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ONTARIO WOMEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW:
A SURVEY OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONS AND UNDER
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION IN ONTARIO

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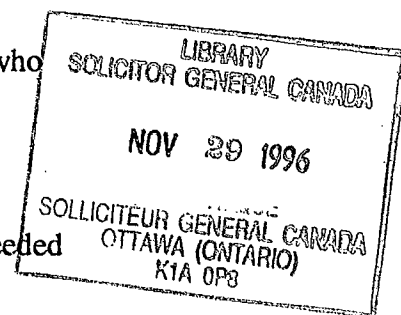
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ONTARIO WOMEN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW
A SURVEY OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONS AND UNDER
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION IN ONTARIO

*** EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ***

A sample of 650 women in provincial institutions or serving sentences under community supervision in Ontario was interviewed between November 1991 and February 1992. The purpose of the survey was to:

- i) help build a detailed profile of women across the province who become involved in the criminal justice system;
- ii) consider their subjective experiences of that system; and
- iii) identify the kinds of programmes and facilities which are needed for women.



The survey was initiated by the Research Services Unit of the Ministry of Correctional Services, in conjunction with the Ministry discussion paper *Agenda for Change* (1991) which argued for the need for coherent policies and programmes for women offenders.

Women form a very small proportion of the population passing through the criminal justice system in Ontario; only approximately 8% of those sentenced to custody, and 18% of those admitted to probation in a year are women. There are relatively few programmes and facilities specifically designed for women. There were a number of reasons for undertaking the survey now: major changes in awareness of the issues affecting women's involvement with the law; greater awareness of the needs of Aboriginal and visible minority women; the growing consensus on the need to develop a community-based model of corrections; and more recent policy and social changes which are likely to affect female offenders.

THE ADULT SAMPLE

There were 531 women in the adult sample, 243 in institutions and 288 under community supervision. The age range was 18 to 64 years, with a mean age of 30 years. Sixty-nine percent identified themselves as Caucasian, 13% as native peoples, 10% black and 6% as belonging to other minority groups. Nineteen percent had been born outside Canada. Both native women and those from visible minority groups appeared to be over-represented in the sample. Eighty-nine percent were English-speaking, six were francophones and 13 spoke primarily other languages. Over half the Aboriginal women stated that they preferred to use their native language.

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Forty percent of the women were single, 30% were separated or divorced and 31% were in common-law relationship or, less often, married. At the time of arrest, 16% were single mothers living alone with children.

Current status and offending

Excluding women at Vanier Centre for Women (25% of the institutional group), 25% of those in jails or detention centres were on remand, 15% were awaiting further charges, 23% were sentenced and awaiting transfer, and 35% were serving their sentence there.

The majority of prison terms were for periods of under six months, with 35% serving less than three months. Twenty percent of the institutional group had spent between one month and one-and-a-half years or more on remand.

Among the community, group 90% were serving probation sentences, usually combined with other sentences and special conditions, 8% were in community residences, and 1% were on remand.

The majority of women did not have an extensive history of offending, and 41% were first offenders. Only 3% of the sample had previously received a federal sentence. Approximately a quarter of the institutional group had a considerable history of incarceration, regularly reappearing in prison on similar charges, receiving the same short-term sentences, and their circumstances remaining unchanged.

The great majority of offences or charges involved property (46%); 15% were charged with drug offences; 14% minor assaults and the remainder a variety of charges including breaches of court orders, 'moral' and public order offences, drinking, and traffic infractions; 5% were charged with more serious offences of violence, primarily robbery.

Children

Sixty-nine percent of the women had children, and 4% step-children. A third of the children were aged five years or below, and 43% were aged 6-16 years old. Thus the majority were, at least officially, at a dependant age. Eighty percent of the mothers said they had been single parents for all or part of their children's lives, and 55% said they had had primary responsibility for bringing up their children.

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Prior to their arrest, 53% of the institutional group and 70% of the community group had been living with at least one of their children. Most children living elsewhere were with relatives but 11% of women with children had at least one child in foster care. The reasons for alternative living arrangements included children adopted at birth (14%), living elsewhere by the mother's own choice (30%), living elsewhere because they were grown up (30%), and taken into care, or by an ex-partner, against the mother's wishes (39%).

Over half of the incarcerated mothers had had to make alternative care arrangements for those children living with them (and some of those now in the community). Three-quarters of those in prison and half of those in the community said they had had considerable problems concerning their children at the time of arrest and subsequently, including care arrangements, emotional problems, the pain of separation, loss of custody, possible abuse by those responsible for caring for their children, and their inability to deal with their children's problems.

Contact with children in prison was a major source of concern, and the need for more flexible policies was stressed. Excluding women at Vanier Centre for Women (who are permitted "open" visits) the overwhelming response from women in jails and detention centres was for touch visits, and many women stressed the need for visiting facilities away from the normal visiting area where they could see all their children at once, and spend some time with them. This applied to mothers with young babies as well as those with older children and teenagers. The possibility of overnight stays with their children was also raised.

Family and childhood and experience of abuse

Only 30% of the women felt they had had a reasonably secure and stable childhood, and 40% mentioned severe disruptions including alcoholism, family violence, separations and illness. Among the women in prison, 30% had spent time in foster care, residential homes or training schools, and 8% had lived on the streets from the age of 13 or 14.

Seventy-two percent of the women stated that they had experienced physical abuse at some stage in their lives, and 48% stated that they had suffered sexual abuse. Altogether 77% of the sample stated that they had been physically or sexually abused, and the reported experiences of both groups of women in prison and the community were similar. Seventy percent said they had been emotionally abused.

Physical abuse was more commonly reported to have been experienced as adults than in childhood. In the great majority of adult cases (90%), the abuse was reported to have occurred at the hands of husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends. Most women rated

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their abuse as serious. In the case of sexual abuse as adults, 61% involved acquaintances or strangers rather than close partners. Sexual abuse was stated to have been common in childhood, and in three-quarters of the cases involved a wide range of relatives including fathers, step or foster fathers, uncles, grandfathers, and brothers. Almost all physical abuse in childhood was stated to have been perpetrated by close relatives. Around 50% of the women who reported that they had experienced abuse wanted help now, primarily individual counselling.

Physical and mental health

Almost half of those in the community and two-thirds of those in institutions mentioned problems with their physical health, including some apparently serious conditions often associated with alcohol and drug use. Almost half the women in institutions felt they were not getting the health care they needed, as did 11% of those in the community. The primary concerns among women in institutions were that they were not listened to or treated seriously by health care staff, that there was insufficient access to health care, and no opportunity for second opinions or consultation with family doctors. They felt their status as alcohol or drug users adversely affected the quality of care they received.

Approximately half of the women in institutions mentioned problems with their mental health as did a quarter of the community group. Eighty percent of those incarcerated said they suffered from at least one mental health problem, primarily depression and anxiety, as did two-thirds of those in the community. Some of this difference must be attributed to the conditions under which many were living in jails and detention centres. Rates of attempted suicide or slashing were similar for both groups of women. The primary need was for greater access to individual counselling from psychiatrists or psychologists who would 'really listen' to them.

Overall, the women, particularly those in institutions, are a high risk group most of whom will not have access to the more extensive health services available at Vanier Centre for Women.

Addictions

Alcohol and drugs have played a significant part in the lives of the majority of the women: 79% of those in institutions and 60% of those in the community. Two-thirds of the former said that alcohol or drugs had been involved in their offending and half of the community group, and in most cases they were major users of alcohol or drugs or both. Drug misuse

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was much more common among the institutional group, as were high risk behaviours such as mixing drugs and alcohol, injecting and sharing needles, and sniffing gas or glue. In addition, 45% of the women in institutions and a third of those in the community said they had been prescribed drugs by a doctor over a long period of time.

There was a need for alcohol programmes with continuity from prison to the street, including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), individual counselling, residential programmes, and those which were culturally sensitive. A greater number of women wanted access to drug treatment, including help with withdrawal, individual counselling, and group or residential programmes. They reported difficulty attending for treatment in the community because of lack of access to child-care or transport, or the support of friends and family members.

Education and work

The educational and work histories of both groups of women were similar. Thirty percent had not reached Grade 10 at school, and two-thirds did not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Only 9% had received post-secondary qualifications, but as many as 82% said they would like some form of education or work training now.

Around two-thirds of the women were not working at the time they committed their offence(s). Most had been out of work for more than a year. The majority of jobs were in service or sales or unskilled manual work.

The main sources of income for the majority of women were welfare or mother's allowance. Only 12% of the women said they did not want a paid job in the future, and 47% of the women in institutions, and 27% of those in the community, wanted specific job training in such fields as trades training, nursing, social work, child-care, or computing.

Thus the work skills and education levels of the women are low, and their work experience limited, with little to distinguish those in institutions from those in the community in these respects. Both are poorly equipped to earn a reasonable income in a legitimate job.

Most important needs

The women felt that the most important things which would help to keep them out of the criminal justice system in the future were employment, work training, help with emotional problems, housing, and treatment for substance abuse. In most cases, the women in the

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institutional group were more likely to mention needs such as employment, work training and housing.

In terms of the priority attached to such help, substance abuse counselling, followed by housing and employment were rated the most important by women in institutions. Those in the community rated counselling for emotional problems, child-related needs and employment the most important.

Staff assessments, while not available for all women, were similar to those of the women themselves, stressing work and employment, but they placed greater emphasis on the need for help with substance abuse than the women themselves.

The experience of remand and detention

The views of women in institutions and some of those in the community about the conditions under which they were remanded in custody or served their sentences indicate three major areas of concern: the physical conditions under which they had to live; the lack of programming or assistance; and their treatment by those in positions of authority over them. Many of the comments, although not all, concerned jails and detention centres rather than the Vanier Centre for Women.

The difficulties of trying to live in the overcrowded, and sometimes cold or dirty conditions of jails and detention centres were stressed by many of the women. The lack of privacy, the noise levels, the stress of sharing an overcrowded cell or dormitory for most of the day or night, the minimal access to fresh air or exercise in most instances, all helped to create an atmosphere of tension and to heighten, anxiety, sleeping difficulties and depression. Some institutions at the time of the survey were seriously overcrowded with six women sleeping in a cell designed for four in one instance.

A major concern was with health and hygiene, particularly a perceived absence of privacy in bathrooms and washing areas, the lack of changes of clothing for exercise or access to showers following exercise, the minimal provision of clean clothes or sanitary napkins when necessary, and the lack of provision of appropriate products for women such as shampoos or for skin care.

In spite of efforts by staff in some institutions, the main experience of the women in jails and detention centres was of boredom and inactivity. Since women form so small a proportion of the total populations of the smaller institutions they have little access to work or programmes including recreation. In a number of cases, they did not have access to programmes available

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to men, including AA and school. Correspondence courses were offered in some institutions but had to be undertaken in dormitories or cells where there was little respite from noise and interruption.

Overriding the physical conditions and lack of programming was the concern of most women to be treated with greater understanding and respect. This applied to both first-time offenders as well as to those with considerable experience of imprisonment, all of whom stressed that people who are treated with respect will respond similarly. The experience of many was of being treated badly. The inappropriateness of unpleasant, punitive and over-secure conditions in relation to their offending behaviour was mentioned by a number of women who stressed the need for alternative ways of dealing with remand and sentencing.

THE NATIVE WOMEN

Eighty adult native women were interviewed, 19 in regions other than the North. The majority (80%) were Registered Status Indians, and two-thirds had been born on a reserve. Almost half the women in institutions were considerable distances (over 100 km) from their homes.

The native women were more likely to have been charged with minor assaults (31%) and drinking offences (15%) than the main adult sample, and less likely to be charged with property or drug offences. They were serving slightly shorter sentences than the main sample, in spite of the fact that they were more likely to have previous convictions. Over half the institutional sample had accumulated a considerable number of short-term custodial sentences (ranging from 5 to over 50).

A higher proportion of the native women had children (86%) and more of them compared with the main sample. They were more likely to have been living with them at the time of their arrest. Less than half of those in institutions had had contact with their children, and most wanted to be able to see them, particularly through open visits.

They reported higher levels of family disruption and alcoholism in their childhoods, and higher levels of physical, though not sexual, abuse than the main sample. Seventy nine percent said they had been physically abused, especially as adults, and 41% sexually abused, more often as children. The percentage of native women who had attempted suicide or slashed themselves was slightly higher than for the main sample.

Overall, the native women had received much less formal schooling than the main sample, and were less likely to have been employed. Almost a quarter had not reached Grade 8, and

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only 14% received a high school diploma. Only 4% said they had received post-secondary education or training (and 47% of the main sample). Two-thirds of the women said they would like to undertake further education or training, primarily literacy or basic upgrading. Only 19% said they had had a full or part-time job, their primary source of income being welfare payments and mother's allowance.

The impact of alcohol on the lives of the native women was greater than among the main sample. Over three-quarters said that alcohol was involved in their offending and almost half described themselves currently as heavy users. Few currently used drugs, but 15% had sniffed solvents. Over half the women had never received any treatment for alcohol abuse, and 44% said they would like help, particularly residential programmes for women and native-based programmes, and AA groups.

There was a need for native-based programmes including access to Elders, native cultural and spiritual activities, native workers and counsellors, native interpreters in institutions and female native staff. They felt their main programme needs were work skills and education, closely followed by housing, and issues relating to their children.

The native women were generally more at ease speaking their own language. They felt they were harshly treated in institutions because of their native status. For them, the problems of being incarcerated and how they were treated were overlaid with an additional barrier of language, race and cultural expectations, and their apparent resignation masks their concern about their circumstances and severe life problems.

THE YOUNG OFFENDERS

Eighty-four young offenders were included in the study, 41 under community supervision, and 43 in open or closed custody. The majority of them had been charged with property offences (41%), 25% for assaults, and 14% for breaches of court or probation orders. Just under a third were first offenders and half of the sample had been charged as juveniles (Phase I Young Offender).

The majority (85%) felt they had problems in relation to their family, including violence, alcoholism and separations. Those in custody were more likely to mention problems and to have left home at an earlier age. They were also more likely to have dropped out of school at an earlier age.

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Two-thirds of the sample said they would now like to undertake training or additional education, primarily basic education or upgrading. Over half of them wanted a job, or help finding one, particularly in the child-care or nursing fields, or trade training.

Overall, 63% said they had been physically abused at some stage in their lives and 58% sexually abused. Much of this had been during childhood. Rates of physical, and particularly sexual abuse, in childhood were higher than among the adult population. Around half of them felt they wanted help with issues of abuse, primarily through individual counselling.

Young offenders, especially those in custody, were more likely to mention specific mental health problems than were the adult sample. Just under half the sample said they had attempted suicide or had slashed themselves at some stage. There was less evidence of current involvement in alcohol and drugs than among the adult sample, but greater evidence of the mixing of drugs and alcohol, and 20% had injected drugs.

In assessing the issues they needed to deal with, the most frequently mentioned was employment, followed by improved family relationships, education upgrading, work training, and help with emotional problems. Staff assessed more young offenders as needing help, primarily in the same areas, but they also felt more of them needed substance abuse counselling.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE FEMALE POPULATION

The main findings of the study help to underline the particular needs of women in institutions and the community which are different from those of the much larger male population. These include their greater vulnerability to physical and mental health problems, their high levels of physical and sexual abuse as children and adults, their often heavy involvement in alcohol, street and prescription drugs, their low levels of educational and work skills, their status as mothers, often with sole responsibility for their children.

The difficulties which women face as a minority in the much larger male system both on remand and under sentence are also emphasized. Since many women are unlikely to be transferred to the Vanier Centre for Women (or may be deemed unacceptable), their experience of incarceration under such conditions cannot be said to be positive.

Native women across the province are subject to greater disadvantages than the non-native population in terms of living conditions, addictions, levels of abuse, and to language and

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cultural differences. Those in custody tend to receive repetitive short sentences which cannot deal with the issues leading to the commission of the offences which led to incarceration.

Apart from Aboriginal women, 16% identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic or visible minority group. They included established Canadians and more recent immigrants. A more targeted study of the problems confronting these women would help to provide a better understanding of how their difficulties can be overcome.

Women from visible minority groups are more likely than others to opt out of treatment programmes. They report that the absence of staff who speak their language or who share their ethnic and cultural background increases their sense of isolation. They suggest that the development of programmes run by people from their own backgrounds, and which are grounded in their own cultural traditions and experience, would have a greater likelihood of acceptance and of meeting their needs. Apart from staff training in ethnic issues, the women identified a need to increase the numbers of staff from minority groups, both in institutions and in the community, and to establish a network of readily available language and cultural resources for the variety of minority groups who pass through the system.

While women in the institutional group have generally greater involvement with the criminal justice system than those in the community, there are a number of similarities between them. Apart from drugs, their offending patterns are similar, with a majority charged with property offences, minor assaults and nuisance offences. They do not represent a danger to the public. The experience of physical and sexual abuse appears to be similarly widespread. Their levels of education and training and their work experience are similar. In neither case are most women well equipped to earn a reasonable wage. They are as likely to have children and to have been single parents, although those in institutions are more likely to have given over some of the responsibility for their care.

The foregoing suggests the importance of developing more programmes in the community to meet the needs of women under community supervision. This also presents an opportunity to consider the possibility of treating more women, now incarcerated, in a community setting. Given that the majority of women given a custodial sentence receive short-term sentences, and are not eligible for transfer to Vanier Centre for Women, there is little opportunity for assessment, or for their needs to be met in the institutional setting, even if such programmes were available. Repetitive short-term imprisonment does not offer an opportunity for treatment for these women. There appears to be a need, and an opportunity, to develop community-based treatment facilities which avoid the many problems of costly short-term incarceration.

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In relation to children and parenting, maintaining or strengthening relationships between mothers and their children requires attention to such things as visiting arrangements and longer-term visits or Temporary Absence Programs (TAPs). Without such reinforcement, separation may result in a greater breach in relationships than may have existed, and the possibility of losing parental rights. Using community-based residential accommodation with facilities for children, or alternatives to incarceration for women with children may avoid many of the problems of separation.

In relation to the use of custodial remands for women whose offences are neither serious nor a risk to the public, it is suggested that the use of alternatives be explored. Both sentenced and remanded women are usually housed together in maximum security conditions. The use of residential facilities in the community for remand, with more flexible policies in relation to movement, visiting and contact with the community would help to lessen the difficulties for both the women and the institutions.

For many women, there are close links between substance abuse, offending behaviour, histories of abuse, and mental and physical health. It is difficult for them to deal with these issues when they are poorly housed, and without job skills, and often with children. What is needed is a more rounded approach to programme provision which recognizes the interrelationship of these problems and which is women-centred, i.e., which specifically takes account of their experiences and needs as women. Account also needs to be taken of their own views. Women may be unwilling to enter programmes because they have dealt with the issue, because of practical barriers, or differences in philosophy and culture background which make the programmes unattractive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This survey is the outcome of an enormous amount of time and effort on the part of many people across the province. Altogether 60 sites were involved, and without the good will and patience of correctional staff in institutions and in the community, and above all of the women themselves, it would not have been possible.

There are too many people to list individually, but I would like to thank the five Regional Directors and their staff for their patience in helping to set up the study; the Area Managers at each of the probation offices, some of whom gave up a lot of their time and insight. A particular debt is owed to the 40 probation officers who administered the often very time-consuming interviews with women under community supervision. I would also like to thank the staff in community residences for enabling interviews to take place, and for their time in providing background material.

In the institutions, we are very grateful to all the Superintendents and the many staff who were involved in helping to ensure that the study ran as smoothly as possible, as well as those whose task it was to provide background information for the survey. In particular, the staff at Metro West Detention Centre and the Vanier Centre for Women who bore the burden of interviews.

I owe a personal debt to the research team who put an enormous amount of energy and skill into their interviews with all the women, and who have continued to provide an input into the interpretation of the findings; to Leonas Campbell, Inez May and Loreen Commandant for helping me to begin to understand something of the experiences of native women in the province and to Sandra Hargreaves who apart from interviews, undertook, singlehandedly, the enormous task of coding the entire study with great energy. I would also like to thank Lorraine Beck and Ramin Zohari for their help with data entry.

The initial phase of the survey was financed by the Secretariat of the Ministry of the Solicitor General, and I am particularly grateful to Jim Bonta for all his support.

Finally, within the Ministry I owe a debt to all the staff of Research Services and to Stan Halliwell and Ash Sial, who in countless ways have helped the study to its completion.

PREFACE

This survey (based upon data collected in 1992) provides both information about women in the correctional system in Ontario, as well as an account of the views of those women on their experiences and the needs they have for programmes and services. It is concerned with their perceptions of being in custody or under community supervision. Studies of prisoners' perceptions of institutions regimes have been carried out in other countries in recent years, in Scotland and in England and Wales, for example (Wozniak & McAllister, 1991; Home Office, 1992). The views of the many staff who work with women in Ontario were not sought, but this is not to suggest that they are of no importance. The focus in the survey is upon the views of those at the receiving end of the system.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Winter of 1991-92, some 650 women in provincial institutions in Ontario or serving sentences in the community took part in a survey of women in conflict with the law. The primary purpose of the survey was:

- i) to help to build a detailed profile of women across the province who become involved in the criminal justice system;
- ii) to consider their subjective experiences of that system; and
- iii) to identify the kinds of programmes and facilities which are needed for women.

The survey was initiated by the Research Services Unit of the Ministry of Correctional Services, in conjunction with the Ministry's Women In Conflict with the Law Committee. It followed the publication of the Ministry discussion paper *Agenda for Change* (1991) which sets out the issues concerning the need for a coherent policy and programmes in relation to women.

There were a number of reasons for undertaking the study now: major changes in awareness of the issues affecting women's involvement with the law; greater awareness of the needs of Aboriginal and visible minority women; the growing consensus on the need to develop a community-based model for corrections; and more recent policy and social changes which are likely to affect the female offenders.

The need for a survey of women

While women are less likely to come into conflict with the law than men, they form a significant group with particular needs. In the past, there has been a tendency to ignore the particular needs of women offenders, or to assume that they are similar to those of men (Berzins & Cooper, 1982). Such assumptions are no longer tenable. There have been extensive changes in attitudes towards women in the past twenty years, including the recognition of the need to protect women from violence in domestic situations as well as elsewhere, for example (Rock, 1986). There is greater awareness of the social and economic pressures on women and the implications these have for women coming into conflict with the law.

The backgrounds and circumstances of women who end up in court differ in a number of ways from those of men. They are more likely to be living in conditions of poverty, to be single parents and economically dependent, to have left school earlier, and to have fewer job-skills or training than men (Johnson, 1987; Deschepper, 1989). They are also more likely to

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have experienced both physical and sexual abuse at some stage of their lives than men (Macleod, 1980, 1989). They present different problems in relation to substance abuse and its recognition and treatment (Reed, 1987).

The kinds of offences for which women are charged and convicted also tend to be different from those of men, involving, on the whole, less serious offences, including a higher proportion of theft and fraud, and offences related to prostitution and alcohol (Johnson, 1987). In addition, women serving sentences, whether in the community or in an institutional setting, are subject to a variety of constraints and problems. These may include a much greater level of child-care responsibilities (Macleod, 1986) or emotional and health problems associated with their life-style and experiences, which are less common among the male population (Resnik & Shaw, 1980).

Not all women are alike

Undertaking a survey of women in conflict with the law in Ontario was not a straight-forward task. As one of the biggest provinces in Canada in terms of population as well as geographic size, Ontario encompasses a very wide range of communities and economies. Lifestyles and work patterns vary considerably across the province, as do the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of those communities. The lifestyles of native peoples living on remote reserves in northern Ontario are very different from those of native peoples in southern parts of the province, and even further removed from their non-native counterparts. Within Metropolitan Toronto itself, there are clear distinctions and patterns of lifestyles, economy and ethnic populations.

A second impetus for the study, therefore, was a recognition that within the female population - as with the male population - there exists a multiplicity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and experiences. It is no longer sufficient to see women as a uniform group with uniform needs, but to develop alternative approaches to meet the needs of women living under very different circumstances. Programmes developed to suit the cultural variations of the Toronto population will not necessarily have much relevance for rural areas of Eastern or Western Ontario, nor for native communities across the province.

Towards a community model

A third factor was the Ministry's overall commitment to move towards a more community-based model of corrections as outlined in *Agenda for Change*. Women form a small proportion of the offender population, and for many of them, a community-based sentence is

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seen as a feasible and more appropriate alternative to incarceration, with less damaging consequences for family stability and personal development. Such a model has already been outlined by the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women in relation to the federal population of female offenders (*Creating Choices*, 1990), and is currently being implemented. This will involve the development of 'cottage-style' facilities for women which provide a supportive environment, together with a network of community services and facilities providing far greater community links and support.

A joint government and voluntary sector Task Force in Nova Scotia has more recently recommended the abolition of the use of the existing women's correctional centre in Halifax for its provincially sentenced women, and its replacement by four community residential facilities (*Blueprint For Change*, 1992).

The need to develop such policies on the basis of consultation and shared views has also been stressed. This stems in part from the development of research which focuses on experiences of women, and takes that experience as an essential starting point for understanding their needs. Thus in developing overall policies and programmes for women, as *Agenda for Change* stresses, the views not just of administrators or practitioners, but also of the offenders themselves, are seen as essential elements.

Finally, there have been significant changes in legislation and population in Ontario in recent years which are likely to have an impact upon female offenders. These include the continuing growth of immigrant communities, significant increases in the use of drugs and alcohol among young women, and the enactment of new legislation affecting street prostitution in 1985 (Bill C-49).

For all these reasons, it is important to have some basic and up-to-date information about female offenders across the province. And a major focus of the survey was on the subjective experiences of women, as well as on their views of the services and programmes they felt they require.

THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM

In Ontario, as with the rest of Canada, women constitute a small proportion of the total population passing through the criminal justice system. In 1990-91, 4,896 adult women were admitted to jails and detention centres (or 8.6% of all admissions) compared with almost 52,000 men (MCS Annual Report 1992). Overall, in that year 7.6% (2,893) of all adults sentenced to imprisonment were women, as were 18.2% (4,991) of all those receiving probation sentences.

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The average number of women in institutions across the province at any one time during the same period was 366. The majority are housed in three Toronto area institutions, Metro Toronto West Detention Centre, Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre and Vanier Centre for Women, the rest are distributed in small numbers across the province (see Appendix II).

On the whole, reflecting the less serious offences for which they are charged, women receive shorter sentences than men¹, with 87% receiving less than 4 months, and 45% under 16 days. This means that little time is available for assessment, treatment, or discharge planning, and there are high costs in terms of intake. Among those under community supervision, women again receive shorter probation terms (with an average of 14.9 months) than men (an average of 15.7 months) (MCS Annual Report 1992).

Because of the comparatively small numbers of women, there are few facilities specifically available for them. Only one correctional centre for women, Vanier Centre for Women, exists in the province (and 16 for men).² Since 1991, a small number (4) of provincially sentenced women can be accommodated at the new Northern Treatment Centre in Sault St. Marie, although they are greatly outnumbered by men (88).³ This means that women may have to travel very long distances within the province in order to benefit from treatment facilities within existing institutions.

There is also a shortage of half-way houses for women across the province, particularly in the Northern Region.⁴ Facilities for female Young Offenders are similarly small in number. (See *Agenda for Change* (1991) p.9 for a detailed account of the facilities available).

¹ The average aggregate sentence for women in 1990/91 was 56.1 days and for men 78.8 days (MCS Annual Report 1991).

² Ontario would appear to be the only province in Canada with a specific treatment facility for women serving provincial sentences.

³ The Northern Treatment Centre is a joint Federal-Provincial venture with beds for 88 men and 8 women, half of which are for provincial offenders.

⁴ A new facility for women opened in Fort Francis in 1992, but that in Thunder Bay closed in 1991.

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YOUNG OFFENDERS

The Ministry is only responsible for young offenders who are 16 and 17 years of age, and the numbers of female young offenders under their care is quite small. As with adult women, they form a very small proportion of the total number of young offenders passing through the courts in Ontario, although there are indications that across Canada as a whole, the proportion of female young offenders has been increasing since the mid 1980's (Statistics Canada, 1992).

The average number of female YOs in secure custody in Ontario in 1990-91 was 26 (3.5% of the total number) with 28 in open custody (out of a total of 416 males and females; MCS Annual Report, 1992). Figures for the number of female YO's under community supervision are not available, but it is estimated that female YO's account for 1,420 of the average total of 7,885.⁵

As with adult women, female young offenders face less serious charges, are less likely to end up in custody or to re-offend, and they tend to receive shorter sentences than males (Statistics Canada, 1992).

THE SURVEY

A total of 650 women took part in the survey at 60 different sites across the province. These included jails, detention centres and Vanier Centre for Women, half-way houses, open and closed custody residences for Young Offenders, and Probation and Parole offices. Institutions were selected on the basis of the numbers of women normally in residence. For community interviews, site selection took account of variations in types of community across each region. (A detailed account of the methodology and the sampling for the study is given in Appendix I).

The framework for the study was established by the pilot survey carried out in the Metro Toronto region in 1988 (Ruhl and Loring, 1988) which had developed interview schedules on the basis of consultations with correctional and administrative staff (see Appendix I). For the present study, a number of changes were made both to the content of the interview schedules and in the organization of the survey. These were designed to take account of issues which had become more prominent since the initiation of the pilot study, to ensure that the interests

⁵ This is calculated on the basis that 18% will be female YO's. Adult women represent 18% of all probation admissions in Ontario, and figures for 12-17 year-olds for the whole of Canada show that 18% of those charged are female (Statistics Canada, 28.5.92).

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and experiences of native women and those from ethnic minority groups were included, and to allow the women taking part in the study to have a greater input in expressing their own views.

This resulted in greater use of open-ended questions, but also in the use of external interviewers for all women in institutions. A team of eight women, all with experience of correctional issues, visited each of the selected institutions and undertook personal interviews with the women. Because of the problems of language and cultural differences for Aboriginal women, all interviews in the Northern Region (with the exception of probation interviews in Sudbury) were conducted by Aboriginal women.

Women under community supervision were asked to complete the interview schedule themselves under guidance from the probation officer responsible for interviews in that office. The inclusion of women serving sentences in the community is important since most detailed studies of women offenders focus only on those who are incarcerated. Additional information on the backgrounds of the women was provided by correctional staff at each site.

OUTLINE OF REPORT

Section I of this report reviews existing literature on women in conflict with the law, and examines some of the main issues relating to their care which are of current concern in Ontario.

Section II reports the major findings of the study in relation to adult women in institutions and under community supervision.

Section III outlines the characteristics and experiences of native women in the study.

Section IV summarizes the main findings for young offenders in the study.

Section V summarizes the main findings and briefly considers some of their implications for the provincial correctional system.

SECTION I

REVIEW OF THE MAJOR ISSUES

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In Canada, there have been few comprehensive studies of women in conflict with law. The majority of studies have been carried out only within the past 10-15 years and have tended to be based on small populations or specific problems such as family violence or child-care needs. In 1982, a one-day survey of women in selected provincial institutions across Canada attempted to outline some of the main characteristics of the female provincial population (Misch, Jefferson, Hayes and Graham, 1982).

More detailed accounts of women's involvement with the criminal justice system in Canada based on aggregate national statistics have been published subsequently by Johnson (1987) and Hatch and Faith (1989-1990). These indicate that women offenders tend to be young, with low socio-economic status, to be poorly educated and unskilled, and to commit primarily minor property offences such as theft and fraud. Compared with men, they are likely to have fewer economic resources, and greater responsibilities in terms of children. They are less likely to commit violent offences than men, and in general receive shorter sentences and are less likely to be reconvicted.

More recently, a survey of women serving sentences of two years or more in Canada has reinforced this picture (Shaw et al. 1991a; 1992). Typically, sentenced women have few job skills, limited educational backgrounds, and high levels of substance abuse and experience of physical and sexual abuse. All these accounts have highlighted the over-representation of Aboriginal women among provincial and federal populations (Sugar and Fox, 1990; LaPrairie, 1987).

Previous Ontario studies on women

In Ontario, no systematic studies of women offenders seem to have been undertaken until the 1970's, and those which were reflect, not surprisingly, the concerns of that period. A detailed evaluative study of the therapeutic regime established at Vanier Centre for Women was conducted by Lambert and Madden (1974, 1976) following the opening of the Centre in 1969. A total of 338 women admitted to Vanier Centre for Women in 1970 and 1971 were followed up two years after their release to assess the rehabilitative effects of the new regime. The study found employment stability on release and the closeness of family support to be the most important factors militating against re-offending. The authors also highlighted the marginal existence of many of the women both prior to their imprisonment and on release:

The "quality of life" experienced by these women after discharge was very disappointing. The fact that so many were leading marginal existences in terms of emotional, financial, and residential measures raises many larger questions concerning broad social policies. In strictly correctional terms, two-thirds of

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those studied might be labelled "rehabilitated"; they had no further reconvictions. But about one half of these was barely "making it on the streets". (Lambert & Madden, 1976).

In their view, the costs of incarcerating women, given the largely non-violent nature of their offending, and the high level of social and emotional problems, needed to be weighed against the family disruption resulting from imprisonment. They suggested that, for women, community programmes and restitution would be preferable to imprisonment.

The first province-wide study concerned with women was that conducted by Rogers and Carey (1979) on the *Child-Care Needs of Female Offenders* and initiated by the Ministry's Advisory Committee on the Female Offender. The survey was unusual in its inclusion of offenders on probation. A sample of 338 women in institutions and under community supervision across the province was interviewed. Apart from providing profile information on the female population, the main purpose of the study was to examine the child care responsibilities of those women who were mothers, and the extent to which incarceration itself, had created child-care problems. Approximately half of the women were mothers, and particularly among those in institutions, adoption and fostering arrangements were common. Not surprisingly, these women also had much poorer employment histories and more extensive histories of involvement with the criminal justice system than those on probation.

A subsequent review of treatment and training programmes for female offenders undertaken for the Ministry by Ross, Currie and Krug-McKay *The Female Offender: Treatment and Training* (1980) also attempted to address the lack of information about rehabilitative programmes for women. While it was based primarily upon a review of American studies, it underlined the failure of many programmes to mention women, or to consider differences between men and women in their responses to treatment. The authors suggested that there was a need to consider women's involvement in offending in the context of their poor social and economic position in society, rather than seeking explanations in terms of biological or individual pathology. They also noted the complete absence of programmes for native female offenders or on female alcohol and drug addiction.

The lack of comprehensive data on the female population was still evident ten years later and led to the development of the pilot study for the current project: *A preliminary study profiling female offenders and their needs* (Ruhl and Loring, 1988). The study was designed to develop and test a data collection instrument to form the basis for a province-wide study. A total of 87 women, 54 in Metro Toronto West Detention Centre and Vanier Centre for Women, and 33 under community supervision in the Metro Region were asked to complete self-report questionnaires. Additional background data were provided by Ministry staff.

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Given the limited regional coverage of the pilot survey, no attempt was made to draw general conclusions about the population of female offenders elsewhere in the province, and almost no information about native women was obtained. Overall, the findings were in keeping with expected profiles. The most common sentence was for theft and fraud offences; two-thirds of the sample had not completed high school; just under half were employed either full or part-time; two-thirds had children, and just under half reported physical, sexual or emotional abuse at some stage of their lives. Of particular interest, was the women's own choice of programmes they would like to have access to, the most common choice being educational upgrading. The most common programme need identified by staff was employment counselling.

THE MAJOR ISSUES

A number of specific issues helped to shape the present survey and some of these are discussed in detail below.

Native women

The disproportionate imprisonment of native peoples in Ontario has long been evident. In the 1970's they constituted almost 9% of the provincial jail population in Ontario, although making up only 2% of the population of the province (Irvine, 1978). An even higher proportion of native women in institutions had been noted by Rogers and Carey (1979) in their study of child-care issues. They found that 16% of the incarcerated women in their sample were of native origin, and 5% of those on probation. Misch et al. (1982) reported that 17% of the female population of Ontario institutions in their one-day survey were of native origin. A comparative study of federal and provincial institutions in six jurisdictions found that Ontario had the highest rate of admissions for provincial liquor offences (Moyer, Kopelman, LaPrairie and Billingsley, 1985).

Concern about the over-representation of native peoples in the correctional system prompted two studies undertaken by the Ministry in conjunction with the Ontario Native Council on Justice (Irvine, 1978; Birkenmayer and Jolly, 1981). While the majority of people interviewed were men, women were included in both studies.⁶ Somewhat characteristically on the grounds of lack of numbers, but also because of the nature of the information

⁶ Irvine's study covered only institutions with a high proportion of natives, primarily in the Northern Region, and included 185 men and 28 women identified as of native origin. Birkenmayer and Jolly interviewed all institutional inmates identified as native and included 447 men and 66 women.

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collected, the preliminary study failed to find any significant differences between the men and women:

Male-female comparisons were non-discriminatory. Truly accurate comparisons were not possible because of the relatively small numbers of females however the indications are that their behaviour and attitudes are similar to those of male native offenders. (Irvine, 1978)

In the second and larger study, covering all offenders of native origin in correctional institutions across the province, very clear differences between the men and women emerged in terms of their social and economic position, their rates of dependency and responsibilities for children.

A little over half of the female portion of the sample were single. Most had dependants - often two or more. During their incarceration, their children were mostly in the care of their mothers or the Children's Aid Society at public expense. Their unemployment rate was very high -- over 8 times the National Average. If they did have a job, it was almost always temporary. Many of the women were dependent on some form of welfare assistance. Most planned to go home to a reserve or a city following their release and to depend on the same source of income that they had before their incarceration. (Birkenmayer and Jolly, 1981.)

Unemployment rates among the women were 75% compared with 26% among the men. Two-thirds of the women had dependants compared with a third of the men. There were also significant differences in their employment histories and release prospects. Women were predominantly convicted of liquor offences, rather than property and public order offences as with the men, and alcohol appeared to have played a more significant role in their offending than among the men.

Subsequent studies have reinforced the even heavier over-representation of native women, as against native men, in institutions (Johnson, 1987; La Prairie, 1987). At the provincial level across Canada, 17% of all sentenced male admissions were native in 1989-90, and 33% of all female admissions (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1990). Similarly at the federal level, native women constitute 16% of all federally sentenced women in institutions or on parole in 1989, compared with only 9% for the total federal population (Solicitor General, 1988). A survey of the population of federally sentenced women in institutions in 1989 found that 23% were of native origin (Shaw, 1991).

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In Ontario, recent figures show little change over the past ten years. In 1990-91, 7.7% of all male sentenced admissions to imprisonment were native, and 12.9% of all female admissions (MCS Annual Report 1992, Ontario Native Council on Justice, 1986, 1990).⁷ Native women also have a much greater chance of ending up in institutions for non-payment of fines than non-native women (Johnson, 1987; La Prairie, 1987), and for liquor offences. In 1990-91, 40% of all native women were sentenced for liquor offences (MCS Annual Report 1992).

Thus native women suffer a double jeopardy: because they are native they are in the poorest social and economic sector of Canadian society, but as women they are likely to have even lower status and resources. The poor living conditions, high rates of unemployment and alcoholism among native peoples have all helped to contribute to this problem, but, as a number of writers have indicated (La Prairie, 1987; Shkilnyk, 1985; Ross, 1992) such explanations only touch the surface of the issues which have helped to create the situation. These include the erosion of traditional native culture and ways of life by the dominant non-native society, discrimination both explicit and implicit, and the marked differences between native peoples' belief systems and customs and those of the non-native society and the criminal justice system in particular.⁸

Multicultural needs

The effects of rapid population changes in parts of Ontario, particularly in Toronto have also become a source of concern. Predictions that 45% of Toronto's population will be from visible minority groups by the end of the century (i.e. non-Caucasian or Aboriginal) (Samuel, 1992) are reflected in the increasing numbers of women from such groups in institutions or under community supervision.

Some of the implications for correctional services were addressed in a study undertaken in 1988 in the Metro and Central Regions (McMullen & Mason, 1988). This study identified a

⁷ For women this does represent a drop from the high of 18.7% reported for 1989-90, perhaps reflecting changes in the enforcement of fine-default cases.

⁸ Ross (1992) provides a very clear account of the many ways in which native customs conflict with those of non-natives, including differences in the use of eye contact, non-interference and unwillingness to criticize others or speak about their actions in their presence, and withdrawal or conservation of energy in the face of stressful situations. Such responses are clearly at odds with the basic responses of the non-native society and court system which expects direct responses and explanations.

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number of language and cultural problems, particularly in the central urban areas, among offenders of Vietnamese, Portuguese, East Indian, Chinese, Polish, South American, African and West Indian origin.

But the problems faced by many recent immigrants and visible minority groups goes far beyond questions of language. Such groups often face problems of racism, cultural differences in communication, and differences in lifestyles. This may manifest itself in terms of poorer employment prospects or access to housing, or in such things as difficulties affecting educational development, or access to health or counselling services (Greene, 1985; Wade and Bernstein, 1991).

There also appears to be high numbers of women from such backgrounds who are living in poverty as single mothers. These women face many of the kinds of problems faced by Aboriginal women. Not only are they from visible minority groups, but they are also women, and because of their status as women, likely to be subject to even poorer social and economic conditions than their male counterparts.

Nor can it be assumed that they have uniform needs. Black women, for example, are also divided in terms of ethnicity. They may be of African, Afro-Caribbean or Afro-American background. They may include long-established indigenous Canadians or recent immigrants. Their experience as black women is likely to be very different from that of non-black women. As one writer has put it:

It is not simply that black women are subject to 'more' disadvantage than white women. Their oppression is of a qualitatively different kind. (Rice, 1990)

Children and parenting

The impact of criminal convictions on the children of women offenders is not easy to assess. The long-term costs of separation, of placement in alternative care, but also of the court processes themselves are almost impossible to measure. Much of the problem centres around a system of justice which does not take account of dependants, and around notions of the 'responsibility' and fitness of women offenders to care for their children. It also stems from a failure to consider the best interests of both the women and their children, and from the long-term focus on male offenders. Men, on the whole, have fewer responsibilities for children, and the effects of separation for both them and their children may be less traumatic, although they should not be discounted.

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In their study of the child care needs of female offenders in Ontario, Rogers and Carey (1979) focused on the extent to which imprisonment had disrupted care arrangements for those women with children. Overall, 48% of their sample of 338 women were mothers, with a total of 342 children between them.⁹ Most of these women were described as experiencing considerable difficulties in providing 'adequate care' for their children. Over half were single mothers as a result of break-downs in relationships or never having married. Just under half had had some involvement with the Children's Aid Society, and approximately a third of the probationers and half of the institutional group had not been living with their children prior to the commission of their offence(s).

The authors argued that the current sentence had not created immediate child-care problems in that only 12% of the children had been placed in foster care at this time. Nevertheless, over half the children had to change their place of residence, and the additional stress on both children and their carer-givers was recognized, as well as the emotional trauma of separation. Overall, the authors concluded that, "it is difficult to find any evidence that their incarceration would actually have a positive effect on their family" (p.34).

A more detailed exploration of the impact of the criminal justice system on women and their children has more recently been undertaken by Wine (*A Motherhood Issue: The Impact of Criminal Justice System Involvement of Women and Their Children*, (1992)). Of all those women in conflict with the law contacted over a five-day period in selected centres across the province (221) 55% were mothers. Interviews with 41 of the mothers dealt with all stages of the justice process: From arrest, custody, and court appearance to sentence. The author examined the impact of the justice process on living arrangements, finances, care-giving role and relationships with their children, at each of these stages, and not just during sentence.

The women interviewed reported a number of negative changes in relationships with the children, increasing trauma, unhappiness with care arrangements made during incarceration, lack of contact during periods of incarceration, and a number of problems associated with the arrest period, including the lack of time to sort out care arrangements.

⁹ Over 25% of their sample were in the 15-18 year age range, which accounts for the lower proportion of mothers in their study.

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Macleod (1986) in a more general review of the problems of women offenders with children, stressed that, "While many criminal justice officials may take discretionary interest in the problems of the offender's families, no-one in the criminal justice system has official responsibility for the children of offenders."

She also points out the difficulties inherent in current child-care and correctional systems which tend to make decisions without reference to each others' sphere of influence. Thus the child-care system, for example, in deciding that a mother is 'unfit' to care for her child because of her offending, focuses on what is taken to be the best interests of the child, but in so doing ignores those of the mother, and perhaps the child too. Institutional policies which are geared to the majority male population also tend to have a more severe effect on women and children, for example, in relation to visits and temporary absences.

Both Macleod (1986) and Wine (1992) argue for much greater use of community alternatives for women with children, and greater flexibility over the administration of sentences so that women and children are not forced to be separated. Elsewhere, Beckerman (1990) has argued for a recognition of the increasing numbers of single mothers in society, and the need for correctional systems to protect their parental rights as far as possible by fostering innovative ways of maintaining and developing contact between mothers in custody and their children.

Alcohol and drug dependency

Alcohol and drug use have long been recognized as being strongly linked to offending behaviour. Sixty-nine percent of the federally sentenced women surveyed in 1989 reported that substance abuse was related to their offending in some way (Shaw et al. 1991a). Substance abuse is also associated with reoffending, and presents a major challenge to correctional authorities.

As with many other fields, it is only in the last twenty years that it has been acknowledged that women with dependency problems have rather different needs from those of men (Carver and Ponée, 1989). Four main types of difference have been identified:¹⁰

- i) the pattern of use of alcohol and drugs differs between men and women;

¹⁰ I am indebted to Virginia Carver of the Addiction Research Foundation for guidance on this section of the report.

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- ii) the lifestyles of female substance abusers are different from those of men, and they are more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol and drug use;
- iii) there are a number of factors which inhibit women more than men from entering treatment programmes; and
- iv) they do not respond well to programmes developed for men.

Overall, women in the general population tend to drink less, and report less use of street drugs than men, but they are more likely to use prescription drugs. However, a 1989 survey of substance use in Ontario showed significant increases in the use of all substances among women in the 18-29 year age group (Adlaf and Smart, 1989), an age group highly represented among offender populations.

Among street youth and adults, the combining of substance use with other high risk behaviour such as prostitution and needle sharing compounds the health risks. Prostitution, as a primarily female activity, places women at risk. The heavy incidence of alcoholism among native women, particularly those on reserves, has already been noted, and such women also tend to abuse solvents.

Compared with men, women are also more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol or drug use. They have a greater likelihood of developing health problems such as cirrhosis, or mental deterioration than men, and to have toxic reactions to prescription drugs. Those with addiction histories also tend to have higher rates of gynaecological problems than women in the general population. It has also been found that women in treatment programmes are more likely to be multiple substance users than men, and to have low self esteem (Reed, 1987). Such women are also more likely to have disruptive family patterns, and to report having experienced physical and sexual abuse (Beckman, 1984; Rasmussen, 1984).

A number of problems centre around women's willingness to enter treatment programmes. There tend to be greater difficulties in recognizing abuse problems among women. Alcohol abuse by women, for example, is less socially acceptable than among men, and may be more covert, or less noticeable (Reed, 1987). There are also a number of barriers which prevent them entering such programmes, particularly having dependent children and household or work responsibilities they feel they cannot leave (Beckman and Amaro, 1984). They tend to have fewer family and community supports to care for children or to help them respond to treatment than men in many treatment programmes (Beckman, 1984).

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Finally, it has been found that women respond more to a supportive treatment approach which, for example, tries to improve self-esteem or to involve them in treatment plans, rather than the more traditional confrontational patterns developed for men (Carver and Ponée, 1989; Reed, 1985). For some women, this may best be achieved through an all-women programme, or programmes which are designed to help women from particular cultural backgrounds.

Physical and sexual abuse

Levels of physical or sexual abuse among women in conflict with the law have been reported for some time to be high. Estimates of the extent of such abuse in the general population range widely, partly because much information comes from selected populations and small samples, partly because it has been difficult for many women to talk about it. In an early study based on women in safe houses, Macleod (1980) estimated that one in every 10 women who is married or living in a common-law relationship is battered. Some addiction treatment programmes have reported rates of sexual abuse among offenders ranging from 45% to 70% (Lightfoot and Lambert, 1991).

Among federally sentenced women, 68% say that they have been physically abused at some time in their lives, most of them for extensive periods, and 58% state that they were sexually abused (Shaw et al. 1991a). Among Aboriginal women, these rates were much higher with 90% reporting physical abuse and 61% sexual abuse.

The effects of such abuse on those women have helped to contribute to offending problems. It is clear that abuse is linked closely with substance abuse as well as with offending. A recent random survey of women in Ontario found strong links between a history of abuse and use of drugs or alcohol (Groenveld & Shain, 1989).

The long-term effects of sexual abuse in childhood have also been recognized. In a study of women entering a crisis counselling centre in Manitoba the effects of childhood sexual abuse were manifest in a range of symptoms such as nightmares, anxiety attacks, sexual problems, fear of men, and difficulty controlling temper, which were much less frequent among those with no history of such abuse (Briere and Runtz, 1988). Other work has focused on the impact of incest on native women (Martens, 1988).

Recognition of the extent of abuse among women offenders, and its links with other aspects of their lives, indicates the importance of the development of programmes for women with such experience. In this respect, the Nova Scotia Task Force (Blueprint for Change, 1992) as does the Federal Task Force, places great stress on the importance of the provision of

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medical and psychiatric facilities and programmes which are 'women-centred' and appropriate for women who have experienced abuse.

Concomitant problems

Many of the difficulties experienced by women in conflict with the law are concomitant. Women with substance abuse problems often have histories of physical and sexual abuse in childhood and, as adults, are also likely to have physical health problems and to have developed a variety of emotional and psychiatric conditions. Coupled with a lack of financial or employment resources and single parenthood, these problems create a web from which it would be difficult to expect anyone to extricate herself without considerable support and assistance.

The implications of high levels of abuse among offender populations and their links with other problems such as substance abuse, ill-health, and low socio-economic status all point to the need for specific programming for women. It is the co-existence of problems, too, which prompted the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women to press for a holistic approach to treatment, one which tries to deal with a range of problems in the lives of women, rather than to treat each component separately (*Creating Choices*, 1990).

SECTION II THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

This section provides an account of the main findings of the survey. A final sample of 615 women forms the basis of the main sections of this report. This sample excludes cases in which information was largely incomplete, and 15 cases from the Northern Region which was over-sampled (see Appendix I for an account of the sampling results). A more detailed account of the findings relating to native women across the province, including the additional cases from the Northern Region, is given in Section III.

A total of 531 adults and 84 young offenders was interviewed, 286 of them in institutions, and 329 in the community. Their distribution by region and location is shown in Table 1 (Adult) and Table 2 (Young Offender) below. Overall, the distribution of the final sample is proportionate to the numbers of women in institutions and on community supervision throughout the five regions of the province.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF ADULT WOMEN INTERVIEWED BY REGION AND LOCATION

REGION	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Metro	98		96		194	36.5
Central	86		71		157	29.6
Eastern	12		48		60	11.3
Western	19		43		62	11.7
Northern	28		30		58	10.9
TOTAL	243	45.8	288	54.2	531	100.0

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE YOUNG OFFENDERS BY REGION AND LOCATION

REGION	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Metro	4		13		17	20.2
Central	19		12		31	36.9
Eastern	5		7		12	14.3
Western	10		5		15	17.9
Northern	5		4		9	10.7
TOTAL	43	51.2	41	48.8	84	100.0%

The characteristics of the young offenders are discussed separately in Section IV.

THE ADULT SAMPLE

On the whole, the general characteristics of the population were in keeping with expectations. Women in conflict with the law tend to be young. The women ranged in age from 18 to 64 years, but 75% of them were below the age of 35. The mean age for both the community and the institutional group was 30 years (Table 3).

TABLE 3

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ADULT WOMEN IN SAMPLE

AGE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
18-20	19	7.8	42	14.6	61	11.5
21-30	125	51.4	117	40.6	242	45.6
31-40	78	32.1	90	31.3	168	31.6
41-50	17	7.0	26	9.0	43	8.1
51+	3	1.2	12	4.2	15	2.8
No Info.	1	0.4	1	0.3	2	0.4
TOTAL	243		288		531	100.0
Mean age	29.69		30.48		30.12	
Standard deviation	7.68		9.81		8.89	

Where they are from

When asked whether they felt they belonged to a particular ethnic or cultural group, the majority (69%) identified themselves as Caucasian, 67 (13%) as Native peoples, 10% as black, and 6% from other backgrounds including East Asian and South Asian, and groups such as Portuguese, Jewish, Lebanese etc.¹¹ On the whole, Caucasian women tended not to feel themselves part of a distinct cultural group.

¹¹ East Asian is the term used to describe people from the Indian sub-continent (Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Sri Lankan). South Asian includes Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, etc.

It should be noted that not all women identified themselves in the same way as they were identified by staff. In staff assessments, slightly fewer women were described as Aboriginal¹² (62 women or 12% of the sample) and only 4% as 'other' (Table 4).

TABLE 4

ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF ADULT WOMEN IN SAMPLE
(Staff Assessment)

BACKGROUND	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Caucasian	170	70.0	224	77.8	394	74.2
Aboriginal	28	11.5	34	11.8	62	11.7
Black	38	15.6	16	5.6	54	10.2
Other	5	2.1	14	4.9	19	3.6
No Info.	2	0.8	-	-	2	0.4
TOTAL	243		288		531	100.0

It is difficult to know how well these figures accurately reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the total population of women under correctional jurisdiction. The greater proportion of black women in the institutional sample may reflect their greater likelihood of being remanded in custody or receiving a institutions sentence rather than probation, or an unwillingness to take part in the survey among those under community supervision. There was some evidence that women from visible minority groups and recent immigrants were reluctant or more likely to

¹² Both the terms Aboriginal and Native are used in this report to refer to Native peoples. One woman identified herself as Metis and is included with the Aboriginal group.

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refuse to take part in the survey than others both in institutions and outside (see Appendix I). On the whole, however, both explanations probably apply.¹³

The representation of Aboriginal women may also be affected by sampling factors outside the Northern Region, since probation offices on reserves, with one or two exceptions, were not sampled in the study.

While the majority of the sample were Canadian citizens (91%), a sizeable minority (19%) had been born outside Canada (Table 5, below). Twenty-eight were landed immigrants, and a few were on work permits or visas, or awaiting immigration or deportation hearings. Eighty percent of those born in Canada came from Ontario.

Around a third of the sample were second generation Canadians, whose parents had immigrated primarily from Western Europe (14%) the Caribbean (7%) and South Asia (3%). There were higher numbers of these women in the institutional group.

While the great majority described themselves as English speaking (89%), six said they were francophones, and 13 spoke mainly another language (Spanish, Chinese, Philippino, German, Portuguese, Czech, etc). Half of the Aboriginal women (52%) were most comfortable with their Native language (mostly Ojibway). Staff assessed 77% of the women as being literate.

¹³ In many countries visible minority groups do tend to be over-represented in correctional systems. This would appear to be the case in Britain (Mair, 1986; Fitzgerald, 1990) and is certainly true in the USA (Petersilia, 1983). Nova Scotia also reports a recent increase in the numbers of visible minority women in their correctional system (Blueprint For Change, 1992; Coverdale, 1991).

TABLE 5
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Canada	191	78.6	241	83.7	432	81.4
USA	6	2.5	2	0.7	8	1.5
Caribbean	23	9.5	10	3.5	33	6.2
S. America	3	1.2	3	1.0	6	1.1
Europe	14	5.8	19	6.6	33	6.2
Far East	1	0.4	1	0.3	2	0.4
Other	5	2.1	12	4.2	17	3.2
TOTAL	243		288		531	100.0

How were they living

At the time of their arrest, the majority (63% of those in the institutional group and 75% of the community group) were living in the same town or city as they were now in. Among the women in institutions, not surprisingly, more were now some distance from their normal place of residence. Over a third of these women (37%) came from another town or city, and 25% were over 100 kilometres from their homes (this applies particularly to women at Vanier Centre for Women, but also to some in the Northern Region). Some 30% of the women had lived in their current home for less than a year, and 30% of both the institutional and the community group wanted to change their place of residence.

TABLE 6
CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

STATUS	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	TOTAL	%
Single	88	36.2	124	43.1	212	39.9
Married	23	9.5	33	11.5	56	10.5
Common-law	61	25.1	43	14.9	104	19.6
Separated, etc	71	29.2	86	29.9	157	29.6
No info.	-	-	2	0.7	2	2.1
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Forty percent of the women were single (i.e., had never married), the rest were either separated, divorced or widowed (30%) or living common-law (20%). Few of them were currently married, reflecting the recent Canada-wide trends in marital status toward common-law situations¹⁴ (Table 6). Women in institutions were more likely to be living common-law, and fewer of them were single than the community group. They were also more likely to have been married before or lived common-law in a previous relationship (58% compared with 46%).

Table 7, below, indicates with whom the women were living prior to the commission of their offence(s), or their current living circumstances in the case of women under community supervision. The most notable conclusions to be drawn from the table are, firstly, the variety of living circumstances and the minority of traditional nuclear 'family' structures (parents and children) and secondly, the preponderance of single mothers living alone with their children. Nearly a quarter of the community sample were single mothers, but only 8% of those in institutions, suggesting that the courts were making a specific effort to enable these mothers to remain with their children (and that some of the institutional group had already lost custody).

¹⁴ See Statistics Canada, Canadian Social Trends, 1991.

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TABLE 7

WHO LIVING WITH NOW/PRIOR TO CURRENT INCARCERATION

LIVING WITH	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Alone	28	11.5	40	13.9	68	12.8
With Friend	29	11.9	28	9.7	57	10.7
With husband/ C/L/boyfriend	71	29.3	49	17.0	120	22.6
With parents/ relatives	54	22.2	47	16.3	101	19.0
Alone with children	19	7.8	65	22.6	84	15.8
With children C/L/relatives etc	40	16.5	55	19.1	95	17.9
No fixed abode	2	0.8	-	-	2	0.4
No info.	-	-	4	1.4	4	0.8
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Overall, 25% of the institutional sample had been, or were living with their children, compared with 41% of those in the community (the difference accounted for by the sentencing of the single mothers). A more detailed account of the circumstances of those women with children is given in a later section.

CURRENT STATUS AND OFFENCE HISTORY

Current status

The majority of the women in the institutional group (52%) were serving their sentence in that institution. Thirty percent were on remand or awaiting further charges and 17% were

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awaiting transfer to Vanier Centre for Women, to the Federal Institutions for Women, or to another institution (Table 8).

These figures do not give a clear indication of the situation of the sample, however, since some 65 women were serving their sentence at Vanier Centre for Women under much more favourable conditions than exist in detention centres or jails. If the Vanier women are excluded, a third (34.6%) of the institutional sample were serving their sentence in a jail or detention centre, 25% were on remand, 15% awaiting further charges and 23% sentenced and awaiting transfer.

TABLE 8
CURRENT STATUS

STATUS	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
On Remand	45	18.5	2	0.7	47	8.9
<u>Sentenced</u>						
Awaiting further charges	27	11.1	5	1.7	32	6.0
Awaiting transfer	41	16.9	-	-	41	7.7
Serving sentence here	126	51.9	255	88.5	381	71.8
In CRC/CRA	-	-	22	7.6	22	4.1
On parole	1	0.4	3	1.0	4	0.8
No Info	3	1.2	1	0.3	4	0.8
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

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Among the community sample, 22 women were in 'half-way' houses in the community.¹⁵

Current sentence

The current sentence of the sample is shown in Table 9. A number of women were awaiting further charges. Very few women were recorded as serving sentences for fine default or intermittent institutions sentences. Such women may be underestimated in the sample, however, since they were less likely to be selected for interview.

TABLE 9
CURRENT SENTENCE

SENTENCE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Jail	181	74.5	18 *	6.2	199	37.5
Intermittent Jail	-	-	2	0.7	2	0.4
Fine default	2	0.8	-	-	2	0.4
Jail & Probation	10	4.1	32	11.1	42	7.9
Probation only	-	-	228	79.2	228	42.9
Other	1	0.4	-	-	1	0.2
On remand	42	17.3	2	0.7	44	8.3
No Info	7	2.9	6	2.1	13	2.4
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

* Including women in CRCs or on parole.

¹⁵ These included Community Resource Centres (CRCs) and houses funded under a Community Resource Agreement (CRAs).

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Among the community sample, 90% were subject to a probation order with conditions; some with fines, some following a period of incarceration, some as conditional discharges, and others as suspended sentences. Approximately 30 of the probation cases had also received a conditional discharge. Overall, 40% of all probation sentences were for periods up to one year, 46% one to two years, and 14% over two years. Three quarters of all probation sentences also included specific conditions, the most common being counselling (including substance abuse) Community Service Orders and restitution.

For those women who had already been given a custodial sentence, the majority (60%) had sentences of six months or less, and only 16% over one year, including 6 women with federal sentences of two years or more. Among the short-term sentences were a number of women with sentences of a few days (Table 10).

TABLE 10

LENGTH OF CUSTODIAL SENTENCE (AGGREGATE)*

SENTENCE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY**		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Up to 1 month	34	17.6	19	35.8	53	21.5
1+ to 3 mths	39	20.2	14	26.4	53	21.5
3+ to 6 mths	34	17.6	8	15.1	42	17.1
6+ to 12 mths	51	26.4	7	13.2	58	23.6
Over 1 year	29	15.0	5	9.4	34	13.8
Over 2 years	6	3.1	-	-	6	2.4
TOTAL	193	100.0	53	100.0	246	100.0

* Excluding those on probation or remand, and 17 cases with no information.

** Including women in CRCs, on parole, and sentenced to institutions followed by probation.

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Examination of these data also revealed that 35% of the women receiving custodial sentences received terms of under three months. Such women, in view of their shorter sentences, were less likely to be transferred to Vanier Centre for Women except in the case of women at either the Metropolitan Toronto West Detention Centre or the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre. In addition, some women with longer sentences were not accepted for transfer to Vanier Centre for Women and had to remain in their jail or detention centre.¹⁶

Remands in custody

Among those in the institutional group, the majority (80%) had spent periods of a few days to less than a month on custodial remand. This included both those now serving their sentence and those currently on remand. Among the remaining women in the institutional group, however, time spent on remand varied considerably from a month up to one and a half years, and in one case three and a half years. Eighteen percent of the women under community supervision had been remanded in custody.

Previous offending history

Information about the previous offending histories of the sample proved difficult to obtain in the course of the survey. This was due to a number of factors including the lack of previous history information in records; the ongoing transfer from the old computer system to the new Offender Management System; the pressure of work for staff in the larger detention centres, particularly Metro West Detention Centre; the very minor nature of many charges and convictions; and vagueness on the part of a number of the women themselves. Some of the women in the institutional sample were unable to give a precise account of the number of times they had been convicted (or received a custodial sentence) and would reply 'about 50' or 'lots'. This was particularly true of those who worked as prostitutes, or had drug or drink-related convictions.

¹⁶ A much higher proportion of annual admissions to custody on sentence are for short-terms. In 1990-91 53% of all female admissions were for periods under a month and a further 34% 1-4 months (MCS Annual Report, 1992).

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On the basis of reports by the women, 41% of the sample had no previous convictions, but there was a considerable difference between the two groups: 22% of the institutional sample and 57% of those in the community reported no previous convictions (Table 11).¹⁷

TABLE 11

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS (Women's Account)

CONVICTIONS	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
None	53	21.8	164	56.9	217	40.9
1	37	15.2	36	12.5	73	13.7
2-4	53	21.8	35	12.2	88	16.6
5-10	23	9.5	15	5.2	38	7.2
11 or more	67	27.6	16	5.6	83	15.6
No info.	10	4.1	22	7.6	32	6.0
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Of those who had previous convictions, approximately 20% had a conviction before the age of 18. The age at first conviction according to staff is shown in Table 12 below, and that given by the women, themselves, in Table 13.

¹⁷ Staff reports on this item were missing for around 100 cases. These figures differ from those in annual statistics in that fewer very short-term sentences are included, however, this is a population rather than an admission sample and will therefore include fewer of the short-term sentences at any given time. For the community sample, these figures are consistent with admissions to probation for 1990-91 which showed that 55% of women had no previous convictions (MSC Annual report 1992).

TABLE 12

AGE AT FIRST CONVICTION (Staff Report)

AGE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
16 or below	52	21.4	34	11.8	86	16.2
17-20	60	24.7	65	22.6	125	23.5
21-30	56	23.1	96	33.3	152	28.6
31-40	21	8.6	41	14.2	62	11.7
41 or more	3	1.2	17	5.9	20	3.8
No info.	51	21.0	35	12.2	86	16.2
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Mean Age 21.20 years 25.09 years

TABLE 13

AGE AT FIRST CONVICTION (Women's Report)

AGE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
16 or below	74	30.5	53	18.4	127	23.9
17-20	63	25.9	65	22.6	128	24.1
21-30	61	25.1	94	32.6	155	29.2
31-40	26	10.7	46	16.0	72	13.6
41 or more	6	2.5	20	6.9	26	4.9
No info.	13	5.3	10	3.5	23	4.3
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Mean Age 20.69 years 24.87 years

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While the mean age at first conviction was 23, the institutional sample had begun their offending at an earlier age; 56% (Table 13) of them had committed an offence by the age of 20, compared with 41% of the community group.

Previous experience of institutions

Three-quarters of the community group and 41% of those in institutions said they had never been incarcerated before. Among the institutional group, however, were a number of women who had considerable experience of imprisonment, 40% had served at least 2 previous sentences, and some 63 (26%) women had accumulated numerous sentences (Table 14).

Among the institutional group, too, was a small group of women who had been placed in training schools as juveniles (19%) or in secure or open custody as young offenders (14%; and 7% and 8% among the community group). Overall, 18 women (3%) had previously received a federal sentence.

TABLE 14

PREVIOUS INCARCERATIONS (Women's Report)

INCARCERATION	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
None	99	40.7	221	76.7	319	60.3
1	44	18.1	27	9.4	71	13.4
2-4	33	13.6	16	5.6	49	9.2
5-10	28	11.5	8	2.8	37	6.8
11+	35	14.4	3	1.0	38	7.2
No Info.	4	1.6	13	4.5	17	3.2
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

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CURRENT OFFENCE

The offences with which women are charged, and which for the most part result in provincial sentences, include a wide variety of types of behaviour. For the purposes of summarizing the overall patterns, the offences are grouped together in Table 15 below, and a more detailed account is given in Appendix II. These include the most serious of their current offences or charges.¹⁸

TABLE 15
CURRENT OFFENCE/CHARGE

CURRENT OFFENCE/CHARGE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Serious violent offences	21	8.6	4	1.4	25	4.7
Assaults/weapons offence	23	9.5	50	17.4	73	13.7
Theft/fraud/possession etc.	78	32.1	164	57.0	242	45.6
Drug traffic/possession	53	21.8	24	8.3	77	14.5
Morals/public order/peace	20	8.2	20	7.0	40	7.5
Breach court order/parole/Probation	26	10.7	5	1.7	31	5.8
Drinking/traffic	11	4.5	15	5.2	26	4.9
Federal statutes/municipal by-laws	3	1.2	1	0.3	4	0.8
No information	8	3.3	5	1.7	13	2.4
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

¹⁸ The distribution of offences will differ from that shown by court based statistics which are based on cases charged, since they include cases which are later dismissed or result in sentences other than probation or custody.

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As expected, by far the most common charges or sentences among the women were for offences involving property (46%). These included primarily theft and possession of property (22%) and fraud offences (19%). The second, but much smaller, category was drug related offences (15%) including trafficking or possession for the purposes of trafficking (10%) and simple possession of drugs (4%). The third most common was assaults and weapons offences (14%). It should be noted, however, that the majority of these women were in the community group, suggesting that on the whole their behaviour was not serious enough to warrant a sentence of imprisonment. Only 5% of the sample had been charged with, or convicted for, offences which are normally classified as involving serious violence. These included three cases of manslaughter, one of attempted murder and 17 of robbery.

Among the institutional group, there were higher proportions of women charged with drug offences, breaches of court order or probation orders, and serious violent offences. The latter included five women charged with, or sentenced for, homicide or manslaughter offences. Most women were charged with a number of offences, and it is clear that, particularly in the Toronto area, there are numbers of women who are charged under a variety of sections of the Criminal Code. These women are charged for offences relating to prostitution, usually communication for the purposes of prostitution, obstructing justice, simple assault or resisting arrest, and often possession of drugs. Similarly in other parts of the province such as the Northern Region, native women are charged with behaviour centred around drinking, with offences under the Liquor Control Act, Breaches of the Peace or Public Order, resisting arrest, or assault.

When other current charges or convictions are examined, or previous offences, the same patterns of offending recur with great regularity: theft, fraud, breaches of court orders, assaults, miscellaneous offences against morals, obstructing justice. One of the consequences of this is that a small group of women are part of a pattern of arrest, conviction, imprisonment, release, and rearrest, with apparently little change on their activity or that of the criminal justice system. When asked how many previous convictions or sentences to imprisonment they had had, many of these women could only reply 'hundreds' or 'about 50'. The regularity with which they reappear in institutions, and their brief sentences of days or weeks represent a kind of 'timeout' at some considerable cost to themselves and their families, and to society.

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THE WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

What are the circumstances of those women with children? Overall more than two-thirds (69%) of the women in the sample had children of their own, and another 21 women (4%) had step-children (Table 16).¹⁹

TABLE 16

NUMBER OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN

WOMEN'S STATUS	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
With children	172	70.8	196	68.1	368	69.3
Without children	71	29.2	90	31.2	161	30.3
No info.	-		2	0.7	2	0.4
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

The number of children which the women had ranged from one to seven, with 62% having two or more (Table 17). Between them they had 758 children of their own, and there were 39 step-children. There were no significant differences between the institutional and the community group in terms of having children, nor the number they had.

¹⁹ Nineteen of the women with step-children also had children of their own.

TABLE 17

WOMEN WITH CHILDREN, CLASSIFIED BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN

NO. OF CHILDREN	INSTITUTION	COMMUNITY	TOTAL	
	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	%
1	64	76	140	38.1
2	67	67	134	36.4
3	20	30	50	13.6
4	11	11	22	6.0
5	5	5	10	2.7
6	3	5	8	2.2
7	2	-	2	0.5
Unknown	-	2	2	0.5
TOTAL	172	196	368	100.0

The age ranges of the children indicated that a third of them were 5 years or under, 43% in the important early childhood and teenage years, and a quarter were 17 years of age or more, and presumably rather less dependant. Table 18 shows the distribution of children by age group.

TABLE 18

CHILDREN CLASSIFIED BY AGE GROUP AND LOCATION OF MOTHER

AGE OF CHILD	INSTITUTION	COMMUNITY	TOTAL	
	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	%
Under 2 years	44	44	88	} 34.2
2-5 years	73	103	176	
6-10 years	97	83	180	} 42.6
11-16 years	77	72	149	
17-18 years	14	19	33	} 23.3
19 or more	61	86	147	
TOTAL	366	407	*773	

* Including 15 step-children

Over half the women had given birth to their first child by the age of 19; 12 of them had been between the ages of 11 and 14. The average age at which they had their first child was 19 years for both groups of women.

Living arrangements

Prior to their current sentence, just over half the institutional group and 70% of those in the community had been living with all or at least some of their children (Table 19).²⁰ Thus a considerable number of children will have been directly affected by their mother's arrest or conviction. In the institutional group, up to 53% of all mothers will have had to make alternative arrangements for their children's care.

²⁰ The number of women with children in this section includes two with step-children.

TABLE 19

NUMBERS OF WOMEN LIVING WITH THEIR CHILDREN PRIOR TO SENTENCE

WITH CHILDREN	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
All of them	64	37.0	112	56.9	176	47.6
Some of them	28	16.2	26	13.2	54	14.6
None of them	81	46.8	59	29.9	140	37.8
TOTAL	173	100.0	197	100.0	370	100.0

Given that many of the women have more than one child, often a variety of circumstances account for their children's living arrangements. A number of women had older children living on their own, or with their own children and partners. Some children had been adopted at birth or soon after; other women had children from previous relationships. Thus there is no simple way to describe the care and parenting roles of the women, nor is it easy to draw conclusions about the extent to which they were acting in 'good parenting' roles.

The variety of arrangements for those mothers who were not living with one or more of their children prior to their current offence is shown in Table 20. Thus 25 of the mothers had children who were in the care of their ex-husband or common law partner. In the great majority of cases, relatives had been caring for those not with their mother, but 11% of all mothers had a child in foster care. Table 21 indicates the reasons for these arrangements.

TABLE 20

CHILDREN'S LIVING ARRANGEMENTS PRIOR TO SENTENCE *

LIVING ARRANGEMENT	INSTITUTION (N=173)	COMMUNITY (N=197)	TOTAL (N=370)	
	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	%
Husband/C/Law	10	13	23	6.2
Ex Husband/C/Law	16	9	25	6.8
Her Mother	19	6	25	6.8
Other Relatives	24	15	39	10.5
Foster Parents etc.	24	17	41	11.1
Friends	1	2	3	0.8
Living on own	22	27	49	13.2
Other	17	12	29	7.8
No. with child living elsewhere	109	85	194	
All with her	64	112	176	

* Some women had more than one arrangement.

TABLE 21

REASONS WHY CHILDREN NOT LIVING WITH MOTHER PRIOR TO SENTENCE *

REASONS	INSTITUTION (N=173)		COMMUNITY (N=197)		TOTAL (N=370)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
All/some grown up	27	15.6	30	15.2	57	15.4
Adopted at birth	13	7.5	14	7.1	27	7.3
Taken into care against own wishes	13	7.5	10	5.1	23	6.2
With others/ in care by own choice	39	22.5	19	9.6	58	15.7
Taken by husband/C/ Law against wishes	32	18.5	21	10.7	53	14.3
No. with child living elsewhere	109		85		194	
All with her	64		112		176	

* Some women had more than one arrangement.

Overall, women in the institutional group were more likely to have made arrangements for a child to live with a relative or be taken into care because of their lifestyle or addiction than those in the community group (23% and 10% of those with children). They were also more likely to have had a child taken from them against their wishes, either into care or by an ex-husband or common-law spouse (26% and 16% of those with children). More of these women hoped to live with some or all their children on their release, although 42% expected not to live with their children and four more women expected their children to be in foster care.

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Single mothers and parenting

As many as 80% of the women with children said they had been a single mother for all or part of their children's lives and there were no differences between the institution and community groups (Table 22).

TABLE 22

SINGLE PARENT EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN

SINGLE PARENT	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Always	54	31.2	64	32.5	118	31.9
Part of Time	87	50.3	95	48.2	182	49.2
Never	29	16.7	36	18.2	65	17.6
No info.	3	1.7	2	1.0	5	1.4
TOTAL + CHILDREN	173	100.0	197	100.0	370	100.0

Overall 55% felt they had had primary responsibility for bringing up their children (slightly more in the community group), and 29% shared responsibility with a spouse or partner. For the remainder, primary responsibility had gone to their mothers, other relatives, ex-partners or, in 10% of cases, to foster carers.

The experiences of being a mother in trouble

Such a bare description of the parenting and care arrangements of these women tells us little about how they experienced separation and the court processes, or the impact of these experiences on the children themselves.

Women on remand expressed a number of concerns over the care of their children and the possibility of loss. One young first offender, with a baby of 11 months now in the care of a girlfriend, had been on remand for 10 days, and was in a state of panic. She was worried

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about who would care for her child, and convinced she would have to give him up permanently to her sister in expectation of a long sentence. Another, with a baby of 18 months and an older child, reported that she had not been given time to take them to friends and had had to place them with Children's Aid who had separated them. Another woman was feeling both ashamed and angry since her children were caught up in a police raid.

A woman with four children under the age of 12 who had been in jail for two days was worried that her children would be taken from her by the Children's Aid Society, "They don't allow us to make arrangements for our kids --it is too difficult to get help...not...knowing what to do with the children or what is happening to them." Another felt that police stations should have a child-care worker available.

Nor are such concerns restricted to those with very young children. One woman with a 15 year-old daughter was concerned that her daughter was not going to school and was staying out late in her absence. She was being cared for by her grandmother, herself an alcoholic, and, because of this situation, she felt the need for longer visits in open rather than closed conditions.

Apart from those recently remanded, there were a number of women who expressed concerns for their children's safety in their absence from abusive fathers or other care-givers:

"I am still very concerned because my oldest girl was sexually abused by her father, and I worry about the help that she will receive."

"[My] daughter was sexually abused...it's too difficult to communicate in jail."

In the context of their own experience of childhood abuse, as the subsequent section suggests, such concerns may be justified.

For some women with children in foster care, or with former partners, there were difficulties writing or talking to children over the telephone if the care-givers refused to accept the call charges.

Distance from home was also a problem. A native woman with three children between the ages of 2 and 11, and serving a two month sentence, was unable to see them because she was some 200 miles from home: "I worry about the youngest, she's not taking my jail term very well, [she] cries, won't eat....doesn't want to play".

Women in the community also had concerns. Some mentioned difficulties with lack of money, problems with gossip and community reaction to their children as a result of their

offence, and the lack of day-care facilities while they were undertaking community service. A number of women in both the community and institutional groups wanted legal advice to deal with custody issues, or felt that their children had emotional or behavioral problems with which the children needed support or counselling.

TABLE 23

CURRENT CONCERNS IN RELATION TO CHILDREN *

CONCERNS	INSTITUTION (N=173)		COMMUNITY (N=197)		TOTAL (N=370)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Day Care	9		18		27	
Accommodation	19		23		42	
Money/job	30		41		71	
Counselling	27		39		66	
Legal help	12		15		27	
Visits	19		12		31	
Other ²¹	13		13		26	
No info.	2		1		3	
No problems now	88	50.9	110	55.8	198	53.5

* Some mentioned more than one type of concern

Altogether, three-quarters of the women in the institutional group said they had had difficulties in relation to their children since their arrest for their current offence, and half of those in the community. Asked what was the most difficult problem they had faced, the most frequently mentioned was separation from their children (mentioned by 55% and 33% of the institutional and community groups).

²¹ These included a number of cases where ex-partners, mothers-in-law or foster parents refused to bring the children to visit.

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Table 23 above summarizes the main issues with which they felt they *now* needed help in relation to their children.

Visits

"Not through glass on a phone."

"It's a waste of time to be here for 20 minutes.."

While 60% of the institutional group had had contact with their children through visits or telephone calls, 28% said that they did not want their children to see or visit them in the institution (only two said they did not want to see them at all).²² A few said it was too far for their children to come, they had not yet had time to contact them, or in five cases, were prevented by court order from seeing them.

The reluctance of many of the women to receive visits from their children seemed, to a large extent, to relate to the conditions under which visits in jails and detention centres across the province take place. The cramped accommodation behind glass in most visiting areas, with contact only via telephone, was particularly difficult for many women and their children, whatever their ages. As one woman who had spent a year in jail away from her two and three year-olds put it, the worst thing was being separated from them, not being able to touch them on visits or give them a hug.

Nor should their wish to have open visits be seen as simply a desire for physical contact. One woman with seven children aged 11 or older, was very concerned about an epileptic daughter and another needing surgery, and stressed her real need to be able to see them under open conditions. Another with children of six and seven, stressed she needed one-to-one visits so she could "hold the kids because they are very angry", and a third with an 11 and a 12 year-old commented:

"Visits through a piece of glass [are] very harmful. There needs to be a recognition that there are different needs for a mom...visiting rooms away from other prisoners who are having inappropriate conversations."

In addition, since young children must be accompanied, and in most institutions only one is allowed at a time, it may take a number of weeks for a woman to see each of her children - if escorts can be found to bring them. This was the case for one woman with four children under 10 who wanted to be able to see them as a family.

²² Only Vanier Centre for Women allows open visits for women and their children. If these women are excluded, then the proportion who did not want their children to visit them in the institution would be much higher.

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Asked what kind of contact they would like to have, over half the women stressed more visits, primarily touch or open visits, for longer periods of time, and more often. Many also stressed the need for facilities for open visits with families and which accommodated young children's needs, away from other offenders, and facilities for weekend visits. For women whose families lived far from the institution, it was felt that more money for phone calls should be made available to enable them to maintain contact. Some wanted more TAPs to allow them to go out to see their children.

CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY

Only 30% of the women in both groups described their family life as having been relatively easy, without serious problems. Around 40% said that there had been serious disruptions in terms of alcoholism, illness, violence and separations. In addition, 50% reported that other people in their family, apart from themselves, had been in trouble with the law.

While on average they had left home at 16 or 17 years of age, a significant number of the women had left much earlier; a third of them had left by the age of 15. The majority had left home to live with friends (34%), to get married or live common-law (28%), to go to a residential home or training school (16%), or to live on the streets (8%).

One major difference between the two groups was that 30% of the institutional group had been taken into care at some point as juveniles, and placed either in a foster home, or a residential or group home, compared with only 9% of the community group. A third of both groups of women did not feel that they now had good support from their families.

While not all had experienced such difficult childhoods, the following illustrate some of the most serious. One described her father as a violent alcoholic who had left home and was now dead, her mother as a drug addict and hooker who does not care for her. She had also been raped by her mother's boyfriend and her uncle. Another woman had been a Ward of Court since the age of five and lived in 44 different foster homes. She had left 'home' at 11 years of age and lived on the streets. A third said she had been left on a street corner by her mother and spent the rest of her childhood in foster homes. She had also left home at 11 years of age.

EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE

The extent of abuse, whether physical, sexual, or emotional, reported by the women was high. Overall, 72% reported having been physically abused at some time in their lives, and 48% stated that they had been sexually abused. Seventy-seven percent said that they had been either physically or sexually abused as children or adults. Seventy percent also said they had experienced emotional abuse.²³

What was striking about this experience, given that women on probation are more likely to be first offenders and in other ways to have rather fewer difficulties, was that levels of abuse were just about as high among the community group as among those in institutions (Table 24).²⁴ A number of Probation and Parole officers had remarked in the course of the survey on the high incidence of physical and sexual abuse among their probationers, even older first offenders from 'comfortable' backgrounds.

TABLE 24

THE EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE*

EXPERIENCE	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Ever physically abused	177	72.8	205	71.2	382	71.9
Ever sexually abused	122	50.2	130	45.1	252	47.5
Ever emotionally abused	170	70.0	201	69.8	371	69.9
No info.	3	1.2	3	1.0	6	1.1

* some women experienced more than one type of abuse

²³ The definitions of abuse used in the study are shown in Questionnaires B and C in Appendix IV.

²⁴ Although more severe and extensive among the institutional group.

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Adult abuse

It was also clear that the reported physical abuse was more likely to have been experienced as adults, in 90% of such cases from husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends. Sixty-two percent of the women reported being physically abused as adults. They also rated their abuse as 'serious' in two thirds of the cases, and as regular (41%) or occasional (40%), rather than as one or two isolated events in their relationships.

Emotional abuse as adults was reported by 60% of the women and in most cases rated as serious. Again, the great majority (87%) had been abused by close partners or husbands, and it was closely associated with physical abuse.

Altogether, 30% of the sample said they had been sexually abused as adults. The majority of these women had been abused by strangers or acquaintances (61%) rather than by common-law partners or boyfriends.

Childhood abuse

The effects of childhood abuse are very difficult to measure since each person's experience will affect them in different ways, and their ability to deal with that experience will vary. Overall, 40% of the women reported being physically abused as children or young adolescents, 34% sexually abused, and 44% emotionally abused. In many cases, though not all, abuse was likely to be multiple:

"My father was and is a heavy drinker....[he] used to beat up my mom in front of all of us and beat me up and my sister and my two brothers almost every day for nothing. My sister was sexually abused [by] my father."

"Mom left when I was 4 years old. Dad was a heavy drinker. [I was] sexually abused by my step brother and physically abused by my step mom and step sister."

And almost two-thirds of the physical abuse had occurred on a regular basis over long periods of time up to the age of 16. Similarly, two-thirds of those who had been sexually abused reported it as a regular or occasional experience, rather than an isolated event.

Who was responsible for this abuse? The women's accounts make it clear that this involved far more than the commonly cited step-father or foster father. In the majority of cases (75%), male relatives including fathers, step-fathers or foster fathers, grandfathers, brothers,

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cousins and (often) uncles were responsible for such sexual abuse. The remainder included non-relatives such as neighbours, babysitters, their mother's boyfriend or strangers. Ninety-five percent of physical abuse was similarly perpetrated by close relatives including, in a minority of cases, mothers and other female relatives.

In an abusive situation, sexual abuse, both in childhood and as adults, was commonly accompanied by physical abuse.

The need for support programmes

Just over half the women who had experienced some form of abuse had sought help, mainly from the police, and less often in the form of counselling, or had gone to a shelter. Some had not sought help, however, and accepted their experience as 'inevitable' or relented even after they had pressed charges. Thus one woman, now 23 years old, described her own experience of childhood sexual abuse as happening:

"...every lunch time...8 years was the first time, for Smarties..."

She has spent the past ten years as a prostitute in Toronto and lives on The Stroll. In her experience "every man hits women".

Another described herself as having been seriously abused physically as an adult "literally hundreds of times", had bones broken, been raped and seriously sexually abused many times, and experienced severe emotional abuse including being threatened and hung upside down over a balcony. She had sought help, usually by calling the police after some of these events, who would arrest her husband or friends, but she would "bail them out in the morning".

One woman described her experience of calling the police a lot when her own mother was abused by her step-father, but her parents always denied that abuse had taken place.

A number of women did not feel they had received the support from the community which they should have received. A woman serving her first sentence of a year's probation for assault with a weapon remarked:

"For years my husband physically abused me. Neighbours called the police who only made sure I was alright. The *one* time I turned on my husband they were right there to arrest me!"

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And another said:

"After being assaulted many times and having [my] spouse charged and him being discharged for these, I felt it was very unfair when a slap across the face to my spouse cost me two years probation for assault -- it gives me the impression we have a very poor justice system in Canada. [We] need far better understanding and protection for women and children."

In the case of childhood abuse, credibility was a major problem. One woman who had spent time in care described how she would tell social workers about the physical and sexual abuse she experienced in her foster home, but was not believed. Her response was to run away from the home, resulting in further foster placements.

Whatever their previous experience of police or legal action or of counselling, over half the women (58%) who had experienced abuse at some time in their lives felt they wanted help to deal with it now. In the majority of cases, they wanted some form of individual counselling (43%), less often a support group (15%), or help with legal action or finding new accommodation.

For those in jails or detention centres, there seemed little opportunity to provide such help, as one woman in a detention centre remarked "they don't have much here".

Among those who did not want help, was a woman who had experienced serious physical abuse once a week from her husband over a period of seven years. She had previously gone to the police and stayed in a women's shelter. Now she felt the need for a programme concerned with developing a positive life-style: "[I] don't need any help with abuse because [I've] already dealt with it."

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PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

The majority of women (54%) felt they had physical health problems or concerns of various kinds, the institutional group more so than those in the community. For most women these included ongoing conditions and more recent concerns, including diabetes, migraines, back pains, asthma, epilepsy, ulcers, anemia, kidney and bowel problems and menstrual problems. It was not always possible to assess the severity of their problems. A number of women were pregnant.

For a smaller group of women, their conditions did appear to be more severe or chronic, including hepatitis, heart conditions, and being HIV positive. Some of those with problems of addiction had a number of accompanying medical problems as one woman's list indicated: 'addictions, liver and brain damage from drug and alcohol abuse, irregular menstruation, back pain, headaches, seizures.' Another stated that she had cervical cancer, was HIV positive and pregnant. A third mentioned an ulcer, migraines, lower back pains and difficulty sleeping, and a fourth migraines, arthritis, "bad nerves" and a vaginal infection. Table 25 summarises their health concerns.

TABLE 25

CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

CONCERNS	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Some concerns about health	128	52.7	132	45.8	260	49.0
Serious/chronic conditions	19	7.8	9	3.1	28	5.3
None mentioned	94	38.7	140	48.6	234	44.1
No Info.	2	0.8	7	2.4	9	1.7
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

While women in the institutional group were rather more likely to mention health problems, they were far less satisfied with the health care they were getting in the institution. Only 36% felt they were getting the care they felt they needed, compared with 83% of those in the community (Table 26).

TABLE 26

ARE YOU GETTING THE HEALTH CARE YOU NEED AT THE MOMENT?

HEALTH CARE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Yes, satisfied	88	36.2	239	83.0	327	61.6
Not getting care needed	117	48.1	32	11.1	149	28.1
No info.	38	15.6	17	5.9	55	10.4
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Many of the women in the institutional group stressed that in relation to health concerns they felt they were not listened to, or taken seriously, by institutional staff.

"They don't listen to health concerns, [we're] not taken seriously, [you] have to resort to extreme measures before they will listen to us."

"We are always being told to wait."

"Your feelings are made to seem trivial."

Apart from this overall feeling, their main concerns were lack of access to health care and the need for better care, and in some cases an opportunity to seek a second opinion concerning their condition. One woman who was pregnant was experiencing vomiting and bleeding and still recovering from a gunshot wound. She states that she was frustrated by her inability to see a doctor when she needed to:

"They don't let us see a doctor when we need to - it takes three or four days to see them."

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"They don't do a thing here, they actually put the women in the hole when they are really sick to do a 24-hour watch instead of going to hospital, you never know if and when you'll get to see a doctor."

"It takes too long to see a doctor, [they] won't give you prescriptions which they have on the street from a legal doctor."

Other women suggested the need for freer access to family doctors' records. One woman with a blood disorder had had to wait five days to get the pills she needed and which were normally prescribed by her own doctor, because she was told she had to be seen by the institution doctor. Others stressed that there should be proper medical examinations, and greater access to health services in the evenings or at weekends.

Overall, in relation to physical health care, such comments from the women in the community, with their greater freedom to seek help when they need it, and probably lower levels of anxiety, were rare.

Health care and addictions

Because of the high levels of addiction among the women, and the fact that some had only recently been incarcerated, a number of women experienced problems with withdrawal. They felt that staff were not always sensitive to the withdrawal experience, and that they were not given the support, or in some cases the treatment, they felt was needed:

"Medical care should be given to girls coming off the streets who go cold turkey, to get off the pain - cold turkey for cocaine users is OK, they need food and sleep, but not for heroin users, they need painkillers...."

While in most cases withdrawal may not have life-threatening consequences, more serious conditions can result, and warranted in their view a policy which recognized both the unpleasant and the potentially dangerous aspects of withdrawal. The alleged case of one woman with a ten-year heroin habit who suffered three severe convulsions in five days, and had to be taken to an outside hospital each time from the cells, was cited by one inmate as an indication of this need to pay greater attention to the withdrawal process.

Many women in fact found that both withdrawal and subsequent health care were affected by their status as users of drugs or alcohol, that they were treated like children and "told to line up and be quiet":

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"Because I'm an addict, I feel that my requests for pain medication...any medication, are not being taken seriously."

"Requests are ignored, they think we are just looking for drugs."

"They don't want to help people with addiction problems."

Mental health

"We need more counsellors, and time, and people to talk to."

"I feel like I'm going to explode, I'm close to the edge."

Again women in the institutional group were more likely to mention mental health problems (49%) than were those in the community (27%). Some of them attributed those problems to being institutionalized but a few clearly had some severe difficulties. One said she had been on valium since the age of three, and another that she had been prescribed pills all her life. Asked if they had difficulty with a series of common mental health conditions, about three-quarters of the women mentioned at least one with depression and anxiety being the most frequently cited (Table 27).²⁵

²⁵ The discrepancy between their responses to these two questions probably relates, for example, to not seeing sleeping difficulties as constituting a 'mental health' problem.

TABLE 27
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS*

PROBLEMS	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Anxiety/ nervousness	99	40.7	115	39.9	214	40.3
Depression	120	49.4	150	52.1	270	50.8
Sleeping Problems	111	45.7	97	33.7	208	39.2
Phobias/fears	38	15.6	59	20.5	97	18.3
Anger/violence	58	23.9	58	20.1	116	21.8
Eating disorders	55	22.6	52	18.1	107	20.2
No. with problems	193	79.4	186	64.6	379	71.4
None mentioned	48	19.8	94	32.6	142	26.7
No info.	2	0.8	8	2.8	10	1.9

* Some mentioned more than one problem

Just over a third of each group (39% for the institution sample and 33% for the community sample) had received some form of treatment in the past for mental health conditions, and just over half those in institutions (53%) and over a third of those in the community (38%) felt they needed mental health care now. Again, however, those inside were much less likely to be receiving it now. Among those who felt they needed help, only a third of the institutional group compared with three-quarters of the community group were currently receiving treatment. Satisfaction with the accessibility, and nature of current care was also much lower

among the institutional group, with only 28% feeling they were receiving the kind of care they needed compared with 53% of those in the community group (Table 28).

TABLE 28

ARE YOU GETTING THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE YOU FEEL YOU NEED AT THE MOMENT?

RESPONSE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Yes	68	28.0	152	52.8	220	41.4
No	123	50.6	52	18.1	175	33.0
Not Applicable	31	12.8	46	16.0	77	14.5
No Info.	21	8.6	38	13.2	59	11.1
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

What they felt they needed primarily, was access to counselling or psychotherapy from psychologists as well as psychiatrists, but also from people who would "really listen" to them. Less often, they said they would prefer support groups to individual counselling.

A number of women on medication for mental health problems felt that they would prefer counselling to drugs:

"I need some psychiatric help from someone who I think understands."

"Some of the medication doesn't help with the problem, and makes you like a zombie. They tend to rely on medication here more than counselling and talking."

Access to psychiatric help was again a major issue. Those without a history of mental illness felt such access was restricted.

"[I] can't see the psychiatrist because of no past history."

"We shouldn't have to be diagnosed as crazy before we can talk to somebody."

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For those who did have a history, access was still very slow, or at times they felt over-reactive and likely to result in being put in 'Seg' if they told staff how they really felt.

"[I've] been waiting for an assessment for four months."

"They always want to send me to a psychiatrist and put me on drugs...[they are] not sympathetic."

Several women requested group programmes for anger management, and among native women there were a number who wanted access to programmes specific to them or to native medical staff.

Overall, as with physical health care, women in the institutional group felt they were treated patronizingly by staff and not taken seriously, and stressed the need for better access to psychologists and psychiatrists on a regular and an emergency basis.

The fact of being in the institution itself, of not having the kind of access available in the community, probably accounts for the major differences between the two groups of women. Levels of depression and anxiety, often with attendant sleeping difficulties, are all likely to be elevated by the fact of being incarcerated, whether awaiting trial or serving a sentence. Thus one woman said her mental health problems while incarcerated arose from her anxieties about her children. And as a subsequent section indicates, the noise levels and overcrowded sleeping conditions of many jails and detention centres must exacerbate such problems.

While those inside were more likely to mention problems of mental health, (and for whom addiction and withdrawal are likely to be more problematic), in other ways their histories were not unlike those under community supervision. For example, just over a third of both groups of women said they had attempted suicide at some time in their lives, around 30% had slashed themselves, and 20% had at times starved themselves or had episodes of bulimia.²⁶

Both the women in the community and those in institutions are, because of their lifestyle and circumstances, a high risk group and this, in itself, underlines the need for a high level of health services.

²⁶ Fifty percent of the women in institutions said they would like to take programmes concerned with nutrition, and a quarter of those in the community.

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ADDICTIONS

"I think that a lot of people should be sentenced to drug rehabilitation instead of jail...."

Getting in trouble with the law

How great is the involvement of the women in alcohol and drug misuse? There are a number of difficulties in assessing the extent of addiction problems, particularly since as a condition of their sentence, women on probation must refrain from the use of drugs and alcohol, and those in institutions are denied access. Many of the women claim to have given up the use of both substances.

At the time of their offence, two-thirds of the institutional group (and just under half of the community group) would appear to have been current users of drugs or alcohol. (Table 29).

TABLE 29

ALCOHOL OR DRUG USE AT TIME OF OFFENCE

SUBSTANCE ABUSE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Major drug use	63	25.9	24	8.3	87	16.4
Major alcohol use	27	11.1	32	11.1	59	11.1
Major use of both	25	10.3	17	5.9	42	7.9
Some use of both	50	20.6	58	20.1	108	20.3
No involvement	77	31.7	154	53.5	231	43.5
No info.	1	0.4	3	1.0	4	0.8
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

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Of those who had been users, the main difference was the much greater use of drugs among the institutional group.²⁷ This is also clear from their account of the nature of the involvement of substance use in their offending (Table 30). Forty percent of those in institutions had been convicted for a drug offence, 50% had committed their offence while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and 39% had offended to support their habit.

Apart from its involvement with current offending, the women were also asked about past substance abuse. Twenty-one percent of those in the institutional group said they had never used either alcohol or drugs, as did 30% of those in the community (Table 30). Thus it is possible to say overall that 79% of the institutional group and 70% of those in the community are, or have been, users of alcohol or drugs.

TABLE 30

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INVOLVEMENT WITH OFFENCE*

INVOLVEMENT	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
**Convicted of drug offence	99	40.7	42	14.6	141	26.6
Convicted of alcohol offence	44	18.1	47	16.3	91	17.1
Offence to support habit	94	38.7	34	11.8	128	24.1
Offence under the influence	122	50.2	91	31.6	213	40.1
No involvement	60	24.7	94	32.6	154	29.0
Never used either	52	21.4	88	30.6	140	26.4

* More than one category relevant for some women;

** or charged with

²⁷ Some of the consequential problems of heavy drug use, including withdrawal and physical health conditions, are discussed in the previous section on health care.

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In order to assess the extent of substance abuse problems, the women were asked to complete standard alcohol and drug screening measures on the basis of the 12 months prior to the current offence.²⁸ Those who said they never used drugs or alcohol, or who had stopped using more than a year before their offence, did not complete the measures (approximately half of the women). Among those who did, women in the institutional group tended to score higher on both measures indicating that their involvement was having more serious consequences for their life-style (Tables 31 and 32).

TABLE 31

LEVEL OF ALCOHOL RELATED PROBLEMS (MAST)

SCORE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Low 1-5	45	18.5	73	25.3	118	22.2
Moderate: 6-10	26	10.7	39	13.5	65	12.2
Substantial: 11-15	35	14.4	24	8.3	59	11.1
Severe: 16-20	15	6.2	15	5.2	30	5.6
No. completing MAST	121	49.8	151	52.8	272	51.4
Not completed	122	50.2	137	47.2	259	48.6
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Mean score: 8.79 7.26 7.94
 Standard deviation: 5.42 5.16 5.32

²⁸ These were the MAST (Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test) (Selzer, 1971), and the DAST (Drug Abuse Screening Test) (Skinner, 1982). Both score out of a total of 20 questions. A score of 6 or more is suggested for identifying people with some problems.

TABLE 32
LEVEL OF DRUG RELATED PROBLEMS (DAST)

SCORE	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Low 1-5	23	9.5	50	17.4	73	13.7
Moderate: 6-10	46	18.9	25	8.7	71	13.4
Substantial: 11-15	46	18.9	31	11.8	77	14.5
Severe: 16-20	32	13.2	16	5.6	48	9.0
No. completing DAST	147	60.5	122	42.4	269	50.7
Not completed	96	39.5	166	57.6	262	49.3
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

Mean score: 10.88 8.30 9.71

Standard deviation: 4.97 5.61 5.41

The women were also asked about high risk substance abuse behaviour over the past five years, and the institutional group were clearly more involved in such activities, with higher proportions mixing alcohol and drugs, sharing needles, injecting, or sniffing gas (Table 33).

TABLE 33

INVOLVEMENT IN HIGH RISK SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN PAST 5 YEARS*

INVOLVEMENT	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Mixed alcohol and drugs	113	46.5	113	39.2	226	42.6
Injected drugs	86	35.4	36	12.5	122	23.0
Shared needles	37	15.2	21	7.3	58	10.9
Sniffed glue/gas	18	7.4	8	2.8	26	4.9
None of these	96	39.5	160	55.6	256	48.2

* More than one response possible

In addition, 45% of the institutional group and 34% of those in the community said they had been put on prescription drugs by a doctor over a long period during the past five years.

Treatment for substance abuse

Given the levels of recent alcohol use, and the numbers who had used it in the past, it is noteworthy that only 17% of the sample said they had previously obtained professional help for their alcohol dependency. This may reflect a perception that alcohol creates less of a problem in their lives than drug use, or their failure to recognize that they have a problem. A number of women who described themselves as binge drinkers did not feel they needed help.

Only around 15%, although more in institutions (21%), said they would like some type of treatment now, and for those who did this need was urgent:

"We are desperate for substance abuse counselling inside, they don't offer it [here] any more."

The majority felt they either had no problems (62%), did not need help to stop drinking, or were not yet ready to quit. The most commonly requested help was Alcoholics Anonymous,

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followed by individual counselling, long residential programmes for women only, a programme run by people from their own culture, and mixed residential programmes.

For a number of women, there was a need for more than just the promise of a programme within the institution. They stressed that programmes should continue on the street to prevent relapses.

"I need to be given some help and supervision when I get out to stay off the booze - to be just put back on the street, alone, without it - I know I won't be able to stay dry."

Some stressed the need for culturally and racially specific drug treatment programmes. As one woman described it, drug use between whites and blacks was different; they use different drugs and have a different degree of involvement. Nor were existing programmes easy to get into. One 40-year-old woman had tried on several occasions while she was in the community to get into a residential programme, and found there was either a long waiting list or they could only help her for a few days.

In relation to drug use, there was some evidence that rather more of the institutional group (25%), with their higher levels of drug use had previously had access to some treatment. Forty percent of these women said they now wanted help for drug abuse, compared with 14% of the community group.

Apart from policies in relation to withdrawal, the most frequently requested kinds of help were individual counselling and such groups as Narcotics Anonymous or Cocaine Anonymous, long residential programmes for women only, or men and women, and programmes, whether residential or group, run by people from their own culture.

Asked what would prevent them opting for treatment at this point in their lives, the most common reasons given were lack of support from family or friends, lack of child care and transport, and not being able to afford to stop work to attend a treatment programme. Finally, a quarter of the institutional group said they were not yet ready to stop using drugs or alcohol, and a small group of women (15) said they had been barred from treatment.

"I think I need help, but I know that I'm not ready to quit."

"I like the drugs and the associated life-style too much."

"No motivation."

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EDUCATION AND WORK

For a variety of reasons relating to upbringing and attitudes towards women's aptitudes and employment, as well as their greater involvement in child-caring roles, women tend to have fewer educational qualifications or job skills than men. The women in the survey were no exception in having relatively low levels of educational or skill development beyond grade school. Since on average they were fairly young, and two-thirds of them were mothers most of whom had had their first child by the age of 19, they had also had little opportunity to work or to undertake post-secondary education or training, and probably little incentive.

The main conclusion to be drawn from the survey in relation to education, work experience and training, was that there was very little indeed to distinguish those in institutions from those under community supervision. Both groups of women are equally equipped in terms of their schooling, post-secondary experience, their job levels or unemployment histories, and their sources of income, and both are very poorly equipped.

Schooling

Around 30% of both groups had not progressed beyond Grade 9 at school, and 49% had not gone beyond Grade 10. Two-thirds of the women had not completed their high school diploma or its equivalent. Just under half (47%) of the sample said they had followed some kind of training or post secondary education, either commercial or college courses (20%), taken trade training (13%) or attended university (6%), but in the great majority of cases they had not completed those courses. Only 9% of the whole sample would appear to have received qualifications in this way.

TABLE 34
FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES WANTED

COURSES	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Basic education/ Upgrading	51	21.0	82	28.5	133	25.0
Literacy	21	8.6	7	2.4	28	5.3
College/university	80	32.9	70	24.3	150	28.2
Trade training	49	20.2	58	20.1	107	20.2
Other	3	1.2	14	4.9	17	3.2
Don't want any	27	11.1	43	14.9	70	13.2
No Info.	12	4.9	14	4.9	26	4.9
TOTAL	243	100.0	288	100.0	531	100.0

The prospect of receiving further education or job training, however, was firmly endorsed by the women; 72% of those in the institutional group and 67% of those in the community said they would like to take do so now, and approximately 10% were already doing so. Table 34 above lists the kinds of course they wanted or were already taking.

Work experience

Gauging the work experience of the women in the sample is difficult given that many of them have worked for only short periods of time or intermittently, and because many have 'made a living' by working illegally, selling drugs, by prostitution, or through the commission of fraud for example.

Before the start of the current sentence, only 20% of the women said they were working full-time, a further 10% part-time, but for the rest there was a variety of reasons for their unemployment. The principal reason given was because there were no jobs (28%); 15% said they were students, 12% that they were sick or on drugs. The only factors differentiating the two groups appeared to be the higher level of drug use among the institutional group, who were more likely to claim sickness or drug use, or just not wanting to work. As one woman

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in that group put it, she was not looking for legal work because she was making too much with fraud.

Among those who had worked legitimately, the most common jobs appeared to be in the sales and service area (35%), including dancers, shop assistants, waitresses, cabin girls in tourist lodges; unskilled manual work (23%) and clerical jobs (13%). Of those who had not been working, two-thirds had been out of work for a year or more.

A number of the women were working illegally but this was often combined with periods of legitimate work too. Table 35 below indicates the monthly income of those women who had been or were working, but illegal income was included by some women too. On the whole, women in the institutional group, probably because of their heavier involvement in drugs, claimed a higher monthly income than those in the community group.

TABLE 35

MONTHLY INCOME ON AVERAGE

INCOME	INSTITUTION		COMMUNITY		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
<\$500	7	5.4	36	23.1	43	15.1
\$500-999	37	28.7	54	34.6	91	31.9
\$1000-1499	40	31.0	39	25.0	79	27.7
\$1500-1999	16	12.4	12	7.7	28	9.8
\$2000+	29	22.5	15	9.6	44	15.4
No. responding	129	100.0	156	100.0	285	100.0
Not responding	114	46.9	132	45.8	246	46.3
TOTAL	243		288		531	

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Table 36 indicates the main sources of income for the women in the sample. Apart from wages, 65% were dependant on welfare of various kinds. There was a greater tendency for women in the institutional group to earn money from illegal activities (28% compared with 11% in the community group).

TABLE 36
MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME*

SOURCES	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Wages	96	39.5	114	39.6	210	39.5
Husband/c/law	37	15.2	53	18.4	90	16.9
Alimony	2	0.8	5	1.7	7	1.3
Mother's allowance	51	21.0	77	26.7	128	24.9
Welfare	68	28.0	91	31.6	159	29.9
Unemployment pay	11	4.5	18	6.3	29	5.5
Disability pay	18	7.4	13	4.5	31	5.8
Parents/relations	12	4.9	19	6.6	31	5.8
Other**	67	27.6	31	10.8	98	18.5

* Some women had more than one source

** Most of this involved illegal activities

Job training

In relation to job training, 42% of the institutional group wanted job training as did 27% of those in the community. In addition, some 16% of the sample wanted help finding a job. The type of job training most commonly mentioned was some form of trade training, closely followed by training in nursing, child care or social work, and computing. A small number wanted office, clerical, or business training.

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As with their reasons for not working in the past, lack of job skills, child care and transport, current addiction problems (for the institutional group) and medical problems appeared to be the main barriers to them getting the kind of job or education they would like. Only 12% expressed no interest in doing so. The problems of finding jobs in the future for these women were summed up by one woman in a detention centre:

"Who's going to hire me now? [I have] a record, no experience and a drug problem."

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THE MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS

In an attempt to try to summarize the kinds of needs for facilities and programmes which the women thought important, they were asked about a range of issues from child-care to legal help or native and ethnic programmes. These were things they felt they needed to deal with in order to stay out of difficulty in the future. Table 37 summarizes their replies in order of selection by the sample as a whole. Thus overall, 45% of the women said that help with employment was an important need, followed by work-training and job skills.

TABLE 37

THE MAIN PROGRAMME NEEDS* (women's report)

NEEDS	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Employment	129	53.1	110	38.2	239	45.0
Work-training	113	46.5	109	37.8	222	41.8
Help with emotional problems	108	44.4	111	38.5	219	41.2
Housing	113	46.5	85	29.5	198	37.3
Substance abuse	114	46.9	52	18.1	166	31.3
Upgrading/literacy	85	35.0	78	27.1	163	30.7
Child-related	70	28.8	85	29.5	155	29.2
Family support	74	30.5	81	28.1	155	29.2
Physical/sexual abuse	58	23.9	62	21.5	120	22.6
Health care	57	23.5	49	17.0	106	20.0
Legal Help	48	19.8	28	9.7	76	14.3
Native/ethnic progs.	21	8.6	24	8.3	48	9.0
Other**	37	15.2	29	10.1	65	12.2
No info.	16	6.6	49	17.0	65	12.2

* More than one category applies

** number of women mentioned financial help

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In most cases, women in the institutional group were more likely to mention their need to deal with individual issues than those in the community. In particular, they stressed the need for help with jobs and work training, housing, and particularly substance abuse counselling.

The women were also asked to rank those issues they selected in order of importance for them. The first seven issues for each group of women are shown in Table 38 below. Thus among the institutional group, substance abuse counselling was ranked first by the greatest number of women, followed by housing and employment. Counselling for emotional problems was ranked the most important among the community group.

TABLE 38

RANK ORDER OF IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

INSTITUTION	COMMUNITY	TOTAL
1. Substance abuse counselling	Emotional counselling	Substance abuse counselling
2. Housing	Child-related	Employment
3. Employment	Employment	Emotional Counselling
4. Child-related	Housing	Housing
5. Emotional Counselling	Work-training	Child-related
6. Family support	Family support	Work training
7. Work training	Physical/sexual abuse counselling	Family support

During the course of the survey, staff in institutions and probation officers were similarly asked what they felt the primary needs of the women were. Because of pressures of work, but also the fact that many women were not well known to staff in jails and detention centres, this information was only provided for just under half of the women in the institutional group. Thus women on remand or serving short-term sentences are under represented.

Overall, staff assessments of the needs of the women are very similar to those of the women, themselves, with even more emphasis on work training and employment (Table 39). Sixty three percent were rated as needing job skills or work training, and 57% employment. The main difference would appear to be in the much greater assessment of the need for help with substance abuse, particularly among those in institutions. Among those for whom staff completed the assessment, 71% of these women were rated as needing help with substance abuse, and 37% of those in the community.

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In terms of priorities, staff rated substance abuse as the most important for both groups of women, followed by psychiatric treatment and work training for those in the institutional group, and child-related needs and work training for those in the community.

TABLE 39

THE MAIN PROGRAMME NEEDS (staff report)*

NEEDS	INSTITUTION (N=243)		COMMUNITY (N=288)		TOTAL** (N=531)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Work Training	72	62.1	163	63.7	235	63.2
Employment	64	55.2	147	57.4	211	56.7
Substance abuse	82	70.7	95	37.1	177	47.6
Literacy/upgrading	51	44.0	112	43.8	163	43.8
Family support	48	41.4	113	44.1	161	43.3
Housing	55	47.4	96	37.5	151	40.6
Psychiatric treat.	52	44.8	95	37.1	147	39.5
Child related	43	37.1	111	43.4	144	38.7
Physical/sexual abuse	32	27.6	97	37.9	129	34.7
Health	33	28.4	66	25.8	99	26.6
Other	15	12.9	44	17.2	59	15.9
Legal	19	16.4	35	13.7	54	14.5
Native/ethnic needs	9	7.8	11	4.3	20	5.3
No. of women assessed	116	(100)	256	(100)	372	(100)
No information	127	(52.3)	32	(11.1)	159	(29.9)

* More than one response may apply

** N.B. percentages are based on the number of women for whom there was a response since in 30% of cases there was no information

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THE EXPERIENCE OF REMAND AND DETENTION

Part of the purpose of the survey was to enable the women, themselves, to express their views on the kinds of programmes and facilities they feel they need, and on their own experiences of going through 'the system'. It is difficult to do justice to the range of views they expressed, or the many suggestions that they made. This section attempts to give an overall picture of those views.

There were three major areas of concern among the women. These concerned the physical conditions, the lack of programmes and the ways in which they were treated. The views were expressed both by those inside institutions, and those under community supervision, since some of the later had been remanded in jails or detention centres, or served time in them prior to their release into the community. The first issue was that of the physical conditions in which they have to live on remand or short-term sentence.

The physical conditions

Many of the women's comments, although not all, related to conditions in jails and detention centres rather than to the Vanier Centre for Women. These were often referred to as dirty and overcrowded, with little access to programmes, recreational facilities or medical and psychological services. There is usually no separation of remanded and sentenced women, although those in custody for the first time are in some instances housed separately from others.

Overcrowding was clearly a problem in a number of the institutions with women having to sleep six even eight a cell in some instances, or to share dormitories without any private space. Thus the lack of adequate facilities for women meant that many were sleeping in cells or dormitories which were noisy, crowded, and with no privacy whatsoever. In some cases, the women were moved from their accommodation at the weekends into the segregation cell to accommodate week-end prisoners (and where they were allowed only one smoke a day).²⁹ Many women complained of the difficulties of trying to live under these conditions with a very high noise level from radios, banging cell doors, and consequent shouting, or even the constant low-level presence of television.

²⁹ In many institutions women had been moved from their quarters to accommodate young offenders with the enactment of the 1982 Young Offenders Act.

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In many institutions, the lack of physical space for programmes such as school or life skills, means that women have to take their turn, along with young offenders and the much larger male populations, for access to the allotted room and its facilities. In some cases they have no access, and stay in their dormitories and try to work on individual programmes. The difficulties of trying to work in such conditions, particularly for women who may have had learning difficulties or unhappy experiences of school in the past cannot be underestimated:

"Group living is very difficult, it causes an amazing amount of tension."

"You can't do a correspondence course with all the noise...and the seats hurt."

In a number of institutions there were complaints that the food was poor, starchy and tasteless, and often cold. Some wanted more raw fruit and vegetables and milk. Women on special diets stated that they sometimes went hungry because of fights over food. Others who requested a vegetarian diet stated that they did not get one. In some institutions, the women also complained that the cells were cold, and there were not enough blankets.

A major area of concern is that of health and hygiene. Many women felt that the lack of privacy in bathrooms and washing areas was particularly difficult. Even shower curtains, if there were any, were see-through. In some instances, 'modesty panels' have recently been installed for showers or across toilets, but the conditions cannot be called private, and are still a considerable shock to those women with no institutions experience, and in a system where both male and female staff are employed.

Many women felt there should be greater access to washing facilities and changes of clothes.

"You're lucky to get two showers a week in segregation".

"Hygiene isn't [seen as] a priority in prison, [I] had to wait 30 hours for a shower after a gym class."

"[We] only get one change of clothes a week. There should be two changes a week, they have a shortage of underclothes."

In some jails, the women complained of dirty and cold conditions. Food had to be eaten in the cell which also contained the toilet facilities. ("If someone goes to the bathroom, we must eat with the smell in the same room"). The provision of sanitary napkins was also raised by a number of the women who felt the restriction to one a day and no clean underwear if needed was totally inadequate. Others felt they should not have to wear

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underwear used by other people. A number mentioned the need for better quality products, particularly for skin care, or shampoo appropriate for black women.

The lack of programmes

In spite of the efforts of staff in some institutions to build up programming for the women, the general lack of programmes in detention centres and jails, the boredom, the lack of yard time or access to a gym and recreational facilities, were mentioned time and again by many of the women. In some institutions there was no programming for women.

"They should have more programmes, emotional help, rehabilitation counselling, more education in groups, more training, discussion groups...arts and crafts."

"More programmes of *any* kind should be implemented - we sit in the range all day doing nothing. School is twice a week and there's a long waiting list."

"Females are not allowed to have a classroom for correspondence courses whereas men have...AA and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are not for females."

"[There are] no programmes, you can't work, there's no gym...10 minutes yard time a day.."

"Women only get 20 minutes in the Yard a day, males get the gym and more time; females only get gym once or twice a week."

The lack of programs, coupled with the physical conditions, led to frustration, fights and arguments. Many women saw programming not only as a way of helping them to cope better on the outside, but especially as an opportunity to get away from the overcrowded and noisy living areas. One described the programme Hobbycraft as "an island of sanity in a sea of madness". Again in small facilities yard-time had to be shared among the various groups within the institution, and fitted into daily schedules and staffing rotas. This meant shorter periods outside, and sometimes none at all.

In better equipped institutions, while there were programmes, there were in the view of the women disincentives to participation. For example, they found it difficult having to wear their normal clothing for recreation without the opportunity to shower or change. In most facilities there are rarely any jobs around the institution for women either, since these tended to be given to men.

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"Women need activities to keep their minds functioning - there is nothing here for people who have an education."

"Here [you have] no decision-making powers. Everything is decided for you. There is too much stress and tension, you lack *privacy* with four girls to a cell, it's difficult to support other people's habits, [like] cigarettes - you can't concentrate to read and the reading material is poor, always Danielle Steele books....[we] want better newspapers, periodicals...more up-to-date. Privacy is the key issue, time away from the range."

"[We need] more activities, and every range should be allowed to work, not doing so causes frustration, fights, and arguments."

"More programming, especially on the weekends, because there's too much TV."

Several women suggested that since there was a lack of tutors, women with college degrees could be employed to work on literacy programmes.

A number of women mentioned the need for translators and interpreters for women who spoke little English, and support groups for women from minority groups.

"[They] should have ethnic groups here, sometimes you need to get together with your own culture."

One French-speaking woman wanted to be able to take French correspondence courses. A Chinese woman, whose family live in Hong Kong, barely spoke English and stated she had had no visitors and had been on remand for a month. Her legal aid lawyer is reported to have visited without an interpreter and left. Many of the Aboriginal women were much more willing to talk and express their views in their own language. They felt much more at ease. One Aboriginal woman said in relation to counselling: "I sure don't want to talk to a white woman."

While many of these women are subject to these conditions for relatively short periods of time, a number of them spend some considerable time on remand, 20% of those in the institutional group, for example, had spent more than a month on remand, some women had been on remand for over a year. And as was indicated previously, a third of the institutional group were currently serving their sentence in a jail or detention centre.

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Being treated with understanding

Another area of considerable concern for the women was the way they were treated. Many stressed that there were good and supportive staff, but both first offenders now on probation who had spent short periods on remand, and women who had had previous institutions experience, argued that if people are treated badly they are likely to do so in return. One 31 year-old first offender now in the community described her experience as follows:

"It was very difficult - hard to talk to the staff - [you're] thrown in, scared, never in trouble and no one helps. [They] need support inside the system to help people deal with them. You're treated like nobody and scum and they make very derogatory comments. They need better staff who care about people. At meal times you need staff members to monitor who gets food....often people went without meals, there is not enough control"

"The women's section was horrible and inhumane."

"I was in overnight. It was a horrible experience. I still have nightmares, the women are treated so badly. Then I went on TAP....and that was great, the staff were very supportive."

Another described herself as feeling very bitter about her treatment on remand "It's difficult to be yourself on the inside -- the lack of privacy, strip-searches are degrading -- the experience strips you of self-worth and dignity."

Overall the women felt there was a lack of understanding of the kinds of problems they had, and that they should be treated with greater respect. The arbitrary enforcement of rules, and the need for staff to be sensitive to their problems, as well as to emergency situations such as withdrawal, suicide or slashing was stressed by many of them.

"If women are treated with violence they will react with violence, if they are treated with respect they will react with respect."

"The approach taken to offenders [is] cold, it doesn't work."

"Don't treat us like hardened criminals and second class citizens...treat us like women, as individuals...use alternatives to jail."

"They don't take us seriously in here and don't give us the help and attention we need. We need more programmes with people who knowwhat it is like

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to have problems stemming from childhood drug use and forms of abuse. We need follow-up counselling on the street."

"When you ask something [of] a guard they ignore you, when you ask again they 'freak out'."

"[They] expect them to act as responsible adults, to go to programmes designed to rehabilitate them, and when they go back to the range the guards treat them as kids... 'slap them on the hand'."

"The guards need to be more emotionally aware, and 'there' for the women."

The appropriateness of these conditions for their offending behaviour was raised by a number of women who felt they did not need to be in such a restrictive environment, to be strip searched, shackled or hand-cuffed, nor did they need the level of security provided by jails and detention centres.

"There's no way a person should be punished that way."

"The environment is too restrictive for the majority of the women and their crimes."

A forty-year-old first offender sentenced for fraud following a number of personal problems commented:

"A person of my background with my experience..should have been taken into consideration..and I think putting me in a institutions for hardened criminals was not appropriate and I feel some other type of facility should be set up to help rather than punish. [You] are not necessarily a criminal just because you can't cope anymore."

As will be evident, many of the women had suggestions about what was needed. (Although one commented that every time they come up with an idea they are told that "this is a holding centre" and such a programme could not be started. Yet as she pointed out, some women are there for a long time). A number of women suggested it was important to provide a list of places and ways to get financial and other help; that there should be an orientation programme to tell people what was available, or at least an information sheet and list of resources in the institution; that there should be quiet rooms for longer-term women to go to get away from the constant noise.

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"The system of corrections needs to be explained to women inside - especially new ones - concerning coping on the inside...[we need] support groups, more coherent separation of women on the inside ...support groups for older women attempting to cope with life changes like job loss, divorce, budgeting, children."

Women with a number of personal problems who tended to reappear in institutions on a regular basis, stressed the difficulties of 'making it' on the streets without support, and often emphasised the need for volunteers on the inside to work with them outside too, and for there to be support when they get out. "We need follow-up services more than anything, we can't make it on our own. We need better communication an interplay between the various agencies which are out there to help people." For those in rural areas or smaller towns, such facilities may be remote or non-existent.

Finally, the recommendation from one woman summarized much of what the women had to say:

"The government has jails to avoid problems in society - why not put the resources into job training and supporting people to get on their feet. Support is what most people need. Incarceration puts you down without helping. You leave institutions and where do you go?"

SECTION III

NATIVE WOMEN

In order to provide a more detailed account of the needs of native women in the province, the Northern Region was 'oversampled' to increase the representation of native women in that region (see Appendix I). This section is based upon interviews with all native women in the study across the province including the additional cases.³⁰ It briefly highlights the main differences between the backgrounds and circumstances of these women and those of the overall sample of 531 adult women, although it should be noted that the latter sample includes 67 (13%) native women. If those women were excluded, then some of the differences between the native sample and the main adult sample described below may be even greater than they appear.

Of the 80 adult native women interviewed, the great majority (62) were in the Northern Region, three in Metro Region, seven in Central Region, six in Western Region and two were in the Eastern Region. Forty one were in institutions and 39 under community supervision. Most (80%) were Registered Status Indians (Table 40), and two-thirds had been born on a Reserve.³¹

³⁰ The main part of this report excluded 15 cases from the Northern Region to ensure that the regional sample was proportionate to the overall distribution of cases between regions. Thirteen of these were native women.

³¹ Eleven of the women were not recorded as Native by correctional staff completing background information. Eight of these were outside the Northern Region.

TABLE 40

DISTRIBUTION OF NATIVE WOMEN BY STATUS AND FIRST NATION

Registered Status Indian	64	80.0%
Non-status	6	7.5%
Metis	1	1.3%
No information	9	11.3%
TOTAL	80	100.0
<i>First Nation</i>		
Iroquois and Allied Indians	5	6.2%
Grand Council Treaty	24	30.0%
Nishnawbe-Aski Indians	13	16.2%
Union of Ontario Indians	21	26.2%
Six Nations	3	3.8%
Other	4	5.0%
Not applicable (Metis)	1	1.2%
No information	9	11.3%
TOTAL	80	100.0%

Native women in institutions were far more likely to be some way from their usual place of residence with only a third of them located in their home town compared with 60% of the overall sample, and almost half were 100 km or more from their homes which were in remote reserves or towns.

Offending

In terms of their current offence or charge, the main differences between the native women and the main sample were in the higher numbers charged with minor assaults (31%) and with drinking offences (15%) (usually under the Liquor Licence Act), and the much lower numbers of theft or fraud (20%) and drugs cases (3%). Overall, the native women were

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serving slightly shorter custodial sentences than the main sample, and none of them had been federally sentenced. In addition, fewer of the native women were first offenders (30%) compared with the main sample (41%).

Past experience of imprisonment was much more common too. Among the 41 incarcerated native women only 15% had never received a term of imprisonment before, and over half of them had received between five and over 50 prior custodial sentences. The repetitiveness of their offending behaviour, the heavy involvement with alcohol, and the relatively low level of seriousness of their offences have resulted in a considerable number of women accumulating numerous short-term institutions sentences.

Children and family

The native women were more likely to be in a current relationship (usually common-law) than to be single or separated, and a much greater proportion of them had children (69 of the 80 women or 86%) compared with the main sample (69%). They also tended to have larger numbers of children. They were much more likely to have been living with all or some of their children at the time of the offence, so that a higher proportion of children were affected by their mother's incarceration. Only nine of the 41 women in institutions had not been living with at least one child.

The main concern among the women in institutions in relation to their children was being separated from them, and not being able to see them, although for some there were more serious situations. One woman's three children had been placed in white foster homes and she was trying to regain custody. Another was very worried about her youngest son who was missing her, refusing to eat and becoming lethargic. Of those in institutions, just under half had been in contact with or had visits from their children, and most of them wanted to be able to see their families, especially through open visits.

Levels of family disruption, and particularly alcoholism, also appeared to be higher among the native women than among the overall population. One family was described as one with much alcoholism, fighting and incest. In another, several family members had died of alcoholism. A third had siblings who had committed suicide, been placed in a mental hospital after prolonged drug abuse, or were chronic alcoholics or gas sniffers. A number of women had been placed in white foster homes in order to attend high school as children, or in residential schools.

Among those growing up in reserves near towns, or who had left their reserve to live in the city, there were problems of identity and the loss of native traditions.

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Abuse

There was also more evidence of physical, but not sexual, abuse among the native women. Overall, 79% said they had been physically abused and 41% sexually abused, and 80% had experienced at least one form of abuse. Forty-six percent said they had experienced physical abuse as children, and 66% as adults, while 34% had been sexually abused as children and 24% as adults. Some of this abuse has been prolonged and severe, as in the case of a woman with numerous past violent relationships resulting in a disability after a spouse broke her back.

Education and work

In terms of their educational and work background, they had as a group received less formal schooling, and were less likely to have been employed than the sample as a whole. Almost a quarter had not reached Grade 8 and 64% percent had not gone beyond Grade 9. Only 14% had received a High School Leaving certificate, while 4% had received qualifications for further training or education. But even these assessments may be over-optimistic. As one of the interviewers with considerable experience of working on reserves remarked:

"Her level of education is Grade 10 but most teachers pass these young women without really assessing their ability."

Two-thirds of the women said they would like further education, primarily in terms of basic education and upgrading. Only 19% said they had a full or part-time job. Their most common source of income was welfare payments, and less frequently mother's allowance. Only 13% received money from a common-law partner, and 15% wages from a job.

Health

The proportion of women who mentioned problems and concerns about their physical health was similar to that for the sample as a whole, with 44% mentioning difficulties. In terms of mental health, fewer of the native women mentioned concerns, or said they had difficulties with common conditions such as depression, or anxiety etc. (59% compared with 71% mentioning at least one condition).

Nevertheless, this indicates that a significant number of women have concerns about their health, and in a number of cases the effects of prolonged alcoholism and sniffing were evident. Among those in institutions, there were, as before, higher numbers of women who

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were unhappy about the physical or mental health care available to them, or who were not receiving any.

The native women were also more likely to have attempted suicide (41%) or slashed themselves (38%) at some stage in their lives than the sample as a whole (34% who attempted suicide and 30% who slashed themselves).

Alcohol and drugs

The impact of alcohol in their lives was very clear and far greater than among the main sample; over three-quarters said that alcohol had been involved in their offending, and almost half were currently heavy users. Very few women said they were current users of drugs, although 40% said they had mixed alcohol and drugs at some stage in their lives. Fifteen percent had sniffed gas or glue. The differences in their pattern of use from the main sample can be seen in the table below (Table 41).

TABLE 41

COMPARISON OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OFFENDING BETWEEN
NATIVE WOMEN AND THE MAIN ADULT SAMPLE*

SUBSTANCE ABUSE	NATIVE WOMEN	MAIN SAMPLE
	(N=80)	(N=531)
**Convicted of drug offence	8%	27%
Convicted of alcohol offence	34%	17%
Offence to support habit	5%	24%
Offended under the influence	65%	40%
No involvement in offence	24%	29%
Never used either	6%	26%

* More than one category relevant for some women

** or charged with

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While fewer native women appear to be involved in street drugs, a number were on prescription drugs and 40% said they had been prescribed drugs by a doctor over a long period in the past five years. Thus one woman relied heavily on Valium "just to make it through a good day", and keep her off her old habit of heavy drinking; others had also become dependant on Valium. There were a number, too, who said they smoked hemp, which culturally they do not regard as illegal.

Only five women (6%) said they had never used either alcohol or drugs. In terms of previous treatment, over half the women had never received any treatment or attended programmes in relation to alcohol abuse in the past. Those who had, had primarily attended AA sessions, or merely a detoxification centre, and a few, residential programmes. Forty-four percent said they would like help with alcoholism now, favouring native-based programmes, residential programmes for women only, and AA groups.

The problems which many of the native women face in trying to overcome addictions are severe, however. A number came from reserves which were experiencing gas and glue sniffing epidemics, in addition to already high levels of alcoholism, and where rates of suicide were very high.³² They recognize that it may be necessary to leave their reserve if they want to recover from alcoholism.

Overall needs

In terms of their overall needs, over half of the women said they needed native programmes such as visiting native workers in institutions, or Elders or counsellors, cultural activities such as Pow Wows, or alcohol programmes with native personnel as well as activities of any kind:

"[We] need natives to come to talk to groups"

"I sure don't want to talk to a white woman"

"..a native female worker to come and talk to us"

"Maybe a native worker would help so you can talk to someone other than offenders and jail staff - someone who you can trust."

³² In a number of northern reserves conditions of social breakdown appeared to be similar to those described by Shkilnyk (1985) at Grassy Narrows Reserve.

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Training in work skills and educational upgrading were the needs most frequently mentioned by the women, closely followed by help with housing, and in relation to their children.

The overall impression gained from the interviews with native women across the province was that they were generally less vocal and more reticent about their experiences and requirements than others. They were often described by the interviewers as shy, quiet and withdrawn. A member of staff at one institution remarked in relation to one native woman:

"The offender does not divulge a lot of information about her past."

This should not be interpreted to mean they have fewer needs or problems with their situation. Much depends on their own expectations and past experience, and this reticence may be as much a question of language and of past treatment by a whole range of 'officials' from social workers and benefit staff, to the police, the courts and correctional staff, as it is of cultural patterns.

From the experience of the interviewers, who were themselves Aboriginal and spoke Ojibway and Ojicree, there were clearly problems of communication between the women and staff, not always in terms of understanding, but in terms of the greater ease with which they could express their feelings and respond in their own language. The manner in which they were asked questions, and expectations about replies, were those of an English-speaking culture rather than a native culture. A number of women felt they needed a native interpreter to explain things such as procedures to them.

A lot of women talked about the way they were treated in institutions. They found strip searches degrading, and felt that fun was made of them while they were naked. They felt that guards treated them harshly by abusing them verbally, and looked for something wrong "to get mad at them".

A number of the native women had also experienced considerable discrimination outside institutions. One woman, who had lived with a white family as an adolescent, had an overall distrust of white society which she felt was continually critical, and made her feel 'different'. Many of them were distrustful of non-native people.

To some extent, the concerns of the native women were similar to those of non-native women in feeling the need to talk with people who they felt were concerned and interested in them, and whom they could trust, and in wanting to be treated with courtesy. Thus they wanted someone to share their feelings with, and understand them, and felt there should be a native woman in the institution to work with them, and involve them in more activities. They wanted to be treated with the 'same respect non-native women get'. But these similarities

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were overlaid by an additional barrier of language and culture. The sharp contrast between the noisy jails and detention centres in other regions of the province and those where the concentration of native peoples is high was very marked. The women (and men) would appear on the whole to be quiet and undemanding, but that appearance covers up a resignation and a considerable amount of concern on the part of the women themselves, as well as a multitude of difficulties in their lives.

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THE YOUNG OFFENDERS

Eighty-four young offenders were included in the study, 41 under community supervision, 22 in open custody and 21 in closed custody (Table 42). This section provides a brief account of their backgrounds and experiences. The location of young offenders does not always provide a clear indication of their circumstances since some of those in closed custody will be on remand, and others may be on temporary transfer from open custody.

TABLE 42

LOCATION OF YOUNG OFFENDERS

LOCATION	NUMBER	PERCENT
Closed custody	21	25.0
Open custody	22	26.2
Community supervision	41	48.8
TOTAL	84	100.0

The ethnic and cultural background of the young offenders was similar to that of the adult population, with 69% of them identifying themselves as Caucasian, 11% as Native people, 6% as black, and 7% as other. A quarter of the young offenders in open or closed custody were located in the same town or city they had been living in prior to their offence, but a quarter were housed some distance (100 km or more) from their usual place of residence.

Offending history

The majority of the young offenders (88%) were currently serving their sentence, 7% were on remand, and 4% awaiting the outcome of further charges. As with the adult population, the great majority (41%) were charged with or sentenced for property offences (theft, fraud, breaking and entry), 25% for assaults and 14% for breaches of court or probation orders (Table 43).

TABLE 43
YOUNG OFFENDERS CURRENT OFFENCE OR CHARGE

CURRENT OFFENCE/CHARGE	OPEN/CLOSED CUSTODY		COMMUNITY SUPERVISION		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Serious violence*	5	11.6	2	4.9	7	8.3
Assaults, weapons	13	30.2	8	19.5	21	25.0
Theft, fraud, etc.,	9	20.9	25	61.0	34	40.5
Drug traffic/poss.	4	9.3	1	2.4	5	6.0
Moral, public order	-	-	2	4.9	2	2.4
Breach of orders etc.	10	23.3	2	4.9	12	14.2
Drinking/traffic	-	-	1	2.4	1	1.2
No information	2	4.7	-	-	2	2.4
TOTAL	43	100.0	41	100.0	84	100.0

* These included one case of manslaughter, one of attempted murder and five of robbery.

Those in custody were more likely to be charged with offences involving minor assaults, more serious violence, and breaches of court or probation orders.

In terms of their sentence, just over a third of the sample were serving terms of custody, and the same proportion were on probation (Table 44).

TABLE 44

YOUNG OFFENDERS CURRENT SENTENCE

SENTENCE	OPEN/CLOSED CUSTODY		COMMUNITY SUPERVISION		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Custody	30	69.8	1	2.4	31	36.9
Probation	-	-	31	75.6	31	36.9
Custody + Probation	8	18.6	3	7.3	11	13.1
Other	-	-	5	12.2	5	6.0
On Remand	5	11.6	1	2.4	6	7.1
TOTAL	43	100.0	41	100.0	84	100.0

Thirty percent (25) of the young offenders were first offenders (Table 45) the majority of them (18) under community supervision.

TABLE 45

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS OR FINDINGS OF GUILT

CONVICTIONS	OPEN/CLOSED CUSTODY		COMMUNITY SUPERVISION		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
None	7	16.3	18	43.9	25	29.8
One	8	18.6	9	22.0	17	20.2
2-4	18	41.9	9	22.0	27	32.1
5 or more	6	14.0	4	9.8	10	11.9
No Information	4	9.3	1	2.4	5	6.0
TOTAL	43	100.0	41	100.0	84	100.0

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Half of the sample had also been charged as juveniles (Phase 1 Young Offenders) and received residential placement or, less often, probation. A quarter of them had been placed in care as juveniles. In both cases those now in custody were more likely to have a juvenile offending background (27 or 63% compared with 30% in the community) or have been placed in care as children (17 or 40% compared with three or 7% of those under community supervision).

Family background and children

All but nine of the young women were single, and at the time of the offence just over a third (38%) were living with their parents, the remainder mostly living with friends or a boyfriend.

Sixteen of them (19%) had a child and in 13 cases had been living with their child prior to the offence. Half of those with children said they had had primary responsibility for bringing them up. In the remaining cases, the child had been in the care of their mother, adopted at birth or more recently taken into care. For those in custody or separated from their child, their main concern was separation itself.

The great majority of the young offenders (85%) felt they had had a number of problems in relation to their families as they grew up. This had included violence, alcoholism, separations and other difficulties. Those now in custody were more likely to mention problems, and to have left home at an earlier age.

Education and work

Overall 49% of the young offenders had not progressed beyond Grade 9 at school, and only eight (9%) had a high school diploma. It was evident that those in custody had dropped out of school at an earlier age, only one had a high school diploma and only five had progressed beyond Grade 10 compared with 16 of those under community supervision. Ten of the women said they had taken some further education or training since leaving school. Two-thirds said they would now like to undertake training or additional education, and a third were already doing so (Table 46).

TABLE 46

TYPE OF COURSES WANTED NOW

COURSES WANTED	OPEN/CLOSED CUSTODY		COMMUNITY SUPERVISION		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Literacy	12	27.9	-	-	12	14.3
Basic education/ upgrading	24	55.8	22	53.7	46	54.8
College/ university	1	2.3	14	34.1	15	17.9
Trade training	6	14.0	3	7.3	9	10.7
Do not want any	-	-	2	4.9	2	2.4
TOTAL	43	100.0	41	100.0	84	100.0

At the time of their offence, 29% had been working either full or part-time, and 19 (22%) said they were students or at home with their child, but the largest group were those looking for a job (28 or 33%). Those who had worked were usually employed in sales or service jobs.

Their main sources of income appeared to be wages from a job, parents, and welfare payments, and, in rather fewer cases, illegal activity. Over half the young women wanted a job or help finding one, and their primary interests were work in the nursing or child-care fields, or training for a trade.

Physical and sexual abuse

Just under half of the young offenders (44%) said they had experienced physical abuse as children and the same number sexual abuse. Over a third of the women had experienced subsequent physical abuse and a quarter sexual abuse. But as before, those in custody were more likely to have been abused. Overall 63% had been physically abused at some stage of their lives, and 58% sexually abused.

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Since YO's are younger than the adult population, it is not possible to assess their experience of abuse as adults. Nevertheless, it is clear that rates of both physical, and particularly sexual abuse (44%) in childhood are higher than among the adult population (34%).

Approximately half of those who had been abused had sought help in the past, and just under half felt they would like some kind of help with problems of abuse now. Their main requested need was for some form of individual counselling.

Health

Forty-eight percent mentioned problems with their physical health, but as with the adult population, those in custody were less likely to feel they were getting the care they needed. In terms of mental health, 45% of those in the community and 65% of those in custody felt they had concerns. Asked about specific conditions, young offenders in custody were far more likely to say they were depressed, anxious etc., than those under community supervision (Table 47). Just under half of both groups of young women said they had slashed themselves or attempted suicide in the past, a higher proportion than among the adult sample.

TABLE 47
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS*

PROBLEMS	OPEN/CLOSED CUSTODY (N=43)		COMMUNITY SUPERVISION (N=41)		TOTAL (N=84)	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
Anxiety/ nervousness	27	62.8	13	31.7	40	47.6
Depression	35	81.4	15	36.6	50	59.5
Sleeping difficulties	27	62.8	13	31.7	40	47.6
Phobias/fears	13	30.2	9	22.0	22	26.2
Anger/violence	27	62.8	9	22.0	36	42.9
Eating problems	19	44.2	10	24.4	29	34.5
No. with problems	42	97.7	27	65.9	69	82.1
None mentioned	1	2.3	14	34.1	15	17.9

* More than one response possible

Overall, the proportion of young offenders who felt they had specific problems such as these was greater than among the adult population, particularly among those in custody.

Fifty percent of the young women felt they wanted help with mental health concerns. The most frequently requested help was individual counselling.

Alcohol and drugs

Compared with the adult population, the young offenders were less likely to feel that drug or alcohol use was involved in their current offending. Two-thirds of those in the community and 47% of those in custody said that substance abuse was not related to their offence. On the other hand only 20% said they had never used drugs or alcohol in the past (compared with 26% of the adult population). Nineteen percent (14) had received help with alcohol

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abuse in the past, but only 14% (12) wanted treatment now, the majority feeling they had no problems, had quit or could do so on their own. Similarly, 69% did not want any drug treatment (although fewer of those in custody).

There was evidence, however, of considerable mixing of drugs and alcohol among the young offenders. Two-thirds said they had done so (compared with 43% of the adult population), and around 20% injected drugs.

Overall needs

In assessing the issues which they felt they needed to deal with to avoid future offending problems, the most frequently mentioned was employment (mentioned by 50% of all young offenders) closely followed by family relationships (46%), help with literacy or upgrading (43%), and work training and help with emotional problems (mentioned by 42% in both cases).

On the whole, staff assessed more young offenders as needing help than the YOs themselves, although there was, in general, agreement about the areas of importance. Thus 67% were assessed by staff as needing education programmes, 66% help with work training and 57% with family relationships. However, staff placed greater emphasis on the need for help with substance abuse than the young offenders did themselves (staff assessed 45% as needing some help, compared with 23% of the YOs)

Among those in custodial settings, and particularly in Detention Centres, there were concerns, as with the adult population, about both the conditions under which they were held and their treatment by staff. In open custody there was concern in some instances about the lack of facilities for exercise and sports. As a group, however, the young offenders tended to be more reticent about taking part in the study, as well as more guarded about talking about their experiences than did the adult women, and this applied to both those in the community as well as those in custodial settings.

Overall, compared with the adult population, the young offenders are more likely to be charged with offences against the person and breaches of court orders, to have higher levels of disruption in their childhood and past suicide attempts or self injury, and are more likely to mention such conditions as anxieties and depression. Their offending was less likely to involve substance abuse, although there were indications that it is a problem in their lives, and they had lower levels of education and work experience. Rates of physical, but particularly sexual abuse in childhood, were higher than among the adult population.

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It should be noted, however, that the young offender population usually includes a high proportion of those with serious problems in their lives, and they will, if they continue to offend, necessarily form a smaller proportion of the subsequent adult population. Therefore these findings should not necessarily be interpreted as an indication of future escalation in the seriousness of adult female offending.

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SECTION V SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study is based on a sample of 615 women in institutions or under community supervision in 60 sites across Ontario. Interviews were held with 531 adult, 243 of them in institutions and 288 in the community. In addition, 84 young offenders were interviewed, 43 in open or closed custody and 41 under community supervision, and an additional group of native women in the Northern Region were interviewed to provide a broader picture of the issues facing native women across the province.

The purpose of the study was to provide a more detailed profile of the characteristics of women coming into conflict with the law, and to consider their experiences of being in the system, and their views on the kinds of programmes and facilities they feel they need. The views of the women themselves are regarded as essential components in the development of policies and programmes for female offenders in Ontario.

THE ADULT SAMPLE

The results of this survey of women in institutions or under community supervision across the province confirm much of what is generally known about the characteristics of women offenders. The great majority of them have been charged with or sentenced for minor offences involving property, and the remainder for drug offences, minor assaults, breaches of court orders, and 'moral' and public order offences, traffic and drinking offences. Overall, the charges involve very little threat to public safety.

The majority of adult women did not have an extensive history of offending, although those in institutions were more likely to have at least one previous conviction (78%) than those in the community (43%). Around a quarter of the institutional group, however, had a considerable history of incarceration, regularly reappearing in institutions on the same charges, their offences rarely getting more serious, and receiving repetitive short-term sentences. Only 3% had ever been federally sentenced.

Excluding women serving sentences in Vanier Centre for Women (who comprise a quarter of the institutional group), 25% of those in jails and detention centres were on remand, 15% awaiting further charges, 23% awaiting transfer and 35% serving their sentence there. The majority of current institutions sentences (54%) were for periods of under 6 months with 35% serving less than three months. Twenty percent of the institutional group had spent periods of a month or more on remand.

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The average age of the adult women was 30 years, and 40% were single, the rest were either in common-law relationships or, less often, married (31%), or were separated (30%). The majority (69%) identified themselves as Caucasian, 13% as native peoples, 10% as black and 6% as belonging to a specific minority group. Both native women and those from visible minority groups are over-represented in the sample. Nineteen percent of the sample had been born outside Canada.

Children

Overall, 69% of the women had children of their own, and 4% step children. A third of the children were five years or less and 43% were aged six to 16 years. Thus the majority of children were, at least officially, at a dependant age. The majority of women (80%) had been single mothers for part or all of their children's lives. Prior to their arrest, just over half the mothers in the institutional group (53%) had been living with at least one child, as compared with 70% of those in the community. Thus over half the mothers in institutions had had to make alternative care arrangements for their children at the time of their arrest.

The women whose children had not all been living with them, had a variety of care arrangements. Most were cared for by relatives but 11% of all mothers had a child in foster care. The reasons for alternative care arrangements included adoption at birth (14% of all mothers), with relatives or friends by the mother's choice because of her life-style or circumstances (30%), grown up (30%), and taken into care or by an ex common-law or husband against the mother's wishes (39%).

Three-quarters of the mothers in institutions, and half those in the community, had had considerable problems concerning their children at the time of their arrest and subsequently, including care arrangements, emotional problems, loss of custody, possible abuse from those entrusted with the care of their children, and their inability to deal with their children's problems. Around half the mothers still felt they needed help in relation to their children.

Contact with children in institutions was a major source of concern and the need for far more flexible policies was stressed. While 60% of those in the institutional group had had some contact either by telephone or visits, 28% said they did not want their children to visit them in the institution, primarily because of the closed visiting arrangements. If the women at Vanier Centre for Women (who have 'open' visits) are excluded, the overwhelming response from women in jails and detention centres was for touch visits, and many women stressed the need for visiting facilities away from the normal visiting area where they could see all their children at once, and spend some time with them. This applied to mothers with young babies, as well as those with older children and teenagers who, the mothers felt, needed their

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time and care. Some women at Vanier Centre for Women also wanted the possibility of overnight stays with their children.

Family and childhood and experience of abuse

Only 30% of the women felt they had had a reasonably secure and stable childhood, and 40% mentioned severe disruptions including alcoholism, family violence, separations and illness. Among the women in institutions, 30% had spent time in foster care, residential homes or training schools, and 8% had lived on the streets from the age of 13 or 14.

Seventy two percent of the women had experienced physical abuse at some stage in their lives, and 48% sexual abuse. Altogether 77% of the sample had been physically or sexually abused, and the experiences of women in institutions and in the community were similar. Seventy percent said they had been emotionally abused. Women who had been sexually abused had often experienced physical and emotional abuse too.

Physical abuse was a more common experience as adults than in childhood, and in the great majority of adult cases (90%) at the hands of husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends. Most women rated their abuse as serious. In the case of sexual abuse as adults, 61% involved acquaintances or strangers rather than close partners. Thirty-four percent said they had been sexually abused as children, usually over long periods of time, in three-quarters of these cases by a wide range of relatives including fathers, step-fathers or foster fathers, uncles, grandfathers, brothers etc. Almost all physical abuse in childhood was perpetrated by close relatives.

Around 50% of the women who had experienced abuse had sought help in the past, and the same proportion wanted help now, primarily individual counselling.

The high levels of abuse among all the women in the survey reinforce the need for a much wider network of programmes for women across the province.

Physical and mental health

Forty-nine percent of the community group and 62% of those in institutions mentioned problems with their physical health, including some apparently serious conditions, and a number of problems associated with alcohol, and particularly, drug use. In terms of satisfaction with health care, there was a much greater difference between the two groups,

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with 48% of the women in institutions feeling they were not getting the help they needed compared with 11% of those in the community.

The primary concern among women in institutions was that they were not listened to, or treated seriously by health care staff; that there was insufficient access to health services, and that they were denied a second opinion or that their family doctor was not consulted. They also felt their status as alcohol or drug users adversely affected the quality of care they received. They also stressed that far more attention should be given to the problems of withdrawal.

Women in institutions were again more likely to mention problems with their mental health (49% compared with 27% in the community group). Eighty percent of the women in institutions also said they had at least one of a series of common mental conditions, primarily depression or anxiety (often with attendant sleeping difficulties), and 65% of those in the community. Some of this difference must be attributed to the fact of being in institutions itself, given the cramped and difficult conditions of most institutions, and the stress of waiting the outcome of cases. Again, women in the community, with their greater access to health care were more satisfied that they were receiving the help they needed in relation to mental health problems than those in institutions. The primary need was for greater access to individual counselling from psychologists who would 'really listen' to them.

Some 20% of the sample mentioned eating disorders, and 30% said they had slashed themselves, and just over a third had attempted suicide at some stage of their lives. Overall, the women particularly those in institutions, are a high risk group most of whom may not have access to even the more extensive health services available at Vanier Centre for Women. Prostitution, extensive alcohol and drug use, pregnancy and gynaecological factors, physical and sexual abuse, all make them more vulnerable to physical and mental conditions than the male population, and underline the importance of giving specific attention to the needs of the female population, regardless of their addiction status. In this respect it has been argued elsewhere that "no group of prisoners needs a supportive, liberal and humane regime more than female drug addicts." (Golding, 1988).

Addictions

Alcohol and drugs have played a significant part in the lives of the majority of the women: 79% of those in institutions and 60% of those in the community. Two-thirds of the former said that alcohol or drugs had been involved in their offending compared to half of the community group, and in most cases they were major users of alcohol or drugs or both substances. Drug misuse was a much greater factor among the institutional group, as were

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high risk behaviours such as mixing drugs and alcohol, injecting and sharing needles, and sniffing gas or glue. As many as 45% of the women in institutions, and a third of those in the community said they had been prescribed drugs by a doctor over a long period of time.

A number of women did not regard drinking as a problem for them, but for those who did, and who often receive very short-sentences, there was an urgent need for professional help. There was a stress on the need for programmes with continuity from institutions to the street, including AA, individual counselling, residential programmes, and those which were culturally sensitive.

A greater number of women wanted access to drug treatment, especially those in institutions, including help with withdrawal, and individual counselling, and group or residential programmes. The women said they found it difficult to take up treatment when they were in the community, because of lack of access to child-care or transport, or the support of friends and family members.

It is clear that substance abuse plays a central role in the involvement of the majority of women in the criminal justice system, and that there is a considerable need for programmes which are supportive and take account of the fragility of many women's support systems in the community.

Education and work

Overall, 30% of the women had not progressed beyond Grade 9 at school and two-thirds had not received a high school diploma or its equivalent. Only 9% had completed and received post-secondary qualifications, but as many as 82% said they would like some form of education or work training now.

Work patterns are difficult to establish since some women have never worked, others have worked full or part-time in casual or short-term jobs, sometimes interspersed with illegal work. Around two-thirds of the women said they were not working at the time of their offence, often because of lack of jobs, but also because of illness, because they were students, or were earning money illegally. Most had been out of work for more than a year. Among those who had had legal jobs, around a third worked in sales or service jobs such as dancers, waitresses or shop assistants, and a quarter had done unskilled manual work.

Apart from income from work, the main sources of income for the majority of women were welfare or mother's allowance. Only 12% of the women said they did not want a paid job in the future, and 47% of the women in institutions and 27% of those in the community wanted

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specific job training in fields such as trades training, nursing, social work or child-care, and computing.

Thus the work skills and education levels of the women in the study are low, and their work experience limited, with little to distinguish those in institutions from those in the community. Both are very poorly equipped to earn a reasonable income in a legitimate job, most rely on welfare and state benefits, in a number of cases supplemented by illegal work including prostitution, drugs and thefts or fraud. Whatever the current employment situation, what is clear is that most women regard paid employment as a goal in a society where increasing numbers of women have sole responsibility for children, and where stable long-term relationships are less assured.

Most important needs

Asked what they felt were the most important things which would help to keep them out of the criminal justice system in the future, employment was the most frequently cited, followed by work-training, help with emotional problems, housing, and treatment for substance abuse, among others. The women in the institutional group were more likely to mention the need for such help in areas such as employment, work training and housing.

In terms of the priority attached to such help, substance abuse counselling, followed by housing and employment were rated the most important by women in institutions. Those in the community rated counselling for emotional problems, child-related needs and employment the most important. Staff assessments of the programme needs, while not available for many women, were similar to those of the women themselves, stressing work and employment priorities, but they placed greater emphasis than did the women on their need for help with substance abuse, especially for those in institutions.

The experience of remand and detention

The women, both those in institutions and some of those in the community, had much to say about the conditions under which they were remanded in custody or served their sentences. There were three major areas of concern: the physical conditions under which they had to live; the lack of programming or assistance, and their treatment by those in positions of authority over them. Many of these comments, although not all, concerned jails and detention centres rather than Vanier Centre for Women which was generally found to be more supportive and to provide a range of programmes and facilities.

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The difficulties of trying to live in the overcrowded, and sometimes cold or dirty conditions of jails and detention centres were stressed by many of the women. The lack of privacy, the noise levels, the stress of sharing an overcrowded cell or dormitory for most of the day or night, the minimal access to fresh air or exercise in most instances, all helped to create an atmosphere of tension and to heighten, anxiety, sleeping difficulties and depression. Some institutions at the time of the survey were seriously overcrowded with six women sleeping in a cell designed for four in one instance. Many mentioned the minimal time they were able to spend in exercise yards and the lack of access to gyms, as well as the absence of separate clothing for wearing outside or for exercise.

A major concern was with health and hygiene, particularly the absence of privacy in bathrooms and washing areas, the lack of access to showers following exercise, the minimal provision of clean clothes or sanitary napkins when necessary, and the lack of provision of appropriate products for women such as shampoos or for skin care.

In spite of efforts by staff in some institutions, the main experience of the women in jails and detention centres was of boredom and inactivity. Since women form so small a proportion of the total populations of the smaller institutions they have little access to work or programmes including recreation. In a number of cases they did not have access to programmes available to men, such as AA and school. Correspondence courses were offered in some institutions but had to be undertaken in dormitories or cells where there was little respite from noise and interruption. Since many women are less likely to be transferred to Vanier Centre for Women, their experience of institutions under such circumstances can in no way be said to be positive.

Overriding the physical conditions and lack of programming was the concern of most women to be treated with greater understanding and respect. This applied to both first-time offenders as well as those with considerable experience of imprisonment, who all stressed that people who are treated with respect will respond similarly. The experience of many was of being treated badly. The inappropriateness of such unpleasant, punitive and over-secure conditions in relation to the seriousness of their offending behaviour was mentioned by a number of women, who stressed the need for alternative ways of dealing with remand and sentencing.

NATIVE WOMEN

Eighty adult native women were included in the survey, including 13 additional cases over-sampled from the Northern Region to provide a more detailed account of their backgrounds and needs. Nineteen of these women were in regions other than the North. The majority were Registered Status Indians (80%), and two-thirds had been born on a reserve. Almost

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half the women in institutions were considerable distances (over 100 km or more) from their homes.

The native women were more likely to have been charged with minor assaults (31%) and drinking offences (15%) than the main adult sample, and less likely to be charged with property or drug offences. Overall, they were serving slightly shorter sentences than the main sample, but were more likely to have previous convictions. Over half the institutional sample had received a considerable number of previous custodial sentences (ranging from five to over 50). The repetitiveness of their offending behaviour, much of it alcohol-related, has resulted in the accumulation of numerous short-term institutions sentences.

A higher proportion of the native women had children (86%) compared with the main sample, and larger numbers of children. They were more likely to have been living with their children at the time of their arrest, and their main concern was separation from them. Less than half of those in institutions had had contact with their children, and most wanted to be able to see them, particularly through open visits.

The native women were more likely to be living in a current relationship than those in the main sample. They reported higher levels of family disruption and alcoholism in their childhoods, and higher levels of physical, though not sexual, abuse. Seventy-nine percent said they had been physically abused, especially as adults, and 41% sexually abused, more often as children.

Overall, the native women had received less formal schooling than the main sample, and were less likely to have been employed. Almost a quarter had not reached Grade 8. Only 16% had progressed beyond Grade 10 compared with 51% of the main sample, and only 14% received a high school diploma. Even more marked was the lack of any further training or post-secondary education, only 4% said they had received any (compared with 47% of the main sample). Two-thirds of the women, however, said they would like to undertake further education or training, primarily literacy or basic upgrading. Only 19% of the women said they had a full or part-time job, their primary source of income being welfare payments and mother's allowance, money from a partner (13%) and 15% wages from a job.

Forty-four percent of the women mentioned problems with their physical health, slightly fewer than those in the main sample, and they were also less likely to mention problems of mental health, or common conditions such as depression and anxiety (59% mentioned at least one condition). Nevertheless, this still amounts to a considerable number of women with health concerns, and those in institutions were less likely to be satisfied that they were receiving the care they felt appropriate than those in the community. The numbers of native

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women who had attempted suicide or slashed themselves was slightly higher than for the sample as a whole.

The impact of alcohol on the lives of the native women was very clear, and much greater than among the sample as a whole. Over three-quarters said that alcohol was involved in their offending and almost half described themselves currently as heavy users, although very few currently used drugs. Fifteen percent had sniffed solvents, and only 6% said they had never used either alcohol or drugs. Over half the women had never received any treatment for alcohol abuse, and 44% said they would like help with alcoholism now, particularly residential programmes for women and native-based programmes, and AA groups.

Over half the women said they needed native-based programmes including access to Elders, native cultural and spiritual activities, and native workers and counsellors, as well as native interpreters and native female guards. They felt their main programme needs were work skills and education, closely followed by housing, and issues relating to their children.

The native women were generally less vocal and more reticent about their experiences and needs than the rest of the women. They were also much more at ease speaking their own language, which allowed them to express themselves and respond more easily. Many of them felt they were treated harshly by guards because of their native status, and made fun of and verbally abused. For them the problems of being in institutions and how they were treated were overlaid with an additional barrier of language, race and cultural expectations, and their apparent resignation covers up a considerable amount of concern about their circumstances.

Not all native women had identical views, and those living in urban settings or in reserves near towns had rather different concerns from those from remote reserves. Nevertheless, including even those who could 'pass for white', they had all experienced conditions and attitudes which placed them at a considerable disadvantage, and has left them with even fewer resources than the non-native women in the study.

THE YOUNG OFFENDERS

Eighty-four young offenders were included in the study, 41 under community supervision, the remainder in open or closed custody. The majority of them had been charged with property offences (41%), 25% for assaults, and 14% for breaches of court or probation orders. Just under a third were first offenders, but half of the sample had juvenile offending histories. Those young offenders in custody were much more likely to have a juvenile court history, or to have been placed in care as children, than those under community supervision.

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All but nine were single, and over a third had been living with parents at the time of their arrest. Sixteen of them (19%) had a child and 13 had been living with them prior to the arrest. The majority (85%) felt they had problems in relation to their family, including violence, alcoholism and separations. Those in custody were more likely to mention problems and to have left home at an earlier age. They were also more likely to have dropped out of school at an earlier age.

Two-thirds of the sample said they would now like to undertake training or additional education, primarily basic education or upgrading. Twenty nine percent had been working at the time of their offence, and a third were unemployed and looking for a job. Over half of them wanted a job or help finding one, particularly in the child-care or nursing fields, or trade training.

Overall, 63% said they had been physically abused at some stage in their lives and 58% sexually abused. Much of this had been during childhood. Around half of them felt they wanted help with issues of abuse, primarily through individual counselling. The level of concern about physical or mental health conditions was similar to that among the adult sample, but as before, those in custody were more likely to have health concerns. However, the young offenders were far more likely to mention specific mental health problems than the adult sample, and especially those in custody. Just under half the sample (compared with a third of the adult sample) said they had attempted suicide or had slashed themselves at some stage.

There was less evidence of current involvement in alcohol and drugs than among the adult sample. Two-thirds of those in the community and 47% of those in custody said substance abuse was not related to their offending, but there was greater evidence of the mixing of drugs and alcohol among the young offenders. Two-thirds said they had done so and 20% injected drugs.

In assessing the issues they needed to deal with, the most frequently mentioned was employment, followed by improved family relationships, education upgrading, work training and help with emotional problems. Staff assessed rather more young offenders as needing help, primarily in the same areas, but they also felt more of them needed substance abuse counselling.

As with the adult women, those in custody were likely to have concerns about the conditions under which they were held, and the way in which they were treated.

As a group, young offenders appear to have higher levels of difficulties and needs, including their greater vulnerability to sexual and physical abuse, their previous experience of care or

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juvenile custody, and their greater lack of educational and family supports. They are also more likely to have been charged with offences against the person.

OVERALL ISSUES

The main findings confirm and expand our knowledge about women in conflict with the law, and they provide some insight into the women's experience of going through the criminal justice system. They help to underline the particular needs identified by the women themselves, both in institutions and in the community, which are different from those of the much larger male population. These include their greater vulnerability to physical and mental health problems; their high levels of abuse, physical, sexual and emotional, as children and adults; their often heavy involvement in alcohol, street and prescription drugs; their low levels of educational and work skills; their status as mothers, often with sole responsibility for their children.

The findings also underline the difficulties which the women themselves face in the process of remand and sentence, and the problems of being a minority group in a much larger system. Because of the design of the study, certain groups of women are under-represented in the sample. In particular, those serving sentences for non-payment of fines, those on intermittent sentences, and women receiving very short sentences of a few days were less likely to have been interviewed. Thus the proportions of women who experience the difficult conditions of detention centres and jails, and who do not have access to programmes available for women, will be considerably greater than these findings suggest.

The particular problems faced by native women across the province are evident. They are subject to far greater disadvantages in their living conditions because of their native status, to a justice system which is largely non-native, and in the case of those in custody, to short institutions sentences which cannot deal with the issues which lead to their incarceration. The lack of community alternatives for such women is marked.

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Multicultural needs

Altogether 16% of the adult sample identified themselves as belonging to an ethnic or visible minority group (apart from the 13% Aboriginal women). These women include a wide array of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as well as established Canadians and more recent immigrants.³³

As the results of this survey have suggested, women from ethnic and visible minority groups were probably under-represented in the sample for a variety of reasons. One reason was clearly the problem of language, but others involved the emotional burden of having been sentenced, which some women, often recent immigrants, found very difficult to bear. In a number of instances such women refused to take part in the study. Others appeared isolated and confused by the events in their lives and the differing cultural expectations. As one Probation Officer remarked of a client:

"In the Phillipines it is accepted that a parent hits a child to discipline them, even child-care workers. However, when she did this in Canada, she was charged and convicted."

There was also a tendency for women from minority groups to be more reticent because of linguistic and cultural differences. A more intensive study of the problems confronting these women may help to provide a better understanding of how their difficulties can be overcome; difficulties which seem particularly acute at the remand and sentencing stage.

It must also be said, nevertheless, that women from visible minority groups face additional problems. A number of the women who identified themselves as black declined to take part in the survey, and at Vanier Centre for Women, for example, they are more likely than other women to opt out of the treatment programmes available. As with all minority groups, including Aboriginal women, the absence of staff who speak their language or who share their ethnic and cultural background increases their sense of isolation.

This suggests that programmes developed and run by people from their own backgrounds, and which are grounded in their own cultural traditions and experience, may have a greater likelihood of acceptance and of meeting their needs. It suggests, too, apart from staff training in ethnic issues, the need to increase the numbers of staff from minority groups, both in institutions and in the community, and to establish a network of readily available language and cultural resources for the variety of minority groups who pass through the system.

³³ Nineteen percent of the sample were born outside Canada.

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Meeting the needs of the female population

A number of other issues also arise which relate, not so much to the conditions under which women are remanded or serve their sentences, as to the potential for developing alternative ways of dealing with many women offenders.

On the whole, the main differences between women in the institutional and community groups reflect the greater involvement of the former in the criminal justice system. They are more likely to have previous convictions, started offending at an earlier age, and are more likely to have been in court as juveniles or young offenders. They are also more involved in illegal drug use, and their offending patterns reflect this involvement. Thirdly, they would appear to have a higher level of both physical and mental health problems, many of them consequences of their substance abuse and life-style, but at least some of these problems probably arising from the fact of being in institutions.

In other respects, however, there are a number of similarities between the women in institutions and under community supervision. Apart from drugs, their offending patterns are similar, with a majority charged with property offences, minor assaults and nuisance offences. They do not represent a danger to the public. The experience of physical and sexual abuse appears to be similarly widespread, with some three-quarters of the women in both groups saying they have been physically or sexually abused. Their levels of education and training and their work experience are similar. In neither case are most women well equipped to earn a reasonable wage. They are as likely to have children and to have been single parents, although those in institutions are more likely to have given over some of the responsibility for their care.

This suggests, firstly, that there is a need to develop more programmes in the community for women under community supervision. Many of the Probation Officers taking part in the study emphasized the lack of programmes for women across the province. The availability of child-support facilities for women undertaking community service was also an issue. While courts may make counselling for substance abuse a condition of probation, for example, it is not clear how far that condition is being satisfactorily met for women, nor how many women have access to good programmes dealing with abuse.

Secondly, it also suggests the possibility of treating more women, now incarcerated, in a community setting. Given that the majority of women given a custodial sentence receive short-term sentences, and are unlikely to be transferred to Vanier Centre for Women, there is little opportunity for assessment, or for their needs to be met in the institutional setting, even if appropriate programmes were available. Repetitive short-term imprisonment does not deal with the issues facing these women. There would appear to be an opportunity to develop

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community-based treatment facilities which avoid the many problems of short-term incarceration.³⁴

The issue of children and parenting illustrates some of these problems resulting from the use of short-term incarceration for women. Children clearly are affected by their mother's imprisonment, as are the mothers themselves. Separation can be used as an opportunity to develop better relationships between mothers and their children if attention is given to such things as visiting arrangements and longer-term visits or TAPs. Without such reinforcement, separation may result in a greater breach in relationships than may have existed, and the possibility of loss of parental rights. Alternatively, using community-based residential accommodation with facilities for children, or alternatives to incarceration for women with children would avoid many of the problems of separation. Recognition of the need to develop more flexible policies for women with children, who comprise the majority of women offenders, has led to some innovative projects in a number of instances.³⁵

A further question is the extent to which it is necessary to continue to use custodial remands for women whose offences are neither serious nor a risk to the public. The responsibility of jails and detention centres to service the courts, the pressure of handling the constantly changing population, as well as rapid fluctuations in numbers, make it difficult for other issues relating to the care of those in custody to establish any priority. Most institutions do not separate remanded from sentenced women, and both groups are subject on the whole to the same physical conditions and maximum security. At the remand stage in particular there is likely to be a high level of anxiety, and consequential problems relating to such issues as children. The use of residential facilities in the community for remand, with more flexible policies in relation to movement, visiting and contact with the community would help to lessen these difficulties.

³⁴ In this respect, the contrast between male and female offenders is underlined by Coulson's report (1993) that the average score on the Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) for women at Vanier Centre for Women is 16. In a comparable study, Bonta and Montiuk (1990) report an average score for men of 25, and recommend a score of 14 and below as suitable for early release to a halfway house.

³⁵ See for example accounts of day-visiting schemes in England by Denton ('Throwing away the rule book at Styal Prison.' 1991), and at Bedford Hills Correctional Institution USA (Cannings, 1989). The Federal Task Force also recommended the provision of accommodation for women with children, and flexible visiting policies (Creating Choices, 1990). In Quebec, overnight stays are possible for women and children at the main women's institutions Maison Tanguay.

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As one of the interviewers for the survey remarked, many of the women in custody, whether on remand or sentenced, had a great need to talk about their problems with someone they feel they can trust, who will listen to them and be non-judgemental and objective, and have empathy and time. The conditions of remand or short-term custody provide little opportunity to meet even this need.

A final question relates to the provision of programmes, and the interrelationship of many of the problems facing the women. As one Area Manager pointed out, there is a tendency to categorize women because there are so few of them as 'sexually abused' 'spouse abused', 'shoplifter' etc., but not to see the whole person. In itemizing programme needs, there is a similar tendency to think in terms of individual components of 'need'. But for many women there are close links between their substance abuse, their offending behaviour, their histories of abuse, and their mental and physical health. And it is difficult for them to deal with these issues when they are poorly housed, and without job skills, and often with children. The comment of one woman in a detention centre sums up the need for a more rounded and women-centred approach to programming:

"Women need to be treated in a more holistic manner - not as a druggie or an alcoholic or a prostitute - but as women with a name, a history and a variety of needs."

In defining needs, it is important to consider the views of the women, themselves. Not all of them are ready to participate in programmes, nor do they feel the need to do so. In some cases, this may be because they felt that they had dealt satisfactorily with their problem. In other instances they may feel that the programmes available do not meet their needs, either because of philosophical or cultural orientation or because of practical difficulties.

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APPENDIX I

METHODOLOGY

The pilot study for this survey was carried out in the Metro Toronto region in 1988 (Ruhl and Loring, 1988). Based on consultations with correctional staff and administrators about the issues which needed to be considered, that study had developed and tested interview schedules and data collection instruments. The interview schedules were self-completed by the women themselves in groups of 3 - 8, under guidance, where necessary, from correctional staff, who also collated additional information.

For the present study, a number of changes were made both to the content of the interview schedules and in the organization of the survey. These were designed to take account of issues which had become more prominent since the initiation of the pilot study; to ensure that the interests and experiences of native women and those from ethnic minority groups were included; and to allow the women taking part in the study to have a greater input in expressing their own views.

This resulted in greater use of open-ended questions, and, for example, changes to sections on abuse, and alcohol and drug use for which there had been poor response rates in the pilot study. The major change, however, was in the use of external interviewers for all women in institutions, providing the women with an opportunity to talk in a confidential interview with someone unconnected with the correctional system. A team of eight women, all with experience of correctional issues visited each of the selected institutions and undertook personal interviews with the women.

Other changes included the coverage of Young Offenders and women on parole in half-way houses.

Training sessions were held with all external interviewers, and with Probation Officers in each Region.

Survey instruments

Two versions of the interview schedule were provided, one for use in institutions and one for the community sample (See Questionnaires B and C Appendix IV). (They were identical but for the use of tenses, and additional questions on children for the institutional sample). French versions of all schedules were also made available. The interviews covered the following main areas:

demographic information	family background
children	history of abuse
education	physical and mental health

work	alcohol and drugs history
juvenile history	assessment of help/programmes needed
young offender/adult history	additional problems identified

In addition to the interview schedule completed for each women taking part in the survey, staff at each site were asked to complete a short form (Questionnaire A, see Appendix IV) providing demographic and offence history information, together with an assessment of the offender's needs. Since staff at Metro Toronto West Detention Centre had indicated that they would have difficulty providing some of this data for a large number of women, because of the rapid turnover of inmates, lack of information and pressure of work, some questions were duplicated in the interview schedule.

Interviews

Interviews took place between November and February 1991-2. All women were informed that the interview was confidential, and that everything they said would be treated in the strictest confidence. Nothing they said would be used in way which would enable them to be identified, and the forms would not be identifiable by Ministry personnel. They were offered a consent form to be signed by the interviewer and themselves. (Any information which could have enabled the women to be identified individually was removed from all schedules by the external project director following the completion of interviews).

Women at Vanier Centre for Women were informed in advance of the study, and invited to take part (a copy of the invitation is in Appendix III). In other institutions, interviewers asked the women individually or met with them as a group beforehand.

Interviews with the institutional sample were conducted in private (and designed to be as relaxed and informal as possible within the constraints of the completion of the schedule) to allow the women to talk about issues they felt to be important. Interviews usually lasted for around an hour, but in many cases were considerably longer some as long as three hours. A number of interviews in the Northern Region were conducted in Ojibway, and a few in the Eastern and Metro Regions in French.

For the community sample, Probation Officers were asked to conduct 'guided interviews', working through the interview schedule with the woman, but allowing her to complete it herself unseen. At the end of the interview, the women were asked to put the schedule in an envelope and seal it, to ensure that what she had written was in confidence, and would not be seen by the officer. Where women had language, reading or writing difficulties, the schedules were completed by the Probation Officer during the interview.

Sampling

The sampling framework was established by Ministry staff prior to the commencement of the survey using an NEA Research Division formula. (This provides for sample sizes for a given population with a confidence level of 0.05). Sample size was determined on the basis of average daily counts of women in institutions across the province, and monthly averages of women under community supervision.

To ensure a balance of representation across the province, sampling within the five regions was initially designed to be proportionate to the overall offender distribution across the regions. The average daily population of adult women in institutions in Ontario in 1990-91 was 365 distributed as follows:

Metro Region	152	42%
Central Region	128	35%
Western Region	27	7%
Eastern Region	30	8%
Northern Region	28	8%
TOTAL	365	100%

Thus since some 42% of adult females in institutions in Ontario are located in the Metro Region, a target sample contributing approximately 42% to the total sample of institutional interviews was established.

The final target numbers for the study were adjusted to take account of the number of Probation and Parole offices taking part in a region and to account for fluctuations in institutional populations since the original sampling was established.

It was also decided to over-sample all Northern Region sites to increase the representation of Aboriginal women.

Site selection

Given the size of Ontario and the number of sites, it was not feasible to target all institutions or Probation and Parole offices. Within each region apart from the North, the two institutions with the highest average daily count and monthly admissions of women were selected for the study (see Appendix II for a list of institutions included). For the community supervision sample, between 4 and 11 Probation and Parole offices were targeted within each

region. The selection of sites was made on the basis of discussions with Regional Managers to ensure a spread of types of area and offenders (eg., small rural offices as well as those in larger urban areas), as well as distributing the work load for the survey.

For the Northern Region, because of distances and the clustering of the population in small communities, the three centres with the largest numbers of women in institutions were targeted, together with Probation and Parole offices in those towns.

In addition to institutions and Probation and Parole offices, all CRCs and CRAs within each region which accommodate adult women were included in the survey, and all open and closed custody facilities for female young offenders. The total number of sites involved in the survey was 60.

Sample selection

Within each site, selection of women for interview was made on as random a basis as possible. In MTWDC for example, interviewers worked down the list of inmates alphabetically, starting with a different letter each day. In small institutions, all women were invited to take part.

Because of variations in allocation of cases within individual offices as well as rates of intake, it was not possible to establish a set formula for the selection of community cases. Probation Officers were asked to select women on as random a basis as possible, and to avoid selecting only those who would be easy to interview. In most cases, officers invited women to take part as they came in for reporting. In larger offices they were usually able to interview their own offenders, but in a number of cases offenders reporting to colleagues were also included. This was usually the cases for young offenders.

The sample was an achieved sample. At all sites, interviewers were asked to complete a target number of interviews, and to collate information on the numbers who declined to take part. Because of the pressure of work for most of the probation staff, little information about the number of refusals is available for the community sample. A number found it difficult to complete quotas because of the limited number of women reporting to an office, and because women themselves felt they did not have time to take part in the survey. Younger women often had boy-friends or children waiting, which made a lengthy interview difficult.

Refusals and exclusions

The estimated number of refusals in institutions was around 50. On the basis of limited information, there would not appear to be much variation between the refusals and the interviewed sample, with the exception of slightly higher numbers of women from visible minorities among the refusals at MTWDC and Vanier Centre for Women. At Vanier Centre

for Women, for example, visible minority women were less likely to opt to take institutional programmes, and also more likely to decline to take part in the study.

Certain groups of women were excluded, however. In MTWDC interviewers did not have access to those in segregation cells, although elsewhere they were sometimes included. In addition, women serving intermittent weekend sentences were rarely seen by interviewers.

The provincial population covers a wide spectrum of offenders. Given the rapid turnover of women in jails and detention centres, the achieved sample is probably as reasonable a reflection of the population as could be expected in a study of this kind.

Loss of cases and sample attrition

Interview schedules from two Probation and Parole offices (in Central and Western Regions) were lost in transit, reducing the final sample by 18 cases.

Not all interviewers were able to complete their target numbers, either because there were fewer women at a given site than expected (this was particularly true of young offenders) or because of refusals or lack of time. In a few cases, women felt unable to complete the interview once they had begun.

Final sample

The total number of women who took part in the survey was 650. Of these, 20 cases were excluded from the analysis because they were incomplete, leaving a total of 630 completed interviews. For the purposes of the main analysis, a further 15 cases were randomly excluded from the Northern Region because of the over-sampling in that region. The separate section on native women in the report includes these additional cases.

The final sample comprises 615 women, 531 adults and 84 young offenders. The distribution of interviews across the province is shown in Table A below together with the target numbers established at the beginning of the survey.

The main deficiencies in the achieved sample are in the under-representation of young offenders in institutions and the loss of 16 community cases in transit. No target numbers were set for CRCs since the number of women appears to fluctuate considerably. In the case of young offenders, there were far fewer in closed custody than had been expected on the basis of preliminary calculations.

Overall, around 66% of the average adult population of women in institutions across the province were interviewed.

TABLE A
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TARGET AND ACHIEVED SAMPLES*

	TARGET SAMPLE	ACHIEVED SAMPLE
ADULTS		
Institutions	250	243
Community	303	288
TOTAL	553	531
YOUNG OFFENDERS		
Institutions	60	43
Community	44	41
TOTAL	104	84
OVERALL TOTALS	657	615

* Excluding incomplete interviews and additional cases from Northern region.

APPENDIX II

Supplementary tables

CURRENT OFFENCE OF ADULT SAMPLE*

Homicide & Related	6	1.1%
Serious violent	18	3.4%
Violent sexual	1	0.2%
Break & Enter & Related	14	2.6%
Non-Violent Sexual	1	0.2%
Traffic/Import Drugs	55	10.4%
Weapons Offences	5	0.9%
Fraud & Related	101	19.0%
Misc. Against Person	4	0.8%
Theft/Possession	119	22.4%
Assault & Related	68	12.8%
Property Damage/Arson	8	1.5%
Misc. Against Morals	18	3.4%
Obstruct Justices	8	1.5%
Possession Drugs	22	4.1%
Traffic - Criminal Code	4	0.8%
Breach Court Order	28	5.8%
Drinking Driving	16	3.0%
Misc. Against Pub. Order	9	1.7%
Other Federal Statutes	3	0.6%
Parole Violation	3	0.6%
Highway Traffic Act	2	0.4%
Liquor Control Act	4	0.8%
Other Prov. Statutes	-	-
Municipal Bylaws	1	0.2%
Unknown	13	2.5%
TOTAL	531	100.0%

The categories are those used by the Ministry of Correctional Services. It should be noted that each category includes a series of sub-categories involving a wide range of behaviour.

Thus 'Fraud and Related' includes 28 sub-categories ranging from breach of trust to the use of a revoked credit card, and 'non-violent sexual' includes 12 categories including bigamy, incest, loitering for the purposes of sex and nudity.

Institutions included in study

Metro West Toronto Detention Centre
Whitby Jail
Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre
Vanier Centre for Women
Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre
Windsor Jail
Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre
Quinte Detention Centre
Kenora Jail
Thunder Bay Jail
Sudbury Jail

Henwood House
Marjorie Amos House
Rebekah House
MacPhail House
Cecil Facer
Nickle Centre

There were 37 Probation and Parole offices included in the community survey, and 6 CRCs or CRAs.

APPENDIX III

Letter distributed to women in Vanier Centre for Women

SURVEY OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONS AND UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

Over the next few weeks we are conducting a survey of women who are currently in institutions or under community supervision across Ontario. The purpose of the study is to try to find out about the kinds of programmes and facilities which should be provided to help women in conflict with the law. We want to be able to develop better ways of helping women on remand and under sentence.

There are not many women in institutions or on probation compared with men, so it is very important to try to find out who is involved, and whether there are particular programmes which women need, or difficulties which they face as women.

The best way to find this out is by asking women themselves. We need to know what you think is important in your lives, and what problems or experiences you have had. This includes things to do with your health, training and jobs, about contact with your children or family and friends, and about problems you might experience because of your culture or background. You might think everyone asks about these kinds of things, but we don't really know how far these are problems for women all across the province. And we also need you to tell us about things which are important to you that we have not thought about.

We would like to carry out personal interviews with the majority of women here. The interviewers come from outside, they are not connected with the institution, the police or the Ministry in any way. Interviews are *voluntary*, you will not be forced to take part but we do need your help. The interview will take about an hour. A lot depends on how much you want to say about what should be done.

In the interview everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence. You will not be identified personally in any way. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire, and we will not discuss what you say personally with anyone.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to talking to you.

APPENDIX "IV"

SURVEY OF FEMALE OFFENDERS

QUESTIONNAIRE A

To be completed by probation officer or designated institutional staff member

1. Location
 - 1) Probation/Parole office: _____
 - 2) Institution: _____
2. REGION
 - 1) Metro _____
 - 2) Central _____
 - 3) Western _____
 - 4) Eastern _____
 - 5) Northern _____
3. Client CPIC No. _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

4. Date of birth: _____/_____/_____ D M Y
5. Would you classify her as:
 - 1) Caucasian
 - 2) Native American Indian
 - 3) Inuit
 - 4) Metis
 - 5) Black
 - 6) East Asian
 - 7) South Asian
 - 8) Other (specify) _____
6. Current citizenship status:
 - 1) Canadian
 - 2) Landed immigrant
 - 3) visa/work permit
 - 4) Deportation hold
 - 5) Immigration hearing pending
7. What is her main working language:
 - 1) English
 - 2) French
 - 3) Native language (write in) _____
 - 4) Other (write in) _____

8. a) How well does she speak English:
1) Completely fluent
2) Fairly fluent
3) Doesn't speak well but understands
4) Minimal/no English
- b) Is she literate? _____
9. Where was she living at the time of her arrest: (town/reserve)
- _____

OFFENCE HISTORY

10. Number of previous convictions:
- a) up to 18th birthday _____
b) none
c) no information
- b) aged 18 and over _____
b) none
c) no information
11. Age at first conviction: _____
12. Total no. of previous incarcerations:
- a) up to 18th birthday _____
b) none
c) no information
- b) aged 18 and over _____
b) none
c) no information
13. Were any previous incarcerations federal?
- a) Yes (write no.) _____
b) No
c) No information
14. Most serious previous conviction:
(**please see note 4)
- _____
- 8) No previous
9) No information

15. Most common prior convictions (up to three types in descending order of frequency):

1) _____ (How many ___)?

2) _____ (How many ___)?

3) _____ (How many ___)?

8) No previous

9) No information

CURRENT OFFENCE(S) /CHARGES

16. Current conviction/charges: (in order of seriousness - **see note 4)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

17. CURRENT STATUS:

1) Remanded only

2) Sentenced with further charges

3) Sentenced awaiting transfer

4) Serving sentence here

5) CRC

6) On Parole

18. CURRENT SENTENCE:

(write in) _____

a) Aggregate term (in days) _____

b) Probation term (in days) _____

- c) Conditions attached to Probation order:
Restitution/compensation
Fine
CSO
Other _____

19. Is she a Young Offender:
1) No
2) Yes

PROGRAM NEEDS

20. What are her most important needs in your opinion (please give details and rank in order of importance - **see note 5):

RANK
ORDER

- ___ 1) Child-related _____
___ 2) Family support _____
___ 3) Housing/accommodation _____
___ 4) Literacy/educ.up grading _____
___ 5) Work training/job skills _____
___ 6) Employment _____
___ 7) Substance abuse counselling _____
___ 8) Physical/sexual abuse counselling _____
___ 9) Health care _____
___ 10) Psychiatric treatment _____
___ 11) Legal help/advice _____
___ 12) Other (specify) _____

21. Does she have any specific needs relating to her cultural/ethnic background? (**see note 6)
- _____

SURVEY OF FEMALE OFFENDERS

QUESTIONNAIRE B

CLIENTS UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

Can we start by talking a little about your background.....

1. What country were you born in? _____

2. a) (If not born in Canada): How old were you when you first came to Canada? _____

or b) (If born in Canada): Where were you born?

Province _____ City _____

Community/Reserve _____

3. a) Mother's county of birth? _____

b) Father's country of birth? _____

4. Do you feel that you are part of a distinct cultural group? _____

1) White

2) Native/Aboriginal

- Registered (Status)

- Non-registered (Non-status)

- Inuit

- Metis

5) Black

6) East Asian

7) South Asian

8) Other (specify) _____

5. If Native/Aboriginal: a) what First Nation do you belong to? _____

6. What language do you feel most comfortable with:

1) English

2) French

3) Native language (write in) _____

4) Other (write in) _____

7. What is your marital status at present?:
- 1) single - never married
 - 2) married
 - 3) common-law
 - 4) separated
 - 5) divorced
 - 6) widowed
8. Have you been married more than once or lived with a previous common-law partner?
- 1) No
 - 2) Yes
9. a) Where are you living at the moment?
- _____
- b) how long had you been there? _____
- c) Who are you living with?
(check all that are true)
- 1) alone
 - 2) with husband
 - 3) with common-law or boyfriend
 - 4) with your children or step-children
 - 5) with parents or in-laws
 - 6) with friends
 - 7) other (where?) _____
10. Are you settled there, or do you think you need help finding somewhere else to live?
(eg. sheltered housing, low-cost housing...):
- _____

CHILDREN

Can we talk about children now - this is something which is very important because in the past people have tended to forget about children when women end up in court.

11. Do you have any children?

If yes: How many do you have:

- a) Your own children _____
- b) Step/adopted children _____

IF NO CHILDREN PLEASE GO TO QUESTION No.19

12. a) How old are they:

(Write in age of each child)

- 1) under 2 years _____
- 2) 2-5 years _____
- 3) 6-10 years _____
- 4) 11-16 years _____
- 5) 17-18 years _____
- 6) 19 or more _____

b) How old were you when you had your first child? _____

13. a) How many of your children are living with you now?

- 1) all of them
- 2) some of them (how many) _____
- 3) none of them

b) If some are not - who are they living with?
(check all that apply)

- 1) husband or common-law
- 2) ex-husband or common-law
- 3) your mother
- 4) other relatives _____
- 5) friends
- 6) foster home/Children's Aid/wardship
- 7) living on their own
- 8) other _____
- 9) not applicable (all with you)

c) If some are not - can you say why this is?
(check all that apply)

- 1) all grown up/adult
- 2) adopted etc at birth or early age
- 3) more recently taken into Care etc because of offending/addiction etc
- 4) own choice because of addiction/not being able to cope etc
- 5) other _____
- 9) not applicable (all with you)

14. Who has had primary responsibility for bringing up your children up to now?

(check all that apply)

- 1) self alone
- 2) self and husband/common-law
- 3) ex-husband/common-law
- 4) your mother
- 5) other relatives _____
- 6) foster/adoptive parents etc
- 8) other(who?) _____

15. Have you been a single parent for part or all of the time?

- 1) always
- 2) part of the time
- 3) never

16. What has been the most difficult problem for you and your children since your arrest/conviction?

17. Do you have any major worries about your children that you feel you need help with at present?

If Yes a) What about:

- 1) day-care etc
- 2) accommodation
- 3) financial support
- 4) emotional/coping with behaviour
- 5) legal/advice access
- 6) dealing with the offence
- 7) visits _____
- 8) other _____
- 9) no problems/concerns

If Yes b) What do you think would help you deal/cope with these problems?

- 1) day-care etc _____
- 2) better accommodation _____
- 3) job/financial support _____
- 4) therapy/counselling _____
- 5) legal advice/access _____
- 6) other _____
- 8) no problems/concerns

19. Do you have any major concerns about other members of your family apart from children

which you feel you need help with?
(eg. elderly or sick dependants)

EDUCATION

Can we talk about work and school now:

20. What was the highest grade you completed in school?

- 1) under grade 8
- 2) 8
- 3) 9
- 4) 10
- 5) 11
- 6) 12
- 7) 13

21. a) Did you/do you like school, get on well with teachers, other students? _____

b) Did you get a High School Diploma (or equivalent)?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes

22. Have you ever taken any courses or training since then?

If so, what kind? _____

- 1) some commercial/college _____
- 2) finished " " _____
- 3) some trade training _____
- 4) finished trade training _____
- 5) some university _____
- 6) finished university _____

23. Would you like to take more education or training now?

- 1) yes
- 2) already taking
- 3) no

24. What kind of courses would you like to take (or are already taking now):

- 1) basic education upgrading
- 2) college/university _____
- 3) trade training _____
- 4) other(what?) _____
- 8) don't want any more

WORK

25. Do you have a job at the moment?

- 1) working full-time
- 2) working part-time
- 3) working on and off
- 4) looking for work
- 5) not working or looking(why?) _____

26. a) If you are working now, what kind of job(s) do you have? _____

b) If you are not working now how long is it since you last worked?

(Years) _____ (Months) _____

27. Have you usually worked since leaving school?

- 1) Yes
- 2) Often unemployed when wanted work
- 3) Not wanted to work (eg. homemaker/student)
- 4) Other/Illegal jobs only _____

28. a) What kinds of job do you usually do?

List the three jobs you have had for the longest time starting with the longest job:

1 _____ (How long? _____)

2 _____ (How long? _____)

3 _____ (How long? _____)

b) Do you usually get on well with people you work with? _____

29. About how much on average do you take home each month from your job? _____

30. What are your main sources of income usually?
(check all that apply)

- 1) wages from job
- 2) husband
- 3) common-law/boyfriend
- 4) ex-husband (child support/alimony)
- 5) mother's allowance
- 6) welfare
- 7) unemployment benefits
- 8) disability payment
- 9) parents, relatives
- 10) other (what?) _____

31. Do you feel you need job-training or help finding a job now?

- 1) job-training
- 2) help finding a job
- 3) help keeping a job
- 4) don't need any(more)
- 5) don't want a job
- 6) other _____

32. What kinds of job training would you like to have (write in) _____

33. What are the main things which stop you getting the job or education you would like?
(check all that apply)

- 1) lack of child care
- 2) lack of transport
- 3) lack of right job skills
- 4) medical disability
- 5) other (what?) _____

-
- 6) don't want a job
 - 7) already working

JUVENILE HISTORY

These questions are about things that happened

before you were 16

34. Before your 16th birthday, were you ever convicted for an offence? 1) Yes 2) No

If Yes how many times? _____

If you were convicted before you were 16 what was the most serious thing that happened to you?

- 1) training school
- 2) secure custody/detention home
- 3) open custody/observation home
- 4) probation
- 5) other (what?) _____

35. Before your 16th birthday, were you ever taken into care for your own protection? 1) Yes 2) No

If Yes what happened? _____

YOUNG OFFENDER/ADULT HISTORY

36. How old were you when you were first convicted for an offence? (write in) _____

37. How many times have you been convicted before this time? (write in) _____

38. Have you ever been sentenced to custody as a young offender before?

- 1) Never
- 2) Yes to open custody
- 3) Yes to closed custody

39. Have you ever been sentenced to prison before? (write in no. of times) _____

40. Were any of these federal prison sentences?

- 1) Yes (write number) _____
- 2) No
- 3) Never been in prison

41. Have you ever ended up in prison just because you couldn't or didn't want to pay a fine?

- 1) Yes (write number of times) _____
- 2) No
- 3) Never been in prison

CURRENT SENTENCE/CHARGES

42. a) Were you remanded in custody after your arrest?
- 1) No
 - 2) Yes

b) If yes about how long did you spend/have you spent on remand so far?

c) How long have you been in custody altogether (ie. including on sentence)?

43. a) Was anybody else accused at the same time as you for this offence?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No

b) If yes was it:

- 1) a male partner
- 2) another male other than a partner
- 3) a female
- 4) other (who?) _____

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Can we talk now about some of the things that might have happened to you as you were growing up.

44. a) Do you think you had an easy time growing up, or were there lots of problems in your family (eg. like moving about a lot, heavy drinking, people being seriously ill, or a lot of arguing and fighting)?
-

b) So would you say there were:

- 1) no real problems
 - 2) some problems
 - 3) a lot of problems
- c) Has anyone in your family ever been in trouble with the law? _____

45. a) How old were you when you left home?

b) Where did you go/how did you live?

46. a) Do you feel you get a lot of emotional support now from your family and get on well with them?

b) What about support from friends, or people you know well?

c) Have any of the friends you spend time with been in trouble with the law? _____

There's been a lot of talk in the last few years about women being knocked about and physically hurt. It's a very difficult thing to talk about, but we think it's very important to try to find out how common it is.....

47. a) As a child were you ever hit or beaten about in a way that caused injuries (like bruises or burns, cuts, scrapes, broken bones)?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - serious abuse

If Yes b) how often did this happen?

If Yes c) about how old were you?

If Yes d) who was involved?

- 1) mother
- 2) father
- 3) brother

- 4) other relative _____
- 5) other (who?) _____

48. a) As a child were you ever sexually assaulted or forced to take part in sexual activities when you didn't want to?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - serious

If Yes b) about how many times did it happen? _____

If Yes c) about how old were you?

If Yes d) who was involved?

- 1) mother
- 2) father
- 3) brother
- 4) other relative _____
- 5) other (who?) _____

49. a) As a child were you ever mentally or emotionally abused (like being threatened, insulted, locked in a closet etc)?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously abused

b) If yes about how old were you?

c) If Yes who was involved?

- 1) mother
- 2) father
- 3) brother
- 4) other relative _____
- 5) other (who?) _____

AS AN ADULT.....

Have any of these kinds of things happened to you since then.....

50. a) Have you ever been physically abused in a relationship with a partner or by someone else: (hit and beaten about....)

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously

b) About how often has this happened?

c) Can you say who was involved:

- 1) Husband/common-law/boyfriend
- 2) Other _____

51. a) Have you ever been sexually assaulted, or forced to take part in sexual activities, in a relationship with a partner or by someone else:

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously

b) About how often has this happened?

c) Can you say who was involved:

- 1) Husband/common-law/boyfriend
- 2) Other _____

52. a) Have you ever been emotionally abused in a relationship with a partner or by someone else: (like being threatened, insulted...)

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously

b) was this:

- 1) husband/common-law/boyfriend
- 2) someone else _____

53. Have you ever sought help about any of these events (eg. did you call a helpline, go to a women's shelter, call the police....)
(If yes, what happened)?

54. a) Do you feel now that you would like some kind of help in dealing with what has happened to you in the past, or to help prevent it happening in the future?

b) would you want to:

- 1) talk to a psychologist or counsellor
- 2) take part in a support group on abuse
- 3) get help to take legal action
- 4) find new accommodation
- 5) other _____
- 6) don't need any help (why) _____
- 7) never been abused

HEALTH

Can we talk now about any difficulties you might have with your health.....

55. a) Do you have any particular concerns about your physical health at the moment (eg. worries about bad headaches, backpains, stomach problems, menstruation, AIDS.....)

56. a) Do you think you are getting the kind of physical health care you need at the moment? (and can make yourself understood.....)?

b) If not what help do you think you need?

57. a) What about mental health.....are there any particular problems you are worried about?

b) Do you have difficulty with any of the following kinds of problems (check all that apply):

- 1) anxiety/nervousness
- 2) feeling depressed
- 3) difficulty sleeping
- 4) phobias or fears
- 5) getting very angry or violent with people
- 6) no real problems

58. Do you sometimes starve yourself for long periods of time, or make yourself vomit after eating?

- 1) No
- 2) Occasionally
- 3) Often do this

59. a) Have you ever had any treatment for any of the kinds of problems you've mentioned in Questions 57 and 58? _____

b) Do you think you are getting the kind of help you want now (and can make yourself understood.....)?

b) If not what kind of help do you think you need? _____

c) Would you like to take a program on things like nutrition and health care?

Can we talk about the ways people sometimes try to cope with problems in their lives.....

60. Have you ever tried to hurt yourself in some way, like slashing or cutting yourself?

- 1) No
- 2) Once
- 3) More than once

61. Have you ever tried to commit suicide?

- 1) No
- 2) Once
- 3) More than once

62. a) If you have ever hurt yourself or tried to commit suicide, what would have helped you avoid it (eg. friends, other people to talk to, counselling.....)

b) Would you like to be involved in some counselling or a program now to help avoid this kind of behaviour?

- 1) No - not interested
- 2) No - already seen someone (who?) _____
- 3) Yes (what kind?) _____

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Can we talk now about your experience with alcohol and drugs.....

63. a) How much have drugs and alcohol been involved in your getting into trouble with the law? (check all that apply)

- 1) convicted of drug offence(s) (eg. possession)
- 2) convicted of alcohol offences
- 3) convicted of offence(s) to support drug or alcohol habit
- 4) offence(s) usually under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- 5) offence(s) not related to drug or alcohol use in any way
- 6) don't use alcohol
- 7) don't use drugs

b) If you weren't using drugs or alcohol before this arrest, did you use them a lot in the past? _____

64. Can you look at the following list of questions about taking ALCOHOL and circle Yes or No for each question.

Each question is about the 12 months BEFORE this conviction.

1. Do you feel you are a normal drinker?
2. Have you ever awakened the morning after some drinking the night before and found that you could not remember a part of the evening before?
3. Does your partner (or parents) ever worry or complain about your drinking?
4. Can you stop drinking without a struggle after one or two drinks?
5. Do you ever feel bad about your drinking?
6. Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker?
7. Are you always able to stop drinking when you want to?
8. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) because of your drinking?
9. Have you gotten into fights when drinking?
10. Has drinking ever created problems with you and your partner?
11. Has your partner (or other family member) ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking?
12. Have you ever lost friends, boyfriends or girlfriends because of your drinking?
13. Have you ever got into trouble at work because of drinking?
14. Have you ever lost a job because of drinking?
15. Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking?
16. Do you ever drink before noon?
17. Have you ever been told you have liver trouble? Cirrohsis?
18. Have you ever had delirium tremens (DTs), severe shaking, heard voices, or seen things that weren't there after heavy drinking?

19. Have you ever been arrested, even for a few hours, because of drunk behaviour?
20. Have you ever been arrested for drunk driving or driving after drinking?

* * * * *

65. a) Have you ever had any professional help (eg. at a hospital, clinic or alcohol treatment centre) because of an alcohol problem?

- 1) No
2) Yes (where) _____

b) Do you think you need some help with drinking problems now?

If No why is this? _____

If Yes what sort would you like to take?
(check all that apply)

- 1) Individual counselling
2) AA group
3) Other group with someone from your own background or culture
4) Long residential program for men & women
5) Long residential program with women only
6) Other.....

66. Now can you look at the following list of questions about using DRUGS and circle Yes or No for each question.

Each question is about the 12 months BEFORE this conviction.

1. Have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons?
2. Have you abused prescription drugs?
3. Do you abuse more than one drug at a time?
4. Can you get through the week without using drugs?
5. Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to?

6. Have you had "blackouts" or "flashbacks" as a result of drug use?
7. Do you feel bad or guilty about your drug use?
8. Does your partner (or parents) complain about your involvement with drugs?
9. Has drug abuse created problems between you and your partner or your parents?
10. Have you lost friends because of your drug use?
11. Have you neglected your family because of your use of drugs?
12. Have you been in trouble at work because of drug abuse?
13. Have you lost a job because of drug use?
14. Have you got into fights when under the influence of drugs?
15. Have you engaged in illegal activities in order to obtain drugs?
16. Have you been arrested for possession of illegal drugs?
17. Have you experienced withdrawal symptoms (felt sick) when you stopped taking drugs?
18. Have you had medical problems as a result of your drug use (eg. memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, bleeding etc.)?
19. Have you gone to anyone for help for a drug problem?
20. Have you been involved in a treatment program specifically related to drug use?

* * * * *

67. Have you been on prescription drugs in the past five years (like valium, librium, seconal, Halcium, Elavil) given you by your doctor for a long time (to help you sleep, or stop being depressed, anxious etc)?

68. a) Have you done any of the following in the past 5 years (check all that apply):
- 1) mixed drugs and alcohol
 - 2) injected drugs
 - 3) shared needles
 - 4) sniffed glue or gas
 - 5) none of these

b) Do you think you need some kind of help with drugs now?

If No why is this? _____

If Yes what kind? (check all that apply)

- 1) Individual counselling
- 2) NA or Cocaine Anonymous type programs
- 3) Other group program with someone from your own background or culture
- 4) Long residential program for men & women
- 5) Long residential program for women only
- 6) Other _____

69. What are the main things which stop you getting the kind of treatment or help with drinking or drugs that you would like:

- 1) lack of support from family or close friends
- 2) lack of child care
- 3) lack of transport
- 4) can't afford to stop working
- 5) other _____

FINALLY

We've covered a lot of things like work and jobs, health, alcohol and drugs, abuse, children and family ties.....

70. What do you think are the most important things you need to deal with right now to help you stay out of trouble with the law?

*Please write in what kind of help you need

_____ a) Child-related _____

- ___ b) Family support _____
- ___ c) Housing/accommodation _____
- ___ d) Literacy/upgrading _____
- ___ e) Work-training/job skills _____
- ___ f) Employment _____
- ___ g) Substance abuse counselling etc _____
- ___ h) Physical/sexual abuse counselling _____
- ___ i) Health care _____
- ___ j) Help with emotional problems _____
- ___ k) Legal help/advice _____
- ___ l) Native or ethnic programs _____
- ___ m) Other (specify) _____

*Now can you rank them in order of importance for you [in the boxes on the left].

Finally, we may have missed out OTHER things which are very important to you.....

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE you would like to say about your experience over this conviction, or which would make it easier for you to cope in the future?

.....

* * * * * THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP * * * * *

SURVEY OF FEMALE OFFENDERS

QUESTIONNAIRE C

CLIENTS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Can we start by talking a little about your background.....

1. What country were you born in? _____

2. a) (If not born in Canada): How old were you when you first came to Canada? _____

or b) (If born in Canada): Where were you born?

Province _____ City _____

Community/Reserve _____

3. a) Mother's country of birth? _____

b) Father's country of birth? _____

4. Do you feel you are part of a distinct cultural group? _____

1) White

2) Native/Aboriginal

- Registered (Status)

- Non-registered (Non-status)

- Inuit

- Metis

5) Black

6) East Asian

7) South Asian

8) Other (specify) _____

5. If Native/Aboriginal: a) what First Nation do you belong to? _____

6. What language do you feel most comfortable with:

1) English

2) French

3) Native language (write in) _____

4) Other (write in) _____

7. What is your marital status at present?:
1) single - never married
2) married
3) common-law
4) separated
5) divorced
6) widowed
8. Have you been married more than once or lived with a previous common-law partner?
1) No 2) Yes
9. a) Where were you living before this sentence began? _____
b) how long had you been there? _____
c) Who were you living with?
(check all that are true)
1) alone
2) with husband
3) with common-law or boyfriend
4) with your children or step-children
5) with parents or in-laws
6) with friends
7) other (where?) _____
10. Will you go back there, or will you need help finding somewhere else to live when you get out? (eg. sheltered housing, low-cost housing...):
1) Plan to go back to same situation
2) Will find own accommodation
3) Would like help finding place to live
-

CHILDREN

Can we talk about children now - this is something which is very important because in the past people have tended to forget about children when women end up in court.

11. Do you have any children?

If yes: How many do you have:

- a) Your own children _____
b) Step/adopted children _____

IF NO CHILDREN PLEASE GO TO QUESTION No.19

12. a) How old are they:

(Write in age of each child)

- 1) under 2 years _____
- 2) 2-5 years _____
- 3) 6-10 years _____
- 4) 11-16 years _____
- 5) 17-18 years _____
- 6) 19 or more _____

b) How old were you when you had your first child? _____

13. a) BEFORE YOUR ARREST how many of your children were living with you?

- 1) all of them
- 2) some of them (how many) _____
- 3) none of them

b) If some were not - who were they living with ? (check all that apply)

- 1) husband or common-law
- 2) ex-husband or common-law
- 3) your mother
- 4) other relatives _____
- 5) friends
- 6) foster home/Children's Aid/wardship
- 7) living on their own
- 8) other _____
- 9) not applicable (all with you)

c) If some were not -can you say why this was? (check all that apply)

- 1) all grown up/adult
- 2) adopted etc at birth or early age
- 3) more recently taken into Care etc because of offending/addiction etc
- 4) own choice because of addiction/not being able to cope etc
- 5) other _____
- 9) not applicable (all with you)

d) WHEN YOU ARE RELEASED will you live with any of your children?

- 1) all of them
- 2) some of them (how many _____)
- 3) none of them

e) If some will not live with you who will they live with? (check all that apply)

- 1) husband or common-law
- 2) ex-husband or common-law
- 3) your mother
- 4) other relatives _____
- 5) friends
- 6) foster home/Children's Aid/wardship
- 7) living on their own
- 8) other _____
- 9) not applicable (all will be with you)

14. Who has had primary responsibility for bringing up your children up to now? (check all that apply)

- 1) self alone
- 2) self and husband/common-law
- 3) ex-husband/common-law
- 4) your mother
- 5) other relatives _____
- 6) foster/adoptive parents etc
- 8) other(who?) _____

15. Have you been a single parent for part or all of the time?

- 1) always
- 2) part of the time
- 3) never

16. What has been the most difficult problem for you and your children since your arrest/conviction?

17. Do you have any major worries about your children that you feel you need help with at present?

If Yes a) What about:

- 1) day-care etc
- 2) accommodation
- 3) financial support
- 4) emotional/coping with behaviour
- 5) legal/advice access
- 6) dealing with the offence
- 7) visits _____
- 8) other _____
- 9) no problems/concerns

If Yes b) What do you think would help you deal/cope with these problems?

- 1) day-care etc _____
- 2) better accommodation _____
- 3) job/financial support _____
- 4) therapy/counselling _____
- 5) legal advice/access _____
- 6) other _____
- 8) no problems/concerns

18. a) Have you had contact with your children in here?

(If not why?) _____

If Yes b) how much contact?

- 1) daily or several times a week
- 2) about once a week
- 3) 2 or 3 times a month or less

If Yes c) Has this been visits mainly or phone calls or letters?

- 1) visits and phone calls
- 2) phone calls or letters only

d) Would you like some/more contact - if so what sort?

19. Do you have any major concerns about other members of your family apart from children which you feel you need help with?
(eg. elderly or sick dependants)
-
-

EDUCATION

Can we talk about work and school now:

20. What was the highest grade you completed in school?
- 1) under grade 8
 - 2) 8
 - 3) 9
 - 4) 10
 - 5) 11
 - 6) 12
 - 7) 13
21. a) Did you/do you like school, get on well with teachers, other students? _____
- b) Did you get a High School Diploma (or equivalent)?
- 1) No
 - 2) Yes
22. Have you ever taken any courses or training since then?
If so, what kind? _____
- 1) some commercial/college _____
 - 2) finished " " _____
 - 3) some trade training _____
 - 4) finished trade training _____
 - 5) some university _____
 - 6) finished university _____
23. Would you like to take more education or training now?
- 1) yes
 - 2) already taking
 - 3) no

24. What kind of courses would you like to take (or are already taking now):

- 1) basic education upgrading
- 2) college/university _____
- 3) trade training _____
- 4) other(what?) _____
- 8) don't want any more

WORK

25. BEFORE YOU CAME HERE did you have a job?

- 1) working full-time
- 2) working part-time
- 3) working on and off
- 4) looking for work
- 5) not working or looking(why?) _____

26. a) If you were working then, what kind of job(s) did you have? _____

b) If you were not working how long was it since you had last worked?

(Years) _____ (Months) _____

27. Have you usually worked since leaving school?

- 1) Yes
- 2) Often unemployed when wanted work
- 3) Not wanted to work (eg. homemaker/student)
- 4) Other/Illegal jobs only _____

28. a) What kinds of job do you usually do?

List the three jobs you have had for the longest time starting with the longest job:

1 _____ (How long? _____)

2 _____ (How long? _____)

3 _____ (How long? _____)

b) Do you usually get on well with people you work with? _____

29. About how much on average do you take home each month from your job? _____

30. What are your main sources of income usually?
(check all that apply)

- 1) wages from job
- 2) husband
- 3) common-law/boyfriend
- 4) ex-husband (child support/alimony)
- 5) mother's allowance
- 6) welfare
- 7) unemployment benefits
- 8) disability payment
- 9) parents, relatives
- 10) other (what?) _____

31. Do you feel you need job-training or help finding a job now?

- 1) job-training
- 2) help finding a job
- 3) help keeping a job
- 4) don't need any(more)
- 5) don't want a job
- 6) other _____

32. What kinds of job training would you like to have (write in) _____

33. What are the main things which stop you getting the job or education you would like?
(check all that apply)

- 1) lack of child care
- 2) lack of transport
- 3) lack of right job skills
- 4) medical disability
- 5) other (what?) _____

-
- 6) don't want a job
 - 7) have job to go to

JUVENILE HISTORY

These questions are about things that happened before you were 16

34. Before your 16th birthday, were you ever convicted for an offence? 1) Yes 2) No

If Yes how many times? _____

If you were convicted before you were 16 what was the most serious thing that happened to you?

- 1) training school
- 2) secure custody/detention home
- 3) open custody/observation home
- 4) probation
- 5) other (what?) _____

35. Before your 16th birthday, were you ever taken into care for your own protection? 1) Yes 2) No

If Yes what happened? _____

YOUNG OFFENDER/ADULT HISTORY

36. How old were you when you were first convicted for an offence? (write in) _____

37. How many times have you been convicted before this time? (write in) _____

38. Have you ever been sentenced to custody as a young offender before?

- 1) Never
- 2) Yes to open custody
- 3) Yes to closed custody

39. Have you ever been sentenced to prison before? (write in no. of times) _____

40. Were any of these federal prison sentences?

- 1) Yes (write number) _____
- 2) No
- 3) Never been in prison

41. Have you ever ended up in prison just because you couldn't or didn't want to pay a fine?

- 1) Yes (write number of times) _____
- 2) No
- 3) Never been in prison

CURRENT SENTENCE/CHARGES

42. a) Were you remanded in custody after your arrest?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes

b) If yes about how long did you spend/have you spent on remand so far?

c) How long have you been in custody altogether (ie. including on sentence)?

43. a) Was anybody else accused at the same time as you for this offence?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

b) If yes was it:

- 1) a male partner
- 2) another male other than a partner
- 3) a female
- 4) other(who?) _____

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Can we talk now about some of the things that might have happened to you as you were growing up.

44. a) Do you think you had an easy time growing up, or were there lots of problems in your family (eg. like moving about a lot, heavy drinking, people being seriously ill, or a lot of arguing and fighting)?

b) So would you say there were:

- 1) no real problems
- 2) some problems
- 3) a lot of problems

c) Has anyone in your family ever been in trouble with the law? _____

45. a) How old were you when you left home?

b) Where did you go/how did you live?

46. a) Do you feel you get a lot of emotional support now from your family and get on well with them?

b) What about support from friends, or people you know well?

c) Have any of the friends you spend time with been in trouble with the law? _____

There's been a lot of talk in the last few years about women being knocked about and physically hurt. It's a very difficult thing to talk about, but we think it's very important to try to find out how common it is.....

47. a) As a child were you ever hit or beaten about in a way that caused injuries (like bruises or burns, cuts, scrapes, broken bones)?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - serious abuse

If Yes b) how often did this happen?

If Yes c) about how old were you?

If Yes d) who was involved?

- 1) mother
- 2) father
- 3) brother
- 4) other relative _____
- 5) other (who?) _____

48. a) As a child were you ever sexually assaulted or forced to take part in sexual activities when you didn't want to?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - serious

If Yes b) about how many times did it happen? _____

If Yes c) about how old were you?

If Yes d) who was involved?

- 1) mother
- 2) father
- 3) brother
- 4) other relative _____
- 5) other (who?) _____

49. a) As a child were you ever mentally or emotionally abused (like being threatened, insulted, locked in a closet etc)?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously abused

b) If yes about how old were you?

c) If Yes who was involved?

- 1) mother
- 2) father
- 3) brother
- 4) other relative _____
- 5) other (who?) _____

AS AN ADULT.....

Have any of these kinds of things happened to you since then.....

50. a) Have you ever been physically abused in a relationship with a partner or by someone else:

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously

b) About how many times has this happened?

c) Can you say who was involved:

- 1) Husband/common-law/boyfriend
- 2) Other _____

51. a) Have you ever been sexually abused in a relationship with a partner or by someone else:

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously

b) About how many times has this happened?

c) Can you say who was involved:

- 1) Husband/common-law/boyfriend
- 2) Other _____

52. a) Have you ever been emotionally abused in a relationship with a partner or by someone else: (like being threatened, insulted...)

- 1) No
- 2) Yes - mild
- 3) Yes - seriously

b) was this:

- 1) husband/common-law/boyfriend
- 2) someone else _____

53. Have you ever sought help about any of these events (eg. did you call a helpline, go to a women's shelter, call the police....)
(If yes, what happened)?

54. a) Do you feel now that you would like some kind of help in dealing with what has happened to you in the past, or to help prevent it happening in the future?

b) would you want to:

- 1) talk to a psychologist or counsellor
- 2) take part in a support group on abuse
- 3) get help to take legal action
- 4) find new accommodation
- 5) other _____
- 6) don't need any help (why) _____
- 7) never been abused

HEALTH

Can we talk now about any difficulties you might have with your health.....

55. a) Do you have any particular concerns about your physical health at the moment (eg. worries about bad headaches, backpains, stomach problems, menstruation, AIDS....)

56. a) Do you think you are getting the kind of physical health care you need at the moment? (and can make yourself understood....)?

b) If not what help do you think you need?

57. a) What about mental health.....are there any particular problems you are worried about?

b) Do you have difficulty with any of the following kinds of problems (check all that apply):

- 1) anxiety/nervousness
- 2) feeling depressed
- 3) difficulty sleeping
- 4) phobias or fears
- 5) getting very angry or violent with people
- 6) no real problems

58. Do you sometimes starve yourself for long periods of time, or make yourself vomit after eating?

- 1) No
- 2) Occasionally
- 3) Often do this

59. a) Have you ever had any treatment for any of the kinds of problems you've mentioned in Questions 57 and 58? _____

b) Do you think you are getting the kind of help you want now (and can make yourself understood.....)?

b) If not what kind of help do you think you need? _____

c) Would you like to take a program on things like nutrition and health care?

Can we talk about the ways people sometimes try to cope with problems in their lives.....

60. Have you ever tried to hurt yourself in some way, like slashing or cutting yourself?

- 1) No
- 2) Once
- 3) More than once

61. Have you ever tried to commit suicide?

- 1) No
- 2) Once
- 3) More than once

62. a) If you have ever hurt yourself or tried to commit suicide, what would have helped you avoid it (eg. friends, other people to talk to, counselling.....)

b) Would you like to be involved in some counselling or a program now to help avoid this kind of behaviour?

- 1) No - not interested
- 2) No - already seen someone (who?) _____
- 3) Yes (what kind?) _____

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Can we talk now about your experience with alcohol and drugs.....

63. a) How much have drugs and alcohol been involved in your getting into trouble with the law? (check all that apply)

- 1) convicted of drug offence(s) (eg. possession)
- 2) convicted of alcohol offences
- 3) convicted of offence(s) to support drug or alcohol habit
- 4) offence(s) usually under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- 5) offence(s) not related to drug or alcohol use in any way
- 6) don't use alcohol
- 7) don't use drugs

b) If you weren't using drugs or alcohol before this arrest, did you use them a lot in the past? _____

64. I'm going to ask you a list of questions about taking ALCOHOL. Can you say Yes or No for each question.

Each question is about the 12 months BEFORE this conviction.

1. Do you feel you are a normal drinker?
2. Have you ever awakened the morning after some drinking the night before and found that you could not remember a part of the evening before?
3. Does your partner(or parents) ever worry or complain about your drinking?
4. Can you stop drinking without a struggle after one or two drinks?
5. Do you ever feel bad about your drinking?
6. Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker?
7. Are you always able to stop drinking when you want to?
8. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) because of your drinking?
9. Have you gotten into fights when drinking?
10. Has drinking ever created problems with you and your partner?
11. Has your partner (or other family member) ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking?
12. Have you ever lost friends, boyfriends or girlfriends because of your drinking?
13. Have you ever got into trouble at work because of drinking?
14. Have you ever lost a job because of drinking?
15. Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking?
16. Do you ever drink before noon?

17. Have you ever been told you have liver trouble?
Cirrhosis?

18. Have you ever had delirium tremens (DTs),
severe shaking, heard voices, or seen things
that weren't there after heavy drinking?

19. Have you ever been arrested, even for a few
hours, because of drunk behaviour?

20. Have you ever been arrested for drunk driving
or driving after drinking?

* * * * *

65. a) Have you ever had any professional help
(eg. at a hospital, clinic or alcohol
treatment centre) because of an alcohol
problem?

- 1) No
- 2) Yes (where) _____

b) Do you think you need some help with
drinking problems now?

If No why is this? _____

If Yes what sort would you like to take?
(check all that apply)

- 1) Individual counselling
- 2) AA group
- 3) Other group with someone from your own
background or culture
- 4) Long residential program for men &
women
- 5) Long residential program with women
only
- 6) Other.....

66. Now I'm going to ask you a list of questions
about using DRUGS. Can you say Yes or No for each
question.

Each question is about the 12 months BEFORE this
conviction.

- 1. Have you used drugs other than those required
for medical reasons?
- 2. Have you abused prescription drugs?

3. Do you abuse more than one drug at a time?
4. Can you get through the week without using drugs?
5. Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to?
6. Have you had "blackouts" or "flashbacks" as a result of drug use?
7. Do you feel bad or guilty about your drug use?
8. Does your partner (or parents) complain about your involvement with drugs?
9. Has drug abuse created problems between you and your partner or your parents?
10. Have you lost friends because of your drug use?
11. Have you neglected your family because of your use of drugs?
12. Have you been in trouble at work because of drug abuse?
13. Have you lost a job because of drug use?
14. Have you got into fights when under the influence of drugs?
15. Have you engaged in illegal activities in order to obtain drugs?
16. Have you been arrested for possession of illegal drugs?
17. Have you experienced withdrawal symptoms (felt sick) when you stopped taking drugs?
18. Have you had medical problems as a result of your drug use (eg. memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, bleeding etc.)?
19. Have you gone to anyone for help for a drug problem?
20. Have you been involved in a treatment program specifically related to drug use?

* * * * *

67. Have you been on prescription drugs in the past five years (like valium, librium, seconal, Halcium, Elavil) given you by your doctor for a long time (to help you sleep, or stop being depressed, anxious etc)?

68. a) Have you done any of the following in the past 5 years (check all that apply):

- 1) mixed drugs and alcohol
- 2) injected drugs
- 3) shared needles
- 4) sniffed glue or gas
- 5) none of these

b) Do you think you need some kind of help with drugs now?

If No why is this? _____

If Yes what kind? (check all that apply)

- 1) Individual counselling
- 2) NA or Cocaine Anonymous type programs
- 3) Other group program with someone from your own background or culture
- 4) Long residential program for men & women
- 5) Long residential program for women only
- 6) Other _____

69. What are the main things which stop you getting the kind of treatment or help with drinking or drugs that you would like:

- 1) lack of support from family or close friends
 - 2) lack of child care
 - 3) lack of transport
 - 4) can't afford to stop working
 - 5) other _____
-

FINALLY

We've covered a lot of things like work and jobs, health, alcohol and drugs, abuse, children and family ties.....

70. What do you think are the most important things you need to deal with right now to help you stay out of trouble with the law?

*Please write in what kind of help you need

- ___ a) Child-related_____
- ___ b) Family support_____
- ___ c) Housing/accommodation_____
- ___ d) Literacy/upgrading_____
- ___ e) Work-training/job skills_____
- ___ f) Employment_____
- ___ g) Substance abuse counselling etc_____
- ___ h) Physical/sexual abuse counselling_____
- ___ i) Health care_____
- ___ j) Help with emotional problems_____
- ___ k) Legal help/advice_____
- ___ l) Native or ethnic programs_____?
- ___ m) Other (specify)_____

*Now can you rank them in order of importance for you [in the boxes on the left].

Finally, we may have missed out OTHER things which are very important to you.....

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE you would like to say about your experience over this conviction, or which would make it easier for you to cope in the future?

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* * * * * THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP * * * * *



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