WE'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY . . . OR HAVE WE?

THE PHENOMENON OF COMMUNITY RE-INTEGRATION

FOR INCARCERATED WOMEN

by

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ABSTRACT

The current study explored the phenomenon of community re-integration with incarcerated women. Each of the women were six months or less from release and had at least one prior experience with community re-integration. Qualitative methodology and a phenomenological mode of inquiry were used to explore the pre-incarceration, incarceration, and post-incarceration experiences of these ten incarcerated women. The following themes emerged from data analysis: 1) Family Relationships, 2) Traumatic Events, 3) Change, 4) Treatment from Jail Staff, 5) Programs/Classes, 6) Anxiety, and 7) Motherhood as Motivation. These themes are discussed as they relate to each research question; as well as, their relationship to the pre-incarceration, incarceration, and post-incarceration experiences of the participants. Implications for social work practice include the improvement of rehabilitative services to incarcerated women, as well as, the development of a discharge plan that could be used to begin the process of community re-integration on the first day of incarceration.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the incarcerated women at the Tuscaloosa County Jail. Their life struggles were the inspiration for this project. Their willingness to share their stories was an inspiration to me.

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rehabilitative and community re-integration programs so that this time in jail will be the last time.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The number of individuals incarcerated in the United States
has increased dramatically over the past two decades (Bureau of
Justice Statistics, 2005). As of June 30, 2006 there were
approximately 2.3 million individuals incarcerated in jails and
prisons in the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics,
2006). Laws related to the War on Drugs have directly impacted
these overwhelming increases (Belknap, 2002, Bush-Baskette,
2000, Chesney-Lind, 2000). Specifically, the presence of women
in incarcerated settings has been increased through the
implementation of these laws. As of June 2006, 203,100 women
were incarcerated in jails and prisons throughout the United
States. The overall increase in the number of incarcerated
individuals has spawned an obvious increase in those who will be
released and re-integrating into the community. The Bureau of
Justice Statistics (2004) noted that over 670,000 individuals
per year are being released from jails and prisons back into the

community; an additional nine million are released from jails (Beck, 2006; Harrison and Beck, 2005).

The number of incarcerated individuals along with the number of those who are released from that incarceration every year demonstrate a problem. However, the current study will focus on the gaps in the literature. Women are not often the focus of incarceration research. In addition, the focus of any research on incarceration and community re-integration is on those in prisons. Therefore, the current study focuses on incarcerated women in jails and their attempts at community re-integration.

Community Re-Integration

The body of research that exists pertaining to community re-integration is vast, but has focused more on men than women (Flannigan, 1992). In addition, the literature that focuses on community re-integration tends to center on issues of recidivism rather than the process and struggles of re-integration into the community. (Visher and Travis, 2003). With the increased number of incarcerated and, subsequently, reintegrating women, a great need exists to gain more understanding of this process.

The current study will examine the phenomenon of community re-integration as it has been experienced by women who have been incarcerated on more than one occasion. It will also focus on the anticipatory thoughts and feelings they have in relation to

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their impending release and community re-integration.

Incarceration and Recidivism

As of December 31, 2006, approximately 2.3 million individuals were incarcerated in jails and prisons in the United States; this figure represents 738 per 100,000 Americans. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). This number is reflective of the fact that the United States incarcerates more individuals per capita than any other nation in the world (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004). Of these 2.3 million incarcerated individuals, approximately ninety-five percent will be released back into society.

A recent ten-year review of recidivism indicated that nearly seventy percent of individuals released from prison would re-offend within three years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004). This statistic presents a compelling case that a need exists for research which focuses on the impact of prison on incarcerated individuals, and how that impact affects their re-integration into society. Further, this statistic represents both male and female prisoners. A focus on the female prison population reveals that although they represent a much smaller overall percentage, their numbers are increasing at a much faster rate (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003).

Approximately seven percent or approximately 115,308 of the 2.3 million incarcerated individuals in the United States are

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women (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). Since 1995, the

number of incarcerated women has increased by forty-five

percent, as compared to twenty-seven percent for men. In 2006,

the female prison population experienced a larger increase

(2.5%) than that of the male prison population (1.5%) (Bureau of

Justice Statistics, 2007). Despite their rapidly growing

numbers, females are underrepresented in prison related

research. A majority of the literature focuses on the behavior

and lives of imprisoned men. Most relevant theoretical and

conceptual frameworks in the areas of recidivism and community

re-integration were developed based on imprisoned men (Belknap,

2002; Chesney-Lind, 2000; Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1990).

War on Drugs

     The laws associated with the War on Drugs have had an

undeniable effect on the massive increase in female

incarceration (Drug Policy Alliance, 2001; Feinman, 1994). From

1986 to 1999, the number of women sentenced to prison for drug

crimes alone increased approximately nine fold (Bureau of

Justice Statistics, 1999; Mauer, Potler, & Wolf, 1999). The

incarceration increases for women of color were even higher

(Drug Policy Alliance, 2001). During this same time period,

overall female arrests for drug crimes increased 95% while those

for men increased only 55% (Mauer, Potler, & Wolf, 1999).

During the mid-1990's, research established that one in three

women in state prisons and one in four women incarcerated in jails in the United States had been convicted of a drug crime (Feinman, 1994). When examining incarcerated men, it was determined that one in five men in both prisons and jails had been convicted of a drug crime (Amnesty International, 1999). These statistics demonstrate that the advent of the War on Drugs laws has a dramatic effect on overall incarceration, but also further demonstrate the greater impact of these laws on women.

The War on Drugs legislation helped to firmly identify women as active participants in drug crimes; in addition, these laws have also brought to light the amount of drug use and addiction that exists in this population. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2004) reported that three quarters of women in state and federal prisons reported using drugs regularly prior to their arrest. Additionally, sixty percent reported regular use one month prior to the commission of their offense. This population of women not only committed crimes involving drug use and drug sales, but they were also experiencing problems with drug use (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004).

The literature review in chapter two will focus on the path women take to the commission of crimes, and will specifically highlight patterns of abuse and dysfunctional relationships that ultimately lead to the commission of-and-or participation in criminal acts. Establishing the roads to incarceration will

become the context for the discussion of the difficulties women experiences while incarcerated and, subsequently, in their attempts to reintegrate into the community. This three dimensional approach is reflective of the phenomenological mode of inquiry that will be discussed in Chapter Three as the mode of inquiry for the current study.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the current study was to explore the phenomenon of community re-integration with incarcerated women in a jail setting. This exploration was conducted through interviews with a group of incarcerated women who had experienced incarceration and release at least one previous time, and were, at the time of the interview, six months or less from release. It was my goal that interviewing incarcerated women would give voice to a group of people who had otherwise been silenced. In addition, it was my hope that giving voice to this group of women would result in plausible ideas that would impact social work practice, policy, and future research endeavors.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review presents an overview of research and statistics about women in jails and prisons in the United States, and their lives prior to, during, and after incarceration. Information will be provided so that the reader can understand the major factors in these women's lives that have affected their attempts at community re-integration. In addition, this section will outline some of the reasons why it is important to give these women a voice to speak about their personal experiences with the phenomenon of community re-integration.

I will provide a summary of my experience working with the population of jailed women in Tuscaloosa, Alabama to place myself in the context of the research. It is necessary to provide this information because qualitative inquiry uses "researcher as instrument". Therefore, due to the purposefully subjective nature of qualitative inquiry, it is important to articulate my biases and preconceived notions prior to presenting literature meant to support my research questions.

In addition, it will assist the reader to understand the perspective I bring to the forthcoming data analysis (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 1994).

My experiences working with female inmates at the Tuscaloosa County Jail, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, as well as my review of the literature shaped the format of this chapter. I have spent the past four years working with both male and female clients in the Tuscaloosa County and Municipal courts. Specifically, I have spent many hours at the Tuscaloosa County Jail conducting anger management groups and working with these clients one on one. The one on one time spent with all of the inmates, specifically the women, assisted me in the creation of this dissertation project.

Working with the female inmates helped me to perceive that there are three different components of their lives that seemed to affect their attempts to re-enter their communities following incarceration: pre-incarceration experiences (e.g. childhood and early adulthood relationships and experiences); experiences during incarceration; and previous post-incarceration experiences (e.g. prior attempts at community re-integration)

When examining the existing literature on incarcerated women and community re-integration, I chose to focus on each of these three areas. In the majority of the literature, these three areas are addressed separately, but, at times, I address

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them in combination as it assisted in explaining the complexity

of the different life issues that incarcerated females face.

Originally, I addressed these three areas of interest by

providing a theoretical framework for each. However, after

analyzing the data, I reorganized this chapter. Specifically, I

have discovered that the model I used for the post-incarceration

experiences section is actually most useful as the overarching

theoretical framework. Therefore, I will begin this chapter by

presenting the model for community re-integration set forth by

Rosenthal and Wolf (2004). Following this explanation, I will

address each of the sections (pre-incarceration experiences,

incarceration experiences, and post-incarceration experiences)

as they were previously discussed. I will insert relevant

theories for explanatory purposes as they are warranted.

However, each of the sections will be related back to the

aforementioned model of community re-integration.

Theoretical Framework

    The model of [community] re-integration posited by

Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) is based on the concept that community

re-integration should begin at the time of arrest (as opposed to

the prevailing model that is based on the concept that re-entry

should begin immediately after release (Rosenthal and Wolf,

2004). Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) believe that the prevailing

model waits too long to begin re-integration efforts. By

waiting until the time of release to address the issues these women will face upon release, precious time is wasted that could be used in more rehabilitative ways. Their model focuses on the rehabilitative efforts they believe jails and prisons should be employing with their residing inmates. Specifically, their model for community re-integration proposes a six-stage plan that focuses on the criminal justice system as a holistic process from sentencing to parole, and every step in between.

Most current re-integration models focus on providing services to people when they are released from jails and prisons (Rosenthal & Wolf, 2004). More advanced re-integration models acknowledge the need to provide these services prior to release from jails and prisons. Both basic and advanced re-integration models use the same definition for community re-integration.

This six-stage plan for community re-integration is based on the idea that rehabilitative efforts can be inserted into any step in the criminal justice process. Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) suggested inserting rehabilitative efforts into any and all of the following six stages: 1) Pre-trial release, 2) Plea bargaining and sentencing negotiations, 3) Sentencing, 4) Self development and preparation for re-integration while in prison, 5) Release after serving sentence, and 6) Parole revocation (Rosenthal and Wolf, 1994). As is evident in the verbiage used in stages four and six, this model for community re-integration

is based on interactions with the criminal justice system experienced by prison inmates. However, they do mention the use of this model with those who are incarcerated in our nation's jails. The only change that would need to take place is the shift of stage six from parole revocation to probation revocation. Jail inmates are not granted parole, but do remain under the blanket of the criminal justice system after release through being granted probation.

The implementation of such a plan for community re-integration would allow rehabilitative efforts to begin on the day of arrest. Further, these efforts would continue to be introduced, or re-introduced, at each point in the criminal justice process. Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) continue by stating that the ability to introduce rehabilitative efforts at all points in the process would allow the concept of community re-integration to be used as a tool during both pre-trial release and sentencing.

I have chosen to use this model for community re-integration as the framework for this study because I believe, based on clinical experience, that the women I have chosen to interview have many psychosocial problems prior to their incarceration. These psychosocial issues factor into why these women are incarcerated, some of the problems they encounter in jail, and some of the barriers they experience when attempting

to re-integrate. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the literature that addresses the types of experiences that these women encountered prior to incarceration, during incarceration, and post-incarceration. The presentation of this literature will further bolster argument supporting the need for a holistic plan for community re-integration.

Pre Incarceration Experiences

When examining the literature on females and crime, I found that the information presented on events leading up to their initial incarceration (pre-incarceration experiences) focused on childhood abuse, abusive adult relationships and substance abuse. The following section will explore each of these areas separately as they relate to the lives of incarcerated women.

Women who have been abused emotionally, physically and/or sexually are more likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol as adults than those who do not experience these types of abuse (Duncan, Saunders, Kilpatrick, Hanson, & Resnick, 1996; Marcenko, Kemp & Larson, 2000; Lo & Cheng, 2007; Mesman & Long, 2002; Osgood & Manetta, 2002). In turn, drug-abusing and/or addicted women are more likely to be involved in some sort of criminal activity. (Hagan & Coleman, 2001; McClellan, Farabee, & Crouch, 1997). Brems, Johnson, Neal and Freeman (2004) found that in both men and women, early childhood episodes of either physical or sexual abuse led to earlier onset of both drinking

and drug use than in those who did not experience childhood abuse (Lo & Cheng, 2007). In turn, this early abuse was also an indicator of increased incidents of teenage and adult arrests (Agnew, 2006; Brems, Johnson, Neal & Freeman 2004).

The literature on incarcerated women illustrates that many have suffered an overwhelming amount of abuse (both physical and sexual). From a very early age, the majority of these women experienced some type of abuse at the hands of parental figures or other significant adults in their lives (Duncan, et al., 1996; Lo & Cheng, 2007; Marcenko, et al., 2000; Mesman & Long, 2002; Osgood & Manetta, 2002).

In many instances, these early abusive experiences affected the types of relationships these women chose to enter as adults. (Agnew, 2006; Marcenko, et al., 2000; Styrun & Janoff-Bulman, 1997). The literature on re-victimization elaborates on the phenomenon of those who were victims of abuse as children becoming re-victimized through abusive adult relationships (Noll, 2005; Roodman & Clum, 2001; Vermilyea, 1995). Vermilyea (1995) explains that, when children experience consistent abuse, they learn to disassociate. This disassociation is accomplished by constricting their awareness of danger and access to emotions. Once this pattern is established, it becomes more difficult for the individual to recognize the danger signs of abuse; thus increasing the likelihood of re-victimization. As

such, women who are the victims of childhood physical and sexual abuse have been shown to be more likely to be the victims of both rape and abusive relationships in adulthood (American Psychological Association, 2001). This pattern of re-victimization is often present in the lives of incarcerated women (Bill, 1998; Lo, Kim, & Church, 2008; Marcus-Mendoza, Sargent, & Yu, 2003).

The literature regarding the commission of crimes by women documents the frequency of substance use and abuse that both precedes and is associated with their criminal activity and incarceration (Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994; Browne, Miller, & Maguin, 1999; Danner, Blount, Silverman, & Vega, 1995; Gilfus, 1992). Browne, et.al. (1999) interviewed 150 women in a maximum-security prison, and found that an overwhelming majority had experienced sexual and/or physical abuse as a child and intimate partner abuse as an adult. Similarly, the Chicago Coalition of the Homeless (2002) found that over half of their sample of 235 women incarcerated in Cook County Jail reported experiencing abuse as a child and incidents of domestic violence.

Previous research has documented a frequent history of substance abuse among incarcerated women. This substance abuse was most often linked with both a history of physical/sexual abuse and/or a current relationship with a drug-addicted

romantic partner (Esteal, 2001; Lo & Cheng, 2007; Lo & Stephens, 2002; Maeve, 2000; Marcus-Mendoza, Sargent, & Yu, 2003; McClellan, Farabee, & Crouch, 1997). This substance abuse, whether the product of early abuse or introduced by way of an intimate partner, is a major pathway to crime for women (Gilfus, 2002).

This section focused on the patterns of abuse that many incarcerated women experience that influenced their criminal activity. Research has demonstrated that these early patterns of abuse contribute to a likelihood of re-victimization as an adult (Noll, 2005; Roodman & Clum, 2001; Vermilyea, 1995). Re-victimization can present in the form of self-abuse, abuse by an intimate partner, or both (American Psychological Association, 2001; Esteal, 2001; Gilfus, 2002; Lo & Stephens, 2002; Maeve, 2000; Marcus-Mendoza, Sargent, & Yu, 2003; McClellan, Farabee, & Crouch, 1997). Finally, the literature has demonstrated that these issues of abuse and re-victimization are present in a majority of incarcerated women (Browne, Miller, & Maguin, 1999; Danner, Blount, Silverman, & Vega, 1995; Finklehor & Brown, 1988; Gilfus, 2002; Gilfus, 1992).

Incarceration Experiences

In terms of incarcerated women, my review of the literature has revealed that a lack of effective rehabilitative programming, including but not limited to programs focusing on

substance abuse, life skills, and preparation for community re-integration, has played a large part in the continued cyclical pattern of re-incarceration that has been exhibited by female inmates and/or prisoners. The same statement can be made for male inmates and/or prisoners; however, the situation is much more dire for their female counterparts because equal levels of programming do not exist (Farkas & Rand, 1999).

The increased presence of women in jails and prisons has led to a need for different types of rehabilitative programming. Specifically, the frequency of drug addiction in incarcerated females makes it clear that a need for this type of treatment exists. Substance abuse programs have been offered for many years to male inmates; however, it has only been in the last decade that the focus has shifted to include women (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). A majority of substance abuse programs for women in jails and prisons are based on a male model of treatment (Bloom & Chesney-Lind, 2000). Specifically, drug-addicted, incarcerated women are provided the same treatment curriculum as males (Bloom & Chesney-Lind, 2000; Bourffard & Taxman, 2000).

As women have become a greater presence in U.S.jails and prisons, equal treatment of men and women has become more of an issue. Initially, equality in rehabilitative efforts was attempted by providing the same groups and programs for women

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that existed for men (LeClair, 1991; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). The notable problem with this approach was that women expressed and demonstrated different needs from their male counterparts. Therefore, using an exact replica of male groups and programs for female inmates did not prove very effective (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). Previous research has indicated that the treatment needs of males and females differ (LeClair, 1991; Morash, Bynum & Koons, 1998). Moreover, this body of literature has advocated for more gender-specific programs, programs that are better able to address the rehabilitative needs unique to the incarcerated female population (Bloom & Chesney-Lind, 2000; Kates, Cransford & Cardozo, 2005; LeClair, 1991; Morash, Bynum & Koons, 1998; Office of Justice Programs, 1998).

Recent studies in the area of gender specific differences in drug abuse have noted that female drug abusers have a higher rate of co-morbidity with other psychiatric disorders (Osher, Steadman, & Barr, 2002; Ulzen & Hamilton, 1998). In addition, women are more likely to have suffered from both physical and sexual abuse in childhood (Davis, 2001, Fletcher, 1993; Johnson, 2004). However, current curricula in drug treatment facilities are rarely attentive to these needs which are indigenous to the female residents (Best & Abdulrahim, 2005; Bruner, King, Kidorf, 1997; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003; Wells & Bright,

2005).

Studies on the few treatment facilities which address the specific needs of female residents note that these programs focus upon meeting the basic needs of women (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003). Specifically, women have been found to be more successful in drug treatment when the facility helps them meet the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. These treatment facilities also address mental health issues, motherhood and its relation to drug abuse, patterns of interpersonal relationships, and parenting education (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 2005). Also, women in drug treatment respond better to interventions that address their abusive histories and build trust rather than those that are confrontational (traditionally used in male based programs) (Hughes, Coletti, & Neri, 1995). Finally, these programs have proven even more successful when they provide an aftercare component which offers support after the completion of inpatient treatment (Hughes, Coletti, & Neri, 1995; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003).

In addition to substance abuse programs, incarcerated women have also been offered programs in anger management, life skills and parenting. Counseling services specifically targeted at histories of abuse and self-destructive behavior have been sorely lacking in these settings (Rucker, 1991). The programs

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that have been offered have not been consistently available; moreover, when they have been offered, they are, once again, often based in a male-oriented framework (Rucker, 1991; Vigilante, et al., 1999).

The lack of effective rehabilitative programs would fit in with Goffman's idea of "institutionalizing" the inmate; thus, getting them used to living in the jail or prison setting and not working towards preparing them for post-release existence in the community. Specifically, the lack of effective rehabilitative programs can lead to being ill-prepared for the possibility of relapse into the drug and/or alcohol addiction that plagues so many incarcerated women (Esteal, 2001; Lo & Stephens, 2002; Maeve, 2000; Marcus-Mendoza, Sargent, & Yu, 2003; McClellan, Farabee, & Crouch, 1997). The literature discussed pertaining to a lack of effective, gender-specific programming illustrates the continued existence of the institutionalization of inmates. Until effective, gender-specific programs are initiated in jails and prisons, inmates will continue to be ill-prepared for community re-integration and will be more comfortable in the institutional setting.

In theory, these rehabilitative efforts are conducted to provide the inmate a better chance of becoming a productive citizen upon their release. This process of transitioning from living in an institutionalized or incarcerated setting to living

in the community is often referred to in the literature as community re-integration (Byrne, 2004).

Erving Goffman's "Total Institution"

For the purposes of the study, I used Erving Goffman's concept of the "total institution" as the theoretical framework for describing incarceration experiences of women. The "total institution" was a phrase coined by Erving Goffman in 1962. He described the "total institution" as one that separated a group of individuals from society; moreover, the institution itself functioned independently of the outside world. Goffman believed that mental institutions, prisons, military camps, and nursing homes were all examples of the "total institution" (Goffman, 1962). These institutions were categorized according to the types of individuals they housed, and the various reasons the individuals had been separated from society. According to Goffman, one main goal of the "total institution" was to do away with the old self of the inmate or resident and to create a new self. The creation of a new self was accomplished by means of both social and physical abuse. All control was stripped away from the inmate and he/she was pushed towards conforming to the rules, regulations, and lifestyle of the institution – towards the end of behaving like the "perfect inmate" (Farrington, 1992; Goffman, 1961; Weinstein, 1994). Goffman believed that inmates perceived this transformation as a waste of time, but, at the

same time, were led to believe that life on the outside, after release, would never be as it was prior to their institutionalization (Farrington, 1992; Goffman, 1961; Weinstein, 1994).

Goffman's observations and writings on the total institution have become the basis for much sociological inquiry (Farrington, 1992). Much of the subsequent research on jails and prisons as institutions, inmate culture, and inmate relationships has clearly been influenced by this work (Weinstein, 1994). Goffman's research was influential in the creation of this study because of its focus on the institution as an instrument of change in the inmate – change that could result in the inmate's becoming institutionalized, in turn, affecting their ability to successfully re-enter society. A result of Goffman's influence on this dissertation will be addressed in Chapter Three in the discussion of the interview protocol.

Post Incarceration Experiences

In the literature, community re-integration is referred to in terms of anyone who has been institutionalized in some way and is returning to the community (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). In terms of those who have been incarcerated, community re-integration describes the process that inmates experience when they leave jail or prison and return to the community in an

attempt to become a productive citizen and not criminally re-offend (Travis & Vischer, 2005; U.S. Department of Justice, 2004; Wolf, 2005). The available literature on community re-integration identifies several different groups of individuals who are actually involved in this process. Some studies define community re-integration as involving those individuals who have been released from jail/prison and are still on probation or parole. Another body of work defines those involved in community re-integration as those who have been released and are not being supervised at all (Byrne, 2004). The remainder of studies combines the two groups into one large group of individuals (Byrne, 2004). In reviewing the literature, it becomes clear that there exists no set definition for community re-integration or the individual who is experiencing it. For the purposes of this study, the women involved in community re-integration will be defined as former inmates, supervised or unsupervised by the state or federal government, who have been released from incarceration and are in their first year of living in the community. Specifically, this definition will be used to examine women's previous experiences with community re-integration. However, I will use Rosenthal and Wolf's (2004) model for community re-integration as a lens for examining the results of this study in Chapter Five. Further, I will use this model of community re-integration to explore the possibilities

for future research and implications for social work practice.

Regardless of the difficulty in defining the term, issues surrounding the barriers in community re-integration have been fairly well documented. With the onset of determinate sentencing, jail/prison terms have become longer (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). Research has demonstrated that the longer individuals are incarcerated, the more likely they are to receive few or no visits from their families (Holt & Miller, 1972; National Media Outreach Campaign, 2005). This factor is particularly pertinent to female inmates because a majority of them were mothers who were the primary caregivers for their children. Research in this area has established that the less contact an inmate has with her/his family, the more likely their efforts at re-integration will fail (Kaslow, 1987; Maryland Commission for Women, 2004).

The increased length of sentences associated with determinate sentencing laws has caused the jails and prisons to be overcrowded (Petersilia, 2000). This overcrowding has led to increased costs and, consequently, to a decrease in available rehabilitative programs. Historically, women were offered fewer rehabilitative options than their male counterparts, however, as the jail and prison population has increased and resulted in overcrowding, it has become more difficult to fund these types of programs and services (Haney, 2003). Therefore, a majority

of inmates leave incarceration having had little or no experience with rehabilitative programs and groups (Haney, 2001).

Once inmates return to the community, they face difficulties accessing jobs, reconnecting with their families, and acquiring housing (Urban Institute, 2006). Statistics on repeat offenders have demonstrated that those who are released who have been convicted of crimes more than once have an 80% chance of offending yet again (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003).

Women attempting to re-enter the community face further problems as a majority of them attempt to reconnect with their children. The Adoptions and Safe Families Act mandated that any separation of a parent from a child of more than fifteen of the previous 22 months requires an initiation of termination of parental rights (Bess, Leos-Urbel, and Geen, 2001). Currently, the average length of incarceration for women is twenty-one months (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004). Therefore, women exiting incarceration will not only encounter difficulties with employment and housing, they may also be facing the loss of their children. Such stresses can only increase the likelihood of a further breakdown in feelings of stability, and, in turn, a return to criminal activity (Clinton, 1997; Hagan & Coleman, 2001).

In this literature review, I highlighted the research and statistics which affect the community re-integration efforts of incarcerated women. Specifically, I discussed the life experiences that led these women into criminal activity, the rehabilitative efforts, or lack thereof, which they experience during incarceration, and the policies, such as determinate sentencing, and acts of legislation, such as the Adoptions and Safe Families Act, that negatively affect their attempts at community re-integration.

In addition, I presented theoretical frameworks for each section which assisted me in the writing of the interview protocol. Overall, the writing of this literature review supported the opinions I formed during my clinical experiences. It is not any individual factor but all of them working together that affect community re-integration.

Although previous research addressed the phenomenon of community re-integration with women incarcerated in prisons, none of the research that I reviewed explored this topic with women who are incarcerated in jails. Incarceration in county and city jails in the United States indicates that the convicted inmate is serving a sentence of less than a year and a day. In addition, they are serving time on a misdemeanor charge. Exploring community re-integration as it relates to jailed women, as opposed to imprisoned women, is particularly relevant

considering the impact the War on Drugs has had on jailing women for lower level drug offenses. It is my thought that the process of community re-integration following incarceration could differ somewhat from the re-integration process that exists after release from prison. For these reasons, I believe it is a topic worth exploring and will add to the current literature on community re-integration.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the process of community re-integration from the perspective of females who have previously experienced the phenomenon, and are currently less than six months from release due to a subsequent incarceration. These females were interviewed to explore the factors they believe were the most relevant to successful community re-integration, those factors they believe are barriers to the process, and finally their thoughts on the manner in which programs in jails/prisons could be improved to assist the outgoing inmate with this process.

Research Questions

From these observations in the literature the following research questions were derived:

1. What prior life experiences do research participants believe have affected their previous efforts at community re-integration?

2. What changes do women believe need to be made in jails to

   assist them and future inmates with the process of

   community re-integration?

3. How do women view community re-integration during previous

   incarcerations?

4. How do women view community re-integration during their

   current incarceration?

5. What are the lived experiences of women who are currently

   incarcerated in jail with community re-integration?

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Ontology

　　Ontology and epistemology are two concepts that are central

to the discussion of qualitative research. Ontology is defined

as a way of being. Writings on ontology are inextricably linked

with metaphysics. Within this framework, ontology is also

concerned with understanding the different factors or components

that constitute the world (Blackburn, 1996).

　　Qualitative research espouses an ontology that does not

accept the existence of an external reality (Schwandt, 1997).

By external reality, it is meant that no reality exists outside

of the interpretation and experience of the individual (Herron &

Reason, 1997). In essence, qualitative researchers embrace an

ontology that exists only through the experience of individuals.

By espousing this particular ontological perspective,

qualitative researchers cannot purport that results derived from

a sample can be applied to the larger population. Thus, it is

possible to understand why qualitative research claims no

ability to generalize (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson,

2002; Heron & Reason, 1997).

Different perspectives are used to define one's ontology, such as post-structuralism, pragmatism, feminism, and constructivism. For the purposes of this study, I used a post-modernist perspective. Post-modernist thought rejects all totalizing or monolithic perspectives on culture, society, or the world as a whole (Locher, 1999). It rejects the idea of one truth as it relates to any phenomenon. Instead, post-modernism embraces the idea of many truths or perspectives that may differ from individual to individual. This particular perspective acknowledges that everyone will experience a phenomenon differently based on their previous and current life experience (Conner, 1989). I believe, for the purposes of the current study, it is the most appropriate lens through which to examine a phenomenon such as incarcerated women who are on the brink of community re-integration. In my opinion, the post-modernist lens assisted in giving voice to an oppressed and often forgotten sample of women by not attempting to fit their way of being into any particular mold, but to allow the individuality of their experience to emerge (Connor, 1989; Locher, 1999).

Epistemology

Simply defined, epistemology is a way of knowing. In qualitative research, epistemology encompasses how we know what we know (Heron & Reason, 1997). My view of reality, because of how deeply involved I was with this jail population, directly

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affected the way I gathered and interpreted data from my participants. In addition, my epistemological stance affected how my research will add to the existing knowledge base.

I chose to use phenomenology as the mode of inquiry for this study because I believe that only by documenting and analyzing lived experiences can we truly gain a three dimensional understanding of how individuals experience a phenomenon. In this study, I wanted to gain a holistic understanding of how some incarcerated women experienced the phenomenon of community re-integration and how they believe this previous experience will affect their upcoming attempt. In essence, it is my belief that the most appropriate epistemological stance for this particular study was one where the knowledge of the phenomenon was garnered directly from a small group of women who were currently in the midst of grappling with the issue of community re-integration. A broader discussion of phenomenology as a mode of inquiry will occur in the sections below.

Qualitative Research

The current study employed a qualitative method to explore the experiences of women who have been incarcerated and are attempting to re-integrate into the community. The purpose of this study was to detail the experience of currently incarcerated women who have experienced at least one prior

incarceration followed by an attempt at community re-integration. The description of this phenomenon includes their current anticipation of their impending re-integration, as well as, any previous experiences with community re-integration. The study also explored the experiences they had while incarcerated that might have affected their re-integration efforts. The use of qualitative methodology enhanced my attempt to holistically detail the phenomenon of community re-integration with women incarcerated in a jail setting because it gave voice to these women and allowed them to detail their own individual experiences without having to adhere to preconceived notions that can exist in the closed ended questions of a quantitative instrument (Creswell, 1998; Tandon, 1981).

Qualitative methodology is used to describe and understand rather than to predict (Creswell, 1998). This ability to describe and understand is what makes qualitative methodology the appropriate one to investigate these particular phenomena of community re-integration in women incarcerated in a jail setting. Qualitative methodology allows for a thick description of an event, group, or phenomena (Geertz, 1973). Thick description is a term coined by Geertz (1973) to indicate a more in-depth explanation or illustration of a certain event, group, or phenomenon. Thick description was beneficial to the current study because it allowed for a detailed, three dimensional

account of the participants' experiences. More importantly, thick description gave voice to a group of incarcerated women whose stories and life experience have often been overlooked.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the specific mode of inquiry within qualitative research that was used to examine the experiences of currently incarcerated women re-integrating into the community. "A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998). Those using phenomenology seek to detail the essence of an experience or phenomenon. In short, they seek to detail a common, underlying theme or meaning of a particular experience.

Another focus of phenomenological research is the idea of intentionality of consciousness (Creswell, 1998). This concept focuses on the idea that consciousness is always directed towards an object. Reality of an object, then, is inextricably related to one's consciousness of it (Creswell, 1998) In attempting to identify someone's intentionality of consciousness towards a particular phenomenon, the researcher is attempting to identify and detail not only the outward appearance (more superficial) of the experience but also, the participant's internal experience of the phenomenon. This internal consciousness is based on the thoughts, experiences, and

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personal meaning of the individual. Exploring both the inner and outer meanings of the phenomenon allows for a more complete description of the phenomenon in question. In short, using only the outward appearance of the experience as a basis for the description of the lived experience of the phenomenon would leave the picture incomplete. For example, if a participant responded to questions only with an outward description, I would have an event by event description of the phenomenon, but would be lacking the emotional reaction and thought process that went along with experiencing each of these events. The inclusion of intentionality of consciousness within phenomenological research allows for a more thorough, multi- dimensional, description of individuals' lived experiences, and as a result, the phenomenon itself (Creswell, 1998; Siewert, 2003).

Sampling Strategy

I employed a type of purposive sampling called criterion sampling. The use of purposive sampling, or a derivative thereof such as criterion sampling, is important in phenomenological inquiries as it assists the researcher in presenting a more accurate portrayal of the phenomenon in question (Davey, 1999). Criterion sampling means that all participants must meet certain criteria in order to participate (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Criterion sampling is particularly useful in phenomenological inquires as the focus of the study is

to detail the lived experience of a group of individuals as it pertains to a very specific phenomenon (Creswell, 1998).

Recruitment of Participants

The following criteria were used to recruit participants for this study: 1) Incarcerated in the Tuscaloosa County Jail, 2) Incarcerated at least one previous time, 3) Case had been adjudicated and sentence has been passed, and 4) Six months or less from release. Participants already had sentence imposed and were six months or less from release. I chose to recruit those inmates who had already been sentenced because their cases were concluded and therefore, confidentiality could be ensured. (if the case had not been concluded there would have been a possibility that I could have been called to testify by the prosecution if the participant revealed a relevant piece of information and the district attorney found out that it had been revealed to me.)

I provided a list of criteria to the correctional officer in charge of the computer database, and asked her to generate a list of women. The women who met all of the criteria were gathered in a room, and a correctional officer read a description of the study taken directly from the materials I provided the Institutional Review Board. Afterwards, the women were given the opportunity to sign a piece of paper indicating whether they were interested in participating in the study.

Because of my previous experience with this population, I chose to accept the first ten volunteers that expressed interest in the study.

A total of 10 participants were recruited from this facility. Ten is an optimal number of participants through which a researcher can detail the lived experience of a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Dukes, 1984; Riemen, 1986). This number of participants was also suggested because it was small enough so that the researcher could conduct in-depth interviews and gather enough detail to accurately portray the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998,; Riemen, 1986). Although this flexible sampling structure left open the possibility for me to recruit more participants to elaborate further on themes and concepts, the ten interviews I conducted proved sufficient to establish themes and provide thick description. As such, the current study was completed with the desired sample of ten.

Data Collection

The primary mode of data collection for this project was in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Creswell (1998) noted that in-depth interviews are the accepted mode of data collection for phenomenological studies because they allow for the richest data to be collected to fully capture the lived experience of a phenomenon. Each of the participants was interviewed one to two times. The first of these interviews

lasted approximately one to two hours. Second interviews were only scheduled to obtain additional information or to elaborate on previously gathered information in order to fully detail the lived experience of the participants. As part of my analytic process, I found it necessary to conduct only one second interview to elaborate further on a response to one of the interview questions.

Each interview was recorded using digital technology. The use of a digital recorder allowed me to download the interviews onto my personal computer. Once downloaded on my personal computer, the data were password protected. In addition, I was able to erase each interview from the digital recorder immediately after download. The use of this type of equipment allowed for a higher level of confidentiality. As a backup, each interview was also saved onto a password protected compact disc. These files are currently being stored for the duration of my dissertation in a password protected file on my personal computer until all research value has been extracted, and it is of no further academic use. At that point, all interview files will be destroyed. The one- on-one interviews were all conducted in the library of the Tuscaloosa County Jail. I chose the library because it has no windows and no intercom system. Therefore, it was the meeting room in the jail that was least likely to be prone to interruption or breaches in

confidentiality.

In addition to in-depth interviews, I maintained a journal to document process and field notes. Journaling is a method of data collection that captures data produced by the researcher. I journaled both prior to and after each interview. These journal entries detail my thoughts and feelings as they pertain to each interview and my role as the researcher. Among other content, I detailed how I believed the interviews might have been affected by my prior experiences in the Tuscaloosa County Jail, as well as, the experience of being a male researcher interviewing female participants. These journal entries assisted in the coding of the interviews during data analysis by serving as a guide for how I, as the researcher, might have influenced the collection of data. At points where my journal entries added to data analysis or demonstrated how my presence influenced the flow of the interview, I bracketed this information. The process of bracketing and journaling in the phenomenological process will be further discussed in a later section addressing trustworthiness of the study.

Interview Protocol

The questions which comprise the interview protocol were developed from both my personal experiences working with women at the county jail and an in-depth review of the pertinent literature. Erving Goffman's concept of the "total

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institution", as well as a holistic model for community re-integration developed by Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) were exceptionally helpful with the development of this interview protocol.

Erving Goffman's concept of the "total institution" was used in the creation of several questions in the interview protocol. Each participant was asked about her previous and current incarceration experiences and how those experiences related to community re-integration. Specifically, participants were asked about treatment by the staff, other inmates, and rehabilitative programs. These questions were based on Goffman's idea that residents/inmates are institutionalized by the staff, other institutionalized residents, and how the staff run programs (Goffman, 1962; Goffman, 1961).

Institutionalization affects the resident/inmate in such a way that she will either never leave the institution or will return soon after being released (Farrington, 1992; Weinstien, 1994). According to Goffman, those who are institutionalized are dependent upon the institution in order to function (Goffman, 1962; Goffman, 1961)

The model of [community] re-integration posited by Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) was also influential in the creation of this project's interview protocol. Their model is based on the idea that community re-integration should begin at the time

of arrest (as opposed to the prevailing model of re-integration that is based on the idea that re-integration should begin immediately after release). Rosenthal and Wolf's model for re-integration assisted in the creation of this interview protocol because it took a very different track from Goffman's concept of the total institution. This model proposes using the jail or prison as an instrument of positive, life altering change that, in theory, would make the re-integration process a more successful endeavor. Specifically, two of the questions in the interview protocol ask the participants to discuss their thoughts on how their incarceration experiences have affected previous attempts at community re-integration and the effect they think it will have on their upcoming attempt at community re-integration. Finally, they were asked to discuss types of programs and services that should be offered during their incarceration that could assist in the process of community re-integration.

The questions in the interview protocol attempted to capture the lived experiences of incarcerated women who were within 6 months of community re-integration. Specifically, these questions comprised demographics, previous experiences with community re-integration, life experiences during current incarceration, and expectations of their upcoming community re-integration. Phenomenological inquiry lends itself to a flexible

approach to the development of an interview protocol. The
completed protocol appears as Appendix A to this document.

At the beginning of each interview, I informed the
participant that a second, follow-up interview could be
necessary. In addition, I told the participants that they would
have the opportunity to read my analysis of the interviews.
This process of member checking is a technique for assuring
trustworthiness in qualitative research and will be discussed in
the following section.

Trustworthiness

The issue of credibility or trustworthiness is one that
receives quite a bit of attention in qualitative inquiries.
Quantitative inquiries employ measures of reliability and
validity to determine the trustworthiness, or rigor, of a study.
Because qualitative research is focused on the actual words of
participants as opposed to the quantifiable components used in
quantitative research, it is important to employ other methods
to ensure the trustworthiness of findings (Davey, 1999; Padgett,
1998).

Padgett (1998) outlined three major threats to the
trustworthiness of qualitative inquires: reactivity, researcher
bias, and respondent bias. Each of these factors needs to be
addressed in a qualitative study in order to ensure the
trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry. Reactivity refers to

the effect the presence of the researcher has on the natural environment of the field. The very presence of the researcher in an environment in which he/she would not normally exist, could distort the manner in which people behave and interact (Lincoln and Guba, 1995).

Researcher bias is another threat to trustworthiness in qualitative inquiries. This threat involves the researcher taking in and analyzing the information he/she gains through his/her own "personal filters." The result of researcher bias could be the dissemination of information as seen through the researcher's eyes as opposed to that of the participants'. In addition, if unaware of his/her own biases, the researcher could select particular participants or ask specific questions which would allow the inquiry to be driven by his/her own agenda as opposed to capturing the actual phenomenon (Padgett, 1998; Weiss, 1994).

According to Padgett (1998), the final threat to trustworthiness in qualitative studies is respondent bias. This particular threat is similar in both qualitative and quantitative inquires. Respondent bias takes place when the participant in a study withholds information in order to protect their privacy or for any other reason. In addition, it can take place when a respondent embellishes his/her answers to provide the researcher with responses they think the researcher will

think are desirable. Either way, respondent bias can pose a major threat to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study.

Several strategies were employed to address these threats and to enhance the trustworthiness of this qualitative inquiry. As previously mentioned, these strategies serve as the qualitative mirror of the notions of reliability and validity in quantitative studies. For the purposes of this study, the following strategies for increasing trustworthiness were used: bracketing, member checking, peer debriefing, and the use of an audit trail. Each of these techniques will be described in more detail below.

Bracketing

When using phenomenology as a mode of inquiry researchers attempt to suspend judgments about what is real and what is not real (Creswell, 1998). In essence, something is determined to be a real phenomenon based only on the lived experiences of the participants, not based on the previously lived experiences of the researcher. This attempt to suspend judgment by the researcher is implemented through bracketing (Creswell, 1998). Researchers employing phenomenology as their mode of inquiry "pull-out" their pre-conceived notions about a certain phenomenon by bracketing them separately within the text. This process makes it easier for both the researcher and the reader to understand the difference between the participants' lived

experiences and the pre-conceived notions of the researcher (Creswell, 1998; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003).

As the researcher in this project, I bracketed my pre-conceived notions pertaining to incarcerated women who were facing an impending attempt at community re-integration. I have worked in the Tuscaloosa County Jail in association with the Tuscaloosa County Public Defender's Office for the past three years. In that time, I have been responsible for placing both women and men in drug treatment facilities, running anger management groups, and accessing resources for those on the brink of being released from jail. In that time, I have seen many individuals, both women and men, released from incarceration, attempt community re-integration, commit further offenses, and return to the county jail. During this period of time, I have formed thoughts and opinions, pre-conceived notions, as to why the process of community re-integration breaks down, or results in less than success, for certain individuals.

For the purposes of this study, I had to set those thoughts and opinions aside, or bracket them, within the text in order to keep them separate from the actual lived experiences of those women who have actually been a part of the process. Specifically, I used my journal entries as a venue for bracketing out my thoughts and feelings about the data I am

gathering. When writing the analysis section of my dissertation, I have included these bracketed thoughts and feelings to elucidate potential researcher bias and respondent bias.

Member Checking

Member checking occurs when the researcher returns to the participants to make sure their thoughts and feelings are being accurately represented. This process can be difficult because the participants may not wish to review what they discussed or may simply not have time to meet with the researcher. Member checking may lead some participants to want to withdraw certain answers or tell the researchers that their experiences have not been accurately represented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because we, as human beings, all possess our own set of lenses through which we filter information, it is vitally important to go back to the participant who actually experienced the phenomenon under investigation to ensure the accuracy of the analysis (Davey, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For the purposes of this study, I attempted to provide an opportunity for member checking prior to my participants' release from jail. However, because some of my participants were released from jail prior to completion of the analysis, only four of ten participants participated in member checking.

I transcribed and analyzed data as I continued to interview

participants in an attempt to provide the transcription of each

interview to the corresponding participant for the purpose of

member checking. The review of the actual transcript allowed

each participant to decide whether or not I documented her story

to her satisfaction. At the end of analysis, I provided the

remaining participants with a summary of the themes associated

with the phenomenon of community re-integration.

A majority of the themes that emerged during data analysis

elicited no objection from those who participated in the member

checking process; when disagreement with a theme or a

modification was desired, I complied. Those themes that were

adjusted as a result of the member checking process will be

noted during my discussion of the results, in Chapter Four.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing involves relying on a colleague or group of

colleagues to review some or all of your data analysis. Lincoln

and Guba (1985) referred to the peer reviewer as a devil's

advocate. The peer reviewer is to lend a critical eye and ask

thought provoking questions about method and analysis. In

addition, this/these person(s) can act in a "therapeutic" manner

toward the researcher by listening to his/her thoughts and

feelings about the research process (Creswell, 1998). During

this process, both researcher and peer reviewer keep journal

entries about the sessions. These entries could also be used in

the aforementioned bracketing process. Using a peer reviewer, who also conducts qualitative research, can provide invaluable consultation about data analysis, as well as enhance the trustworthiness of your study by helping to reduce the amount of researcher bias (Davey, 1999).

Lisa Jennings, one of my colleagues in the doctoral program at the University of Alabama helped me as a peer reviewer. I chose her to function in this capacity because she was also conducting a qualitative dissertation with subject matter similar to mine. Because Lisa relocated to another state we conducted peer debriefing through both phone calls and email. She was able to assist in a more contextual manner because she is currently immersed in the criminal justice and forensic social work literature. Specifically, Lisa was able to review my data analysis and highlight some quotations I overlooked that strengthened the use of some of the emergent themes. In addition, her constructive comments enhanced the elaboration on the themes that I provided in Chapter Five. I believe that she provided invaluable assistance to my data analysis process and increased the trustworthiness of my results.

Audit Trail

The use of an audit trail is another way in which researcher bias can be decreased (Creswell & Miller, 2000). An audit trail comprises the documentation of every step of the

study including: raw data, field notes, journals, theoretical notes, process notes, observations and any other information that would, in any way, be pertinent to the study. In addition, the process of keeping an audit trail increases the ability of other researchers to reproduce the study. Similar to quantitative inquiries, this reproducibility also serves to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Davey, 1999; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993). For the purposes of this study, I kept records of all of my research efforts in spiral bound notebooks which are currently stored in my home office.

I am storing all of my transcripts, journal entries, analysis notes, and any other hard copy of information pertaining to this study in these notebooks. The electronic information will be stored on my personal laptop computer. In order to ensure the privacy of my informants, this information is password protected.

Procedures

Female inmates at the Tuscaloosa County Jail who had already been sentenced to a period of incarceration were given a brief informational session on the scope of this study and procedures associated with protection of human research participants. They were informed that participation required one to two interview sessions approximately one to two hours in length, as well as one to two member checking session at the end

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of data analysis to review and comment on the results of the coding process. Those inmates who agreed to participate were scheduled for interviews. As previously mentioned, the interview(s) were conducted in the library of the Tuscaloosa County Jail. The interviews were digitally recorded, and downloaded onto my computer for transcription and analysis. The audio and text copies of these interviews will be kept for a period of time until all academic worth has been extracted. Participants were informed that all of their comments would be kept confidential and that each of them would be assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. At the conclusion of this study, the Tuscaloosa County Jail will be given a copy of the final product to keep in their inmate library so that any inmate who may access the final product.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis began after the first interview was completed and continued throughout the data collection process and beyond. Open coding was employed in the initial phase of data analysis and included reading through the transcripts of the interviews and making notes and memos in the margins. This process was a recording of my initial impressions of the data. This is the first step in the creation of "meaning units" (Garko, M. G., 1999) which assisted in detailing the lived experience of the phenomenon, and also a further step

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(that began with the process of journaling) in the elaboration

of my experience as the researcher (Creswell, 1998; Miles and

Huberman, 1994).

The open coding process was completed by hand. Afterwards,

the transcripts were downloaded into a qualitative software

program. Atlas ti is one of many software packages that assist

in the analysis of qualitative data (Atlas ti, 2006). This

program allowed me to organize the data into categories and

assisted in identifying the overarching theme(s) that

characterized the phenomenon of community re-integration (Barry,

1998).

The initial open coding process and organization into

categories and overarching themes using Atlas ti assisted in the

development of a textural description of the phenomenon. The

textural description of the phenomenon included an overall

description of the experience. This type of description

detailed the events that make up the phenomenon. I documented

the events of the re-integration process by gathering

participant statements that illustrated the textural description

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

The structural description of events will follow, and

encompasses an overall description of how the phenomenon was

experienced. Structural description encompasses a more in-depth

examination of the phenomenon which focuses more on the

underlying meaning of the experience rather than the superficial one provided in the textural description. The aforementioned intentionality of consciousness is the focus of structural description. As in textural descriptions, participant statements were used to support my understanding (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

All of the prior components worked together to assist me in establishing and elaborating on an underlying theme, or essence, of the phenomenon. A large focus of data analysis in phenomenological inquiries is the emergence of an underlying theme that will assist in unifying the experience among the participants (Creswell, 1998). The next chapter will detail the data analysis of the current project. Specifically, each research question will be examined, and emergent themes and concepts will be discussed.

Researcher as Instrument

As was previously mentioned, bracketing is an integral part of phenomenologically based research. This process allows the researcher to express his biases and motivations up front, and embrace the role of the researcher as an active and important part of the research process. The following will be an account of what led me to conduct the current study. Specifically, it will include all of the aspects of my life and experiences up to this point which I consider relevant. The resulting effect

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should be to inform the reader of how my experiences and motivations could and do affect my interpretation of the data.

When I was in my first year of the Master's program in social work, I began an internship at the Public Defender's Office in a rural county in Alabama. I believed this internship to be the realization of the work I had wanted to do for as long as I could remember. Even as a child, I wanted to work with those who committed crimes, and understand what led them to a place in their lives that allowed them to make the decision to break the law in such a way that it led them to be imprisoned. I make this statement to provide an understanding of how long I have contemplated issues of both criminal activity and its origins.

When I began my field placement at the Public Defender's Office, I interacted with individuals who had experienced life in a very different way than I. These men and women had been reared in an environment where crime and imprisonment were common occurrence. I was fascinated. It was as if these individuals were reared in an environment where the laws of our state and country were written for others – those who had not experienced the lives they had. It was this initial interaction that led me to ponder on what occurred when these incarcerated individuals were released. What must they think? How must they feel? What would they do to make the experience different this

time?

During my second year, I participated in an internship in Washington D.C. at St. Elizabeth's hospital. At this placement, I worked with prisoners in Washington D.C. who experienced pre-trial issues with mental illness. This placement provided me with a very different look at incarcerated life, but the similarities were still immense. Prisoners or jail inmates, these men and women seemed to have an inability to live and function within society's boundaries in the same way that I did. During this placement, I began to have a better understanding of why the laws that I abided by with such ease seemed to prove such a difficulty for them. It was at this point that I officially decided I needed to pursue a PhD so I could investigate the needs of this population as they attempt to re-enter society.

Throughout my entire doctoral education, I have worked with the inmates in the county jail of a rural Alabama county. My experiences with them began to form the foundation for my dissertation. I listened to the stories of men and women about their experiences both while incarcerated and on the outside. When they discussed prior attempts at community re-integration, they spoke of feeling excited upon release from incarceration, but this excitement was followed by an almost immediate frustration. They conveyed that they felt this frustration

because of the way society viewed and treated them. Almost as if they wore a scarlet letter on their chest, they felt rejection at every corner. The acquisition of jobs, housing, clothing, food, etc. all proved to be more difficult for these individuals than those who had not ever been incarcerated. The idea that they had paid their debt to society and were starting clean almost seemed laughable. These stories added layers to the pre-established foundation of my dissertation.

It began to feel like the project I wanted to undertake for my dissertation was not one that would just act as a means to satisfying my own personal curiosity, but as one that could actually provide assistance to a voiceless group of individuals in dire need of help. I chose to investigate women for this project because they seemed to me to be the most silenced of all the voiceless incarcerated. Not only were they incarcerated, but also they were incarcerated without most of the programs and opportunities that their male counterparts had. At the time, they had no GED programs, no substance abuse programs, no work release – all of which were programs and rehabilitative efforts that were bestowed upon their male counterparts. Therefore, I chose to investigate incarcerated women who were moving towards an attempt at community re-integration. I hope to be able to use the results of this study to create re-integration programs for women. In addition, I hope that this study will lead to

other research efforts which will have positive effects on

incarcerated women and men.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

When I began analyzing data, I had some difficulty determining how to present the themes and concepts that emerged. I wanted to ensure that the thoughts and feelings of the women contributing to the study were presented accurately and in a clear enough format to give voice to their experiences, and to provide information that could prove valuable to both researchers and practitioners. Therefore, I chose to use a straightforward framework by addressing each of the research themes separately. In each section, I will present the emergent themes relating to each research question.

I will begin with a brief, general description of the sample. Each subsequent section will begin with the presentation of a research question followed by an explanation of the related themes and concepts which will be illustrated through the use of interviewees' quotes. The quotes are identified with "Interviewer" to refer to me, and a pseudonym to refer to each participant. For the purposes of this study, the following pseudonyms were utilized: Rachel, Iris, Amanda, Ally, Felecia, Jenna, Lorna, Vicki, Marley, and Kathleen. These

pseudonyms were assigned by me, and are in no way associated with the names or nicknames of the participants. At the conclusion of each section, I will bracket out any relevant preconceived thoughts and feelings I had prior to the beginning of the research. Finally, at the end of the chapter, I will discuss the member checking interviews and how they affected the process of analysis and the dissemination of information.

Description of Sample

I am providing a brief, general description of the sample. I have chosen not to provide specific, individual information so as to protect the identity of my participants. The age of my participants ranged from twenty-five to forty-eight years. Their education ranged from 9th grade to a few years of college. All of the women had at least one child, and those children were being cared for by either spouses or grandparents. Finally, the women had been previously incarcerated as few as one time to as many as twenty-five times.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One

What prior life experiences do these women believe have affected their previous efforts at community re-integration?

The discussion of life experiences that study participants believed had affected their previous efforts at community re-integration focused on two main areas: 1) Family Relationships,

and 2) Traumatic Events. These two themes were dominant in the discussions of both pre-incarceration experiences, and the community re-integration attempts that occurred between periods of incarceration. I have placed the themes in this particular order due to chronological flow. Specifically, all of the women discussed some type of family relationship issue that has affected their adult lives that, in turn, worked against their attempts at community re-integration. The theme of traumatic events was discussed in terms of both familial-related and other types of incidents.

Family Relationships

A great majority of the discussion relating to pre-incarceration experiences focused on the women's relationships with their families, particularly with their parents. The majority reported having experienced some form of abuse at the hands of one or both of their parents. They described this abuse as being both physical and sexual in nature.

> Interviewer: Can you tell me a little more about you and
> your dad?
> Rachel: He thought my mom spoiled me too much, and my dad
> is real strict. He was in the services [military] and
> everything was set for him, and that's the way he expected
> his kids to be. Except for me, I was the only one who
> didn't.
> Rachel: You kind of went the other way?
> Rachel: Yeah
> Interviewer: So, he was the disciplinarian in the house?
> Rachel: Yeah
> Interviewer: So, how did he discipline you?

Rachel: I've had my ass beat many a times . . . busted nose about three times.
Interviewer: So, he was pretty abusive?
Rachel: Yeah

Amanda: I was . . . it started [sexual abuse] when I was fifteen. My mom and dad, their friend, an old ass man. He did the same thing to my mom. When I told her he did it to me and she didn't believe me. There's been several after that.
Interviewer: Several after that who were sexually abusive?
Amanda: Yes

Ally: He [father] whooped us, and left marks on us.
Interviewer: with a belt?
Ally: He [father] has backhanded me with his hand once.
Interviewer: Was that just you and your brother?
Ally: More or less me and my brother was the ones who got the whoopings.

Interviewer: Did his [father] friends mess with you too?
Kathleen: He has had friends mess with me.
Interviewer: How old were you the first time someone touched you inappropriately?
Kathleen: Probably, I was ten when I had sex . . . probably about, it could have been before I had sex, but I'm not sure.
Interviewer: You're just not putting it together like that.
Kathleen: It's just locked away somewhere back there. It's just not coming out. The one I can remember the most is when I was in the 7th or 8th grade. I was getting drunk then.

While discussing their family relationships, these women not only discussed their own struggles with abuse, they related having watched different members of their families while they were being abused. These abused family members were described as both mothers and siblings. The importance of this distinction is that many of the family units in which the women

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existed [as children and teenagers] were defined by an overall culture of abuse.

    Ally: He has backhanded me with his hand once.
    Interviewer: Was that just you and your brother?
    Ally: More or less me and my brother was the ones who got the whoopings.

    Felecia: My momma slapped me a couple of times.
    Interviewer: Your momma slapped you in the face?
    Felecia: Yeah, and I've seen her get thrown through a closet door when I was in the fourth grade.
    Interviewer: By your dad?
    Felecia: No, by one of her husbands.

At times, the women relayed stories of continuing verbal abuse in the form of inappropriate sexual comments that has continued into adulthood.

    Kathleen: He [father] knows I'm gay, and he said he wanted to watch. And I said, "no", that's the part that makes me uncomfortable with him.

    Interviewer: So, you would say he [grandfather] has made sexually inappropriate comments and continues to make sexually inappropriate comments?
    Lorna: Before I came in here [jail], it was like that to.
    Interviewer: How does that make you feel when he does that?
    Lorna: Makes me want to use, to numb it out and not think about it.

In the discussion of family relationships and their connection to attempts at community re-integration, the women focused on the presence of familial abuse in their lives. The relevance of the topic of childhood/adult familial abuse will become more clearly relevant in the sections to follow.

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Traumatic Events

The theme of traumatic events emerged while discussing the problems that the women have experienced with community re-integration. At first glance, it appears that traumatic events could be included in one large category with the abuse that was experienced during childhood; however, upon closer inspection, there were several occurrences of life altering traumatic events that existed outside the realm of abuse. In addition, this theme focuses on the existence of the event in their lives as opposed to the relationship of the event to a family member. Finally, the majority of the supporting quotes include a relationship between the traumatic event and some self-destructive behavior. While some overlap existed, I believed the need for a separate theme existed.

Several women expressed the existence of a traumatic event in their lives without actually relating the event to any subsequent self-destructive behavior.

> Interviewer: Your mom and dad divorced?
> Rachel: Yeah, she divorced him.
> Interviewer: Tell me what role your dad played [in your life].
> Rachel: He was a disciplinarian. He disciplined us. [But], he's always been there for me. No matter how many times I got whooped, no matter how many times I got in trouble.
>
>
> Kathleen: I've been in a mental ward twice.
> Interviewer: Which was around the same time that you were touched.

Kathleen: Yeah, I made it specific when I got in there that
I didn't want my dad [who was abusive] coming up there at
all.

However, a majority of the women discussed the traumatic

event(s) and discussed their subsequent, self-destructive,

coping behaviors. Specifically, the majority of the women

appear to have an understanding of the relationship between

experiencing the traumatic event and the onset of the

subsequent, self-destructive, coping behavior.

Interviewer: That's the timeline I'm trying to put
together, so when you started to use drugs was . . .
Jenna: When my mother died

Vicki: I went to drugs real, real bad because it was after
my dad shot himself. I got high on anything I could get my
hands on.
Interviewer: How long ago did your dad shoot himself?
Vicki: 2004
Interviewer: So you think the event that happened with your
dad had a lot to do with why you were in the position you
were in at that point [abusing drugs].
Vicki: Yes it had . . . because I found him. He lived just
across the street from us. He hadn't been gone for 2
minutes, and we went to check on him and he had shot
himself.
Interviewer: [Later in the interview] Can you give me some
idea of the emotions that went on when you did find him?
Again, you don't have to talk about it.
Vicki: It just made me want to use.
Interviewer: Made you want to use . . .
Vicki: Use or drink something. I had drank before . . . I
can't drink anymore. It made me want to use.

Rachel: Cause I see how hard it was for me to have one
parent . . . cause my mom passed away one month before I
graduated out of the fifth grade. It's just been me and my
dad and my brother, and my dad kind of, I guess after my
mom died he was kind of going through a depression mode. He
drew himself closer to my brother, and spent all of his

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time with my brother. Even in the fifth grade after she
passed, I stayed fighting and suspended from school. I
thought if I got into trouble it would bring me and my
daddy closer. That he would come closer to me, but it
didn't work.

    During one of the interviews, the connection between

the teenage traumatic event, and her subsequent legal

problems became evident.

Kathleen: I was . . . it started [sexual abuse] when I was
fifteen. My mom and dad, their friend, an old ass man. He
did the same thing to my mom. When I told her he did it to
me and she didn't believe me. There's been several after
that.
Interviewer: Several after that who were sexually abusive?
Kathleen: Yes
Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit about what you were
convicted of?
Kathleen: It was unlawful sexual contact with a minor. . .
a fifteen year old.

Both familial relationships and traumatic events are themes

in which the women discussed situations in their lives that

could be considered life-altering. At times, they discussed

these events in terms of the subsequent effects it had on their

behavior. These themes are relevant to previous attempts at

community re-integration because the women would very likely

require some sort of professional assistance to deal with the

aftermath in a healthy manner. However, only one of the women

made mention of any such assistance (mental institution).

Further, the behavior that most of the women engaged in during

the aftermath of a traumatic event were drug abuse – an illegal

activity; thus establishing a connection between prior experiences and subsequent incarceration. A more clear connection will be established after each of the research questions has been addressed, and a more holistic understanding of this phenomenon can be achieved.

Bracketing

When creating the interview protocol for this study, the prior experiences of the women was a topic of major interest. It was my pre-conceived notion from prior discussion with women in similar situations and a preponderance of pre-existing literature, that early life experiences might very likely have played an integral role in their eventual criminal activity and subsequent difficulties in community re-integration. Therefore, I wasn't surprised when these women were so open about discussing their histories prior to incarceration, and, that in my analysis, these events seemed woven into the cloth of the phenomenon of community re-integration. However, because what emerged from the analysis equated with my pre-conceived notions, I made it a point of discussion in the member checking sessions and during peer review. Both of these sections will be featured, in full, at the end of this chapter.

Research Question Two

II: How did the women view community re-integration during previous incarcerations?

When participants discussed their thoughts and feelings about community re-integration during previous incarcerations, the theme of change emerged as dominant. The majority of the women who were interviewed discussed their thoughts about their previous incarcerations in relation to how they felt when they were released. They discussed the idea of change in relation to altering their lives so they wouldn't return to jail, or they discussed continuing to engage in the behaviors that brought them to jail because they thought they wouldn't get caught or didn't care if they did. They did not discuss much about the underlying thoughts and feelings they had during these previous attempts at community re-integration.

Change

When reviewing their thoughts about community re-integration during previous incarcerations, the women discussed the thoughts and/or feelings that occurred to them both at the time of their release and after their release. Their thoughts about getting out of jail and going back into the community were either positive or lackadaisical, depending on the situation. Some of the women discussed change in terms of the positive changes they were implementing, followed by the life issue,

mostly drug related, that took them back to their previous

lifestyles.

> Marley: I stayed clean for a while, went to work. Then got
> back around the same people and relapsed [using drugs].
> I've been messing up ever since.
> Interviewer: How long after you were released would you say
> you relapsed?
> Marley: One year. And that's when I got back into what I
> was doing before to support myself [illegal activities].
> Interviewer: And the cycle continues . . .
> Marley: And the cycle continues
> Vicki: I went back, after I got out last time, I went back
> to my mom's and I was still doing drugs. I was back on it
> [drugs] after two months. . .

Another group of women discussed community re-integration

in terms of the change they did not attempt to make. These women

expressed that they were either not affected enough by their

period of incarceration, or simply expressed a feeling of a lack

of control in their own lives.

> Interviewer: How did you feel the last time you were
> released [from jail]?
> Ally: Like I wouldn't be coming back. But, I just went back
> to the same
> things [drugs].
> Interviewer: Do you think jail didn't affect you?
> Ally: I wasn't here [jail] long enough to get a good taste
> of it.

> Lorna: I made a big joke out of it [being released]. I had
> been in drug court and never tested dirty. . . I wasn't
> going to be on papers [probation]. So, I told the judge
> that I wasn't going to be on papers and that if I saw him
> riding in the car, I was going to fire up a blunt right
> there in the car and smoke it.
> Overall, when discussing previous incarcerations and

release from jail, in terms of community re-integration, the

women discussed the concept of change. In some cases, the women

left the jail with every intention of turning their lives around. They attempted to work and remain separated from the friends and acquaintances with whom they had previously interacted. However, after a certain period of time, they found themselves relying on the same types of behavior that had previously involved them with criminal activity. In other cases, the women admitted to not having much anticipation of successful change.

The one constant throughout the discussion of change was the inability of the women to articulate their concept of change in a concrete manner. They discussed that they remembered wanting to change, but were incapable of discussing what changes they wished to make. Further discussion of the theme of change will take place in the section focusing on the women's thoughts about community re-integration during their current incarceration.

Bracketing

The research question addressing thoughts and feelings about community re-integration during previous incarcerations was of particular interest to me. I was very curious to see if the women in this study would respond to this question, and if so, then how. My assumption was that the women would discuss previous thoughts about community re-integration in very positive, almost idealistic, terms. Specifically, I thought that

the women would look back and view themselves as having been very idealistic and, perhaps, unrealistic in their previous ideas of what it would be like to re-enter the community. I was wrong. When interviewing the women, this particular part of the interview seemed to elicit the least amount of emotion. They responded to the questions in this section with fewer verbalizations and facial expressions than in all other sections. They were not unwilling to discuss previous incarceration and attempts at community re-integrations, but were much less likely to expound upon their very straight forward responses. Further discussion of this issue will be included in the final chapter

Research Question Three

How did the women in the study view community re-integration during their current incarceration?

When discussing their anticipation of community re-integration several themes emerged from the data: 1) Anxiety, 2) Motherhood as motivation, and 3) Change. Together, these themes explain how the women were reporting feeling about their impending release. The theme of anxiety was the overwhelming feeling that was discussed in the interviews. Next, all of the interviewed women had at least one child and therefore, motherhood was a main focus of the motivation to succeed when they were released. Further, this success was defined by these

women, in terms of the next theme, change. They discussed change in terms of completely turning their lives around, and not returning to the same lifestyles (e.g. drugs and crime) as they had before. Following the discussion of the themes, I will document my bracketing of my pre-conceived notions, and make mention of the member checking and peer review sessions.

Anxiety

When discussing their upcoming attempts at community re-integration, the women expressed several feelings. However, the dominant emotion expressed by all of the women who were interviewed was anxiety. The women discussed their impending release in terms of the anxiety they were feeling about the life situations that will exist or still existed in the community. Specifically, they discussed relationships and dealing with the requirements of their release. These were the two topics that dominated the discussion of their anxieties.

In terms of their relationships, the women were concerned about the men who were waiting on them to get out of jail. They were worried about what these men would do to them, and that they would be led back into what they described themselves as unhealthy relationships.

> Interviewer: What are you most worried about when you get out? Jenna: That the trouble is still there when I get out.
> Interviewer: What trouble?
> Jenna: With my husband and the drugs. Cause yeah, I think that I want to be with him cause we've been married for

almost twenty years. . . but the last two years, there's
been so much hurt and so much happen.
Rachel: I received a threatening letter from my boyfriend.
Interviewer: The last ex-boyfriend?
Rachel: Yes, somehow he got the letter back here to me [her
ex-boyfriend is also in jail]. His mom told me about my new
boyfriend, and he said that when he gets out that he was
going to come looking for me and that if I don't wanna be
with him then I won't be able to be with anyone. So that's
kind of been on my mind.

The remaining discussions pertaining to anxiety focused on

community re-integration resulted in a variety of responses. I

think it is important to report on these varied responses

because it demonstrates that although anxiety is a common theme,

individual life circumstances dictate the area on which the

anxiety is focused.

Kathleen: I'm worried about . . . you know, I'll be on
probation for two years. I'll have to register [as a sex
offender] twice a year. I know that. I don't know what goes
with probation because I've never been on it.
Vicki: It's going to be hard with the mental aspect of it
[community re-integration] because I've got issues.
Vicki: What do you think would help you?
Vicki: You know, I've got a psychiatrist on the outside.
But he's the type of psychiatrist who would just write me
[prescriptions] whatever I want.
Vicki: Can you think of any other way you have to deal with
your mental health issues?
Vicki: I don't know about that because I don't know how to
answer it.
Vicki: The whole anxiety about dealing with stuff in your
head when you get out?
Marley: Yeah, because it's still going to be in there. And,
I'll still be seeing my dad all the time. He doesn't hit us
anymore but he still makes some freaky ass comments.
Interviewer: When you think about getting out, how does it
make you feel?
Rachel: I'm worried about not handling everything when I
get out, and resorting back to drugs. I'm not going to lie

to you . . . I've been thinking that I might use when I get out . . . cause I still have everything facing me.

Motherhood as motivation

Despite the anxiety that the women admitted exists as they prepare for community re-integration, they were still able to describe a level of motivation to go back home, and sometimes, to change. Every woman who was interviewed for this study was the mother of at least one child. The majority of the children were being cared for by a family member of the women while they were serving their time. The following quotes demonstrate that the women were focused on their impending release so that they can resume their roles as mothers, and, in some cases, how the resumption of this role is acting as a motivation for their impending attempt at community re-integration.

> Ally: And my mom finally understands that I have a drug problem. Because my dad brought it up to her and she was like, 'my daughter don't have no drug problem and my son is not an alcoholic" . . . but we are. So now, she has full power of attorney and authority over my son cause I don't want him bein in harms way, and then DHR get him or somethin and him goin through the system. . .
> Marley: For me, my problem is that I get time to take care of my kids. I'm 38 years old and I ain't had one of my kids with me. My momma's been taking care of them. So, maybe if my momma would lay down the law and tell me to take care of my children, then I would have no other choice. That would make me stronger. I want my own children. I'm 38 years old and I had my first baby at 19 years old and I ain't had my children since then, and it's sad. I know how they feel. I was raised by my gradmother and I don't want my babies to be . . . like my oldest one [who is in jail now]. There's nobody going to hurt me getting out of here because my kids need me.

Iris: I've devistated them kids, and I won't do it again. I was fixing to lose my kids, and I'm not talking about the state, I'm talking about the love. It's time for me to be the momma again, and not let my kids suffer. But they are not going to suffer no more.

Change

The theme of change emerged from the data during the discussions of the thoughts and feelings of the women regarding their impending release and attempt at community re-integration. This piece of the interview elicited both positive and negative responses. A few of the women expressed some doubt as to their ability to change. These particular women were those who had been in and out of jail the most number of times, and had made many, many unsuccessful attempts to change their lives during community re-integration. The doubts that these women expressed revolved around the difficulties they had in the past rather than their hopes for the future.

Felecia: I mean, I may stay clean for a year, but nine times out of ten, I'll end up relapsing within a year . . . within a year, that's when I'll relapse.
Interviewer: Does that frustrate you?
Felecia: Not really, because I'm used to it. . .
Interviewer: It's just sort of a part of your existence?
Felecia: Yeah, pretty much, it's just a daily routine for me. I mean, I keep repeating the same mistakes. You know, you do one thing and then you do it another way to try and keep for getting caught.

Rachel: Me personally, I want to move out of [here], and start all over because once people know you, they know your background, and that's it. There is no starting over in the same town. It's just not happening because you're already labeled and named regardless of how hard you try to do

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better they already look at you by what you've done in the
past and that keeps you from doing better in the future.
Interviewer: So rather than trying to . . . so, what I hear
you saying is rather than trying to change the behavior,
you change the way you do the behavior?
Jenna: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. I have tried to do the
right thing, and sometimes folks. . . once they find out
you have a felony, that's all there is to it. That's all it
takes. They'll throw your application in the trash and have
nothing to do with you. And you go back to doing what you
did before to support yourself. And to make sure you have a
place to stay, and food to eat, and clothes and everything
else. I mean, people do what they have to do to survive.
Those women who had experienced jail fewer times expressed

their hopes for change when reflecting on their upcoming

community re-integration. These women were more positive in

their outlook, and expressed in general terms what they thought

it would take for them to be successful upon their release to

the community.

Ally: I just got it set in my mind that I don't wanna come
back to this place when I get out. Also, I'm tired of
coming to this place. It's going to feel good not to have
someone wake you up in the middle of the night. I've got
somewhere I can go when I get out of jail. I don't have to
be on their [jail] schedule anymore.
Amanda: That's all you need to do when you get in here is
set you a goal. Set you a goal and do it. That's what
you've got to do. You've got to do exactly what you say you
are going to do. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going
to go home, and get a job, and try and get my kids back.
Rachel: I have to stay away from the people who do drugs. I
think that it's going to be easy. I'll go back to school
when I get out . . . and they [her kids] are home schooled,
and I'll get back involved with that and that will take up
more of my time. It will keep my mind off everything that
is going on.
As previously mentioned, when discussing their overall

thoughts on their impending community re-integration, the women

focused on three areas: 1) anxiety, 2) motherhood as motivation,

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and 3) change. The anxiety the women discussed was focused on a variety of areas of their lives: continuing to deal with the system, relationships, their children, and drug use. However, when the discussion turned towards motherhood as a motivation upon release, and their ideas about change, their attitudes turned in a somewhat more positive direction. They discussed a desire to get out of jail and to resume mothering their children. Further, they incorporated their children as a part of their motivation for change.

When discussing change, those women who had been in and out of jail the most times expressed some level of doubt or resignation regarding their situations, and expressed the reality that difficulties dealing with community re-integration were imminent. Those women who had been in and out of jail fewer times expressed a much higher level of hope. However, all of the women who spoke of change did so in a very superficial manner. When the women discussed plans for their change after release, they offered no concrete plans. They discussed that they wanted to change, they wanted to take care of their children, and they wanted to stay out of jail, but they never articulated change in specific terms. They never elaborated any particular plan that might lead them to a successful attempt at community re-integration. Further discussion on the theme of change will be highlighted in Chapter Five.

Bracketing

Before beginning this study, I had some preconceived notions, based on my prior experience, as to how the women would respond to questions pertaining to their impending release and the process of community re-integration. I was wrong. My experience with the women was very much related to their difficulties with their boyfriends, their families, and themselves. Much of their interaction with me focused on the negative parts of their lives, and how it has impacted them. To that end, one of the only positive aspects of their lives that they discussed was based in their belief systems. Specifically, the majority of the women that I have dealt with in the jail are deeply rooted in religion; furthermore, the vast majority of their religious beliefs are Christian based. Therefore, I very much anticipated that religion would present itself as one of the positive forces that would emerge in relation to community re-integration. Those discussions never happened. In fact, never once was religion mentioned as a part of their plan, goals, or anything related to their impending release. Further elaboration on this topic will be addressed in the final chapter.

Research Question Four

IV: What changes do the women in this study believe need to be made in jails to assist them and future inmates with the process of community re-integration?

When discussing their time in jail, the women were quite forthcoming about the experience of being in jail and how it could be changed to assist women in preparing for community re-integration. The analysis of this question yielded the following themes: 1) Programs/Classes and 2) Treatment by staff. Of these two emergent themes, the discussion of programs/classes was the most dominant. These women very clearly articulated what types of programs/classes they believed they needed to ease the transition from incarceration to community. In addition to the discussion of programs/classes, these women discussed their interactions with jail staff. Their interactions with staff were described as being overwhelmingly negative and, at times, overtly affecting the way they interact with people on the outside. Finally, as in the prior three questions, support emerged as a theme. In this instance, support was expressed in terms of both human interaction and potential and existent rehabilitative resources inside the jail. Most often, this level of support was expressed more as a desire than as a reality.

The discussion of changes that could take place in the jail

to assist in community re-integration will conclude with an overview, and a bracketing section. Further discussion on this part of the data analysis will be explored in the final chapter.

Programs/Classes

The discussion on programs/classes focused on two areas. The first part of the discussion focused on the programs/classes that exist at the jail. They discussed the types of classes in which they either participated or in which they wanted to participate. In addition, they provided suggestions for classes that could exist inside the jail to further assist women with community re-integration.

> Rachel: I have filled out the forms for the classes but they haven't enrolled me.
> Interviewer: What did you want to be involved in?
> Rachel: Narcotics Anonymous, Anger Management, I think I have an anger problem. I want to do something with celebrate recovery. I wanted to get into breaking free; it's a class about the Bible. They don't let us have GED.
> Interviewer: What other kind of classes do you think the jail could have to benefit women?
> Interviewer: What do you think, what kind of programs, or what do you think could be done while you're in jail, for the process of . . . that could help when you get out?
> Jenna: I think that NA classes are good. I think they need a program for women that deals with both drugs and physical abuse while they've been out on the streets. Let them know what all kind of jobs they could have available to them when they get out. Let's see . . . let them know, it needs to be a caring situation where they feel welcome. Then they would quit having low self-esteem and they could get out and do something for theyself. They could get out and take care of the kids and not want to go back to drugs. That's it.
>
> Interviewer: What kind of classes do you think would be helpful if they were offered to you outside of jail?

Vicki: I would do anything that was offered to me cause I'm going to need the extra help. I need the extra help when I get out.

Marley: I mean, I don't even know if they [jail] have support groups. . . I mean cause I haven't heard of any.
Interviewer: You think a support group would be helpful?
Marley: I do. Like I said, like me, they know they've screwed up and can't get out of here and want to be out there with their kids but has screwed up and can't get out there to their kids right now. They would like to better themselves. I mean, that's about . . . I mean, they've got the drug classes and the alcohol classes, I think. I think they are pretty much the same, and we've got anger management classes and the celebrate recovery classes, and you've got the Bible study class, but they don't have nothing like a support group.
Interviewer: [Support Groups] that focus on?
Marley: That focus on women that have children that have been on drugs and alcohol or have been in abusive relationships.
Interviewer: More like a therapeutic group.
Marley: Women that have kids involved. We want the help, but we don't know how to ask. . . There's no help for people like us other there or in here. Some of those people out there make you feel so low and so dirty that you don't want to ask for help.

The other component to the discussion of programs/classes at the jail was specifically focused on the connection of the programs to the community. These quotes focused on the idea of a community re-integration program. The women were discussing their ideas about what should be included in such a program, and how they thought it would assist them in re-entering the community. The women specifically discussed the creation of a community re-integration program that would continue the support

they received from some of the jail programs when they re-enter

society.

     Interviewer: What would you like to include in this type of
     program?
     Vicki: Like education, jobs . . . to help people get jobs
     who are felons . . . maybe like classes that would help
     physical, mental, and sexual abuse. Something like that.
     You know, like re-integration programs, when you're being
     released. Like a reentry program for women.

     Interviewer: What do you think the jail could do better to
     help people when they are going to get out?
     Iris: Classes
     Interviewer: What kind of classes?
     Iris: I don't know . . . at the prison, they've got a
     reentry program where people actually come and talk to you
     and if you need help, people you can actually contact when
     you get out . . . if you're having problems or whatever.
     Interviewer: A support system . . .
     Iris: Yeah

     Interviewer: So, it sounds like you think that coming out
     of prison has a more positive effect going back into the
     free world than when you come out of jail.
     Vicki: Yeah, cause you already have a start on something.
     They have people who actually come and teach the classes
     and give you degrees. You know, you can easily pick it up
     when you get out. They have work release here [jail] but
     mainly for the men. In prison, they help you get a job, and
     do this and this and this. In jail, they don't help you do
     nothing. They just let you out and say, 'that's it'. They
     just look at you like a pay check. In prison, they try to
     help you change and to better yourself.

     Lorna: I mean, you go from being involved in anger
     management and drug programs, celebrate recovery, or
     whatever, and you get out of here, and those things are not
     as accessible to you as they were.

Treatment By Staff

The emergent theme of treatment by staff is relevant for
two reasons to the question of the improvements that the women
think the jail could make to assist in community re-integration.
Some of these quotes covertly relate to the issues the women
discussed in the events that preceded incarceration section. At
times, some of the abuse the women previously experienced at the
hands of others (e.g. family members, boyfriends) was being
replicated, while incarcerated, by correctional officers.

> Interviewer: What about treatment from staff?
> Ally: Good points and bad points. We got Bibles in a class
> . . . a certain guard took them away. It made me want . . .
> taking that away from me . . . It just made me want . . .
> it was a bounded leather Bible. . . It made me very angry
> and wanting some numbing stuff. Some of them are good
> though. Some are nice. Some of them are asses. You just
> want to slap the shit out of them.

> Amanda: They [staff] talk to you any kind of way. I mean,
> they call the women who are in here, 'crackheads', . . .
> they know what they have done. You don't have to come up in
> here calling them crackheads or bitches, or tell them 'you
> ain't shit'.

> Marley: The guards treat you like shit sometimes. I mean, a
> girl was going into a seizure and you have to bang on the
> door and it takes them forever to get down here. And
> fighting . . . one girl got the crap beat out of her . . .
> slung her up against metal doors and beds and everything
> and it took forever for somebody to get down there. It's
> just like they sit down there and they could care less.

While the preceding quotes demonstrate an indirect
relationship between treatment by jail staff and the potential
effects they could have when they re-integrate back into the

community, the following quotes demonstrate a more direct link between treatment by jail staff and the upcoming community re-integration of these women.

> Interviewer: Do you think it [the treatment you receive from staff] affects the way you deal with people on the outside?
> Vicki: Strangers, yes. I don't care too much for strangers. I could pretty much care less. . . You know, the people in here, you try to help them, and they still try and run over you.
> Interviewer: So, it sounds like you think the way you deal with staff effects how you deal with other people.
> Vicki: I don't trust too many people.

> Jenna: The more you try to please them, the worse they get. To me, in here, what makes it so hard is that you've got to kiss up to the officers and kiss up on their behind. The more you kiss up on their behind, the worse it gets. No matter what you try to do to get along with them . . . now, I'm saying some of them, the worse it gets. They make it where . . . now, I don't know about nobody else but me, today, but they make it where you don't ever want to come back here. So, you know, they are doing a really, good, good job because I don't want to come back here.
> All three of these quotes demonstrate a link between

current treatment by jail staff, and the potential effects it will have on the women once they re-integrate into the community. The final quote was included because this particular woman, deliberately or not, made a beneficial connection between the poor treatment of the inmates by staff and their impending community re-integration. This topic will be discussed in further detail in the final chapter.

Bracketing

Prior to data analysis, I had formed some very concrete ideas about the impact of the jail experience related to women's re-integration into the community. Over the better part of five years, I have spent time with women like these who are/have been incarcerated at this jail. During this time, I have heard these women complain about the treatment they receive from jail staff, and about the lack of rehabilitative opportunities. However, I have also listened to these women discuss the positive effects of some of the programs/classes, and the overwhelmingly positive presence of religion in the lives of these women. Therefore, it was not surprising to hear the women in the study discuss treatment from jail staff, and the programs/classes the way in which they did. Overall, the themes and quotes included in this section did, in fact, turn out the way I thought they might. The final section of this chapter, however, did not necessarily unfold in accordance with my pre-conceived notions.

Research Question Five

V. What are the lived experiences of women who are currently incarcerated in jail with community re-integration?

The analysis of the previous four research questions illustrated the lived experience of incarcerated women and the process of community re-integration. In the analysis of these questions, the women discussed how prior experiences, jail

experiences, and previous experiences with community re-integration affected their thoughts and feelings about their impending attempts at community re-integration. The themes of family relationships, romantic relationships, traumas, classes/programs, treatment by jail staff, anxiety, motherhood as motivation, and change all emerged as affecting the women in terms of community re-integration. The women all told the stories of their lives as they related to life experiences that they believed had made them more prone to engaging in criminal activity, and, in turn, more prone to unsuccessful attempts at community re-integration. The presence of many negative influences in their lives proved dominant in these discussions. However, most of the women who were interviewed also discussed at least a few positive aspects of their lives that could assist them when they were released. Throughout this analysis, one emergent theme revealed itself in each of the discussed research questions - support. Support emerged as the centralizing theme of this analysis of the phenomenon of community re-integration for currently incarcerated women who were six months or less from their next attempt at community re-integration.

During each of the interviews that were conducted, the women discussed their families, their relationships, and their life experiences in terms of the effects they have had on their own choices, decisions, and behaviors. During the analysis, all

of these issues had one theme in common, support. The following

sections will discuss support in terms of each of the

aforementioned research questions.

The process of presenting the analysis of the centralizing

theme of support proved somewhat difficult. Initially, I

presented the theme of support under each of the research

questions, and provided a summary at the end of the chapter.

However, that particular presentation format did not allow for

the greatest understanding of the theme. Therefore, I

eliminated the theme from each of the previous sections, and

placed all of the data pertaining to support in this section.

Discussing the centralizing theme of support in one section

rather than throughout the chapter allowed for a more

straightforward discussion of the topic, and, in turn, a greater

impact for the reader.

Prior Life Experiences

The emergence of the themes of family relationships and

traumatic events from the data led me to analyze the data for

the theme of support. The lack of familial support for the

women when they were children shines through when they discuss

their encounters with physical and sexual abuse, and other

traumatic events. While listening to the women discuss the

abuse and traumatic events, it occurred to me that a missing

element was the presence of another adult (parent or otherwise)

who attempted to assist them, or provide any level of support.
As the description of the analysis progressed, it became evident
to me that a lack of support was a theme that ran consistently
throughout all of the responses. Quotes, such as the following,
illustrate that these women turned to abusing drugs to cope with
traumatic events.

> Interviewer: That's the timeline I'm trying to put
> together, so when you started to use drugs was . . .
> Jenna: When my mother died
> Vicki: I went to drugs real, real bad because it was after
> my dad shot himself. I got high on anything I could get my
> hands on.

In addition, the following quote, highlights the lack of an
adult to protect, support, and/or believe these women during
childhood when they were encountering abusive situations.

> Kathleen: I was . . . it started [sexual abuse] when I was
> fifteen. My mom and dad, their friend, an old ass man. He
> did the same thing to my mom. When I told her he did it to
> me and she didn't believe me. There's been several after
> that. Interviewer: Did his [father] friends mess with you
> too?
> Kathleen: He has had friends mess with me.
> Finally, some of these women discussed that there was once

a supportive person in their families who, unfortunately died.
A discussion of the theme of support as it relates to prior
experiences and community re-integration would not be complete
without including such quotes.

> Jenna: She [mother] was never judgmental. She was never
> happy about what I was doing, but she was never judgmental.
> She was always there for me no matter what I done. Never
> disowned me never kicked me out of the house, nothing.
> Interviewer: Sounds like you could count on her. Do you

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feel like she was the only person you could count on?
Jenna: I know she was.
Interviewer: Sounds like you find it difficult to depend on
other people.
Jenna: Yes, you don't find too many people you can depend
on.
Interviewer: Tell me what role your dad played [in your
life].   Rachel: He was a disciplinarian.
He disciplined us. [But], he's always been there for me. No
matter how many times I got whooped, no matter how many
times I got in trouble.
Ally: When I was drinking, drugging, whatever I do, I
didn't have to worry about the kids, nothing, because I
knew they were well taken care of, clothes, fed,
everything. Where if she had said, 'stop, I'm tired of
raising these kids, I've raised you and now it's time for
you to raise your kids' and stuff, you know that would've
helped me.

The theme of support is illustrated by the above quotes,

but is also highlighted in every quote used in the discussions

of family relationships and traumatic events. The lack of

support that existed in the women's lives prior to incarceration

is evident. Only two of the women discussed any level of

support in their households – and both of those discussed

supportive family members in terms of the support that they

remember when that individual was still alive. The lack of

support or presence and then withdrawal of support is important

to prior attempts at re-integration because it makes evident

that the women had experienced little or no support in their

lives, and, as such, would not expect or, perhaps, know how to

accept assistance during such a potentially stressful period of

time. Further discussion of this individual theme and how it

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fits into the phenomenon of community re-integration will follow in Chapter Five.

Previous Incarcerations

The theme of support once again emerged from the data. When examining their previous incarcerations and thoughts about community re-integration, the women once again focused on the time of release. They discussed those people who provided living space for them after their release. Further, they discussed those who provided them with food, clothing, and other basic needs. The following quotes provide an explanation of the support they received, and from whom they received it.

> Interviewer: You had to move back in with your grandmother?
> Marley: Yes
> Interviewer: So, you didn't have a lot of problems with housing. Marley: No
> Interviewer: How about food and clothing?
> Marley: It was easy for me because I had food stamps. I had food stamps.
> Rachel: I didn't work.
> Interviewer: You didn't work?
> Rachel: She [mother] didn't want me to work. She wanted me to stay home with her.
> Interviewer: [Your mother] provided for you?
> Rachel: She provided for me and my son. All I had to do was clean the house.
> Vicki: It took me about a month to get a job and get started living in the outside world because my boyfriend's mother and my stepdaddy, they didn't do anything.
> Amanda: I didn't work [last time I was released}.
> Interviewer: How did you support yourself?
> Amanda: My boyfriend and my momma and them
> Interviewer: So you lived with your boyfriend and your mom.
> Amanda: Yes
> Interviewer: Did they provide you with food and clothing?
> Amanda: Yes

On two different occasions very little or no support was indicated by the women who were interviewed.

> Interviewer: Was there anyone that you considered to a part of your support system [last time you were released from jail]?
> Iris: My dad, that's it.
> Interviewer: Who would you say you considered a part of your support system [at the time?]
> Ally: Um, no one.
> Interviewer: When you were getting out last time, you would say that you didn't have any support system?
> Kathleen: I didn't really talk to my family.

Overall, when discussing previous incarcerations and release from jail, in terms of community re-integration, the women discussed the idea of support. Many of the women described having a place to stay, clothes to wear, and food to eat; however, some of the quotes presented above describe a situation where the women were not expected to do anything. They were given no responsibility and no expectations. Two of the women expressed an almost complete lack of support. Perhaps, the support that the majority of these women experienced was not so much non-existent or ineffective as it was incomplete. Further discussion of this topic will be explored in the final chapter.

Current Incarceration

Support emerged as a theme when the women were discussing their thoughts and feelings about their impending release from jail. As in the previous section, the theme of support overflows

into the other three themes of anxiety, motherhood as motivation, and change. The quotes that are used to illustrate this theme focus on the identity of those they believe will offer them help or support upon their release. The support of someone else or some kind of resource can help to alleviate some of the issues these about which these women expressed anxiety. Further, the women have already discussed the fact that they are receiving some level of support from a family member who is assisting them with their children while they are incarcerated. Finally, the presentation of the theme of change demonstrated that any assistance with basic needs, childcare, and a general feeling of support could assist these women in the arduous task they will have upon their release. These quotes illustrate the types and level of support these women perceive will exist upon release.

The majority of the interviewed women expressed at least expectation of human support upon release; however, there were women who expressed none. The quotes dealing with lack of support will be presented first, followed by the quotes of those women who expect at least some level of familial/friend support waiting for them upon release.

> Lorna: The meetings [Narcotics and Alcoholics anonymous] are the only thing I can think of that will be able to help me when I get out of here.
> Felecia: I've got a friend of mine who don't do drugs and don't drink. He is the one who is trying to help me get out

early and all that. I figure he'll be there to help me, and if not, I'll do it on my own.

Interviewer: . . . Where are you going to live?

Rachel: With my mother. She's got my son, and that's where I'll be.

Lorna: Um, I have my boyfriend and that's important . . . I have my family, and that's important. Yeah, [my boyfriend] is looking for us a house right now. He said he would have one for us when I get out. [My mother] told me that she would re-hire me [when I get out]. She put me in the computer [at the temporary agency], and when I get out, she'll put me back on the schedule.

Amanda: I can stay at home for four months on house arrest and get myself clean. My daddy will run off anyone who tries to come to the house. He knows who does drugs, and he knows my friends who used drugs, and he won't let them come around me.

The theme of support overlapped with all other previously discussed themes in this section (anxiety, motherhood as motivation, and change). Support or the lack thereof had everything to do with their level of anxiety, their children being cared for during their incarceration, and their ability to change after release. Their anticipation of support, or the lack thereof, was integral in their discussions of their upcoming community re-integration. Further discussion of this topic will be presented in Chapter Five.

Changes in Jails

The theme of support emerged in the analysis of each the preceding three research questions. In the analysis of the women's thoughts and feelings about the effects of the jail experience on their impending community re-integration and how

that experience could be changed in the future to further

benefit women inmates, support emerged as a theme was underlying

in both of the aforementioned themes of programs/classes and

treatment by staff. The following analysis will illustrate the

presence of the theme of support within the other two themes.

Some of these quotes will repeat from the other sections in an

effort to demonstrate the presence of the theme of support

throughout the analysis of this research question.

In the analysis of the theme of programs/classes, the women

discussed the programs they attended at the jail in several

different aspects. First, they discussed programs/classes in

terms of how the jail did not support them, by illustrating what

rehabilitative opportunities were not offered.

> Interviewer: What other kind of classes do you think the
> jail could have to benefit women?
> Rachel: GED for women because there are a lot of women who
> don't have their diploma or a GED.

> Interviewer: What did you want to be involved in?
> Rachel: Narcotics Anonymous, Anger Management, I think I
> have an anger problem. I want to do something with
> celebrate recovery. I wanted to get into breaking free;
> it's a class about the Bible. They don't let us have GED.

Next, they discussed programs/classes in terms of what

other kinds of support the jail could offer.

> Felecia: I think they need a program for women that deals
> with both drugs and physical abuse while they've been out
> on the streets.
> Lorna: I mean, I don't even know if they [jail] have
> support groups. . . I mean cause I haven't heard of any.

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Interviewer: You think a support group would be helpful?
Lorna: I do. Like I said, like me, they know they've
screwed up and can't get out of here and want to be out
there with their kids but has screwed up and can't get out
there to their kids right now. They would like to better
themselves. I mean, that's about. . .

Finally, the women discussed programs/classes in terms of

the specific support they believed were necessary to assist them

with community re-integration

Interviewer: What other kind of classes do you think the
jail could have to benefit women?
Jenna: Like a reentry program for women.
Interviewer: What would you like to include in this type of
program?
Jenna: Like education, jobs . . . to help people get jobs
who are felons . . . maybe like classes that would help
physical, mental, and sexual abuse. Something like that.

Ally: Classes
Interviewer: What kind of classes?
Ally: I don't know . . . at the prison, they've got a
reentry program where people actually come and talk to you
and if you need help, people you can actually contact when
you get out . . . if you're having problems or whatever.
Interviewer: A support system . . .
Ally: Yeah

Interviewer: What kind of classes do you think would be
helpful if they were offered to you outside of jail?
Marley: Yes, I would do anything that was offered to me
cause I'm going to need the extra help. I need the extra
help when I get out.

When the women discussed the treatment they received from

staff, the majority of the interviews became focused on the lack

of support they had been receiving. Unlike the discussion of

programs/classes, the lack of support in this section was

indicated in the form of verbal abuse.

> Jenna: You know, the people in here, you try to help them,
> and they still try and run over you. The guards treat you
> like shit sometimes. I mean, a girl was going into a
> seizure and you have to bang on the door and it takes them
> forever to get down here. And fighting . . . one girl got
> the crap beat out of her . . . slung her up against metal
> doors and beds and everything and it took forever for
> somebody to get down there. It's just like they sit down
> there and they could care less.
> Iris: Some of them are asses. You just want to slap the
> shit out of them.

The lack of support from jail staff demonstrated in the

above quotes does not directly relate to their impending

community re-integration. However, it does demonstrate that

they experienced similar types of abuse and neglect while

incarcerated that they did prior to incarceration. Therefore,

no level of rehabilitation or shift in their view of human

beings was experienced while incarcerated. The end result of

the women's interactions with jail staff was that they were no

better prepared for their impending community re-integration,

perhaps worse off, because of it.

Bracketing

Prior to data analysis, I had formed some very concrete

preconceived notions about the impact of the jail experience

related to women's re-integration into the community. I have

spent the better part of five years spending time with women

like these who are/have been incarcerated at this jail. During

this time, I have heard these women complain about the treatment they receive from jail staff, and about the lack of rehabilitative opportunities offered. However, I have also listened to these women discuss the positive effects of some of the programs/classes, and the overwhelmingly presence of religion in the lives of these women. Therefore, it was not surprising to hear the women in the study discuss treatment from jail staff, and programs/classes the way in which they did. Overall, the themes and quotes included in this section did, in fact, turn out the way I thought they might.

The majority of the women have, in many different ways, lived their lives without much support. The discussions surrounding prior life experiences that affected their attempts at community re-integration revolved around the lack of support they received from family members. This lack of support was illustrated by the amount of abuse and the number of traumatic events on which they elaborated.

Further, this lack of support has continued during their incarcerations. Poor treatment from staff and a small number of rehabilitative programs/classes are examples of the continued need for support that these women were not receiving.

When discussing their time in jail, the women were very outspoken about the type of support they believe would help them and others during incarceration. Specifically, they discussed

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their ideas for a community re-integration program that could assist them both while they were in jail, and after release.

The lack of support that these women experienced during prior attempts at community re-integration was highlighted during analysis. In terms of lack of support, the women reported that they had little or none. Their memories of these time periods were filled with discussions of having few or no places to turn for assistance. At times, they tried to change their own behaviors, but, in part, due to lack of support, they ended up returning to their former methods, criminally based, of supporting themselves.

Further, despite this colossal lack of support, when the women discuss their upcoming release and community re-integration, they were still filled with hope and a desire to change. Their beliefs that change and successful re-integration would be possible seemed based largely on the anticipation that the support they had not previously received would be available this time around.

Finally, despite the number of unsuccessful attempts at community re-integration that the women already encountered, the belief that some of them report that they have in themselves - the support they anticipate they will be able to provide for themselves - is quite substantial.

The theme of support was the centralizing link among all of

the research questions and emergent themes. Throughout life
experiences that the women were sharing, including prior life
experiences, former incarcerations, current incarceration, and
anticipation of community re-integration, the common bond that
linked them all was support. A lack of support was consistent
in all of the women's stories, but a continued desire and hope
for future support was also highlighted. Further elaboration of
the centralizing theme of support will be featured in the final
chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The current study explored the lived experiences of women who were incarcerated at the time of the study and facing imminent community re -integration. Specifically, I interviewed ten women who were at that time incarcerated in jail and were six months or less from release. The women were previously incarcerated on at least one prior occasion. During the interviews they discussed life events that occurred prior to their first incarceration, experiences during incarcerations, and their thoughts and feelings about the process of community reintegration. During the interviews, a number of themes emerged: 1) Family relationships, 2) Traumatic events, 3) Programs/Classes, 4) Treatment by jail staff, 5)Motherhood as motivation, 6) Change, and 7) Support. In Chapter Four, these themes were discussed relative to the research questions addressed in this study. In chapter five, these themes will be related to the categories of: 1) Pre-incarceration experiences, 2) Incarceration experiences, and 3) Post-incarceration

experiences. During the process of analysis, the theme of

support emerged as the centralizing theme that links these

women's experiences of community re-integration. Therefore, the final piece of the synthesis of the analysis will include a section relating to how all of these themes work together to tell the entire story of how these women have experienced and anticipate experiencing community re-integration.

After synthesizing the analysis, I will discuss the limitations of the current study, how these results could fuel future research, implications of this study for social work practice, policy, and theoretical connections. These sections will complete the synthesis and conclusions for this study.

Pre-Incarceration Experiences

During data analysis, three themes emerged as relevant to the pre-incarceration experiences of these incarcerated women: 1) Family relationships, 2) Traumatic Events, and 3) Support. In this section, the first two themes will be discussed in terms of pre-incarceration experiences and their effects on community re-integration. As previously stated, the discussion of the theme of support will be saved for the final section of synthesis as a means for connecting all of the emergent themes.

Family relationships arose as a dominant theme in the discussion of pre-incarceration experiences. These relationships, most often portrayed in a negative light, always involved their parents and some sort of physical and/or sexual abuse.

A review of the literature in this area demonstrates that it is well documented that women who were involved in criminal activity and subsequently incarcerated have experienced some sort of an abusive history (Duncan, et al., 1996; Marcenko, et al., 2000; Mesman & Long, 2002; Osgood & Manetta, 2002). Specifically, the abusive relationships the women experienced with their families acted as the emotional foundation upon which their lives were built. The majority of the women I interviewed did not report ever experiencing any therapeutic intervention to help them deal with the traumatic effects of this abuse.

In addition to family relationships, the theme of traumatic events emerged during the interviews. Traumatic events overlapped with the abuse described during the discussion of family relationships. However, this theme emerged separately due to the existence of other types of trauma that was reported as having been experienced outside of the realm of their nuclear family. The traumas that were discussed included a number of different experiences including: divorce of parents, finding a parent dead, friends of the family inflicting sexual abuse, and witnessing abuse of others.

The women often discussed these traumatic events in terms of the proximity to their drug use. They consistently made the connection that their drug use either began or increased after a traumatic event. Further, they often relayed their drug usage

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as a means to numb the emotions they experienced as a result of the traumatic event. This result is consistent with previous literature that links the presence of abuse to substance abuse, and, in turn, these two factors being linked to criminal activity (Brems, Johnson, Neal & Freeman 2004; Hagan & Coleman, 2001; McClellan, Farabee, & Crouch, 1997). Many times, the onset or recurrence of drug use was directly related to the experience of a traumatic event. The topic of substance abuse did not, however, emerge as a dominant theme.

I believe that substance abuse did not emerge as a dominant theme because it was never discussed by these women as an underlying problem related to community re-integration. Substance abuse was definitely discussed as an issue, and at times, a barrier to community re-integration. However, in the realm of pre-incarceration experiences, it was discussed as a coping mechanism or a symptom of some larger life issue. Thus for them, acts of substance abuse were dependent on the existence of some other problem they were experiencing.

The literature on incarcerated women does not directly refer to traumatic events, but, as stated earlier, does relate incarceration to abusive histories (Duncan, et al., 1996; Marcenko, et al., 2000; Mesman & Long, 2002; Osgood & Manetta, 2002). In the literature on abusive histories, the discussion of substance abuse as a result of abusive histories is prevalent

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(Brems, Johnson, Neal & Freeman 2004). I could not find any mention in the literature about the existence of substance abuse among incarcerated women that was not directly related to some other major life issue. The lack of previously existing literature supports the previously stated idea that it's existence in these women's lives is not independent, but directly related to the existence of some other life issue.

Overall, the analysis of these discussions pertaining to pre-incarceration experiences establishes the early victimization this group of women experienced. Their life stories illustrate that, from early ages, they have been victims of abusive family relationships and other traumatic events. Establishing the victimization that the women experienced because of these types of pre-incarceration events will set the stage in the following sections for the re-victimization that will exist during incarceration, as well as, during their efforts at community re-integration.

Incarceration Experiences

The discussion of incarceration experiences focused on two different areas. The women talked about programs and classes, as well as their treatment by jail staff. staff. The parts of the interviews that focused on programs and classes was discussed from both positive and negative aspects. The women who were involved with classes believed that the experience was

helpful. Specifically, they discussed that the substance abuse classes (e.g. Narcotics Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery) and anger management were helpful. The frustration they expressed was focused on a desire for more classes. They particularly would like classes with more of a therapeutic focus. These parts of the interviews related directly back to the discussions on family relationships and traumatic events. The women recognized the effects that their pre-incarceration experiences had on their lives, and the potential effects they could have on their ability to successfully re-integrate into the community.

When discussing treatment they received from jail staff, the women most often related their experiences as being negative and, sometimes, abusive. At no point during the interviews, did any of the women use the word abusive to illustrate their experiences with jail staff; I am describing them as such based on my interpretation of the words they used. The jail staff was described as being insensitive with an overall attitude of not caring. Several women described incidents where women were in physical danger and respondents described jail staff responding in a way which seemed to indicate a lack of humanity.

The discussion of incarceration experiences in the literature review was framed using Erving Goffman's theory of institutionalization (Goffman, 1962). Goffman's theory

described the process a resident or an inmate expeiences while living in an institutional setting (Farrington, 1992; Goffman, 1961; Weinstein, 1994). This process results in an individual being more comfortable existing in the institutional setting than in the community (Farrington, 1992; Goffman, 1961; Weinstein, 1994). The connection between that theory and the interviews that I conducted with the women lies in the idea of re-victimization. Earlier, it was established that these women were victims in their pre-institutional lives. Their interactions with staff, at times, were described as emotionally abusive; moreover, the lack of attention paid to physical harm in the jail setting could be viewed as physically abusive through omission of appropriate protection.

The literature on re-victimization elaborates on the phenomenon of those who were victims of abuse as children becoming re-victimized through abusive adult relationships (Noll, 2005; Roodman & Clum, 2001; Vermilyea, 1995). Vermilyea (1995) explains that when children experience consistent abuse, they learn to disassociate. This disassociation is accomplished by constricting their awareness of danger and access to emotions. Once this pattern is established, it becomes more difficult for the individual to recognize the danger signs of abuse, thus increasing the likelihood of re-victimization. As such, women who are the victims of childhood physical and sexual

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abuse have been shown to be more likely to be the victims of both rape and abusive relationships in adulthood (American Psychological Association, 2001). This pattern of re-victimization is often present in the lives of incarcerated women (Bill, 1998; Marcus-Mendoza, Sargent, & Yu, 2003).

The re-victimization these women report experiencing while incarcerated only reinforces the victimizing they experienced prior to their first incarceration experiences (Bill, 1998). In addition, this re-enforcement of victimization, or re-victimization, has previously and could in the future make it even more difficult for the women to successfully re-integrate into the community (Bill, 1998).

The experience of being incarcerated, as described by these women, can be viewed as a bit of a tug of war. They are experiencing some level of rehabilitation through the existing programs/classes. However, at the same time, they are experiencing a certain level of re-victimization at the hands of the jail staff. The question becomes: Is the level of re-victimization they receive less than, equal to, or greater than, the amount of rehabilitative efforts offered? This topic will be discussed further in the sections addressing future research efforts and implications for social work practice.

Post-Incarceration Experiences

When discussing post-incarceration experiences, three

themes emerged as dominant: 1) Anxiety, 2) Motherhood as Movitavtion, and 3) Change. The discussion on post-incarceration experiences was actually framed in terms of questions pertaining to how the women viewed community re-integration during their past incarcerations and during current incarcerations. Interestingly, in prior incarcerations, they discussed their feelings on community re-integration in terms of anxiety. During their current incarceration, they also expressed a level of anxiety in terms of how they were going to deal with everyday life; however, when anticipating their upcoming attempt at community re-integration, their attitudes were surprisingly positive.

The discussions about their impending release from jail were framed in terms of feelings of anxiety. These women discussed anxiety in terms of where they were going to live, and how they were going to contend with the issues of everyday life without resorting to their former way of life. They were worried about former relationships and the looming concern about substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

Despite the anxiety the women were feeling, they were surprisingly optimistic in terms of their anticipated ability to change and successfully re-integrate into the community. Specifically, they discussed the idea of returning to their roles as mothers as motivation for change, and, in turn, a

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successful return to the community. A part of their discussions

about motherhood was an expression of anxiety. All of the women

had children who were being cared for by relatives or are in

some other type of foster care. When the women discussed

returning to their roles as mothers, they expressed anxiety due

to their past experiences with that particular role. However,

they also expressed a great desire to change so that they could

be strong mothers for their children. A great deal of these

women's desire to successfully re-integrate was grounded in the

desire to be good mothers.

A final theme that emerged from the post-incarceration

discussion was change. The women expressed the knowledge that

they would have to make different life decisions in order to

change. In these discussions, change was directly related to

re-integrating into the community. Despite their understanding

that change was necessary for success, none of the women were

able to articulate specific changes or a specific plan of action

that would help them reach their goal of staying out of jail.

They expressed some specific actions that would be positive,

such as: staying away from certain people, remaining drug free,

and taking care of their children. However, none of them were

able to articulate a specific mechanism through which they would

accomplish their goal. I believe their inability to articulate

this mechanism for change is based in the fact that none of them

have life experience that would fuel this knowledge.

Specifically, none of the women has ever successfully re-integrated from jail into the community. Each time they have been released they have returned to jail. They have never been exposed to any effective type of rehabilitative effort that would assist them in developing a concrete plan to guide them. The discussion of support, and how it could assist these women in their quest for change, will be addressed in the next section.

Overall, the discussion of post-incarceration experiences centered around a mixture of anxiety about the unknown combined with an expressed desire to change. Most of these women had very generalized plans for change. A component of most of these plans centered on re-entering the community in the role of mother. These mothers were concerned about changing for themselves, but more importantly for their children. They expressed a desire to be good mothers for their children so their children did not make the same mistakes that they had. Once again, however, none of these plans for change, in terms of motherhood, was accompanied by a specific plan. A further discussion of support and its role in these efforts to change will be discussed in the following section.

Support: The centralizing theme

During the analysis of the data as it related to each of the research questions, one theme emerged throughout - support. Even though this theme emerged in each of the sections, I chose to discuss it separately because, in my analysis, it emerged as the centralizing theme. In phenomenological studies, one centralizing theme often emerges that ties together all of the other emergent themes, thus connecting the lived experiences of each of the interviewed individuals and, in turn, establishing the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Siewert, 2003). In this study, the theme of support is the centralizing theme that connects the experiences of these ten women, and assists in defining their lived experiences of the phenomenon of community re-integration.

At times during the analysis, the theme of support was expressed in terms of lack of support; however, in terms of community re-integration, the need for support was dominant. Regardless of the discussion, whether it involved pre-incarceration, incarceration, or post-incarceration experiences, the connection to community re-integration called for a level of support that they perhaps had not previously experienced. Therefore, it seemed pertinent to define this theme in terms of the support that they need to succeed rather than the support they have not previously experienced.

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A lack of support was expressed in terms of pre-incarceration experiences due to the level of abuse (e.g. emotional, physical, and sexual) and traumatic events that were experienced. The connection of these events to community re-integration was perceived in the expressed desire for therapeutic and/or support groups to assist them in dealing with prior life trauma. The women expressed a belief that this type of assistance while incarcerated could assist them during community re-integration. In addition, they expressed a desire for supportive services to be continued after release. Several of the women believed that a continuation of this type of support after release could assist them in their attempt to change, and avoid resorting to their previous dysfunctional means of managing their lives.

The theme of support was pervasive throughout all of the interviews. During analysis, it became evident that support was the centralizing theme that pulled together the phenomenon of community re-integration. Lack of support was evident in the discussions of pre-incarceration experiences (e.g. abuse and traumatic events). During incarceration, both support and lack of support was featured in the interviews. The existence of support was highlighted in the existent programs/classes; however, lack of support was expressed in terms of the non-existent classes and the treatment they received by jail staff.

When discussing their attempts at community re-integration, support was expressed in terms of what they would need to achieve success. They desired a continuation of some of the classes/programs to support them in their journey through community re-integration. Further, they discussed specific plans that they had for their imminent release. All of these plans would require a level of support from their families, the community and from within themselves. Further discussion of how social work practitioners can assist will be discussed in the section addressing implications for social work practice.

Limitations

The current study used qualitative methods and a phenomenological mode of inquiry to explore the process of community re-integration for incarcerated women. The use of this type of methodology relies on the use of a small sample in terms of the number of individuals interviewed due to the large amount of data it yields (Creswell, 1998; Dukes, 1984; Riemen, 1986). This small sample size necessarily limits the scope of the study. Qualitative methodology does not claim any ability to generalize results; utilizing such a small sample size limits the scope of the results to only those women I interviewed (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002; Heron & Reason, 1997). The results of this study and the discussion that followed only apply to the ten women I interviewed in this

study. The results are not generalizable to any of the other women incarcerated in that county jail, nor any other incarcerated females.

Another limitation to this study was the choice of this particular county jail as the setting. I have worked with the inmates in this county jail consistently over the past five years. I am familiar with the inmates, jail staff, and jail administration. This familiarity allowed me easier access to this population of women; however, it is possible that the inmates' knowledge of me and my function as a social worker affected their desire to participate in the study. In addition, this knowledge could have affected the answers the women provided to the interview questions. Participants who knew that I had conducted anger management classes could have responded to the interview questions in a particular manner because they thought I was in search of a particular response. Moreover, participants who knew of my familiarity with the jail could have thought, despite being informed otherwise, that their participation in this study could provide them favor with the court. My familiarity with the setting and some of the inmates in the study directly affected my preconceived notions of the answers to the research questions. In turn, these preconceived notions were addressed in the bracketing sections throughout Chapter Four.

A final limitation that needs to be discussed in terms of this study involves race and sex. Literature on qualitative inquires explores the effects of sex and race on the interviewing process (Schuman & Converse, 1971; Hatchett & Schuman, 1976; Anderson, Silver, & Abramson, 1988; Finkel, Guterbok, & Borg, 1991). A primary question is whether or not the race and sex of the interviewer should match that of the interviewee. It is entirely possible that a female interviewer could have elicited different responses than I did as a male. In addition, in those instances when I, as a Caucasian, interviewed an African-American woman, her responses could have differed based on cultural differences. Further, I may have been less effective as an interviewer due to these cultural differences.

Implications for Social Work Practice

The data analysis for this study revealed the possibility for a number of implications for social work practice. The most important of these implications is the potential for improvement of rehabilitative efforts for incarcerated women. The literature reveals a lack of rehabilitative services for women incarcerated in jails and prisons (Farkas & Rand, 1999). The current study revealed that the programs/classes that existed seemed appreciated, but their quantity was minimal. The women in this study expressed a need for classes/programs that

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addressed their therapeutic needs. Further, they expressed a
desire for assistance with the process of community re-
integration, both while incarcerated and after release. As
social workers, we have a responsibility to our clients to
provide them with the most effective interventions and
assistance. The use of studies such as this one could provide
practitioners with information that could craft interventions to
assist their clients who are incarcerated. These evidence based
interventions can also be utilized by social workers in the
community (e.g. social workers involved with substance abuse
treatment, community mental health, and life skills).

A more specific implication for social work practice is one
that was mentioned in the previous section on future research.
Social workers working with incarcerated clients could utilize
the results from studies like this one to develop discharge
plans. The model for community re-integration developed by
Rosenthal and Wolf (1994) is based in the idea of planning for
community re-integration from the day of arrest. Social work
practitioners can be a vital part of this process by developing
individualized discharge plans for inmates from the very
beginning of their incarcerations. Discharge planning and
treatment plans are common practices by social workers in the
health care and gerontological fields. Similar plans utilized
with jail inmates would make the best and most efficient use of

their incarcerated periods.

Increasing the rehabilitative efforts provided to incarcerated women, along with the implementation of discharge plans could increase the likelihood of a smooth transition back into the community and decrease the likelihood of recidivist behavior.

Policy Implications

In the process of data analysis, it became evident that the women's responses related to the policies at the jail, or more to the point, the lack of certain policies. Specifically, the women talked about the lack of access to programming and the treatment they received from staff. They are not made aware of the specific policies, but their experiences in the jail reflect the need for potential changes in policy to occur.

When the participants in this study discussed the programming at the county jail, they expressed a need for greater access to programs and a wider variety of these programs. The women discussed that they signed up for programs, but were rarely allowed access. When reviewing jail policy with a supervising correctional officer, I discovered that every inmate is provided with a sign-up sheet for all existing programs and classes. They are not made aware of the waiting lists for these programs, nor are they made aware of the possibility of actually participating in these programs. They

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are simply given the opportunity to put their names on a waiting list. Much of the frustration that is associated with lack of access to programs seems to be wrapped up in the lack of information provided to inmates about the likelihood of actually accessing these programs during their incarceration. From discussing these issues with my participants and the supervising correctional officer at the jail, it seems likely that the frustrations of incarcerated women could be alleviated if newly incarcerated women were informed of the likelihood of participation in programs or classes while they are incarcerated. Informing newly incarcerated women about the waiting lists for programs in conjunction with the amount of time they are going to be incarcerated could provide a realistic picture of the likelihood of their ability to participate in the classes for which they are signing up.

Staff training was another policy implication that was demonstrated by the data analysis in this study. The participants in this study expressed that, for the most part, staff were verbally abusive. This verbal abuse can be viewed as a type of re-victimization. The women in this study experienced myriad abuses throughout their lives, and this abuse is only being re-enforced during their incarceration. Their period of incarceration could be used as a period of rehabilitation that could aid them in their eventual attempts at community re-

integration. In order for this rehabilitation to have the chance to occur, jail staff have to be an integral part. At this point in time, staff at this particular institution are not trained, in any way, to play a part in this rehabilitation. Therefore, providing staff with specific, therapeutic training in how to work with abused people could assist the inmates in their rehabilitation, as well as, assist the staff in their ability to deal with day to day issues in the facility. A protocol of staff training that focuses on the mental health issues of those who have experienced abuse could provide a better working relationship between correctional officers and inmates. A better working relationship could result in a more functional relationship between staff and inmate, as well as, a better chance at rehabilitation for the inmate.

Future Research

The results of the current study should lead to different avenues for future research. Several of the themes that emerged from the data analysis deserve further, more in-depth, exploration in order to develop a better understanding of the women's experiences, the phenomenon of community re-integration, and how well informed interventions could assist in smoothing the transition from incarceration to the community. Specifically, I would like to further investigate all of the themes as they relate to the development of a discharge plan.

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The themes that emerged from the data highlighted both life issues (e.g. relationships, abuse, traumatic events) and anticipation of their upcoming community re-integration (change, anxiety, motherhood as motivation). These themes could be further explored in terms of how they could be used to craft an individualized discharge plan for each inmate at the beginning of their incarceration period.

Another path for future research would be to focus on the phenomenon of re-victimization as it relates to incarcerated females and their process of community re-integration. The results of this study highlighted that the women reported having been victimized throughout their lives prior to incarceration (e.g. relationships, abuse, traumatic events). The women also discussed a level of re-victimization that occurs through their treatment by the jail staff. Finally, the women reported the continuation of re-victimization during previous attempts at community re-integration. A more in-depth understanding of re-victimization in this population of women could lead to more effective interventions to assist in a smoother and more successful transition back into the community. Further, it could lead to the development of more effective training for the jail staff and administration; thus, improving interactions and relationships with inmates.

A final path for future research in the area of incarcerated women and community re-integration would be to include a quantitative component which would make the results generalizable to a larger group of people. Specifically, the themes that emerged from the data analysis of the current study could be used to develop surveys that could be administered to large groups of female inmates regarding their process of community re-integration. A study of this magnitude could assist jails across the nation to change the way the rehabilitative component of incarceration is implemented.

Further, it would serve to provide large numbers of incarcerated women a voice to express the life issues that exist with which they need assistance to increase, the likelihood of a successful transition from incarceration back into their community.

Theoretical Connections

In the creation of this study, Rosenthal and Wolf's model of community re-integration, and Erving Goffman's concept of the total institution were both used as frameworks (Rosenthal & Wolf, 2004; Goffman, 1962). The results of this study re-enforce Rosenthal & Wolf's model which provides for the preparations for community re-integration to begin on the day of arrest. The women in this study discussed myriad life issues they encountered prior to their first incarceration. These life

issues followed them into their incarcerations and remained after their release. During their incarceration, they described experiencing little or no rehabilitative efforts that would assist them in re-entering the community. Rosenthal and Wolf (2004) believe that the earlier rehabilitative efforts and plans for release occur the more likely they will result in successful attempts at community re-integration. I discussed the need for discharge planning as an implication for social work practice. I believe that the results of this study re-enforce the need for discharge planning in jails. These discharge plans fit directly into the model of community re-integration proposed by Rosenthal and Wolf. In social work practice, discharge plans are created at the beginning of an individual's stay in any institution. These plans then become a focus of the treatment an individual receives. If jails were to implement these plans on the day of arrest, an individual's incarceration could have meaning beyond punishment. Incarceration could become a time of both punishment and rehabilitation. This individual level of rehabilitation could lead to a greater number of people successfully re-integration into the community.

Erving Goffman's concept of the institutionalized individual was re-enforced by the women's discussions of their treatment while in jail. The women discussed how very few programs and classes were made available to them during their

incarceration. Therefore, for the most part, the largest experience they had was with the structure of the jail. They were told when to eat, when to sleep, when to go outside, and what to watch on television. Their time in jail was not spent assisting them in their eventual community re-integration. Their time was spent molding them into better inmates. The women leave the jail as better inmates who are prepared to be re-incarcerated, not better prepared to live in the community.

Conclusions

The phenomenon of community re-integration for incarcerated women is an important one to understand. The current study explored this process with a small group of women incarcerated in a southern county jail. Data analysis revealed that these incarcerated women experience life issues in many different areas that affect their ability to successfully transition back into the community after a period of incarceration. The current study revealed that incarcerated women are dealing with the results of dysfunctional, abusive family relationships and traumatic events that occurred prior to their first incarceration. These pre-incarceration experiences followed them from the community into the jail. During incarceration they are being re-victimized by staff, and are not being offered rehabilitative programs that could enhance their chances at successful community re-integration. Finally, as they are about

to be released, they are facing feelings of anxiety. They express that they are anxious because they do not believe they will be able to deal with their life circumstances any differently this time than they have during previous attempts. The women express a desire to change their lives, and to be better parents to their children. However, they are incapable of articulating a specific plan or specific behaviors they wish to change. They do not seem to have the knowledge or life experience which could lead them to understand how they can change their behaviors or what specific behaviors they need to change.

The results of this study fill a gap in the literature that relates to jail inmates. While reviewing the literature on community re-integration, I read a great many studies that explored the phenomenon as it relates to prison inmates. These studies reviewed the programs offered in prisons and the release of prisoners back into the community. What I did not find was the same types of studies focusing on the jail setting. The current study addressed the issue facing jail inmates as they approach community re-integration. The results highlighted that inmates in jails face the same issues as their prison counterparts; however, they are not being afforded the same chances at rehabilitation. Therefore, they are re-entering the community with fewer resources and lower levels of

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rehabilitation. The end result is that they are not as well
equipped to make the changes that could lead to successful
community re-integration.

Further, this study adds specifically to the social work
literature which is sorely lacking in information about
incarcerated individuals. The majority of the research that I
encountered came out of criminal justice journals. There was
very little social work literature in this area of study. The
current study not only provides more information on jail
inmates, but also helps to fill an overwhelming gap in the
social work literature.

The most important implication of the results of this study
is the implications it has for rehabilitative efforts that can
occur in jails. The improvement of and greater access to
rehabilitation during incarceration could very well assist women
during their incarceration, and increase their chances at a
successful re-entry into the community. It is this type of
implication that I believe is the most important contribution
that studies such as this one can make. Giving voice to a group
of women who are not very often heard can allow for changes to
be made.

Further, the results of this study demonstrate the need for
social workers to be placed in jails. These social workers can
develop discharge plans for incoming inmates. These

individualized plans could be used to construct rehabilitative efforts to assist women in dealing with life issues that affected them prior to incarceration and have hindered their previous efforts to successfully re-integrate from jail into the community.

The current study is a small step toward providing incarcerated women with rehabilitative services that are already offered to their male counterparts (albeit also in limited scope). It also provides a small step towards increasing the likelihood that women who are released from jail will have a greater chance of smoothly transitioning back into the community. Finally, the current study assists in providing a voice for a group of women who are too often silenced.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. Demographic Questions:

    a. How old are you?

    b. What is your ethnicity?

    c. Do you have any children?

    d. How many times have you been incarcerated?

        i. How many times have you been in jail?

        ii. How many times have you been to prison?

2. Tell me about your previous charges.

        Prompt about the following

        How long were you incarcerated?

        How long were you "on the outside" prior to being

        re-incarcerated?

3. Tell me about the last time you were released from jail and attempted to live on the outside.

       Prompt about the following

       a. Work?

       b. House/Living arrangements?

       c. Food and Clothing?

       d. Children?

       e. Support system

       f. Substance abuse issues

       g. Abusive relationships

       h. Mental health issues

4. Tell me about your current charges

       Prompt about the relationship between current charges and issues during re-integration process.

5. How long have you currently been incarcerated?

6. How long before you are released from jail?

7. Tell me about your expectations of trying to live on the outside again.

       a. How do you want it to be the same?

       b. How do you want it to be different?

       Prompt about the following

         i. Work?

         ii. House/Living arrangements?

         iii.Food and Clothing?

iv. Children?

v. Support system?

vi. Substance abuse

vii. Abusive relationships

viii. Mental health issues

8. Tell me your thoughts about your previous attempts at community re-integration.

    a. Treatment from staff?

    b. Treatment from other inmates?

    c. Rehabilitative programming?

9. How do you think your current experience being in jail will affect living on the outside?

    a. Treatment from staff?

    b. Treatment from other inmates?

    c. Rehabilitative programming?

10. How do you think your previous attempts to live on the outside will help you this time?

Appendix B

We've Come a Long Way Baby. . . Or Have We?

The Phenomenon of Community Reintegration for Incarcerated

Females

Doctoral Investigator: Joshua Baldwin

Faculty Advisor: Debra Nelson-Gardell

Introduction

    The number of individuals incarcerated in the United States

has increased dramatically over the past two decades (Bureau of

Justice Statistics, 2005). Laws related to the War on Drugs

have directly impacted the overwhelming increases in the female

population (Bush-Baskette, 2000). The increase in the

population of incarcerated individuals has spawned an obvious

increase in those who will be released and re-integrating into

the community. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2004) noted

that over 600,000 individuals per year are being released from

jails and prisons back into the community.

    The body of research that exists on the issue of community

re-integration is vast, but has focused more on males than

females (Flannigan, 1992). In addition, the literature that

does focus on re-entry tends to center on issues of recidivism rather than the process and struggles of reentry into the community (Visher and Travis, 2003). With the increased number of incarcerated and, subsequently, reintegrating females, a great need exists to gain more understanding of this process. The current study will examine the phenomenon of community re-integration as it is experienced by women who have been incarcerated on more than one occasion.

Purpose and Goals

The proposed study will employ a qualitative method to explore the experiences of women who have been incarcerated and are attempting to re-integrate into the community. The aim of this study is to detail the experiences of women currently incarcerated at the Tuscaloosa County Jail, who have experienced at least one prior incarceration, with community re-integration. The description of this phenomenon will not only include their current anticipation of re-entry, but also any previous experiences with community re-integration. The study will also explore the experiences they have had while incarcerated that might have affected their re-integration efforts.

Procedures

I have worked for the past three years for the Tuscaloosa County Office of the Public Defender. During this period, I have spent time at the Tuscaloosa County Jail. This time has

entailed completing drug and alcohol assessments, one on one therapeutic sessions, and leading anger management groups. I have a working relationship with the staff and administration of the Tuscaloosa County Jail, however, I do not now nor have I ever been an employee of the jail.

A list of female inmates who have already been sentenced will be provided by the Tuscaloosa County Jail. Further, from this list, only women who are within six months of release, and have been in jail at least once before will be spoken with about the study. These are the only criteria for participation in this study.

Female inmates who meet both criteria will be given a brief informational session on the scope of this study and procedures associated with protection of human research participants. This informational session will take place in the library of the county jail. I will attempt to speak with all of them at once, however, if the group is too large, they will be split. This session will only be attended by the inmates and me. They will be informed that participation will require one to two interview sessions approximately one to two hours in length; as well as, one to two member checking session at the end of data analysis to review and comment on the results of the coding process. After I leave the room and the inmates are taken back to their dorms, they will then be asked to sign up on a sheet of paper.

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They will be informed that everyone who signs up may not be interviewed. Inmates will be informed that the interviews will take place over the next month.

The interview(s) will take place in the library of the Tuscaloosa County Jail. Only I and the inmate will be present for the interview. These interviews will be digitally recorded with an audio recorder, and will be downloaded to my computer for transcription and analysis. After digital audio recordings are downloaded, they will be erased from the recording device. The digital audio recordings will be retained until the completion of analysis for this project. The text copies of these interviews will be kept until all research value has been extracted from them and they are of no further academic use. Participants will be informed that all of their comments will be reported under a pseudonym therefore ensuring anonymity. However, each participant will be informed that I am a social worker, and therefore a mandatory reporter. It will be explained to each participant that if they discuss any issues that describe children or elderly adults that are currently in an abusive or dangerous situation that it will be reported to the Department of Human Resources.

At the beginning of each interview, each participant will be handed an informed consent form. I will read the document aloud as the participant follows along. Afterward, I will ask

if the participant understands and if she has any questions. If there are no questions and the participant says that she understands, she will be asked to sign it.

After interviews are conducted, I will transcribe the audio recordings. After this process, each participant who is still accessible will be allowed to review the transcription to insure that there thoughts and feelings were accurately recorded. If the participant has corrections, I will incorporate the specific changes into the transcription.

At the conclusion of this study, the Tuscaloosa County Jail will be given a copy of this study to keep in their inmate library so that any inmate who wishes may access the final product. The copy that is given to the jail will be the exact same copy that is presented as my dissertation. Specifically, the dissertation will include a literature review, a methods, results, and discussion section. Within the results and possibly the discussion sections, quotes from the interviews will be used to illustrate the themes which emerged from the data analysis. Neither names nor pseudonyms will be used in association with these quotes. In addition, both the results and discussion sections will include information that I have gathered from the interviews with the inmates. As previously stated, pseudonyms will be used so that no quote can be attributed to any specific participant.

While there are no counseling services offered at the jail, I am a social worker who has three years experience working with this population and will provide my services to assist in working through any distress. Participants will be informed that if they have concerns or experience emotional difficulties resulting from the study that they will be able to fill out a request for services form. These forms are commonly used at the jail for the inmates to request services such as medical or pastoral counseling. The administrative staff at the jail will allow participating inmates to request my services through these request forms. The forms will be held at the booking desk and I will check for them on a weekly basis throughout the course of the study.

Risks and Benefits

Administrative staff at the jail have assured me that participation in this research project will, in no way, affect the participant's treatment in the facility or the length of their sentence. However, I cannot guarantee this promise, and this will be communicated to the participants. There is also a possibility that discussing life events and criminal history could lead to emotional distress. While there are no counseling services offered at the jail, I am a social worker who has three years experience working with this population and will provide my services to assist in working through any such distress.

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Participants will be informed that if they have concerns or experience emotional difficulties resulting from the study that they will be able to fill out a request for services form. These forms are commonly used at the jail for the inmates to request services such as medical or pastoral counseling. The administrative staff at the jail will allow participating inmates to request my services through these request forms. The forms will be held at the booking desk and I will check for them on a weekly basis throughout the course of the study.

Participants may benefit from having an opportunity to discuss their life experiences. Research participants may gain gratification from the idea that their participation could benefit others in the future as a result of what is learned. These potential knowledge gains may include, but are not limited to, an increased understanding of the needs of female inmates who are close to reintegrating into the community and insight into possible programming changes that would benefit the staff and administration of the Tuscaloosa County Jail.

Informed Consent

A copy of the full text is attached to this proposal as an appendix. The eight elements of informed consent are described below through excerpts (italicized here) from that document:

1. A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the

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subject's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures which are experimental.

"You are being asked to be in a research study looking at the lives of women in jail who are six months or less from getting out. Also, to be eligible, you need to have been in jail at least one time before."

"You will be asked to participate in up to two initial interviews and up to two more follow-up interviews, for a possible total of 4 interview sessions. In these interviews, you will be asked to talk about what has happened before when you got out of jail and went back home. You will also be asked to talk about what you think is going to happen this time when you get out of jail. Finally, you will also be asked to talk about things that happen in jail that could affect what happens when you get out."

"You will also be asked to participate in one to two more interviews. In these interviews, you will look at the report I typed up about your interview to see if you are satisfied with what I recorded."

"Each of the interviews will take between one to two hours. Overall, you will spend between two and eight hours participating in this study."

2. A description of any reasonable foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject:

"There is a small amount of risk that comes with being in the study. Administrators at the jail have promised that being in this study will not affect the way you are treated in the jail or the length of your sentence. However, I cannot guarantee this promise. There is also a possibility that discussing your life could lead to stress. There are no counseling services offered at the jail, but I am a social worker who has worked with people at the jail for the past three years. I will talk with you to help reduce any stress you may feel. If you need to speak with me, you can fill out a request form and give it to the correctional officer assigned to your dorm."

3. A description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research:

"If you help with the study, you may benefit from having a chance to talk about your life. You may feel good about the idea that what is learned from you could help others in the future. We could learn about what female inmates need who are close to going back into the community. That could affect the kinds of services that female inmates get from staff and administration at the Tuscaloosa County Jail."

4. A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject: Not applicable

5. A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained:

"These interviews will be recorded. The audio recordings will be put onto a computer and I will type them up. I will be the only person to listen to the recordings from the interviews. All recordings will be protected on the computer with passwords and typed reports will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. All recordings will be erased from the computer after I type them up. Your interviews will be identified by a fake name only.   The fake name will be used to keep your identity a secret. The only time that confidentiality will be broken is if you discuss that there are children or old people who are currently being abused or are otherwise in danger. This information will be reported to the Department of Human Resources. Finally, a copy of the final report will be located in library of the Tuscaloosa County Jail. Although your stories will be told in the report, your identity will be hidden by using a fake name so that no one who reads it will be able to tell that it is you who was interviewed."

6. For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation, as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained:

Not applicable

7. An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject (the former should be the investigator or member of the research team, and the latter should be a Research Compliance Officer):

"*If you have questions about the study right now, please ask them. If you have questions about the study later on, please call the investigator, Joshua Baldwin at 348-6763 or Dr. Debra Nelson Gardell at 348-2990. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at (205)-348-5152.* "

8. A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled:

"Taking part in this study is voluntary—it is your free choice. You may choose not to take part at all. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of any benefits you would otherwise receive" To prevent complications that may arise due to an illiterate inmate, the consent form will be read aloud to each participant. Prior to beginning of the interview, they will each be given a copy of the form. A copy of the consent form is included in this proposal.

University of Alabama

Informed Consent for a Research Study

You are being asked to be in a research study looking at the lives of women in jail who are six months or less from getting out. Also, to be eligible, you need to have been in jail at least one time before. The title of this study is "We've come a long way baby . . . or have we?" The phenomenon of community re-integration for incarcerated women. The study is being done by Joshua Baldwin who is a doctoral student at the University of Alabama School of Social Work. Mr. Baldwin is being supervised by Dr. Debra Nelson Gardell who is a professor in the School of Social Work.

What is this study about?

This research study is being done so that women can talk about what it is like to get out of jail and go back home. You will be asked to talk about what was good and what was bad the last time you got out of jail. You will also be asked about what happened while you were in jail. Finally, you will be asked about what you think would help other people who are about to get out of jail.

Why is this study important? What good will the results do?

This study is important because what you talk about could lead to other people understanding what it is like to get out of jail and go back home. If other people understand what it is like,

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they could create programs to help other women when they get out of jail and go back home.

Why have I been asked to take part in this study?

You have been asked to take part in this study because you are in jail, you have already been sentenced, and will get out in less than six months. You are also being asked because you have been in jail before.

How many people besides me will be in this study?

Ten women will be talked to for this study.

What will I be asked to do in this study?

You will be asked to participate in up to two initial interviews and up to two more follow-up interviews, for a possible total of 4 interview sessions. In the initial interviews, you will be asked to talk about what has happened before when you got out of jail and went back home. You will also be asked to talk about what you think is going to happen this time when you get out of jail. You will also be asked to talk about things that happen in jail that could affect what happens when you get out. At any point, you may refuse to answer any question.

In the follow up interviews, you will be asked to look at the report I typed up about your interview to see if you are satisfied with what he recorded. You will be given a chance to tell me if there are things in the report that you think were recorded incorrectly,

How much time will I spend being in this study?

Each of the interviews will take between one to two hours.

Overall, you will spend between two and eight hours

participating in this study.

Will I be paid for being in this study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will being in this study cost me anything?

The only cost to you will be the time we take to complete the

interviews

Can the researcher take me out of this study?

I may take you out of this study if it looks like you are really

upset by the interview questions.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen to me if I

am in this study?

If you help with the study, you may benefit from having a chance

to talk about your life. You may feel good about the idea that

what is learned from you could help others in the future. We

could learn about what female inmates need who are close to

going back into the community. That could affect the kinds of

services that female inmates get from staff and administration

at the Tuscaloosa County Jail.

What are the benefits to scientists or society?

If you help with this study, other researchers will be able to

use the information to do more studies about women in jails and

prisons. These studies could help make programs that could help

women when they are in and out of jail.

What are the risks (dangers or harm) to me if I am in this

study?

There is a small amount of risk that comes with being in the

study. Administrators at the jail have promised that being in

this study will not affect the way you are treated in the jail

or the length of your sentence. However, I cannot guarantee

this promise. There is also a possibility that discussing your

life could lead to stress. There are no counseling services

offered at the jail, but I am a social worker who has worked

with people at the jail for the past three years. I will talk

with you to help reduce any stress you may feel. If you need to

speak with me, you can fill out a request form and give it to

the correctional officer assigned to your dorm.

How will my confidentiality (privacy) be protected? What will

happen to the information the study keeps on me?

These interviews will be recorded. The recordings will be put

onto a computer and I will type them   I will be the only

person to listen to the recordings from the interviews. All

recordings will be protected on the computer with passwords and

typed reports will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my

home office. All recordings will be erased from the computer

after I type them up. Your interviews will be identified by a

fake name only. The fake name will be used to keep your

identity a secret. The only time that confidentiality will be

broken is if you discuss that there are children who are

currently being abused or are otherwise in danger. This

information will be reported to the Department of Human

Resources. Finally, a copy of the final report will be located

in library of the Tuscaloosa County Jail. Although your stories

will be told in the report, your identity will be hidden by

using a fake name so that no one who reads it will be able to

tell that it is you who was interviewed.

What are the alternatives to being in this study? Do I have

other choices?

The alternative or other choice is not to participate.

What are my rights as a participant?

Taking part in this study is voluntary—it is your free choice.

You may choose not to take part at all. If you start the study,

you can stop at any time. Leaving the study will not result in

any penalty or loss of any benefits you would otherwise receive.

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (IRB) is

the committee that protects the rights of people in research

studies. The IRB may review study records from time to time to

be sure that people in research studies are being treated fairly

and that the study is being carried out as planned.

Who do I call if I have questions or problems?

If you have questions about the study right now, please ask them. If you have questions about the study later on, please call the investigator, Joshua Baldwin at 348-6763 or Dr. Debra Nelson Gardell at 348-2990. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at (205)-348-5152.

I have read this consent form. The study has been explained to me. I understand what I will be asked to do. I freely agree to take part in it. I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____   _____

Signature of Research Participant   Date

_____   _____

Investigator   Date

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