

A New Time



*A toolkit
for families of women offenders preparing
to reintegrate into their family and the community*

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Elizabeth Martin and Krista Poole



Canadian Families and Corrections Network
Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s

***A New Time:** A toolkit for families of female offenders preparing to reintegrate into their family and the community.*
By Elizabeth Martin and Krista Poole.

Cette ressource est disponible en français sous le titre ***Un nouvel envol**, ressources pour les familles des femmes purgeant une peine fédérale et se préparant à réintégrer leur famille et leur communauté.*

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Canadian Families and Corrections Network
Box 35040 Kingston ON K7L 5S5
Toll Free Information line: 1-888-371-2326
Email: national@cfcn-rcafd.org
Internet: www.cfcn-rcafd.org

Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s
C.P. 72042, Bois-des-Filion, QC J6Z 4N9
Renseignements téléphoniques sans frais : 1-877-875-1285
Courriel : rcafd@sympatico.ca
Internet : www.cfcn-rcafd.org

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Preface

This toolkit is part of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network's Family Liaison Worker pilot project at the Joliette and Nova Institutions. Joliette Institution is a federal correctional facility for women in Quebec and Nova Institution is a federal correctional facility for women in Nova Scotia. The project focuses on the needs of federally sentenced women and their families. It addresses family reintegration issues such as:

- Safe and successful family and community reintegration;
- Child custody and access during incarceration and upon reintegration;
- The role of grandparents in relation to custody and access of the offender with her children;
- The role of victimization among women and its impact on parenting expectations and their approach to child care;
- The needs of the family member who was a victim of the offence, including providing information on victim services such as CSC Victim Services; and
- The relational support issues of women.

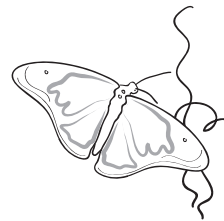
Successful family and community reintegration is a process that takes commitment and time. The Family Liaison Worker project provides support during the critical first year of release. Other community organizations are also an important component in assisting with a realistic family-based reintegration plan.

Project Components

1. Family Strengths and Needs Assessment Tool. Federally sentenced women are offered the opportunity for an individual interview. This tool evaluates family ties, support capacity and community links. It also identifies protective and resilience factors as well as reintegration expectations.
2. The development of *A New Time: A toolkit for families of women offenders preparing to reintegrate into their family and the community*. Following a family-based interview, the toolkit is provided to interested families and women.
3. Family Reintegration Action Plan (FRAP). With the help of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network's Family Liaison Worker, women can develop a family-based plan

to address areas of concern and determine what type of community family support is needed. Families are also invited to contribute to the plan by expressing their concerns and offering their support to the returning family member. It is important that the goals be realistic and attainable.

4. Correlation with the Correctional Plan. With the consent of the woman, the Family Reintegration Action Plan is shared with Case Management to complement the Correctional Plan.
5. Community support. The woman and her family are linked to a community organization that will provide structured reintegration support to the entire family for one year based on the Family Reintegration Action Plan.



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Lloyd Withers and Linda Miller for editing.

Women and family members who generously shared their lives.

Introduction

This toolkit is written for:

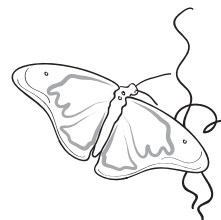
- Families who have faced the incarceration of a female family member and are now thinking about offering their support for a safe and successful return to the family and the community.
- Women who are returning to the community and are developing a support system with family and with significant others who care about them.
- Those who desire to better understand and support federally sentenced women and their families upon reintegration.

Women from Joliette and Nova Institutions and Thérèse Casgrain Halfway House and their family members contributed their thoughts to this toolkit. Their insights about family and community reintegration appear throughout the toolkit. Their personal stories illustrate for other women and family members the challenges of reintegration. Being a family member is a difficult journey.

Re-entry into society is also an ongoing challenge. CFCN thanks the women and their families for their openness in sharing their stories.

We welcome your comments as to how the toolkit can be improved in order to better support women and their families. CFCN is aware that not every part of this toolkit will address every family's specific reality. For example, the questions or needs of a parent or grandparent are different than those of a partner. Also, the nature of the offence committed may add to the complexity of family and community reintegration.

Each family is unique...



Each family is unique

The Canadian Families and Corrections Network's definition of family is the one used by the United Nations: a family is "a group of individuals who are related by affection, kinship, dependency or trust." Relationships with significant others is another way to describe a family.

This definition of family recognizes that some traditional definitions of 'family' may no longer apply to Canadian families. There are many expressions of family life. Aboriginal and First Nations cultures have long embraced a larger definition of 'who is my family.' Many Canadians now live in blended families or other combinations of family life, and the list can go on.

"Prison has given me back my family. You know, I got back in touch with my family because of prison."

Returning family member

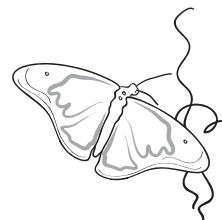
"My family needs help to understand why and how I committed an infraction and ended up in prison."

Returning family member

It is important to acknowledge that women returning to the community following a period of incarceration come from and return to a variety of family backgrounds. Their family's strengths and needs will influence both the joys and challenges of family and community reintegration.

It takes hard work and commitment to make relationships mutually satisfying. Incarceration and reintegration intensify the difficulty of maintaining relationships but surprisingly can also provide an opportunity to rebuild relationships. Sometimes a family can work it out on their own. Sometimes outside support is needed.

If a family member was the victim of the offence, they need to have a safe place to process their feelings. There are many emotions that result when a family member is a victim, including hurt, anger, shame, guilt and or loss. There is information about resources for these families at the end of this toolkit.



Family reintegration expectations

“Society changes constantly and women face many challenges upon reintegration. Walking around without fences, grocery shopping in a large store or public transportation in a new city are all experiences that may be difficult to adjust to. Also the requirements to meet different professionals (halfway house counsellor, psychologist, parole officer) can be very exhausting. Fitting in again (finding a place to live, role in the family, job) takes time and effort. Discouragement can set in when one’s hopes and dreams are set against the sometimes harsh realities of every day life. Support is needed to better cope with reintegration challenges.

Family members also have their own set of expectations. A child whose mother has been incarcerated may dream that life will return to what it was before. Influenced by television, books or imagination, a child may fantasize about what a good mother is. The child may also be very hurt and angry because of being abandoned. The receiving parent may expect their daughter to be the same person as before incarceration and facing who she has become could be devastating. Dreams have been shattered for all concerned.

In order to facilitate the process of reintegration, the expectations of all family members need to be discussed openly. If this does not happen, disappointments and misunderstandings between family members will build even higher walls between them. Outside support is needed to break down these walls and to build bridges.”

*Mother who has returned to the community
after serving a life sentence*

The family as well as the returning loved one will both have to make adjustments after a period of incarceration.

Reintegration usually works best when the returning family member is permitted to resume her responsibilities slowly, one step at a time. Families need to be realistic and give the woman time to adjust to life outside. The pressure to succeed in everything and all at once can have the opposite effect and lead to setbacks. A woman’s expectations for release can also run high. Permitting each other to take small steps can go a long way.

"I am learning to better express my opinions and needs thanks to programs and the resource people I have met during my incarceration. This was not common practice in my family. My family ties are now stronger and we have learned to respect each other. I work at helping my child do the same and upon reintegration, I would like to keep up this good practice."

Returning family member

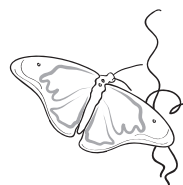
Good communication will help clarify everyone's expectations. Families may still have questions. They may require support and information to understand the offence, its impact on the victim and its impact on the woman and her reintegration after serving her time. Good information for the family leads to good family support for reintegration.

"Ties with my family are severed. I have broken their trust. I want to regain their trust and show them that I am trustworthy."

Returning family member

Honesty can go a long way in helping to re-build relationships. It is important that the returning family member share her release conditions with her family. If there is something that is confusing to the family about the release conditions, then the family may need to ask consent to speak to the woman's parole officer. Vicki Sanderford-O'Connor says it this way:

Hope and conflicting loyalties constantly divide you. You are challenged to support troubled family members who are not always truthful, yet bound by the need to be respectful of their conditions of parole. It is not an enviable position...¹



1. *The Power in Compassion: Transforming the Correctional Culture*, Sanderford-O'Connor, V. (2001), Fair Oaks, CA: Clariquest, p. 38.

Establishing boundaries for support

Conflicting attitudes and feelings often influence the family's capacity to support the returning family member. Many times their actions are driven by compassion and empathy. Other families may be motivated by feelings of guilt when they compare their situation with the difficulties experienced by the offender. At other times family support is tempered by the hurt and disappointment that the family has experienced because of the woman's past behaviours. They don't want to be hurt and disappointed again.

1. Some families may have cut off all ties and still others are limited in what they can offer.
2. Sometimes families want to do their best to support their loved one but don't always know how.
3. Other families may need support as they face stigma and stress related to media coverage or negative attitudes of other family members, friends and neighbours.
4. Weighed down by feelings of shame, families may hesitate to ask for outside help. They may find it difficult to trust service providers, fearing to be misunderstood or judged. It is important that family members speak with service providers who understand the dynamics of incarceration and reintegration.
5. The correctional system can be intimidating to families. A family liaison worker or another community agency can help the family to understand the process more effectively.
6. Tensions can also arise between the parole officer and the families. For example, the parolee's reporting relationship with the parole officer can cause stress within the family concerning confidentiality and accountability.

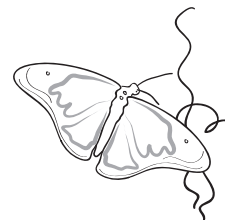
*"Families experience a lot of stress. They have limits and if I don't help myself, they will stop helping."
Returning family members*

*"A family support group, with people experiencing the same thing would be helpful and break the isolation felt by my family."
Returning family member*

“Basically, the parolee’s family and the Parole Officer share the same goal: to help the newly released parolee stay out of jail and respect her release conditions. That is why it is essential that the family and the Parole Officer work together. Certain family members may view collaborating with the Parole Officer as a form of betrayal; however it can be a very helpful preventive measure. If a family member senses that the parolee is on a slippery slope and they discuss it with the Parole Officer, the Officer will then be able to intervene before an irreversible situation occurs.”

Community Parole Officer

7. The returning family member often has trouble trusting others and is unlikely to seek community help unless first accompanied by a support person in whom they have confidence. They will also have to show, through their behaviour, that they are worthy of a family member’s or support person’s trust.
8. Families need to see the importance of setting boundaries that acknowledge their strengths, needs and well being. In some cases the most honest and helpful attitude is to admit that they are no longer able to provide support.



Helpful attitudes and actions checklist

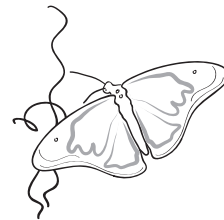
The following checklist serves as a guide to sorting out which attitudes and actions are helpful or not when supporting a woman who was incarcerated and is now returning to the family and community.

Helpful attitudes and actions

- ✓ Offering a listening ear;
- ✓ Providing support for change by asking honest questions and encouraging the returning family member to tap into appropriate community resources;
- ✓ Holding the family member accountable to their own goals for reintegration;
- ✓ Supporting change when it occurs. Celebrating the good choices made by the returning family member even when they are not the family's preferred choice. The emphasis is on supporting change;
- ✓ Modeling pro-social attitudes and thinking (respect for the law, valuing family relationships, treating others with respect and dignity, an honest work ethic, emotional self-control...);
- ✓ Taking care of one's own needs;
- ✓ Recognizing one's limits; and
- ✓ Asking for help.

Unhelpful attitudes and actions

- ✓ Taking the problems on yourself or doing for your returning family member what they can do for themselves;
- ✓ Acting as a parole officer;
- ✓ Solving problems;
- ✓ Criticizing attempts at progress;
- ✓ Being permissive about anti-social beliefs or attitudes (negative towards authority, not valuing family relationships, not respecting others, not valuing work, minimizing risky behaviour...);
- ✓ Wanting change more than the returning family member;
- ✓ Blaming the returning family member for failure; and
- ✓ Trying to be or seeing oneself as the only resource possible.



Intimate and partnered relationships

*M*any women have not experienced nurturing relationships in their family of origin. This can influence their choice of partners and sometimes they choose partners who are abusive.

Women in general have a longing for relationship and connection. Most decisions, good or bad, are made to meet a relational need. There may also be a link between relational breakdown and choices that lead to criminal behaviour.

Incarceration separates and puts a further strain on intimate relationships.

Some partners have maintained the relationship and been supportive during a woman's incarceration. For other women, their male partners are no longer present. Many women do not have support on the outside. They feel that no one can really understand what they are going through.

New relationships form in prison and for some it may be the first time they establish a meaningful, fulfilling relationship. Upon their release to the community, women may long for the companionship of their 'inside family.' There may be no home to go to. Reintegration can be a lonely time.

When a woman returns to the community and to family, she may need support and encouragement in developing healthy friendships. Non-romantic relationships can contribute to meeting real needs of companionship. Such friendships can be a solid foundation on which to assert one's independence without the complexities of an intimate relationship.

There is a strong tendency for women to return to unhealthy partners who may lead them right back to crime. To evaluate what constitutes an appropriate romantic relationship, the following questions can be helpful:

- Is it in my best interest to be involved in an intimate relationship so soon after release?
- Does my spouse or potential partner show pro-social attitudes and thinking?

"You have to have been inside a prison to truly understand what we're going through. I cannot even find the words to describe what I have been through to my family. Please help me to explain."
Returning family member

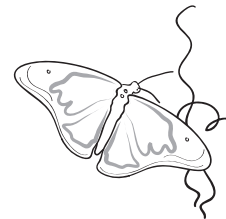
"My family tries to encourage me and say "you can do it" but they don't understand what I'm going through."
Returning family member

- Is he/she a willing to stay clean and seek support with me?
- Can one be romantically involved with a former offender and still maintain a crime free lifestyle?

A 'time out' from being involved in a romantic relationship can be very beneficial so that the woman can concentrate on self-care. Getting to know oneself after incarceration can provide a solid foundation for making good relationship choices later.

Relationships are always changing and evolving. For those already committed in an intimate and supportive relationship there will be an adjustment period. Both partners may need to redefine the relationship upon reintegration and over time.

Studies have suggested that a woman involved with another ex-offender can still abstain from criminal behaviour provided that **both** partners are committed to the rehabilitation process.



Aboriginal families and community reintegration

By Line Rainville, CSC Aboriginal Liaison Officer

Since family solidarity is the predominant value in aboriginal communities, the reintegration of a criminalized woman is the challenging task of all members of the family and clan.

However, it is often difficult for family or clan members to accept a woman released from prison because the crime may be related to another member of the family or community. Therefore, support for the woman and her family, especially those who share the same house, is essential.

When the woman returns to her community, she needs help to repair the relational bonds that have been broken. Since everyone knows each other and is aware of the crime, all suffer its consequences. Her family (especially her children) and clan members have carried the blame and shame of her crime and have often been ostracized and rebuked by those hurt by the crime. A process of understanding and forgiveness needs to be initiated.

For reintegration to be successful, families must have support to accept the woman and receive her back into the family and clan. Other families who have already lived through this same experience can be part of this support (peer support).

In many communities, social services are offered and are adapted to the reality of aboriginal people. Help and assistance is provided by an elder or any person in the community designated to offer spiritual guidance. Competent people from outside the community may also offer assistance to the woman and her family unit.

Dealing with changes and losses

"I'm not the only one who was sentenced. We are a closely-knit family and the separation that we are going through is a harsh punishment for all of us.

My family lost a mother and grandmother.

I was very involved with my children and grandchildren and my absence left an immense void in their lives.

I have felt so powerless here behind bars, not being able to help them. All I can do is reaffirm my love and offer a listening ear and guidance.

My oldest grandchild was only five years old when I was incarcerated. I had always spent a lot of time with her. Going to plays and movies, shopping, museums, hikes and naps at my home were some of our favourite activities. She was always over at my house as I lived just next door. We ate at least three family meals together each week. She often stayed with me on weekends.

My other daughter who was going through a separation came to live with me bringing along her newborn.

The National Parole Board granted me temporary absences for the last year and a half to visit my family (with an escort).

These visits lift my spirits and have brought happiness to my grandchildren and daughters. It gives them such pleasure to see me outside the walls and to have me home. These outings do me so much good. I feel alive once again. I relish each moment and spend time helping the kids with their homework.

I take life one day at a time, doing the best I can. I keep telling myself that I have less time left to serve and that I'm getting through this rather well. My family keeps telling me that I have a good outlook even after all these years.

My main goal is to take care of my health in order to enjoy the years I have left with the people I love.

I am thankful that I have grown as a person inside these walls. Something positive will have come out of this time.

My daughters and grandchildren are reassured to see the end of my sentence approaching and anticipate my return."
Mother and grandmother who is serving a life sentence

There is a never-ending series of changes for all family members during incarceration and reintegration. With each new circumstance, a sense of loss is often experienced.

Upon incarceration, families live broken dreams for their child, children lose the presence and care of their mother, partners face separation and the loss of a mother to their children and grandchildren are separated from their grandparents. Upon reintegration, grandparents who are caregivers may face the pain of losing their grandchildren when the mother returns and resumes her parenting role.

It is vital for everyone to recognize these losses and openly express them to a caring individual.

Many women have suffered mental, physical and/or sexual abuse during their formative and adult years. These injustices and crimes produce deep wounds. The journey to wholeness includes addressing these wounds. Incarceration can be a period of time that is beneficial to one's journey. Women may need this time out to reflect upon their lives. It may a first time away from abuse and neglect.

Many women desire intimacy and the relational dimension of their lives is an essential part of their self-worth. Women generally identify themselves by the types or strength of relationships they are able to maintain and therefore experience great relational loss during incarceration.

No loss is greater than losing the contact with their children.

All these losses can bring on feelings of guilt, hopelessness, even uselessness. Learning to grieve the changes and losses is part of the journey.

"Give us a chance to show our family that we have changed with the help of our programs."
Returning family member



Mothering and the best interests of the children

*M*any of the emotions and issues faced by incarcerated women are related to their mothering.

Parenting values and skills are often learned in our family of origin. As well, societal norms often measure a woman's worth in terms of parental capacity and success. Not all women have a build-in capacity to be nurturing mothers due to a variety of contributing factors such as poor nurturing in their family of origin, low education, poverty, etc.

Incarcerated mothers face tremendous challenges. Women who have committed a crime, even a violent offence need support to process their emotions with respect to their children and to assess the best way to remain involved in the children's lives.

Some women have lost custody and/or access to their children prior to incarceration. Strong feelings of guilt often overtake a woman with respect to her past failures as a mom. Incarceration may provide a 'time out' to reflect upon how or if she can resume her mothering role.

What is custody?

Custody refers to the authority to choose the child's activities and make decisions regarding the child's development. It can include arrangement for the care of a child by his parents, grandparents, other relatives or Child Protection services. Parents, other relatives and Child Protection services or foster care placement family are possible custodians of minor children.

What is access?

Access refers to visitation between a child and a non-custodial parent. It can be a court ordered agreement or a mutually agreed upon schedule between the custodial parent or caregiver and the non-custodial parent. It can also include monitoring all forms of communication, including letters and phone calls while incarcerated as well as internet or email contacts upon return to the community.

Custody and access considerations

What should the mother consider before asking for a custody or access order? The following is a list of things to think about when deciding the right time to ask for custody or access:

1. It is absolutely normal to feel isolated as a parent during incarceration. However during that time, you are learning new coping skills that can help you in your role as a mother.
2. Being realistic about your reintegration needs and a gradual transfer of parental responsibility may give time for everyone who is involved to adjust to the changes.
3. Because the developmental needs of your child have changed since you were incarcerated, your parenting role will need to be adapted.
4. It is important for all to practice open communication during this process.

Concerns during incarceration

A sense of powerlessness with respect to their children can be overwhelming and women have expressed the following concerns with respect to mothering:

- Extended absence from the child's daily activities;
- The challenges of parenting from a distance;
- The limited time they are available to provide care for their child;
- Having to depend on someone else to raise their child;
- The lack of privacy in prison or while under Child Protection services;
- Being under scrutiny and having all one's actions observed and analyzed;
- Missing important stages in their child's development: first steps, kindergarten, homework, first crush, etc.;
- Coping with children's mixed feelings of love and anger in response to absence and/or abandonment;
- Children's self-harm behaviours in response to distress;
- Worry about the risk of delinquent or criminal behaviour of their children;

- The lack of age appropriate activities for teenagers while visiting in prison;
- Their children's anxiety fearing their mother may relapse and leave again; and
- Concern for the grandmothers. They carry heavy responsibilities, manage stressful situations and are often exhausted. They reach a point where their authority is not enough to keep the child out of trouble.

It is common to witness a woman hang up the phone in tears because of the difficulty of mothering over the phone. It is almost certain that the child is also crying on the other end.

Many women want to be good mothers and do their very best. They call, write, read stories by tape from prison, do homework over the phone, send birthday and Christmas cards, and cooperate with Child Protection services.

During incarceration, the **Mother–Child Program** supports women, providing they meet the criteria, in some of the following ways:

- Parenting skills program (a prerequisite for participation in all programs listed below);
- Possibility of full-time cohabitation for children up to four years of age;
- Possibility of part-time cohabitation for children up to six years of age; and
- For children up to eighteen years of age, all day visits in the Mother-Child sector and Private Family Visits.

Services such as *Mommy Reads to Me*, a program sponsored by the Elizabeth Fry Societies, build a bridge between mother and child during incarceration.

“This project gives the participants the opportunity to read a book to their child or any other child with whom they have a significant relationship. They can be a mother, grandmother, aunt, godmother, friend of the family, etc. The women are invited to choose a book to read out loud and record for the child.

The participating child will then receive the book, a walkman, headphones, the cassette, and batteries which will permit him or her to discover the story chosen especially for him or her by the participating woman. This program is for children from one to sixteen years of age. Where adolescents are concerned, the recording may be an invitation to read the book that the adult has chosen for him or her.

In this way, young children can follow along with the story and look at the pictures while allowing them to be soothed by the sound of the voice of the reader. Older children have the pleasure of following along with the story as it is read. Children of all ages find comfort in listening to the voice of their loved ones reading to them.

In the experience of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saint John, many of the participating children have developed an interest in reading thanks to this project. While certain women have expressed a desire to improve their reading skills by returning to school, others have started making regular contact with their children and reconnected with their families because of this experience.

This simple little project touches everyone who participates in it. The participants, both children and parents, derive many benefits from it. ²

Regaining custody and access rights can be a strong motivating factor toward rehabilitation. However, establishing or regaining visiting rights or custody takes time, and the best interest of the child must always be the determining factor. Often the loss of custody or access does not happen as a result of one incident. Thus the steps necessary to repair the situation may take a long time, will require patience and serious commitment and may not result in the hoped-for outcome.

It is important to accept and work through one's limits and remain open to possibilities that are ultimately in the best interests of the child. Sometimes the most loving act is to let someone else parent, at least part-time.

Upon reintegration, women need to continue to communicate with the appropriate individuals or agencies to build trust and positive communication with their children. The help of a psychologist may be needed to assist in taking realistic steps toward healthier relationships. With the help of these programs and other child services upon reintegration, many women take steps to regain parental visits, access and/or custody.

"My infant son is my main motivation for getting out. I want to do him right and be a good role model for him."

Returning family member

"I will have to prove myself before I can have access to my children."

Returning family member

2. Elizabeth Fry Society of Quebec. http://www.elizabethfry.qc.ca/eng/mommy_reads_to_me.html

Caregivers

For many women, their parents and in particular their mothers are their main support system and caregivers to their children. A grandparent can fulfil a very important role providing stability and continuity of care. Sometimes a sibling is the caregiver of the children of an incarcerated mother.

At times, family members expect the woman to be able to resume her parenting role immediately upon reintegration. This may be a realistic expectation for some women. For other mothers, however, a more gradual re-involvement is necessary as it avoids undue pressures that can undermine family and community reintegration.

Research shows that more fathers are caring for their children while the mother is incarcerated.³ This can be a positive protection factor for the child. They will also experience an adjustment when the mother comes back to live with the family.

All caregivers need respite. Fathers may need to return to work and grandparents may be aging. It is important to evaluate the needs of all concerned.

Caregivers may be anxious about the return of the mother into the children's lives. They may fear that the mother will not be successful at parenting. They may hesitate to hand over the children because of their strong attachment to them. Their decision-making is based on protecting the child and on what they perceive to be 'the best interest of the child.' They don't want their grandchildren hurt again. They may also hesitate until the mother has shown that she will maintain a lifestyle that will not put the children in jeopardy.

It is also in the best interest of the child, the mother and the caregivers to take the time to speak honestly before release about expectations. A Child Protection social worker or an agency providing support or mediation can help develop a realistic plan for childcare that responds to the needs of the entire family.

3. *Parenting Roles And Experiences Of Abuse In Women Offenders: Review Of The Offender Intake Assessments*, Gordana Eljdupovic, March, 1999, Ottawa, http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/gordana/gordana-08-eng.shtml#P331_24957

When a child is the victim

Crime against a family member is far more common than we realize. Shock, anger, sadness, confusion, anxiety, grief, stress and fear are some of the emotions felt by the child victim of a crime.

In addition to coping with loss and injury, the child victim and the family often experience the very public consequences of the crime. If they are required to give evidence or testify in court, they will relive the trauma over and over.

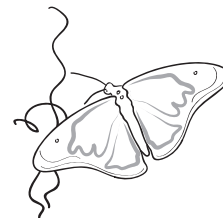
A child victim can feel responsible and confused when he is separated from his mother.

It is important to remember that children, like all victims were not given the chance to prevent the crimes against them. They are NOT responsible NOR at fault. They are also powerless when confronted with the effects of that crime on the entire family.

They will not only experience separation from their aggressor but may also lose contact with their siblings and extended family.

Child victims, including those harmed by the criminal behaviour of their mother, need consistent love and care from trustworthy and reliable adults. Children also need age appropriate information and recovery options.

Continue to ask for assistance for the child victim in your care. You are their voice and they need your continued love and support. ⁴



4. Adapted with permission from *One Step at a Time: Reshaping life following crime within the family*, Shannon Moroney, Kingston: CFCN, 2008.

Dynamic factors

Research has shown that the seven dynamic factors used by the Correctional Service of Canada in developing correctional plans are important for successful community reintegration. These factors will be familiar to your returning family member. The seven dynamic factors are:

1. Family/parenting/marital/intimate partner issues
2. Employment and education issues
3. Substance abuse
4. Associates – social network
5. Emotional, psychological and mental health
6. Pro-social attitudes and thinking
7. Basic community living skills

These dynamic factors are linked to each other and influence each other. Family relationships are directly affected by each factor. For example if the returning family member has a difficulty with substance abuse then this will directly affect her ability to hold down a job and provide for her children.

Addressing each dynamic factor with a measure of success will reduce the risk of re-offending.

Family/parenting/marital/intimate partner issues

The toolkit has up to now focused on the family with the goal of helping families and returning family members understand and value the part that family plays in supporting reintegration.

We will now look at the other six dynamic factors as they have a great impact on the Family/parenting/marital/intimate partner dynamic factor. They play a vital role in successful reintegration. The family is needed to support efforts in each one of these areas.

Employment and education issues

Women can experience a continuum of services by beginning preparation for the job market while incarcerated. Job skill evaluation, preparation and placement as well as primary to university education programs are available to women during incarceration.

Education is a worthwhile pursuit. It helps build self-esteem and develops perseverance and skills. It can also lead to more satisfying employment.

In order to consider further education or employment, family implication is often essential. For example, if the mother is a single parent, who will help care for the children when she is in school or working? This will require some advance planning.

The education level of the parents can also affect how much help the children can be given with homework. After-school homework programs may be sought out to fill this need.

One of the other great family struggles, often linked to low education, is poverty. School trips and extra activities are expensive. For example, the cost of the school ski trip may be out of the question when the choice is between having enough to eat or to pay the rent and the ski trip. In stressful situations like this, a plan is needed.

It takes a lot of perseverance to find a job to meet one's needs. This may mean going back to school or starting at the bottom of the pay ladder. Family can be there to realistically support and encourage the efforts of the returning family member.

Substance abuse

Alcohol, drug or prescription medicine abuse greatly affects and alters personality and capacity for interpersonal relationships. Any woman with an untreated addiction hinders her ability to be in healthy family relationships. For example, substance abuse can interfere with the woman's capacity to hold a job and thus adequately contribute to basic family needs. It may interfere with her ability to provide appropriate care for the children.

"In my family we were used to living on social assistance. However, after my incarceration, I was determined to earn a living.

I would like to talk about something that really worked well for me: Government Job assistance programs helped me reintegrate the work force. When you've had a bad run like me, you need a helping hand. It has made all the difference for me. I now have a job I like. It's still tight for me and my children but we will make it".

Returning family member

Substance abuse treatment programs are offered during incarceration. Women can begin their journey to recovery. Relapse prevention programs are widely offered in the community.

*“The fact that I was arrested is a blessing; it put a stop to abusing drugs.”
Returning family member*

Returning women and their families need a relapse prevention plan that all agree to follow. As well, families can attend support groups with the returning family member.

Family members may have questions concerning their role in supporting the returning family member. Help may be sought from a community organisation or a professional in order to find answers to questions and draw up an effective plan.

“I didn’t sleep at all last night, knowing that she is probably using again. I feel her suffering. I don’t judge her and I understand her distress. I know how much pressure she must be under.

I am terribly worried and I imagine how discouraging it is to relapse when one wants to break the addiction cycle. I hope that she will be strong enough to forgive herself and seek help. I will be there to support her as she seeks to find her way again.”

Family member

Substance abuse

By Marjolaine Dion, CSC Program Officer

In many cases, family members offering support find it difficult to understand the underlying causes of drug dependency. Your returning family member may have first turned to drugs in order to face the many difficulties in their life: emotional and mental health issues, the absence of adequate support or as a way to survive a traumatic event, repeated encounters with the justice system, preoccupations linked with child-care, etc.

Family members may feel guilty, angry and powerless while trying to cope with the situation. Perhaps, they have tried many times before to help their returning family member without success, and thus feel discouraged, betrayed and deeply hurt.

The drug dependent person may isolate herself further or the family may withdraw in order to protect themselves. Family ties are sometimes broken.

A person can only change their behaviour if they are self-motivated and are willing to do whatever is necessary to bring it about. It is also important to realize that real change is a process and relapses will occur. Those who try to break the addiction cycle need support from people who are open-minded and non-judgmental. They need consistent moral support and a listening ear. The shame and guilt felt by those who relapse are often the worst enemies to their rehabilitation. However, they can grow in self-confidence as they regain control of their lives.

It is not helpful for family members to take on the responsibility for recovery. They need to be conscious of their own strengths and limits and have the returning member respect them also. Sometimes the best way they can help the returning family member is by better taking care of themselves.

Associates – social network

Women often commit crime in the context of pressure exerted by close friends or intimate partners. Failure to succeed with reintegration is often the result of a return to unhealthy relationships.

Women are socialized from a very young age both consciously and unconsciously to nurture and value relationships. They may measure their self-worth and success by their ability to maintain intimate relationships. They may make unwise choices to please others and avoid rejection. They may hold their relationships in high regard but have trouble setting appropriate relationship boundaries or may lack the skills and abilities to sustain healthy relationships.

Clearly communicating one's needs and implementing healthy boundaries are just a few of the abilities that can be learned in order to help keep relationships healthy. Choosing a new social network, and perhaps even in a different community, is a step that will contribute to successful

reintegration. It may feel easier to return to familiar relationships even though they are negative. It takes courage and support to distance oneself and seek out new relationships.

“The possibility of meeting friends we have associated with in illegal situations adds much stress to our social reintegration.”

Woman released serving a life sentence

Families worry about the influence of negative associates upon their returning family member. They may find it difficult to measure the amount of influence an associate has on the returning loved one.

As well, parolees may have a non-association stipulation as part of their release conditions. This means that they are not allowed to knowingly associate with other offenders. For example, two women who became close on the inside may not be able to provide support for each other upon reintegration.

It is important for families to develop a plan to effectively communicate concerns, establish their own boundaries and develop a strategy to address problems with negative associates, even before reintegration begins. Both the returning family member and the family may need to clarify doubtful relationships. This may include having a clear understanding of the association restrictions laid out either by the Parole Board or by the parole officer who is providing supervision.

As a family, plans can be made to support each other and to get involved together in a new pro-social network. Some suggestions include:

- Volunteer as a family. Go online or call your local volunteer bank;
- Choose a sport or nature activity that you both enjoy or join a social club;
- Get a library card and go regularly to the library as a family;
- Sign up for a beginner’s second language class;
- Attend a faith community of your choice; and
- Find a community organization to mentor your family.

Emotional, psychological and mental health

Self-image, thinking patterns, emotional make-up, sexual behaviour, mental ability and/or mental health are all parts of our emotional, psychological and mental health. These greatly influence our capacity to relate to others.

Being incarcerated and also suffering from a mental health problem further stigmatizes the returning family member. A woman with a mental health problem who is returning to the family and community faces a greater challenge and requires specialized support. Her family will also need help to better understand what support they can provide.

Mental health and female offenders

By Karine O'Connor, CSC Clinical Social Worker

Mental Health issues are on the increase by 61 per cent for female offenders.⁵ Difficult and traumatic life experiences such as sexual assaults, violence, drug addiction and poverty greatly impact women's mental health.

Women who are incarcerated are more likely to suffer from certain psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia, major depression, substance use disorders, psychosexual dysfunction, and antisocial personality disorder than the general female population.⁶

A continuum of care has been put in place by the Correctional Service of Canada with treatment beginning during incarceration and continuing at release in the community. Several programs are offered to incarcerated women including Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). It is a recognized approach for treating people with serious emotional and behavioural problems as well as an effective treatment for personality disorders.

5. *Quick facts, Community Mental Health Initiative*, Correctional Service of Canada, October 2008, para. 1, <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/qf/17-eng.shtml>

6. *Women offender programs and issues, The 2002 Mental Health Strategy For Women Offenders*, Ross 1988 as quoted in Jane Laishes, *Mental Health, Health Services 2002*, para. 3, <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/mhealth/4-eng.shtml>

Mental health problems cause a lot of stress as families face various hardships in their family relationships, their daily activities and home dynamics. They can easily feel overwhelmed and isolated.

However, families have an important role to play in supporting the person. The family's collaboration is usually beneficial as long as the relationship with their family member is intact.

It is therefore important that the family receive support to better understand the illness and manage their stress; otherwise they can unknowingly add pressure to the person suffering which, in turn, has a negative impact on the illness itself.

The family needs to avoid critical comments like telling the person that she is lazy, that she is doing nothing to help herself or that she is making the family look bad because of her behaviour. Treating the person like a child, managing her affairs, doing as much as possible for her and not letting her participate in normal activities will also prevent the recovering person from developing autonomy.

It sometimes happens that the family rejects the person suffering from a mental health problem and does not have the desire to collaborate with health care workers. Families may also not have the personal capacity to help the person. Family members need to give themselves permission to practice good self-care.

By being better informed and supported, the family can act in helpful ways to support their loved one and hang in there when tensions occur. The returning family member can in turn experience emotional closeness and at the same time develop autonomy.

Support workers can encourage families to get information about the illness, to participate in treatment planning, and to join family therapy and self-help groups.

Mental health associations exist across Canada. The contact information for the Canadian Mental Health Association is found at the end of this toolkit. Please contact them for the Branch nearest you.

Survivors of abuse

By Lorraine Dufour, CSC Program Officer

Many incarcerated women have experienced sexual abuse or other traumatic experiences. These traumatic experiences leave emotional scars which are often debilitating. All areas of their lives are impacted.

They need someone to come alongside them to help them heal from these painful experiences.

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) offers Survivor of Abuse and Trauma Therapy during incarceration which includes the following objectives:

- Personal empowerment;*
- Capacity to make choices;*
- Responsible decision-making;*
- Regaining self-respect and dignity; and*
- Integrating shared responsibility.*

This step by step process -awareness, treatment and follow-up- permits a gradual healing from the devastating effects of abuse and traumatism. Women are met individually and voluntarily in a safe environment. The trust relationship with the facilitator encourages the re-building of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Similar programs are also offered in the community for all family members. Since sexual abuse often occurs within the family and can be perpetuated from generation to generation, it is important that individual and family therapy be accessed.

"I wasn't able to be the mother that I wanted to. I grew up in an abusive home and as an adult I experienced domestic violence. I was not emotionally equipped for my role as a mother. I deeply regret that I wasn't able to be there for my children.

During all these years of suffering, I held my children close to my heart by praying for them. It was not wasted time because I kept the desire alive to one day be a good mother. I dreamt of holding them in my arms...

After following a CSC therapy during incarceration, I gradually contacted my children. I am very proud of my sons. They are all grown-up and have children of their own. My grandchildren are a precious gift! My sons have given me new hope, that of being a grandmother.

My desire has been fulfilled as I now have my grandchildren to cuddle which really helps my healing. I am repairing my mistakes and I look forward to getting to know my grandchildren."

Returning mother and grandmother



Women and violence⁷

Based on an interview with Julie Dorais,
CSC Program Officer

Women may resort to violence in response to many personal and social difficulties. While never excusable, some contributing factors to choosing violence are:

- Psychological, sexual and physical abuse;*
- Violent and unhealthy relationships;*
- Self-defense;*
- Retaliation;*
- Low education;*
- Poverty;*
- Inadequate living skills;*
- Emotional impulsivity and frustration;*
- Substance abuse; and*
- Anti-social values and attitudes.*

Women who have been victims of violence can also become the aggressor.

Women experiencing domestic violence can in turn react or displace their violence on an innocent third party (their children, their parents or a new partner).

7. Based on Elizabeth Martin's interview with Julie Dorais, December 2, 2008.

Women feel tremendous regret, shame and guilt over their violent behavior. Rebuilding a healthy identity involves acquiring a new positive image of themselves. It is important for them to both accept their qualities and recognize their faults. With the help of professionals they can make new life style choices.

Family members also need to honestly admit the presence of all forms of family violence including verbal, psychological, physical and sexual. There are several distinct phases in the cycle of violence: tension building, crisis, justification and the honeymoon phase.⁸

Help may be needed to address destructive family patterns. It is important to foster pro-social attitudes of respect and non-violent conflict resolution. One should not minimize or tolerate violent behavior but seek help to break the cycle.

Families may need help to communicate constructively and use peaceful conflict resolution skills. Support can be found in many community organizations including those specializing in Family Therapy.

As well, the returning family member needs to continue applying the skills learned in the Women's violence prevention program offered during incarceration. Follow-up programs are offered in the community by many agencies servicing women.

8. <http://www.inspq.qc.ca/violenceconjugale/faq/cycle.asp?id=26>

Arseneau, L., Lampron, C., Levaque, R. & Paradis, F. (2005). La violence conjugale. Activité de sensibilisation. Beauport: Direction régionale de santé publique, Agence de développement de réseaux locaux de services de santé et de services sociaux de la Capitale-nationale.

For a more in depth look at domestic violence consult: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm (English) or <http://www.inspq.qc.ca/violenceconjugale> (French)

Pro-social attitudes and thinking

Choosing how to behave and respond to difficult situations is part of reintegration. Choices are based on values shaped by upbringing and life experiences. How one processes information and develops skills also guides one's decision-making.

Respect for the law, valuing family relationships, treating others with respect and dignity, an honest work ethic and emotional self-control are examples of pro-social attitudes that positively influence how we make decisions.

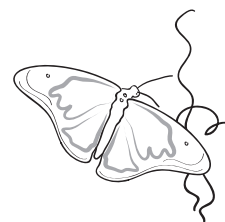
Incarceration can be time to re-think one's value system. We all have the ability to change the way we respond to situations by changing our thinking. There are opportunities in correctional programs to acquire and integrate pro-social attitudes. A willing and positive attitude toward program participation both inside and once out in the community will go a long way in assuring successful reintegration. Taking a program means 'working at it' during the program and when the program is completed.

Families need to model pro-social attitudes and discuss openly when the returning family member is minimizing risky behaviour. It is not always easy to have an honest discussion about negative thinking or behaviours patterns. If one sees that the returning family member is not willing to be transparent, it is best to state one's opinion briefly and then give the other person time to think it over. If the discussion is escalating, is it better to withdraw temporarily.

If the family environment is not pro-social, the returning family member may need outside support to make the best decisions possible.

There is a big difference between behaviours adopted to survive in prison and what is acceptable on the outside.

Much patience is needed as your returning family member may not always make the right choices. Remember that she can be feeling afraid, anxious and unsure of herself. She needs support. It is a new time for her.



Basic community living skills

Incarcerated women generally live in housing units at the minimum and medium security level. Each woman has a private bedroom and shares the kitchen, living room and bathroom spaces.

Like on the outside, incarcerated women manage a budget, plan their groceries, cook and clean. They work or attend school. They look after their health needs and plan their leisure activities (pottery, library, sports, etc.).

It is not an easy situation to live with people they have not chosen as housemates. Respecting and considering the needs of others are values that help make living with others more enjoyable. Practicing these skills during incarceration will help prepare for life on the outside.

Locating and furnishing a place to live, medical appointments, managing finances, looking after children's daycare or school needs, and participating in community activities are just a few of the challenges of everyday life.

The weight of making all the decisions while dealing with the day to day family responsibilities requires the use of many skills. These challenges typically become more pronounced for a female returning family member when there are children involved. Accomplishing the list of every day tasks can be exhausting.

The returning family member can begin planning for all these needs before leaving prison. During the Community Integration Program, women have the opportunity to make a realistic reintegration plan based on their needs. As well, halfway house staff will assist women as they take responsibility for themselves and make concrete steps to reintegrate the community.

Once the family member finally gets home, there is no longer anyone to tell her how to manage her daily responsibilities. This sense of total freedom and the pressure to succeed can be overwhelming.

Family can help support the returning family member by offering practical help such as driving to appointments, babysitting the children, offering help to find furniture etc.

Together it is possible to come up with a plan for a routine that will take into account the needs of all family members. Encourage the returning family member to identify interests and needs and assist her in finding community groups or agencies that fill those needs. Many communities have social networks for women and families.

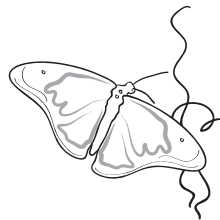
Social and leisure activities will help get the returning family member interacting with people in the community and will provide the opportunity to become more confident and to practice many new skills. One can meet people with similar interests. It will also provide a healthy balance between work and leisure.

With support from family and community organizations, the parole officer and halfway house staff, the adjustments needed for successful reintegration are possible.

“Women who have been imprisoned often fantasize about their release throughout their incarceration. They sometimes fail to evaluate realistically the effects of prison on their thinking, the changes they will experience once “outside”, or the situations and events they will encounter.

They do not realize how much living in a closed environment has affected them until they are “free”. They imagine that life after release will be positive, easy and energizing. In most cases the reality is quite different...”

*Woman released after serving
a life sentence*



Identifying family strengths and needs

The lack of planning and seeking or maintaining appropriate support following incarceration can contribute to difficulties during family and community reintegration. Consistent support will help maintain healthy family relationships and assist in a safe and successful return to the community.

The following tool will identify family strengths and needs and help to clarify family support issues.

A. Please make a check in the box that indicates the degree to which you agree with the following statements. Your answers will help you evaluate your family's relational strengths and needs.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
1. We talk about the problems we have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We try to understand each other's problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We count on each other when we have problems to offer support and encouragement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We feel safe with each other to discuss our problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We try to hold each other accountable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We know our personal limits and can verbalize them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We practice good self-care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You may want to consider asking for help to better support each other.

B. Please make a check in the box that indicates the degree to which you agree with the following statements. Your answers will help you evaluate your family’s links to community support.

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
1. We have people in our community that we can safely talk to about the problems we have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. In the past, when we had problems, we asked for help from someone in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Even when we know the solution we ask for advice, just to be sure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We don't like to admit to someone that we need help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We prefer to find solutions by ourselves, even if it takes more time to solve our problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Generally, we wait to see if the problem will resolve itself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We trust helpers (such as a Spiritual Leader, Elder, Psychologist, Volunteer, Teacher, Instructor...) who want to help us.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. We feel better when we know we will receive some help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You may want to consider reinforcing or building-up your community support.

C. Please check the areas where your family would like to receive help:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation/conflict resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis management | <input type="checkbox"/> Addictions issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting role | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Support to obtain government services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building a social network | <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency financial, housing/material aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
-

D. This list will help you evaluate what kind of organization your family would prefer to receive support from in the community.

Please check those that apply.

- Governmental/Public Service
 - Non-profit Community or Voluntary Sector Organization
 - Faith-based Organization, Church or Religious Group
 - Other: _____
-

E. Each organization has its particular strengths. The following list may help you decide what qualities are most important to you when accessing a service provider.

You can classify the priorities in order, starting with 1 as the most important, and 8 being the less important.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ Low cost/free | ___ Programs/services meeting my specific needs (gender specific, mother, spouse...) |
| ___ Close to public transportation | ___ Resource staff from my cultural background |
| ___ Easy to use (ex: no need to register, answer questions...) | ___ Option to use the services anonymously |
| ___ Friendly, supportive staff | ___ Other, please specify : _____ |
| ___ Culturally sensitive (ex: Aboriginal, Afro-Canadian, Italian, Muslim...) | _____ |
-

F. Based on your family’s strengths and needs what are your hopes for family reintegration?

.....

.....

.....

G. What would you realistically like to see happen with your:

Yourself?	Returning family member?	Returning family member’s children?	Other important relatives, such as siblings?

H. What are your reintegration concerns with respect to:

Yourself?	Returning family member?	Returning family member’s children?	Other important relatives, such as siblings?

You may now be ready to set some realistic goals to help with successful reintegration. It is important for the returning family member and the family to put in writing a plan for family support issues. Waiting until situations ‘pop up’ to deal with them only generates more stress and disappointment. It can lead to poor decision-making that can jeopardise parole success.

If you have difficulties completing the inventory or need to talk to someone to sort out other issues about family reintegration, please consider seeking out a CFCN Family Liaison Worker or a service provider in your community to assist you with your family reintegration plan.

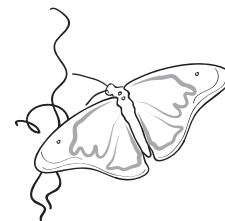
Conclusion

Safe and successful reintegration for women into family and community life is a wonderful, and sometimes difficult, challenge.

Family members who are welcoming a returning female offender back into the family can meet the challenge by supporting each other with the help of the community.

Communicate openly and try to accept each other without judging. Begin reintegration planning early on and do not hesitate to seek help. Many community agencies can offer that extra support that will help build family relationships and make reintegration a success.

It can be a new time for everyone !



Recommended reading

CFCN RESOURCES:

Time Together: A survival guide for families and friends visiting in Canadian federal prisons, by Lloyd Withers, (Kingston: CFCN, 2000), helps families cope during the early stages of incarceration in a federal institution. It informs about visiting and security rules, and talks about relating as a child, parent, partner or friend.

One Day at a Time: Writings on facing the incarceration of a friend or family member, compiled by Heather Holland, (Kingston: CFCN, 2003), shares the stories of some of the experts – family members. They know what it is like to have a family member who is incarcerated.

Time's Up: A reintegration toolkit for families, by Lloyd Withers, Marg Holland and Elizabeth Martin, (Kingston: CFCN, 2005), contains helpful suggestions for families who are re-uniting after incarceration. The toolkit describes Family Group Decision-Making for Reintegration, a restorative justice process in which the family develops a family-based reintegration plan.

One step at a time: Reshaping life following crime within the family, by Shannon Moroney, (Kingston: CFCN, 2008), provides information and ideas for victims of criminal behaviour caused by another family member. It contains a listing of recommended reading dealing with restorative justice, the incarceration of a family member, domestic violence and child victims. It also contains a list of books written by victims of crime and others written by incarcerated people/released offenders. A self-care activity sheet is included to help assess one's needs.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES:

Information Guide to Assist Victims, CSC Services to Victims, contains helpful information on Victims' Rights and explains the Offender's sentence from start to finish and Community Corrections. Available at http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cor/nov/nov_guide_06-en.asp

Human rights in Action, a handbook for women serving Federal Sentences, Elizabeth Fry Societies, Native Women's Association of Canada and Strength in Sisterhood. This manual is part of the Human Rights in Action Project and enables women to survive prison and parole by reinforcing their own pre-existing capacities and strengths. The PDF version is available at <http://www.elizabethfry.ca/hra/cover.htm>

Sexual Abuse Information Series 2008. Informative and user-friendly guides for Young Girls, Young Boys, Teenagers, Parents and Children, and Partners are available at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/nc-cn or by calling 1-800-267-1291.

The Healing Journey (Family Violence Prevention in Aboriginal Communities), is a resource toolkit preventing and responding to family violence in Aboriginal communities, prepared by Gignoo Transition House and PLEI New Brunswick. Originally designed as a resource that was specific to New Brunswick, the authors have prepared a similar toolkit for a national audience. It addresses the issue of: Individual Healing, Family Healing, Community Healing, Understanding the Roots of Family Violence, Recognizing the Harm of Interpersonal Violence, Safety Plans for Aboriginal Women and Children, Family Violence Resources, Creating Healthy Personal Relationships Networks and Starting Over: What You Should Know About Family Law Matters. *The Healing Journey* is available for purchase at <http://www.thehealingjourney.ca/mahin.asp>.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN:

Nine Candles, by Maria Testa and illustrated by Amanda Schaffer, (Minnesota: Carolrhoda books Inc, 1996). This is the story of a seven year old visiting his mother in prison knowing that she will only be out on his ninth birthday. For ages 5 to 12.

Mama Loves Me from Away, by Pat Brisson and illustrated by Laurie Caple, (Pennsylvania: Boyds Mills Press, 2004). This book shares how a mother and daughter cope with the separation due to incarceration. For ages 7 and up.

While We're Apart, by Carole Gesme, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Pine Tree Press, 2001). A book on how to communicate with children while living apart. For ages 6 to 16.

My Mom Went to Jail, by Kathleen Hodgkins and Suzanne Bergen. Illustrated by Lori O'Brien, (Wisconsin: The Rainbow Project Inc.) A sensitive book on the emotions of a child whose mother has gone to jail. For pre-school children and ages 6 to 10.

Help for Kids, by Carole Gesme, (Minnesota: Pine Tree Press, 1993). This is a workbook that contains ideas to help children identify their feelings about jail as well as maintain the relationship with their parents. Ages 6 and older.

What is Jail, Mommy?, by J. Stanelin, (Texas: Lifevest Publishing Inc., 2006). This is written from an American perspective and talks about what a parent goes through when they go to jail. For ages 4 to 12.

Visiting Day, by Jacqueline Woodson (New York: Scholastic, 2002). This is a beautiful book with many picture illustrations and walks one through a visiting day with a child. For ages 6 and older. This book is aimed at children visiting an incarcerated father but the exceptional graphics may make it a useful resource for the children of an incarcerated mother.

Important contact information

Canadian Families and Corrections Network Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s

Box 35040 Kingston ON K7L 5S5

Toll free information line for families:

1-888-371-2326 (English) or 1-877-875-1285 (French)

Email: national@cfcn-rcafd.org

Web site: www.cfcn-rcafd.org

The CFCN is a Canadian charity. Its mission is to “build stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by criminal behaviour, incarceration and community reintegration.” Policy and program development is based on a restorative justice approach. A database of agencies across the country (including the Northern regions) and print resources for families are available at the CFCN’s website.

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies

700-151 Slater Street Ottawa ON K1P 5H3

Phone: 1-613-238-2422 or 1-800-611-4755

Email: caefs@web.ca

Web site: www.elizabethfry.ca

CAEFS is an association of self-governing, community-based Elizabeth Fry Societies that work with and for women and girls in the justice system, particularly those who are, or may be, criminalized. Consult their on-line directory for services in your community.

Canadian Mental Health Association, National Office

Phenix Professional Building

595 Montreal Road, Suite 303

Ottawa ON K1K 4L2

Telephone: 613-745-7750

Email: info@cmha.ca

Web site: www.cmha.ca

The Canadian Mental Health Association is a nationwide, charitable organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. A wealth of information and regional directories are available on line.

Native Women’s Association of Canada

Head Office

Six Nations of the Grand River

1721 Chiefswood Road, P.O. Box 331

Ohsweken ON N0A 1M0

Telephone: 519-445-0990

Web site: www.nwac-hq.org

Satellite Office

1292 Wellington Street West

Ottawa ON K1Y 3A9

Toll free: 1-800-461-4043

Telephone: 613-722-3033

Sisters in Spirit:

Telephone: 613-722-3033 or 1-866-796-6053

The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nation, Métis and Canadian societies. NWAC is an aggregate of thirteen Native women’s organizations from across Canada. It was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1974. Many resources are featured including links to National Aboriginal Organizations.

Victim Services

Correctional Service of Canada

340, Laurier Avenue West Ottawa ON K1A 0P9

Toll free: 1-866-806-2275

Email: victims-victimes@csc-scc.gc.ca

Web site: www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims-victimes

The web site features easy-to-access, up-to-date information on the criminal justice and correctional systems and a national directory.

An information guide to assist victims is available at:

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cor/nov/nov_guide_06-en.asp

For links to victim services in your area:

Web site: www.victimfirst.gc.ca

Victim-witness assistance programs (VWAP) are available in all provinces and territories and have toll-free phone numbers.

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

Confidential 24 hour nationwide service for kids aged 6 to early twenties

In an emergency, dial 911



A New Time

It takes hard work and commitment to make family relationships mutually satisfying. Incarceration and reintegration intensify the difficulty of maintaining relationships but surprisingly can also provide an opportunity to rebuild relationships.

Safe and successful reintegration for women into family and community life is a wonderful but sometimes difficult challenge.

Family members who are welcoming a returning female offender back into the family can meet the challenge by supporting each other with the help of the community.

"In order to facilitate the process of reintegration, the expectations of all family members need to be discussed openly. If this does not happen, disappointments and misunderstandings between family members will build even higher walls between them. Outside support is needed to break down these walls and to build bridges."

Woman who has returned to the community after serving a life sentence

Canadian Families and Corrections Network's mission is to build stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by criminal behaviour, incarceration and community reintegration.

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