

Connecticut Women's Consortium

AJFO Conference

*Orange is the New Black – Battered and Blue: Transcending the Impact of Sexual Abuse for Women Served by the CJS*

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## Notes

1. **Session Goals** – Define sexual recovery; identify at least 3 factors relevant to trauma, addiction, women's sexuality, and sobriety; and be able to describe a theoretical overview of the linkages with women, high-risk behaviors, and re-victimization;
2. **Complexities: Women, Sexuality, Addiction, & Trauma: Women's Sexuality:** Keep the Moral Code, Be Good in Bed, Be THE Sexually Responsible One, Caretaker Role – Needs of Others 1st – “The Good Mother”; **Sexuality of Women with Addiction:** Societal Stereotypes -Male View – “Easy Sex” Shame, Guilt, Secretive – Seen as Having a “Variety of Sexual Experiences,” **Consequences:** High Risk Sexual Behaviors, Sexual Violence, High Relapse Risk, Loss of Children, Loss of Income, Housing, Health
3. **What is trauma:** Individual exposure (directly or indirectly) to an overwhelming (physical and/or psychological) event/experience that involves a threat to one's physical, emotional, and/or psychological safety. Trauma – sudden, dramatic and/or series of unrelenting violations.
4. **Causes of Trauma:** CSA, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, IPV, accidents, war, illness, medical interventions, abandonment, death of loved one, small t's and big t's;
5. **Body/Brain – Impact of Trauma Event** > Brain – Amygdala – freeze, flight, and/or fight (Endorphins, NE released), hippocampus override (memory), broca (speech shut down), chronicity – brake stuck on:
6. **PTSD – Exposure to a Traumatic Event**, Freeze, Fight, or Flight, Invokes Intense Fear /Helplessness, Horror;\ **Range of Symptoms:** Flashbacks, Numbing, Lack of Responsiveness, Somatic Complaints – Speechless Terror, Hyper-vigilance, Nightmares, Recycling without Resolution;
7. **Women w/Child Sexual Abuse Histories** – Trauma > PTSS/Dissociation>Self-Blame Behaviors>High Risk Behaviors > Risk HIV/Re-victimization>Recycle
8. **Pathways from Childhood Abuse to Incarceration: Victim of CSA** – Status offenders, Runaways/ Homelessness – Substance Abuse, Addiction, Sex Work/ CJS – Drug Related Crimes, Crimes Against Abuser/ **Incarceration and Re-victimization** – Restraints, Seclusion, etc.
9. **Orange is the New Black** – not so accurate a portrayal yet highlights public awareness of women and incarceration;
10. **Women and incarceration** – 95% history of physical and/or sexual abuse; 70% or > MI; 50% criteria for substance abuse; most have children under age 18 (at risk); commit low level, non-violent crimes;
11. **World of the Survivor:** Instability, harmful behaviors, submissive and clinging, distrust and suspiciousness, aggression, and feelings of inadequacy;
12. **Trauma Triggers and CJS** – Pat downs, stripped searches, supervised shower/dress, shackled while in labor, institutional abuse, verbal abuse, etc.
13. **Sexual recovery for women with trauma histories: Outcome:** To Affirm a Woman's Right to a Healthy Sexual Self/ Process: **Sex Positive Approach** to Working with Women While in Treatment;
14. **Sex Positive Approach:** Develop positive attitudes about sexuality, sexual pleasure, and sexual relationships while being mindful of relapse triggers and keeping sobriety as central to sexual health;

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15. **Environment to feel safe and secure to talk about:** sexual desires, sexual needs, past history, sex and drug linked behaviors, sexual fears and preferences;
16. **Conflictual Goals? Women, Trauma, the CJS & Recovery: Relationship Abuse** – trauma triggers, unregulated emotions, fear, anxiety, depression, developmental delays, substance abuse, high risk behaviors; > **Vulnerability for Incarceration** – high control, loss of personal power, little to no choices, highly scheduled, consequences (trauma triggers) restraint, isolation, personal searches, etc., high likelihood of re-victimization; **Goal of Recovery** – be one’s own agent, healthy ability to think and act in autonomous ways, “release ME from the chains of the past so I can become the authentic person I was always meant to be.”
17. **Erica** – CSA/IPV, Sexual Assault, Homeless, Unstable and chaotic relationships, chronic yeast infections, pelvic pain, headaches, major depression, anxiety disorder, PTSD, self-cutting, bulimia, substance abuse;
18. **Improved capacity for healthy relationships** = healing, treatment, recovery and reduced recidivism;
19. **Sexual Recovery Process: Phase I – Safety** – Screening HIV/STI, Detox, Emotional & Physical Stabilization, **Phase II – Prevention** – sharing of story (meaningful engagement), psycho-educational assessment/skills, ID trauma and drug linked triggers, individualized prevention plan for sexual recovery, and **Phase III – Authenticity** – reconnected to who always intended to be, clarity of purpose, emotional regulation, joy and range of emotions embraced, duality of present with past, managing sobriety, intimacy and life;
20. **Processes to Cultivate, Nurture, and Discover** – exercise, nutrition, playing, group/peer support, trauma therapy, meditation, 12-step recovery, relaxation, positive affirmations, sponsorship, journaling, yoga, etc.
21. **12 Considerations for Working with the Survivor in the CJS** - 1) assume universal precaution; 2) recognize trauma signs and symptoms; 3) Share: “What’s happening,” “Why,” and Choices; 4) Be and respond in calm tone with supportive body posture; 5) encourage breathe, ground, and center; 6) model self-affirmations – “I have faith in you.” “You are resilient.” “You are capable.” “You deserve to live a life full of love and kindness.” 7) show and respect her for her courage; 8) listen/validate feelings – anger, frustration, sadness, joy, 9) communicate, “you are not alone,” 10) be genuine and honest, “I do not know,” 11) share: “not going anywhere,” and 12) envision the woman before you deserving of compassion and gentleness.
22. **For the Counselor:** Training on Sexual Health, Trauma, and Sexual Recovery, Need for Ongoing Support & Supervision – Risk of Vicarious Traumatization, Require a Safe, Confidential Place to Discuss Work, Opportunity to Examine/ Appraise Own Sexual Values, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Experiences;
23. **Resources & Models for Working with Women in Trauma & Recovery:** 1) *Sanctuary for Change* – Based on Relational Cultural Theory and Social Cognitive Therapy (Psycho-educational and comprehensive sexual health and recovery training for women with trauma histories- creative small-group exercises, hands-on activities and self-reflective tools) [www.viewsfromatreehouse.com](http://www.viewsfromatreehouse.com); 2) **Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)** – form of psychological acupressure, combination of tapping energy meridians with + affirmations <http://www.spiritual-web.com/downloads/eftmanual.pdf> 3) **Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model** – group based intervention, facilitate trauma recovery, short and long term consequences of victimization <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=158> 4) **Helping Women Recover:** Four Modules with Specific Exercises – ID Women’s Triggers for Relapse, Self, Relationships, Sexuality, and Spirituality <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=181> 5) **EMDR – Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing** – 1:1 psychotherapy < trauma symptoms, memory associated with feelings of safety, use of motor task, attend to task while focusing on traumatic memory
24. **Connecting Mind, Body, & Spirit** – Shame due to harsh judgment by others or self; negative emotion & associated with unworthiness & embarrassment; diminishes enjoyment & choices in sexuality, and interferes with potential to change self-destructive patterns of behaviors.

Any Q’s – Email: [germayne@viewsfromatreehouse.com](mailto:germayne@viewsfromatreehouse.com)

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