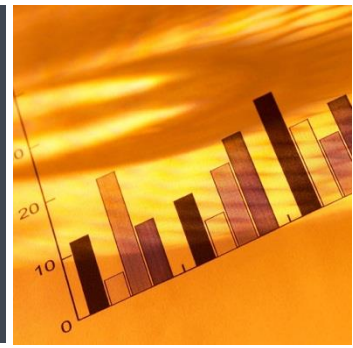


# Incorporating Gender-Based Analysis into Crime Prevention



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BUILDING A SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA

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## Background

Females commit considerably less crime than males in nearly every category of crime (Blanchette & Brown, 2019). In 2017, females accounted for 1 in 4 persons accused in police-reported crime incidents in Canada (Savage, 2019). Typically, females are arrested for theft, impaired driving, fraud, and drug violations (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013). When females do engage in violent crime it is typically less serious, occurs in private settings, and is generally committed against known victims (Schwartz, 2013). In contrast, male violence is far more likely to produce injury, to occur in public, and against strangers (Schwartz, 2013). The Canadian 2014 General Social Survey on victimization revealed that those who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were twice as likely to be the victim of a violent crime than their heterosexual counterparts (Simpson, 2018).

Up until recently scholars and policy makers have afforded at-risk girls, justice-involved girls/women and sexual and gender minorities little attention. This is no longer the case. Gender-based scholarship, policy, and practices are steadily emerging around the globe.

The aim of this report was to close the gap between knowledge and practice by consolidating the literature on gender-based analysis (GBA) in the crime prevention context. This report included; a literature review on gender differences in patterns of offending, risk and protective factors; over-arching gender-based principles distilled from the “What Works” (gender-neutral evidence base) *and* the gender responsive literatures; a systematic review that identified and synthesized the results of outcome evaluations involving female samples of justice-involved individuals (from the community and institutional settings); examples of

promising evidence based programs and strategies for adapting existing crime prevention programs. Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations were also provided.

## Method

A multi-method approach was used to meet our objectives. A standard literature review was used to explore the nature of female perpetrated crime, gender differences and LGBTQ2 offending patterns and victimization. In addition, a systematic review was used to identify risk and protective factors and outcome evaluations. A thematic content analysis was used to distill over-arching gender-based principles. To ensure all potential articles/studies were selected, we targeted a broad range of sources, including primary studies, narrative literature reviews, and meta-analytic reviews; no date restrictions were imposed. We included peer-reviewed (e.g., journal articles) and non-peer-reviewed work (e.g., books, edited books, technical reports published by governments or agencies) from Canadian and international authors. We included articles across the developmental spectrum from childhood through adulthood. Collectively, this approach rendered 31,888 initial sources for investigation; ultimately, 56 risk and/or protective studies were included; 41 outcome evaluations, and 84 sources that informed the creation of the over arching gender-based principles.

## Findings

Fifty-six studies were identified that either examined risk or protective factors in exclusive samples of girls/women or examined risk or protective factors in the same study, but separately for males and females. No studies disaggregated results for LGBTQ2 individuals. Overall, consistently identified risk



predictors in both genders included: criminal history, criminal thinking, antisocial peers, employment challenges, poor parental supervision, externalizing mental health problems (e.g., aggression), and absence of family support. Evidence was mixed or inconclusive in regards to: executive functioning (eg. attention and self-regulation), antisocial personality, internalizing mental health problems (e.g., depression, self-harm), childhood adversities, substance misuse, relationship quality (eg. partner satisfaction), absence of peer support, education, poor use of leisure time, and community factors (e.g., housing insecurity). Further, the review did not identify a clear pattern of gender differences among risk predictors; gender similarities were the norm. Notably, major mental illness and self-concept (an individual's perception of oneself) did not predict offending for either gender. Family support and employment were consistently identified as protective factors for both genders. Mixed evidence emerged for the protective effects of peer support, education, executive functioning, and living with a partner. Gender differences in protective factors were not identified. Future research may identify potentially nuanced gender differences however.

Thirteen over-arching gender-based principles were distilled from the content analysis: (1) Create environments characterized by safety, respect and dignity; (2) Conduct comprehensive, individualized assessments; (3) Target multiple needs; (4) Target needs using a holistic framework; (5) Utilize community-based wraparound services emphasizing continuum of care; (6) Be trauma responsive; (7) Be strength based; (8) Be relational; (9) Implement structured skills-based treatment to strengthen needs; (10) Implement diversity responsive approaches; (11) Train and use staff appropriately; (12) Embrace research and evaluation; (13) Implement sustainable programs with high fidelity.

Forty-one rigorous outcome evaluations conducted between 1970 and 2019 were identified; 16 targeted children/youth and 25 targeted adults; samples were ethnically diverse; and most studies were conducted in the United States. No studies focused on LGBTQ2 individuals. The results clearly identified programs that

reduced criminal conduct as well as those that did not have an impact on criminal conduct.

Effective programs were characterized by: a human service as opposed to a punishment philosophy; clear implementation of the risk principle (risk level was matched to treatment intensity); blended treatment models that incorporated elements from the “What Works” and the gender responsive evidence base; holistic substance abuse programs for women that simultaneously targeted trauma; and community-based wraparound programs for youth grounded in social learning paradigms. Ineffective programs were characterized by: unstructured counseling; pure token economies; punishment-oriented programs (e.g., Scared Straight); unstructured programs (e.g., no manual), poorly implemented programs; and programs that failed to adhere to the risk principle and program fidelity.

Several promising evidence based programs were identified: Girls Circle (One Circle Foundation, n.d.) for low risk girls; Stop-Now-and-Plan (SNAP, Augimeri, Walsh, Levene, Sewell, & Rajca, 2014); and Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO; Chamberlain, 2003) for moderate risk girls; Moving On (Orbis Partners, n.d.); and the jointly delivered Helping Women Recover (Covington, 2019) & Beyond Trauma (Covington, 2016) for moderate to high risk women. The Collaborative Case Work with Women (CCW-W; Orbis Partners, n.d.) was also identified as a promising supervision model for women.

## Conclusions and Lessons Learned

1. Implement blended programs and service delivery models that incorporate elements from the “What Works” and the gender responsive evidence base.
2. Fund outcome evaluations for programs with promising evidence. Examples for low risk girls: Girls Circle; for moderate risk girls or boys: Stop-Now-and-Plan (SNAP); for moderate to high risk women: Moving On. The evaluations should also contain a cost benefit component.
3. Evaluate the extent to which pre-existing services for girls and women are gender responsive using the Gender-Responsive Policy

- and Practice Assessment (GRPPA, Bloom, Covington, Messina, Selvaggi, & Owen, 2014)
4. Explore if and how pre-existing programs for girls and women can be adapted for the LGBTQ2 community.
  5. Invest in nationwide gender-based training in all justice-related settings (community and institutional), and cross-over agencies: social services, police, the courts and correctional settings.
  6. Designate a national champion to over-see the implementation of gender-based practices.

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## Additional Sources

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