

Trauma and Justice-Involvement Among Women and Girls

Stephanie S. Covington, PhD, LCSW

Institute for Relational Development

Center for Gender and Justice

7946 Ivanhoe Ave., Suite 201B

La Jolla, CA 92037

(858) 454-8528 (858) 454-8598 FAX

Email: sc@stephaniecovington.com

www.stephaniecovington.com

www.centerforgenderandjustice.org

*A Rising Tide: Understanding Incarceration's Multigenerational Impact on
Women, Girls, and Communities Conference*

April 4, 2019

Philadelphia

Trauma and Justice-Involvement Among Women and Girls

Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

Center for Gender and Justice
Institute for Relational Development
La Jolla, CA

*A Rising Tide: Understanding Incarceration's Multigenerational Impact on
Women, Girls, and Communities Conference*

April 4, 2019
Philadelphia

© S. Covington, 2019 1

Who are the Women?

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

© S. Covington, 2019 2

Who are the Girls?

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

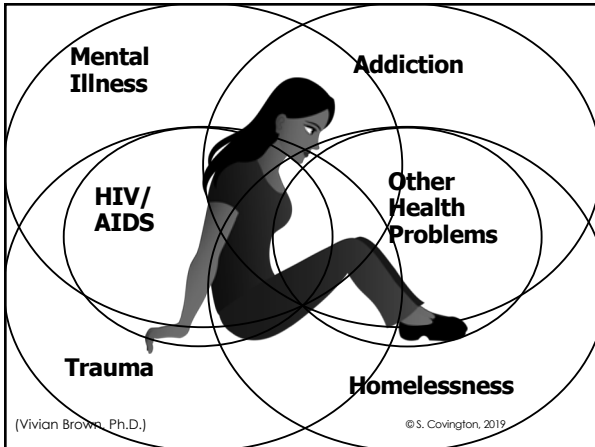
© S. Covington, 2019 3

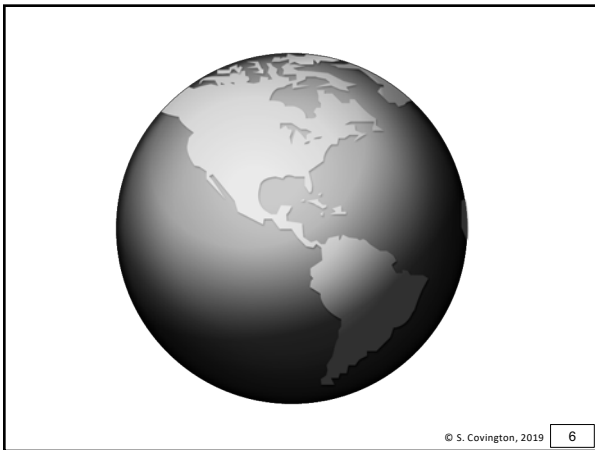
Women and Girls in the CJ System

Compared with men and boys, they –

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

© S. Covington, 2019 4





Two Questions I Ask:

- Who are the most disadvantaged women in your country?
- Who is overly represented in your women's prisons?

© S. Covington, 2019 7

Answers:

- Always the same women
- What does this tell us about justice in our criminal justice systems?

© S. Covington, 2019 8

U.S. Incarcerates more Women than any other Country

201,200	United States (almost 1/3 rd of female prisoners worldwide)
84,600	China
59,200	Russian Federation
29,175	Thailand
4,060	England & Wales
449	Scotland
44	Northern Ireland

(Walmsley (2012). *World Female Imprisonment List*, 2nd Edition. London, United Kingdom: International Centre for Prison Studies.)

© S. Covington, 2019 9

Women in the Criminal Justice System

From 1980 – 2014 over 700% increase in incarcerated women
(BJS, 2014)

© S. Covington, 2019 10

US and Women

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

© S. Covington, 2019 11

- **Increasing numbers**
- **Continuing invisibility**

© S. Covington, 2019 12

History of Services

- Addiction treatment services designed by men for men and boys
- Mental health services designed by men for women and girls
- Criminal justice services designed by men for men and boys

© S. Covington, 2019

13

Two Themes

- Adversity
- Abuse

© S. Covington, 2019

14

Trauma

Linked to:

- Substance use disorders
- Mental health issues
- Sex work
- Self-harming behavior
- Relationship issues

© S. Covington, 2019

15

Jails and Prisons Retraumatizing

- Restraints
- Seclusion
- Searches

© S. Covington, 2019 16

Definition of Trauma

Trauma occurs when an external threat overwhelms a person's internal and external positive coping resources.

© S. Covington, 2019 17

Traumatic Events

© S. Covington, 2019 18

Historical Trauma

- Across generations
- Massive group trauma

Examples include: Native Americans, African Americans, Holocaust survivors, Māori, First Nations, people from colonized countries, and others

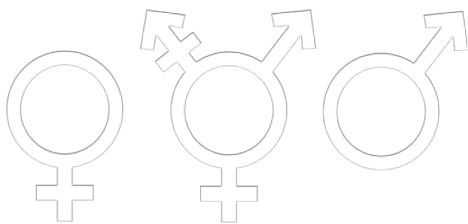
© S. Covington, 2019 19

Two Kinds of Suffering

- Natural
- Created

© S. Covington, 2019 20

Gender Differences



© S. Covington, 2019 21

Gender and Abuse

Childhood

- Girls and boys at risk from family members and people they know

Adolescence

- Young men at risk from people who dislike or hate them. Boys at greater risk if they are gay, young men of color, gang members, or transitioning.
- Young women at risk from lovers or partners – people to whom they are saying, “I love you.”

Adulthood

- Men at risk from combat or being victims of crime
- Women at risk from those they love
- Transgender – highest risk

© S. Covington, 2019 22

Differences in Risk Worldwide

- Worldwide, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men experience psychological abuse from partner
- 38% of female homicides are committed by male partners, while 6% of male homicides are committed by female partners
- in 5 women will be raped, while 1 in 71 men will be raped
- Transgender population is at greatest risk and has a higher rate of abuse

© S. Covington, 2019 23

Gender-Responsive Treatment

- Creating an environment through:
 - site selection
 - staff selection
 - program development
 - content and material
- that reflects an understanding of the realities of the lives of women and girls, and
- addresses and responds to their strengths and challenges.

(S. Covington "Women and Addiction: A Trauma-Informed Approach," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, SARC Supplement 5, November 2008, 377-385.)

© S. Covington, 2019 24

Stress

- Normal Stress
 - Positive stress
 - Tolerable stress
- Destructive Stress
 - Relentless stress
 - Toxic stress
 - Traumatic stress

© S. Covington, 2019 25

Toxic Stress and Children

- Stress of adversity is toxic to the development of the brain
- Primary responses
 - Emotions – dysregulation
 - Behavior – unmanageable
 - Relationships – lack of connection, trust

© S. Covington, 2019 26

Trauma and Parenting

- Child is a trigger
- Overly protective

© S. Covington, 2019 27

ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

- Original study in 1998
- 17,000 adults in San Diego, CA
- 10 questions
- First 10 years – largely ignored
- Past 10 years – embraced

© S. Covington, 2019 28

ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Results

ACEs still have a profound effect 50 years later, although now transformed from psychosocial experience into organic disease, social malfunction, and mental illness.

- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Injection of illegal drugs
- Obesity

(Felitti, V.J.: Origins of Addictive Behavior: Evidence from the ACE Study. 2003 Oct;52(8): 547-59. German. PMID: 14619682 (PubMed-indexed for MEDLINE).

© S. Covington, 2019 29

ACE Study (cont.)

Women 50% more likely than men to have a score of 5 or more.

(Felitti & Anda, 2010)

© S. Covington, 2019 30

ACE Study (cont.)

"I see that you have...
Tell me how this has affected you
later in your life."

(Felitti & Anda, 2010)

© S. Covington, 2019

31

Crittenton ACE Pilot (October 2012)

Group	Total Score	
	4+	5+
All girls served by Crittenton (n=916)	53%	42%
All young mothers served by Crittenton (n=253)	61%	48%
Young mothers in juvenile justice and served by Crittenton (n=59)	74%	69%
Young mothers in child welfare and referred to Crittenton (n=42)	63%	48%

(Summary of Results: Crittenton Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Pilot, October 24, 2012)

© S. Covington, 2019

32

Women in Prison Childhood Traumatic Events Largest Effect-Mental Health

- Psychotropic medication
- Mental health treatment
- Attempted suicide
- Traumatic stress

(Messina & Grella, 2005)

© S. Covington, 2019

33

Women in Prison Childhood Traumatic Events Largest Effect-Mental Health

Score of 7 or more "yes" answers

=

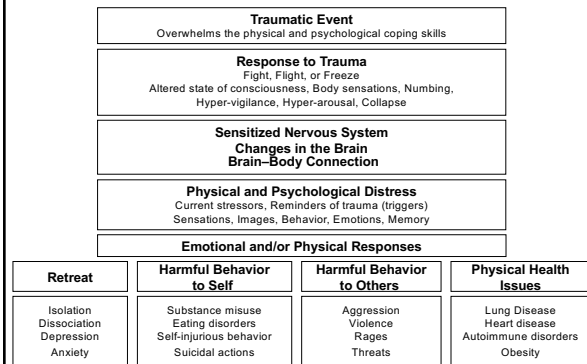
980% more risk of having
mental health problems

(Messina & Grella, 2006)

© S. Covington, 2019

34

Process of Trauma



© S. Covington, 2019

35

What does all this mean
for the women and girls we serve?

© S. Covington, 2019

36

Trauma Informed

Universal knowledge about adversity and trauma and its effects on individuals, communities, and society.


What We Know

© S. Covington, 2019

37

Becoming Trauma Informed: A Training for Correctional Professionals

- Facilitator Guide with step-by-step instructions for a 7 hour training day
- Participant Booklet
- PowerPoint Slides



© S. Covington, 2019

38

Trauma Responsive

Policies and practices in place to minimize damage and maximize opportunities for healthy growth and development in all populations at risk.

Creating an environment for healing and recovery.

What We Do

© S. Covington, 2019

39

Hindelbank Women's Prison in Switzerland

107 Women

- Mother and child unit

© S. Covington, 2019 40



© S. Covington, 2019 41



© S. Covington, 2019 42

Světlá nad Sázavou Women's Prison in Czech Republic

750 Women

- Several "different prisons"
- Mother and child unit

© S. Covington, 2019 43



© S. Covington, 2019 44



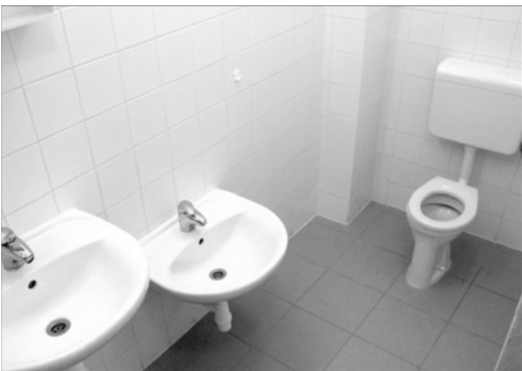
© S. Covington, 2019 45



© S. Covington, 2019 46



© S. Covington, 2019 47



© S. Covington, 2019 48

Moving from Trauma Informed to Trauma Responsive

- Facilitator Guide with step-by-step instructions
- Three hours of video
- USB Drive with over 100 pages of handout resources



© S. Covington, 2019 49

Trauma Specific

Services designed to specifically address violence and trauma, the related symptoms, and to facilitate healing and recovery

What Services We Provide

© S. Covington, 2019 50

Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey for Women

- 12 Sessions
- Facilitator Guide
- Participant Journal
- Two facilitator DVDs and one participant DVD



© S. Covington, 2019 51

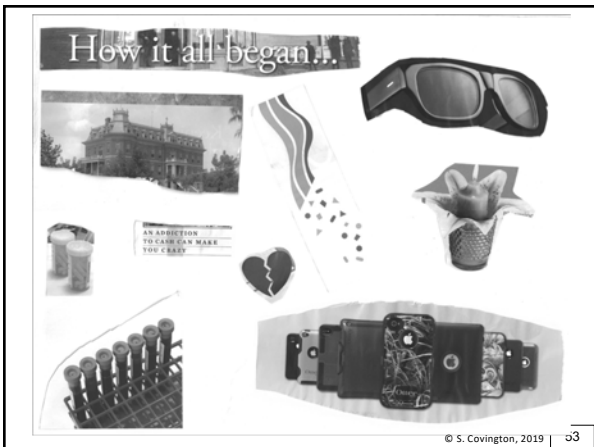
Definition of Historical Trauma

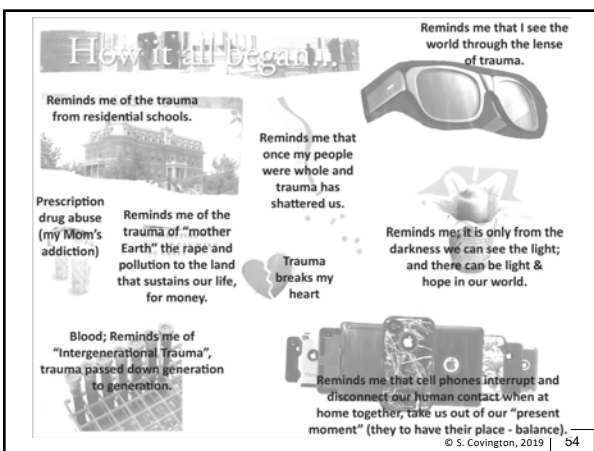
...the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding... spanning generations, which emanates from a massive group trauma.

(Brave Heart, M.Y.H. (2005). *From intergenerational trauma to intergenerational healing*. Keynote address at the Fifth Annual White Bison Wellbriety Conference, Denver, CO, April 22, 2005)

© S. Covington, 2019

52





Healing Trauma:
A Brief Intervention for Women

- 6 Sessions on CD-Rom for easy duplication
- Facilitator Guide
- Participant Journal in English and Spanish

© S. Covington, 2019

55

Healing Trauma
Women in Prison –Questionnaires

Patient Health Questionnaire

Anxiety ↓

Depression ↓

Short Screen Scale: DSM-IV PTSD ↓

K6 Brief Psychological Distress Screen ↓

Legend
★ Change (no statistical test of significance performed)
↓ Significant Change
■ No Significant Change

(Messina & Calhoun, 2018)

© S. Covington, 2019

56

Healing Trauma
Women in Prison –Questionnaires (cont.)

Buss-Warren Aggression Questionnaire

Physical aggression ↓

Verbal aggression ↓

Anger ↓

Hostility ↓

Indirect aggression ↓

Legend
★ Change (no statistical test of significance performed)
↓ Significant Change
■ No Significant Change

(Messina & Calhoun, 2018)

© S. Covington, 2019

57

Healing Trauma

Women in Prison – Questionnaires (cont.)

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)

- ❖ Non-acceptance of one's own distress
- ❖ Negative emotions impact concentration
- ❖ Negative emotions make it difficult to remain in control
- ❖ Lack of awareness of emotional responses
- ❖ Believes cannot regulate oneself when upset
- ❖ Lack of clarity about emotions experiencing
- ❖ Total DERS Score



Legend

- ★ Change (no statistical test of significance performed)
- ↓ Significant Change
- No Significant Change

(Messina & Calhoun, 2018)

© S. Covington, 2019

58

California Institution for Women (CIW)

***Healing Trauma* Graduation, August 2018**



© S. Covington, 2019

59

California Institution for Women (CIW)

***Healing Trauma* in the SHU**



© S. Covington, 2019

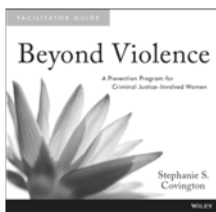
60

**California Institution for Women (CIW)
Healing Trauma in the SHU, May 2017**



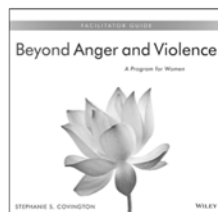
© S. Covington, 2019 61

Beyond Violence



20 Sessions

Beyond Anger and Violence



21 Sessions

© S. Covington, 2019 62

**Research on *Beyond Violence*
(Michigan Department of Corrections)**

- Women who participated in *Beyond Violence* showed:
 - Reduction of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and serious mental illness symptoms
 - Reduction of unhealthy anger styles
 - Increase in healthy anger management
- *Beyond Violence* can be implemented
 - In a therapeutic unit and general population
 - With women preparing to re-enter the community and women with long-term sentences

© S. Covington, 2019 63

Pilot Project on *Beyond Violence* (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation – CDCR)

- Phase 1: Training staff and peer educators
- Phase 2: Peer educators participate in *Beyond Violence*
- Phase 3: Peer educators co-facilitate *Beyond Violence* with four specific groups

Research: Dr. Nena Messina, UCLA

© S. Covington, 2019 64

CDCR Pilot Study

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD Change over time	Positive at Admission to BV	Positive at Graduation from BV	McNemar's Chi Square
Peer Educators	55.2%	18.5%	8.33**
Other Participants	72.1%	42.3%	7.35*

Source: Nena Messina (2014). *Beyond violence, final report*, CDCR cooperative agreement no. 5600004087.

© S. Covington, 2019 65

CDCR Pilot Study (cont.) Summary of Findings

- Implementing *Beyond Violence* showed significantly positive outcomes for women incarcerated for long terms or life:
 - Reductions in PTSD
 - Reductions in Anxiety
 - Reductions in Anger and Aggression
 - Reductions in symptoms of serious mental illness
- Beyond Violence* was successfully implemented in a prison setting and was successfully facilitated by the Peer Educators (reducing costs).
- Although the sample size is small, positive results were found for previously identified difficult populations to treat.

Source: Nena Messina (2014). *Beyond violence, final report*, CDCR cooperative agreement no. 5600004087.

© S. Covington, 2019 66

**California Institution for Women (CIW)
Beyond Violence Graduation, Dec 2018**



© S. Covington, 2019 67



**June 4-6, 2019
Stamford, Connecticut
www.covingtonconference.com**

Hosted by:



Onsite Bookstore:



© S. Covington, 2019 68

What Makes a Difference?

- Creating a safe environment

© S. Covington, 2019 69

Sanctuary



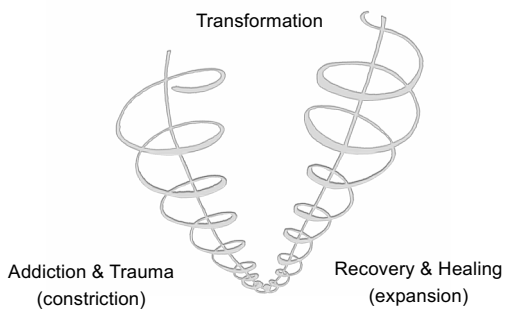
© S. Covington, 2019 70

What Makes a Difference?

- Creating a safe environment
- Listening to her/their story
- Empathy

© S. Covington, 2019 71

Upward Spiral



© S. Covington, 2019 72

About your presenter....

Dr. Stephanie S. Covington is an internationally recognized clinician, author, organizational consultant, and lecturer. With over thirty-five years of experience, she is noted for her pioneering work in the design and implementation of innovative and effective gender-responsive and trauma-informed services in public, private, and institutional settings. Her presentations, staff-development seminars, and technical assistance focus on systems change and the development of caring, compassionate, and empowering therapeutic environments. They provide professionals an opportunity to learn new skills for dealing with personal, institutional, and societal changes and are always in demand, both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Covington has provided training and consulting services to many behavioral health treatment programs, including the Betty Ford Treatment Center. She has also had extensive experience in the criminal justice system, including work with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Ministries of Justice in England, Scotland and Switzerland, the Correctional Service of Canada, the US Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the National Institute of Corrections, as well as many state and local jurisdictions. Dr. Covington was a workshop chair for the women's treatment improvement protocol (TIP) published by SAMHSA. She is also the co-author of a three-year research project, *Gender-Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*, for the National Institute of Corrections. This publication received the University of Cincinnati Award for its outstanding contribution to the field of corrections in the U.S. and Canada.

Educated at Columbia University and the Union Institute, Dr. Covington has served on the faculties of the University of Southern California, San Diego State University, and the California School of Professional Psychology, and she is a former chair of the Women's Committee of the International Council on Alcoholism and Addiction. She is a board-certified Diplomate of the National Association of Social Workers and the American Board of Sexology and is a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and the American Psychological Association. She has also served on the Advisory Council for Women's Services for the federal agency SAMHSA. She was the featured consultant and therapist on the Oprah Winfrey Network docu-reality show entitled *Breaking Down the Bars*.

Dr. Covington is based in La Jolla, California, where she is co-director of the Institute for Relational Development and the Center for Gender and Justice, which seeks to expand gender-responsive policies and practices for females who are under criminal justice supervision. Among the many articles and books written by Dr. Covington are:

- *Women and Addiction: A Gender-Responsive Approach*
- *Awakening Your Sexuality: A Guide for Recovering Women*
- *Leaving the Enchanted Forest: The Path from Relationship Addiction to Intimacy*

She has also published gender-responsive and trauma-informed program materials. The following research-based curricula include training manuals for professionals and complementary materials for participants:

- *Helping Women Recover: A Program for Treating Addiction*
(with a special edition for the criminal justice system)
- *Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey for Women*
- *Voices: A Program of Self-Discovery and Empowerment for Girls*
- *A Woman's Way through The Twelve Steps*
- *Beyond Violence: A Prevention Program for Criminal Justice-Involved Women*
- *Beyond Anger & Violence: A Program for Women*
- *Becoming Trauma Informed: A Training Program for Correctional Professionals* (USA, Canadian, and UK versions)
- *Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women* (co-authored with Eileen Russo)
- *Helping Men Recover* (co-authored; also with a special edition for the justice system)
- *Exploring Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Men* (co-authored with Robert Rodriguez)

For a list of Dr. Covington's recent articles, and descriptions of her current seminars for professionals, visit: www.stephaniecovington.com and www.centerforgenderandjustice.org.