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CHALLENGING CORRECTIONS: EMPOWERING LGBTQ FOLX

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies

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All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies have been completed.

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Challenging Corrections: Empowering LGBTQ Folx

Alexandrea Martin

Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies Honors Thesis

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Abstract:

While incarcerated, LGBTQ folx are subjected to discrimination, harassment, lack of access to healthcare, solitary confinement, separated housing, and sexual violence--conditions and circumstances that can trigger old traumas that produced substance abuse and mental health concerns and increase the probability of recidivism. The Workshop Curriculum I have designed is meant to empower LGBTQ FWI (Folx who are Incarcerated) to minimize the harmful impacts of these systematic barriers created by Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex. The Criminal Justice Systems needs to challenge Corrections by implementing Community-Based Corrections, Trauma Informed Care, Gender Neutral Responsivity, and specialized education for staff and FWI.

Dedication to:

My parents for unconditionally loving and supporting me through my wild journey,

My grandma for all of the encouragement,

My brother for listening to my social justice rants,

Gary Blackford for motivating me to grow and be the best me I can possibly be,

Dr. Mary Ann Rasmussen for advocating for me during this entire process,

Dr. Rachel Williams for inspiring me to pursue my passions and guiding me in the right direction,

My friends in the Senior Research Seminar and the University of Iowa Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies Department for providing a support system and positive space,

And, most importantly, to all of the folx who are incarcerated that I have worked with and will continue to work with in the future, thank you for inspiring me to do this hard work. You all deserve love, support, and justice. I promise to keep working on reforming the Criminal Justice System to be more inclusive and empowering.

The fight for justice is not over; it's just beginning.

Introduction: Finding Empowerment and Purpose

“It took me a long time to develop a voice and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent,” are words that Madeleine Albright once said. I truly believe Albright could not describe my self evolution over the past four years any differently. I entered college completely unaware and oblivious to the social ills our culture perpetuates, but that began to change when, after stumbling through Biology and Psychology, I found Cultural Anthropology and Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies. Both departments have exposed me to silenced social issues that fuel discrimination, social stratification, and inequities. I am genuinely grateful for the diligent professors and colleagues who inspired me to dive deeper into my studies and to question everything I encounter. It’s taken me a long time to find my voice because I have been conditioned most of my entire life to be silent and not to question the inequities we all face. Now that I have found my passion to make a difference in this world by tackling these inequalities created by racism, genderism, classism, and homophobia, I am empowered to speak up for myself and those who cannot advocate for themselves. I am no longer going to be silent; I am now fearless, brave, and persistent. My voice is strong enough to expose the unfair social practices and norms that continue to plague our societal institutions, like the Prison Industrial Complex, to create a safer, more equitable, and inclusive environment for all. My evolving journey through my undergraduate studies has given me the confidence to continue to advocate for all including folx who are incarcerated (FBI.) This Honors Capstone Project is the culmination of all of my blood, sweat, and

tears, and my persistent efforts to tackle the barriers LGBTQ+ FWI endure and provide support to the oppressed.

To further define, folx is an inclusive gender neutral term used to describe all people including transgender, genderqueer, and genderfluid people. Power is deeply ingrained in language, and folx is an attempt to disrupt the social ills our society perpetuates with gendered language. Using an 'X' makes Folxs gender neutral because 'folks' is gendered in some languages, which gives the patriarchy power to continue to force binary expectations on folx. LGBTQ Folx who are Incarcerated (FWI) is progressive term created to respect and include all people in the conversation surrounding incarceration and people who identify as LGBTQ. FWI utilizes person-centered language. First and foremost, FWI are folxs first, not prisoners, inmates, or offenders. Additionally, LGBTQ FWI puts LGBTQ identities first. LGBTQ refers to folx who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. Lesbians may be womxn who are sexually attracted to other womxn and femininity, while gay can refer to men who are sexually attracted to other men and masculinity. Bisexuality is when someone is romantically and sexually attracted to both men, womxn, masculinity, and femininity. Folx who are transgender identify as a different gender than the sex they were classified as at birth. For example, a transwoman who was born as a male identifies as a womxn. Sex and gender are two different identities. Sex is fluid from asexuality to femaleness and maleness while gender usually involves the expression and/or identity of folx who may be nongender or genderqueer or a woman or man. Lastly, Queer can refer to multiple identities like being sexually and romantically

attracted to multiple genders, non-heterosexual, or not fitting into cultural norms around binary sexualities. LGBTQ is an attempt to disrupt the heteronormative and binary classification of individual's sexual orientation and gender identity. Below is the Genderbread Person graphic that visually explains the complexity and fluidity of LGBTQ identities. In the LGBTQ FWI Support Group Curriculum, we use the Gender Unicorn graphic in Week 1 to allow FWI to explore their sexuality, gender, and sex. In my opinion, the Gender Unicorn is more inclusive and engaging than the Genderbread Person, and that is why I used it in my curriculum.

Figure 1: The Genderbread Person graphic used in previous curriculum. The Gender Unicorn is more inclusive than the Genderbread Person. I wanted to share this graphic to compare it to the Gender Unicorn in the curriculum to demonstrate the progress in terminology and language.

LGBTQ Folx are marginalized and continuously discriminated against in our culture, but we need to alter the way we see LGBTQ to become more positive. As a womxn apart of the LGBT community, I view LGBTQ coming first before folx as a way to celebrate and eliminate the stigma against LGBTQ people. Being LGBTQ is not a negative fixed identity and way of life. I was not born queer; I became queer and my sexuality and gender are always fluidly evolving. LGBTQ FWI may not be incarcerated for their entire lives, and their identities as folxs who are incarcerated will be ever changing throughout their sentenced term in prison, parole, and life after being in the Criminal Justice System. LGBTQ FWI is not the final term used to represent LGBTQ FWI. In the future, LGBTQ FWI may evolve to become even more inclusive. Additionally, I will also be using 'womxn,' instead of women or woman, through this paper to expose and eliminate the discrimination and institutional barriers womxn have historically faced and still fight today. Womxn are not continuation of men but independent and free from marginalization. A dynamic change in language can represent how our sociocultural norms are progressing to become more aware of societal inequities. But during my practicum, I observed how heteronormative social norms discriminate against LBGTQ Folx who are Incarcerated (FWI) by creating barriers and lack of support and resources.

Over 2017 Winter Break, I decided to change my capstone project to specifically focus on providing support to LGBTQIA+ FWI due to my practicum and volunteer experiences at ICIW and my internship at Fresh Start Women's Facility with the 5th Judicial District. I have observed so much silence surrounding queer relationships in

prison even though research reveals “the incarceration rate of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people is three times greater than that of American adults generally” and 33% (1/3) of womxn in prison identify as LB (Stemple 2017). With such a high rate of nonheteronormative identities in correctional facilities, there is little acknowledgement and insufficient resources and support for LGBTQIA+ FWI in the state of Iowa. No search results from the Prison Activist Resource Center, a webpage list of all national LGBT Organizations and Resources for LGBTQ+ FWI, were found in Iowa. Because of institutionalized racism, Iowa is third in the nation for disproportionately locking up people of color “with blacks 11.1 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites, based on the state's population” (Haley 2016). The politics of marginalized sexual, gender, and racial identities continue to entrap marginalized people in prison. After my fall research and thinking more about my place in this world and my GWSS education, I had an epiphany. I realized my opportunity to empower LGBTQIA+ FWI to advocate for their rights and make healthy choices so they can reduce their chances of reoffending.

Activism against rape supportive culture is extremely important to me because of my personal experiences and the sexual hostility I have observed that our society actively promotes. I started out this capstone project wanting to analyze the University of Iowa's sexual assault policies and their implementation always with a social justice and advocacy framework. As I was going through the GWSS Practicum at Iowa Correctional Institution for Women, I began seeing similar policies and sociocultural connections between University of Iowa campus and ICIW. Rape culture, misogyny, and homophobia are deeply ingrained in the world college students and folx who are

incarcerated live in and in how people interact and live together. Rape culture “is hard to deconstruct, drawing on beliefs that students [and folx who are incarcerated] soaked up long before college [and prison]” from their social and familial structures related the intersectionality of privileges and disadvantages (Cook 2012). Sexual violence is perpetuated by conditioning community members to conform to norms that usually prefer masculine behaviors of being aggressive, dominant, and competitive within ideologies around heteronormative sex. Nonheteronormative and nonbinary identities, behaviors, and expressions are seen as ‘deviant’ from institutional sociocultural norms, which make people who self identify as queer and womxn targets for sexual violence and harassment. The “institutional and sociocultural factors related to gender, [race, sexuality,] and class inequalities on college [and prison] campuses are problematic and they directly and indirectly contribute to the occurrence of sexual assault as well as an overall tolerance of a rape-supportive culture” (Jozkowski 2017). LGBTQIA+ people in both institutions are more likely to be sexually victimized and less supported even with Title IX and the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) policies and supposed ‘protections’. Under Title IX, Speak Out Survey results claim that womxn at the University of Iowa have a one in five chance of being sexually violated, while Reuters reported that “12 percent of incarcerated sexual minorities say they’ve been sexually victimized by another inmate and 5 percent say they’ve been sexually victimized by staff, as compared with 1.2 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively, of heterosexual inmates” (Crist 2016). Even though the U.S. Department of Justice passed the Prison

Rape Elimination Act (PREA¹) in 2003 to address prison sexual violence, LGBT FWI still face a higher chance of being sexually violated than their heterosexual peers even with mandated regulations. Moreover, sexual assault is a major public health and environmental and sociocultural community issue that the University of Iowa and Iowa Department of Corrections need to take more seriously by **properly implementing** policies and protocols that are meant to protect students and people who are incarcerated. LGBTQ FWI confront “higher rates of incarceration, longer sentences, widespread sexual victimization, disproportionate isolation, and poor mental health outcomes and this urgently requires a rethinking of current health and criminal justice approaches [and policies for] this [at risk] population” (Stemple 2017). Most importantly, policies are ideally created to provide safe environments, but most policies are not properly enforced and carried out. Right now, Iowa Department of Corrections has no policies to protect and support LGBT FWI besides federal PREA requirements. Currently within ICIW, there is little support for LGBTQIA+ folx who are incarcerated, and there is a desperate need for more diversity awareness programs designed to support folx and educate all Department of Corrections employees and general population about the struggles that LGBT FWI face on a daily basis due to sociocultural discrimination and sexual violence.

In this project, I reflect on my personal experiences working with LGBTQ FWI in correction, address the barriers LGBTQ FWI experience, and develop a trauma-formed curriculum created to support LGBT FWI. The things I have seen and heard in my

¹ PREA will be discussed later on.

practicum and internship as a group facilitator have led me to this activism and research. Prisons do not operate like general society because there are different social norms meant to dehumanize and punish people who have committed social deviance. But LGBT Folx who are incarcerated experience discrimination by staff and other people who are incarcerated, lack of access to healthcare, sexual abuse, trauma, and substance abuse similarly to outside society's marginalization because of their violations of heteronormative standards. The Prison Industrial Complex is thriving as state and private interests continue to expand the nation's prisons and correctional facilities. States are now giving up their jurisdiction to control corrections and paying private companies to oversee and run all aspects of facility incarceration. As prisons have been expanding for the monetary benefit of private interests, other supportive public institutions, like schools and housing, have disappeared and the ideal of rehabilitation to reform people who are incarcerated is becoming less and less valued. As Caleb Smith writes in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, the correctional system "has shifted its focus away from the offender, toward target populations, away from justice, [and] away from rehabilitation" (Burgett 2014). The racist, sexist, classist, and homophobic centerpiece of the Prison Industrial Complex system has contributed to the intensifying consequences of the School-to-Prison pipeline and the War on Drugs, LGBTQ FWI's troubled path into the Criminal Justice System. Therefore, my capstone project is meant to shed light on the social ills of the Prison Industrial Complex and to humanize LGBTQ FWI who are demonized by our society. Most importantly, the sole purpose of this work is to develop a theoretical LGBTQ FWI support group curriculum

that addresses the resources and support LGBTQ FWI name as inadequate in prison. My main goal is to concentrate on what they need from staff, administration, and policy makers to give them a voice and an opportunity to be more empowered. In the future after graduating, I want to continue refining this curriculum in graduate school and a future career because the work around research and social justice activism for LGBTQ FWI will never be finished.

My Participant Observation Journey Through the Criminal Justice System

When I first pulled up to Fresh Start Women's Center in Des Moines in December 2017, I was shocked at the outside of the women's correctional facility. The brick building looks like a clean nursing home with an old abandoned playground in the backyard. When I walked in, womxn were rushing around cleaning the Residential Officers' desk, administration offices, and the communal hang out space and kitchen. There are no airport-security-like metal detectors or bars on the bedroom doors just four beds and little closets like a college dorm room. The womxn do not wear orange uniforms but pajamas, jeans, sweatshirts, and work uniforms, and the Residential Officers (ROs) do not don militant uniforms. The comfortable trauma-informed environment was purposefully welcoming with soothing colored walls, floral murals with inspirational quotes, and comfy couches. At 8:30am, the clients gathered together for their daily meditation and quiet time. This is not your stereotypical cold sterile correctional facility. Fresh Start is a community-based correctional facility that focuses on reintegrating people who have been incarcerated back into the community as apart of their parole and probation requirements to get 'off paper.' The overall mission "of the

Fresh Start Women's Program is to provide a safe and holistic approach to supervision that seeks to educate, support and advocate for all women to transform their lives. The program emphasizes gender responsiveness and a trauma informed approach to case management” (Fresh Start Women’s Center 2017-2018). Promoting holistic treatment opportunities, employment, education, healthy parenting skills, and focusing on individualized needs is a progressive approach compared to traditional corrections model which supports crime control, harsh sentences, and little rehabilitation efforts. Fresh Start’s main focus is on humanistic rehabilitation, not punishment.

Before I started my internship at Fresh Start, I went to Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (ICIW) for a practicum and volunteer experience starting in September 2017. ICIW is more similar to the stereotypical prison you may see in the media and even compare to Litchfield Penitentiary, a minimum-security women's federal prison, featured in Orange is the New Black (OITNB). Similarly, ICIW has metal detectors, minimum security, and uniforms for FWI and Correctional Officers (COs.). When I walked into ICIW for the first time, I felt very calm and comfortable which was confusing and conflicting because society reinforces stereotypes about corrections facilities and FWI. I had to evaluate everything society has conditioned me to believe about incarceration and let it all go. ICIW has no cells with bars from my observations during a campus tour but rather facilities that look like high security college dorms. The buildings have common spaces with TVs, gyms, and kitchens. Also, the middle P building has classrooms for DMACC (Des Moines Area Community College) educational programs and group meetings for our Art Class and others like Healthy

Relationships and Healing Trauma, and behind that building there is the Sacred Space for diverse religious congregations and ceremonies. Society portrays all of these images of 'hard dangerous criminals' that are confined to dirty desolate prison cells but that's not reality. I quickly reaffirmed that pop culture and media, like *Orange is the New Black* (OITNB,) marginalize FWI by incorrectly portraying them with a voyeuristic perspective.

The Impact of the Fetishization and Performative Stereotypes of LGBTQ FWI in Popular Culture

American popular culture often fetishizes and stereotypes LGBTQ FWI. One show with a mixed relation to this harmful dynamic is the Netflix series *Orange is the New Black* (OITNB) which premiered in 2013 and is currently filming its sixth season with a seventh season on the way. The show is based on the 'real life' experiences that Piper Kerman published in her memoir, *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* (2010). When *OITNB* does not work, it sensationalizes prison and gives viewers a fantasy image of the reality of prison culture. Over the years, *OITNB* has been viewed by critics as flipping the 'lesbian script' but these stereotypes actually contribute to FWI being seen as deviant societal outsiders. When Piper Chapman arrives at Litchfield Penitentiary, she undergoes culture shock especially in 'Season 1, Episode 3: Lesbian Request Denied' when fellow 'inmate' Suzanne 'Crazy Eyes' Warren begins targeting Chapman and calling Chapman her wife. *OITNB* casts Warren as a masculine possessive and aggressive 'stud'² in the cafeteria scene where Warren becomes protective of Chapman and screams "this is my wife, bitch. I will cut you" at

² 'Studs' are considered to be masculine presenting lesbians. FWI experiences at ICIW will be discussed later on.

another character who is talking with Chapman (Heder 2013). The problem here is that Warren is portrayed as having emotional and mental disabilities and is a black queer womxn. *OITNB* depicts her intersecting marginalized identities of race, sexuality, gender, and disability as dangerous and volatile to viewers who may not be able to analyze the falsity of these characterizations. Later in the episode, Chapman is called into her Correctional Counselor's office to discuss her housing placement, and she finds out that Warren has persistently applied to be a bunkmate with Chapman. Her Correctional Counselor, Sam Healy, firmly explains the lesbian culture in disturbing homophobic language. He says "'She's what we call a 'stud,' which is very confusing for a nice girl like you, because, let's be honest, she looks like a man ... My advice? Let her down easy ... Lesbians can be very dangerous. It's the testosterone" (Heder 2010). Additionally, he thinks that there should be a separate housing wing for the 'boys.'

There's a lot wrong with this scene. First of all, claiming that 'lesbians can be very dangerous' perpetuates the idea that butch lesbians are predators who will rape femme womxn. Secondly, homosexuality has no connection with hormones. This biologically essentialist belief pejoratively dismisses the idea of social constructionism where identities are not innate but learned by one's societal exposure. Thirdly, separate housing based on LGBTQIA+ identities violates Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) housing requirements. Segregated housing of LGBT FWI is a violation punishable by federal defunding. Some correctional officers, counselors, and administration may have these opinions but *OITNB* appears to be casting all employees as unsupportive of the LGBTQIA+ community.

While this episode promotes harmful conceptions about LGBT FWI by using distorted stereotypes, *OITNB* also exposes viewers to an intersectional feminist critique of prison through Laverne Cox, a transwomxn of color who plays Sophia Burset on the show. Cox has been a trailblazer for the queer community by being the first openly trans* figure to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy award. Her breakout stardom has brought awareness to trans* issues, especially for trans* folx³ who are incarcerated. So while we see stereotypes on *OITNB*, we also see progressive portrayals of LGBTQ FWI that humanize prison, and shed light on the real life experiences of FWI.

At Fresh Start, I discussed the stereotypes from *OITNB* with LGBT FWI to gain more of an understanding about their experiences at ICIW. I started sitting in morning meditations when my supervisor mentioned how disorganized and unsuccessful the sessions were becoming. One morning, I joined the group to gain rapport, and one of the womx, who we will call Lea,⁴ began talking to me. She recognized me from my Healthy Relationships Practicum at ICIW, but she participated in a different group than mine. I asked for her honest opinion on how she liked the class. Lea told me that she loved the discussion and the 'similarities between us' yarn activity but she disliked the educational session on LGBTQ identities, which is interesting since she identifies as queer but did not participate in the LGBTQ group⁵. Lea and I discussed her queer

³ Transwomxn and Transman continue to perpetuate the binary. Trans* disrupts the binary and promotes more gender neutrality.

⁴ Her identity was changed for her own privacy and confidentiality purposes.

⁵ After talking with other group facilitators, they confirmed that the LGBTQ group in the practicum at ICIW enjoyed discussing the LGBTQ identities and terms since they identify as members of the queer community. During the queer educational curriculum unit, the non-LGBTQ groups also talked about what it means to be a member of the queer community and they did not connect to those activities. Then, the participants colored a 'genderbread' person with their fluid and diverse sex, gender identities, sexual attraction, and romantic attraction. It's intriguing to me how Lea has had same sex relationships while being incarcerated but did not enjoy the identity week session.

experiences in prison and how she had a girlfriend who she described as a 'bitch.'

According to Lea, her ex-girlfriend was clingy because they had no activities or entertainment to occupy themselves so they spent every moment together, and their relationship quickly turned toxic. On the inside, Lea was not 'gay for stay.' 'Gay for stay, straight at the gate' is a term used to describe womxn who come to prison and have same-sex relationships but have 'stricty' heterosexual relationships on the outside when they get out on parole. Lea had girlfriends on the outside but she preferred femme women, not 'studs.' Within correctional settings, there is prison slang, norms, and values that people who are incarcerated become socialized to accept or, in lack of better terms, prisonized to conform to using and performing. Prison argot may seem politically incorrect and inappropriate to some people, so there are many conflicting opinions about 'gay for stay' agendas inside and outside of prison. A reporter for the Houston Chronicle, Keri Blakinger, a womxn who claims she was treated like a man in prison because of her masculine appearance, claims that there are fluid shades of lesbianism in prison because "everyone's a lesbian in prison...everyone — regardless of her sexual orientation on the outside — has a girlfriend in prison." (2017). Some FWI use 'girlfriend' as a way to label their best friend for companionship, and others use 'girlfriend' to signify high-risk sexual and romantic relationships. All forms of intimacy between FWI, like hugging, kissing, and most dangerous sexual contact, is against all rules and can result in a incident report which jeopardizes their level privileges and restrictions and also parole dates. Blakinger develops the idea further and says that gender and sexuality become murky on the inside which Lea recalls seeing at ICIW.

Lea talked about her two roommates at ICIW who were called 'studs' because of their masculine butch appearance of short hair, no make-up, and baggy clothes which connects to OITNB's interpretation of 'studs.' Some 'studs' do not identify as men but prefer to be 'girls.' According to her experiences, Lea said that most 'studs' aggressively picked a girlfriend like Warren did with Chapman and they were more likely to go to the hole⁶ for having sexual contact with another FWI.

The gender and sexuality stereotypes are also seen in *Girls Incarcerated*, a Netflix documentary that portrays the lives of young womxn in Madison Juvenile Correctional Facility and School. One student reaffirmed the stud stereotype of performing masculine lesbianism, but other young FWI said that girls mess around to just mess around because of boredom of just being in the correctional environment even if they are not 'gay.' One particular girl called some FWI, who mess around with other girls for food, 'Commissary Hoes' because "it's, like, they use a girl for their food" (Riggs 2018). Interestingly, commissary items and food are used as sexual currency. At Madison Juvenile Correctional Facility, "lots of girls get in trouble because the rules are no touching...it's no tolerance...[but] they have physical contact, all right. They go to blind spots" and find a way" (Riggs 2018). Netflix continues to fetishize the sexuality of young womxn and LGBT FWI in *Girls Incarcerated*, and the producers and editors of the documentary series portray damaging stereotypes about LGBTQ+ prison culture. Pop culture has all of these general ideas about 'prisoners' and 'offenders' who are LGBT without understanding individualized experiences of real people.

⁶ Also called SHU, Solitary Housing Unit

Another client⁷ at Fresh State let's call Jaime⁸, overheard me and Lea during our morning meditation and joined the conversation. During my conversation with Lea, he came out as a transman and the three of us talked about his experiences as being a transman who is incarcerated. He spoke about the discrimination and harassment he received from the Corrections Officers whose main jobs are to protect FWI and enforce policies. According to Jaime, being a masculine female and transman makes COs and administration feel like they have to police and reinforce gender norms. COs have the structural power and control to harass queer people who do not fit into the normalized gender stereotypes. For example, Jaime claimed that on his third day at ICIW he was once written up for taking a hair off his girlfriend's shirt while his friends were caught kissing behind a unit and were let off without a write up. The most surprising part of our open conversation was that at ICIW, he took T (testosterone) to get a deeper voice and facial hair but he is currently not taking T at Fresh Start for no particular reason. In his opinion, ICIW administration supports giving trans* people hormones and healthcare but not respect. He said that ICIW staff would respect his name change but not his preferred gender pronouns and often misgendered him against his wishes. Furthermore, Jaime's extensive background in the correctional system began at a young age and shaped his current reality as a transman who is incarcerated.

The Consequences to LGBTQ Youth of the School-to-Prison Pipeline

⁷ Client is used instead of 'offender,' 'felon,' or 'inmate' in community based correctional facilities to destigmatize society's way of shaming people who are incarcerated.

⁸ His identity was changed for his own privacy and confidentiality.

When Jaime was young, he was placed in a juvenile facility where he was approached by a lesbian guard who would favor him in secret but target him for being queer around all the other clients. I intentionally did not continue to ask Jaime his experiences in juvenile justice facilities because I did not want to trigger him if he had experienced sexual abuse from that specific CO. Research from the *American Journal of Public Health* has shown that LGBTQ FWI “are more likely to have experienced childhood sexual abuse than straight inmates” (Stemple 2017). Jaime and many of us are probably unaware of the social barriers that had conditioned him to enter the Criminal Justice System at such a young age, but he was thrown into the School-to-Prison Pipeline due to the crimes he committed and his marginalized sexuality and gender identity. The School-to-Prison Pipeline is the concept that punitive policies and lack of bullying and harassment prevention at schools push at risk students out of the classroom and into the juvenile criminal justice system, events which are more likely to lead to a lifetime struggle with recidivism. The theory behind the school-to prison pipeline is usually applied to youth of color, but now research on the LGBTQ School-to-Prison Pipeline is becoming significantly more recognized as a social justice issue due to alarming research findings. According to Movement Advancement Program, LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System with 7-9% of youth nationwide identifying as queer, but 20% of youth in juvenile justice facilities identifying as LGBTQ. Additionally, 40% of girls in juvenile justice facilities identify as queer which relates to the high statistic of 33% of women in prison identifying as LB (Stemple 2017). Additional data says that LGBTQ youth are “**three times** more likely

to experience criminal injustice and school sanctions than students” who do not identify as LGBTQ (Banner 2015). Fundamentally, discrimination forces LGBTQ youth into the Criminal Justice System.

Figure 2: I created this graphic to display the factors that fuel the School-to-Prison Pipeline for LGBTQ Youth.

The graphic above portrays how the School-to-Prison Pipeline cycle begins with foundational societal factors that push LGBTQ youth to enter the Criminal Justice System. Community and family rejection and instability, poverty, homelessness, racism, abuse, and harsh community policing techniques like stop and frisk all intersect to increase vulnerability in the school and educational system. In *Girls Incarcerated*, we see one of the more high risk girls talking about how she should have been in prison a long time ago because prison is in her blood and in her family (Riggs 2018). Many of

her family members had already gone to prison and she “already knew what path [she] was going down” and that was all she was taught (Riggs 2018). Around 60% of womxn who are incarcerated are mothers, and their incarceration significantly influence their children and could be a catalyst to entering the School-to-Prison Pipeline. It is clear that the Prison Industrial Complex can create familial and parental instability and push young LGBTQ kids into the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Also, the Criminal Justice System wrongfully profiles LGBTQ youth as sex workers and more likely to commit ‘sex crimes’ which leads to over policing of queer youth. These factors growing up could “create pathways to substance abuse, homelessness, and detention” (Stemple 2017). Overall, the underlying foundation for all of these colliding societal pressures are transphobic, homophobic, biphobic, and queerphobic attitudes and beliefs. If an LGBTQ youth does not fit within the heteronormative standards society reinforces, then they are more likely to experience social exile.

Next in the school and educational systems, the School-to-Prison Pipeline claims that LGBTQ youth are “more likely to be suspended, expelled, or otherwise removed from school settings— often for relatively minor offenses—and pushed into the juvenile justice and broader correctional systems” (Movement Advancement Project 2018). Failure to implement LGBTQ-inclusive anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies usually result in strict punishments with removal, suspension, and expulsion. The education system over-relies on severe discipline to enforce zero-tolerance policies that have negative consequences for all students. Exclusionary punishment does “not address the root causes of bullying... [but instead] continues the bullying cycle and

contributes to the deterioration of learning environments and the alienation of students” with oppressed identities (Banner 2015). The School-to-Prison Pipeline exposes how the policies created to supposedly protect students who are more likely to be bullied actually end up severely harming them. For example, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) conducted a national school climate survey and found that 56% of LGBTQ students feel unsafe at school due to bullying and harassment, and LGBT youth who were bullied “at school often experience more negative impacts, including harsher school discipline, increased risk of substance use and mental health challenges, missed school, thoughts of suicide, and lower aspirations to attend college” (Movement Advancement Project 2018). All of these unhealthy effects contribute to a lower chance of graduating and also a higher chance of struggling with mental health and substance abuse during and after school. The GLSEN also reported that “3.4% of LGBT youth said they did not plan to graduate high school or were unsure if they would graduate, and when asked why, a majority of these students (57%) named hostile or unsupportive school environments as the reason why they felt they had to leave school” (Movement Advancement Project 2018). Without a high school diploma and plans to attend college, these LGBTQ youth have limited employment opportunities which could lead to poverty and homelessness.

Not surprisingly, transgender and gender non-conforming students are more likely to be punished for just expressing themselves by going into their preferred bathroom, but another intersecting factor in the LGBTQ+ School-to-Prison Pipeline is race and institutionalized racism. Black “and Latino students, in particular, are at

increased risk for harsh disciplinary policies that can result in detention, suspension, and expulsion (Movement Advancement Project 2018). For instance, Black girls “who are perceived to be gender non-conforming [and LGBTQ] in some way, such as dressing in a more stereotypically masculine fashion, speaking out in class, or playing sports, are more likely to be disciplined” than other students, especially heterosexual and white students (Movement Advancement Project 2018). Failing to conform to white feminine social norms for girls of color leads to them being viewed as masculine and aggressive. Their non-normative identities and expressions threaten the biases in the criminal justice system and may lead to unequal treatment resulting in harsher punishments and unfair sentences. The intersectionality of racism, homophobia, transphobia, and sexism are significantly responsible for targeting and pushing LGBT youth to enter the criminal justice system which affects their entire lives and future.

Once in the juvenile justice facilities, LGBTQ youth are more likely to be exposed to physical violence, discrimination, and sexual assault by other youth and by correctional staff. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 18% of LGB youth have been forced to have sexual intercourse without their consent at some point in their lives and living in a juvenile justice facility puts them at a higher risk for even more sexual victimization (LGBT Youth). All of the barriers and abuse these adolescents face induce trauma and lead to mental health and substance abuse concerns. In addition, gaining access to healthcare, like hormones and quality counseling, is difficult for youth who do not have access and support. In the Netflix documentary series, *Girls Incarcerated*, Superintendent of the ‘school,’ John Galipeau, said that “17-18% of girls

return. It means that almost 80% are successful” (Riggs 2018). After being released on parole, the odds are stacked against formerly incarcerated youth. Galipeau claims that the public school system, not involved and unsupportive parenting, and lack of self-worth and coping skills attributes to their return. Many struggle to find employment and housing and to graduate from high school. 40% of LGBTQ Youth are homeless and more vulnerable on the streets than youth who do not identify as LGBTQ (Our Issue). The School-to-Prison Pipeline is a continuous cycle that pushes LGBTQ to enter and reoffend to return to the criminal justice system. Our nation is failing to protect and empower LGBT Youth, and we are seeing the effects of discrimination on adult LGBTQ FWI. The community, educational system, and juvenile justice facilities have failed to help teens like Jaime and instead have marginalized his transman identities, failures which made him more vulnerable to recidivism and entering prison as an adult.

Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline cycle may seem difficult after seeing the impact it has on justice involved children and folx who are LGBTQ. In the *School to Prison Pipeline* Zine, Dr. Rachel Marie-Williams offers solutions to resist the social ills the School-to-Prison Pipeline creates (Marie-Crane 2011).

If you want to do more to help LGBTQ youth affected by the School-to-Prison Pipeline, as this zine suggests, speak out about the injustice and discrimination you see within your community and education system and get involved with organizing activities and mentoring programs. Find ways to educate youth on their rights and focus on reforming the education system to do a better job protecting and supporting students before they get in the system like Jaime did.

Addressing Trans* FWI Human Rights Violations

Similar to Jaime's story, in *OITNB* we see Sophia Burset, a transwomxn, struggling with transphobia and healthcare barriers inside Litchfield Penitentiary. Early on in Season 1 of *OITNB* characters use transphobic language like 'transsexual,' 'tranny,' 'she-male,' and 'man pretending to be a woman,' to harass and humiliate Burset's character. The language *OITNB* uses is outdated and discriminative, and the way the

prison administration treat Burset is extremely problematic when they take away her healthcare, forcefully place her in isolation, and deny her basic human rights. In Season 1, Episode 3: Lesbian Request Denied, Burset is notified that her vital estrogen hormone medication was being switched to a generic brand and lowered to smaller dosage due to budget cuts and administration changes (Heder 2013). In a key scene that shows her resistance, Burset abruptly walks into her Correctional Counselor's office and demands to talk to the facility's doctor, but her counselor, Sam Healy, says it must be a medical emergency to go to the medical wing. Immediately, Burset breaks a clay dog figure on his desk and swallows a piece, saying "I'd like to report an emergency" (Heder 2013). When she talks with the doctor, Burset is denied hormones but offered antidepressants, a response which demonstrates the mental illness epidemic in prison and the lack of access to healthcare. Later on in Season 3, a couple of FWI jump Sophia in her salon and target her with hate crimes and transphobic rumors. Her face is badly injured and later in the episode she is thrown into SHU (Solitary Housing Unit) for 'her own protection,' a decision which contradicts PREA's real life separate housing based on gender identity regulation. Burset is still isolated in SHU in *Season 4 Episode 4: Doctor Psycho* without her wig and her hormones after many weeks and despite her requests for medication. In one scene when the CO gives her a tray of meatloaf, she asks to speak to the warden but is denied access. She then shoves the meatloaf and a towel in the toilet to clog the pipes and water begins to flood her cell. Finally, Burset has gotten the warden's attention and he comes to visit her in SHU. The warden says that no one has forgotten about her but Burset knows he is lying to her about her wife's

activist efforts to get her out. Out of desperation and anger, she rips off her shirt and shoves it in the toilet, yelling, “either you get me out of here or I am going to keep flushing this toilet until I drown myself.” In the next scene, Sophia cracks a light bulb and starts a fire by lighting her mattress, prompting the entire SHU unit to evacuate. While being escorted out by two COs, Sophia says “go tell Caputo (the warden) to go fuck himself. I am just getting started.” Sophia’s experience in SHU is filled with so much isolation and pain. The viewer can see the intense anger and depression in her eyes because of the unjust treatment she received just because of her trans* identities yet also her resistance to her dehumanization. Buset’s experiences are not entirely different from many other transwomxn who are incarcerated. The trans* rights activist and actor that plays Sophia Buset, Laverne Cox, produced *Free CeCe*, a documentary centered around CeCe McDonald, a black bi transwomxn who served 41 months in a Minnesota men’s prison for second degree manslaughter. It was extremely important to Cox to bring awareness through her character to the real horrendous prison experiences of transwomxn like CeCe McDonald, and to the way she was treated by the criminal justice system.

Graphic: Actor and Activist, Laverne Cox (Left) and CeCe McDonald (Right)

On June 5th, 2011, CeCe, her sister, friends, and boyfriend were walking past a bar not far from her apartment when white bystanders began yelling racist and transphobic slurs at the group. CeCe claimed that her and her friends walked away from the group but they came after her and her friends. One of the men, Dean Schmitz, struck CeCe in the face with a broken beer bottle. As CeCe was backing away grabbing her bleeding face, Schmitz charged her. In self-defense, CeCe grabbed a pair of scissors from her purse and Schmitz was stabbed in the chest. In the ambulance, Schmitz died and CeCe was automatically arrested and denied medical care for her face wounds for hours. A few days later, CeCe was charged with two counts of 2nd degree murder, which meant up to 20 years in prison. On May 2, 2012, CeCe took a plea bargain for a lesser charge of 2nd degree manslaughter and 41 months in prison. During the entire plea bargain process, the media and courts demonized her claiming she was on a murderous rampage and failing to see the act Schmitz committed as a hate crime and CeCe as a victim. CeCe was constantly misgendered; her birth name

prior to transition was used on the news and in court proceedings. In an interview conducted by Laverne Cox, CeCe says the incident “wasn’t about being black or white. It was about power structures [that] enjoy[ed] oppression” of black and trans* people. Schmitz had a swastika tattoo and had joined a white supremacist group when he was in juvenile prison. He attacked CeCe because of the violent and racist oppression and discrimination white supremacy promotes. The courts portrayed CeCe as a dangerous criminal and not a victim because “black bodies trans...are assumed to be criminal. Out of 2.2 million people that are incarcerated, 60% are minorities” (*Free CeCe* 2016).

CeCe was held in segregated housing confinement while awaiting trial for ‘her own safety’ as a transwomxn of color. She spent 3 months in isolation, which many activists rightfully equate to torture, as solitary confinement increases suicide ideations and the chance of completing suicide. CeCe said she was on the verge of suicide during this isolation because she did not want to keep reliving the traumatizing experience. Few safe housing options are available to vulnerable LGBTQ FWI in prison so “administrators utilize solitary as a protective measure,” but solitary housing leads to physical, mental, and emotional trauma (Stoffers 2015). CeCe had no human contact for months and became severely depressed and wanted to kill herself, and these experiences lead to her developing PTSD and a paranoia of white people. Additionally, again claimed for her own ‘protection,’ CeCe was not allowed to wear shorts while all the other offenders were. The staff claimed it was to hide her curves and ‘feminine physique,’ yet the administration and other offenders were actually hypersexualizing by taking away her womanhood in a misogynistic act of power and control. CeCe’s story is

sadly so common for transwomxn of color who are incarcerated. Isolation in separate housing and solitary confinement based on sexuality and gender identity and expression is a violation of the PREA and also a violation of the U.S. Constitution Fourteenth Amendment which forbids states to restrict citizens' basic human rights. The barriers to healthcare, support, and resources because of transphobic discrimination strip Trans* people of privileges and immunities as U.S. citizens that guarantees equal protections when implementing laws and policies.

Transgender people who are incarcerated are still struggling to receive equal rights and protections within the criminal justice system. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey, a progressive “groundbreaking study about transgender discrimination that included 6,450 transgender and gender non-conforming participants from around the United States and its territories, asked participants about their interactions with the Criminal Justice System, particularly including, police, judges, court officials, and prisons. They found that 20% of respondents were denied equal treatment by police officers, 29% harassed or disrespected, and 6% reported physical assault by a police officer” (Buist 2013). Trans* people and LGBTQ FWI are more likely to experience discrimination and violence from and in the Criminal Justice System than people who are heteronormative and cisgender due to their non-normative gender expressions. Transwomxn, particularly people of color, they found, are at a high risk of being violently and sexually victimized and criminalized due to sex work stereotypes. Further, as Buist argues, “transgender people, particularly transgender women and people of color who engage in sex work for economic survival have reported higher

rates of verbal and physical abuse by police officers than cisgendered sex workers...[and] 44 % African American, 28 % Latina/o, and 15 % MTF people” report abuse (Buist 2013). Repeatedly, transwomxn of color’s bodies are being policed and punished by law enforcement, courts, and corrections. In our contemporary correctional system, as Foucault predicted, the body is ordered, regulated, and supervised rather than tortured. Our criminal justice system controls trans* FWI’s bodies by using strict policing and discipline (Foucault 1975). Prison’s stated goal is to ‘reform’ people who are incarcerated but in the act of reforming them, prison often punishes LGBTQ FWI for their gender and sexual ‘deviancy.’ Marginalized by their race, gender, and sexuality identities, LGBTQ people of color are more chastised and disciplined by the criminal justice system due to institutionalized racism that permeates it. One can only conclude that Corrections is a white patriarchal, heteronormative, misogynist institution used to keep marginalized groups oppressed.

Sexual Harassment and Violence in Corrections

One Monday morning, I rode along with one of the Fresh Start Residential Officers to pick up a woman who was incarcerated from Polk County Jail. She was serving the rest of her time and probation at Fresh Start to begin the reentry process to return back into the community after being in jail for seven months. Before this experience, I had never stepped foot in a jail before, and the environment had a different energy than at ICIW and Fresh Start. Most of the jail’s staff in the offices and the FWI in the living quarters are men. In the approximately two hours of being there, I recollect seeing only two women in uniform. The majority of the staff there were white

and majority, but not all of the FWI, were of color. I could feel the 'male gaze' as I walked past the staff and the FWI. The FWI would be talking, then stop and stare, and start whispering as I entered a space. They tried to make eye contact and a couple of the brave FWI quietly whistled. For one of the first times in my life, the 'male gaze' was burning my entire body like fire. I could feel the intensity all 360 degrees around me. 'Male gaze' "invokes the sexual politics of the gaze and suggests a sexualised way of looking that empowers men and objectifies women" (Lorek 2016). In heteronormative masculine spaces, womxn are visually objectified to please men, and womxn are taught to internalize and reproduce the male gaze in order to conform to norms that establish womxn's emotions and thoughts are lesser than men's. The jail is a masculine misogynist space, I saw, and I was unwelcome because of my womxnhood but welcomed as a sexual object for the men to scrutinize and admire. As the prominent social theorist of power and control, Michel Foucault, claims that observation and gaze are crucial instruments of power (Foucault 1975). The male gaze continues to fuel the patriarchy which governs the correction climate. *Prison Masculinities* rightly claims that prisons mirror the worst aspects of social constructions of gender relations in our culture, and I fully agree that gender and sexual biases enable oppression after my intense experience with misogyny at the jail. The male staff and FWI decided not to care about my worth beyond my sexuality as a womxn. The jail's environment is hostile against femininity because it is a male misogynistic space.

My senses and awareness of my surroundings at Polk County Jail were heightened because I felt that I was unsafe sexually and physically, and that's the

everyday reality for LGBTQ FWI. Folx who are LGBTQ tend to have a larger chance of being incarcerated and in prison and they also have a higher risk of being sexually victimized. In 2003, the Department of Justice passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to address sexual violence and abuse in prisons. PREA was not specifically passed to protect LGBTQ FWI, but the regulations enforced are inclusive to LGBTQ FWI. PREA requires implementation of policies, staff trainings, medical care, mental health resources for people who are sexually assaulted, and proper investigations to receive federal funding. Additionally, PREA forbids strip and body cavity searches in order to determine an intersex, genderqueer, and trans* person's 'true genitals', LGBT segregated housing, and punishment for refusing to answer LGBT and gender identity screening questionnaires, but these policies work only when they are put into action by correctional staff. Prison staff sometimes allow sexual harassment and violence as a way to punish LGBTQ+ FWI like constantly requesting pat downs and strip searches. Jason Lyon, a prior folx who was incarcerated in a jail, says that correctional staff use "prisoner-on-prisoner sexual violence is a way of maintaining power and control...Staff will sometimes intentionally place an LGBT prisoner with someone they know will rape them as punishment" (Stoffers 2015). Corrections punishes people who are incarcerated by taking away their autonomy and restricting their freedoms. Rape and sexual violence are used as a key instruments of power to 'reform' LGBTQ FWI for being queer.

Under PREA, the Bureau of Justice is required to conduct national research on sexual victimization. They found in 2011-2012 that "12.2% of non-heterosexual people

in prison and 8.5% of non-heterosexual people in jail reported inmate-on-inmate sexual assaults within the last 12 months, compared with 1.2% of their straight counterparts in both institutional settings” (Shay 2014, 14). With respect to staff sexual abuse, 5.4% of non-heterosexual people in prison reported victimization, compared with 2.1% of straight people in prison” (Shay 2014, 14). Additionally, LGBTQ men who are incarcerated “are more than six times as likely to be sexually assaulted by a staff member or inmate than straight men” (Stemple 2017). The Bureau of Justice Research proves that sexual violence against LGBTQ FWI is a major crisis that is not being addressed. Even though PREA mandates a zero-tolerance policy for inmate-to-inmate and staff-on-inmate sexual assault and harassment, the study’s findings demonstrate the incredibly high targeted rates of sexual violence against LGBT FWI. Giovanna Shay’s final statement in “PREA’s elusive promise: can DOJ regulations protect LGBT incarcerated people?” claims that “PREA does not address the root problem that exposes too many people to prison sexual violence--over-incarceration” (Shay 2014, 14), . PREA policies and protocols can be created but they are only effective if they are faithfully implemented, and most prisons and jails barely follow the regulations just to receive federal funding. Additionally, the Eighth Amendment in the US Constitution addresses that no United States citizen should be subjected to excessive bail and cruel or unusual punishments. The United States Supreme Court ruled in 1993 in the Farmer v. Brennan case that a correctional facility’s failure to protect from sexual violence is a violation of the Eighth Amendment. FWI are still United States citizens, and correctional staff have a duty to protect FWI and provide safe and humane conditions free from

sexual violence. A FWI's health and safety can be sexually violated by other 'prisoners' and if correctional staff do nothing when they observe rape and sexual violence, they are violating the United States Constitution and FWI's human rights. The driving force behind widespread sexual assault in prisons is not only misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia, but mass incarceration and the criminalization of LGBT people. There would be no need for PREA if we eliminated mass incarceration and the War on Drugs.

Mass Incarceration and the War on Drugs

The United States is the global leader in mass incarceration and harsh punitive sentences for drug offenses. We are "home to 5 percent of the world's population but 25 percent of its prisoners" (Pffaf 2017, Chap. 1). Mass incarceration and our extensive prison-industrial complex system are our nation's biggest and most silent social problems that impose severe social, cultural, political, and economic costs. The modern War on Drugs gained momentum in 1980 when Ronald Reagan took office, but its roots began in the 1870's when the first anti-opium laws were passed to target the influx of Chinese immigrants. In 1883, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified into the U.S. Constitution and prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude unless as punishment for a crime committed. Supposedly, the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, yet the Prison Industrial Complex and political system currently perpetuate the enslavement and exploitation of black people to profit private corporates. The film *13th* shows how private prison industrial contractors have entered the market and financially supported large companies and politicians to ensure that arrests for minor offenses and lengthening

sentences continue to keep prisons full for private interests and economic profit (13th 2016). Our country's infrastructure was built on the backs of exploited black slaves, and it's time for people of color to be seen as human beings, not criminals for free labor. The War on Drugs is a War on People of Color.

In the early 1900's, anti-cocaine laws were passed to oppress Black men in the South, and in the 1910's and 1920's anti-marijuana laws were enacted to discriminate against Latinx and Mexican immigrants. In the 1960s, drugs were turned into "symbols of youthful rebellion, social upheaval, and political dissent and the government halted scientific research to evaluate their medical safety and efficacy" (A Brief History of the Drug War). Racism was rooted deeply in the early War on Drugs but during President Richard Nixon's and President Ronald Reagan's presidential terms its roots were fully in view. In June 1971, President Nixon, our 37th U.S. President, declared the War on Drugs by increasing federal drug control initiatives such as mandatory sentences and harsh warrants (A Brief History of the Drug War). Crime and incarceration were low yet increasing in the 1970's, but the Nixon Administration criminalized heroin and marijuana to specifically target the Black community and Anti-War 'Hippies.' Nixon himself promised to be tough on crime; however Nixon and the Federal government had little power to regulate crime "since the Tenth Amendment delegates all un-enumerated powers-including the police power-to the states" (Ehrlich 2012, 385). In reality, nationwide drug crises are really local problems because the most power to make drug sanctions is given not to state governments but local districts. John Pfaff, author of *Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform*

and Professor of Law at Fordham University, claims that there is not a single War on Drugs but rather hundreds or even thousands on small-scale local levels (Pfaff 2017, Chap. 1). Furthermore when President Ronald Reagan took office in 1980, crime and incarceration rates skyrocketed as the public became more concerned about illegal drug use. The number of people in prison “for nonviolent drug law offenses increased from 50,000 in 1980 to over 400,000 by 1997” (A Brief History of the Drug War). To put it simply, rising incarceration rates spurred the growth in crime. President Reagan’s presidency is now synonymously associated with the War on Drugs because “he and his wife built on Nixon's foundations...and instituted a full on federal assault on the drug trade” (Ehrlich 2007, 385). With the influence of First Lady Nancy Reagan, federal funding in the 1980’s was given to programs like “Just Say No” and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) in attempt to prevent drug use, association with gangs, and violent behavior within at-risk communities. All of these programs educated adolescent on the ‘dangers’ of drug use, but research found that they were quite ineffective at actually deterring participants from using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco (Ennett 1994). Scott Lilienfield’s *Psychological Treatments That Cause Harm* research even discovered that D.A.R.E. is an intervention program that psychologically harms participants (Lilienfield 2007, 53-70). Eventually, First Lady Reagan’s drug prevention programs were renamed ‘Just Say Nonsense’ by professionals and the public after their utter failure. The Reagan Administration perpetuated the nationwide War on Drugs in local communities by funding ineffective drug awareness programs and encouraging punitive anti-drug legislation.

Under Reagan's spell, Congress passed the Comprehensive Crime Control Act in 1984 and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. During the Reagan era, "politicians argued that "tough on crime" stances-including certain imprisonment and longer sentences-would keep communities free of crime...however, the of mass incarceration during that period had little or no effect on official crime rates" (Davis 2010). Both bills the Congress passed increased federal drug sentences and authorized mandatory minimum sentences for simple possession of drugs. Mandatory minimums require the offender to serve a set term based on the crime they were found guilty of committing. The Three-Strikes laws are a prime example of mandatory minimums where offenders who are convicted of three felonies are sentenced to life in prison without parole. During the War on Drugs, cocaine and crack cocaine sentences were the more common mandatory minimums that attacked racial and ethnic minority communities. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act "included a new sentencing scheme for cocaine and crack cocaine, [also known as "crack"]...Under the new provisions, the possession of crack-a drug predominantly found in communities of color-was punished up to 100 times more harshly than powder cocaine, which is more expensive and use of which is concentrated in white communities" (Ehrlich 2007, 385). As an example of how this discrepancy in sentences worked, someone, usually Black, who was arrested for selling cheap crack cocaine for the first time and was found with five grams had to serve a minimum sentence of five years while a first-time dealer of powder cocaine, who was more likely to be white, would not be charged with a minimum sentence. The only way a white seller of powder cocaine would receive a five-year mandatory sentence would be

if they had at least five hundred grams in their possession. The War on Drugs' crack cocaine versus powder cocaine disparity is "widely acknowledged as racist and one of the causes of today's overflowing prison populations" (Ehrlich 2007, 385). The 100-1 cocaine sentencing disparity was eliminated in 2010 with the enactment of the Fair Sentencing Act, but presently mass incarceration continues to target communities of color. Mass incarceration has always been fueled by the war on marginalized peoples which "authorizes discrimination against them in voting, employment, housing education, public benefits, and jury services" (Alexander 2012). This continuity of oppression leads to loss of income and class disparities, parental absence, poor healthcare, and many other factors that are difficult to recognize and measure, factors that put kids of color at risk for entering the 'School-to-Prison Pipeline' or some could argue the 'Cradle-to-Prison Pipeline.'

Graphic by Dr. Rachel Marie-Crane

Mass incarceration in the Prison Industrial Complex and the War on Drugs has targeted people of color and other marginalized groups and has subjected them to larger social consequences.

The War on People of Color in the Era of Colorblindness and the War on LGBTQ Folxs in the Age of Queerblindness

Our current national climate is struggling after the Obama Administration era of 'colorblindness' with the changes wrought by the dynamic transition to the Trump Administration's explicit racial and xenophobic discrimination against African Americans and Latinx. The 2008 election tricked America into thinking that we were entering a new post-racist era of colorblindness. The nation dismissed racism and promoted

'colorblindness' because the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, identifies as African American. Refusing to acknowledge institutionalized racism in the Obama era has continued to put people of color in danger of entering the Prison Industrial Complex, and a racist all-American caste system has resurfaced. During their lifetime, "1 in 3 Black and 1 in 6 Latino boys born in 2001 are at risk of imprisonment" (Children's Defense Fund 2009). With all of the rampant racism happening now in 2018 under the Trump Administration, children of color are even more endangered of adult incarceration beginning at birth. In *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander claims "these young men are a part of a growing undercaste, permanently locked up and locked out of mainstream society" (Alexander 2012). Mass incarceration has established an exiled caste of African American and Latinx men whom are more likely to be incarcerated due to their race and have less societal opportunities. A felony record relegates people to a second class status for the rest of their lives. For felons, there is little hope of escaping the mainstream socioeconomic exile since drug felons, whose crimes may be drug addiction or small possession of drugs for recreational use, are "barred from public housing by law, discriminated against by private landlords, ineligible for food stamps, forced to 'check the box' indicating a felony conviction on employment application for nearly every job, and denied licenses for a wide range of professions" (Alexander 2012). Therefore, the harsh sentences people of color are more likely to receive create harsh sanctions and cultural stigma that lead to more societal oppression. I dare to argue that all of these

marginalizing strategies apply to people who identify as LGBTQ, strategies with different but similar origins rooted in discrimination.

Similar to the targeting of people of color in the War on Drugs, the Reagan Administration revealed extremely homophobic with their insufficient and inadequate federal response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis in the early-mid-1980's. AIDS became a sociopolitical tool, "and gay men [were] the target, for the politics of fear, hate, discrimination [and death]" (White 2012). The LGBTQ community experienced homophobic hostility and stigma from the federal government and public since HIV/AIDS was framed as a 'gay disease.' Also, religious and conservative communities declared HIV/AIDS 'God's revenge on the immortality of perverted homosexuality.' The Reagan Administration was quick to implement War on Drug policies to target people of color and slow to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic since LGBTQ lives were victimized due to their non-heteronormative lifestyles. The Reagan Administration's lack of acknowledgement and support led to thousands of queer lives lost, their homophobic strategy to further marginalize, silence, and oppress LGBTQ folx. People who are LGBTQ are wrongly viewed as sexually deviant, HIV/AIDS positive, and regular participants in illegal sex work. The Drug Policy Alliance release research that claims "The War on Drugs has made the HIV epidemic worse" due to lack of treatment options because of the intersectionality of race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, and addition. Furthermore, the War on Drugs "has sent LGBT individuals to prisons and jails for their drug use, punishing them instead of giving them healthcare" and rehabilitation services (Drug Policy Alliance). Additionally, Folx who are LGBTQ are more likely to be

stopped on the street and arrested more frequently and punished more harshly due to their non-heteronormative sexuality like people of color are targeted for crack cocaine use and possession. Discreetly, mass incarceration has built a separate low caste for queer folk, who like people of color, are more likely to struggle with healthcare.

Our society supports the imprisonment of LGBTQ people and other marginalized groups, like African Americans and Latinx, because our nation prides itself on being 'Queerblind,' that is, blind to the institutionalized oppression people who identify as LGBTQ with non-heteronormative sexuality and gender expressions experience. 'Queerblindness' is the widely believed misleading concept that people who are LGBTQ and gender non-binary are no longer suppressed but privileged. After 'Gay Marriage' was legalized on June 26, 2015 by the US Supreme Court, people thought the struggle for LGBTQ equality was over, but in reality the fight for LGBTQ equity had just begun. An analysis of the 2011-2012 National Inmate Survey discovered that "rates of incarceration for lesbian, gay and bisexual people were 1,882 per 100,000 [and] that is more than three times the "already high" incarceration rate of 612 per 100,000 U.S." population" (Crist 2016). The results found that LGBTQ face a higher chance of being incarcerated due to homophobic prejudices in the Criminal Justice System that originate from the War on Drugs. Again, this is not new for people of color, but the data is proving that people with non-normative sexuality and gender identities are also more likely to be affected by the Prison Industrial Complex. Practicing queerblindness contributes to the perpetuation of discrimination and mass incarceration of the LGBTQ community. It is clear that the fight for LGBTQ equity is not over simply because of the Supreme Court

established legal gay marriage in all fifty states. The LGBTQ community wants more than just marriage. They want no police brutality against transwomxn of color, access to rehabilitative healthcare in prisons, and the elimination of policies that maintain mass incarceration and injustice within the Criminal Justice System. Our nation is facing not only a never-ending War on Drugs, one which masks the War on People of Color in the Era of Colorblindness, but also the War on LGBTQ Folxs in the Age of Queerblindness.

The Impact of Today's Opioid Crisis on LGBTQ FWI

Now in 2018, crime is lower than the 1990's but incarceration rates continue to remain high. The Hamilton Project reports that crime rates have significantly dropped over that past 25 years (Kearney 2016). The line graph below demonstrates that crime rates peaked in the early 1990's and then began declining.

Graphic from the Hamilton Project

Other research has found that “the biggest driver of the decline in prison population since 2010 has been the decrease in the number of people in prison for drug crimes” (Pfaff 2017). Most people who are in prison are not there for drug offenses or violent crimes but for property crimes despite how the media frames the recent Opioid Crisis in America. In the UN World Drug Report, research found that “from the period 2002-2004 to the period 2011-2013, there was an [alarming] increase in heroin use...[which] has triggered a sharp increase in heroin-related overdose deaths” in the United States (UN 2016). Several factors have contributed to the spike in opioid use including “law enforcement and regulatory actions to address the irrational prescribing and reformulation of prescription opioids with abuse-deterrent technologies; implementation of programs for monitoring prescription drugs and education of health-care professionals and the public about their appropriate use; and increased accessibility, reduced prices and high purity of heroin in the United States” (UN 2016). The recent Opioid Crisis has to be affecting the LGBTQ community even though there is little research on the recent epidemic and its impact on folx who are LGBTQ. Research found that LGBTQ people are more likely to use illicit drugs to cope with discrimination and prejudice with estimations of that “between 20 percent to 30 percent of gay and transgender people abuse substances, compared to about 9 percent of the general population” (Hunt). Some research shows “higher rates of drug use and misuse compared to heterosexual individuals due to less family support, greater rates of mental health issues, a response to social oppression, and targeted advertising” which

connects to the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Drug Policy Alliance). Childhood trauma can begin the path to substance abuse and addiction. The daily stress of battling stigma and oppression are a main stimulus for why substance abuse is a silent and deadly issue within the LGBTQ community. Further research from a nationwide randomly sampled study by the National Institute of Corrections estimated that 98% of women who are incarcerated have a history of substance abuse (Greenfield 1999). It's outrageous that almost 100% of women who are incarcerated have struggled with substance abuse in their lifetime, and it emphasizes that the War on Drugs has shifted to criminalizing women and LGBTQ FWI. The War on Drugs "has sent LGBT individuals to prisons and jails for their drug use, punishing them instead of giving them healthcare" and rehabilitation services (Drug Policy Alliance). Most fundamentally, trauma, mental health, substance abuse, and incarceration all intersect to impact LGBTQ FWI and keep them in the Criminal Justice System without resources.

There is not a lot of research on the correlation between LGBTQ FWI and the effect of substance abuse. Most of the research about LGBT FWI is about the higher risk of being raped and victimized compared to heterosexual people who are incarcerated, and all of the victimization and discrimination creates trauma. Maureen A. Keating, a drug abuse counselor at Kent State University, says "trauma is a powerful, recurring reason why LGBTQ individuals turn to substance abuse...[and] 80-90 percent of addiction victims have a background of trauma" (Brennan 2017). Furthermore, substance abuse and mental health are ultimately intersecting with LGBTQ people using substances to cope with mental illness. Again, there is not that much research on

LGBTQ FWI and being incarcerated for illegal drug possession and use, but there has to be some type of correlation that needs to be further explored. Too often prison is used as a substance abuse and mental health holding center instead of providing social services and treatment to solve public health crises. Incarceration is not a healthy alternative to rehab for anyone especially LGBTQ FWI who are vulnerable to substance abuse, violence, rape, and discrimination. The LGBTQ community needs more social support to intervene in the higher chance of incarceration due to the substance abuse, mental health, and suicide challenges LGBTQ people encounter.

A Curriculum to Dismantle the Barriers LGBTQ FWI Face

Ultimately, the forces of transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, sexism, genderism, racism, and classism all influence the School-to-Prison Pipeline cycle and a Mass Incarceration system that create barriers for LGBTQ FWI. Stereotypes and stigma, lack of access to resources and healthcare, sexual assault, substance abuse, and mental health issues are the looming barriers LGBTQ FWI confront. Recidivism often results from traumas experienced before entering the Criminal Justice System and after being sentenced to prison never addressed. The curriculum I have designed is meant to minimize the harmful impacts of these barriers and provide support. The group I have envisioned is meant to meet for two hours once a week for six weeks. There is a specific theme for each week and each of the themes are meant to encourage exploration, reflection, and empowerment. Week 1 is intended to welcome members of the group to build a safe and comfortable community by getting to know one another.

Expectations and objectives for the sessions will be explained and discussed, and participants will explore LGBTQ identities and pronouns with The Gender Unicorn Activity. Week 2's theme is about LGBTQ FW stereotypes and biases. The main purpose of this session is to have an open conversation about personal experiences and how to confront prejudices when they arise. Next, Week 3 is concentrated on Body Image and Mental Health. Mental illness and body image disproportionately affect LGBTQ FWI due to lack of support and healthcare for body transitions. In Week 4, the difficult subject of discrimination by family, friends, and the community will be tackled. The group will think about the bigotry they have experienced and reflect on how it has affected them and the complexity of 'coming out' will be discussed. The Connections Between Yarn Activity will be used so members can see how everyone shares similar stories and realize the need to come together as a community to uplift one another. Week 5 will continue talk about homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia based bullying and harassment, and the group will learn how to file discrimination complaints to administration. Finally, the activities planned for Week 6 are meant to empower folx to be more confident and self-accepting. Since it will be our last meeting, this session will be an opportunity to reflect on what we have accomplished and to celebrate their achievement with a ceremony to honor their hard work and perseverance. A certificate will be given to each participant to demonstrate their progress to the parole board to get out of prison and take the skills they have learned from this workshop with them out into the world.

EMPOWERMENT WORKSHOP FOR LGBTQ FOLX WHO ARE INCARCERATED

Introduction

The Trauma Informed Care Philosophy behind this Curriculum

Trauma Informed Care is a foundational framework to understand, recognize, and respond to diverse effects of trauma when working with groups of people who are

more likely to have traumatic experiences. Trauma can impact individuals physically, emotionally, and psychologically, so Trauma Informed Care strives to be aware of an individual's overall safety and wellbeing. No one is spared from the effects of trauma because trauma affects the individual and disrupts families and the community. The overall objective of Trauma Informed Care is to empower survivors and those impacted by Second-Hand Trauma by promoting inclusiveness and a sense of autonomy and control to rebuild healing and healthy patterns. This curriculum is Trauma Informed and focused on providing LGBTQ FWI a safe space to explore, reflect, and express themselves without hostility and judgement. In prison, your body is not your own, and the patriarchal Criminal Justice System is attempting to punish people who are incarcerated for their mistakes. LGBTQ FWI are already punished by society and the hostile marginalization creates trauma. Furthermore, LGBTQ FWI are more likely to experience sexual assault, harassment, interpersonal violence, and discrimination, which can lead to substance abuse, mental health issues, and recidivism. This curriculum is specifically designed to reduce the risk of being triggered which could intensify one's trauma. LGBTQ FWI may not have access to a safe space to be express themselves and have open conversations, and this group is meant to provide a safe space in the punitive prison environment. All people who use this curriculum must understand the importance of Trauma Informed Care Critical Pedagogy and be capable of applying these strategies while facilitating groups.

Trauma Informed Critical Pedagogy in Correctional Education

When teaching and working in a prison setting, educators and group facilitators can encounter many difficulties with the practice of educating FWI and how FWI learn and respond based off their specialized experiences and needs. LGBTQ FWI have even more barriers when learning and absorbing knowledge due to their possible traumatic experiences with discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia in the criminal justice system. LGBTQ FWI may have troubled backgrounds with education because they were pushed into the School-to-Prison Pipeline as youth. Teachers and facilitators who work with LGBT students who are incarcerated must create "learning spaces that are opportunities for sharing, put the need of the learner at the core, utilize restorative and healing practices, and offer spaces for both self-reflection and critical analysis of larger structures that impact us down to the individual level" (Cities of Peace 2016). To put into action trauma-informed critical pedagogy theory and practice, instructors must equalize power dynamics, understand the clients' needs, give them autonomy and a voice due to the constant prison surveillance, giving diverse perspectives, and empowering FWI to improve their own lives and the community.

To practice Trauma Informed Critical Pedagogy, equalizing power dynamics with physical seating and participant-led facilitation style. In the curriculum, the beginning

meditation explains sitting or standing on an equal level with the students because it makes an effort to take away the power from the instructor and gives the students power over their learning. Reducing the power and control dynamics starts with recognizing the diverse needs with recognizing the facilitator's privilege with their identities and applying a culturally sensitive and perspectives concerning race, class, abilities, and, of course, gender and sexuality that are politically correction. There must be a recognition of social constructionism and oppression to validate various experiences. Implementing Participant-led facilitation style also allows participants to make choices in a correctional facility where they do not have options. Adapting the curriculum to the group's needs is crucial to acknowledging the trauma that LGBTQ FWI might be learning to heal with the resources provided in the curriculum. Additionally, having flexibility with discussions and activities builds a learning environment centered on promoting individualized learning, healing, and empowerment. Challenging the traditional pedagogy and transforming the teaching and facilitating styles to become more holistic to meet the needs of everyone within the group is the key to having a rehabilitative and progressive curriculum.

Trauma Informed Strategies to Implement:

- Create a safe environment
- Build community by focusing on relationships and support
- Always ask for consent by engaging in choice and autonomy
- Encourage empowerment
- Use a soothing voice and actively listen
- Allow time to process
- Reduce power dynamics between you and the group and between members
- Collaborate to problem solve
- Remind people that "You are not alone"
- Validate people's needs and feelings
- Share some of your stories to connect with people but use professional discretion
- Be aware of language, expression, and body language that may offend people
- Encourage inclusive language like using preferred gender pronouns and using "you all" or "y'all" instead of "you guys."
- Have clear expectations
- Provide sensory materials for people to fidget with (*you will see that the participant workbook has coloring pages at the end of each week so participants can color to soothe themselves and ease their trauma.*)

- Descelate arguments, tension, and negative energy
- Calmly correct incorrect gender pronouns and gender/sexuality-biased statements and stereotypes without calling people out

For more resources, check out:

- National Resource Center for Justice Involved Women:
<http://cjinvolvedwomen.org/>
- <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/>
- <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/areas-of-expertise/trauma-informed-behavioral-healthcare/>
- <https://community.nicic.gov/blogs/mentalhealth/archive/2013/09/09/trauma-informed-correctional-care-promising-for-prisoners-and-facilities.aspx>
- <http://www.icjia.state.il.us/articles/trauma-informed-and-evidence-based-practices-and-programs-to-address-trauma-in-correctional-settings>
- [http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/TIC%20criminal%20justice%20for%20women%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/TIC%20criminal%20justice%20for%20women%20(2).pdf)
- http://www.healthrecovery.org/images/products/25_inside.pdf
- <http://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/Initiatives/TIC/LGBTQ/TIC%20TALK%20-%20Bringing%20Trauma%20Informed%20Care%20to%20Trauma%20Exposed%20LGBTQ%20Youth.pdf>
- <http://www.thebreathenetwork.org/trauma-informed-care-for-lgbtq-survivors-of-sexual-violence>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207194/>

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Week 1:

Who are you?

Opening Breathing Ritual

At the beginning and end of each weekly session, the group will sit or stand (whatever physical position people are comfortable in, be aware and inclusive of all (dis)abilities) in a circle so everyone is facing one another. Being in a circle is absolutely crucial because it allows people to see everyone and to create a safe space for sharing their experiences and stories. It also equalizes the power dynamics to some degree between facilitators and participants. The opening breathing ritual is meant to ground the group and calmly prepare everyone for the session.

1. After everyone finds a seat, gets comfortable, and gets focused and quiet, say “We are going to take three deep breaths together. One to recognize the self, one to let go of the events, issues, stresses that might be troubling us today, and one to bring us together in this place of respect, growth, and hope.”
2. Using a soothing tone and guide everyone to begin to take a the 3 breaths. Give them their own time and space to finish the exercise with no pressures.
3. Ask them: “How do you feel? Are there places that ache? Where do you need to relax? Are you present? What are some emotions you can recognize?”
4. Ask the group to go around the circle, say your name, pronouns, and anything that you are feeling at the moment.
 - a. Ex. My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____ (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc). Today, I am feeling _____.
 - b. The purpose of starting off class saying your pronouns is that people may be exploring and growing, and their pronouns could change throughout the course of our time together. We need to respect individuals preferences and celebrate their growth.
 - c. **Optional:** You can ask each person to set an intentional goal or learning outcome they would like to achieve in this class.

Class Purpose

- The purpose of this class is to:
 - Explore LGBTQ Identities and Topics
 - Reflect on personal past and present experiences
 - Empower yourself and each other!
 - Be the best you!
- Why are we meeting?
 - We meet as a group in order to validate each other’s experiences so we recognize that we are not alone and that we have a community.
 - We meet as a group to create a safe environment to explore and reflect on these topics and support each other during high and low times.

- We meet as a group to problem solve various questions together that are presented to the group through this curriculum, our discussions, and our personal experiences

Intentions for this Session

Before starting the activities and discussions, always explain the agenda for this specific session.

1. Introduce ourselves and the purpose of this group
2. Take a Pre-Assessment
3. Create group expectations
4. Learn from one another and the wisdom we have to offer
5. Explore LGBTQ terms, identities, pronouns, and topics
6. Activity: Gender Unicorn

Pre-Assessment

Give the group 5-10 mins to fill out the pre-assessment in their workbook. Be ready to read and answer questions to accommodate to all (dis)abilities.

Activity: Who are you?

1. Take out a piece of paper and a pencil/pen (**provide paper and writing utensils if participants do not have them**)
2. 5 minutes: Individually brainstorm and free write about who you are
 - a. Stress that there are no right or wrong answers and that you know yourself better than anyone else.
3. 5 minutes: Turn to the person next to you and explain who you are without using what you wrote on your paper for 1 minute. When you are done, read what you actually wrote.
4. 5 minutes: Discussion
 - a. Who are you?
 - b. What did you learn about yourself?
 - c. What did you learn about your partner?
 - d. What did you take away from this activity?

Discussion: Group Agreement

Now that we have gotten to know each other, let's make a community agreement. **Use a large poster to write their group agreement down so each session there**

is a visual reminder of their commitment to each other. At the end of the discussion, have everyone sign the poster to create a sense of community.

Next, talk about creating a community bonding ritual like putting your hands in the middle and cheering, chanting an agreed upon mantra, or practicing power poses at the end of class.

Ask them to think about these questions:

- What does a support group look like?
- How do we want to treat each other?
- What do you do if someone has a different opinion than you?
- What if you disagree with someone?
- What do you do if someone hurts your feelings or doesn't listen to you?
- How do we make a safe environment for everyone to feel comfortable?
- What do you do if someone shares a sensitive story?
- How do we respect one another?
- What is confidentiality?
- What is trauma informed care and awareness?

Group Agreement Essentials You Must Touch On

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- Active listening
- Open-mindedness
- Connectivity and community building
- Inclusivity
- Nonjudgement
- Respect
- Trauma informed
- Use proper pronouns

4 principles of a safe space (Berkeley student cooperative)

Equalize the Space

- Confidentiality – share stories and experiences, not names and gossip
- Step-up/step-down – give space before you take space, and challenge yourself to step out of your pattern value and encourage risk taking, while maintaining everyone's right to pass challenge the idea or the practice, not the person everyone has equal worth in this discussion, and all knowledge and opinions are equally valid

Check Your Assumptions

- No judgments or disclaimers (including self-judgments)
- Maintain gender neutrality in your language, and inquire about preferred pronouns
- Treat everyone as an individual and not a representative of any specific group
- Personalize your knowledge, don't project it (i.e. use I statements)
- Believe in our common best intentions

The Right to be Human

- We all have the right to be human (i.e. inconsistent, emotional, triggered, etc.)
- Avoid blaming people for the misinformation taught to them
- Acknowledge emotions
- Practice forgiveness

Practice Consensual Dialogue

- Active listening – attention focused, maintain appropriate eye contact, check your body language, take breaks only when you need to
- Silence is okay – an unforced pace of dialogue is one into which people can step-up safely
- Be sincere and consistent, practicing respectful honesty

Group Guidelines taken from Kendra Malone's LGBTQIA Circles at University of Iowa

- Assume good intentions
 - We appreciate that everyone comes to meetings with good intentions.
- Intention versus impact
 - Sometimes well-intentioned words or actions can be hurtful.
 - *Example: Your toe still hurts even if the person didn't *intend* to step on it.*
- Ouch/Oops
 - 1.) Say "ouch" if you find someone's words hurtful.
 - 2.) If someone says "ouch" in response to something you've said, acknowledge with an "oops."
 - 3.) When there is an "ouch", the group will pause and either address the situation at the time or after the meeting.

- Speak from your own experience
 - Share stories you've lived, not a story you heard second hand.
- All experiences are valid
 - Respect that two people may take away something different from the same situation.
- Good communication practices
 - One person speaks at a time. Be mindful of the amount of time that you speak. We want everyone to be able to have their voice heard.
- Respect others' privacy
 - Do not disclose personal information outside of meetings.
 - *(Additionally, "outing" a trans* or gay person can put them in danger.)*

Discussion: Needs

Briefly ask the group what they need from group meetings? What type of support is essential to their wellbeing and success?

Make sure you are practicing active listening and validating their needs. You could write down their thoughts and ideas to guide your own facilitating approach.

Discussion: LGBTQ Pronouns and Identities

Materials: Provide each person with copies of:

- Comprehensive List of LGBTQ Vocabulary Definitions.pdf from Metrosexual.com
 - <http://thesafezoneproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Vocabulary-Extravaganza-Participant.pdf>
 - The Gender Unicorn Graphic
 - A blank Gender Unicorn Outline
 - Colored Pencils and markers

Use the Comprehensive- List of LGBTQ Vocabulary Definitions.pdf from Metrosexual.com that is connected to the Gender Unicorn person graphic to start a discussion for members to explore their and other people's sexuality and gender.

As the discussion about the vocabulary terms and definitions progresses, refer to the Gender Unicorn person graphic to explain the definitions more dynamically so members can apply the terms to a visual.

Spanish Version

Pass out markers and colored pencils so the group can color their own gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, sexual attractions, and romantic attractions identities on the blank Gender Unicorn picture.

Give the group 10-15 minutes to explore and design their genderbread person that reflects who they are. Ask the group if anyone would want to share their unique gender unicorn person!

Closing Ritual:

Give the group time to take a few breaths to decompress and ground themselves. The whole purpose of breathing is to get in touch with their emotions after a long and sometimes triggering session.

Go around the circle and ask each person to say their name, how they are feeling, and one wish for the week!

As the class is ending, use the remainder of the closing time to explain the optional but beneficial journaling reflection prompts.

After you explain the journal prompts, let someone lead the end of class community building ritual.

Journal Prompts:

1. How do you feel after the first session? Are you uncomfortable or comfortable and why do you think that is?
2. Do you agree with the group agreement?
3. What did you learn about LGBTQIA+ identities?
4. How did you fill out your genderbread person?
5. Reflecting on your own experiences, why do you identify the way you do? When did you first become aware of your gender and sexuality?
6. How have your identities changed after entering prison?

Week 2:

LGBTQ FWI

Stereotypes

Opening Breathing Ritual

1. After everyone finds a seat, form a circle, gets comfortable, and gets focused and quiet, say “We are going to take three deep breaths together. One to recognize the self, one to let go of the events, issues, stresses that might be troubling us today, and one to bring us together in this place of respect, growth, and hope.”
2. Using a soothing tone and guide everyone to begin to take a the 3 breaths. Give them their own time and space to finish the exercise with no pressures.
3. Ask them: “How do you feel? Are there places that ache? Where do you need to relax? Are you present? What are some emotions you can recognize?”
4. Ask the group to go around the circle, say your name, pronouns, and anything that you are feeling at the moment.
 - a. Ex. My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____ (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc). Today, I am feeling _____.
 - b. Optional: You can ask each person to set an intentional goal or learning outcome they would like to achieve in this class.

Intentions for this Session

Before starting the activities and discussions, explain the agenda for this specific session.

1. Implement our Community Agreement
2. Role play stereotypes about people in prison
3. Discuss stereotypes about LGBTQ FWI

Discussion: Reminder about Community Agreement

How to talk about stereotypes, remind about community agreement and safe space

Activity: Stereotype Role Play

1. Ask the group to independently think of some stereotypes we hear about LGBT FWI
 - a. The purpose of this exercise is to expose the problematic consequences of stereotypes and debunk myths.
 - b. Some questions to begin brainstorming may be:
 - i. Where did stereotypes come from? Are stereotypes true or false? Are stereotypes helpful or harmful? What did you think prison would be like prior to coming here? What do people who have never been in prison think about prison?

2. Divide the participants into smaller groups of around 3-4 people
3. Each group discusses the stereotypes they came up with and they choose one stereotype together to create a short skit that explains ways that these ideas impact LGBTQ folx in prison.
 - a. Remind them to reflect on their first prison impressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality.
 - b. What were their first experiences of gender and sexuality in prison?
 - c. How do LGBTQ FWI maintain a sense of identity in a place where they are monitored in terms of expression through clothing, jewelry, make up, material possessions, etc.
 - d. How does surveillance impact their behavior?
4. The next step is to develop a skit about a specific stereotype in prison and act it out in front of the larger group
5. Let the group guess the stereotype and discuss it's positive, neutral, or negative implications
6. When all of the groups are finished, allow some time for reflection.
 - a. This can be individual reflection or a group discussion. Give the group the choice!
 - i. Giving them the opportunity to choose how they would like to reflect returns back to our trauma-informed care mission.
 - b. Reflection prompts may include:
 - i. How did this activity go? What things surprised you about yourself and others? What things were difficult when you first came to prison? What things are easier now? What parts of coming to prison have made you stronger and wiser? What things are still hard for you?
7. When the group is finished reflecting, transition into the discussion about stereotypes that directly influence LGBTQ FWI.

Discussion: Stereotypes about LGBTQ FWI

1. Begin this discussion with reminding the group about the community agreement to be aware of other people's experiences and trauma, to practice non judgement, and to uphold confidentiality.
2. Participants may share very personal stories so remember some trauma informed care strategies:

- a. Have tissues ready if someone becomes emotional
 - b. Provide sensory materials for people to fidget with
 - c. Encourage group support and validation
 - d. Be aware of language, expression, and body language that may offend people
 - e. Descelate arguments, tension, and negative energy
 - f. Calmly correct incorrect gender pronouns and gender/sexuality-biased statements and stereotypes without calling people out
3. This discussion will probably take up the rest of the session time. Be prepared to end the conversation when time is up. The conversation around stereotypes will never be finished. The discussion can continue into the next session if the group would like to continue.
4. Here are some group discussion prompts to begin the discussion:
- a. What does a real lesbian look like?
 - b. Is someone who is 'gay for the stay' just bisexual? Or are they straight?
 - c. Is sexuality fluid? Based on environment? Inside? Outside?
 - d. What does bisexuality in prison look like?
 - e. Is someone trans* in prison just a really butch lesbian or a femme male? (transman vs transwoman in women's prisons)
 - f. Who has the power in inside gay relationships? The 'real lesbians'?
 - i. Assumption: The bi and 'gay for stays' less likely have the power
 - g. What does the "Don't Drop the Soap!" stereotype mean?
 - h. Who creates the sexuality power structure?
 - i. Are LGBT people of color in the conversation?
 - i. Are they silenced because of the intersection of their race, gender, and sexuality?
 - ii. Do they feel more comfortable together?
 - j. Do the COs and administration understand these complex sexuality identities and actions?
 - k. What do COs and administration need to become more inclusive and less ignorant?
 - l. How do we make ICIW a safe space for all people to feel comfortable with their sexual identities?

Closing Ritual:

Give the group time to take a few breaths to decompress and ground themselves after the sensitive discussion about FWI stereotypes.

The whole purpose of breathing is to get in touch with their emotions after a long and sometimes triggering session.

Go around the circle and ask each person to say their name, how they are feeling, and one wish for the week!

As the class is ending, use the remainder of the closing time to explain the optional but beneficial journaling reflection prompts.

After you explain the journal prompts, let someone lead the end of class community building ritual.

Journal Prompts:

1. How do you feel after this second session? Did you like the role play activity and the discussion?
2. Did you feel uncomfortable or comfortable discussing FWI stereotypes?
3. How do stereotypes impact you? Your behaviors? Your lifestyle?
4. Reflecting on your own experiences, how did coming to prison affect you and the stereotypes you encountered? Did your stereotypes change? Did you find new stereotypes you never thought about?
5. What did you learn about yourself and others today?
6. What is one aspect of your identity that feels disempowered, misunderstood, or judged because of your own or other people's perceptions and societal stereotypes? What could you do to empower yourself?

Week 3:

Body Image, Mental Health, and Self-Esteem

Opening Breathing Ritual

1. After everyone finds a seat, form a circle, gets comfortable, and gets focused and quiet, say “We are going to take three deep breaths together. One to recognize the self, one to let go of the events, issues, stresses that might be troubling us today, and one to bring us together in this place of respect, growth, and hope.”
2. Using a soothing tone and guide everyone to begin to take a the 3 breaths.
3. **Optional:** This week you could recommend the group to place their hand on their chest and their other hand on their stomach to feel the physical sensations of the deep breaths if they are comfortable with trying something new.
 - a. The purpose of this additional practice is to help further connect the mind, body, and soul.
4. Give them their own time and space to finish the exercise with no pressures.
5. When they are finished, ask them: “How do you feel? Are there places that ache? Where do you need to relax? Are you present? What are some emotions you can recognize?”
6. Ask the group to go around the circle, say your name, pronouns, and anything that you are feeling at the moment.
 - a. Ex. My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____ (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc). Today, I am feeling _____.
 - b. **Optional:** You can ask each person to set an intentional goal or learning outcome they would like to achieve in this class.

Intentions for this Session

Before starting the activities and discussions, explain the agenda for this specific session.

1. Talk about the issues LGBTQ FWI face around body image, mental health, and self-esteem
2. Read and reflect on a poem: “There is no wrong way to have a body!” poem by Hanne Blank, feminist activist

Discussion: Reminder about Community Agreement

How to talk about sensitive subjects like body image, remind about community agreement and safe space, encourage practicing openmindedness

Activity: Poems

Poems can be adapted to the diversity of the group. If there are people who will not connect with the identities and pronouns in the poems, you can find another poem that fits their perspective and respects who they are.

1. Provide each individual a copy of “There is no wrong way to have a body!” poem by Hanne Blank
 - a. This poem was borrowed from <https://www.hanneblank.com/blog/real-women/> with the permission by Hanne Blank.
 - b. There is a PDF version on the website above
2. Ask for a volunteer to read the poem. If no one wants to read, you may take the lead and read aloud. (5 mins)

Real Women

by Hanne Blank

Excuse me while I throw this down, I'm old and cranky and tired of hearing the idiocy repeated by people who ought to know better.

Real women do not have curves. Real women do not look like just one thing. Real women have curves, and not. They are tall, and not. They are brown-skinned, and olive-skinned, and not. They have small breasts, and big ones, and no breasts whatsoever.

Real women start their lives as baby girls. And as baby boys. And as babies of indeterminate biological sex whose bodies terrify their doctors and families into making all kinds of very sudden decisions.

Real women have big hands and small hands and long elegant fingers and short stubby fingers and manicures and broken nails with dirt under them.

Real women have armpit hair and leg hair and pubic hair and facial hair and chest hair and sexy moustaches and full, luxuriant beards. Real women have none of these things, spontaneously or as the result of intentional change. Real women are bald as eggs, by chance and by choice and by chemo. Real women have hair so long they can sit on it. Real women wear wigs and weaves and extensions and kufi and do-rags and hairnets and hijab and headscarves and hats and yarmulkes and textured rubber swim caps with the plastic flowers on the sides.

Real women wear high heels and skirts. Or not.

Real women are feminine and smell good and they are masculine and smell good and they are androgynous and smell good, except when they don't smell so good, but that can be changed if desired because real women change stuff when they want to. Real women have ovaries. Unless they don't, and sometimes they don't because they were born that way and sometimes they don't because they had to have their ovaries removed.

Real women have uteruses, unless they don't, see above. Real women have vaginas and clitorises and XX sex chromosomes and high estrogen levels, they ovulate and menstruate and can get pregnant and have babies. Except sometimes not, for a rather spectacular array of reasons both spontaneous and induced.

Real women are fat. And thin. And both, and neither, and otherwise. Doesn't make them any less real.

There is a phrase I wish I could engrave upon the hearts of every single person, everywhere in the world, and it is this sentence which comes from the genius lips of the grand and eloquent Mr. Glenn Marla:

There is no wrong way to have a body.

I'm going to say it again because it's important: **There is no wrong way to have a body.**

And if your moral compass points in any way, shape, or form to equality, you need to get this through your thick skull and stop with the "real women are like such-and-so" crap.

You are not the authority on what "real" human beings are, and who qualifies as "real" and on what basis. **All human beings are real.**

Yes, I know you're tired of feeling disenfranchised. It is a tiresome and loathsome thing to be and to feel. But the tit-for-tat disenfranchisement of others is not going to solve that problem. Solidarity has to start somewhere and it might as well be with you and me.

Gender is not black & white

by Tristan from <https://hellopoetry.com/gaypetals/>

"Just be yourself" they say,
as if being transgender was the same as liking to wear funky sweaters
or dying your hair every month.

There's no fun in panicking over where to use the restroom,
or the sting of pain when someone uses the wrong name or pronouns.

Everyone has a picture that all transmen love women and sports,
and transwomen love boys and dresses.
They yet to understand any difference and when they see it,
it's constant question and judgement.

If you really want me to "just be myself",
give me the right to do that without question.
Don't look at my eyeliner and ask "are you still a boy?"
Clothing does not invalidate gender.
My gender is my choice, not yours.

Additional Poems to Adapt to Group Needs:

What It Feels Like to be Transgender

By Lee Mokobe

The first time I uttered a prayer was in a glass-stained cathedral.
I was kneeling long after the congregation was on its feet,
dip both hands into holy water,
trace the trinity across my chest,
my tiny body drooping like a question mark
all over the wooden pew.
I asked Jesus to fix me,
and when he did not answer
I befriended silence in the hopes that my sin would burn
and salve my mouth would dissolve like sugar on tongue,
but shame lingered as an aftertaste.
And in an attempt to reintroduce me to sanctity,
my mother told me of the miracle I was,
said I could grow up to be anything I want.
I decided to be a boy.
It was cute.
I had snapback, toothless grin,

used skinned knees as street cred,
played hide and seek with what was left of my goal.

I was it.

The winner to a game the other kids couldn't play,

I was the mystery of an anatomy,

a question asked but not answered,

tightroping between awkward boy and apologetic girl,

and when I turned 12, the boy phase wasn't deemed cute anymore.

It was met with nostalgic aunts who missed seeing my knees in the shadow of skirts,

who reminded me that my kind of attitude would never bring a husband home,

that I exist for heterosexual marriage and child-bearing.

And I swallowed their insults along with their slurs.

Naturally, I did not come out of the closet.

The kids at my school opened it without my permission.

Called me by a name I did not recognize,

said "lesbian,"

but I was more boy than girl, more Ken than Barbie.

It had nothing to do with hating my body,

I just love it enough to let it go,

I treat it like a house,

and when your house is falling apart,

you do not evacuate,

you make it comfortable enough to house all your insides,

you make it pretty enough to invite guests over,

you make the floorboards strong enough to stand on.

My mother fears I have named myself after fading things.

As she counts the echoes left behind by Mya Hall, Leelah Alcorn, Blake Brockington.

She fears that I'll die without a whisper,

that I'll turn into "what a shame" conversations at the bus stop.

She claims I have turned myself into a mausoleum,

that I am a walking casket,

news headlines have turned my identity into a spectacle,

Bruce Jenner on everyone's lips while the brutality of living in this body

becomes an asterisk at the bottom of equality pages.

No one ever thinks of us as human

because we are more ghost than flesh,

because people fear that my gender expression is a trick,

that it exists to be perverse,

that it ensnares them without their consent,

that my body is a feast for their eyes and hands
 and once they have fed off my queer,
 they'll regurgitate all the parts they did not like.
 They'll put me back into the closet, hang me with all the other skeletons.
 I will be the best attraction.
 Can you see how easy it is to talk people into coffins,
 to misspell their names on gravestones.
 And people still wonder why there are boys rotting,
 they go away in high school hallways
 they are afraid of becoming another hashtag in a second
 afraid of classroom discussions becoming like judgment day
 and now oncoming traffic is embracing more transgender children than parents.
 I wonder how long it will be
 before the trans suicide notes start to feel redundant,
 before we realize that our bodies become lessons about sin
 way before we learn how to love them.
 Like God didn't save all this breath and mercy,
 like my blood is not the wine that washed over Jesus' feet.
 My prayers are now getting stuck in my throat.
 Maybe I am finally fixed,
 maybe I just don't care,
 maybe God finally listened to my prayers.

A Queerification

By Regie Cabico

queer me
 shift me
 transgress me
 tell my students i'm gay
 tell chick fil a i'm queer
 tell the new york times i'm straight
 tell the mail man i'm a lesbian
 tell american airlines
 i don't know what my gender is
 like me
 liking you
 like summer blockbuster armrest dates
 armrest cinematic love
 elbow to forearm in the dark

humor me queerly
 fill me with laughter
 make me high with queer gas
 decompress me from centuries of spanish inquisition
 & self-righteous judgment
 like the blood my blood
 that has mixed w/ the colonizer
 & the colonized
 in the extinct & instinct to love
 bust memories of water & heat
 & hot & breath
 beating skin on skin fluttering
 bruise me into vapors
 bleed me into air
 fly me over sub-saharan africa & asia & antarctica
 explode me from the closet of my fears
 graffiti me out of doubt
 bend me like bamboo
 propose to me
 divorce me
 divide me into your spirit 2 spirit half spirit
 & shadow me w/ fluttering tongues
 & caresses beyond head
 heart chakras
 fist smashing djembes
 between my hesitations
 haiku me into 17 bursts of blossoms & cold saki
 de-ethnicize me
 de-clothe me
 de-gender me in brassieres
 & prosthetic genitalias
 burn me on a brazier
 wearing a brassiere
 in bitch braggadocio soprano bass
 magnificat me in vespers
 of hallelujah & amen
 libate me in halos
 heal me in halls of femmy troubadors
 announcing my hiv status

or your status
 i am not afraid to love you
 implant dialects as if they were lilacs
 in my ear
 medicate me with a lick & a like
 i am not afraid to love you
 so demand me
 reclaim me
 queerify me

Discussion: Poems

Remind the group that body and beauty norms are social constructs. There is no right or wrong way to look, behave, dress, and express yourself. (20-30 mins)

1. Do you connect with any of these poems? If not, why?
2. In Real Women, do you feel like this poem's language and descriptions fully inclusive to all people on the gender spectrum?
3. What about Gender is not black or white?
4. What does it mean to be a "real womxn, person, etc?"
5. Are the authors angry? What feelings do the authors convey?
6. What qualifies as socially "ideal" body? Do you feel the pressure to have an socially ideal body?
7. Do you struggle to feel comfortable with your body? Why?
8. What makes you real? Do you feel like you can be your 'real' self?
9. Are your mental health and self-esteem affected by beauty standards?
10. How can you celebrate your realness and uniqueness?

Creative Activity: Realness Celebration Mirrors

Materials: provide shiny reflective paper, sharpie markers

- Begin by posing these questions for individuals to think about:
 - What are somethings about you that make you unique? What are you insecure about? What makes you real?
- Ask them to write them down on a blank sheet of paper and reflect on why they may feel that way. (15-20 mins)
 - Then, write some positive words, phrases, etc about these unique traits they are insecure about.
 - Remind them to turn the negative thoughts into positivity.

- The whole purpose is restructure their negative thoughts about themselves.
- These thoughts can pertain to their body image, mental health, confidence, etc.
- Here are some examples you can use to guide the group:
 - I am insecure about my belly. I feel like it is too round, and I sometimes degrade myself by calling it my 'food baby.' Turning this negative thought around, I could start telling myself that I like my belly and my curves. My toxic 'food baby' thoughts can be transformed into 'I love my beautiful curvy belly.'
 - I frequently feel lonely and depressed. I have practiced self-harm and had suicidal ideations. To begin recovery with my mental illness, I am turning my negative thought patterns into 'I am not alone' and 'I am healing.'
 - Sometimes my confidence is low and I am quiet in larger groups. I do not always express myself or share my ideas because I feel like I will be judged. My new positive thoughts are 'I am fearless' and 'I have a voice I can use to empower myself and others.'
 - I feel like my arm muscles are weak. I cannot lift super heavy weights like it seems like everyone else at the gym. Instead of 'I am weak,' turn the negative idea into 'I am strong and grateful for what my arms can help me achieve.'
- When people begin to finish brainstorming, give them a piece of the shiny reflective paper and a sharpie marker to write their new positive thoughts about themselves.
 - The reflective paper can be turned into a mirror for the individual to look into, see themselves, correlate the positive thoughts with themselves, and remind them of their awesomeness.
- Give the group the opportunity to share their Realness Mirrors when everyone is done or when the class is ending.

Closing Ritual:

Before everyone leaves, give the group time to take a few breaths to decompress and ground themselves. The whole purpose of breathing is to get in touch with their emotions after a long and sometimes triggering session.

Recommend seeing their corrections counselor if they need to process the session. Additionally, their counselor can provide resources and support.

Go around the circle and ask each person to say their name, how they are feeling, and one wish for the week!

As the class is ending, use the remainder of the closing time to explain the optional but beneficial journaling reflection prompts.

After you explain the journal prompts, let someone lead the end of class community building ritual.

Journal Prompts:

1. What is 'realness?'
2. What makes you 'real?'
3. How has society influenced the way you see yourself?
4. What are some socially constructed body and beauty standards that affect you?
How do they impact you?
5. What are some things about yourself that you are insecure about? Why?
6. How can you change your negative thoughts about yourself to be more positive?
7. What are some challenges you face with practicing positive thinking and how can you overcome them?
8. What are three things that make you a beautiful human being?

Week 4:

Discrimination

Opening Breathing Ritual

At the beginning and end of each weekly session, the group will sit or stand (whatever physical position people are comfortable in, be aware and inclusive of all (dis)abilities) in a circle so everyone is facing one another. Being in a circle is absolutely crucial because it allows people to see everyone and to create a safe space for sharing their experiences and stories. It also equalizes the power dynamics to some degree between facilitators and participants. The opening breathing ritual is meant to ground the group and calmly prepare everyone for the session.

1. After everyone finds a seat, gets comfortable, and gets focused and quiet, say “We are going to take three deep breaths together. One to recognize the self, one to let go of the events, issues, stresses that might be troubling us today, and one to bring us together in this place of respect, growth, and hope.”
2. Using a soothing tone and guide everyone to begin to take a the 3 breaths. Give them their own time and space to finish the exercise with no pressures.
3. Ask them: “How do you feel? Are there places that ache? Where do you need to relax? Are you present? What are some emotions you can recognize?”
4. Ask the group to go around the circle, say your name, pronouns, and anything that you are feeling at the moment.
 - a. Ex. My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____ (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc). Today, I am feeling _____.
 - b. Optional: You can ask each person to set an intentional goal or learning outcome they would like to achieve in this class.

Class Purpose

- The purpose of this class is to:
 - Answer ‘what is discrimination and how do we deal with it?’
 - Discuss the Do’s and Don’ts of the ‘Coming Out’ process
 - Establish that ‘You are NOT Alone’

Intentions for this Session

Before starting the activities and discussions, always explain the agenda for this specific session.

1. Group discussion about discrimination
2. Talk about ‘Coming Out’
3. ‘Connections Between Us’ Yarn Activity

Discussion: What is Discrimination?

Start the group discussion by referring back to the group agreement expectations.

1. Ask the group: What is discrimination? What does biphobia, homophobia, and transphobia look like?
2. Refer back to the Vocabulary Extravaganza papers from Week 1
3. **Read aloud the definitions for: Biphobia, Homophobia, and Transphobia**
4. Open up the space for group discussion about these definitions and if participants have experienced discrimination
 - a. Topics can include definitions from the Vocabulary List like dyke, fag, etc
 - b. Discussion prompts:
 - i. Have you experienced discrimination?
 - ii. Who has discriminated against you? Your family? Your friends? Your community? Prison Staff?
 - iii. What does being discriminated against feel like?
 - iv. Do you experience discrimination in prison? Is it different from being on the outside?
 - v. What type of support do you need?
5. Allow participants to reflect on their personal experiences and how they dealt with discrimination and coming out
 - a. People in the LGBTQ community come out everyday.
6. Open the floor for participants to share their coming out experiences and feeling around their day to day struggle with constantly having to come out.
 - a. How do they come out? In what situations?
 - b. What have been people's reactions?
 - c. Have you experienced discrimination after coming out to people?
 - d. Who were the people who did not accept you the most? Family? Friends? Coworkers? Community?
7. Coming out DO's and DON'Ts

- a.
 - b. Image and information from:
<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2016/04/when-someone-comes-out-to-you-do-dont/>
8. Validate stories people share and allow the group to offer them support or advice
 9. Remember that discussions are very fluid and the conversation might go in a different way. Allow the group to express themselves and gently bring them back to the discussion if they get way off track.

Activity: The Connections Between Us

Note: Allow at least thirty minutes for this activity!

Directions:

1. Form a circle. Be aware of all participant's (dis)abilities and be inclusive with standing or sitting.
2. Begin with a ball of yarn, preferably rainbow to symbolize queer pride.
3. As the group facilitator, hold the ball of yarn and tell a personal story about when you felt disempowered, judged, put down, etc.
4. When someone in the circle relates to an aspect of the speaker's experience, identity, or story, they politely interrupt the speaker and say "we are connected."
5. The speaker then gently throws the ball of yarn to new speaker while still holding a piece of yarn.
6. Continue until everyone has told at least one story, comment, etc.
7. The circle of yarn will look like a complex spider web with everyone holding part of it. Some people may have more than one piece, but everyone will be connected together.
8. Once everyone has spoke, the last person holding the yarn will say one thing they have learned from this activity until they rewind the yarn back to the last holder they were connected to. This unwinding process continues until the yarn has been rewound back into a ball.
9. Reflection:
 - a. Did you like this activity?
 - b. How did hearing other people's stories make you feel?
 - c. How did you feel sharing your story to the group?
 - d. Do you feel like your experiences were validated?
 - e. What stands out? What did you notice?
 - f. What did you get out of this activity?
 - g. Do you feel less alone and more connected to others within the group?

Closing Ritual:

Give the group time to take a few breaths to decompress and ground themselves. The whole purpose of breathing is to get in touch with their emotions after a long and sometimes triggering session. Discussing personal experiences with discrimination and coming out is difficult and can bring up past trauma.

Go around the circle and ask each person to say their name, how they are feeling, and one wish for the week!

As the class is ending, use the remainder of the closing time to explain the optional but beneficial journaling reflection prompts.

After you explain the journal prompts, let someone lead the end of class community building ritual.

Journal Prompts:

1. Did the definitions we discussed correlate to your personal experience with discrimination?
2. How did it feel telling your coming out story to the group?
3. What did you learn from the yarn activity?
4. Do you feel closer with the group?
5. Reflect on a time you felt alone. What support did you need?
6. How can you better support your siblings in the LGBTQ community?
7. When was a time when you felt proud about your identities?
8. Where is a space were you felt comfortable to come out and express yourself?

Week 5: Harassment and Bullying

Opening Breathing Ritual

At the beginning and end of each weekly session, the group will sit or stand (whatever physical position people are comfortable in, be aware and inclusive of all (dis)abilities) in a circle so everyone is facing one another. Being in a circle is absolutely crucial because it allows people to see everyone and to create a safe space for sharing their experiences and stories. It also equalizes the power dynamics to some degree between facilitators and participants. The opening breathing ritual is meant to ground the group and calmly prepare everyone for the session.

1. After everyone finds a seat, gets comfortable, and gets focused and quiet, say “We are going to take three deep breaths together. One to recognize the self, one to let go of the events, issues, stresses that might be troubling us today, and one to bring us together in this place of respect, growth, and hope.”
2. Using a soothing tone and guide everyone to begin to take a the 3 breaths. Give them their own time and space to finish the exercise with no pressures.
3. Ask them: “How do you feel? Are there places that ache? Where do you need to relax? Are you present? What are some emotions you can recognize?”
4. Ask the group to go around the circle, say your name, pronouns, and anything that you are feeling at the moment.
 - a. Ex. My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____ (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc). Today, I am feeling _____.
 - b. Optional: You can ask each person to set an intentional goal or learning outcome they would like to achieve in this class.

Class Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to empower folx with activities meant to:

- Allow the group to discuss personal harassment and bullying experiences to process and heal from the trauma
- Role play harassment and bullying situations and how to respond non-confrontationally and productively
- Practice filing complaints
- Finding resources and support in prison

Intentions for this Session:

Before starting the activities and discussions, always explain the agenda for this specific session. It’s also important to remind the group about the community agreement since today we will be discussing personal experiences with harassment and bullying.

1. Share personal stories and experiences with harassment and bullying
2. Role play situations and how to respond
3. Learn how to file harassment complaints and get support
4. Empower each other to stand up for one another and advocate for themselves

Discussion: Personal Stories

This activity may take longer than 30 minutes or even the entire session because talking about bullying and harassment are difficult topics lots of people want discuss and process.

“Last week, we talked about the connections between us. To begin this week’s session, we are going to talk about our experiences with bullying, abuse, and harassment. If you do not feel comfortable sharing your story, you do not have to.

Let’s support one another. Nod if you have a similar story. Practice open-mindedness and non-judgement.”

Questions to begin storytelling:

1. When was a time you were bullied or harassed? How did it make you feel?
2. Did you feel like people were discriminating and targeting you because of your non-heteronormative sexuality and gender expression?
3. How did you react in the moment of the incident? After?
4. How did the perpetrator act and respond?
5. Did people stand up for you?

Questions to ask after storytelling is over:

1. What would you tell the person/people who bullied you?
2. How would you productively respond?
3. If the situation turned negative, why?

Activity (Optional): Intervening in Difficult Situations

The purpose of this exercise is to empower the group with tools to respond to bullying and harassment. (5-10 minutes)

1. Split the participants into groups of 2-3
2. Ask them to pick a situation from the two provided below.

3. Give the small groups 5 minutes to think about how they would respond and role play their intervention. The groups can reenact the situation and how to respond in a non-confrontational and productive way.
4. Then, bring the group together and ask each individual group to role play their positive responses to harassment and bullying if they would like to
5. When everyone is finished, ask if anyone has any reactions to the exercise and if this exercise was helpful with providing healthy ways of dealing with conflict.

Scenario #1

You and your roommate are eating in the cafeteria and the group next to you starts talking about one of the transwomxn in the facility. Some of the comments made during the discussion include: “He’s a tranny.” and “He’s just pretending to be a woman.” and “He’s not a real womxn because he has a dick.”

Questions:

- Would you intervene? Why or why not?
- How would you realistically intervene in this situation?
- What would be a productive and non-confrontational response to their comments?

Scenario #2

You and your friends are outside enjoying the nice weather when you hear two people arguing loudly. You look behind you and see one person aggressively yelling at another person who seems uncomfortable. The person said “God created one man and one woman for a reason. Lesbians like you go to hell. You are a sinner.”

Questions:

- Would you intervene? If not, why?
- How would you realistically intervene in this situation?
- What would be a productive and non-confrontational response to their comments?

Information: How to File a Discrimination Complaint

Give each person a copy of the discrimination complaint form and the policy and procedure information.

https://doc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/ad-pr-18_f-1_discrimination_complaint_form.pdf

https://doc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/wrowi-45_discrimination_grievance.pdf

Briefly walk through definitions and how to file out the application. It's pretty straight forward.

Here's a couple things to remember:

1. Discrimination is defined as:
 - a. 1. Offenders are not subject to discrimination based on an offender's race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or political views. (ACRS-6B-01) The District shall ensure all offenders are afforded equal opportunity to participate in all activities, services and programs.
2. "Written intake criteria prohibits discrimination in accepting referrals on the basis of gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, race, political views, or national origin." (ACRS-6B-02)
3. A grievance must be filed within 14 days of the incident.
4. The FWI gets 1 appeal.

Closing Ritual:

Before everyone leaves, give the group time to take a few breaths to decompress and ground themselves. The whole purpose of breathing is to get in touch with their emotions after a long and sometimes triggering session.

Recommend seeing their corrections counselor if they need to process the session. Additionally, their counselor can provide resources and support.

Go around the circle and ask each person to say their name, how they are feeling, and one wish for the week!

As the class is ending, use the remainder of the closing time to explain the optional but beneficial journaling reflection prompts.

After you explain the journal prompts, let someone lead the end of class community building ritual.

Journal Prompts:

Free write and journal a story or a poem about how this workshop has empowered you

They can share your writing at the closing ceremony if they'd like

Week 6: Confidence and Self-Acceptance

Opening Breathing Ritual

At the beginning and end of each weekly session, the group will sit or stand (whatever physical position people are comfortable in, be aware and inclusive of all (dis)abilities) in a circle so everyone is facing one another. Being in a circle is absolutely crucial because it allows people to see everyone and to create a safe space for sharing their experiences and stories. It also equalizes the power dynamics to some degree between facilitators and participants. The opening breathing ritual is meant to ground the group and calmly prepare everyone for the session.

1. After everyone finds a seat, gets comfortable, and gets focused and quiet, say “We are going to take three deep breaths together. One to recognize the self, one to let go of the events, issues, stresses that might be troubling us today, and one to bring us together in this place of respect, growth, and hope.”
2. Using a soothing tone and guide everyone to begin to take a the 3 breaths. Give them their own time and space to finish the exercise with no pressures.
3. Ask them: “How do you feel? Are there places that ache? Where do you need to relax? Are you present? What are some emotions you can recognize?”
4. Ask the group to go around the circle, say your name, pronouns, and anything that you are feeling at the moment.
 - a. Ex. My name is _____ and my pronouns are _____ (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc). Today, I am feeling _____.
 - b. Optional: You can ask each person to set an intentional goal or learning outcome they would like to achieve in this class.

Class Purpose

The purpose of this class is to:

- Build perseverance and confidence
- Become empowered by mantras
- End our time together

Intentions for this Session

Before starting the activities and discussions, always explain the agenda for this specific session.

1. Learn what is perseverance and how to foster it
2. Create personal empowerment mantras
3. Close out our group

Discussion: What is Perseverance?

The LGBTQ+ community and people who are incarcerated have always faced discrimination and oppression based on sexuality, gender expression, and romantic attraction and on-paper status, but we have kept fighting and persevering. (20 mins)

1. Ask the group what they think perseverance is in their own words?
2. Provide the definition of perseverance.
 - a. Perseverance from Dictionary.com
 - b. Perseverance is:
 - i. steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.
3. Discussion questions:
 - a. What are some obstacles LGBTQ+ FWI face?
 - b. How do LGBTQ+ FWI persevere?
 - c. What are some strategies you can implement to keep on persisting regardless of the difficulties you are put up against?
 - i. One of those strategies are (Wo)mantras!
 - ii. Transition into activity.

Activity: (Wo)mantras

(Wo)mantras is a wordplay on mantras. Mantras are words, statements, and mottos that are frequently used to concentrate and remember an important idea. (Wo)mantras is an attempt to make mantras gender neutral and a source of empowerment

Examples of (Wo)mantras:

Ex. Nevertheless they persisted.
Ex. He believed he could, so he did.

Now it's time to create your own!!!!

(Optional: provide a mini square canvas for participants to write their mantra and decorate. This give them the opportunity to keep and remember their mantra.)

- Do you have goals? Write those down.
- Brainstorm of something you need to remember to achieve these goals.
 - It can be a thought, related to something you need to work on, or something you need to reaffirm when you need support.

- The purpose of using this mantra is to remember all that you have learned during our sessions and what future goals you are striving to achieve when you are in need of some empowerment and guidance.
- When you're stress, recall this mantra. When you're lonely, say your mantra. When you feel like you cannot keep going, remember your mantra and your goals.

Post-Assessment

Give the group 10-15 mins to fill out their post-assessment so they can reflect on their experiences. You can collect the comments and use them for your personal and professional group.

Closing Ceremony

Today is the last day of group sessions. This can be very hard for some participants because we have built a strong supportive community, and we have shared our stories of our hardest experiences. There may be emotional responses so have tissues readily available, and be ready to support distressed participants.

Remind the group that they are not alone. We have one another and keep on persisting.

Allow time for participants to share their own empowerment journals, poems, or stories if they choose

Let them know how this experience has been for you as a facilitator. What have you learned? How have you grown? What has been inspiring?

Tell each participant one thing that you think they did great during the program. Try to avoid giving advice. Focus on the positive traits you see in each person.

Optional: You can use a certificate template provided in the participant workshop and bring treats if you want to further celebrate the completion of the group and have a closing ceremony.

**EMPOWERMENT
WORKSHOP FOR LGBTQ FOLX WHO
ARE INCARCERATED Participant
Workbook**

Welcome to the Empowerment Workshop for LGBTQ Folx who are Incarcerated (FWI)!!!

We are so grateful that you decided to participate in this group, and we hope you have an amazing experience discovering more about yourself, reflecting on who you are, and building friendships with other members.

The purpose of this six week workshop is to learn ways to empower yourself and others and to become equipped with the skills to cope with trauma and life as an LGBTQ Folx and a person who is incarcerated. We are here provide you with support and resources to succeed.

This curriculum is specifically designed to be trauma informed and gender neutrally responsive. Please be aware that there are some difficult topics to discuss. Your safety and needs come first, and at anytime you feel triggered or uncomfortable you can leave the space to take a break or check out and color the pages provided.

Additionally, please respect other participants and their diverse perspectives, experiences, and confidentiality. Please do not share other people's personal stories with anyone else outside of this environment. Be aware that anything you share and write in your journals may not be private.

This space is yours. If you have any concerns, feedback, or accommodations, please talk to your facilitator. We are here to support you and your needs.

Pre-Assessment

The purpose of this pre-assessment to record your thoughts and goals before participating in this workshop so you can reflect afterwards. There will be a Post-Assessment to determine your growth and document your feedback for the curriculum and group facilitator(s.)

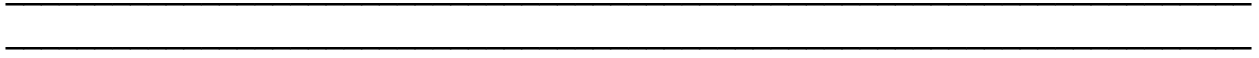
1. What does a healthy LGBTQ+ person in prison look like to you?

2. What do you struggle the most with: accepting your identities and who you are, stereotypes, discrimination and harassment, mental health, body image, or self-esteem? Why?

3. What are some goals you wish to achieve during our weekly session?

4. How can we better support you?

5. What are some resources you need?



Week 1

Comprehensive List of LGBTQIA+ Pronouns and Definitions

*This list is neither comprehensive nor inviolable, but it's a work in progress toward those goals. With identity terms, trust the person who is using the term and their definition of it above any dictionary. These definitions are the creation of a cultural commons: emails, online discussions, and in-person chats, with the initial curation being mine, then growing into a collaboration between Meg Bolger and me at TheSafeZoneProject.com (<http://www.thesafezoneproject.com>).

We are constantly honing and adjusting language to — our humble goal — have the definitions resonate with at least 51 out of 100 people who use the words. Identity terms are tricky, and trying to write a description that works perfectly for everyone using that label simply isn't possible.

Some definitions here may include words you aren't familiar with, or have been taught a flawed or incomplete definition for; I've likely defined those words somewhere else in the list, but if I also missed many. This is an ever evolving project that I do my best to check back in on every three or four months. All that said, let's get started...
alphabetically:

advocate – noun : a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. 2 verb to actively support/plea in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance, educate others, etc. no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.

ally /“allie”/ – noun : a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect. “Coming out” as an ally is when you reveal (or take an action that reveals) your support of the LGBTQ community. Being an active supporter can, at times, be stigmatizing, though it is not usually recognized, many allies go through a “coming out process” of their own.

androgyny/ous /“anjarahjune”; “anjarahjunuss”/ – adj. : 1 a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; 2 occasionally used in place of “intersex” to describe a person with both female and male anatomy.

androsexual / androphilic – adj. : being primarily sexually, romantically and/or

emotionally attracted to some men, males, and/or masculinity.

aromantic – adj. : experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic). Sometimes abbreviated to “aro” (pronounced like “arrow”).

asexual – adj. : experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to “ace.” Asexuality is different from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation whereas celibacy is an abstaining from a certain action. Not all asexual people are aromantic.

bigender – adj. : a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (and sometimes a third gender).

bicurious – adj. : a curiosity about having attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

biological sex – noun : a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.” Often seen as a binary but as there are many combinations of chromosomes, hormones, and primary/secondary sex characteristics, it’s more accurate to view this as a spectrum (which is more inclusive of intersex people as well as trans*identified people).* – Is commonly conflated with gender.

biphobia – noun : a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express towards bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society. Biphobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards bisexual people. Example of bi-invisibility and bi-erasure would be the assumption that any man in a relationship with a woman is straight or anyone dating someone of the same gender means you’re gay. In neither case do we assume anyone could be bisexual. Really important to recognize that many of our “stereotypes” of bisexual people – they’re overly sexual, greedy, it’s just a phase – have harmful and stigmatizing

effects (and that gay, straight, and many other queer individuals harbor these beliefs too).

bisexual – adj. : 1 a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. 2 a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people of their gender and another gender . This attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to. Can simply be shortened to “bi.” Many people who recognize the limitations of a binary understanding of gender may still use the word bisexual as their sexual orientation label, this is often because many people are familiar with the term bisexual (while less are familiar to the term pansexual).

butch – noun & adj. a person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally. ‘Butch’ is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but is also be claimed as an affirmative identity label.

cisgender /“sissjendur”/ – adj. : a person whose gender identity and biological sex assigned at birth align (e.g., man and assigned male at birth). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.” “Cis” is a latin prefix that means “on the same side [as]” or “on this side [of].”

cissexism – noun : behavior that grants preferential treatment to cisgender people, reinforces the idea that being cisgender is somehow better or more “right” than being transgender, and/or makes other genders invisible.

cisnormativity – noun : the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans* identities or people. Leads to invisibility of noncisgender identities.

Closeted – adj. : an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one’s safety, peer or family rejection or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.” When someone chooses to break this silence they “come out” of the closet. (See coming out)

Coming Out – the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). 2 The process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.). This is a continual, lifelong process. Everyday, all the time, one has to evaluate and reevaluate who they are comfortable coming out to, if it is safe, and what the consequences might be.

constellation – noun : a way to describe the arrangement or structure of a

polyamorous relationship.

crossdresser – noun : someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.

demiromantic – adj. : little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual or emotional connection is formed with another individual, often within a sexual relationship.

demisexual – adj. : little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic or emotional connection is formed with another individual, often within a romantic relationship.

down low – adj. : typically referring to men who identify as straight but who secretly have sex with men. Down low (or DL) originated in, and is most commonly used by communities of color.

drag king – noun : someone who performs masculinity theatrically.

drag queen – noun : someone who performs femininity theatrically.

dyke – noun : referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it can be adopted affirmatively by many lesbians (both more masculine and more feminine presenting lesbians not necessarily masculine ones) as a positive self identity term.

emotional attraction – noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., sharing, confiding, trusting, interdepending), experienced in varying degrees (from little to none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

fag(got) – noun : derogatory term referring to a gay person, or someone perceived as queer. Occasionally used as a self identifying affirming term by some gay men, at times in the shortened form 'fag'.

Feminine of center; masculine of center – adj. : a word that indicates a range of terms of gender identity and gender presentation for folks who present, understand themselves, and/or relate to others in a more feminine/masculine way, but don't necessarily identify as women/men. Feminine of center individuals may also identify as femme, submissive, transfeminine, etc.; masculine of center individuals may also often identify as butch, stud, aggressive, boi, transmasculine, etc.

Feminine presenting; masculine presenting – adj. : a way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine/masculine way. Often confused with feminine of center/masculine of center, which generally include a focus on identity as well as expression.

femme – (noun & adj) someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be

physically, mentally or emotionally. Often used to refer to a feminine presenting queer woman.

fluid(ity) – adj. : generally with another term attached, like genderfluid or fluidsexuality, fluid(ity) describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available (e.g., man and woman, bi and straight).

FtM / F2M; MtF / M2F – **abbreviation : female to male transgender or transsexual** person; male to female transgender or transsexual person.

gay – adj. : : 1 individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. More commonly used when referring to men who are attracted to other men, but can be applied to women as well. 2 An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual. “Gay” is a word that’s had many different meanings throughout time. In the 12th century is meant “happy,” in the 17th century it was more commonly used to mean “immoral” (describing a loose and pleasure seeking person), and by the 19th it meant a female prostitute (and a “gay man” was a guy who had sex with female prostitutes a lot). It wasn’t until the 20th century that it started to mean what it means today. Interesting, right?

gender binary – noun : the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

gender expression – noun : the external display of one’s gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”

gender fluid– adj. : : gender fluid is a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

gender identity – noun : the internal perception of an one’s gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don’t align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans, and more. Often confused with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

gender neutrois – adj. : **see agender.**

gender nonconforming – adj. : 1 a gender expression descriptor that indicates a nontraditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man) 2 a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as “GNC.”

gender normative / gender straight – adj. : someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society’s gender based expectations.

genderqueer – adj. : a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender nonconforming or nonbinary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid). They may combine aspects man and woman and other identities (bigender, pangender); not having a gender or identifying with a gender (genderless, agender); moving between genders (genderfluid); third gender or other gendered; includes those who do not place a name to their gender having an overlap of, or blurred lines between, gender identity and sexual and romantic orientation.

gender variant – adj. : someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, crossdresser, etc).

gynesexual / gynephilic /“guynuhseksshuuhl”/ – adj. : being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some woman, females, and/or femininity.

heteronormativity – noun : the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual (e.g. asking a woman if she has a boyfriend) and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

she/her/hers / he/him/his: gender specific pronouns people may use to signify their masculine, feminine, womxn, man, etc. identities grammatically in third person (see **ze / zir / “zee”, “zerr” or “zeer”/**) They/them/theirs are other gender neutral pronouns

hermaphrodite – noun : an outdated medical term previously used to refer to someone who was born with some combination of typically male and typically female sex characteristics. It's considered stigmatizing and inaccurate. See intersex.

heteronormativity – noun : the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

heterosexism – noun : behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more "right" than queerness, and/or makes other sexualities invisible.

heterosexual – adj. : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex. Also known as straight.

homophobia – noun : an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. Homophobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards gay people. The term can be extended to bisexual and transgender people as well; however, the terms biphobia and transphobia are used to emphasize the specific biases against individuals of bisexual and transgender communities. May be experienced inwardly by someone who identifies as queer (internalized homophobia).

homosexual – adj. & noun : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead). Until 1973 “Homosexuality” was classified as a mental disorder in the DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is just one of the reasons that there are such heavy negative and clinical connotations with this term. There was a study done prior to DADT (Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell) being revoked about peoples’ feelings towards open queer service members. When asked, “How do you feel about open gay and lesbian service members,” there was about 65% support (at the time).” When the question was changed to, “How do you feel about open homosexual service members,” the same demographic of people being asked – support drops over 20%. There are different connotations to the word homosexual than there are to gay/lesbian individuals for both straight and queer people.

intersex – adj. : term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

lesbian – noun & adj. women who have the capacity to be attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to some other women.

LGBTQ; GSM; DSG – abbreviations : shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a nonnormative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bi sexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people add a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Inter sex Lesbian Trans* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]). There is no “correct” initialism or acronym — what is preferred varies by person, region, and often evolves over time. The efforts to represent more and more identities led to some folks describe the ever lengthening initialism as “Alphabet Soup,” which was part of the impetus for GSM and DSG.

lipstick lesbian – noun : Usually refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way. Is sometimes also used to refer to a lesbian who is assumed to be (or passes for) straight.

metrosexual – adj. : a man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends more time, energy, or money on his appearance and grooming than is considered gender normative.

MSM / WSW – abbreviations : men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women, to distinguish sexual behaviors from sexual identities: because a man is straight, it doesn't mean he's not having sex with men. Often used in the field of HIV/Aids education, prevention, and treatment.

Mx. / “mix” or “schwa” / – an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: Mx. Smith is a great teacher.

outing – verb : involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

pansexual – adj. : a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to “pan.”

passing – adj. & verb : 1 trans* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans*. 2 An LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight. Passing is a controversial term because it often is focusing on the person who is observing or interacting with the individual who is “passing” and puts the power/authority in observer rather than giving agency to the individual. While some people are looking to “pass” or perhaps more accurately be accepted for the identity that they feel most aligns with who they are “passing” is not always a positive experience. Some individuals experience a sense of erasure or a feeling of being invisible to their own community when they are perceived to be part of the dominant group.

PGPs – abbreviation : preferred gender pronouns. Often used during introductions, becoming more common in educational institutions. Many suggest removing the “preferred,” because it indicates flexibility and/or the power for the speaker to decide which pronouns to use for someone else.

polyamory / polyamorous – noun, adj. refers to the practice of, desire to, or orientation towards having ethically, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). This may include open relationships, polyfidelity (which involves more than two people being in romantic and/or sexual relationships which is not open to additional partners), amongst many other setups.

queer – adj. : used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight. Also used to describe people who have a nonnormative gender identity, or as a political affiliation. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term “queer” can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer folks” instead of “LGBTQ folks”). If a person tells you they are not comfortable with you referring to them as queer, don't. Always

respect individual's preferences when it comes to identity labels, particularly contentious ones (or ones with troubled histories) like this. Use the word queer only if you are comfortable explaining to others what it means, because some people feel uncomfortable with the word, it is best to know/feel comfortable explaining why you choose to use it if someone inquires.

questioning – verb, adj. an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

QPOC / QTPOC – abbreviation : initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

romantic attraction – noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little to one, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

same gender loving (SGL) – adj. : sometimes used by some members of the African American or Black community to express a non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

sex assigned at birth (SAAB) – abbreviation : a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called "designated sex at birth" (DSAB) or "sex coercively assigned at birth" (SCAB), or specifically used as "assigned male at birth" (AMAB) or "assigned female at birth" (AFAB): Jenny was assigned male at birth, but identifies as a woman.

sexual attraction – noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physical intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little to none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – noun : the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

sexual preference – noun : the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with "sexual orientation," creating an illusion that one has a choice (or "preference") in who they are attracted to.

sex reassignment surgery (SRS) – noun : used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's biological sex. "Gender confirmation surgery" is considered by many to be a more affirming term. In most cases,

one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as “top” surgery and “bottom” surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

skoliosexual – adj. : being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/or nonbinary people.

spiritual attraction – noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in intimate behavior based on one’s experience with, interpretation of, or belief in the supernatural (e.g., religious teachings, messages from a deity), experienced in varying degrees (from littletonone, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or emotional attraction.

stealth – adj. : a trans person who is not “out” as trans, and is perceived by others as cisgender.

straight – adj. : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

stud – noun : most commonly used to indicate a Black/AfricanAmerican and/or Latina masculine lesbian/queer woman. Also known as ‘butch’ or ‘aggressive’.

third gender – noun : for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognise three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

top surgery – noun : this term refers to surgery for the construction of a male type chest or breast augmentation for a female type chest.

trans* – adj. : An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including nonbinary identities, as well as transgender men (trans men) and transgender women (trans women).

transgender – adj. : A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex. Because sexuality labels (e.g., gay, straight, bi) are generally based on the relationship between the person’s gender and the genders they are attracted to, trans* sexuality can be defined in a couple of ways. Some people may choose to self-identify as straight, gay, bi, lesbian, or pansexual (or others, using their gender identity as a basis), or they might describe their sexuality using otherfocused terms like gynesexual, androsexual, or skoliosexual (see full list for

definitions for these terms. A trans* person can be straight, gay, bisexual, queer, or any other sexual orientation.

transition / transitioning – noun, verb this term is primarily used to refer to the process a trans* person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

transman; transwoman – noun : An identity label sometimes adopted by female to male transgender people or transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as assigned female sex at birth. (sometimes referred to as transguy) 2 Identity label sometimes adopted by maletofemale transsexuals or transgender people to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as assigned male sex at birth.

transphobia – noun : the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society. Transphobia is often manifested in violent and deadly means. While the exact numbers and percentages aren't incredibly solid on this, it's safe to say that trans* people are far more likely than their cisgender peers (including LGB people) to be the victims of violent crimes and murder. Transphobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

transsexual – noun and adj. a person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

transvestite – noun : a person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression (“crossdresses”) for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification (often called a “crossdresser,” and should not be confused with transsexual). Some people use transvestite as a way to dehumanize and humiliate trans* people.

twospirit/2Spirit – noun : is an umbrella term traditionally used by Native American people to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.

ze / zir / “zee”, “zerr” or “zeer”/ – alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers” respectively. Alternatively some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun.

Gender Unicorn

Gender Unicorn in Spanish (Other languages are available)

Gender Unicorn Worksheet

Week 1 Journal Prompts:

1. How do you feel after the first session? Are you uncomfortable or comfortable and why do you think that is?

2. Do you agree with the group agreement?

3. What did you learn about LGBTQIA+ identities?

4. How did you fill out your genderbread person?

5. Reflecting on your own experiences, why do you identify the way you do?

6. When did you first become aware of your gender and sexuality?

7. How have your identities changed after entering prison? Are your identities fluid?

Notes:

TIC Coloring Page:

Week 2

Week 2 Journal Prompts:

1. How do you feel after this second session? Did you like the role play activity and the discussion?

2. Did you feel uncomfortable, neutral, or comfortable discussing FWI stereotypes?

3. How do stereotypes impact you? Your behaviors? Your lifestyle?

4. Reflecting on your own experiences, how did coming to prison affect you and the stereotypes you encountered? Did your stereotypes change? Did you find new stereotypes you never thought about?

5. What did you learn about yourself and others today?

-
-
-
6. What is one aspect of your identity that feels disempowered, misunderstood, or judged because of your own or other people's perceptions and societal stereotypes? What could you do to empower yourself?

Notes:

TIC Coloring Page:

Week 3

Poems:

Real Women

by Hanne Blank

Excuse me while I throw this down, I'm old and cranky and tired of hearing the idiocy repeated by people who ought to know better.

Real women do not have curves. Real women do not look like just one thing. Real women have curves, and not. They are tall, and not. They are brown-skinned, and olive-skinned, and not. They have small breasts, and big ones, and no breasts whatsoever.

Real women start their lives as baby girls. And as baby boys. And as babies of indeterminate biological sex whose bodies terrify their doctors and families into making all kinds of very sudden decisions.

Real women have big hands and small hands and long elegant fingers and short stubby fingers and manicures and broken nails with dirt under them.

Real women have armpit hair and leg hair and pubic hair and facial hair and chest hair and sexy moustaches and full, luxuriant beards. Real women have none of these things, spontaneously or as the result of intentional change. Real women are bald as eggs, by chance and by choice and by chemo. Real women have hair so long they can sit on it. Real women wear wigs and weaves and extensions and kufi and do-rags and hairnets and hijab and headscarves and hats and yarmulkes and textured rubber swim caps with the plastic flowers on the sides.

Real women wear high heels and skirts. Or not.

Real women are feminine and smell good and they are masculine and smell good and they are androgynous and smell good, except when they don't smell so good, but that can be changed if desired because real women change stuff when they want to. Real women have ovaries. Unless they don't, and sometimes they don't because they were born that way and sometimes they don't because they had to have their ovaries removed.

Real women have uteruses, unless they don't, see above. Real women have vaginas and clitorises and XX sex chromosomes and high estrogen levels, they ovulate and menstruate and can get pregnant and have babies. Except sometimes not, for a rather spectacular array of reasons both spontaneous and induced.

Real women are fat. And thin. And both, and neither, and otherwise. Doesn't make them any less real.

There is a phrase I wish I could engrave upon the hearts of every single person, everywhere in the world, and it is this sentence which comes from the genius lips of the grand and eloquent Mr. Glenn Marla:

There is no wrong way to have a body.

I'm going to say it again because it's important: **There is no wrong way to have a body.**

And if your moral compass points in any way, shape, or form to equality, you need to get this through your thick skull and stop with the "real women are like such-and-so" crap.

You are not the authority on what "real" human beings are, and who qualifies as "real" and on what basis. **All human beings are real.**

Yes, I know you're tired of feeling disenfranchised. It is a tiresome and loathsome thing to be and to feel. But the tit-for-tat disenfranchisement of others is not going to solve that problem. Solidarity has to start somewhere and it might as well be with you and me.

Gender is not black & white

by Tristan from <https://hellopoetry.com/gaypetals/>

"Just be yourself" they say,
as if being transgender was the same as liking to wear funky sweaters
or dying your hair every month.

There's no fun in panicking over where to use the restroom,
or the sting of pain when someone uses the wrong name or pronouns.

Everyone has a picture that all transmen love women and sports,

and transwomen love boys and dresses.
They yet to understand any difference and when they see it,
it's constant question and judgement.

If you really want me to "just be myself",
give me the right to do that without question.
Don't look at my eyeliner and ask "are you still a boy?"
Clothing does not invalidate gender.
My gender is my choice, not yours.

Week 3 Journal Prompts:

1. What is 'realness' to you?

2. What makes you 'real'?

3. How has society influenced the way you see yourself?

4. What are some socially constructed body and beauty standards that affect you?
How do they impact you?

5. What are some things about yourself that you are insecure about? Why?

6. How can you change your negative thoughts about yourself to be more positive?

7. What are some challenges you face with practicing positive thinking and how can you overcome them?

8. What are three things that make you a beautiful human being?

1.

2.

3.

Notes:

TIC Coloring Page:

Extra TIC Coloring Page:

Week 4

Refer back to the Comprehensive List of Pronouns and Definitions

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2016/04/when-someone-comes-out-to-you-do-dont/>

Week 4 Journal Prompts:

1. Did the definitions we discussed correlate to your personal experience with discrimination?

2. How did it feel telling your coming out story to the group?

3. What did you learn from the yarn activity?

4. Do you feel closer with the group?

5. Reflect on a time you felt alone. What support did you need?

6. How can you better support your siblings in the LGBTQ community?

7. When was a time when you felt proud about your identities?

8. Where is a space that you felt safe and comfortable to come out and express yourself?

Notes:

TIC Coloring Page:

TIC Coloring Page:

Week 6

Examples of (Wo)mantras:

Ex. Nevertheless they persisted.

Now it's time to create your own!!!!

- Do you have goals? Write those down.

-
-
- Brainstorm of something you need to remember to achieve these goals.
 - It can be a thought, related to something you need to work on, or something you need to reaffirm when you need support.
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-
-
-

- Your mantra:



- The purpose of using this mantra is to remember all that you have learned during our sessions and what future goals you are striving to achieve when you are in need of some empowerment and guidance.
- When you're stress, recall this mantra. When you're lonely, say your mantra. When you feel like you cannot keep going, remember your mantra and your goals.

Post-Assessment

This is a Post-Assessment meant to give you the opportunity to reflection on your growth throughout the past six weeks and give you all the opportunity to provide feedback for the facilitator(s.)

1. After the sessions and doing the hard work, what does a healthy LGBTQ+ person in prison look like to you?

2. Looking back, what do or did you struggle the most with: accepting your identities and who you are, stereotypes, discrimination and harassment, mental health, body image, or self-esteem? Did this workshop give you the resources and tools to be able to work through those struggles in a positive and healthy manner?

3. Did you achieve the goals you previously wrote down? If you did not, why? How could you continue to work towards accomplishing them in the future?

4. Did this workshop support you?

5. Do you feel like you were given the resources you needed to be a healthy LGBTQ+ person in prison?

6. What are some positive things that your facilitator(s) did?

Thank you for participating in this group. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching all of you grow. I hope you feel more empowered, confident, and accepting of who you are. When things get tough, remember our time together and what you've learned, and when you feel lonely, remember that we have a supportive loving community and you are not alone. We are all human beings, regardless of our non-heteronormative sexual and romantic identities and our incarceration status. You all have bright future, and you deserve love, respect, and acceptance. Best wishes to you all!

The Importance of Prison Reform, Diversifying the Criminal Justice System, and Empowering LGBT FWI

“In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become apart of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we not exist has to be radically changed...it means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system.” -Ella Baker

Throughout this project, I have attempted to expose the devastating struggles LGBTQ FWI are subjected to before incarceration and what they face while serving their time in prison. LGBTQ youth are funneled into the Criminal Justice System by the School-to-Prison Pipeline as a result of harsh punitive practices schools use to police queerness and the lack of community compassion and support. LGBTQ youth are expected to conform to heteronormative behaviors in educational and social settings, and nonconformity is often severely punished. The pressure from these transphobic and homophobic policies push them into juvenile correctional and eventually adult correctional facilities. As adults in the criminal justice system, LGBTQ FWI are subjected to discrimination, harassment, lack of access to healthcare, solitary confinement, separated housing, and sexual violence--conditions and circumstances that can trigger old traumas that produced substance abuse and mental health problems. Entering prison with traumatic pasts, LGBTQ FWI encounter a system that normalizes violence and harm. For these reasons and others, it is of the utmost importance that corrections be trauma informed, gender neutral responsive, and community based.

I believe prisons can reform to become less punitive, less discriminative, less violent, and more inclusive of all people, but especially LGBTQ folx. An important step in reforming corrections is diversifying correctional staff and administration. We need LGBTQ employees in the correctional field that will make corrections more LGBTQ friendly. Most importantly, there must be more criminology research on what causes LGBTQ FWI to enter and return to the criminal justice system, particularly research that focuses on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and the injustices they experience while in correctional facilities. Finally, we must understand how Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex have impeded prison reform in support of LGBTQ FWI due the privatization of the Criminal Justice System and the gender and sexual discrimination the criminal justice system supports. Queering criminology and the Criminal Justice System to make prisons more inclusive for LGBTQ FWI is a critical element in making a difference in the lives of LGBTQ FWI's.

Applying Trauma Informed Care and Gender Responsivity

My curriculum is focused on implementing trauma informed pedagogical practices when working with LGBTQ FWI. Fundamentally, Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is the foundational framework of my curriculum. My TIC curriculum is designed to understand, recognize, and respond to diverse effects of trauma when working with groups of people who are more likely to have had traumatic experiences in their lifetime. It acknowledges that trauma can impact individuals physically, emotionally, and psychologically. When applied to corrections, TIC strives to make central an individual's

overall safety and wellbeing in facilities when in-taking, interacting, programming, and disciplining FWI. TIC claims that no one is spared from the effects of trauma because traumas that affect individuals also affect their families and communities. The overall objective of TIC is to empower survivors and those impacted by these “second-hand traumas” by promoting a sense of autonomy and control that can build healing and healthy patterns and reduce recidivism after reentry. The purpose of this project’s TIC based curriculum is provide LGBTQ FWI with a safe space to learn, reflect, and express themselves without hostility, discrimination, and negative judgement.

My curriculum is built on research that shows that LGBTQ FWI are already punished by society before they enter the criminal justice system and the hostile environment in prison creates additional trauma. It supports the assertion that LGBTQ FWI are more likely to experience sexual assault, harassment, interpersonal violence, and discrimination, which can lead to substance abuse, mental health issues, and recidivism. The curriculum is specifically designed to reduce the risk of being triggered, which could intensify one’s trauma. It argues that LGBTQ FWI may not have access to a safe space to be express themselves and have open conversations; thus group meetings are meant to provide a safe space in the punitive prison environment. This graph illustrates the trauma informed strategies I seek to apply in rehab and interactions with LGBTQ FWI.

Graphic from National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women with a few suggestions

TIC's main principles include safety, trust, choice and autonomy, collaboration, and empowerment. In a group setting and living environment, my curriculum argues, LGBTQ FWI need to feel safe and comfortable, and correctional staff must neutralize the space and the number of potential triggers. The LGBTQ FWI must feel like they can trust the staff and have the autonomy to make choices such as asking FWI if they are ready for a pat down before it takes place from a same sex officers. Staff must collaborate with one another to continue the commitment to the TIC mission, and administration must engage with FWI when making decisions and policies that will affect the entire community. My curriculum's most important principle is empowering FWI with skills to recognize and cope with their trauma. To accomplish this, I show the facility how to hold focus groups on various topics like healthy relationships and parenting, art therapy session, and meditation time. All of these intersecting principles, I argue, must be used in a gender neutral responsive manner when making contact with LGBT FWI.

Gender responsivity is another important element of my prison reform model. This not just a technique for working with women. Gender responsivity must expand to

be gender neutral responsive. All genders, not just womxn and men but also queer and trans*, FWI need to be treated in a holistic TIC rehabilitative community-based corrections setting.

It is important to understand the implications of working against gender binary stereotypes to creating a TIC system. For example, the response to invasive protocols is, of course, individualized but these protocols are often more traumatizing for LGBTQ FWI because of their specific histories. For example, strip searches are usually a non-negotiable requirement and perhaps the hardest procedure to eliminate, yet they can easily re-traumatize an LGBTQ FWI who has experienced sexual violence, especially if a staff member of the opposite gender is supervising. LGBTQ FWI may not feel like their gender expression matches their bodies if they are going through transition or do not specifically identify with their sexual anatomy and genitalia. I would argue that the best way of handling strip searches in a TIC and gender neutral responsive way is to ask the individual if they are comfortable with the person doing it and listen to their responses. If they want someone who is queer or of the same gender to perform their strip search, staff should listen to their request and make it happen to the best of their abilities. It is important to explain PREA and confidentiality policies and to acknowledge that while strip while searches are not optional, their emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing is extremely important. The procedure should be done in the least threatening way. Staff should confirm that LGBTQ FWI feel safe, ask for their consent with positive body language, use a neutral non-confrontational tone of voice, and respect their requested gender pronouns. Staff should not physically touch the

client or invade their personal space. Searches should be conducted following all of the proper protocols and in an ethical manner. At the end of the strip search, staff should ask LGBTQ FWI how they are feeling, actively listen to how they are doing, and offer counseling if they feel triggered or need someone to talk to. Finally, staff should thank them for their cooperation and offer any support or resources they may need.

Another crucial element to fulfilling TIC's mission and gender neutral responsiveness is adopting TIC language in communication. Mis-gendering is a repetitive re-traumatizing issue for the LGBTQ community in and outside of the Criminal Justice System faces. In correctional settings, staff and officers usually use an FWI's birth name and pronouns due to ignorance and segregated binary housing. When interacting and working with clients, staff should refer to inmates by their last names and ask what pronouns they prefer. It is essential to use LGBTQ FWI's preferred names and pronouns to build rapport and make the facility's space more trauma informed and comfortable for them. Reminding staff and other clients of these expectations reinforces and makes visible the staff's commitment to the TIC mission. Having educational conversations without calling people out about mis-gendering is also important. Additionally, making the facility more encouraging and empowering with gender inclusive, culturally, and racially diverse images and quotations can soothe LGBTQ FWI who may have traumatic associations with white sterile walls from previous stints in other correctional facilities.

As useful model for staff is presented in the documentary film *Girls Incarcerated*. There correctional staff members have mentoring programs that are like nothing I have

ever seen in Fresh Start Women's Facility or Iowa Correctional Institution for Women. In the film FWI individually meet weekly or biweekly (depending on the behavioral, emotional, and psychological needs of the client) with a Correctional Officer who is not their counselor, therapist, or probation or parole officer. These meetings allow staff to coach and mentor clients based on their needs inside their living space in order to work on their daily behavioral goals. They allow clients to have a positive interaction with staff members outside of disciplining and policing. In this trauma informed care method, FWI are asked what operational practices make them feel safe and unsafe. The FWI give feedback on how staff can better support their needs, and this gives them a sense of autonomy within their living environment. Trauma informed care is the future of corrections, and implementing the methods shown in this film and argued in this paper can begin to diversify the Criminal Justice System with employees with various identities and inclusive attitudes.

Diversifying Staff in the Criminal Justice System

Overall our current Criminal Justice System is transphobic and homophobic, and the social justice issues that emerge from these biases are seen within Iowan correctional facilities. We see no research about LGBTQ correctional officers or administration. When applying for applications, there are only two 'gender' categories of female and male. As discussed in my Introduction, sex and gender are two different entities that can or cannot intersect. The gender box on an Iowa Department of Corrections application assumes that sex and gender are the same identity when they are not. This is an example of ignorance and arguably transphobia and queer blindness.

There may be various reasons why there is a lack of representation of LGBTQ correctional officers overall in corrections. Employees may not feel comfortable coming out in their workplace environment or there may be no support or resources as in the recent case of Vroegh vs. Iowa Department of Correction. In 2016, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a complaint on behalf of Jesse Vroegh, a nurse at the Iowa Correctional Facility for Women, against the Iowa Department of Corrections for discrimination based on his gender identity (ACLU 2016). Vroegh began personally and medically transitioning from female to male and approached the administration asking to use male locker rooms and restrooms. The ICIW administration said Vroegh could use a gender neutral (uni-sex) bathroom with unequal amenities that his coworkers had. Additionally, his insurance provided by the Iowa Department of Corrections denied him healthcare coverage for a necessary medical surgery because of his transgender identity. As this case indicates, the Iowa Department of Corrections does not recognize or entirely value employees who are LGBTQ and this contributes to creating a less inclusive environment for LGBTQ FWI. Bringing awareness to LGBTQ employees and their experiences will bring awareness to LGBTQ FWI and the barriers they face.

The Iowa Department of Corrections must diversify by employing more people of color who can properly represent the clientele's demographics within the facility they are working with. To reduce discrimination against LGBTQ employees and become more inclusive, administration must recognize queerness because being queer blind contributes to prejudices within facilities. More LGBTQ people must be hired and supported with resources and healthcare coverage. Diversifying the criminal justice

system will bring different perspectives to corrections and create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ FWI.

Trauma Informed Care and Gender Neutral Responsivity are the future of building an inclusive, safe, and rehabilitative correctional system. Our motivation as correctional employees must be to work on reforming the correctional system to improve reentry success and help reduce recidivism.

Queering Criminology Research

When I started this project, I was searching for statistics and research on LGBTQ FWI, and it was so disappointing to only see studies on prison rape of LGBTQ FWI related to PREA policies and requirements. I found very little work about queer criminology in studies and journals. I believe we must promote queer criminology as research and activism to improve LGBTQ FWI's lives in prison and reduce their chance of recidivism.

Queer Criminology is a relatively new subfield of Criminology that concentrates on LGBTQ folx and their interaction with the criminal justice system. Overall, criminology scientists and scholars usually disregard LGBTQ FWI experiences and focus on binary and heteronormative ones. Criminologists who are interested in queer research argue that criminology "does not always engage with the deconstructive approaches drawn from queer theory. Ultimately, this can limit the ways that 'queer criminologists' are able to address injustice" (Ball 2013). Criminologist rarely acknowledge the various injustices LGBTQ FWI experience in the "form of

discrimination, heteronormativity, gender binarism, or invisibility” (Bell 2016). The contemporary field of queer criminology promotes understanding of how queerness intersects with social constructionism, queer experiences in the Criminal Justice System, and advocacy. It shows us the way people police the community and interpret laws within the Criminal Justice System are socially constructed by privileged people in power. Queer criminology engaged with queer activism for the LGBTQ FWI in the Criminal Justice System can produce more social justice. Matthew Bell, a researcher in queer criminology, argues that queer criminology “encompasses research that assists victims and offenders, as well as educates workers such as victim advocates, police, and other criminal legal system professionals, in order to impact policy, help victims and offenders, provide agencies with better data, and allow research findings to be reported in ways that are validating to the experiences of those often disadvantaged by criminal justice processes” (Ball 2016). Working on this project has been my contribution to queer criminology advocacy because LGBTQ FWI issues are rarely addressed. I could not find an empowerment curriculum that is inclusive to LGBTQ FWI. To reform corrections, we need more research on all LGBTQ FWI experiences within prison, not just rape and sexual violence. Most importantly, more research will reduce recidivism and improve the community, which is supposedly the mission of Iowa Department of Correction. Personally, I am dedicated to promoting a future where inclusive research is applied to policy making and making the lives of institutionalized LGBTQ FWI better.

The Impact of Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex on the Corrections System

Mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex are at the center of many U.S. social ills that impact the LGBTQ community. Prisons have oppressed and marginalized the LGBTQ community by policing queer bodies, minds, and souls. Discriminative policies and harsh sentences stripped the freedoms and liberties of marginalized communities and silenced LGBTQ FWI.

Mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex influence the corrections aspect of the criminal justice system. All of this begins on the streets with police officers who are implicitly and explicitly biased against non-heteronormative folx when patrolling and arresting. Within the Criminal Justice System, reform begins with education. We must find “effective alternatives [that] involve both transformation of the techniques for addressing "crime" and the social and economic conditions that track so many children from poor communities, and especially communities of color, into the juvenile system and then on to prison” (Davis 2010). The harsh policing policies in the educational system and the community target LGBTQ youth and push them into the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

The Court System then subjects LGBTQ folx to sentences that may or may not be influenced by their biases, as one sees in the CeCe McDonald Case. It's important for “the judge, attorneys and community health organizations...to coordinate treatment and ensure offenders stay on track” (Bailey 2003). All agents who work in courts with FWI must begin to be specialized in substance abuse and mental health treatment, gender neutral responsivity, and trauma informed care to meet the needs of all people. Next, they should be educated on the impacts of racism, sexism, genderism, classism,

ableism, and all stigmatized identities that affect trial outcomes because of biases in court. LGBTQ folx (and all people who are incarcerated) who are charged and tried for drug crimes do not need prison but treatment. Prisons should not be a holding center to treat mental illnesses or substance abuse. Instead, prisons should reform to support treatment options instead of traditional imprisonment. The Drug Treatment Alternative Program (DTAP) is a phenomenal example of how drug rehabilitation instead of prison reduces drug abuse, improves public safety, and saves money (DTAP 2007). Low level non-violent substance abusing offenders are more likely to be more successful and “have a five-year post-treatment recidivism rate that is almost half the rate for comparable offenders who served time in prison” (DTAP 2007). The courts system must begin to focus on alternative rehabilitative approaches for FWI who struggle with mental health and substance abuse instead of prison.

The Prison Industrial Complex’s oppressive system of incarceration does not benefit FWI but instead makes private investors money. The recent push for vocational training masks the Prison Industrial Complex’s monetary greed and is completely counterproductive to supporting and rehabilitating FWI. Instead, it is 21st Century slavery. Yes, FWI might need vocational skills for jobs when reentering the community, but the private Prison Industrial Complex is also profiting off low paying labor instead of providing rehabilitation services to reduce the chance of reoffending after reentry. The Prison Industrial Complex is stifling FWI, including LGBTQ; therefore the correctional system as a whole needs to rethink and reform the way they ‘punish and discipline criminals’ Correctional facilities must evolve into community-based, substance-free

residential homes for FWI to receive the treatment, counselling, support, and resources they need to recover. Correctional housing is a controversial subject for some prison reformers and advocates because separate housing for LGBTQ FWI could disrupt the Prison Industrial Complex's punitive practices. Many ask 'should LGBTQ FWI have their own housing units to prevent sexual victimization and promote inclusivity?' Janel Saldana, a freelance writer that specializes in advocacy, suggests LGBTQ 'Pink Prisons' for queer FWI, and it might be a viable idea to consider. 'Pink Prisons' could protect LGBTQ FWI from suffering discrimination, harassment, and sexual assault. Clearly transwomxn should not be housing in all-male prisons, but they are placed in solitary confinement and labelled as predators if placed in all-female prisons. Pink Prisons could be an option for LGBTQ FWI who want a safe LGBTQ space but not required. Forced segregation based on gender, sex, and sexuality identities is a violation of PREA and human rights. To reform the field of corrections, housing options need to progress to community-based substance-free treatment residential facilities for low security offenders. LGBTQ FWI who commit serious crimes should have the option of being in a safe space specifically inclusive for non-heteronormative FWI. Education on the specific struggles and issues LGBTQ FWI face is the key to terminating Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex by reforming the criminal justice system and corrections to become more inclusive and less traumatizing.

The largest misconception about FWI is that they are 'criminals' who cannot change and that they deserve to be in prison for the crimes they committed regardless of the severity. As discussed in War on Drugs background section, most FWI have likely

committed a property crime and drug offenses, but extreme cases, like murder, that the media constantly frames as common, are rare. Most FWI have made life-altering mistakes and can positively turn their lives around and contribute to society with the proper rehabilitative resources and support during incarceration and before and after reentry. At Fresh Start Women's Center, I observed that the criminal justice system can stop their support at any time they want, make the FWI pay off their large accumulated fines, and force them out into the world. When this happens, society shuns people who have been incarcerated by limiting employment options, taking away their right to vote, and labelling them as 'criminals.' Recidivism, returning to the criminal justice system and prison, after reentry into the community is a repetitive social cycle that entraps FWI. And the overlap of transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia intersect to put LGBTQ FWI at a higher risk of being caught in the system of mass incarceration.

We can eliminate these barriers by encouraging prison reform that creates rehabilitative, trauma informed, and community-based corrections. The implementation of Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and policies that transform gender responsiveness to include nonbinary genders must be a requirement when working with LGBTQ FWI who are in every correctional facility. It's essential to empower staff with trainings and education on TIC methods of interacting with LGBTQ FWI, discipline, and conflict resolution. All training sessions need to be trauma informed and gender neutrally responsive to address the needs of LGBTQ FWI. For example, correctional staff should receive training in nonviolent trauma informed care de-escalation techniques during mental illness episodes and behavioral outbursts. Furthermore, prisons need a

Community-Based Corrections model that focuses on LGBTQ-responsive rehabilitation, treatment, and case management. The Prison Industrial Complex has failed LGBTQ FWI by eliminating rehabilitative support and resources to expand prisons to monetarily benefit private interests. It is absolutely critical that corrections separates from the Prison Industrial Complex and that process starts with educating FWI, administration, and staff on alternatives for punitive practices. Community-Based Corrections are the future of corrections, but as Angela Davis asks 'are prisons obsolete' since they perpetuate the social ills of society? and is education the answer to eliminate mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex?

The Need for Education

“Learning gives us a different understanding of ourselves and the world around us, and it provides us tools to become more empathetic.” -Elizabeth Hinton

Throughout this project I have emphasized the importance of education. Education is where social change begins. Ignorance restricts reform, and education eradicates ignorance. Therefore, prisons need to give FWI the opportunity to change and get an education. New York Times Op-Ed Contributor, Elizabeth Hinton, promotes turning prisons into college-like environments because “a vast majority of [FWI] do not have a high school diploma. And it could help shrink our prison population” (Hinton 2017). Expanding educational opportunities for FWI is a way to reduce government spending and recidivism. A study by RAND Corporation published in 2013 found “that inmates who took classes had a 43 percent lower likelihood of recidivism and a 13

percent higher likelihood of getting a job after leaving prison” (Hinton 2017). Finding employment when reentering the community gives FWI a purpose and minimizes reoffending. One of the most proclaimed prison universities is at San Quentin State Prison in California. In 2015, President Barack Obama awarded the project a National Humanities Medal due to the quality of their curriculums and classes designed to specifically educate people in prison. The San Quentin State Prison recognizes that “education serves as a critical intervention strategy to empower incarcerated people to interrupt the devastating intergenerational cycles of unemployment, poverty, family violence, mental illness, drug addiction, and crime...[and how] programs improves mental health, strengthens economic prospects and significantly reduces one’s likelihood of being involved in crime and violence in the future” (Prison University Project 2018). Educating FWI is the key to eliminating mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex. To empower FWI, purposeful education is the key to improving their lives. With LGBTQ FWI, education will expand their worldviews so they reflect on the social implications of their crimes and realize the support they have to empower themselves.

If the general public and the personnel involved within the criminal justice system are not aware of all of the social ills mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex causes, then these socially unjust issues cannot be eliminated. Critically, employees and administration within the criminal justice system need education and training to understand how the system impacts LGBTQ FWI. Locally, Onelowa, a state-wide LGBTQ organization that prides itself on advocacy and education, provides a

'jail school' training presentation for law enforcement and correctional administration to open up dialogue and "help them understand the challenges LGBTQ people face in the criminal justice system, and help educate law enforcement on how to professionally and humanely treat LGBTQ persons" (One Iowa). The presentation discusses basic LGBTQ terminology, stereotypes and myths about LGBTQ FWI, and more information on PREA. The presentation is a theoretically great idea, but the language they use is outdated. 'Jail School' and 'Inmate' and 'offender' continue to promote power and control hierarchies and are not inclusive ways to interact LGBTQ FWI. But the One Iowa does do a good job explaining PREA's policies about strip searches and housing. The Iowa Department of Corrections desperately needs to find ways to educate their employees on LGBTQ FWI and implement policies that require LGBTQ inclusion training. I recommend finding more LGBTQ aware employees to design a required training and adding an additional module within the pre-employment process.

An Urgent Challenge

"Ignorance restricts reform, and education eradicates ignorance .Education is where social change begins." -Alexandrea Martin

This project has been a demanding cry for prison reform. LGBTQ FWI and the social ills they face must be included in the conversation about changing corrections and reforming the criminal justice system. Staff, administration, and policy makers must provide resources that give LGBTQ FWI a voice and opportunity to be more empowered. What the broken system is providing now is NOT good enough and

absolutely unacceptable. It is time for prisons to stop 'punishing' LGBTQ FWI for crimes that may have been committed due to being marginalized and policed as nonheteronormative. Overall, our society needs to rethink how marginalized sexual, gender, and racial identities entrap marginalized people in prison. As Angela Davis wrote, "the most difficult and urgent challenge today is that of creatively exploring new terrains of justice, where the prison no longer serves as our major anchor" (Davis 2013). Prison can no longer be a damaging holding center for people who need actually rehabilitation and support. Trauma informed care, community-based corrections, gender neutral responsivity, and education must be put into action immediately to fight the social ills produced by mass incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex.

In the Free Cece documentary, CeCe McDonald proclaimed that "we must continue to fight" against hate and oppression that LGBTQ FWI face. My curriculum and my writing are my form of passionate activism. Beyond this project, I will continue to advocate for the rights of folx who are incarcerated, actively promote support for LGBTQ FWI, and call for prison reform. The fight for justice is not over; it's just beginning.

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Free CeCe. Directed by Jae Gares. Produced by Laverne Cox. Performed by CeCe McDonald and Laverne Cox. United States, 2016. DVD.

Free CeCe documents the real life experiences of CeCe McDonald, a transwoman of color who was wrongfully incarcerated and subjected to isolation due to her gender identity and expression. On June 5th, 2011, CeCe, her sister, friends, and boyfriend were walking past a bar not far from her apartment when white bystanders began yelling racist and transphobic slurs at the group. CeCe claimed that her and her friends walked away from the group but they came after her and her friends. One of the men struck CeCe in the face with a broken beer bottle. As CeCe was backing away grabbing her bleeding face, Dean Schmitz charged her. Out of self defense, CeCe grabbed a pair of scissors from her purse and Schmitz was stabbed in the chest. In the ambulance, Schmitz died and CeCe was automatically arrested and denied medical care to her face wound for few hours. CeCe was charged with two accounts of 2nd degree murder up to 20 years in prison. On May 2, 2012, CeCe took a plea bargain for a lesser charge of 2nd degree manslaughter and 41 months in prison. The public and courts demonized her and said she was on a murder rampage but did not see the act as a hate crime and CeCe as a survivor.

It is well documented that CeCe was held in segregated housing confinement while awaiting trial for 'her own safety.' She spent 3 months in isolation which activists equate to torture. Solitary confinement increases suicide ideations and the chance of completing suicide. Cece said she was on the verge of suicide because she did not want to keep reliving the traumatizing experience. Solitary confinement and isolation based off of sexuality and gender identity and expression is a violation of PREA and also a inhumane violation of human rights. CeCe had no human contact for months and became severely depressed and wanted to kill herself. These experiences lead to her development of PTSD and a paranoia of white people. Additionally for her own 'protection,' CeCe was not allowed to wear shorts while all the other offenders were. The staff claimed it was to hide her curves. The administration and other offenders hypersexualized her and took away her womanhood as a misogynistic form of power and control.

CeCe says the incident "wasn't about being black or white. It was about power structures and enjoying oppression" of black and trans* people. Schmitz had a swastika tattoo and joined a white supremacist group when he was in juvenile prison. He attacked CeCe because of the violent oppression and discrimination white supremacy promotes.

Additionally, the courts portrayed CeCe as a dangerous criminal and not a victim because “black bodies trans or not are assumed to be criminal. Out of 2.2 million people that are incarcerated, 60% are minorities” (Free CeCe 2016). Mass incarceration is fueled by racism, classism, homophobia, and transphobia. When binary gender norms are disrupted, society punishes the ‘deviant.’ CeCe’s story is sadly so common for transwomen of color who are incarcerated. Corrections is a white patriarchal, heteronormative, misogynist institution used to keep marginalized groups oppressed.

The conclusion of the documentary was very empowering yet tragic. CeCe and Laverne Cox talk about all of the other transwomen of color who were not as lucky as CeCe and were killed. There’s so many beautiful women whose lives were lost due to hate and ignorance. The average age of a transwoman of color is thirty five years old, so according to statistics CeCe might only have seven more years to live. The documentary left a great message: “we must continue to fight” against hate and oppression.

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- I watched this episode specifically for the scenes where Sophia Buset is in SHU because I wanted to see how OITNB portrayed segregated housing and isolation. A CO wheels in a cart of food and behind his back you can see kites being passed between doors. Sophia looks helpless in her cell and almost unrecognizable without her wig and her hormones. When the CO gave her a tray of meatloaf, she asks to speak to the warden but is denied. She shoves the meatloaf and a towel in the toilet to clog the pipes and water begins to flood out into her cell. Finally, Sophia has gotten the warden's attention and he comes to visit her in SHU. The warden says that no one has forgotten about her but Sophia knows he is lying to her about her wife. Out of desperation and anger, she ripped off her shirt and shoves it in the toilet and yells, "either you get me out of here or I am going to keep flushing this toilet until I drown myself." In the next scene, Sophia cracks a light bulb and starts a fire by lighting her mattress prompting the entire SHU unit

to evaluate. While being escorted out by two COs, Sophia says “go tell Caputo (the warden) to go fuck himself. I am just getting started.”

Sophia’s experience in SHU is filled with so much isolation and pain. You can see the anger and depression in her eyes. The anger Sophia’s character in OITNB perpetuates the ‘angry black woman’ stereotype. In Free CeCe, CeCe similarly experienced depression and even wanted to commit suicide at one point. Sophia is a strong woman who does not deserve to be treated the way she did just because of her trans* identities.

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LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System with 7-9% of youth nationwide identify as queer, but 20% of youth in juvenile justice facilities identify as LGBTQ. Most surprisingly, 40% of girls in juvenile justice facilities identify as queer which relates to the high statistic of 33% of women in prison identifying as LB (Stemple 2017). Discrimination forces LGBTQ youth into the Criminal Justice. Family Rejection and instability, poverty, homelessness, unsafe schools with lax anti-harassment and bullying policies, and failures in Child Welfare System are factors that are connected to the School-to-Prison Pipeline LGBTQ youth are pushed into. The School-to-Prison Pipeline is the applicable concept that LGBTQ youth are “more likely to be suspended, expelled, or otherwise removed from school settings— often for relatively minor offenses—and pushed into the juvenile justice and broader correctional systems” (Movement Advancement Project 2018). Unsurprisingly, transgender and gender non-conforming students are more likely to be punished for just expressing themselves by going into their preferred bathroom. Another intersecting factor is race. Black “and Latino students, in particular, are at increased risk for harsh disciplinary policies that can result in detention, suspension, and expulsion (Movement Advancement Project 2018). For example, Black girls “who are perceived to be gender non-conforming [and LGBTQ] in some way, such as dressing in a more stereotypically masculine fashion, speaking out in class, or playing sports, are more likely to be disciplined” than other students, especially heterosexual and white students (Movement Advancement Project 2018). Additionally, bad community laws and harmful discriminative policing strategies, like anti-prostitution laws, target LGBT youth to enter the Criminal Justice System which affects their entire lives and future.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline, along with community norm policing and oppressive law enforcement is pushing LGBTQ youth into the Criminal Justice System. Schools are not properly protecting LGBTQ students from harassment from other students and evasive stop-and-frisks from security. A GLSEN report found that 56% of LGBTQ students feel unsafe in school and 57% have experienced harassment or assault and did not report to administration because of lack of trust in the system and self blame (Movement Advancement Project 2018). Schools and communities are not supporting LGBTQ youth

which perpetuates discrimination and pushes youth into the Criminal Justice System which does not provide the proper resources.

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Shay, Giovanna. "PREA's elusive promise: can DOJ regulations protect LGBT incarcerated people?" *Loyola Journal of Public Interest Law* 15, no. 2 (2014). Accessed January 16, 2018. LegalTrac.

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Giovanna Shay's work has become amazing sources for the criminalization and mass incarceration of LGBT FWI. This source focuses on how the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) has affected LGBT FWI. PREA is a major reformist effort with

the sole purpose of protecting people who are incarcerated from rape and sexual violence. In the past decade, mass incarceration has decreased yet the U.S. has continues to be the #1 nation in the world with the largest population in the criminal justice system. People who are LGBT tend to have a larger chance of being incarcerated and in prison they have a higher risk of being sexually victimized. Under PREA, the Bureau of Justice is required to conduct national research on sexual victimization, and they found in 2011-2012 that “12.2% of non-heterosexual people in prison and 8.5% of non-heterosexual people in jail reported inmate-on-inmate sexual assaults within the last 12 months, compared with 1.2% of their straight counterparts in both institutional settings. (14) With respect to staff sexual abuse, 5.4% of non-heterosexual people in prison reported victimization, compared with 2.1% of straight people in prison” (Shay 2014). Even though PREA mandates a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault and harassment, the research findings demonstrate the incredibly high rates of sexual violence against LGBT FWI. Additionally, PREA requires implementation of policies, staff trainings, medical care, mental health resources for people who are sexually assaulted, and proper investigations to receive federal funding. PREA also forbids strip and body cavity searches in order to determine an intersex, genderqueer, and trans* person’s ‘true genitals’, LGBT segregated housing, and punishment for refusing to answer LGBT and gender identity screening questionnaires. Shay’s final statement states “ PREA does not address the root problem that exposes too many people to prison sexual violence--over-incarceration.” Policies and protocols can be created but they are only effective if they are faithfully implemented.

Shay explained the purpose of PREA and presented data that demonstrates how LGBT FWI are more likely to be the target of sexual assault than their heterosexual peers. She simplified the PREA requirements but also analyzed their effectiveness. PREA policies are not effective if they are not properly implemented, and most prisons and jails barely follow the regulations just to get federal funding. Shay’s final statement perfectly demonstrates the problem with sexual assault in prisons: mass incarceration and the criminalization of LGBT people. We would not need PREA if we eliminated mass incarceration and abolished prisons. This source answers my questions about the sexual victimization of LGBT people within corrections policies, PREA.

Stemple, Laura, and Ilan Meyer. “The Unspoken Horror of Incarcerated LGBT People.” *ADVOCATE*, Advocate.com, 23 Feb. 2017, www.advocate.com/commentary/2017/2/23/unspoken-horror-incarcerated-lgbt-people.

Advocate begins their article by addressing the lack of research and recognition of the over-incarceration of LGBT people. Early on Stemple and Meyer claim that “The incarceration rate of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people is three times greater than that of American adults generally” (Stemple and Meyer 2017). Also, they state that surprisingly 33% of women in prison and 26% in jails identify as LB. Research on trans* people who

are incarcerated is forthcoming and not included in PREA research finding. The CJS definitely profiles LGBT folx as sex workers which perpetuates the over-policing of queer people and their bodies (connect with Foucault.) Gender stereotypes and norms also affect how FWI are viewed. If a woman is seen as masculine, they are more likely to be labelled as aggressive and predatory and be punished more than their stereotypical feminine womxn peers. In conclusion, “higher rates of incarceration, longer sentences, widespread sexual victimization, disproportionate isolation, and poor mental health outcomes urgently require a rethinking of current health and criminal justice approaches” to LGBT people (Stemple and Meyer 2017).

I agree with Stemple and Meyer when they state that there is overrepresentation of POC in mass incarceration research. Researching racism, classism, and mass incarceration is such an important issue (I am not denying that) but LGBT FWI are usually forgotten and FWI whom are of color are even more underrepresented. The statistics are so surprisingly with 33% of womxn who are incarcerated are LBQ. It’s shameful that our CJS does not shed light on the mass incarceration of LGBT people which continues the overpolicing of queer bodies and enforcement of gender stereotypes. There needs to be more movements to queer criminal justice system. Michel Foucault discusses the punishment of prisoners’ bodies in his book, *Crime and Punishment*. He claims that in the modern prison industrial complex system “the body is arranged, regulated and supervised rather than tortured.” I argue that prisons regulating heteronormative behaviors and punishing queer bodies to perpetuate sociocultural gender norms is torture.

Furthermore, the study found that there is higher psychological distress of LGBT FWI due to segregation, solitary confinement, exclusion from programming, lockdowns, and lack of family visits. This reaffirms the fact that our CJS must become more inclusive and aware of vulnerable marginalized population who are incarcerated to improve the overall wellbeing of our communities to reduce crime. Shay and Meyer have given me information and sources on the barriers LGBT FWI face. The statistics will help my background section and the importance of this research.

Stoffers, Carl. “LGBT Inmates Face Abuse, Solitary in U.S. Prisons: Study.” *NY Daily News*, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, 28 Oct. 2015, www.nydailynews.com/news/national/lgbt-inmates-face-abuse-solitary-u-s-prisons-article-1.2415227.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/lgbt-inmates-face-abuse-solitary-u-s-prisons-article-1.2415227>

Daily News provides me with a testimony of Christopher DiAngelo, a transman who is incarcerated. DiAngelo claims he was forced into the hole for his entire six month term which severely negatively affected his mental and physical health. A study conducted by the advocacy group, Black and Pink, found that 76% of respondent believe that

corrections staff allow sexual violence to happen to maintain power and control. Also, the author of the study report and advocate, Jason Lydon claims that "Staff will sometimes intentionally place an LGBT prisoner with someone they know will rape them as punishment."

Correctional staff and administration assert their power and control as a way to allow the sexual victimization of LGBT FWI. LGBT FWI are 7x more likely to be sexually assaulted than heterosexual people who are incarcerated and in general population. This demonstrates that PREA and DOC policies can be passed but if they are not implemented on the ground then LGBT FWI are still at risk for being violated and discriminated against. Staff MUST be properly trained on PREA policies and diversity training so they can understand the challenges and barriers LGBT FWI face.

Additionally, prisons and jails have been slow with adapting with LGBT inclusive practices. Using solitary confinement as 'protective measures' is not a positive long term housing solution and is actually a violation of PREA. There should be no separate housing for LGBT FWI under PREA regulations even though there have been proposed ideas of separate housing for LGBT people by prison reform activists. This source helps further explain the housing and solitary confinement barriers LGBT FWI face.

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