



Parental Distress and Family Reunification among Incarcerated Women in Kenya

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Abstract: Women face difficulties adapting back into their families after incarceration. Gender-responsive programs build an atmosphere that provides a sense of the realities of women's lives and discusses women's issues. The study sought to determine whether rehabilitation programs address parenting distress and family reunification of incarcerated women. Adopting a cross-sectional descriptive research design the study sampled 384 women offenders and 5 officers in charge of the selected women prisons in Kenya. Also included were representatives from NGOs and FBOs partnering with Kenya prisons in rehabilitating women offenders and director rehabilitation service in Kenya prisons. The data was obtained using self-administered questionnaires. The study also utilized a simple random sampling technique to select respondents for the study and a purposive sampling design to sample the number of women prisons and the key informants. Based on the stress level categories on parental scale index by Abidin (1995), the study findings affirmed that incarcerated women in Kenya prisons suffer from parental distress. This was indicated by a cumulative mean of 42.69. The assumption of the PSI scale is that typical parental stress among incarcerated mothers is between 15- 80. The reintegration of incarcerated women is marred with challenges such as stigma, loneliness, unemployment, broken marriage/relationship, rejection from family and/or children, financial constraints, drugs/substance abuse etc. These challenges increase the chances of recidivism among just-released incarcerated women. Therefore the study recommends Kenya prison service to implement gender-informed programs such as parenting and relationship programs, trauma informed programs.

Keywords: Parental Distress, Family, Reunification, Incarcerated women, Kenya

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1. Introduction

Incarceration of women is increasing internationally (World Health Organisation 2020; Stack 2020). Parental distress is the degree of overwhelming sadness, anxiety, or pain experienced by an individual (who is also a parent) (Driscoll, Buscemi & Holmbeck, 2018). Research into parental stress has revealed a link between parental stress

and crime, especially among female offenders who were single parents (Poehlmann-Tynan & Pritzl, 2019). A big percentage of women in prison have at least one child under the age of 18 and visitation and child custody are difficult to manage while incarcerated (Turanovic & Tasca, 2019). A study by Aiello and McCorkel (2018) found out that more than 60% of women in state prisons and almost 80% of those in jail are mothers with minor children. In contrast to incarcerated fathers, the majority

of incarcerated mothers are single mothers who are solely responsible for their young children.

Institutional parenting programs are one way to alleviate the potential negative effects of maternal incarceration on children's well-being (Poehlmann-Tynan & Dallaire, 2021; Correa, Hayes, Bhalakia, Lopez, Cupit, Kwarteng-Amaning & Van Horne, 2021). Mothers can develop strategy and skills to help their children adapt to the challenges and stressors associated with incarceration through parent preparation programs. Unfortunately, most programs ignore the crucial, ongoing link that exists between jailed moms and family members who care for their children—often the convicts' own mothers. According to research, when various co-caregivers fail to coordinate parenting efforts and interventions, act in opposition, or degrade or undermine one another, children's behavior issues worsen (Arditti & Savla, 2015; Arditti, 2016). Regardless, it is now unclear if parenting programs for mothers in these facilities have a favorable impact on various parenting outcomes (Tremblay & Sutherland, 2017).

There are approximately 10,644 Convicted women in Kenya as of 2017 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017), with about 3762 women prisoners serving long-term sentences (Walmsley, 2017). Corrections programs aimed at improving mothers' parenting skills often focus solely on knowledge and skill development, rather than larger family system challenges that would eventually serve as the framework for future maternal involvement. As a result, any advances in knowledge or skills that women achieve while incarcerated may be lost if they are denied the ability to engage in decision-making regarding their children and have no significant links to active parenting while incarcerated. The aim of this study was to determine whether rehabilitation programs address parental distress and family reunification of incarcerated women on which most studies are silent on especially in the African, Kenyan context. In various ways, this study contributes to correctional policy and enhances existing theory, research and correctional social work knowledge.

2. Literature review

A study found that corrections-based parenting programs have positive effects on parental behavior, parenting attitudes, and parenting knowledge. However, these interventions appear to have little direct impact on parenting stress for incarcerated moms who may be forced to move from their homes or lose contact with their primary caregiver (Tremblay & Sutherland, 2017). Inmate mothers' support networks are under-recognized and under reported. There has been a change in emphasis toward building institution-based programs to fulfill these women's particular parenting demands. Inmate mothers often have little or no access to their own children. The majority of those who do re-enter a system in which their

children have been raised by their grandmothers or other relatives are incarcerated fathers, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2010) data shows that mothers' communication with their children is most typically facilitated by grandmothers rather than fathers (Engstrom, 2008).

Many prison authorities restrict the number of visits prisoners can have with their families, as well as the amount of time they can spend with them (Halter, 2018), while paying little attention to the conditions of the visit and its positive emotional impact. Prison visits are often regarded as a privilege that can be easily removed, rather than an essential part of a prisoner's release planning (Cochran, Mears & Bales, 2017). Many of the emotional and behavioral problems that children of incarcerated parents exhibit originated before their mother's arrest as a result of poor parenting choices; however, their mother's incarceration exacerbates these tendencies. According to research by Collica-Cox and Furst, (2019), children who are denied visits with their moms in jail have higher levels of anxiety, despair, and withdrawal symptoms than children who do not have such restrictions. Even when visits were impossible to arrange, greater letter writing and phone conversations were linked to less behavioral issues. Children can benefit from their mother taking a parenting course, especially if she learns how to foster healthy communication.

Women are often imprisoned far from home due to a lack of resources, a vast geographic region, and the fact that various prisons have varying levels of security (Aday & Dye, 2019). As a result, families and friends of prisoners must travel long distances and pay a high price to see them. Families are not given any financial support for visits, and prison rules provide for the prohibition of touch as a punitive punishment (Beresford, Earle, Loucks, & Pinkman, 2020). Furthermore, stress related to reduce interaction is linked to higher levels of mental illness among incarcerated women with children (Tadros, 2021; Milavetz, Pritzl, Muentner, & Poehlmann-Tynan, 2021).

To underscore the importance of parental stress as both a risk factor and a treatment, research on women's parenting services typically shows impressive results on offense-related outcomes, highlighting the significance of parental tension as both a risk factor and a treatment goal (Beattie, 2018). The distance between the prison and the children's homes, as well as a lack of transportation and financial support, make it difficult for a woman prisoner to sustain these relationships. Children of women who are incarcerated face many challenges (Poehlmann-Tynan, & Pritzl, 2019). Research on women's parenting programs generally shows impressive effects on offense-related outcomes.

Parenting is one of the most important determinants of a child's psychosocial growth. The ways in which parents communicate with their children may either be a risk

factor or a protective factor for their growth (Henson, 2020). To deal with the burdens of incarceration, both men and women take on different roles in the prisoner subculture. Females are thought to be more sensitive to the effects of incarceration than males due to the difficulties of being separated from their families and children (Ocen, 2017).

It is behaviorally and emotionally advantageous for anyone to preserve the relationship between an incarcerated mother and her child (Collica & Gennifer 2020; Synder, 2009). Restoring mother-child ties, according to Purvis (2013), may minimize the risk of future involvement in criminal justice. The pain of incarceration is usually more intense for women than men, partially because of separation from their children (Cooke & Farrington, 2015). They suffer from higher rates of depression and other types of mental illness when compared to male prisoners (Collica & Gennifer, 2020). Their children also suffer from many problems, including depression, social isolation, family dysfunction, anxiety, drug use, behavior breaking the law, behavioral disorder, antisocial behavior, low educational success, educational failure, school failure, mental health problems, restricted potential income, physical illnesses, and dysfunctional intimate relationships (Mears, & Siennick, 2016). Incarceration and alienation from families and, in particular, children also have a huge effect on mothers who are incarcerated. Women state that they feel sorrow, rage, and helplessness as they worry about their children's health and well-being and the potential for permanent loss of custody when they are imprisoned (Alexander & Opsal, 2019; Foster, 2012). Incarcerated women are more likely than incarcerated men to report having minor children, and more mothers than fathers report living with their minor children in the period before they were arrested (Shlafer, Hardeman, & Carlson, 2019).

When mothers are incarcerated, the interruption of the relationship with their children puts all emotional and behavioral issues at risk. (Collica & Gennifer, 2020). The pains of incarceration are usually felt more harshly by women than men, partially because of separation from their children. When compared to male inmates, they suffer from higher rates of depression and other forms of mental illness (Collica & Gennifer, 2020).). Researchers find that most women inmates want to engage in parenting activities, and most want to restore their relationship with their kids. Parenting programs in prison are becoming increasingly common (Armstrong, Eggins, Reid, Harnett, & Dawe, 2017; Loper & Tuerk, 2006). In United States the Partners in Parenting (PIP) program is a training initiative primarily designed to help female offenders strengthen their relationships with their children (Mbatha, et al., 2019; Gonzalez, Romero, & Cerbana, 2007).

Many facilities offer parenting programs, but there is no study on their efficacy (Purvis, 2013). The goals of these services differ, but they typically include enhancing

incarcerated parents' parenting skills, strengthening relationships, reducing the detrimental impact of parental incarceration on children and adults, and assisting in the reduction of reoffending (Armstrong .et al., 2017; Purvis, 2013 Loper & Tuerk, 2006). Because of their perceived potential to improve parenting skills and mitigate some of the negative effects of parental incarceration, prison-based parenting programs are becoming increasingly common (Butler, Percy, Hayes, & Devaney, 2019). Previous research has found that parental incarceration can have a negative impact on children's well-being, social isolation, psychopathology, behavioral difficulties, low educational attainment, and crime in the short and long term (Wildeman, 2014). Among the many challenges experienced by parents who are incarcerated are issues around visitations and child custody. Maintaining such arrangements while incarcerated is not very easy resulting to parental stress (De Clare & Dixon, 2017; Bloom et al., 2003).

Once distressed, the incarcerated mother may be presented with discipline problems in correctional facilities, while the child may exhibit behavioral problems in schools, placing further demands on public institutions and children's caregivers (Martin, 2017). The bond between the incarcerated mother and the child may be strained by the lack of child-parent relationship, whereby the mother who has been out of contact with the child loses her moral control over the child. The mother also finds it difficult to make decisions about her child (De Clare & Dixon, 2017; Tuerk & Loper, 2006). Studies focus more on the impact of incarceration on parents or children, with an emphasis on the immediate problems of stress, anxiety, the preservation of close family relations and other programmatic issues (Stansfield, et al., 2020). This is counterproductive since the issue is much wider than the immediate needs of inmates or families.

Inmate mothers with higher parenting stress levels are much more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety and depression. In addition, the increased prevalence of institutional offenses result in higher levels of recorded parenting stress (Aday, & Dye, 2019). This shows that mothers experiencing parenting stress have greater difficulty adjusting to the rules and constraints of prison life (Tupper, et al., 2020). A research carried out by Collica and Gennifer (2020) on evidence-based Parenting Inside-Out curriculum, showed a significantly decreased depression, decreased drug abuse, increased parental engagement, improved parenting skills, decreased parental stress, and decreased recidivism among prisoners

Although most studies have shown that most prison -based programs neglect the major, ongoing relationship between imprisoned mothers and family members caring for their children there has been a consensus that many imprisoned women have left behind children (Aiello, & McQueeney, 2020; Cecil et al., 2008), during the time of arrest. A study conducted among incarcerated women by Aiello and

McQueeney (2020) found that although mothers experienced a sense of appreciation to caregivers for caring for their children and helping them remain connected during incarceration, they also felt shut out from day-to-day caregiving and/or felt disrespected or displaced in the eyes of their children by caregivers.

As Glaze and Maruschak (2016) noted, the majority of treatment for their minor children, including financial support, had traditionally been given previously by women. The imprisonment usually leaves a hole not only in the incarcerated women's lives but in the lives of their young children too. Conflict between incarcerated mothers and the caregivers of their children in these relationships can result in reduced mothers' interaction with their children leading to non-existent, supportive, or even contentious relationships (Poehlmann-Tynan, & Pritzl, 2019). Children who lack contact with incarcerated parents may feel alienated thus contributing to psychological distress in the household (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010; Uwera 2020).

Strong family ties have been shown to minimize reoffending, promoting desistance, and reducing prison misconduct (Cochran, 2012; Brunton-Smith & McCarthy, 2017). There is also an increased interest in improving family relationships of those in prison. Parenting programs have the ability to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of criminal activity by enhancing family functioning during and after incarceration. Poor family functioning has been linked to the transmission of criminal behavior from incarcerated parents to their children (Auty, Farrington, & Coid, 2015). According to Turney & Goodsell, (2018), correction programs need to be designed to strengthen mothers' parenting skills. They instead typically focus on promoting knowledge-and skill-building, but not on broader family issues that will ultimately serve as the context for future maternal involvement.

Both mothers and their children are affected by the community and household conditions. For example, Murray and Farrington (2008) contend that children of incarcerated mothers may experience poverty, familial substance abuse, and changes in homes and guardians. Child antisocial behavior, offending, mental health problems, drug abuse, school failure, and unemployment are often associated with parental incarceration. Children's development is negatively affected by maternal incarceration therefore setting the stage for their involvement in the crime. This is because children attachment relationships are disrupted, particularly given the greater chance of non-familial care during the mother's incarceration (Dallaire, 2007). Research suggests that monitored visitations with children are a key component to a reunification case plan. When visitations are embraced, they provide several benefits to both the child and the incarcerated mother. Incarcerated mothers who receive regular visits, as Schubert (2016) argues, they

exhibit higher self-esteem and lower levels of depression, anxiety and parental stress. Visiting is recommended for families to enable them to sustain or build a relationship (Flynn, 2014) and contribute to family reunification.

Also Piquero et al. (2016) concluded that community-based parenting programs are an important evidence-based tool for reducing antisocial behaviour and delinquency in children and adolescents. For imprisoned parents, lower recidivism, and better post-release adjustment and community integration have been associated with the maintenance of supportive family ties through visiting (Codd, 2007). As Vaswani (2019) affirms, most of the female offenders are likely to be primary breadwinners in their families at the time of their incarceration. The fears of female offenders are whether the children will suffer because of their incarceration and the worst being if their absence and motherly guidance will put the children engaging in criminal behavior and end up incarcerated too. The pains of coping with prison life and not being able to help their children when they face difficulties are overwhelming to women offenders to the extent of contemplating suicide (Vaswani, 2019). Women offenders also fear whether they will reunite and be accepted by other family members, especially their spouses. Research by Odhiambo (2010), indicates that majority of women lose their marriages as a result of imprisonment. Some women may not get a husband because of stigma and societal stereotypes.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design targeting a population of 384 women offenders and 5 officers in charge of the selected women prisons in Kenya. The Cochran formula allows one to calculate a sample size with the desired level of precision, level of confidence, and the estimated proportion of the attribute present in the population.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

The study was conducted in selected maximum women prisons hosting women offenders with all forms of criminal offenses and considered to host the majority of offenders across all counties in Kenya. The target population of the study was women offenders incarcerated in the 18 Kenyan prisons. Purposive sampling technique was used to select five focus group discussions with 8 participants in each FGD from the selected five women correctional facilities. The study included only incarcerated women who had been in the prison for at least six months with an assumption they have enough information on programs offered in correction facilities. Also, included were representatives from NGOs and FBOs partnering with Kenya prisons in rehabilitating women offenders and director rehabilitation service in Kenya

prisons. The data was obtained using self-administered questionnaires. Out of the possible 384 questionnaires, 340 were completed. The study also utilized a simple random sampling technique to select respondents for the study and a purposive sampling design to sample the number of women prisons and the key informants.

4. Results and Discussion

Table1: Distribution by number of visits for incarcerated women by their children

Number of visits (not counting visits from lawyers)		
	N	Cumulative Percentage
Weekly	53	15.6
Fortnightly	70	36.2
Monthly	63	54.7
Other	154	100.0
Total	340	

Table 1 indicates the number of visits incarcerated women receive from their children. Majority of respondents indicated others presented by 45.3%. 20% of the respondents gets visits after every two weeks, 18.6% receive visits every month. 15.6% of respondents receive visits every week. Respondents who picked “Others” in this study mean that most respondent do not get in contact with their children as often as it should. This concurs with research by Cochran, Mears and Bales (2017) who affirmed that many prison officials restrict the number of visits prisoners may have with their families, as well as the amount of time they can spend with them, and pay little attention to the conditions of the visit and its positive emotional impact. Rather than being an essential part of a prisoner's preparation for release, prison visits are often regarded as a luxury that can be easily withdrawn. Given that a large proportion of women in jail have at least one child under the age of 18, and that visitation and child custody are difficult to handle whilst in prison (Turanovic & Tasca, 2019), parental stress has been linked to higher levels of mental illness among incarcerated women especially those who were single parents prior to their arrest. This was backed up by information collected from focused group discussion with women inmates as seen from the quotes below:

“Nimekua hapa ndani kwa miaka kumi na moja, mtoto wangu mmoja nilimuacha akiwa na miaka miwili saa hii ako form two na sijawai muona najua tu tukikutana lazima rejection ikue. Na inapea wasiwasi sana (I have been in here (prison) for eleven years, a child I left behind was two years then, and I have never seen him, I just know

The study sought to examine whether the rehabilitation programmed addressed parental distress and family reunification among incarcerated women in Kenyan women prison. The findings were as presented in this section. The table show the number of visits incarcerated women receive from their children and family members.

when we meet he will reject me) it gives me anxiety” (FGD 3).

One representative from the FBO that is involved in rehabilitation of women incarcerated in the selected women correctional facilities had this to say:

If there is something that depresses and distresses women in prison is their children whereabouts. Where are my children? How are they? How are they doing? Sometimes the reports the get about their children are not good reports, some left their children with no one in particular as most of them were single mothers prior to their arrest”(FBO1).

The study sought to measure the level of parental stress among incarcerated women in Kenya women prisons. Based on the stress level categories on parental scale index by Abidin (1995), the study findings affirmed that incarcerated women in Kenya prisons suffer from parental distress. This was indicated by a cumulative mean of 42.69. The assumption of the PSI scale is that typical parental stress among incarcerated mothers is between 15-80. Majority of incarcerated women with children had higher prenatal stress on impacting the lives of their children while in prison. This findings concurs with research by Ocean (2017) who affirms that, owing to the hardships of being separated from their families and children, females are believed to be more vulnerable to the consequences of incarceration than males (Ocen, 2017). On the statement “In conversations with other people at the prison, I talk about my child” 60.6% of respondents agreed with the statement. Indicating that there is high

tensions among incarcerated women concerning their children. These findings concurs with claims with risk-need reponsivity model that affirms that criminal activity can be predicted, thus intensive treatment may concentrate on high-risk criminals when designing and delivering programs, the Need principle asserts that priority should be provided to criminogenic needs offenders. It is believed that Women's offending and recidivism have been attributed to maternal depression and parental needs in particularly (Adams, 2020). Many of these women will benefit from a variety of parenting courses and programs. They must also learn how to reintegrate into their child's life and how to become better parents. In addition, many of these women require drug therapy.

For women who are accompanied by children to prison, parental distress is still evident. The reality is evident from FGD two quotes below:

“In prison the situation is tough for children, I am not given enough water to clean my child, and water is scarce. (Maji unapewa ni baridi, huwa naweka kwa jupa naekwa kwa mabati yawe moto ndio nimpanguze mtoto. (the water am supplied with is usually cold, I normally put in a bottle then place it on the roof top to get warm so that I clean my child). Chakula si kizuri kwa mtoto, tunakula chakula kimoja mimi na mtoto wangu, hakuna special diet kwa mtoto.

Nguo za watoto tunapewa huwa zinaletwa na wasamaria wema, kitu kama diaper tunapewa moja kwa siku ambayo haitoshi)..(the food is not so good for the child, we eat same food with children. We are given clothes normally donated by well-wishers, for the baby diapers we are given one per day which is not enough” (FGD1, 4).

For women inmates who had little children in prison, they had this to say:

“The language the child gets to hear here is bad, vulgar language. They get hear words like nitakua, nitakuchapa (I will kill you, I will beat you). It is depressing to see a small little child grow up knowing such language, it hurts” (FGD5)

A study by Mumola (2000) found out that 28% of mothers claim that their children reside with their fathers while they're in incarceration. Nine out of ten mothers said their children live with a grandparent, other family, or a friend. Women in prison are five times more likely than men to report having their children removed from their immediate family and placed in a foster home or other agency; 10% of women have children residing in a foster home or other agency. The table below indicates distribution of difficulties family members of incarcerated women face when con when conducting prison visitations.

Table 2: Difficulties with family visitation

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Location	148	1.0068	.08220
Lack of transport	117	2.0000	.00000
Stress of the visit	67	3.0000	.00000
Childcare issues	21	4.0000	.00000
Others	48	5.0000	.00000

The findings in the table 2 above indicate that most incarcerated women cite location as the main reason of lack of visitation by their families and/or children .This was represented by 147 respondents with a (Mean of 1.0068 and SD of .08220). These findings concur with Aday and Dye, (2019) who affirmed that Women are often imprisoned far from home due to lack of resources, a vast geographic region, and the fact that various prisons have varying levels of security. As a result, families and friends of prisoners must travel long distances and pay a high

price to see them. The transition from law-abiding citizen/mother to convicted felon can be especially difficult for women prisoners, as mothers have been regarded as society's moral backbone, whose fall from grace implies a seriously broken or corrupt character. Mothers who are incarcerated are not the only women who are stigmatized, but they are among the most ostracized in society. The table indicates spearman rank correlation between dysfunctional relationship and prison base programs variables

Table 3: Distribution by level of dysfunction relationship among incarcerated women

	Prison_Programmes	Dysfunctional_Relationships
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.944
	N	340

Results as presented in table 3 showed a weak negative association between the two variables, prison programmes and dysfunctional relationships among incarcerated women. The findings of the investigation revealed the true coefficient connection of (-.004 and Sig. 944). There is insufficient evidence that there is a relationship between present prison-based services for jailed women and the dysfunctional relationship among detained women in Kenya because the $P > .944$ is bigger than the sig 0.05.

In response to rising victimization concerns, correctional facilities have not evolved. Although correctional institutions have become more conscious of the difficult paths women take to incarceration, it is vital to translate that awareness and understanding into meaningful programs and procedures when working with women in inherently stressful situations like jail (Ervin, 2020).

Female inmates' disadvantages are exacerbated by correctional facilities, regardless of age, failing to provide the essential recuperation and care services. Given the high incidence of abuse histories among women and girls in correctional facilities, trauma-informed environments and supports are critical. Females are more likely than males to be physically and sexually victimized in adult contexts. Because of the biased and uninformed curricula offered by Kenyan women's prisons, the vast majority of inmates depart with skills that may or may not be financially viable. Many jailed women originate from large families or families with unstable histories, which includes weakening family relationships, violence, and maltreatment during their childhood and adolescence (Whiting, et al., 2020).

Table 4: Spearman rank correlation coefficient results for null hypothesis (H₀) between prison programs and parental distress and family reunification among incarcerated women

Correlations			Parental distress_mean	Prison_Programmes
Spearman's rho	Parentaldistress_mea n	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.087
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.109
		N	340	340

Source (Field data, 2020)

The findings of null hypothesis on the relationship between prison programs and parental distress and family reunification. The null hypothesis (H₀) "there is no significant relationship between current prison-based programs and parental distress/family reunification" indicated coefficient correlation -087, $p = .109$. According to spearman rule a negative correlation coefficient expresses a negative relationship between variable. Therefore the study fails to reject null hypothesis as there was no significant relationship between current prison program and parental distress/family reunification denoted by the equation $r_s(338) = -087, p > .109$.

The study failed to reject the null hypothesis indicating there is no significant relationship between current prison programs and parental stress and family reunification. The study findings concur with a study by Tremblay and Sutherland (2017), who examined the outcomes of Randomized Control Treatments in relation to parenting attitudes and found that institution-based parenting

programs have small effects on parenting attitudes and distress.

Tremblay and Sutherland (2017) showed that in the short-term, corrections-based parenting programs are connected with favorable effects on parental behavior, parenting attitudes, and parenting knowledge. These programs, on the other hand, appear to have little effect on parenting stress just after rehabilitation. These programs are widely varied in terms of theoretical orientation, therapeutic components, and program content due to the lack of criteria for establishing parental interventions for this population. Furthermore, women who are involved in the justice system encounter a number of specific contextual challenges that are not experienced by non-justice-involved mothers, making it unclear whether typical programs are beneficial in addressing parenting issues in this population.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Most of incarcerated women are single mothers and bread winners to their young children. Upon imprisonment, majority suffer maternal distress affecting their prison adjustment because constant worrying of their children they left behind under no one's care. Supporting the continuous development of critical social and emotional skills in young children while their moms are incarcerated may have the longer-term payoff of lowering the probability of delinquent and antisocial conduct. Almost all incarcerated mothers express a desire to do the right thing for their children. The trouble is that, given their circumstances, they frequently find it difficult to carry out

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- these parental aspirations. Planned attempts to establish communication and improve relationships between the jailed mother and her child's caretaker can only be beneficial in these circumstances. After their release, the majority of women will confront significant obstacles that will make it difficult for them to stay crime-free and reunite with their children. If meaningful conversations about the child and the value of co-parenting, cooperation, and support for children can be established by players in the criminal justice system like social workers among other practitioners in the field, prior to release, it will help to strengthen mothers throughout their reintegration into the community and in the lives of their children.
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