AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES TOUCHE BY INCARCERATION
WASHINGTON STATE PARENTING SENTENCING ALTERNATIVE
The Need: Why Create a Parenting
Sentencing Alternative?

In 2008/2009, the Department of Corrections experienced a dramatic
increase in prison population.

Economic downturn and budget reductions

Reduce crowding

The cost of incarcerating a female offender in a minimum security
living unit is about $90.47 per day. The cost of incarcerating a male
offender in a minimum security living unit is about $64.71 per day.

At a major institution that cost increases; female offenders about
$121.65 per day and male offenders about $70.60 per day.
Parenting Sentencing Alternative

The legislation created **TWO** alternatives in which parents of minor children that have been convicted of a non-violent, non-sex offense can receive intensive supervision in lieu of incarceration:

- **Family and Offender Sentencing Alternative (FOSA) – Judicial Sentencing Option:** Judges have the option to waive a prison sentence within the standard sentence range and impose 12 months of community custody along with conditions for treatment and programing for eligible offenders facing a prison sentence.

- **Community Parenting Alternative (CPA):** Allows the Department of Corrections to transfer an offender home on electronic home monitoring for up to the last 12 months of his or her sentence.
FOSA – Eligibility Requirements

Offender Must:

- Have physical custody of his/her minor child(ren) or is a legal guardian or custodian with physical custody of a minor child at the time of current offense.
- The high end of the offender's sentence is more than one year (presumptive prison sentence).
- Sign a release of information waiver regarding current and/or prior child welfare involvement.

Offender May Not:

- Have current or prior convictions for a felony sex and/or violent offense.
- Be subject to a deportation order.
If revoked the offender is incarcerated for the mid to high range of the sentencing range.

No credit for time served under FOSA in the community will be granted if revoked.
CPA – Eligibility Requirements

Offender Must:

- Have physical custody of minor child(ren), or have legal custody of a minor child,
- Has a proven, established, ongoing, and substantial relationship with his or her minor child that existed prior to the commission of the current offense; or is a legal guardian of a minor child at the time of the current offense.
- Have up to 12 months remaining on their prison sentence.
- Sign a release of information waiver regarding current and/or prior child welfare involvement.

Offender May Not:

- Have any current convictions for a sex and/or violent offense.
- Be subject to a deportation order.

The Department of Corrections:

- Determines that such placement is in the best interest of the child.
- Considers nature of harm, visitation, infractions & programming while incarcerated.
CPA – Prison Option

Best Interest of Child

Children's Administration Report

Behavioral Health & Rehabilitation Report

Transfer Plans

Offender Interview

Home Visit

Search Waiver

Custodial Parent Support

Referral Process

*Actual participants
Community Supervision/ Monitoring Phase System

Phase 1
• 1st-3rd month
• Parenting, CD treatment, cognitive behavioral groups, solution focused brief therapy, routine and structure

Phase 2
• 4th-8th month
• Educational & vocational classes, employment

Phase 3
• 9th-12th month
• Independent decision making & balancing life responsibilities

Phone Check In’s
Home Visits
Homework/Reading
Meal time
Accountability
Transparency

*Actual participant
Goal Oriented Strength Based Model

Community Based Partnership

Sustainability

Individual Support

Employment/Education/Vocation

Transportation

Budgeting

Housing

Balance

*Actual participants
Multi Disciplinary Screening Committee

The screening process was implemented by the Department of Corrections:

- Ensures that the “best interest of the child” is being met.
- Ensures that eligible offenders are selected to participate on the CPA program.

Screening Process Includes:

- Assessing what is in the best interest of the child
- Nature & extent of convictions
- Relationship to the child prior to & during incarceration
- Extent of parental role
- Infractions while incarcerated
- Program participation in prison
Solution Based Case Management

- Strength Based
- Building Consensus
- Client Driven (what did you want to be when you were a child?)
- Gender Responsive
- Working with offender & family
- Non traditional supervision approach
- Relational Approach
- Present Parenting
  - Clean & sober
  - Put your child(ren) first
- Kid Focus
  - Development, nutrition, education, physical/mental health
- Balance
Identify Risk Factors
Identify Strength Factors
Protective Factors

- Conditions that can protect families and promote resilience.
- Serve as a buffer against adversity – when present in families, the likelihood of child maltreatment goes down.
- The Protective Factors framework focuses on strategies for building family strengths rather than focusing exclusively on risk deficits.
The Protective Factors

- Parental/Family Resilience
- Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
- Social Connections
- Concrete Support in Times of Need

“I would definitely recommend this program for parents who are READY to change and willing to do whatever it takes to be good parents”.
- Former CPA Mother

“Since starting FOSA, I have been given a second chance to change. I have been given more time with my kids, we read daily and eat meals together.”
- Former CPA Father

"Having my husband home makes me feel like I'm not alone anymore."
- Wife of current participant
Strengthening Families Framework

- Over 30 states using the framework, and is integrated in multiple Washington initiatives: Frontiers of Innovation, Early Achievers, Essentials for Childhood, Community Café, Department of Corrections.

- Easily supported by everyday actions of parents, teachers and community members.

- Moves the work of child abuse prevention to measuring positive impacts in lives and communities.
Parental/Family Resilience

Having adaptive skills and strategies to preserve in times of crisis. Family’s ability to openly share positive & negative experiences & mobilize to accept, solve and manage problems.
What does Parental Resilience Look Like?

The Cowardly Lion
Parental/Family Resilience

What it looks like:
- Hope & optimism
- Problem solving skills
- Ability to maintain/restore calm
- Self-care
- Help seeking
- Future orientation

What you can do:
- Support for parental decision-making
- Validation & encouragement
- Support for self-care
- Training/support in problem solving
- Model resilience
- “Cheerlead”
Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

✓ Understanding and using effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children and youth.
Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

What it looks like:

• Nurturing parenting styles
• Effective communication & warm interaction
• Self control over choices
• Feeling valued and able to make a difference
Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

What you can do:

• Create an environment where parents are comfortable asking for help.
• Identify actions parents can take to help strengthen their parenting skills.
• Highlight activities the child is enjoying or participating in which point out age appropriate developmental levels.
Social Connections

- Friends & Family
- Community
- Social Institutions
- Peers
- School
Social Connections

• It isn’t how many relationships you have, but the quality of the relationships.
Social Connections

Social networks infused with:
- Positive emotional support
- Positive parenting norms
- Resource sharing & mutual help

What you can do:
- Connect isolated families to peers
- Create group activities and environments for social sharing & mutual support activities.
- Create a socially inclusive
- Help parent choose positive social connections
Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to tangible goods and services to help families deal with stress.
Concrete Support in Times of Need

What we know:

Many families do not get the services they are eligible for.

Stigma is a significant barrier to families getting services.

Navigation of service systems are hard.

Service can be provided in a way that undermines families.
Concrete Support in Times of Need

What you can do:

- Use trusting relationships as the gateway to other services
- Serve as an advocate for existing services
- Support families ability to access resources
- Build service networks
Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Children’s age appropriate ability to regulate their emotions, engage with others, and communicate feelings.
Social & Emotional Competence of Children

What we know:

Social emotional development is a foundation skill.

Early childhood mental health issues are more common than we think.

Children’s social emotional development impacts parents.
Social & Emotional Competence of Children

What you can do:

Help parents understand social and emotional development.

Connections to children’s mental health supports.

Social emotional development activities for kids.
The Gender-Responsive Perspective

“Gender-Responsive” is used to describe approaches and strategies that:

• Acknowledge sociological, psychological and cultural differences across gender, and

• Purposely allows the research knowledge on gendered life experiences to direct programming and supervision for women.
The Gender-Responsive Perspective

- The goal is to produce favorable outcomes with female correctional populations tailoring supervision and services to their needs -
  - Relational
  - Trauma-Informed
  - Strengths-Based
  - Culturally Sensitive
Gender-Responsive Strategies are Relational

- Relationships are critical for women.
- Women’s identities are relationship-based.
- Many women in the system do not understand what a healthy relationship feels like.
- Staff who supervise women offenders should strive to develop an authentic supportive relationship with each of their clients.
  - This principle is not exclusive to female caseloads, but perhaps is even more important.
- Women’s unhealthy relationships often get them into trouble.

Emily J. Salisbury, Ph.D.
Gender-Responsive Strategies are Trauma-Informed

Nearly 1 in 5 women (18.3%) in the U.S. general population have experienced rape or attempted rape (CDC, 2011).

Trauma does not have to involve violence – can result from being stigmatized due to gender, race, poverty, or other social positions (Covington, 2006).

77-90% of incarcerated women report histories of emotional, physical and sexual abuse (Messine & Grella, 2006).

Emily J. Salisbury, Ph.D.
Gender Responsive Strategies are **Strength-Based**

- Low Levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy and high rates of depression
  - Everyone has strengths that can be actualized

- Self-defeating cognition which results in hopelessness and despair
  - Reframe negatives into positives

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*There’s nothing wrong with you that what’s right with you can’t fix.*
- Unknown

Emily J. Salisbury, Ph.D.
Comparative Approaches

**Traditional, Deficit-Based**
- Emphasizes individual, person-centered causes
- Self-concept is “criminal identity”
- Problem-focused
- Motivates through threats
- Encourages client passivity
- Targets criminogenic needs separately in programming

**Strengths-Based**
- Emphasizes multiple, interactive causes
- Self-concept is resilient rational
- Strengths-focused, looks to possibilities
- Motivates through building appropriate relationships
- Encourages active client engagement in the treatment plan
- Targets criminogenic needs holistically
Being “Gender-Responsive” means…

• …creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content and material that reflects an understanding of the lives of women and girls and responds to their strengths and challenges.

  (Covington & Bloom)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics and Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women/men on the program:</td>
<td>64% / 36%</td>
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<td>Percentage of cases shared with DSHS:</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<td>Number of children averted from Foster Care as of December 2011:</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of children removed from Foster Care as of December 2011:</td>
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Statistics & Outcomes

Successful Completions
- CPA: 85%
- FOSA: 72%

Terminations/Revokes
- CPA: 15%
- FOSA: 28%
## Statistics & Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
<th>CPA</th>
<th>FOSA</th>
<th>Total Successful Completions</th>
<th>CPA Successful</th>
<th>FOSA Successful</th>
<th>Total Terminations/Revocations</th>
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<tr>
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Statistics & Outcomes

New Felony Within 7 Years

Successfully Completed Program          Revoked/Terminated from Program
13%                                       26%

New Felony Within 7 Years – Returns to Prison

Successfully Completed Program          Revoked/Terminated from Program
9%                                       21%
A Positive Solution for Public Safety

If our goal is to reduce offending and extend positive outcomes to children, families, and communities, we have to do this work in partnership so that families thrive and children are safe, stable and nurtured.
Publications


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