

# The Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton

## Supporting High Risk/High Needs Women from a Residential Perspective

Presenters:

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Development

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# Overview

- ▶ From a best practice approach, how to support high risk/high need women (mental health, violent or sexual offences etc) from a residential perspective
- ▶ Outlining a systematic approach from a National, Provincial and local model
- ▶ Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel–Halton operates Ellen House a Community Based Residential Facility for women who are at-risk or in-conflict with the law
- ▶ The risks and needs of these women are increasing, so is the importance of a model and plan of care to support all women, especially those with specialized needs
- ▶ Outlining the resources that are available within a three tired system to manage the risk and the needs of women in a gender responsive approach
- ▶ Nationally, there is the Canadian Association of Residential Options for Criminalized Women, which focuses on the establishment of gender-specific housing in communities across the country for women coming from prison and reintegrating into the community
- ▶ A federal initiative in Ontario, through the OHHA Executive, is the Women's Community Strategic Planning Committee, which reviews and discusses high needs/risk cases from a multi-residence team approach to provide the best residential options and resources for the specific woman and her needs
- ▶ Provincially, the Women In Conflict Advisory Committee has been reestablished with local community and institutional representation
- ▶ Locally, Ellen House utilizes a number of resources to address specific needs of women.

# Creating Choices: The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women

- ▶ “It was federally sentenced women who gave us the courage to look at their needs in new ways...ways which value cooperation and the wisdom gained through women’s experiences. The task force was built on strong commitment and partnership and centered on the belief that together we could find solutions.”
- ▶ Creating Choices, April 1990

# CAROW

- ▶ The Canadian Association of Residential Options for Criminalized Women (CAROW) is a not-for-profit society dedicated to the establishment of gender-specific transitional housing in communities across the country for women coming from prison transitioning to the community.
- ▶ **What CAROW Does:**
- ▶ CAROW offers leadership and strategic direction to agencies and operators who provide residential placements or housing to women and girls involved in the criminal justice system.
- ▶ We consult with legislated authorities about the development of policy, programs and services to advance the interests of women and girls transitioning into the community from prison.
- ▶ Through all our activities, CAROW's goal is to promote the development of gender-specific residential facilities for women and girls in the criminal justice system.

# CAROW Initiatives

- ▶ In 2011, the SLSC (St. Leonard's Society of Canada) and the CAROW (Canadian Association of Residential Options for Women) formed a partnership to advance mental health resources for Canadians leaving prison.
- ▶ As part of this initiative, the two organizations hosted a day-long forum, Better Together: Improving Working Relationships Across the Criminal Justice and Mental Health Sectors, in Brampton, Ontario on February 24.
- ▶ Eighty representatives from local service organizations, provincial ministries and Corrections Service Canada participated in this collaborative session which will explore the benefits of providing ongoing mental health support to former inmates and identify opportunities for the criminal justice and mental health sectors to work together.
- ▶ In March 2012, CAROW and CSC collaborated to provide a venue that brought together women's residential programs across Canada to facilitate the development and sustainability of Social Enterprises for women

# OHHA

- ▶ The Ontario Halfway House Association (O.H.H.A.) is a non-profit professional organization, which serves as a forum for non-governmental organizations that are primarily residential service providers for federally sentenced adults. The Association was constituted in 1979. The current membership is made up of the majority of halfway house organizations and treatment facilities serving federally sentenced offenders in the Region of Ontario as well as other criminal justice organizations and interested persons. Through the work of the Ontario Halfway House Association we promote and facilitate community-based criminal justice services.
- ▶ Information and resource sharing, best case management practices, annual training conferences with experts in domains of community corrections

# W-CSPC

- ▶ Women's Community Strategic Planning Committee (WCSPC) which reviews and discusses high needs/risk cases from a multi-residence team approach to provide the best residential options and resources for the specific woman and her needs
- ▶ All women's halfway houses are represented, co-chaired by Regional Director of Correctional Services of Canada
- ▶ High risk/high needs cases are brought to the table by the institutional parole officer that specializes in these cases
- ▶ All houses review each woman and discuss her needs and best location for her based on those needs and services available in the community and the residence
- ▶ Discuss trends and issues and identify special needs populations (Aboriginal, mental health, addiction, women who sexually offend, history of violence, physical limitations, health concerns)

# Stats

- ▶ Programs have been implemented to address the risk and need areas for women offenders, including substance abuse, employment needs, mental health interventions and culturally specific programs for Aboriginal women offenders
- ▶ These programs are critical when you consider that:
- ▶ Substance abuse is a significant need area for approximately 80% of women offenders
- ▶ Studies generally show that women offenders who have employment needs are at a higher risk of recidivism as compared to women offenders without employment needs
- ▶ One in four women offenders is identified as having mental health concerns upon entry into prison. This represents a 100% increase since 1997
- ▶ The majority of women offenders have experienced abuse and trauma in their families of origin or with their intimate partners
- ▶ The percentage of incarcerated Aboriginal women offenders has increased over the past decade, representing approximately one-third of the total incarcerated women offender population

(Public Safety Canada, 2010)

# National Pilot Program

- ▶ July 2011 Women's Symposium hosted by Deputy Commissioner of Ontario and the Warden of Grand Valley Institution for Women
- ▶ Discussed forthcoming trends and issues in women's corrections
- ▶ How to support those women with specialized area of need
- ▶ Identified need of collaborations between the community and the institution (CSC) to address capacity issues and the program needs of women
- ▶ Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton met with Regional Director of Central District at CSC to propose and form a unique partnership
- ▶ Ongoing planning and development of a pilot Unescorted Temporary Absence (UTA) for the purpose of completing Women Offender Moderate Intensity Program (WOMIP) in the community
- ▶ This collaboration was the first time women would receive institutional correctional programming in the community while residing at a Community-based Residential Facility (CRF)

# National Pilot Program

- ▶ Three women were identified at the institution as individuals who would require and benefit from a more intimate and structured learning environment based on their needs identified in their correctional plan
- ▶ Opportunity to learn and apply tools from program in a community setting, preparing them for successful community engagement and in turn, a favourable parole board hearing outcome for release
- ▶ At onset of proposed program, Ellen House was under utilized and Grand Valley Institution for women was dealing with capacity pressures based on increased population as a result of legislation changes

# Successes:

- ▶ Ongoing case management preparation and collaboration
- ▶ Institutional in-reach to develop rapport with identified women
- ▶ Transportation from institution by agency staff
- ▶ Initial transition orientation accompaniment in the community
- ▶ Close proximity of program site to the residence
- ▶ Onsite CSC program staff – Regional Director committed specific staff for the pilot
- ▶ Onsite CSC psychologist
- ▶ Plan for remaining time (2 60 day UTA's) volunteer work, in-house programming
- ▶ Updates and regular case management meetings with case management team
- ▶ Access to children – reconnecting parental bonds
- ▶ Programming in a classroom vs. institutional environment
- ▶ 24 hour a day residential counsellor support
- ▶ Access to community and agency resources to support correctional plan
- ▶ Graduation celebration

# Challenges:

- ▶ Mental preparation of returning to the institution – assisting women for transition back into custody
- ▶ Managing bed space and capacity
- ▶ Casual staffing capacity
- ▶ Considered “inmate” so different policies and procedures
- ▶ Limited community access
- ▶ Limited visitations
- ▶ Relationship building with duty officer at GVI
- ▶ Adapting CSC institutional processes to the community
- ▶ Functioning within the “spotlight”

# Moving Forward as an Agency

- ▶ UTA Pilot is an example of one of the initiatives developed by Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel–Halton to move forward as an agency to increase the support provided for ALL women
- ▶ Challenges:
  - Major deficit
  - Under-utilization of beds
  - Philosophical shift from then to now
- ▶ Developments:
  - Create a philosophical shift from selection to inclusion
  - Support staff in understanding the needs and resources to support ALL women
  - Staff training
  - New Management – recruited experienced manager to support new direction

# Moving Forward as an Agency

- Develop and increase relationships with community and stakeholders (police, probation, court, Addiction Services, Mental Health services etc)
- Re-established a Community Assessment Team
- Participated on committees to increase profile and resources (Ontario Community Justice Association and Reintegration Committee at the Institution)
- Relationship building with women in the institution
- Connecting with institutional staff with high risk/high needs caseload
- Preparation and support for women in parole board hearings
- Developed action plan and provided regular updates to the Board of Directors
- Ensured contingency plans with other houses when accepting high risk women
- Increased casual staffing compliment to ensure adequate enhanced staffing
- Hired Personal Support Workers
- Utilizing complex case funding
- Marketing of Ellen House and services available
- Media Policy

# Case Management Tools for High Risk/High Needs Clients

- ▶ **Community Assessment Team (CAT)**
  - Peel Regional Police, Women's Supervision Unit (Parole Officer and Parole Officer Supervisor), Community Advisory Member, Director of Adult Services & Program Development & Ellen House Manager
  - CAT team reviews and discusses applicants with high risk/high needs and will then identify in advance a case management plan and the need for Personal Support Worker, Enhanced Services, increased Police presence, increased Case Management requirements as well as the community access, physical security and staffing requirements during their residency at Ellen House
  - Develop recommendations to the Parole Board of Canada as part of the Community Strategy, in addition to institutional recommendations to manage the risk of the client in the community and address the client's individual needs

# Case Management Tools for High Risk/High Needs Clients

## ▶ Institutional In-reach

- Regular visits to Grand Valley Institution for Women and Vanier Centre for Women
- Assess clients needs/risk
- Connect with institutional supports and case management team (Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Community Support Worker, Social Workers, Institutional Parole Officers, Reintegration Worker, Registered Nurse etc)
- Build relationship and rapport in preparation of transition into Community Residential Facility
- Act as assistants/support in parole board hearings to provide education and information to PBC members

# Case Management Tools for High Risk/High Needs Clients

- ▶ Enhanced Services & Complex Case Funding
  - Correctional Service of Canada provides additional support to mitigate risk and address the high needs of individual clients
  - Extra staffing to provide additional security, community escorts/accompaniment and
  - In house one-on-one support for individualized programming and crisis intervention, if required
  
- ▶ Personal Support Worker (PSW)
  - Funded through the Canadian Mental Health Initiative and/or Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
  - Provides one-on-one mental health support for those clients with a mental diagnosis (bi-polar, depression, anxiety etc), in addition to developmental or physical limitations
  - Supported by Registered Mental Health Nurse

# Ellen House

- ▶ Community Residential Facility that provides a supportive living environment for women involved with the criminal justice system
- ▶ Two-story bungalow situated in a residential neighborhood of old Brampton
- ▶ Public transportation, local agencies, downtown Brampton, and recreational facilities are within walking distance
- ▶ 12-bed capacity with 5 double rooms and 2 single rooms, a recreation room, a living and dining room, large deck, etc.
- ▶ Provide service to women from the community, provincial and federal institutions



# Ellen House

- ▶ Staffed twenty four hours a day/seven days a week by trained and qualified staff that are able to provide support and programming services to all of its residents
- ▶ Offering residency in a supportive communal environment
- ▶ In preparing clients for community reintegration, the House has a number of programs available for its residents
- ▶ Individual counselling is offered with an emphasis on community reintegration and living skills
- ▶ Offering assistance in locating future accommodation, career planning, educational upgrading, and referrals to a number of other community resources
- ▶ Resident's Plan of Care would include referrals to appropriate agencies to address her identified areas of need
- ▶ An aftercare program is available to support women to successfully reintegrate into the community



# Operational Management

- ▶ Management as primary worker for high risk/high needs women
- ▶ Adjusting policies and procedures to ensure women are not in breach of condition
  - ▶ Children
  - ▶ Pets
  - ▶ Media
- ▶ Staff meeting guest speakers for professional development and community connections
- ▶ Involvement with women's families
- ▶ Escort training of management to provide escorts to high risk women
- ▶ Mental health training for all staff
- ▶ Dialectical behaviour training for all staff
- ▶ Implemented volunteer/student and MSW program
- ▶ Access to specialized therapy
- ▶ Partnership Chiropractic Association of Canada

# Community Supports

- ▶ **Circles of Support and Accountability**
  - Community members providing support to women who sexually offend
- ▶ **Volunteers**
  - Chaplaincy, CSC and Elizabeth Fry Society
  - programming, pro-social support and healthy leisure
  - Accompaniment in the community and to appointments
- ▶ **Community Partners**
  - John Howard Society, YMCA, Credit Valley Hospital, Jean Tweed Centre, Methadone Clinic, Grace United Church, Canadian Mental Health Association, COAST etc
- ▶ **Psychology/Psychiatry/Counselling**
  - Conveniently located at agency head office (short walk away)
  - Access to psychologist specializing in clients who sexually offend

# Security Measures & Enhancements

- ▶ Increased staffing levels
- ▶ Increased police presence and patrol
- ▶ Personal panic alarms for staff
- ▶ Alarm system with entry point sensors
- ▶ Night security check-in calls with other residences
- ▶ Escorts in the community
- ▶ Collateral checks while in community
- ▶ Enhanced lighting
- ▶ Perimeter checks
- ▶ On-call back up support
- ▶ High-Risk Registry with Peel Regional Police
- ▶ Graduated curfew system
- ▶ Limited community access
- ▶ Increased house checks
- ▶ Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Training

# Gender Responsive Programming

Treatment needs of women differ from those of men.

Programming must reflect an understanding of the realities of women's' lives and be responsive to their needs and strengths (Covington, 2001). The service environment must be conducive to processes of therapeutic change, and be founded upon an understanding of women's' psychological and social development, and trauma treatment.

# Programming

- ▶ **Anti-Theft Fraud:** In house program facilitation linked with crime prevention counselling which uses an educational/behavioural approach to examine the cognitive processes behind theft and fraud and other anti-social behaviours.
- ▶ **Anger Management:** In house program facilitation linked with anger management counselling. The program is cognitively based to assist clients in developing the skills needed to manage anger effectively and other related emotions connected to anti-social behaviour.
- ▶ **Substance Use:** In house program facilitation linked with a community agency that focuses on assessment and treatment for substance use, including counselling.
- ▶ **Employment:** In house program facilitation linked with employment counselling and a practical component of learning employment skills at head office or other available community resources, including free truck driver training and license program.
- ▶ **Seeking Safety:** (Trauma and Substance Use): In house program facilitation designed for women dealing with PTSD and other consequences of trauma, linked with trauma counselling.
- ▶ **Life Skills:** In-house program facilitation focusing on various life skills including budgeting, parenting, developing healthy relationships, linked with counselling.
- ▶ **Women's Circle:** In-house program facilitation specifically designed to empower women and increase self esteem and self worth, linked with counselling.
- ▶ **From Stilettos to Moccasins:** In-house program facilitation to specifically "address identity and stigma in the healing journeys of criminalized aboriginal women from illicit drug abuse." Although directed at Aboriginal women, the content and healing approach is widely applicable to criminalized women of all backgrounds.
- ▶ **CSC Programs:**
  - ▶ Self Management Program – Women Offender Correctional Program
  - ▶ WOMIP – Women Offender Moderate Intensity Program (available via Program UTAs and Parole)

# Support that Works!

Dear Sarah,

Hello....its Claire. I am doing well. I have found permanent residence last June. I am very happy here, and I recently had my ODSP trial and they approved me..I will be able to receive ODSP and go back to school for this September...I'm hoping everything falls together soon...I'm working on it...I really wanted to thank u for your care and support while I was in Vanier. I very much appreciate of your excellent communication and loyalty. You helped me stay strong and feel supported...Thank you so much Sarah! Have a great day!



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