

GENDER DIFFERENCES

National Institute of Corrections

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GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Men are not women
- Women are not men
- Impossible to pinpoint differences that apply to all men and women
- Each individual is unique
- Behavior
- Communication
- Help-seeking
- Response to victimization
- Adjustment to incarceration

Behavior and Communication

- Men

- Guard information
- Not inclined to share innermost thoughts and feelings
- Value independence, self-reliance
- Reluctant to ask for help
- Less verbal
- Aggressive, competitive, less emotional expression
- Conceal vulnerability

- Women

- Relating and sharing are important
- Rapport building, bonding, intimacy, closeness
- Talk about their problems
- Caretakers, empathizers
- Feelings, senses, emotion
- Inclined to ask for help
- Willing to expose vulnerability

GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Unique Characteristics of Female Offender
- The average female offender:
 - Age 30
 - Of a racial or ethnic minority
 - A substance abuser
 - Unmarried
 - Experienced sexual or physical abuse since childhood
 - A mother of at least two children
 - Never completed high school
 - Unemployed at the time of offense

Female Offenders

- Significantly more sexual, physical abuse and victimization than the average male inmate
- Sensitive to actual or perceived threats and intimidation
- High rates of drug/alcohol dependence
- More familial responsibilities than the average male offender entering prison
- Two-thirds are single mothers
- More affected by separation from family/children than men

Female Offenders

- More difficulties adjusting to punitive environment
- Rapid growth of female prison population
- Correctional system unprepared for increase
- Health issues
 - OB-GYN
 - HIV
- The prevalence of HIV among women is 2-3 times higher than in men.

Female Survivors of Abuse

- The majority of imprisoned women report prior sexual abuse
- More than half of incarcerated women reported prior abuse by spouses, boyfriend and nearly a third by parents or guardians
- Abuse continues through the childhood years into adulthood.
- Women are more at risk for unhealthy relationships with authority figures, particularly men.

Male Offender

- High rates of drug and alcohol dependence
- More than half of incarcerated men have been abused by parents or guardians; mostly as children
- More likely to be brutalized by other inmates
- Feel bound to be self-reliant, not dependent
- Pressure to show toughness, not appear weak
- Angry, victimizers, aggression, need to control
- Less verbal

Male Survivors of Abuse

- More than half of incarcerated men have been abused by parents or guardians
- Males indicated being mistreated mostly as children
- Males are less likely to report abuse or seek help
- Males may question sexual identity and sexual preference more than women do as a result of the abuse

Gender Differences

- Men generally turn their anger outward while women turn it inward
- Men tend to be more physical and sexually threatening and assaultive while women tend to be more depressed, self-abusive and suicidal.
- Women offenders are also more likely to have used serious drugs (i.e. heroin and cocaine), to have used them intravenously and to have used them more frequently prior to arrest.
- Women are also more likely to have coexisting psychiatric disorders and to have lower self-esteem

Gender Differences

- Depression, anxiety and other mood disorders are more common among substance abusing women than substance abusing men
- Standard procedures in correctional setting (searches, restraints and isolation) can have profound effects on women with histories of trauma and abuse and can act as triggers to retraumatize women
- Sexual misconduct by staff is more prevalent in women's prisons

Staff Issues

- **Drug, alcohol, mental health problems**
- **Dissatisfaction with career** (low morale, poor public image, low pay, boring, overcrowding, dangerous, staffing/shift issues)
- **Problems in personal life** (displacing frustration onto spouses and children)
- **Role Confusion** (compliance vs. accommodation)
- **Boundary Violations**
 - **sharing personal information, fraternizing, inappropriately relating with inmate**
 - **Sexualized environment**
 - **Predatory behavior**

Staff Issues

- Men
 - Substance Abuse
 - Stress
 - Challenges in personal life
 - Power, Control & Domination
 - Thrill, Risk
- Women
 - Substance Abuse
 - Stress
 - Challenges in personal life
 - Power & Control
 - Flattery, Attention

Sexualized Environment

