



WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK

**SUMMER 2016:
Issue #3**

Editor's Note:

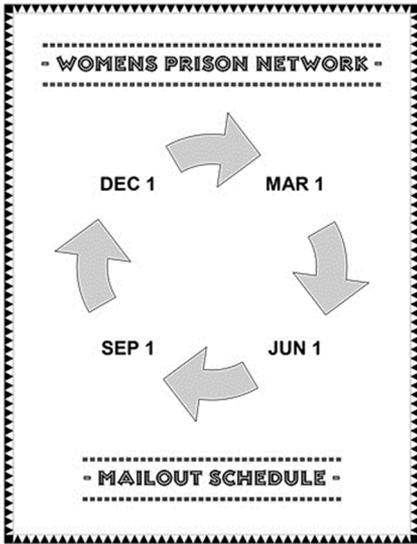
Welcome to the 3rd Issue of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada. Its purpose is to be a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, and connections. We strive to send copies into all women's prisons in Canada.

We have not included a request for penpals in this issue as there have been no responses so far. We will try again in the future if there are any requests.

This magazine is sent into women's prisons only!

Please send in your art, poems, short stories and articles to Women's Prison Network if you would like your voice to be part of the next issue.

Women's Prison Network
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'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women's Prisons in Canada.

If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation !!!

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COVER ART

All Cover Art featured in future issues will receive a \$25.00 donation.

Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to as well.

Thanks!

The 10 Most Distressing Numbers on Canada's Federal Prisons

The 10 most distressing numbers from Correctional Investigator for Canada Howard Sapers's damning report on the state of Canada's federal prisons, released March 10.

50%: The proportion by which the aboriginal inmate population in federal prisons grew during the law-and-order Harper years between 2005 and 2015. The number of aboriginal women entering the system has almost doubled in that time. About 25 per cent of the total federal inmate population of 15,000 in Canada is aboriginal; 35.5 per cent of all women in custody are aboriginal.

69%: The proportion by which the black inmate population grew during the same decade. "These increases continue despite public inquiries and commissions calling for change and Supreme Court of Canada decisions urging restraint," the report states.

More than 6,200: The number of formal inmate complaints handled by the Office of the Correctional Investigator in 2014-15, one of the highest caseloads in recent years. The office also conducted some 1,510 reviews of incidents involving use of force against inmates and 167 reviews of incidents involving assault, death, -attempted suicide and self-harm.

One in four: The proportion of inmates in the federal prison population who are over 50. That's one-third more than just five years ago. According to the report, "The system has become so risk averse that even elderly, chronically ill and geriatric persons who no longer pose any ongoing or dynamic risk to public safety are commonly held to their statutory or warrant expiry dates." The prison population is not only getting older; it's also getting sicker. About 68 per cent of federal inmates are overweight or obese. That number increases to 90 per cent for those over 65. The average age at death for a federal inmate is around 60 – much younger than the Canadian average of 78.3 for men and 83 for women.

30%: The proportion of women offenders who were previously hospitalized for psychiatric reasons. Even more troubling: six in 10 women in the federal prison system are on some form of psychotropic medication to manage their mental health.

Close to 70%: Women in federal prisons who report a history of sexual abuse. More than 86 per cent report having been physically abused at some time in their lives.

578: "Self-injury" incidents involving women inmates in 2013-14. Nearly three-quarters of those occurred at one facility: Regional Psychiatric Centre, Saskatoon. Overall incidents of prison self-injury have tripled in the last decade.

1 in 5: Deaths by suicide, which is the leading cause of unnatural death in federal prisons. Just under half of those who took their lives behind bars were on prescribed medications. Segregation is a major contributing factor to suicides behind bars. Almost half, 14 of the 30 suicides in federal prisons in 2014, took place in segregation cells. Five of the 14 had been held in segregation for more than 120 days prior to taking their lives. Of the 659 inmates in segregation today, 13.7 per cent have a history of self-injurious behaviour. The average length of segregation in 2013-14 was 27 days.

\$108,376: Yearly cost of keeping a male federal inmate in jail. The cost is nearly twice that for women inmates. By contrast, the cost of keeping offenders in community is 70 per cent less. Meanwhile, total criminal-justice costs (police, courts, corrections, parole) have risen by almost 25 per cent in the last decade, while the national crime rate has fallen dramatically.

\$6.90: The maximum daily wage a federal prisoner can earn. That number hasn't changed since 1981, the report says, eroding "the possibility of having any meaningful savings to support reintegration or maintain familial obligations on the outside." About 60 per cent of offenders were identified as being chronically underemployed or unemployed at the time they entered federal custody. And fully 60 per cent have a formal education of Grade 8 or less.

From the report:

"The past five years have seen an unprecedented number of sentencing and policy reforms. Taken together, their cumulative effect has profoundly changed the discourse and practice of criminal justice in Canada, and has contributed to the erosion of some long-standing evidence-based correctional principles and practices."

Enzo DiMatteo

Now Magazine - Mar 16, 2016

Babies Need their Mothers, Even When Mom's in Jail

Last September, A.S., a Somali-born Norwegian woman, was arrested in Toronto. She was wanted in Norway for child abduction and forgery, having fled the country with a child and unborn baby as part of a custody dispute.

A.S. alleges her partner was abusive, so she forged his signature on a document relinquishing parental authority and escaped to Canada out of fear for her safety and that of the children. A.S. (her name is being withheld because children in child-protection cases cannot be identified) gave birth on Dec. 30 at the Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ont. Within hours of the birth, the baby was taken into the custody of the Children's Aid Society and placed with a foster family. The three-year-old sibling had already been apprehended. Regardless of where the truth lies in the underlying custody dispute, the treatment of A.S. is barbaric and underscores Canada's regressive prison policies, particularly when it comes to mothers with young children. This fact was noted late last week when a judge granted bail to A.S., saying there is clear evidence that "there are very adverse effects on young children of separation from their parent." A.S. will now live in a shelter and see her children regularly under the supervision of a Children's Aid worker until the extradition case is resolved.

There are about 600 women in federal prisons and roughly 6,000 others in provincial correctional facilities. About two-thirds of them have children, and many have young children. But Canada has a dearth of mother-child units, especially in provincial-territorial facilities, where they are most needed because women are younger and serve shorter sentences. This is a travesty. In an affidavit filed in court as part of A.S.'s bail hearing, Dr. Lisa Graves, chair of the maternity and newborn care committee of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, noted that there are "well-documented medical, psychological and social harms caused to new mothers and their children when separated at or near birth due to incarceration."

Forced separation poses a direct health risk to children, in large part because they are denied breastfeeding. Interfering with a child's attachment to their mother also puts them at risk of developmental deficits and poorer health

and social outcomes. That's why most Western countries allow young children to live with their moms in prison, usually to the age of four.

The Collaborating Centre for Prison Health and Education has published excellent guidelines on the need to implement mother-child units in all correctional facilities, but they have not been heeded broadly. Correctional Service Canada, to its credit, has made great strides in the last couple of years, adding mother-child units in all six women's prisons. There are currently four women participating in the residential component of the mother-child program. There have been 28 women who had babies with them in prison at some point since 2008. Before that, the policy was fairly informal, until there was an outcry when Lisa Whitford, who was convicted of manslaughter for shooting her husband to death, was allowed to keep her baby behind bars.

But only one provincial facility has a decent program, and it was saved only by a landmark 2013 B.C. Supreme Court ruling. Justice Carol Ross found that closing the mother-child program of the Alouette Correctional Centre in Maple Ridge, B.C., (which had operated successfully since 1973) was discriminatory and a violation of constitutional rights. She ruled that corrections officials cannot arbitrarily ignore the best interests of prisoners' children and underscored that a disproportionate number of inmates – about 35 per cent – are aboriginal. As Maclean's noted, prisons are, in many ways, the new residential schools. Everything needs to be done to break the vicious cycle of family breakdown in indigenous communities, and mother-child units in prisons are a small part of the solution.

More broadly, though, there needs to be a new way of thinking – a paradigm shift, if you will – that accepts that it is a baby's constitutional right to remain with a mother, with few exceptions. Committing a crime – or merely being charged with one, like A.S. – does not make you a bad mom. Allowing mothers to be mothers is one of the best ways to improve their health and that of their babies. It lowers the risk of unhealthy behaviours such as drug use, and of recidivism. Prison should be about rehabilitation, not punishment. And, above all, we should not be tolerating policies that punish and harm babies.

Andre Picard
Globe and Mail - Feb 23, 2016



Canada Ignoring Children with Incarcerated Parents, Leads to More Problems

Kelly remembers drawing pictures for her father. She recalls seeing him the orange prison jump suit. She was just four years old in 1989 when her father was sentenced to a year behind bars for stabbing a family member.

"It is really hard to understand as a kid," says the now 30-year-old who wished to remain anonymous to protect the identity of her father.

"You miss your parent and you can't really understand why they can't be at home."

Between time in rehab, a mental institution and jail, she says her alcoholic father wasn't around much and even missed the birth of her younger brother while serving time for the stabbing.

"It is confusing when your parent is there and then they are not all of sudden," she explains.

"Funny enough, even at four years old I was worried if he was okay and safe."

Trent University psychology master's student Jessica Reid says Kelly isn't alone. Ms. Reid recently received a prestigious \$17,500 national scholarship for her research into the support of children affected by parental incarceration. She estimates that 350,000 children in Canada are affected by parental incarceration.

"That number is staggering when you think that there is no support other than us to try and break that cycle. Despite how many kids are affected, it is a blind issue and we have turned our backs to these at-risk kids," she says.

"For some reason, this issue of supporting kids that have a parent inside has been off the radar in the country."

Ms. Reid and her father Derek launched FEAT in 2011 after meeting for the first time. "I always had an interest in child-parent

relationships primarily because Derek wasn't in my life," she says.

At the time, she was teaching out west and had three students with fathers in jail. Ms. Reid says one little girl in particular resembled a little version of herself. She remembers the girl telling her that she wished she could hug and kiss her dad.

"I just resonated with longing to have a parental relationship," she says.

Children of incarcerated parents are often faced with a myriad of challenges according to Ms. Reid. Research estimates that they are four times more likely to enter into a cycle of criminality.

"Because a lot of them have to cope with these challenges alone, they turn to drugs and violence which sometimes leads to a lifetime of crime," she says.

Kelly says she started to drinking alcohol and using marijuana, cocaine and ecstasy at the age of 15.

"My mom tried really hard but I was a difficult kid partly because the type of situation I grew up in," she says,

"I don't know if I acted out because most the attention was on my dad."

Kelly also spent time in youth offenders jail for a violent crime.

"I ended up getting in trouble myself," she says.

Ms. Reid says these kids are also struggling in the school system. Kelly says she had behavioral issues in the classroom and was suspended several times.

"In a lot of cases, there is a lack of positive role models and they are struggling in school, so we need to have a platform to gain that academic support," says Ms. Reid.

Many children are also living in poverty. Typically, when Dad is inside, Mom is still in the picture and is the sole provider.

"Money was hard to come by and I remember getting made fun of because I had BiWay shoes and clothes," says Kelly.

Ms. Reid says in many cases there are several children and an enormous amount of stress. When a parent goes to jail, children tend to becoming clingy due to separation anxiety. Kelly says her mom worked long hours to provide for her.

"I remember several times being angry at my mom," Kelly says, explaining her mom didn't

have much patience because she was under so much stress.

"I didn't know it at the time, but looking back, I realize now and don't know how she didn't have a nervous breakdown."

Kelly says she was treated differently because of the stigma around having a parent in the system. She says she wasn't able to relate with other people.

"There are some kids that are just not aware where their parent is and I think that adds to sense of abandonment," says Ms. Reid, adding that is actually beneficial to tell the child where the parent is and to have regular contact. FEAT's family visitation bus program allows children and families to stay connected. In 2011, it started with seven families and now more than 500 families use the program, including a one-month-old baby that recently visited her father for the first time.

She adds consistent contact seems to help children adjust to the situation better and that it benefits the inmate.

"If inmates stay connected, they are less likely to re-offend when they come out," she says.

"When we talk about rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society, this is a program all angles of crime prevention should be supporting."

But support is hard to come by. She says the stigma makes it hard to get funding, noting FEAT needs help from the government to expand into other cities across the country.

"We always have to think of different ways to raise funds and awareness because it is marginalized population," she says.

"When you see the impact it is having on the children and the families, it fuels that passion and motivation to continue on and keep fighting," says Ms. Reid.

Todd Vandonk
Peterborough This Week
Feb 05, 2016

"Power should not be concentrated in the hands of so few, and powerlessness in the hands of so many."

- Maggie Kuhn

End Use of Solitary for Mentally ill Inmates, Prison Watchdog Urges

The Correctional Service should prohibit the use of solitary confinement for mentally ill inmates, the prison watchdog said Thursday, as his office released its annual report.

Segregation should also be limited to no more than 30 days and should not be used as an alternative to the disciplinary process, Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers said.

In the last year, there has been some progress, Sapers noted. There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of segregation placements and repeat placements because the policy is being better administered, he said.

"The average daily count in segregation cells across the country used to be around 800," Sapers said. "Today it is around 500 and that's without legislation change."

Though the number of people put in solitary has been reduced as a result of recent action by the Correctional Service of Canada, segregation is still often used to manage the mentally ill, the self-injurious and suicidal inmates, Sapers added.

"As my office's recent review of prison suicides documented, segregation was found to be an independent factor that elevated the risk of inmate suicide," he said.

"In fact, 14 of 30 prison suicides between 2011-2014 took place in a segregation cell. Nearly all of these inmates had known mental-health issues."

The fact that these inmates found the means and opportunity to end their lives in what is supposed to be one of the most closely watched and most secure parts of a prison represents a serious operational risk, Sapers added. He said the law is clear that segregation should be used sparingly and only when alternatives have been exhausted, noting the framework needs to be significantly reformed and not just tweaked.

"Segregation has become so overused in our penitentiaries that during the last reporting period, 27 per cent of the inmate population experienced at least one placement in administrative segregation," he said. In its response to the investigator's recommendations on segregation, the Correctional Service noted it will propose amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act for the government's

consideration. The investigator also flagged the issue of the disproportionate rates of incarceration for aboriginal people on Thursday.

The report outlined how aboriginal inmates are more likely to be classified as maximum security, to spend more time in segregation and serve more of their sentence behind bars compared with non-aboriginals. First Nations, Inuit and Métis offenders currently make up just over 25 per cent of the federal prison population, even though they represent just 4.3 per cent of the population, the study noted. The overall aboriginal population in prison has ballooned by 50 per cent in the last decade, the report added.

"The growing disparity in correctional outcomes for indigenous offenders will need to be significantly narrowed," Sapens said.

"We know that a history of disadvantage follows indigenous people of Canada into prison and often defines their outcomes and their experiences."

The report's findings on aboriginal inmates were raised in the Commons.

Michel Picard, parliamentary secretary to Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale, said the government welcomes the recommendations and intends to work on the situation.

Kristy Kirkup
The Canadian Press
Mar 10, 2016

Time to Overhaul Canada's Unjust Bail System

Bail has been an open sore on the criminal justice system for as long as crimes have been prosecuted. Instead of being invoked as a last ditch measure, jailing the accused until their guilt or innocence has been decided at trial is a habit that borders on an addiction.

Legal reformers have grown tired of appealing for improvements to the impractical series of rules, conventions and whimsy that govern bail. Thankfully, a noteworthy new voice burst into the debate this month, with the publication of a stark criticism of the status quo by Julie Lauzon, a Justice of the Peace in the Ottawa region.

In a stinging opinion piece Lauzon unmasked the bail system as being a travesty. "I can no longer call it a court of law," Lauzon said.

"Unfortunately, Ottawa's bailout court, and others, have devolved into dysfunctional and punitive bodies, devoid of rule of law."

Jails are packed - at great monetary and human cost - with people who remain innocent until proven otherwise. The toll is catastrophic, if largely invisible. Marriages are ruined. Jobs are lost. Education is interrupted. Mortgages go into default. Children are traumatized by the loss of a parent or even removed from their custody. Pretrial detention can also significantly impair the ability of an accused person to prepare their defence by limiting access to their lawyer and essential witnesses.

In every unfortunate prisoner who is paraded into bail court hours or days after arrest stands a potentially innocent man or woman whose life has been turned upside down. A great many are desperate, devastated and will agree to just about anything if they can go home, regardless of whether or not the restrictions on their liberty sought by the prosecutor are proportional, reasonable or necessary to protect the public.

Time and again, defence lawyers have witnessed the wreckage that results from a denial of bail or overly restrictive bail conditions. The justice system is replete with examples where an accused person was held in jail for months or years pending trial only to be acquitted — or worse, to have the charges withdrawn on the morning of trial due to a lack of evidence. This reality is far from unusual in a system where one's liberty at the bail stage is judged on the basis of untested evidence that is essentially read into the court record by the prosecutor without the benefit of meaningful scrutiny.

To be sure, many arrests result in convictions. Some defendants are caught red-handed. Some undeniably present a threat to the public if released pending trial. But the presence of this minority obscures a much larger, shifting mass of cases where a defendant may have been falsely accused, arrested based on unconstitutionally obtained evidence, implicated by faulty eyewitness identification or a host of other evidentiary failures.

A recent report on bail from the John Howard Society noted that two-thirds of those in provincial jails are in there awaiting a bail hearing or trial and that 70 per cent of these detainees are charged with nonviolent offences. These men and women comprise the most

vulnerable members of our community, including marginalized racial groups, those with mental health issues, the impoverished, and the uneducated. Yet, in an age when we are bombarded with crime stories by 24/7 news reports, our default position in court is to embrace fear and safety at all costs.

What is needed now is a ground-altering slate of bail reforms that would align with our belief in essential fairness and the presumption of innocence while saving tens of millions of dollars that are wasted each year in unnecessary pretrial incarceration.

Bail courts are crying out for more resources and a culture of improved judgment. We have to have sufficient bail courts - some of them running at night - to ensure that detainees are not forced to endure excruciating days of waiting for their possible release. In addition, appropriate resources should be given to the Crown Attorney's office to ensure senior prosecutors are available to give each bail case a critical review predicated not on a presumption of detention, but on whether evidence and circumstances truly warrant depriving a defendant of his or her most prized possession - freedom. Many detainees ought to be released with minimal restrictions directly from a police station. For those who cannot, it is incumbent on jail authorities to deliver them to court in time for a prompt bail hearing. This will help ensure that friends and family members offering themselves as bail supervisors will not be forced to take multiple days off work on account of a dysfunctional bail process. Reforms such as these are neither onerous nor impractical. They would save far more resources than are currently consumed by our sputtering bail system. They require nothing more than committed political leaders and a renewed public acceptance of the fact that no apology or admission of failure can ever replace liberty lost.

Daniel Brown
Toronto Star - Commentary
Mar 22, 2016

"Most people like to deal with us as though we were in a museum or a history book."
- Wilma Mankiller

For Indigenous Women, Prisons are the Adult version of Residential Schools

I have been going into Canada's penitentiaries for the past seven years. Over this time, some drastic changes have taken place in the way Correctional Service Canada (CSC) treats prisoners.

Double bunking, mandatory minimum sentences and inmate pay cuts have turned the prisons into places of hopelessness and anger. Whereas the men's prisons have become more violent as a result, the women's have become places of despair and depression. There are five women's prisons in Canada serving the five CSC regions. Because there are only five, inmates are rarely incarcerated close to home. Also, indigenous people are vastly overrepresented in prison populations: 68 per cent of federally incarcerated female inmates are indigenous (Edmonton Institution for Women is more than 90 per cent, according to the CSC). Our prisons are a continuation of the harm done to indigenous peoples through the residential schools. There's a strong connection between this harm done and the violence, substance abuse and crime we see in the children and grandchildren of former students of the schools. Incarcerating indigenous women, especially those who are far from their people and cut off from their culture, is a repetition of what happened in the schools. Few families have the means to visit. When a man goes into prison, often his wife or partner keeps in touch, and the family, although fragile, has a chance of survival. When a woman goes into prison, she is often the sole support to the family, and her children go into foster care. This is a huge issue for female inmates, often resulting in or exacerbating mental illness: About 60 per cent of women in penitentiaries are mentally ill. CSC administrators say it's their biggest issue. When you enter a women's prison, you can feel despair, hopelessness and depression. It's both palpable and horrifying. Cut off from their families and culture, and locked up in a "white man's justice system" makes these women ill, both mentally and physically. There aren't enough psychologists to give meaningful talk therapy, so women are medicated. I have been in book club circles in which I am aware that most of the women are on mood-altering medications. I was told in one institution that as soon as a woman enters the system, she goes to a special unit where she is

“stabilized” with medication. Early on in my visits to the women’s penitentiaries, I realized that there were no books written by, or relating to, the cultures of Canadian indigenous people in the libraries. My organization, Book Clubs for Inmates, then bought sets of books written by some of our great aboriginal writers, and these titles are on all our lists for the book clubs. Although we are pleased to help, and have privately donated funds, we wonder why we should have to do this? One of the main issues relating to the prevalent despair of the women is that there is no meaningful job training inside. When they are released, the women can only get minimum-wage jobs, not enough to support their children and get them back. Thus we have here all the same marks of the residential schools: Indigenous people cut off from their families and culture, and families, which are already broken, unable to be reunited after incarceration. Indigenous peoples were badly served by Canada’s residential schools. Many of the schools’ children are now in the penitentiaries because of crime that is related to the destruction of their families by these very schools. Prisons further break down family life and exacerbate the cycle of poverty, crime and violence both on and off the reserves. We all need to become more educated about what is happening to indigenous people in prisons, especially in the women’s prisons as these problems are the most extreme and damaging for future generations. If we don’t address these issues, we become complicit in the ongoing tragedy of the residential schools.

Carol Finlay

The Globe and Mail - Mar 28, 2016

Why Do So Many Canadian Prisoners Die After Their Release?

The tragic stories of Ashley Smith, Edward Snowshoe and other inmates who have died while in Canadian correctional facilities have rightly made headlines around the country. Less well known are the premature deaths of hundreds of Canadians every year from preventable causes after they are released from jails and prisons.

Canadians might be surprised to learn that many health and social services widely available in the

community are not available in most of Canada’s correctional facilities – this needs to change. We are missing a critical window of opportunity to reframe the period of incarceration as a time to help people improve their health and well-being before returning to our communities.

We recently published a study in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal Open* which looked at the rates and causes of death for people who had experienced incarceration in their lifetime. When we examined death in almost 50,000 former Ontario provincial inmates over a twelve year period, we found a shocking discrepancy in life expectancy.

Compared to the general population, the average life expectancy of people who had experienced incarceration was four years shorter for men (73.4 years of age compared to 77.6 years) and 10 years shorter for women (72.3 compared to 82.9 years). The likelihood of dying while in custody was two times what we would expect for people of the same age in the general population. But even after people returned to their communities, the chances of dying during the follow up period was still four times what we would expect for the general population.

So does incarceration decrease life expectancy? We don’t know. We can’t clearly distinguish the specific impact that incarceration has on life expectancy.

But we know that those in prison have a higher risk of early death for a variety of reasons beyond incarceration itself, and that this high risk extends far beyond the period of incarceration.

Here’s what the evidence tells us.

People who spend time in jails and prisons in Canada have often experienced serious adverse events in childhood, such as physical or sexual abuse, and the majority have not completed high school. They have high rates of diseases including mental illnesses, substance use disorders, HIV and hepatitis C. They also tend to have low rates of employment and high rates of homelessness.

So what can we do to prevent premature deaths in this population?

The time in custody offers a valuable opportunity to implement evidence-based interventions. One obvious focus is preventing the harms associated with substance use, which is very common among inmates.

Substance use leads to premature death directly, for example through overdose. Substance use

also leads to premature death indirectly, via infection with HIV or hepatitis C in people who share needles, or to cirrhosis and liver cancer in people who drink heavily.

We have a lot of evidence about ways to treat problems with substance use and to prevent associated harms. However, many of these standard treatments that are widely available in the community are not accessible in many correctional facilities in Canada.

This includes nicotine replacement therapy to help people quit smoking and methadone maintenance therapy for people who are addicted to opiates like heroin and morphine.

We know that people inject drugs in prisons, but we don't provide access to clean needles – which could lead to people sharing needles and becoming infected with HIV and hepatitis C.

Finally, even though the risk of overdose in the weeks after release from prison is 56 times what we would expect for the general population, in most jurisdictions we don't train inmates on how to prevent overdoses or offer them the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone when they are released.

Another missed opportunity is our failure to facilitate access to primary care when people get out of jail or prison. With relatively high rates of early death from a variety of diseases, including chronic diseases like cancer (1.6 times as likely than in the general population) and heart disease (3.1 times as likely), primary care would provide former inmates with a means to access prevention programs and to be screened for, diagnosed with, and treated for diseases.

Supporting people who experience incarceration is good for these individuals, for their families, and for our communities. People who spend time in custody are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, husbands, employees and neighbours.

Improving access to appropriate health treatments could help people who experience incarceration to improve their health, support their social functioning, improve public safety and decrease re-incarceration. Let's not waste this opportunity.

Fiona Kouyoumdjian

Stephen Hwang

Huffington Post - May 27, 2016

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

Prisoner

Even sunlight dares
And trembles through my bars
To shimmer dances on the floor
A clang of lock and keys and heels
And blood-dried guns
Even sunshine dares
It's jail and bail
Then rails to run
Guard grey men
Serve plates of rattle
Noise and concrete
Death and beans
Then pale sun stumbles
Through the poles of iron
To warm the horror
Of grey guard men
It's jail and bail
Then rails to run
BlackKnight. The me myself of me
Sleeks in the folds of history of fear
To secret to hold me deep and
Close my ears of lulls and
Clangs and memory of hate
Then night and sleep and dreams
It's jail and bail
Then rails to run

- Sharon Murray

Scared & Lonely

I see the stars and remember my scars,
I trace my date and remember my fate
As I listen 2 the keys
I wish I had someone to squeeze
As I lie in my bed in the middle of the night
I wish I had someone 2 hold me tight!

- Christy-Lee MacWilliams

"I postpone death by living, by suffering, by error, by risking, by giving, by loving."

- Anais Nin

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSP OEMSPOEMSP OEMSPOEMSP O

EMSP OEMSPOEMSP OEMSPOEMSP OEMSPOEMSP O

Last Chance

Reflections in our minds
 Are shadows mirrored in time
 Tragically ... we're wasting away
 We've reminisced all the parts
 That've pulled at our hearts
 While scrolling through lines to be played
 Our enigmatic routines
 Have never been what they seem
 Misery has now left us to our own
 We've fallen so far into this shit
 We're beggin' for one wish
 Just grant us an answer from a
 Place called Home

- Julie Dolliver

The Streets

Deep in my soul I'm a lost rambler
 Caught up in the street of confusion
 I travel around lost in a world of hate
 Every corner I turn pain & despair lie
 I look into the eyes of the lost
 I find souls like mine
 Trapped inside screaming in silence
 Nu one hears the pain, the suffering
 No one sees the hurt, the shame
 As they walk by with their shopping bags
 As they go about their days
 No one sees the hurt
 No one sees the pain
 Every day on those streets
 The lost & the hungry for love
 Someone to care, someone to hold
 'Spare change?', someone will ask
 Just a dollar or two to survive another day
 In a world of loss of hope, hunger & pain
 Driven by the desire to live one more day

- Constance Taggar

"It's not the load that breaks you down,
 it's the way you carry it."

- Lena Horne

Broken Wings

Sometimes the darkness
 Seems to be my light in these dreadful days
 My mind races, yet the demons still stay
 I want to run but it'll follow me
 I long for freedom
 But it's complete darkness; I can't see
 Where did my dreams go?
 They're so untouchable now
 I've always wanted a family
 And a man who'd cherish my vows
 I looked forward to teaching my grandchildren
 About life's mysteries
 But all I have now is insanity and complete
 misery,
 Endless heartache
 The tears overflow
 I was once a beautiful woman inside
 But now my heart has lost its glow

- Rebecca Reid

Untitled

The time that I've wasted, my biggest regret
 Rotting in this prison, I will never forget
 Thinking about all the things that I've done
 Crying and laughing, the pain and the fun
 Me and my shame & never-ending guilt
 Behind this wall of emptiness & pain that I've
 built
 I'm getting too old for this young person's game
 Acting real tough with no sense of shame
 Becoming this person I don't want to be
 I've hurt so many people that are so dear to me
 I'm trying real hard to not play the part
 I'm still holding my dreams deep in my heart
 I know I can make it, I just have to try
 I was headed for death & I don't want to die

- Lindsay Dubblesteyne

"Love makes your soul crawl out from its
 hiding place."

- Zora Neale Hurston

POEMSP O E M P O E M S P O E M S P O E M S P O E M S P O E

M S P O E M S P O E M S P O E M S P O E M S P O E M S P O E M

The Hole

I sit here alone
 In this tiny cell
 This place is rotten
 And stinks like hell
 My time here is short
 But seems to last forever
 How much more of this shit
 Can I endeavour
 The constant ringing in my ears
 Makes every second feel like years
 Cold steel & metal make this place
 While concrete walls surround my space
 My eyes are blurry, my throat is tight
 My spirit's ready to put up a fight
 Against my mind & the devil too
 But I know god is with me
 The good book says 'I love you'
 I know the sun is shining
 Outside this hole
 I can feel the warmth
 Deep in my soul
 And soon I'll be out
 Back in my home
 But I still feel like I'm all alone

- Jessica Bourgois

Dawn

Seems like I'm always waiting
 For morning to come
 Where the serenity of twilight
 Hovers before the dawn
 It's such an amazingly heavenly place
 The illuminated blue/grey screen
 That is the skyline above the trees
 Anticipates dissipation
 Booming silence is shattered by the faint
 Distant dulcet of a swallow
 And the seemingly timelessness bred dread
 That dawn marks the beginning of another
 Sentence day

- Wendy de Bruin

Evil's Pay

I sit here deep in thought
 It's inevitable, the brutality that I've brought
 My sin, my pleasure, in reality
 It's all bringing me down under
 What have I got to lose you wonder
 My life, my respect, my morals
 It all unfolds right before my eyes
 Judgment is coming & what have I got to show
 Nothing, I'll tell you, but lies & deceit
 The evil it brings me in my own defeat
 I'm tired I tell you, I said 'No more'
 The system is breakin' my soul
 I've taken its toll
 I'm all cashed out
 How much further can a girl fall?
 Please hear me, I'm yellin'
 I'm screaming, I want out!
 I want to start my healing
 To break down my walls
 To slaughter the demons
 To take all these feelings of pain
 To turn them into my cure
 And give me my sane
 So as I keep sitting here
 Jugglin', strugglin' deep in my thoughts
 Just know this, I'll look back on this day
 This time & be proud to say
 I'm making it & I no longer walk in the way
 In design for destruction on the devil's pay

- Delihla Sabrina Eliuk

Swept Away by 'Time'

My youth, swept away
 My motherhood, swept away
 My children, swept away
 My marriage, swept away
 My love, swept away
 My self, swept away
 My life, swept away by Time

- Margaret Posey

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Harvoni: \$60,000 for 8 weeks (Genotype 1, low viral load, never-treated)

Harvoni: \$90,000 for 12 weeks (Genotype 1)

Sovaldi: \$55,000+ perhaps with other drugs for Genotypes other than Genotype 1

Federal Prison: you may be able to start your treatment while inside.

Provincial Prisons: Depending on the province, you may have to wait till you get out.

When released, get right on welfare or disability. Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.

Go to a Clinic and get your blood work done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

Important: most prisons, provincial drug plans, and private plans restrict the new drugs to people who have chronic hep C plus scarring of the liver (stage F2 or higher fibrosis). Both never-treated & people for whom Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin did not work are eligible for the newer treatments. For people with hep C and no liver scarring or light scarring (less than F2 fibrosis), it's still Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners

HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,
- anything in contact with blood! -

**BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C**

Hep C & Eating Well Inside

Your liver is your body's processing and power plant - everything you consume filters through it. If you have hep C, eating well can slow its progression in your liver.

We have some general tips on healthy eating for hep C inside. A diet low in fat, sugar, cholesterol, and sodium, but high in complex carbohydrates and sufficient protein is recommended.

-If you can, talk to health care and see if you qualify for a low-fat, low-cholesterol, or high-protein diet.

- Order peanut butter or protein bars from canteen. Watch your protein bar intake as they often contain lots of processed sugar.

-Eat protein like meats, peanut butter, beans, nuts, and cheese. Your body needs protein to fight infection and heal damaged liver cells. Protein helps you build and maintain muscle. Eat high-fat protein sources like meat, peanut butter and cheese in moderation.

-Eat carbohydrates. You need carbs to give you energy. Try to avoid high-sugar foods like candy, and go for complex carbs like pasta, potatoes, bread, fruits & vegetables.

- Eat all your vegetables - whatever you can get. You get vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables. Drink water. Coffee and cola can dehydrate you. Flush your system with some water.

-Cut back on fatty and salty foods if you can, including deep-fried foods. They make your liver work overtime.

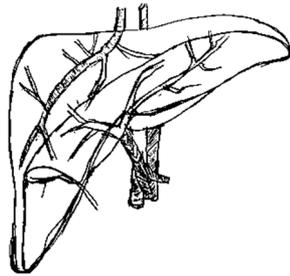
-Cut down or stop drinking. Alcohol is very hard on your liver.

-Try to exercise a bit every day. Walk or jog around the yard. Lift weights to keep your muscles strong or get the blood flowing with push-ups and sit-ups.

-Watch your health. Put in a health care request if you get swelling or pain in the right side of your torso.

-Educate yourself about hepatitis C.

* If you have advanced liver disease or another condition like diabetes that requires a special diet, try to talk to a health professional before making changes to your diet.



Federal Incarceration by the Numbers

\$322 - average daily cost of a prisoner in a penitentiary in 2011-12 (\$221 in 2001-02)

\$117,788 - average annual cost of a prisoner in a prison in 2011-12

\$151,484 - annual cost of a prisoner in max.

\$104,889 - annual cost of a prisoner in med.

\$91,959 - annual cost of a prisoner in min.

7,695 - number of corrections officers in Federal prisons

\$78.76 - amount paid per Canadian, per year, to fund the Federal prison system

Prisoner Profile

Number of prisoners in Federal prisons:

2013: 14,745

2002: 12,663

Age of inmates:

18-29: 40.5%

30s: 27.5%

40s: 19.4%

50-69: 11.7%

70+: 0.8%

2,823 incarcerated for murder

479 dangerous offenders serving indefinite sentences

Race:

58% of inmates are white

23% are aboriginal

Religion:

36% are Catholic

15% are Protestants

5% are Muslims

Source: Correction Service Canada

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration
- Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

F.E.A.T.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, F.E.A.T. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at info@featforchildren.org or by phone at 416-505-5333.

Women's Prison Network Summer 2016 - Issue #3

PO Box 39, Stn P
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info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org
download & print:
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send in your work
before Aug 1, 2016
Fall Issue #4 is sent
out Sept 1, 2016



Prison Radio

- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver - CO-OP 100.5 FM
Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,

Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net

Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted (AIDWYC)

AIDWYC is a non-profit, primarily volunteer organization that looks into claims of innocence. If you would like to contact AIDWYC to discuss whether your case meets their strict criteria, please contact:

1-800-249-1329
win@aidwyc.org

111 Peter St, Suite 408
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If you are a woman, trans or youth prisoner and would like to receive a copy of 'Women's Prison Network', write to us and we will put you on our mailing list. Let us know if you move.

*This magazine is by and for you,
thank you for your contributions!*
