

Chapter 8: Female Offenders in Correctional Systems

Female Offenders Behind Bars: A Detailed Look at Percentages and Rates (1 of 2)

- Small proportion of overall prison population.
- U.S. incarcerates more women.

Female Offenders Behind Bars: A Detailed Look at Percentages and Rates (2 of 2)

TABLE 8.1

Female Offenders in Selected States: A Comparison Between 2016 and 2017

STATE JURISDICTION	2016	2017	PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2016–2017
Arizona	3,997	4,059	0.6
California	5,886	5,859	–0.5
Florida	6,836	6,725	–2.0
Georgia	3,788	3,828	1.1
Illinois	2,613	2,281	–12.7
Missouri	3,337	3,396	1.8
New York	2,274	2,277	0.1
Ohio	4,594	4,426	–3.7
Pennsylvania	2,863	2,851	–0.4
Texas	14,335	13,958	–2.6
Virginia	3,109	3,154	1.4

Source: Carson, E. A. (2018). *Prisoners, 2016*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

History of Women Behind Bars (1 of 6)

The Work of Elizabeth Fry

- Noteworthy for several reasons.
- Visit to Old Newgate Prison in England.
- Association for female inmates in Newgate.

History of Women Behind Bars (2 of 6)

The Work of Elizabeth Fry

- Chivalry hypothesis.
- Victorian Era.

History of Women Behind Bars (3 of 6)

Female Criminality From 1850 Onward

- Increased during and after the Civil War.
- Emergence of separate women's quarters.
- Work of Sarah Smith and Rhoda Coffin.

History of Women Behind Bars (4 of 6)

The Evolution of Separate Custodial Prisons for Women and Further Evidence of the Chivalry Hypothesis

- Separation for administrative convenience.
- Frequently convicted of felony charges.
- Reason for women's crime differ from men's.

History of Women Behind Bars (5 of 6)

The Evolution of Separate Custodial Prisons for Women and Further Evidence of the Chivalry Hypothesis

- Chivalry hypothesis and female criminality.
- Social views tied to moralistic outlooks.

History of Women Behind Bars (6 of 6)

Minority Female Offenders Compared to Caucasian Female Offenders in American History

- Racial disparities among female population.
- Importance of acknowledging disparity.

Issues Related to the Modern-Day Female Offender Population (1 of 2)

TABLE 8.2

Rate of Female Inmates in State and Federal Facilities by Age and Race in 2017

AGE GROUP	ALL FEMALE ^a	WHITE ^b	BLACK ^b	HISPANIC	OTHER ^b
18–19	11	6	26	14	16
20–24	80	57	129	85	144
25–29	165	135	200	163	250
30–34	185	156	224	187	300
35–39	167	143	208	161	276
40–44	126	108	171	108	197
45–49	100	82	148	91	158
50–54	74	56	121	68	126
55–59	41	29	70	41	84
60–64	20	13	35	26	37
65 or older	5	4	9	7	9
Total Number of Sentenced Inmates	105,000	49,100	19,600	19,400	17,000

Note: Counts based on prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional officials. Imprisonment rate is the number of prisoners under state or federal jurisdiction with a sentence of more than 1 year per 100,000 U.S. residents of corresponding sex, race, Hispanic origin, and age. Resident population estimates are from the U.S. Census Bureau for January 1, 2017. Includes imputed counts for North Dakota and Oregon, which did not submit 2017 NPS data.

^aIncludes American Indians and Alaska Natives; Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; and persons of two or more races.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

^cIncludes persons age 17 or younger.

^dRace and Hispanic origin totals are rounded to the nearest 100 to accommodate differences in data collection techniques between jurisdictions.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics, 2007–2017; Federal Justice Statistics Program, 2017 (preliminary); National Corrections Reporting Program, 2016; and Survey of Prison Inmates, 2016.

Issues Related to the Modern-Day Female Offender Population (2 of 2)

The Female Inmate Subculture and Coping in Prison

- Caring, nurturing environment inside prison.
- Sexual relationships are common.
- Faced with surviving the term of sentence.

Considerations for Female Offenders (1 of 9)

Domestic Violence

- Greater risk for physical abuse.
- Abuse follows throughout life span.
- Continue to associate with subculture of origin.

Considerations for Female Offenders (2 of 9)

Physical and Sexual Abuse

- Abused more frequently than male offenders.
- Other findings from Harlow's study.

Considerations for Female Offenders (3 of 9)

Sex Industry Activity and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Often have some history of prostitution.
- Prior sexual victimization as root cause.
- Higher HIV/AIDS infection rates.

Considerations for Female Offenders (4 of 9)

Drugs

- Major contributor to female criminality.
- Used more often by women offenders.
- Engage in riskier drug habits.
- Victimization and use of drugs.

Considerations for Female Offenders (5 of 9)

Violent Crime

- Huge disparity between male and female offenders.
- Female chronic offenders.
- Intimate partner violence.
- Victim-turned-offender.

Considerations for Female Offenders (6 of 9)

Mental Health Issues

- Tied to stages in life cycle.
- Post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and alcoholism.
- Depression as common mental illness.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE).

Considerations for Female Offenders (7 of 9)

Mental Health Issues

- Higher rates of mental health problems.
- Socialization and depression.
- Prior abuse leads to addiction and depression.

Considerations for Female Offenders (8 of 9)

Mental Health Issues

TABLE 8.3

Inmates Presenting With Mental Health Problems in State Prisons and Local Jails

MENTAL PROBLEM	PERCENTAGE OF INMATES IN			
	STATE PRISON		LOCAL JAIL	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Recent history	22	48	18	40
Diagnosed	8	23	9	23
Overnight stay	5	9	4	9
Medication	16	39	12	30
Therapy	14	32	9	23
Symptoms	48	62	59	70

Source: James, D. J., & Glaze, L. E. (2006). *Mental health problems of prison and jail inmates*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Note: Most recent data available.

Considerations for Female Offenders (9 of 9)

Female Offenders as Mothers

- Face losing custody of children.
- Difficulty in reuniting children.
- Collateral damage to children.
- More serious damage to children.

Conditions of Care for Female Offenders (1 of 4)

- Legal precedents.
- Little Hoover Commission.

Conditions of Care for Female Offenders (2 of 4)

Guiding Principles to Improve Services for Female Offenders

- Acknowledging gender differences.
- Safe and supportive setting.
- Crucial issues for successful outcomes.

Conditions of Care for Female Offenders (3 of 4)

Guiding Principles to Improve Services for Female Offenders

- Three critical, interrelated issues.
- Social and material realities of female offenders.

Conditions of Care for Female Offenders (4 of 4)

The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 Revisited

- Findings of the 2014 data collection and analyses.
- Dynamics much more diverse than expected.

Female Offenders and Treatment Implications

- Programs conducive to treatment success.
- Recommendations regarding treatment programs.
- Gender-specific treatment programs.
- Community-based treatment program.