices.

Research Questions

I conducted a literature review of educational programs for previously incarcerated women. I analyze programs that are designed to help women transition from incarceration to community, as well as community-based programs that are available to women upon release. The questions that guided my study are:

1. How are transitional and community educational programs structured and how do they seek to achieve their mandates?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of these programs when implemented?

Theoretical Framework

A feminist perspective is well-suited for my study, as it allows me to create and share knowledge that is beneficial to women (DeVault, 1999) while contributing my research to the existing literature. My literature review is informed by broader feminist perspectives founded on social criticism and based on technical, practical, and emancipatory forms of knowledge (Elias & Merriam, 2005). Feminist theory challenges power dynamics, examines power structures that influence what knowledge is shared and how it is taught, and takes a range of approaches to understand and address inclusion (Hawkesworth, 2012). It stresses the importance of social equity and social justice for all women by using different feminist frameworks and interpretive paradigms that focus on a critical point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Dominant ideologies that include values, beliefs, and stereotypes of particular groups are perpetuated through societal constructs and can influence and distort the reality of particular groups (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). St. Pierre reaffirms that empowerment and liberation are particular to a cause and “because

of the complexity of women's lives, they [post-structural feminists] find it impositional to define one grand vision of liberation for all women" (2000, p. 493).

Globalization, neo-liberal policy changes, and socioeconomic policies have led to the increase in the criminalization of the already disadvantaged, marginalized, and most vulnerable members of our communities, as argued in previous feminist research (Covington, 2003; Pate, 2006; Pollack, 2009). Moreover, feminist scholarship argues that while the structural and social constraints that shape male and female behaviours are identified and unique, this identification does not carry over to criminogenic factors, which continue to be applied unilaterally and without differentiation (Cobbina, 2010; Gaub & Holtfreter, 2015). Pollock (1998) affirms that while different socialization processes for men and women serve to create different behaviour patterns, criminalized women are more likely to be financially disadvantaged, have a history of abuse, and be primary caregivers in their families. Several factors that create a distinctive footprint for female offenders centre around familial environments that often include domestic violence, sexual abuse, and financial hardship. These factors can also contribute to substance abuse, violence, and criminalization (Pollock, 1998).

Feminist perspectives assume that power relations are social and historical constructions, that oppression has many faces, and that oppression characterizes contemporary societies (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). A feminist perspective asks us to consider (and reconsider) not only women's oppression, but our current understandings of power, knowledge and empowerment, while challenging knowledge that excludes women (Harding, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2012). When applied to the context of incarceration, these perspectives challenge our understandings of gender as uniform or as

based on sex alone, and compel us to consider that there are other determinants (such as race, class, and personal experiences) that greatly influence women's participation in all programming (Carlton & Segrave, 2016, Hannah-Moffat, 2009). According to Turnbull (2016), CSC states their program offerings recognize gender differences. In actuality, the programs are based on the foundation of what is opposite to the male 'norm', rather than identifying women's needs. Feminist theory resists the temptation to categorize oppression to the factor of gender alone, and challenges that the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, and class are only a few factors that create divisive environments (Villaverde, 2008). Collins and Bilge (2016) define intersectionality as an analysis of the many axes that work together and influence each other, while acknowledging that these axes are not mutually exclusive.

Feminist theory holds that women have a multitude of educational experiences and examines the implications that these have on their lives (DeVault, 2004). This lens guides my analysis of educational programming in relation to women. By using a feminist vision in this literature review, I am able to analyze educational programs, strategies, tactics, and their educational programs' surrounding literature.

Women, both while incarcerated and upon release, are part of a marginalized community. An Indigenous parolee from the (now closed) Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario stated "the starting point for action lies not in abstract discussions, but in the experiences of the women themselves" (Creating Choices, chapter 1, para. 1). A feminist perspective provides a framework to explore women's issues focusing on what is best for women. However, there are many characteristics of feminist thought illustrating

that feminism is diverse, decentred, exclusionary, argues for emancipation, and holds common interests (Ramazanoğlu, 2002).

Moreover, feminist scholarship argues that the structural and social constraints that shape male and female behaviours are identified and unique, since post-release life circumstances surrounding education, employment, and caregiver responsibilities are often gendered (Cobbina, 2010; Curcio, Pattavina, & Fisher, 2018).

Outline of Research Paper

My research paper is divided into several sections. In section one, I discuss the background of educational opportunities for previously incarcerated women, and how an analysis of the literature surrounding these programs illustrates educational barriers and challenges. Also, the problem situation, purpose of the study, and research questions are identified. A feminist perspective informs my review.

Section two outlines the methods I used to conduct my literature review. In this chapter, I define the criteria I used for program selection and discuss the programs I analyzed. I also identify the research process surrounding program identification and selection. Finally, I explain the methods I used for data collection and data analysis, and conclude with a discussion of my methodological assumptions.

Section three includes literature that reviews the transitional educational programming offered between incarceration and release, as well as post-release programs. I examine the literature through a feminist lens and access both government and academic research, as well as personal accounts of previously incarcerated women.

In section four I identify emergent themes and discuss similarities and/or differences between educational programs, their efficacy based upon individual women's

needs, challenges and barriers, and possible limitations. Additionally, I discuss how prison education may influence post-release programs and how this may impact the possibilities and opportunities available to women post-incarceration.

Section five summarizes the main observations of my literature review. I make recommendations regarding educational programming based upon my findings, and suggestions for knowledge mobilization that may prove beneficial to government agencies and community programming.

Research Methodology and Procedures

A feminist perspective is suitable for my research as the primary purpose of feminism is to move research into practice (Beckman, 2014). The goal of my research is to create awareness of transformative educational practices that can provide a democratic and equitable education (de Saxe, 2012) for previously incarcerated women, while potentially initiating change. The aim of feminist methodology is to research what is beneficial for a diversity of women, and to find what has been ignored, suppressed, and censored (DeVault, 1999). Specific principles are applied in feminist research: (1) power imbalances; (2) the importance of listening to women's voices and experiences; (3) emphasis on diversity and intersectionality; (4) reflexivity; (5) social relationships during the research process; and (6) the use of research results (Beckman, 2014).

Over the years, feminism has taken on many trajectories to better deal with feminist issues not only based upon gender, but more specifically to address the differences in class, ethnicity, economic status, marginalization, and race. Although women are not positioned equally in the social landscape, women of colour (as well as

those who are poor, lesbian, disabled, and immigrant) are also marginalized (DeVault & Gross). Women who have been previously incarcerated experience additional barriers that contribute to their unequal social positions. Approaching my work from a feminist perspective is useful for this literature review, because it focuses attention on the needs of previously incarcerated women. Furthermore, it shows how educational programming can influence their status and stigmatization within the community upon re-entry. Feminist research guides my literature review and provides me with the tools to explore social realities of knowledge that are socially constructed, situational, gender oppressive, and not value-free (Beckman, 2014; Kincheloe, 2008).

Ackerly and True (2010) argue that embedded cultural androcentric patterns influence knowledge production in institutional settings and affect women differently depending upon individual factors. Two main objectives shared across feminist schools of thought are descriptive theories that reveal obvious and subtle gender inequalities, and change-oriented theories that aim to reduce or eradicate those inequalities (Martin, 2003). Multiple methods and tools may be used by feminist researchers while the research questions guide the researchers' choices (Tolman & Szalacha, 1999; Hesse-Biber & Leckenby, 2004). Smith (2004) explains that women's experiences, as told in women's words, are vital in the feminist movement and in their lives. Interviews from previous research can be very powerful as they put women's experiences and knowledge into language that can then be shared by many (DeVault & Gross, 2012). My MRP is designed as a literature review of educational programs for women who have been incarcerated. I analyzed these programs using government documents, research

surrounding previously incarcerated women, and an examination of women's interviews and experiences from other studies.

I define educational programming as any formal or informal academic or vocational training program. I examined the transitional programs offered at federal and provincial correctional institutions, as well as post-release community programs by major community organizations and agencies. The analysis of educational programs is from a feminist perspective that focuses on program similarities, disparities, and overall efficacy. Narratives from previous research indicate that women in the social welfare system are often not able to benefit from educational programming post-release, as there is no government support system that enables them to attend formal/informal training programs (Gouthro, 2005). Additionally, the deconstruction of social safety nets, which include social, health, and education services, has left a vulnerable and marginalized population dispossessed of basic needs and on a path towards criminalization (Bumiller, 2013; Pate, 2006).

Data collection.

I began my research with documents on the CSC website, which focused on educational programs for incarcerated and previously incarcerated women. Many of these documents referenced existing community agencies and provided related websites. I also contacted the research department at CSC and requested publications that dealt with women and education (both incarcerated and post-release). The research department was very helpful in sending me publications, many of which were useful in my research. I researched the existing agencies (Ontario chapters) through the internet and found the John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO), the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry

Societies (CAEFS), and the Ontario Halfway Housing Associations (OHHA). The websites of these organizations provided a large number of reports and publications on their work with previously incarcerated women and the services they provide. Through these agencies, I also became aware of conferences in the Greater Hamilton and Greater Toronto areas focusing on the needs and experiences of previously incarcerated women. I attended several conferences sponsored by community organizations and was guided towards their work and programs with previously incarcerated women.¹ I also contacted key people by email and personally at conferences, requesting information about their programs and other research material, which proved to be very helpful.²

Data analysis.

I analyzed key elements that influenced the validity of programming for incarcerated and previously incarcerated women. Throughout my analysis, I explored and challenged dominant meritocratic assumptions that education is 'always' and 'equally' good and beneficial, and questioned guarantees of success that circulate within educational programming. de Saxe (2012) states that it is important to be open to new knowledge forms and understandings of knowledge; if institutions are going to begin to transform education and make it emancipatory.

The data is presented according to emergent themes that developed during my analysis, which include: gender, reintegration, stigmatization, criminalization, employment, education, housing, economic positionality, family and support networks,

¹ Community organizations include: The Bridge (Hamilton), the CFCN (Canada wide), and the Walls to Bridges Program and the Walls to Bridges Collective (W2B – Kitchener chapter and W2BC – Toronto Collective)

² Individuals contacted include: Louise Leonardi – CFCN (V. Sitnik, personal communication, April 19, 2017), Shoshana Pollack – W2B (V. Sitnik, personal communication, February 4, 2017), and Joann Carrothers – The Bridge (V. Sitnik, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Indigeneity, and geographical considerations. I focus on the impact of these themes and consider how they may inform the choices women make about their participation in educational programming upon release from prison. These themes will be explored individually in the analysis section of the MRP. In what follows, I provide an overview of the educational programming for women in Ontario. Thematic results are connected to the theoretical development of each individual program and its efficacy upon implementation.

Educational Programming in Ontario: A Review

My literature review describes the transitional educational programming between incarceration and release, as well as programming available post-release. I use a feminist lens to examine the literature, particularly community organizations, agencies, and training programs. Through the descriptions and criteria of the programs, I identify emergent themes that impact the participation, efficacy, and success of the programs. Previously incarcerated women may encounter more complex needs associated with reintegration, and these additional elements require a great deal of scrutiny. I have structured the literature review into post-release programming by community and governmental organizations.

Community Organizations and Programming

Women that transition back into the community face many barriers and have complex needs (JHSO, O'Grady, & Lafleur, 2016). Community organizations play a significant role in providing educational programming for this population. The John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society are key nation-wide organizations that have chapters in

every province. I focused on the Ontario chapters, and where statistical data is involved, I focused in on the data from women in Ontario. I also reviewed the programs from The Canadian Families Correctional Network (CFCN), and the Walls to Bridges Collective (W2BC).

John Howard Society Programs.

The John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) believes that effective reintegration programs need to include preparation, education and training prior to release from prison. These must be delivered through cross-agency programming and must also include innovative programs (JHSO et al., 2016). JHSO has 19 locations across Ontario that offer direct services to previously incarcerated men and women (JHSO, 2019). However, not all sites offer the same services or programs. Research conducted by JHSO (JHSO et al., 2016), indicates that educational proficiency is one strategy that assists people in finding employment. Several programs connected to education include academic intervention, community education, development and training, life skills, literacy, cognitive skills, access to a resource centre, and life skills (JHSO, 2018). While the programs vary in focus, 18 of these locations offer programs falling into the above categories. The number of offerings available to previously incarcerated women is misleading, as several programs are institution specific and/or offered only to males (JHSO, 2016). Based on program criteria, there were 14 locations that had programs available for previously incarcerated women in Ontario. However, these programs may also be city/region/institution specific and therefore, women residing outside the region would need to travel to participate. Although these programs offer many services and supports, it is important to note that Toronto is the only location that has a Native Outreach post-

release program, and only two programs are specifically tailored to previously incarcerated women (WISE and Taking Charge; JHS, 2018 – Direct Services). It is evident that the educational programming offerings for women are not as extensive as those that are offered to men, which may create additional challenges for women in terms of obtaining a support network and, ultimately, reintegration.

Community Education Program. (JHSO, 2016)

The Community Education Program (CEP) is offered in several locations across Ontario. Public education about incarceration and re-entry into the community is necessary to support previously incarcerated men and women in their transition and reintegration processes. Although this is not a direct educational program for previously incarcerated women, CEP assists in creating awareness of the needs of previously incarcerated women, reducing their experiences of stigmatization upon release from incarceration. Current research suggests that support and acceptance by the community can assist in relieving the stress of re-entry and lowering potential recidivism (Collica, 2013). JHSO uses various forms of community outreach to counter the trend of stigmatization, such as seminars, speaking engagements, presentations, and media that present a realistic view of crime and its impact on those criminalized, their families, and communities.

Literacy programs.

Although it has been well documented that literacy levels among incarcerated women are low (Covington, 2003; Leverentz, 2014; Pompoco, Wooldredge, Lugo, Sullivan, & Latessa, 2017; Richer, McLean-McKay, Bradley, and Horne, 2015), there are only three chapters that specifically offer literacy services: Durham Region, Kawartha

Lakes/Haliburton (Lindsay), and Ottawa. Ottawa has an extensive *Pre-Employment and Training Program (PET)*, that I discuss separately in detail. These programs are available to all adults, and attention is also paid to literacy competence for employment and furthering education.

The *Learning Alternatives Program* in Durham Region only offers programs in Oshawa, Ajax, Clarington, and Whitby. It is designed to develop literacy, numeracy, interpersonal, and digital skills. The program creates individualized learning plans aimed to assist learners that have a specific path to transition to employment, postsecondary education, apprenticeship, and secondary school. It focuses on supporting individual needs so participants can set goals for their success.

The *Outreach Literacy Program* in Kawartha Lakes/Haliburton is a free community-based program that offers literary service by volunteers. It is available to all adults with low literacy levels, and is part of the Literacy Services Network. The Network provides literacy services to other community locations such as libraries, and may include pre-credit classes with the school board or upgrading classes with the local college. Prior to the program, standardized literacy assessment tools for literacy and numeracy were administered by the program coordinator to best establish the needs of the participant. Additional support includes community care drivers to transport participants to either one-on-one or small group learning sessions.

Employment programs.

One of the key concerns for previously incarcerated women is employment. Employment programs seek to provide financial means to acquire housing, essential services, and provide family stability for women with children. Ideally, workforce

preparation should begin during incarceration. Cross-agency collaboration should assist in occupational placement to ease the reintegration process and more importantly, assist in moving previously incarcerated women forward in the labour market (JHSO, 2016). Employment programs teach skills that can not only help in getting employment, but in retaining that employment. There are employment services in six chapters that teach similar skills: résumé building, interview instruction, job training and education, employment action plans, and career counselling. Resources are also available to assist in finding employment: access to computers with internet and job search engines, access to newspapers, fax machines, and photocopiers. Several chapters also offer unique programs, such as: provincially recognized certifications (Food Safety, Smart Serve, Service Excellence) in the Niagara chapter; PET program in the Ottawa chapter; and the Pre-Apprenticeship Welding Program in the Hamilton chapter.

The *Pre-Apprenticeship Welding Program* in Hamilton is a one-year program funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (JHSO, 2016) and organized in collaboration with the Elizabeth Fry Society in Southwestern Ontario, St. Leonard's Society in Hamilton and Mohawk College (Hamilton). The program is designed for individuals to gain employment skills in the local labour market. It includes a pre-employment life skills component, pre-apprenticeship welding training and a paid employment placement. Additionally, JHSO Hamilton also works with community partners to secure employment for individuals and monitors participants for the duration of the program, creating a unique case management system for both participant and employer, which can help to secure future employability (JHSO et al., 2016). The program began in 2015 with 12 federally sentenced adults (ten males, 2 females), with 7

participants employed full-time at the end of the program. Year 2 funding was granted to support 14 participants from either federal or provincial correctional institutions, although no additional data is available on the completion statistics at the time of writing.

Community reintegration services.

Reintegration services are offered through most chapters of the JHS and provide many post-release supports for women to lessen such factors as poverty, isolation, and recidivism (JHSO, 2016). The services focus on practical support, counselling, housing assistance, life skills programming, education, and healthcare. Several chapters however, will only service specific cities in their region: Simcoe-Muskoka – services only available in Barrie, Orillia, and Midland; Waterloo-Wellington – services only Kitchener, Guelph, and Cambridge (JHSO, 2016). The Thunder Bay chapter offers a residential rehabilitation program for at-risk individuals and those already in the criminal justice system that houses 9 women and 39 men (JHSO, 2016). Individual care plans are developed via an evidence-based criminogenic risk assessment tool, which highlights the individual's criminal history, family and social relationships, financial resources, substance abuse, employment and educational history, social and cognitive skills, and mental health. The residence also serves as a residential facility for CSC, offering 8 rooms to individuals on federal parole. Clients attend regular meetings and their progress is followed by a case manager, who collaborates with community service providers. Programming involved in care plans includes anger management, anti-criminal thinking, life skills (which involves employment and education/training), and recreational programming.

Reintegration services also include discharge planning, wherein JHSO works with women while incarcerated and develops a transition plan working up to their release

(JHSO, 2016). A case manager will work with women to develop a support network in which they can count on for support and resources upon release. The *Kingston and District* chapter provides support to eight federal penitentiaries throughout the Kingston area and Quinte Detention Center in Napanee; of these nine institutions, Quinte Detention Center is the only facility that has female inmates. Reintegration planning and preparedness are two key components that can reduce the risk factors of reoffending (JHSO et al., 2016). Assistance is offered in several ways as part of the transition plan through a pre-release planning group. Support includes resources for successful reintegration, phone services to provide information and resources for incarcerated women and their families, liaise between prisoners and their families to keep lines of communication open, and information on correctional and reintegration topics (procedures of CSC, procedures of National Parole Board, etc.). The *Sault Ste. Marie and District* chapter provides reintegration services both to incarcerated and newly released women, however, their goal focuses only on the women at/from Algoma Treatment and Remand Centre (JHSO, 2016). JHSO develops individual plans for release which includes housing, financial assistance, and programming to ease the process of reintegration. Additionally, there are counselling services at the JHSO office and trustee services to assist with financial matters.

The *Ottawa* chapter (Ottawa) and the *Windsor-Essex County* chapter (Windsor) are the only two chapters that have programs exclusively designed for women while incarcerated (discharge planning), and upon release. (JHSO, 2016). “*Taking Charge*” at the Windsor chapter (JHSO, 2016), is a women’s self-management program that began in 1990 and is aimed at women from 18 years and over. It is comprised of ten workshops

that are one hour long, and in a one-on-one or group settings. The goal of the program is to educate women in the area of life skills and coping mechanisms through counselling, behaviour modification, and awareness. The subjects it deals with are self-esteem, co-dependency, healthy/abusive relationships, stress management, family violence, drugs and alcohol, parenting skills, personal finance, community resources, and community integration. Women may participate through voluntary referral, or they may be referenced by other agencies (Children's Aid Society, probation agencies, Court). The program does not receive funding from another agency (United Way) or ministry (MCSCS). Instead, participants must pay a service fee and submit an application through a JHSO intake worker in order to enroll.

The Pre-Employment and Training Program (PET) at the Ottawa chapter of the JHS has an extensive list of specialized programs that provide skills training for individuals to prepare for employment, further education and training, and develop personal independence goals. The programs include training in reading, writing, numeracy and computer skills. Additional workshops are also offered to improve communication, self-advocacy, self-management and self-direction skills. One of the programs specifically for women is *W.I.S.E. (Women Increasing Skills for Employment)*. There are five programs offered in the Ottawa area (see Table 1).

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies' programs.

The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) works with women and girls in the justice system. The association focuses on equality in support services, programs, public education research, and legislative reform. The goals of CAEFS are focused specifically on addressing the needs of incarcerated and previously

Table 1

PET Programs and Services Available at Ottawa Chapter of JHSO

- *PET Skills*

Services assist individuals in improving their reading, writing, numeracy, and computer skills. Instruction is offered through individualized learning and small group workshops. This program offers flexible times and allows you to work at your own pace.

- *PET Links*

Part-time, academic upgrading program that prepares individuals for post-secondary college education, apprenticeship, and work. Courses lead to the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) certificate which is recognized by community colleges, apprenticeships, and employers. Individualized learning delivered by an Algonquin College teacher and a job coach helps identify career goals and develops a plan for further training and/or employment.

- *PET Reach (Outreach)*

These three programs are free and a response to the identified need for a community “drop-in” literary service, instead of a formalized program. It is open to all, including people who are homeless (or at risk of being homeless), persons living in poverty, individuals facing mental health issues, and those with learning disabilities. The program focuses on skill acquisition and provides literacy help to those that cannot access any educational services. Additionally, it facilitates employment and job search assistance.

Urban Connections – Locations: Shepherds of Good Hope; The Well Drop-In; St.

Andrew's Residence. The Well Drop-In is a community drop-in centre for women and their children focusing on life skills, educational programming, and peer support. It is not specifically for previously incarcerated women.

W.I.S.E. (Women Increasing Skills for Employment) – Location: Cornerstone

Women's Shelter. Provides services focused on reading, writing and computer skills, as well as employment preparation.

LEAFS (Literacy & Employment Access for Survival) – Location: Centre 454 Drop In

and Hope Outreach. Focuses on reading, writing and computer skills, as well as employment preparation and job search assistance. Life Skills Workshops are also offered.

- *PET Works*

Services provided:

- Increased work productivity and self-confidence;
- Offers the skills workers need to perform their jobs efficiently, thoroughly and safely;
- Group workshops and individualized training: Communication skills, customer relations, teamwork, stress management, conflict resolution and time management.

- *PET Pass*

Services provided:

- Online computer skills upgrading program;
- Independent learning at individual pace;

- Instruction in computer basics, internet, e-mail, business fundamentals, and Microsoft Office.

Employment Program – provides assistance to prepare for employment. Workshops offered on résumé writing, interview skills, apprenticeship, and Smart Serve/WHMIS certification.

Note. Adapted from *Adult Programs & Services Inventory by Local Office*, by the John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016. Retrieved from <http://johnhoward.on.ca/find-services/programs-services-across-ontario/>

incarcerated women, as well as reducing the numbers of women criminalized or incarcerated in Canada. Increasing public awareness of criminalization, poverty, racism, and other forms of oppression affecting criminalized and marginalized women is a fundamental principle in the society's mandate (CAEFS). Additionally, there is a focus on increasing social service, health, and educational resources for marginalized, criminalized, and incarcerated women; emphasizing that the services need to be community-based and publicly funded. The society has 24 chapters across Canada divided into five separate regions with eight chapters in Ontario (CAEFS, 2018). Although each chapter has specific programs depending on the needs of the community, the focus on reintegration is ubiquitous. Interestingly, online visitors are encouraged to "leave the site quickly", "exit quickly", or "erase tracks" on several local CAEFS chapter websites. Although no other explanation is provided, these warnings highlight the vulnerability of women seeking help and support, suggesting possibilities of fear, oppression, victimization and abuse.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough chapter currently has offers eight programs that address a diversity of issues. Several of the programs have an eight-week duration, while others are ongoing. There are three psycho-educational programs that help women learn how to take responsibility for their actions, while developing methods of expression and a path to wellness. The *Anger Solutions* program enables women to understand the theory of anger, and develop techniques to resolve anger, conflict resolution skills, and increase self-esteem. The *Wellness and Self-Esteem* program explores relationships between self-image, self-acceptance, self-awareness, and self-

esteem. Women learn stress management, coping strategies, and healthy relationships and lifestyle choices. *Taking Control* is a program that increases women's awareness and knowledge related to woman abuse. It focuses on forms of abuse and learning how to recognize it, violence in intimate relationships, effect of violence on women and children, assessing levels of risk and safety plans, and awareness of services and support available.

Additional programs deal with specific elements of criminalization as theft, fraud, and breach of trust. The programs explore the causes of theft and related behaviours, and how grief, loss, and depression impact a woman's behaviour. The issues of self-esteem and self-care strategies are explored, as well as understanding how cultural attitudes surrounding the status and role of women influence and shape women's lives. A program surrounding substance abuse and subsequent impact on the lives of the woman and connected relationships identifies the pathways to addiction, cognitive and physiological responses to drug use, and relapse prevention tools. One-on-one support programs are also available dependent upon the needs of the woman. There may also be probationary criteria and court ordered requirements, fulfilled through ongoing sessions, as part of the women's reintegration planning.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County.

The motto of this chapter is "Inspiring Positive Change" (EFS Simcoe County, 2019), which envisions empowered individuals and a healthy community that understands the challenges, stigmas, and issues faced by criminalized and marginalized women. This chapter is located in Barrie, and has several reintegration programs for women that begin in the correctional institution, providing a planned transition into community. *Jail Visitation and Advocacy* has staff visit women for reintegration

planning, parole hearings, and advocacy at GVI, Vanier Centre for Women (Milton), and Central North Correctional Centre (CNCC) in Penetanguishene. Women are also made aware of the programs available to them upon release, such as: anti-theft education, emotions management, grief and loss, and healthy relationships. Additional women's programs that provide one-on-one support are part of the programming at CNCC. The *Reporting Centre* program provides additional support and supervision to high risk/high need women.

A unique program offered at this chapter is the *Rural and Remote Programs in Muskoka*. These are core community programs offered to women, youth, and men throughout the Muskoka region focusing on: emotions management, grief and loss, anti-theft programs, and education regarding healthy relationships and substance abuse. Individuals may self-refer, or be referred by a social worker, parole officer, advocate, etc. The online forms confirm enrolment regardless of distance, and clients are asked to identify the town closest to them for planning purposes: Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, or Huntsville.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Southern Ontario.

The office of this chapter is located in Hamilton and the programs are both community and corrections oriented. The community programs address issues of anger management/abuse, identification of needs and barriers, and shoplifting/fraud rehabilitation and education. *A Woman's Journey* is a program that targets women who have experienced abuse and now have anger management issues. The program offers supports and strategies for turning anger into positive motivation. *Opportunities for Women* focuses on self-contemplation and learning to self-identify issues and barriers in

women's lives. Once the needs are identified, assistance will be provided regarding the specific service needs of the individual. *Shoplifting Alternatives Rehabilitation and Education (SHARE)* works with women that have atypical theft behaviour and use theft as a coping mechanism for trauma.

Corrections programs deal with incarcerated women and the judicial system. *Taking Control and Making Healthy Choices* is a program offered at the Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre. It specifically deals with educating women about violence against women and the impact that this has on the woman and community. *Court Support* and *Release Planning* aim to assist women with judicial issues and reintegration services. Staff support women in federal and provincial institutions in planning a release plan in the Hamilton community. Release planning helps to ease the transition from institution and community, and to establish a support group.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario and Elizabeth Fry Society of Sudbury.

Located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury respectively, these chapters offer similar correctional and community education services. *Court Support* is offered to women that need support at court appearances and in achieving a better understanding of the judicial system. The *Jail Visitation* program takes place at the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre and the Sudbury District Jail, and staff/volunteers have one-on-one visits to address women's needs. Women are assisted with counselling, treatment, and release planning. Weekly recreational programs that have included meditation, yoga, book clubs, arts and crafts, and sweat lodges are also offered. The *Release Planning* program specifically focuses on release and what is necessary to women upon entry back into the community.

Staff assists with housing facilities, referrals to local agencies, and discharge kits containing essential items.

The *Public Education* program runs a resource centre open to the community. Additionally, the chapter provides legal education on the systemic issues that feed the criminalization of women. *Taking Control and Making Healthy Choices* is also offered at the Sudbury District Jail, dealing specifically with educating women about violence against women. Five-week certificate programs are offered through workshops in Sudbury as well. Topics discussed include: anger management, healthy living, positive self-image, healthy relationships, substance awareness and abuse, theft prevention, stress management, and abuse and the family. The workshops are offered at the chapter house and also Sudbury District Jail, either individually or in a group setting.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa.

The Ottawa chapter asserts in its mission statement that it is a feminist organization with the following values: accountability, inclusivity, focus on priorities, impassioned about the community, impactful, respectful, and collaborative. The correctional programs include *Court and Prison In-reach*, which provides in court accompaniment and support services at the Ottawa Courthouse. There are on-site community reintegration services to support women in the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, including transition planning, housing assistance, and support services. There are Prison In-reach services available for women in federal institutions at GVI and Joliette (QC).

Community and educational programming, as well as case management, are offered both on individual or group settings. Areas of focus are theft prevention, relapse

prevention, emotion regulation, self-esteem and assertiveness, as well as individual programming for women that are survivors of sex abuse or trauma. Additionally, the Ottawa chapter has begun a drop-in centre, which is open and welcoming to all. Indigenous Support Services are offered at the Ottawa chapter for women, providing court support, individual or group counselling, and partnering with other Indigenous organizations.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto.

The values statement of the Toronto chapter states the importance of being instrumental in our own lives and in the lives of others, having dignity in regarding others, diversity to respect and celebrate human difference, innovation to create change, and resilience to adjust to change and challenge (Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto, 2018). In 2010, the Toronto chapter implemented the Sustainable Livelihoods Model as their new organizational model, which places women's experiences and life context at the centre of its work. The Model recognizes the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexuality and how these factors impact women in terms of victimization, criminalization, and marginalization (Appendix C). The Toronto chapter offers several programs that have educational or skills training programs. There are a broad range of *counselling services* available to women: healing from abuse and trauma, reintegration counselling, parenting services, community general service, and a Partner Abuse Response program. These services aim to educate and advocate for women, ultimately helping them rebuild their lives in a safe and supportive environment. As in the other chapters, reintegration and skill-building focuses on developing alternatives to theft, fraud, and substance abuse. The parenting services offer support in reuniting mothers with their children post or

during incarceration and also play a supportive role in rebuilding family relationships upon release. The Partner Abuse Response program is a twelve-week group program that offers education and support for women in abusive relationships, teaching them skills in non-abusive conflict resolution, among others. It is focused on women that have been charged with domestic violence. Although there is an associated service fee, these are based on a sliding scale.

There are several *employment service* programs that assist with developing communication, literacy, presentation, and job development skills. Participants receive instruction on résumé building, job searches, interview coaching, financial literacy skills, entrepreneurship training, and introduction to support networks.

Community support programs offer *court support* assistance for those women at College Park Court (Legal Aid of Ontario), including court support volunteers available at the court house during weekdays. Additional community support programs involve social-recreational programs for women at Vanier Centre for Women, which develops team building and healthy, positive relationships.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton.

This chapter is located in Brampton and their goal is to empower women and strengthen emotional, cultural, and social well-being, by using strategies for prevention, support, reintegration, and advocacy (Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton, 2019). As in other chapters, programs are available for counselling, employment skills acquisition, substance abuse counselling, and reintegration support. The *Adult Court Counselling Service* is a combination of several programs and is comprised of five to ten individual

counselling sessions. The first component is the *Personal Counselling Program* that provides emotional and problem-solving support. The second component is an Anti-Shoplifting and Fraud Program, which focuses on the root of the behaviour, as research indicates, is a sign of depression, expression, isolation, or anger (Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton, 2019). The third component is the *Anger Management Program*, which is designed to assist the individual through the understanding of their anger and develop non-aggressive behaviours for problem resolution.

Collectively, CAEFS advocates for incarcerated women that are marginalized, and brings them into communities with a pro-active focus for development, reintegration, and healing (CAEFS, 2018). CAEFS challenges Canadians to look past the punishment and stigmatization and acknowledge women that need assistance to overcome their complex needs and reintegrate into their communities.

Canadian Families and Corrections Network (CFCN) Programs.

CFCN focuses on restorative justice—the rehabilitation and reintegration of previous offenders—, and tries to create a reconciliation between offenders and their victims, families, and communities. CFCN not only supports incarcerated or previously incarcerated men and women, but also the families throughout the incarceration process. CFCN works diligently for successful reintegration and reuniting families (CFCN, 2017). The head office is based in Kingston, Ontario. However, representatives travel extensively to provide services and spearhead projects across Canada. Several of their services include:

1. Policy and program development

2. Visitor resource network
3. Family reintegration support
4. Publications
5. Referral services to families

Louise Leonardi, Executive Director and keynote speaker at The Bridge Restorative Justice Conference (Hamilton, ON – April 1, 2017), stated that the mission of CFCN is to strengthen the family unit by bringing healing to those involved in crime and their families. The four main areas of their work are: respected research, policy development, unique programs, and educational resources (The Bridge Restorative Justice Conference, 2017). CFCN disseminates the impact of incarceration through speaking engagements across Canada, and aims to shed light on the loneliness, shame, anger, and grief that affects all family members, when a parent or child are incarcerated.

CFCN has continual publications that are directed not only at families, but also at government agencies such as CSC, with specific recommendations on addressing the needs of families of offenders both during incarceration and post-release. Several recommendations were in the CFCN Strategic Approach and Policy Document (2003), surrounding the increased community engagement of families and how their complex needs should be part of the reintegration planning. Suggestions were made for the expansion of the Mother-Child Program to include halfway houses to assist community reintegration for mothers, further availability, and culturally-specific parenting programs for Indigenous parents.

Martin and Poole (2009) created the publication "*A New Time*" for CFCN, which specifically focuses on the reintegrating to communities and families for women involved

in the criminal justice system. The “toolkit” addresses key concerns surrounding the reuniting process, such as family expectations and support, Indigenous families, employment and education, behaviour and attitudes, substance abuse, and basic living skills. It is necessary, although at times difficult, for families to understand that they cannot return to the life they had prior to incarceration. They instead need to develop a new family dynamic and openly address issues of concern (Martin & Poole, 2009). Any parenting models must be reintroduced if primary caregivers have changed, and also depending on the age of children (if any). Indigenous families have cultural traditions surrounding the reintegration process. Previously incarcerated women need to be accepted not only back into their families, but back into the Indigenous communities. Although this can lead to a great peer support system, it can be daunting for the woman entering back into her community as they face the task of acceptance from all the clan members. Employment and education are key factors when uniting with a family. However, the possible expectations of financial contributions from previously incarcerated women may add to increased stress and tension within the family unit. Educational opportunities may be complex too, depending on the role of the woman as caregiver, financial supporter, etc. Family members need to understand that prison culture and norms are different than those in the community and household, and also that the incarcerated family member may have had to behave differently while incarcerated. At the same time, the previously incarcerated woman needs to understand that ‘outside’ cultural norms are now at play and must make an effort to understand how the family now functions. Additional factors of stigmatization, stress, disappointment, and lack of trust may contribute to a difficult family situation. Martin and Poole (2009) stress that

with open dialogue and support, the family tensions can be resolved over time. Although it may not be an easy process, it is a worthwhile one. Substance abuse is a very real problem for many previously incarcerated women that may impede their acceptance into a family and take a toll on the family unit. It is imperative that treatment programs be available and that family members try to be supportive and non-judgemental of those women with a drug-dependency.

A "toolkit" manual, "*Time's Up: A Reintegration Toolkit for Families*" (2005), was developed by CFCN specifically to address the reintegration needs of families. The manual targets all family members across various age ranges in a direct and clear language. It is comprised of points to consider followed by a quick questionnaire or checklist, to keep the audience on track with the issue (i.e. employment, substance abuse, parenting). The toolkit manual is developed as a question and answer resource, with the material being taken from questions frequently asked by family members. The response is the advice provided by CFCN with the use of suggestions and explanations. These questions/scenarios are not always positive, as family members in reality will not always provide a positive or supportive environment; it will be a challenging transition for both the previously incarcerated woman and her family/friends.

Walls to Bridges (W2B) at GVI and Walls to Bridges Collective (W2BC) Programs.

The W2B programs operate at both federal and provincial levels. These programs also provide a post-release reintegration program in Toronto, Ontario named the Walls to Bridges Collective (W2BC). The W2B program at GVI is run by the Faculty of Social Work from Sir Wilfred Laurier University in Kitchener, Ontario. The Office of the Correctional Investigator has stressed that this program should be expanded throughout

federal institutions and has argued that CSC should be partnering with universities and colleges to support implementation (Zinger, 2018). As of 2016, nine universities in Canada (primarily in Ontario), have participated in this program. Currently, three course offerings are available for the January 2019 term in Ontario: GVI (Federal) and Sir Wilfred Laurier University, Ottawa Carleton Detention Center (Provincial) and University of Ottawa, and South West Detention Center (Provincial) and University of Windsor (W2B, 2019a). The program focuses on dispelling stereotypes about the 'Other,' social action, and the transformative effects of holistic learning (Pollack, 2016, p. 7). Working in conjunction with GVI, the W2B program allows an equal number of incarcerated students ("inside") to work alongside university-based students ("outside") as peers. All students involved in the program receive the same university credits. The program is unique because it brings together a collective of students that learn from each other, collaborate, and develop a vested interest in social justice (Pollack, 2016). Educators participate in a five-day training program at GVI which is led by incarcerated and non-incarcerated W2B alumni and instructors. The training is based upon experiential learning and integrates personal reflections as part of the learning process. This pedagogical model is used for the university courses at GVI and creates a collaborative learning environment. W2B incorporates a social justice praxis that focuses on meeting the educational needs of those experiencing oppression while working in collaboration with them (Fayter, 2016).

As of January 2015, 61 incarcerated students have completed courses within the W2B program at GVI (Pollack, 2016), suggesting there is need and interest in developing these kinds of educational programs. In 2015, there were 1,098 females incarcerated

federally in Canada, and 328 females federally incarcerated in Ontario (Offender Profile 2013-2014, 2017). It is clear that post-secondary course programming needs to be implemented much more aggressively if it is to reach maximum efficacy and serve as a foundation not only for prison education, but for creating opportunities for continued post-release study. As of January 2019, W2B has expanded to nine universities and 10 correctional facilities across Canada and has enrolled 803 students (inclusive) (W2B, 2019b).

The Walls to Bridges Collective (W2BC) program was established in November 2011 in Toronto, Ontario, as an 'outside' program that follows the same learning pedagogy of the W2B program within prisons. The W2BC was designed to provide education, information, and advocacy in Toronto by working with previously incarcerated and criminalized women, while seeking social justice (Weil Davis & Sherr Roswell, 2013). Noted Canadian author Lawrence Hill visited W2BC during the 2018 W2B Instructor Training and shared his thoughts: "W2B stands out as a Canadian gem, because it exemplifies courageous and innovative ways to expand mutual understanding, intellectual advancement, empathy and respect in Canadian society" (W2B, 2019). Former students and instructors from the W2B program meet and work on current issues; facilitate workshops in university and community settings surrounding education, employment, and social justice for criminalized women; and offer training for new W2B educators (W2B, 2019a). The goal of the workshops is to begin a collaborative dialogue about criminalization, imprisonment, stigma, education, and employment for women within the criminal justice system. The W2BC also provides Indigenous learning from scholars and Elders such as Dr. Priscilla Settee, and anti-racism leaders such as Dr. Rai

Reece (W2B, 2019b). In March 2019, the W2BC held an open dialogue workshop/debate on the cycle of criminalization, in collaboration with Hart House (University of Toronto).

The W2BC is responsible for designing, facilitating, reviewing and improving the W2B Facilitator Training Courses. These courses are held at both GVI and Sir Wilfred Laurier University. At the time of writing, 89 participants have completed the Facilitator Training program. The efforts of the W2BC are indicative of the current and ongoing commitment to community interaction, the learning for social justice, and de-stigmatization of previously incarcerated women.

A detailed examination of the existing programs available to previously incarcerated women produced a number of themes highlighting the complex needs of these women and how community organizations respond to those needs. Although incarcerated women have experienced many challenges, the following were the most frequently occurring throughout the programming: gender, reintegration and discharge planning, stigmatization and criminalization, education and employment, housing, economic positionality, family and network supports, Indigenous concerns, and geographic considerations.

Analysis and Discussion

Through a discussion of emergent themes, I provide an analysis of the program offerings and highlight the commonalities and differences between programs. I ask questions about the challenges and barriers of these programs, analyze how a program may benefit one woman and not another, and discuss the possibilities for those outcomes. My analysis also considers that although programs may be developmentally and theoretically beneficial, once implemented, they may not be viable. This is not to say that

programs should be abandoned, but it may be necessary to review their outcomes and make adjustments to improve them. An Internal Audit Sector Report (2013) of inmate employment and employability programs at CSC returned with these results: “We [auditors] did not find an approved set of strategic objectives for employment and employability which were clearly defined and understood for all stakeholders within CSC” (p. 22). The report also stated that the employees of CSC did not share the same goals regarding outcomes for offenders. For instance, 45% of employee participants indicated that there was a greater focus on production output rather than skills development.

Although CSC continues to produce research reports, internal audit reports, and clearly outlines the program needs for women, the situation does not seem to be improving. Further investigation of the literature is vital in parsing out the reasons for the continued lapses in educational programming for previously incarcerated women. This brief overview of educational and vocational programs in prison illustrates the educational environment that previously incarcerated women experienced. In what follows, I examine the programs with attention to the following themes that emerged from my review: gender, reintegration and discharge planning, stigmatization and criminalization, geographical considerations, employment and education, housing, family and support networks, and Indigenous concerns.

Gender

Gender plays an important role from the time of incarceration to post-release programming. Bloom (1999) contends that in order for programming to be beneficial, the needs of previously incarcerated women must be recognized both in their diversity, and

in the nature of the crimes. In developing programs, the design needs to be gender-responsive (Bloom, 1999), and the particularities of women's must also be addressed. Currently, there are five regional federal corrections institutions for women across Canada with multi-level security, and one regional Indigenous healing lodge for incarcerated women (CSC, 2017b) (see Appendix A). As my study was focused in Ontario, I examined the educational opportunities surrounding Grand Valley Institution (GVI) for federally incarcerated women, with a catchment area of Greater Ontario and Nunavut. Additionally, nine out of 26 provincial correctional institutions for women in Ontario, offer educational programming (see Appendix B). Fayter (2016), who was incarcerated at GVI for three and a half years and released in Spring 2017, argues that a solid and supportive education program within prison —particularly a post-secondary education program— sets the foundation and sparks a person's desire to continue further education upon release. The education extended to incarcerated women at federal and provincial levels consists of both academic and skills training programs, as well as transitional programs designed to assist offenders in re-entry and reintegration into the community. As outlined by the National Crime Prevention Centre, the goals of offender re-entry programs (institution based, surveillance based transitional, or assistance based transitional) focus on developing skill sets for incarcerated women that will ease their transition into the community (Griffiths, Dandurand, & Murdoch, 2007). Government risk assessments illustrate the inadequacies that may be connected to these programs, as presented in these examples:

1. Institution based programs (other than the ABE) are voluntary, therefore, participation and completion of the program is women's responsibility.

2. Surveillance based programs do not guarantee a smooth transition from a correctional institution into a community and do not serve to lower recidivism.
3. Assistance based programs are often associated with mental illness or substance abuse and are dependent upon the community services available.

Moreover, the wait list to enter into prison programs can be exceedingly long, and often sentences are served without the opportunity for women to participate in educational programming at all (Zinger, 2018).

The CSC report by Wardrop and Pardoel (2019) emphasizes the need for gender-informed programming based upon women's criminogenic needs, and the need to provide Indigenous-specific programming, both now mandated by CSC. The Women Offender Correctional Program (WOCP) and the Aboriginal Women Offender Correctional Program (AWOCP) are the models used by the CSC to personalize the care for women. However, the Generic Program Performance Measure (GPPM) was applied by Wardrop and Pardoel (2019) in their report to assess these programs, which measure offender progress. The GPPM is completed by the facilitator on her observations and rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from -2 (needs significant improvement) to +2 (excellent). I posit that an objective assessment of an individual using a generic modeled quantitative framework cannot, in practice, evaluate performance on an individual basis while accounting for the complexity of experiences in women's lives. Although findings arising from the GPPM support the need for gender-informed and culture-informed programming, the results do not substantiate the operating efficiency of programs ran by CSC in correctional facilities. Previous research (Bogusz and Gauthier, 2012) supports that a scientific management model for programming design and assessment cannot

reflect the needs and goals of a women-centred framework. Pollack (2007) affirms that Canadian research surrounding women's experiences upon release is largely based on quantitative data, which focuses on recidivism rates and targeting risk factors. The research does not take into account women's individual situations upon release and how that affects the course of their reintegration.

In *Missed Opportunities* (2017) (a comprehensive report by the Office of the Correctional Investigator), recommendations were made regarding correctional programming. The report states that programming is currently generic and not adapted in any way to meet the individual needs of the learner. The report also stated that CSC staff confirmed that programs needed to be adapted, specifically to younger individuals. Reigeluth and Carr-Chellman (2009) assert that learner-centred instruction, which is customized to learner differences, assists in increased motivation, increased student responsibility for their own learning, and in how to manage the learning process.

By examining program offerings by community organizations, I found that both CAEFS and W2BC focus on programs that are specifically tailored to previously incarcerated women. WISE (Ottawa) and "Taking Charge" (Windsor) are the only two programs that are designed specifically for women within JHSO. Although the programs provide educational programming, employment skills and life skills training, the programs can only serve a small demographic. According to the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children – Toronto (METRAC) (2008), women are still considered a minority in the incarcerated population, and therefore, do not receive the same support services and programs as men. JHSO also supports the Urban Connections program in Ottawa, which serves women and children in the

community, but is not limited to previously incarcerated women. As a result, though receiving assistance, women visiting this drop-in centre may not have all needs surrounding their incarceration history and release met.

CAEFS, as an organization dedicated to serving women in the justice system, assumes a very ardent and feminist perspective in its philosophy and program planning. Across the CAEFS chapters in Ontario, reintegration and meeting the needs of women entering back into the community are of the utmost importance. Consideration of gender differences between female and male offenders is also important. Therefore, CAEFS focuses their programs on the most prevalent factors of women's criminogenic needs: anger management, theft deterrence, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Many of the programs throughout CAEFS focus on mental and emotional well-being, healthy relationships, and moving previously incarcerated women from the margins to the centre. The Livelihood Models - Toronto chapter (see Appendix C) is based upon feminist theory, embraces intersectionality, and suggests that gender alone does not define needs. Race, economic means, criminalization, and mental health may also contribute to the needs of previously incarcerated women. CAEFS also recognizes the shift in Canadian law and policy-making towards the criminalization (rather than victimization) of women involved in domestic violence vulnerable due to economic challenges (Pate, 2008).

The programs at CFCN are focused on family and support issues for both previously incarcerated men and women, and their families. Through this lens, CFCN realizes that previously incarcerated women have particular needs as mothers and primary caregivers prior to incarceration. While the toolkit "*A New Time*" (2009) emphasizes these particular challenges, it also includes mothers of incarcerated or

previously incarcerated children, as community feedback supports that mothers of incarcerated individuals are often over-looked in the incarceration and reintegration process.

As an organization geared specifically towards previously incarcerated women, W2BC has a unique perspective as it is facilitated in part by previously incarcerated women. Their experiential learning style and workshops keep current with trends in female corrections, as women involved in the criminal justice system provide their expertise to assist in the implementation and design of their programs. Tiina (2019), a student in the W2B program at GVI, continued her involvement with the W2BC upon release in 2013. She states that her involvement was fundamental in her completion of an undergraduate degree while incarcerated and her recent completion of a Master of Social Work from Sir Wilfred Laurier University. The program not only reaches across boundaries to identify needs that are shared by previously incarcerated women, but also extends to draw upon personal needs and skills of individuals, while identifying how they can contribute to the program. The program reaches out into the community, inviting women into a collective that provides understanding and support, and promoting the collaborative environment and “circles of trust” (Freitas, McAuley, & Kish, 2014) that is present in the W2B courses offered in correctional institutions.

Reintegration and Discharge Planning

We are forced through a confusing and unjust system in which verdicts are influenced by money, power, and various lawyers' interpretations of the law. Everything we know and love is taken from us; we are separated from our families, friends, and communities; we are herded like cattle, numbered and counted like economic products, and locked up like wild animals. (Fayter, 2016, p. 58)

Institutional, governmental, personal, and commercial relations of power influence women's educational aspirations. Leverentz's study (2014) regarding the re-entry and reintegration of previously incarcerated women indicates that although many women saw education as an opportunity for better employment, frustration often was prevalent. She found that "other women began to see limitations in the value of education or college degrees, as their criminal records often still trumped these credentials" (p. 154).

The Offender Management System (OMS) creates and maintains a database of offenders for CSC. The Offender Report for 2013-2014 stated that of 1123 federal female offenders in Canada, 328 were sentenced in Ontario, 179 were incarcerated and 149 were reintegrated into the community at the time of the report (OMS, 2017). Research suggests that educational and community supports for previously incarcerated women are in place across Ontario so that they may continue to rebuild their lives in the community. Based on the Offender Report for 2013-2014, only 30% of incarcerated women had a high projected reintegration potential, while 45% of incarcerated women had a medium projection level. These projections suggest that the CSC is doubtful about the successful reintegration of almost half of previously incarcerated women. As Hannah-Moffat and Innocente (2013) state, institutional post-release planning was only minimally concerned with education and employment. This is a significant finding given that only 18% of the women in their study had educational plans upon release.

CSC Policies and the Adult Basic Education Program.

CSC policy requires all incarcerated women without a Grade 12 diploma (or equivalent) to participate in the Adult Basic Education Program (ABE). The completion

time is open-ended and based upon individual progress. In other words, there is no guarantee that participants will complete their high school diploma in this program, regardless of the length of the sentence. The curricula are based on the guidelines and requirements of the regional Ministry of Education, as education falls under provincial jurisdiction. In Ontario, the ABE consists of four levels: (a) Level I covers grades 1-5; (b) Level II covers grades 6-8; (c) Level III covers grades 9-10; and (d) Level IV covers grades 11-12 (CSC, 2014). A government report by Nolan and Power (2014) states the importance of recognizing within the community the value of educational and vocational certifications obtained during incarceration, and that qualifications not be dismissed by employers and post-secondary institutions. One year later, Richer et al. (2015) reported similar findings on the educational programming provided by the CSC within prison, showing no apparent changes in education recognition within the community. The authors found that the General Education Development Program (GED) certificate completed during incarceration was less valued than an external diploma in the community. They explained that the 'prison GED' was perceived by employers as being too easy to obtain, and that GED testing does not develop socialization skills or institutional norms that are obtained by attending a traditional high school. Currently, successful completion of the GED program results in a certificate which tests social studies, science, reading, math, and writing. Notwithstanding the importance that CSC places on acquiring the GED as a means of reintegration through the many research reports that CSC has published, the British Columbia Ministry of Education does not recognize a GED obtained while incarcerated. Furthermore, since February 2018 (CSC, 2018a), a GED program is no longer offered in any federal institutions, except in the

Atlantic region. It is apparent that the programs outlined by CSC as essential to rehabilitation and reintegration, have been actually removed from prison program offerings.

These findings suggest that women's educational efforts may be limited, devalued, or unrecognized upon release, which carries implications for women's aspirations, experiences and opportunities post-incarceration. It is important to emphasize that while participation in adult basic education is mandatory as per the CSC policy, successful completion of the ABE is not always available, resulting in women becoming the victims of a bureaucratic system that lacks government accountability. Historically, correspondence courses using a VCR and TV were offered in prisons and were administered by teachers working in the establishment (Tilley, Diss. 1998). Due to changes in technology, most off-site university or college courses are now online and prisoners are not permitted to use the internet, limiting their educational advancement to what is offered within the prison walls. GVI does offer 'pen and paper' correspondence courses from two Ontario universities, however, there is a financial cost involved and subsidies are extremely difficult to obtain, making it prohibitive (Pollack, 2016).

CORCAN.

CORCAN is a rehabilitation program working in congruence with CSC. The program is specifically designed to provide skills training in federal penitentiaries and to act as a Special Operating Agency (SOA) for prison industry. Established in 1992, it originally supplied government departments and other penal institutions manufactured goods such as office and dormitory furniture, textile products from uniforms to bedding, construction services ranging from drywall installation to welding and electrical services,

and business services ranging from industrial laundry services to office printing supplies. It has since expanded to the private sector as a viable business solution, complete with an online catalogue. The annual CORCAN report for 2007/2008 (CSC, 2008) details that only ten women completed vocational training at GVI, all in the landscaping and groundskeeping industry. In the same year, CORCAN revenues from products and services was \$70.6 million, with offenders getting paid up to \$6.90 per day (CSC, 2008). Although it does provide skills training, the shops are only available in 29 federal institutions out of 53 (Zinger, 2017). Zinger (2017) continues to add that although the work at the CORCAN shops is impressive, there is a dire shortage of CORCAN jobs available and on average, only 10% of the inmate population are able to participate.

MCSCS Programs.

MCSCS operates 25 correctional facilities (correction centres, detention centres, and jails) across Ontario, which offer a variety of programs and services, with only correction and detention centres offering educational and/or skills programs, and services for incarcerated women. An independent review of Ontario Corrections (Sapers et al., 2017), advised that all incarcerated women should be offered support services upon release and the return to the community should be gradual and supported. The Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ontario is the only all-female facility. Twelve additional facilities provide programming that house both men and women. The jurisdiction on MCSCS is responsible for those serving less than two years in prison or whose terms of probation are up to three years. MCSCS offers four main program streams to assist in rehabilitation, education, and vocational skills that will serve women during and post-incarceration (MCSCS, 2019).

The Life Skills program addresses core life skills (budgeting, supportive relationships, and substance abuse, etc.), employment related skills (job search and computer skills), and parenting skills. Rehabilitative programs address behaviour that can lead to re-offending (anger management, substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual offending) and have several levels dependent upon women's needs. The education programs are divided into four categories:

- a) Adult Basic Literacy Program – structured for individuals with no or limited reading and writing skills;
- b) High School Programs – structured for individuals taking courses for completion of the Grade 12 Ontario Secondary School Diploma;
- c) Self-Study Programs – structured for individuals wanting to enrol in high school/college/university correspondence courses;
- d) Other Educational Programs – structured for programs as English as a second language, academic/career entrance programs, and specialized language courses.

Lastly, there are work programs designed to provide practical skills that women may require post-release, and also assist in their transition into the community. These involve kitchen work, laundry, cleaning, and groundskeeping. Several institutions also offer industry work programs through Trilcor, which involve auto/small engine repair, carpentry, licence plate manufacturing, metal fabrication, and textiles. Trilcor is a provincial program which parallels CORCAN (federal), and Trilcor goods are marketed to government organizations (federal, provincial, and municipal levels), as can be seen in the Table 2.

Table 2

Goods produced by Trilcor Industries and the purchasing organizations.

Industry	Product	Main Customer
Tailored products	Clothing:	Ministry of Community Safety and
	• inmate clothing	Correctional Services
	• specialty security clothing	Law enforcement agencies
	Bedding:	Ministry of Community Safety and
	• fire retardant pillows	Correctional Services
	Blankets	Ministry of Community Safety and
		Correctional Services
		Law enforcement agencies
Linen service	Central laundry	Ministry of Community Safety and
		Correctional Services
Marker plant	All Ontario licence plates	Ministry of Government and Consumer
		Services
Engraving	• plaques	Ontario Public Service
	• name plates	

Adapted from Trilcor Industries Programs. (MCSCS, 2019).

Although the programming may be effective for women while they are incarcerated, Sapers et al. (2017) argue that Ontario still lacks effective discharge planning for a majority of inmates. There are also insufficient linkages between the institutional programs and community services.

By analyzing the reintegration opportunities offered by various organizations, my findings indicate that programs surrounding reintegration and discharge planning are emphasized as vital throughout the province. However, a closer analysis of each organization's offerings reveals that these services are not available unilaterally. The JHSO, while offering reintegration services at many chapters, does not offer them across the province. Several chapters (Simcoe-Muskoka, Waterloo-Wellington, Thunder Bay, Hamilton, Kingston, and Sault Ste-Marie) have exclusionary criteria, either geographical, or policy/institution oriented. The outreach of these programs is reflected in a report by Thomson, Lutfy, Derkzen, and Bertrand (2015), which illustrates that the accessibility for women to services promoted by some organizations was scored between 3 and 5 out of 10 points, indicating that not all services were accessible and available in the community. It is evident that services are inadequate to meet the challenges of women re-entering the community. Pollack (2009) argues that communities are often not supportive and non-profit organizations often rely on correctional funding, thus making them an external apparatus of the correctional system. These structural inequities reflect a larger picture in which women on the economic and social margins often have difficulties surviving without veering onto a criminal path. By not having the necessary support network upon release, women are caught in a cycle of re-entry and re-offending, until they become invisible in the criminal justice system (Covington, 2003).

In contrast, all chapters of CAEFS offer reintegration planning beginning with transitional programs at correctional facilities. Should correctional facilities have multiple chapters in their catchment area, a designated chapter will be responsible for transitional programs at the facility (as I discuss in detail later in relation to geographical considerations). As reintegration is seen as a positive path to prevent recidivism, it is a logical conclusion to ascertain that women's chances of remaining crime free are not guaranteed, but the chances are certainly improved exponentially through discharge planning. Curcio, Pattavina, and Fisher's study (2018) indicates that individuals have a very low risk of reoffending after several years being crime free.

CFCN works extensively with incarcerated individuals and families, and although based in Kingston, representatives and volunteers travel extensively across Canada to provide support for reintegration services. The focus on restorative justice supports their mandate that transitioning back into the community begins during the period of incarceration and involves the incarcerated individual, family members, and community outreach. Community reintegration needs to include family reintegration, while CFCN publications for incarcerated individuals and families must focus on the challenges of reintegration for all parties (CFCN, 2010). "*A New Time*" (2009) emphasizes that a key concept of reintegration is acceptance of life-changing circumstances and the realization that elements from employment, stigma, family relationships, substance abuse, etc., are all interrelated and must be dealt with in open dialogue, honesty, and trust. The direct approach of this literature highlights the acute awareness by CFCN to the real issues that previously incarcerated women and their families face on a daily basis.

W2BC works with women transitioning from GVI, as many women will stay in the Toronto to Kitchener corridor upon release. Additionally, facilitators at W2BC that have previously been incarcerated at GVI, have remained connected with the institution. It is a unique program as it spans from incarceration to community involvement, keeping the same pedagogy and involving the same individuals at the core of both programs. Lorraine P., a student in the W2B program while incarcerated at GVI, was one of the founders of W2BC upon release (Sloan, 2017) and established the importance of a connection between institutional and post-release programming and reintegration.

Stigmatization and Criminalization

The dehumanization of incarcerated women by CSC begins with women's identification not by name, but by the Fingerprint Section (FPS) number. Fayter (2016) emphasizes that in prison, a woman's identity becomes one of a labelled criminal and that her voice and choice no longer exists. The focus of dispelling stereotypes and assumptions of incarcerated or previously incarcerated women is a key principle in a collaborative, experiential learning environment (Pollack, 2016). The Arbour Report (1996a), which focused on the degradation and illegal treatment of women in prison in April 1994, led to the subsequent closing of the Prison for Women in Kingston and initiated women's prison reform in Canada. However, according to Pate (Dell on Pate, 2009), women are still marginalized in the Canadian criminal and social justice system as a result of a patriarchal ideology and male-centred construction of the Canadian judicial system. These same factors are common for previously incarcerated women once released and perpetuated by parole officers, social services, and rehabilitation centres. The programs

offered through all agencies realize how stigmatization affects previously incarcerated women trying to reintegrate into the community. According to Pietsch (2010), the justice system serves as a patriarchal tool for the privileged, and in the case of women, only for those who meet the standards of hegemonic femininity. The CAEFS programs that deal with mental health and well-being target the low agency and self-esteem that previously incarcerated women need to overcome in order to create new paths of reintegration. Stigmatization can lead to a focus on previous transgressions and how they can disrupt positive futures, thereby leaving women to continue down a criminalized path, instead of seeking a change in self-identity (Stone, Morash, Goodson, Smith, & Cobbina, 2018). A feminist viewpoint identifies that although correctional institutions recognized gender and diversity, these establishments determine how to interpret the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in relation to addressing women's needs (Turnbull, 2016). As a result, women often do not receive the assistance they need to escape the criminalization cycle upon release.

According to a study on social justice and previously incarcerated women (Fortune, Thompson, Pedlar, & Yuen, 2010), a significant factor that affects successful reintegration and participation in community programs is stigmatization based upon previous incarceration. The lack of acceptance by the community can leave a previously incarcerated woman in social isolation and without a support network. It can also be an overwhelming and daunting experience to create an identity as an ordinary member of the community and rebuild self-esteem (Doherty et al., 2014). Engaging in dialogue is the beginning to crossing boundaries and to learn as teachers, students, and critical thinkers (hooks, 1994). By breaking down the barriers of stigmatization, we can become a

learning community. The Community Education Program (CEP) offered at many chapters of JHSO, is focused in creating community awareness about the realities of crime and of previously incarcerated women. The goal is to remove the stigma associated with incarceration and thereby, ease the reintegration process while creating an environment of acceptance and understanding. Community events, seminars, and media appearances help to promote a more realistic view of crime and its impact, which can serve as an effective forum for change. Unfortunately, as not all programs are offered at all chapters, some communities do not receive the benefit of this program. It is recommended by JSHO, O'Grady, and Lafleur (2016), that both social service and correctional agencies also offer public education workshops to create awareness about the supports needed for women returning to their communities, emphasizing that they are individuals trying to rebuild their lives, rather than 'ex-offenders' (p. 41).

The Public Education Program at CAEFS runs a resource centre open to the community, providing education and literature on the criminalization of women. CAEFS maintains that media coverage has a significant influence on public opinion towards previously incarcerated women that often keeps women 'at a distance' (Burnouf, Brosnahan, & Adam, 2015). Similarly, CFCN has regularly scheduled community events that try to bring family and community members together to discuss and review literature on reintegration and stigmatization. CFCN also focuses on children's perspectives when dealing with stigmas surrounding incarcerated parents. CFCN is breaking down barriers and creating awareness in the community by hosting many of their community outreach programs in community centres and libraries, and by advertising these events through local television media (CFCN, 2016). W2BC has been working with universities and

attending symposiums on women and the criminal justice system since its inception. As can be seen by their continued community involvement and outreach, the organization brings a crucial critical lens to the topic of women and criminalization. By expanding their work through media and visual arts projects, as well as involving high profile scholars and rights activists, the organization continues to stay in the public mainstream and bring attention to issues surrounding the stigmatization of previously incarcerated women.

The stigma of a criminal record creates additional challenges and may limit employability, while employer skepticism and perceptions may compound the situation. Holzer's (1996 as cited in Gaetz & O'Grady, 2006) study surveyed five American cities and noted that 65% of potential employers would not hire a previously incarcerated person. This employer bias was even higher towards visible minorities. This attitude among employers, coupled with many previously incarcerated women's low educational and skill levels, contributes to a cycle of helplessness. Aspirations of rebuilding their lives through education and employment are thwarted by the "diminution of opportunities" and lack of community responsibility (Fortune et al., 2010, p. 23; CSC, 1990), both being necessary foundations for reintegration. Fortune et al (2010) discuss the experiences of two participants. 'Penny' was previously incarcerated in GVI in 1998 and felt she was not prepared to re-enter the community and to overcome societal attitudes: "We are a very cold unfeeling society...they're looked as criminals instead of, you know, people" (Fortune et al., 2010, p. 26). 'Crystal' had a similar feeling of overwhelming challenges upon release as she was told by the intake worker at the government-funded program, Ontario Works, that 'people like her' did not qualify for the

program (Fortune et al., 2010). Although, previously incarcerated individuals are eligible for housing and employment assistance upon release, and according to the *Ontario Works Directives* (2017), individuals whose release is imminent are eligible for a phone-based application, stigma is often a barrier to gaining employment (Pollack, 2009). This stigma fuels feelings of loneliness and lack of support, which can jeopardize reintegration.

Although strides are continually being made by CAEFS and JHSO, research indicates that there is still stigmatization and that women, in particular, experience a double stigmatization, as they are both criminalized and a woman (JHSO et al., 2016). From a feminist perspective, women are still seen as “the other” in the criminal justice system and marginalized on that premise alone. The language associated with previously incarcerated women is also indicative of how communities and social service agencies perpetuate stigmatization, although their policy reports state that programs initiate change (JSHO et al., 2016).

Education and Employment

Previous educational experiences have a direct impact on educational aspirations and desires, which can create a domino effect for previously incarcerated women. For example, education prior to prison will impact an individual's prison education (Hughes, 2012), and educational experiences while incarcerated will influence a person's post-release educational interest. Tilley (2016) states that her goal in questioning prison education was to understand how education was constructed/presented as essential for rehabilitation and for successful re-entry into the workforce. However, Tilley found that prison education was not always successful and did not yield the promised results. An anonymous prisoner from Kent Institution, a federal penitentiary in British Columbia,

reports that post-secondary education courses and fees are the responsibility of the inmates. Each course costs approximately \$600.00, making it almost impossible for most prisoners to participate (Anonymous, 2017). A positive prison education experience may change a person's existing negative attitudes towards prison or post-release education, and possibly encourage him/her to pursue additional educational programming upon release. Tiina (Jeganathan, 2018) explains her participation in the W2B program while incarcerated at GVI as making her feel "like everybody else" and not judged. Having university credits from Laurentian University prior to incarceration, she was able to take courses and complete her bachelor's degree while at GVI. At the time of the article, she was the only person at GVI to complete a degree. The challenges that Tiina overcame indicate that academic opportunities for women are very limited. Only a few individuals will have the opportunity to complete degree programs. Zinger (2018) argues that W2B needs to be expanded across Canada in order to create solid foundations for a greater number of women while incarcerated, thus increasing the potential for greater education advancement upon release. This is not to say that higher education will be the solution for the challenges women face upon release, but it will provide additional options upon reintegration.

Although there is not always a connection between an educational background and employment opportunities, many women see educational programming as necessary for social mobility and for setting career goals (Leverentz, 2014). Some limitations exist for women entering prison with higher education experience, as the skills and employment training afforded in prisons does not always provision for higher education. These women are at a crossroads since it is difficult for them to find employment as they

are not participating in recommended skills training, yet the training will not help them because they are already considered over-skilled. 'Carolyn' —a participant in Leverentz's (2014) study of re-entry at The Mercy Home (half-way house)— described feeling like a failure because she found it difficult to find employment that met her skill level and credentials prior to incarceration. As she explained, "I don't fit the category... I don't need to be taught how to talk... I don't need to go through their programs [designed for low-wage and low-skilled jobs]" (p. 153). Although CSC promotes transitional programming as part of their correctional programs, CSC has used a scientific management model for women's program planning since the 1990's, which includes a highly structured and organizational framework that does not adapt to an individual's needs (Bogusz & Gauthier, 2012). A recent report for the CSC (Thompson, Lutfy, Derkzen & Bertrand, 2015) on the components of a transition plan for previously incarcerated women focuses on the needs of women for successful reintegration. Ironically, it does not suggest any education or skills training components for the women, but it does recommend a need for a training program that better informs parole board members of women's unique needs.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2013), employers are not permitted to directly ask questions related to race, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, colour, marital status, disability, or criminal offences. Although post-secondary institutions have the same guidelines, questions may be asked if there is a direct relation to the hiring or acceptance process. Academic faculties (medical or legal at several Ontario universities) and professions (doctor, lawyer, teacher, government employees, etc.) may have strict guidelines surrounding criminal or vulnerable sector background

checks due to the nature of the field (A'Hern, 2017). Employers that deal with any sensitive information may request a criminal record check and assess whether the applicant is a risk. In this instance, previous incarceration could directly impact the opportunities of the applicant, even if the offense is not directly related to the employment position, regardless of the skill qualifications of the applicant. Situations such as these illustrate that there is a disjuncture between program guidelines, initiatives, and what is experienced by previously incarcerated women.

The organizations reviewed in my study all provide education and employment skills training, however, there are limitations on program offerings due to existing skill level and availability in the region. The JHSO offers employment skills training programs in only six chapters, which results in limited availability to a program considered as a key factor in the reintegration process by the organization. Though several chapters offer chapter-specific programs, only two are targeted to women and are chapter specific (WISE – Ottawa, Taking Charge – Windsor). Because of the limitation of education and skills training, either by program or location, women are not receiving the extent of support that is required.

CAEFS provides an extensive amount of educational programming not only for employment opportunities, but also focused on well-being and mental health. It is unique in its position of recognizing that women's needs go beyond tactical skills, but begin with a wholeness of the self, and the mindset to rebuild a life post-incarceration that will remain crime free. This holistic approach teaches women to self-identify their needs and barriers to those needs. It also explores the reason for their criminalization and how that

path can be altered post-release. Examining this through a lens, I believe that the individual approach and identification of specific needs is beneficial in creating programs that will be successful on an individual basis. Smith (2004) states that “the only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within” (p. 28). The experiences of previously incarcerated women and how they understand those experiences from their own perspective (Wylie, 2004) supports the feminist theory of recognizing women’s needs as individual and complex. Therefore, the success of programming will be determined by whether the individual goals of women are achieved, in opposition to quantitative measures and assumptions of successful educational and skills programs, based upon governmental and organization targets.

Additional programs focus on literacy skills in these organizations and have a range of skill levels. There is an emphasis on basic literacy levels, which supports previous research indicating lower literacy rates among incarcerated women. Although many women do not fall into this category, CAEFS also offers educational programming focused on job development, entrepreneurship. JHSO offers post-secondary uptraining programs through their PET Links program at the Ottawa chapter. Considering that basic literacy skills are extremely important, it is disappointing to learn that JHSO only offers literacy services in three of their chapters. Additionally, the Outreach Literacy Program in Kawartha Lakes/Haliburton is available to all adults and does not focus on previously incarcerated women or their particular needs. Although it is offered to the community, previously incarcerated women do not necessarily receive additional assistance. Except for transportation to the program being provided, these women are only able to attend the program while it is offered to the community at large. W2BC’s ability to provide

continual post-secondary educational opportunities, that often build upon the W2B programming offered while incarcerated, is vital in keeping previously incarcerated women motivated upon release and part of a familiar educational environment. There is an inherent support system that is created through the continued programming, which eases the transition of women into the community and provides a structured environment upon release (Sokoloff & Schenck-Fontaine, 2017).

Housing, Economic Positionality, and Family and Support Networks

Difficulties arise for previously incarcerated women who desire to participate in educational programming when basic needs such as housing, employment, and family obligations are not met. Although halfway houses serve as stable transitional housing for incarcerated women upon re-entry, living in an all-female structured environment can be reminiscent of prison. As Albany (cited in Leverentz, 2014) recalls of her Mercy Home experience, “so many women. Women again, like jail” (p. 32). This analogy to prison is heightened by the hierarchical structure that can be created in transitional housing due to the various stages of re-entry of the residents, leading to tensions of place and perspectives. (Leverentz, 2014). The Ontario Halfway House Association (2019) has seven residences available for women, of which five are for women only. These are operated by CAEFS, St. Leonard’s Society, and the Salvation Army. Beds are limited as there are 63 beds available in the province. Stonehenge Therapeutic Community in Guelph has a total of an additional 23 beds (for both men and women). However, beds are reserved only for individuals with substance abuse problems, and there is an associated service fee. Two female-only residences have four satellite apartments in total, creating the opportunity for women to live with their child(ren). Returning to the

community and reuniting with their children is one of the most important single events for previously incarcerated women that are mothers (Covington, 2003). Feminist research stresses that gender stereotypes influence mothering relationships for previously incarcerated women. According to Hannah-Moffat and Innocente (2013), children are seen as an asset and stabilizing factor for women upon release by the Parole Board of Canada (PBC). Ironically, the PBC also recognizes that parental responsibilities could be a stressor for many women and therefore are not necessarily helpful, thus creating a paradox for the female offender. Additional gender stereotypes label criminalized women with children as bad mothers when judged for committing a criminal offense (Österman and Masson, 2018; Stone et al., 2018). The importance of family support (financial, emotional, and childcare) is paramount to successful reintegration (Cobbina, 2010). Previously incarcerated women striving for independence are often expected by their families to return to the role of caregiver, adding to the stress of supporting their children but also impacting their own aspirations. Leverentz (2014) argues that these same expectations are not placed on men post-release. Research indicates that many women are primary caregivers prior to incarceration and will return to this role upon release (Berman, 2005), making the environment in halfway houses not sustainable for women with children, without the satellite apartment option.

Previously incarcerated women on parole living in halfway houses have the additional burden of having to report all intimate relationships and undergo surveillance and scrutiny by staff (Pollack, 2007). The intrusiveness can be challenging for women that have been victims in an abusive relationship prior to incarceration. Previously incarcerated women have often survived physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and are

more likely than men to have mental health issues (Berman, 2005; Opsal, 2015). Parole protocols in Ontario prevent previously incarcerated women from associating with other previously incarcerated women. A support network is crucial for those living in a halfway house as it is difficult to get childcare through social assistance. A feminist perspective challenges governmental and community power structures that create repeated limitations for marginalized groups trying to break out of a well-constructed regime (Gore, 1993). Pollack (2009) explains that women on parole receive little money for living expenses, and due to halfway house restrictions, are unable to rely on halfway house roommates for support, limiting opportunities for reintegration. Structured protocols for resident behaviour in halfway houses also add to the feeling of isolation as is described by 'Ruth', a participant in a study by Fortune et al. (2010). Ruth could no longer communicate with her support group, and although she made friends at the halfway house, she could not go out with them alone due to the rules of the house, which left her feeling completely on her own. 'Crystal' (another resident of a halfway house and part of the same study) continued to communicate with her support group, but as she was not in her home province, she could not receive provincial health care (OHIP) in Ontario (Fortune et al., 2010). She was fortunate to receive assistance from her support group in applying for and subsequently receiving provincial health care, otherwise, she would not have received any medical coverage.

Pollack (2009) refers to these spaces as 'circuits of exclusion', where previously incarcerated women need guidance and support because they are alone, however do not have access to any available networks. The dissemination of these power imbalances is the goal of feminist research as it pursues social justice, while recognizing issues of

difference, questioning social power, and resisting oppression (Beckman, 2014; Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004). Previously incarcerated women stated that parole officers and halfway house staff were not familiar with the community services available in some areas (Pollack, 2009). The feeling of isolation and helplessness creates negative experiences and perceptions for previously incarcerated women which may make them skeptical of any program offerings. O'Brien (Paddon, 2019), who was incarcerated at GVI for drug trafficking, states that her family was her life support system throughout her ordeal, during her incarceration and post-release.

In contrast, CAEFS offers similar programs in all their chapters, therefore, making a support network possible for all previously incarcerated women. As part of their mandate to provide services to previously incarcerated women across the province, CAEFS offers counselling, housing, family and community supports, education and employment programs, and cultural sensitivities programs. CAEFS has been instrumental in collaborating with CSC to establish the Task Force on Federally Sentences Women, and was applauded by an HM Inspectorate of Prisons Crown report of GVI (2005) as being instrumental in supporting women post release.

Issues Affecting Indigenous and Racialized Women

Canadian society is racialized, and racism is built into the Canadian legal system. This system was established with colonial and gender inequalities, and exclusion is embedded within governmental institutions (Brigham, 2013; Monture, 2007). Cunneen's (2005) study highlights the marginalization process of Aboriginals in Australia and emphasizes that culture, socioeconomic status, and environment all contribute to criminalization. The stigma continues through post-incarceration, because the "truth" of

their situation is based upon the current political regime. The particular Canadian landscape of colonization and treatment of Indigenous peoples is intrinsically linked to the current legal system and the racial attitudes that perpetuate this machine. Government budget-cuts in the 1990's have resulted in a decrease in funding for social services, health care, and education, contributing to the marginalization and criminalization of poor, racialized, and Indigenous women who turn to crime for survival from poverty and homelessness (Pate, 2006). The marginalization of Indigenous women is closely tied to their criminalization and they are targeted as a criminalized group, being frequently disregarded based on gender and race (Bellrichard, 2018; Turnbull, 2016). Indigenous and racialized women come to prison at a younger age and in many cases, have experienced drug and alcohol abuse, as well as, physical and sexual abuse (Arbour, 1996a). Amanda Lepine's story (Bellrichard, 2018) reflects the failure of the criminal justice system for a Métis woman, as she was 'upgraded' to a female adult prison in Abbotsford, B.C. at the age of 14 (in 1995) by Child Family Services, for running away from foster homes and petty crimes since she was 12. She was released at 19 into the community with no family and support system, and now at 37 years of age spent most of her life in and out of prison.

It is relevant to note that between 80-90% of urban Indigenous women, particularly in single-parent households, live below the poverty line in urban centres such as Regina, Winnipeg, and Saskatoon (Razack, 2002). The distribution of Indigenous women incarcerated in Ontario in 2009-2010 was 62%, while only 38% were released in the community, as opposed to the distribution on non-Indigenous women at 42% incarcerated and 58% in the community (CSC, 2010a). This suggests that Indigenous

women are not only over-represented in the criminal justice system, but have significantly lower rates of release into the community. In Canada, Indigenous women are over-policed, more frequently incarcerated, and afforded poorer representation in the Canadian legal system than other groups (Razack, 2002). Indigenous criminalization trends and improvement strategies have not effectively targeted this issue and in 2017, Zinger and Elman report that almost two out of 5 (38.4%) young offenders aged 18-21 were Indigenous.

Current research indicates that racial stereotypes surrounding Indigenous peoples creates a belief that they are perceived as dishonest, unintelligent, poor, and have substance abuse problems (McManus, Maeder, & Yamamoto, 2018). A recent appeal to the United Nations by Non-Government Organizations supported by CAEFS, holds the Canadian government accountable for racial discrimination and criminalization of women. "Canada devotes significant resources to defending its failure to address the marginalization and victimization — including the criminalization and incarceration — of racialized communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples and African Canadians" (CAEFS, 2017). The dramatic over-representation of Indigenous women in federal prisons, combined with their poor reintegration projection from OMS suggests that there is vacuum for these previously incarcerated women upon release.

The data shows a disproportionate ratio between the female incarcerated Indigenous population and the female Indigenous population in Canada. 30% of federal female offenders in Canada (330 out of 1098) are Indigenous (Offender Profile 2013-2014, 2017), yet only 4.3% of the entire female population in Canada is Indigenous. Additionally, high risk classification and segregation are more prevalent in the

Indigenous population and as of March 31, 2017, 36.5% of offenders in segregation were Indigenous (Zinger, 2017). Additionally, a higher risk classification results in limited or no access to core prison programs, which directly impacts educational programming and future transitional preparedness (Wesley, 2012). In Ontario, one out of every 6 women incarcerated at GVI is Indigenous and the projected reintegration potential is 25% compared to 48% for non-Indigenous female offenders (Offender Profile 2013-2014, 2017). Historical inequities also have created differences in how Indigenous people experience the criminal justice system (Weil Davis, 2013). For those Indigenous offenders that are not able to participate in specifically Indigenous programming while incarcerated, their 'assumed' cultural avoidance becomes a negative determinant for their release criteria (Zinger, 2018).

A reflection from 'Kelly', an Indigenous woman from Northern Ontario (Restorative Justice Conference, 2016), provides a glimpse of attitudes towards Indigenous women in relation to her incarceration and life post-release after a visit to her home community. She was incarcerated at GVI for drug abuse, although she was in an abusive relationship in her community. After surviving her incarceration, she completed courses and skills training as a hairstylist, and at the time of the conference was employed at a hair salon in Ontario. After a recent visit to her home community, she shared the comments from her childhood friends: "wow... you made it... you're living your dream... you got out of here."

By examining the program offerings and how Kelly is reflective of an exception to the status quo, it is clear that there is a dire need for additional Indigenous programs and services. JHSO offers only one Indigenous program: Native Outreach in the Toronto

chapter. Similarly, CAEFS offers Indigenous Support Services only at the Ottawa chapter. Although recommendations continue to be made for additional reintegration and programming for previously incarcerated Indigenous women, the implementation of program offerings is slow moving. In contrast, CFCN and W2B (both smaller organizations), offer Indigenous support services and community education. Although reports calling for additional support and services for Indigenous women go back over 20 years, little has been done to change the situation and Indigenous women remain victimized in the criminal justice system (Bellrichard, 2018).

Geographical Considerations

Due to the sparsity of correctional institutions, there can be a significant disconnect between transitional programming and community reintegration for previously incarcerated women. A CSC report (2010) focuses on the integration between the institution and community to create a support network upon release. Although this is a useful recommendation, it does not take in to account the location of the federal institution in relation to the intended community upon release. Travelling great distances may be difficult for families and other support networks prior to release and therefore, there is a need for additional assistance to overcome these barriers. Educational programming offerings vary between communities (and provinces). Information on educational options within their community must be provided to previously incarcerated women to participate. A 'Density of Community Services' graph in a CSC report (Thompson, Trinneer, McConnell, Derkzen, & Rubenfeld, 2014) illustrates that the greatest amount of services available in Ontario are through the Oshawa to Kitchener Corridor. The additional cities of Windsor, London, Barrie, Kingston, Ottawa, North Bay,

Sudbury, and Sault Ste. Marie have moderate services as well. However, it is evident that community support networks are scarce (or even non-existent) for those living in northern Ontario. Due to this, many previously incarcerated women may not have support systems in their community and may be required to live in an unfamiliar community to access programs upon release.

Geographical barriers greatly impact the availability of programming for previously incarcerated women. JHSO programs are city and region specific, only offering two tailored programs for previously incarcerated women in Ottawa and Windsor. Discharge planning programs that are working in conjunction with the correctional facility are available in Kingston (allied with Quinte Detention Centre) and Sault Ste. Marie (allied with Algoma Treatment and Remand Centre). From a feminist perspective, previous CSC research in the 1980's criticized the Prison for Women as being geographically isolating for female offenders. In result, the prison failed to have adequate programming and reintegration programs to meet the needs of such a nationally diverse female population (Turnbull, 2016). Although regional institutions have now replaced the Prison for Women, the regional prisons still have large geographical catchment areas and as a result, continue to experience similar criticisms. It is evident that although JHSO have programming developed for previously incarcerated women, the implementation of the programs occurs mostly in larger city centres. If a woman does not reintegrate into certain communities, her reintegration opportunities may be lessened. It is necessary for additional programming to be implanted throughout the JHSO chapters. By comparison, CAEFS offers similar programming throughout their chapters and have a greater community outreach to educate incarcerated and previously

incarcerated women about program offerings and services. Although they do not have chapters in all areas, staff travel to correctional facilities in order to work with women and establish discharge planning programs and community supports. The Simcoe County chapter, which is located in Barrie, Ontario, has staff travel to GVI (Kitchener), Vanier Centre for Women (Milton), and CNCC (Penetanguishene). The Ottawa chapter supports women at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, GVI (Kitchener), and Joliette Institution for Women (Joliette, QC). This commitment to work between chapters and establish coverage areas, ensures that women in correctional institutions receive the services they need for reintegration and sustainability upon release. The geographical outreach is tackled by the Rural and Remote Programs in Muskoka, wherein clients enrol to programs online, removing distance restrictions and facilitating programming in their closest city (Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, or Huntsville). In congruence with geographical outreach, CFCN works with organizations across Canada to provide support systems and programming for previously incarcerated women and men, and their families.

Through the analysis of the program offerings, it is evident that gaps appear when examining the relationships between community organizations and correctional facilities surrounding release planning for incarcerated women. While outlining community strategies for women offenders, the CSC report (2010) methodically reviews the principles and concepts in women's corrections, and highlights the importance of integration between institution and community. Although it is evident that organizations like CAEFS do visit several correctional institutions, research indicates that within the prison, the same level of care and attention to programming and release planning is often not available. Additionally, due to the inherent prison structure, women may often not

have the opportunity to participate in programs. This highlights that while strategic plans may provide key potential solutions, strategies must be implemented and evaluated before merit can be applied.

It is evident that although much of the research by the CSC and community organizations identifies women's needs, the implementation of assistance and fulfillment of these needs is not always successful. It is clear that previously incarcerated women need support, assistance, and information about services available in their intended community to ease the transition back into mainstream life. Understanding the educational experiences and perceptions of previously incarcerated women is crucial in assisting these women in rebuilding their lives, finding gainful employment, and building successful relationships in the future.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A central premise of feminist theory is its understanding that a socially situated knowledge lets us learn how to see (Haraway, 2004; Harding, 2004). Women, both while incarcerated and upon release share the external influences impacting participation in educational programming. While the "concrete experiences" (Brooks, 2007, p. 56) of each woman may differ, there is a shared knowledge of institutional and community impact factors. How women negotiate educational opportunities is informed by these struggles.

Although there have been strides to improve conditions for previously incarcerated women, there are still many gaps in the reintegration process that affect women's educational opportunities due to basic needs, such as housing and employment. The discharge planning that is mandated by CSC continues to be scrutinized as

ineffectual and has not taken into account multiple recommendations for change. Zinger (2018) states that CSC has disregarded, or completely dismissed, his previous recommendations for improvement in key. He advises that progress is stalled, or even regressive, in the areas of management of maximum security at women's regional facilities and points out that there has been no movement on the proposals for Indigenous corrections. He also recommends that Indigenous Healing Lodges be developed in urban centres, particularly since a younger inmate population will return to urban centres upon release. The opportunity to be situated closer to education and the employment opportunities that can assist with reintegration, may lead to greater participation rate from this younger demographic.

Previously incarcerated women from GVI are also skeptical regarding progress within CSC to put theory into practice. In a CBC radio interview (Enright, 2018), Fayter states her continued academic work will focus on "the values prison authorities espouse, and what prisoners actually experience" (para. 2). Kish (2013) speaks of the assumptions and preconceived notions surrounding previously incarcerated women and draws attention to how organizations like W2B are breaking these down —although there is still a long way to go. Tiina (Jeganathan, 2018) is also critical of the progress of change in the attitudes of guards at GVI due to her experiences. Although there were supportive mentors from W2B and education, the prevailing attitude was that inmates were "garbage and not worth anything". I believe that while these attitudes exist, there needs to be greater educational and training opportunities for previously incarcerated women, so they can break the cycle of incarceration, release and recidivism. Support networks need to be aggressively implemented, with correctional institutions working with agencies to ensure

that women get the support they need upon release. Statistically, the number of women incarcerated or getting the support they need upon release is quite low compared to the rate of incarceration and release. However, there are also success stories, which indicate that the justice system can move ahead and provide support for previously incarcerated women such as Emily O'Brien, charged with importing cocaine, who was released on parole on December 3, 2018 from GVI (Paddon, 2019). She took courses and certifications in GVI and started a business, overcame a substance abuse program, and is now pursuing her business plans upon release. At the time of writing, she is living at Ellen Osler Home, a halfway house run by the Salvation Army, in Dundas, Ontario, and close to her family.

It is evident, that by following the guidelines outlined in CSC programming protocols, as well as by implementing the recommendations made by review reports of CSC programming and facilities, positive changes can result in better programming for incarcerated women. By extension, improved adherence to transitional programming between institutions and community organizations, is more likely to prepare a greater number of women for re-entry into communities. Additionally, by increasing the number of programs specifically targeted for the needs of previously incarcerated women, community organizations can better serve the reintegration challenges that previously incarcerated women face. However, increases in government and private services often rests on financial supports, either through increased government funding, donations and/or fundraising in the private sector. Government budget cuts in 2014 closed 12 out of 16 Status of Women offices; funding for women's advocacy groups was cut by 37%; and cutting social programs that affect women's educational and occupational advancement

was also on the agenda (Public Service Alliance of Canada, 2014). Government ministries need to recognize the importance of maintaining and improving services, instead of implementing budgetary cuts. Communities need to support private organizations through awareness and donations. Employers need to support the employment needs of previously incarcerated women and align hiring practices that do not exclude these women from the workforce.

Feminist research argues that the increased awareness of the inadequacies of the criminal justice system in meeting the needs of previously incarcerated women results in improved strategies and alternatives for incarceration and release (van Wormer, 2009). Additionally, feminist theory explains that an understanding of women's criminality sheds light on why women engage in crime, the various factors of oppression, and the multiple forces that affect gender realities for previously incarcerated women (Bernard, 2013). Roadmaps exist to improve the reintegration process for previously incarcerated women, but it is the responsibility of the government, its employees, and the communities at large to ensure success by recognizing the individual needs of previously incarcerated women and developing programs that suit those individual needs. These changes will likely increase program participation and, ultimately, improve the reintegration journey.

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Appendix A*Women’s Federal Correctional Institutions in Canada*

Institution	Location	Catchment Area
Fraser Valley Institution for Women	Abbotsford, British Columbia	British Columbia and Yukon Territory (opened 2004)
Edmonton Institution for Women	Edmonton, Alberta	Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territory, and Northwestern Ontario (opened 1995-1996)
Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge	Maple Creek, Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan (Indigenous only) (opened 1995)
Grand Valley Institution for Women	Kitchener, Ontario	Greater Ontario and Nunavut (although Nunavut is not specifically assigned to Greater Ontario, CSC preferences Inuit offenders to specific facilities to “keep them together” for cultural reasons (CSC, 2013) (opened 1997)
Joliette Institution for Women	Joliette, Quebec	Quebec (opened 1997)
Nova Institution for Women	Truro, Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador (opened 1995)

Source: Adapted from “*Women’s Corrections*”, by Correctional Services Canada, 2017a.

Appendix B*Women's Provincial Correctional Institutions in Ontario*

Institution	Location	Offender Profile
Algoma Treatment and Remand Centre	Sault Ste. Marie	Male and Female
Central East Correctional Centre	Lindsay	Male and Female
Central North Correctional Centre	Penetanguishene	Male and Female
Monteith Correctional Complex	Monteith	Male and Female
Vanier Centre for Women – French language services offered	Milton	Female Only

Source: Adapted from “*Facilities – Correctional Centres*”, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, 2018.

Appendix C

Sustainable Livelihoods Model – Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto

Objective 1: Serving Criminalized Women

To develop and implement a service model for holistic and integrated programming that contributes to advancing the sustainable livelihoods of criminalized women.



Objective 2: Policy and Public Education to Decriminalize Women’s Lives

To directly affect policies, regulations and public perceptions that negatively affect criminalized women and their families in Toronto.



Source: Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto, (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.efrytoronto.org/sustainable-livelihoods-model/>