

A Treatment Option For At Risk Population

PRESENTATION
FASD LEARNING SERIES
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INTRODUCTIONS



- **“We build too many walls and not enough bridges”
Sir Issac Newton**

**Caring builds a
bridge to the heart!**

Resiliency

Sometimes I go about pitying myself
and all the while I am being carried across the sky
by beautiful clouds.

Ojibwe Poem

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Provide an overview of who the incarcerated women in the correctional system are, and how that relates to issues concerning Mental Health, Addiction and FASD.
- Provide an overview of “A Woman’s Path” – a trauma-informed treatment program for women who are incarcerated and dealing with concurrent mental health and addiction issues.
- Highlight the role that mindfulness plays in this specific treatment model and milieu.

Prov. Pop. Snapshot: 2009/2010

- Average length of stay:
 - 36 days for sentenced adults
 - 15 days for remanded adults
 - 54 days for sentenced youth
 - 14 days for remanded youth

- 30,000 adult and young offender custody admissions

General Offender Statistics

- Incarceration rate in 2005/2006 was 141 per 100,000 adult population.
- Women accounted for about one in ten offenders
- Average daily inmate population for all correctional and remand centres was approximately 2900 inmates

General Offender Statistics

- 2008/2009 – Aboriginal adults make up 27% of the population in provincial/territory sentenced facilities, 18% of admissions to federal, 21% of admissions to remand, 21% of male prisoner population, 30% of female prisoner population

General Offender Issues/risk factors

- Severe mental health problems
- Underlying organic conditions (FASD, PDD, brain injury)
- Lack of basic literacy and life skills
- History of childhood trauma and abuse

What brings a Woman to prison

- Female offenders tend to commit theft (other than theft of a motor vehicle), common assault, bail violations and fraud.
- Females are infrequently repeat offenders and, for those who are, their crimes tend not to escalate in severity.

What brings a woman to prison

- 2006 – 25% of federal sentenced women in for drug offences
- 80% in the federal system have substance abuse issues
- Conviction rates lower and women less likely to be sentenced to prison and receive shorter sentences.

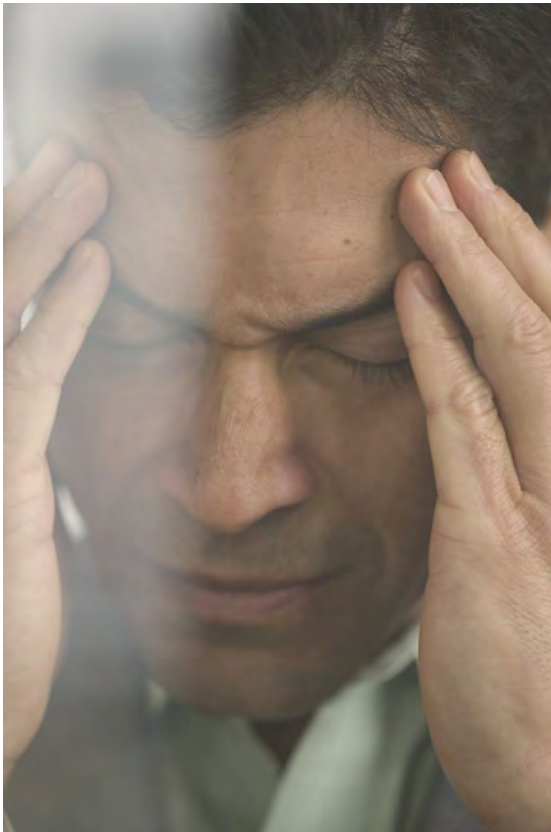
Women Specific Risk factors

- Life time prevalence rate of violence - 16% - 50%
- Sexual assault - 1 in 3 over a lifetime
- Higher rates of mental health disorder – depression and anxiety, PTSD (45-72%)
- Alcoholic women are more likely to have been abused

Women Specific Risk factors

- Estimates of women offenders that have been physically, and/or sexually abused ranges from slightly less than 50-% to close to 90%. Silberman (2010)
- 82% of all federally sentenced women report having been sexually and/or physically abused – 90% for Aboriginal women.
- 80% of women in the federal system report substance abuse issues

Offender issues – Addiction 87%



“addictions always originate in unhappiness, even if hidden. They are emotional anesthetics; they numb pain. The first question always is not “why the addiction?” But “why the pain?”
Gabor Mate

Trauma, Triggers and Addiction

- **Trauma** - response to an overwhelmingly negative experience. Comes in many different forms.
- **Trigger** - stimulus that sets off a response.
- **Addiction** - the door is opened with the need to numb pain.

A Woman's Path

APPROACH:

- Facilitated by two Female Mental Health Therapists
- Participants receive assessments, group therapy, brief individual counseling and follow-up as well as referrals as deemed appropriate
- Voluntary participation
- Group process – 10 -12 women
- Ten full day sessions over two weeks (morning and afternoon)

A Woman's Path

APPROACH

- Two day trauma and self care workshops offered to short term or remand population
- Focuses on empowerment through education, reframing and skill building
- Group sessions are interactive
- Culturally considerate
- Considerate of participants coping capacity and skill level

A Woman's Path

APPROACH

- Uses modeling
- Incorporates mindfulness
- Looks at how thoughts, feelings and behaviours are connected.
- Strength based
- Stephanie Covington PhD – Helping Women Recover and Healing Trauma

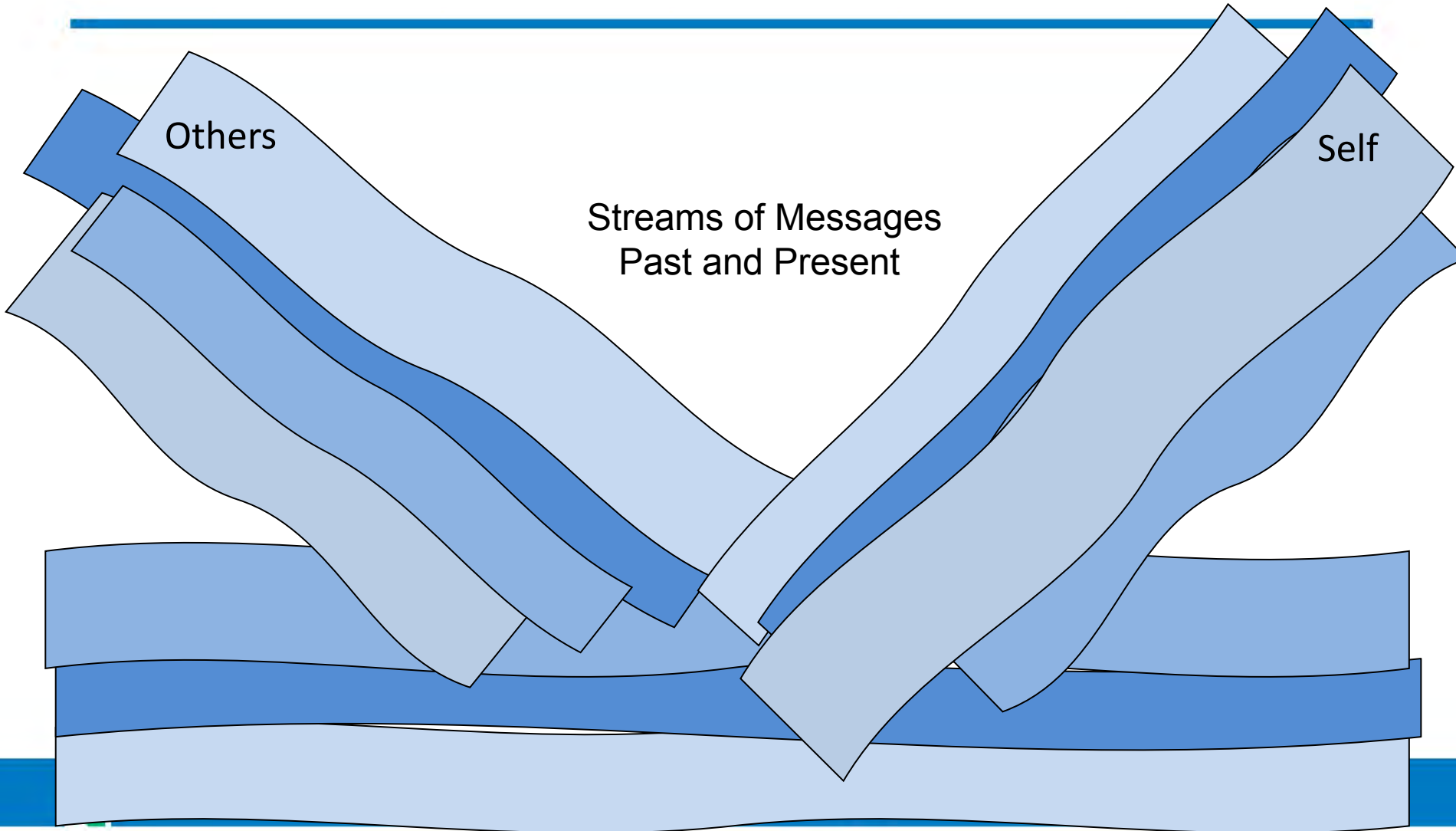
What is a A Woman's Path?

PHILOSOPHY:

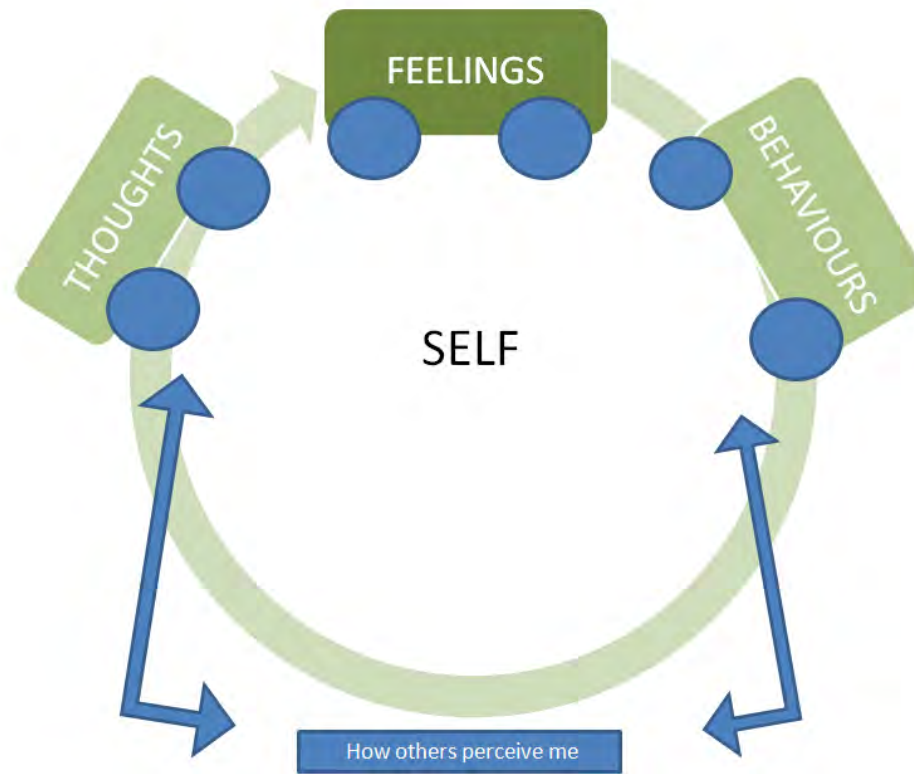
- Holistic
- Gender-responsive
- Trauma – informed
- Integrated and comprehensive



River of Self Esteem



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



Mindfulness?

- Although the term mindfulness has Buddhist origins it is also a universal practice that anyone can benefit from.
- Mindfulness is a natural part of being human. We have all experienced at least moments of it. i.e.. Watching a sunset During these moments we are often keenly aware of the vividness of our experience thereby noticing the small details.

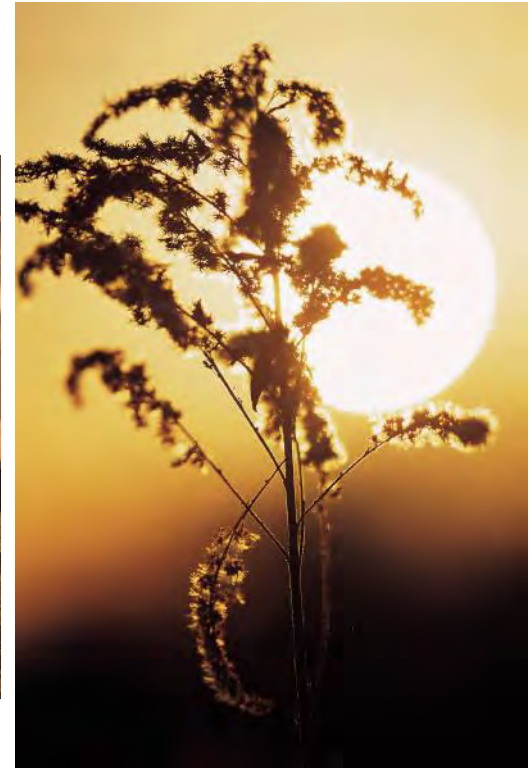
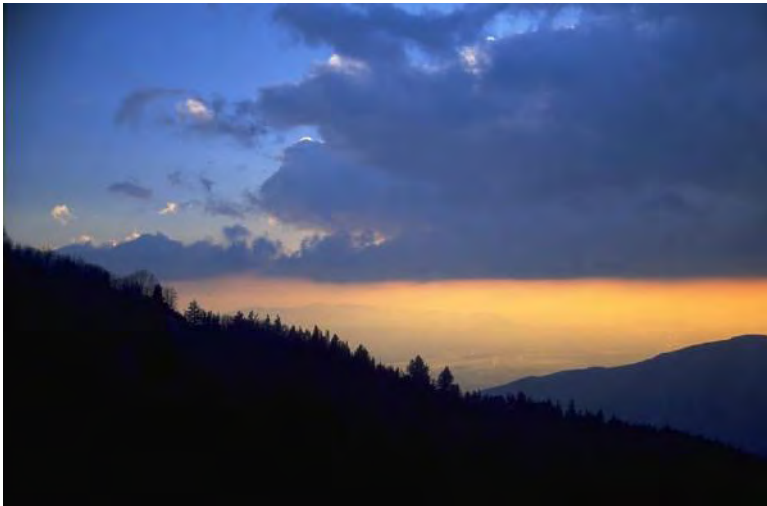
Mindfulness, Trauma and Addictions

Mindfulness is
Intentionally being
aware in the present
moment like an
observer who
chooses an attitude
of acknowledging
acceptance and non-
judgment



Present to the moment

- When do you feel in the peaceful moment?



Why Mindfulness?

- Long term stress can be a factor in serious physical and mental illness especially when we use unhealthy coping such as: smoking, overworking, overeating & substance abuse .
- We can't control the world around us and there will always be situations that produce worry, stress and anxiety. Mindfulness can help us to learn to work with the stress in our life, not against it.

Why Mindfulness?

- Emotional regulation - Reaction vs. Mindful Response
- Increased ability to observe negative self talk and interpretations (catastrophizing)
- Insight into habitual relationship patterns and applying interpersonal mindfulness (openness, empathy, compassion, loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, equanimity) creates space to respond to others
- Mindful communication

Opening the door – The brain

Neuroplasticity

Conditioning is a powerful force that can make change difficult. Like water finds the path of least resistance so do our habits therefore mindfulness must be seen as a tool not as motivation. The paradox is that giving people tools can help with their motivation.

Opening the Door – The good news

“Increasing evidence from laboratory studies of mediators has shown that the repetitive practices at the heart of meditative disciplines can drive positive neuroplastic changes that reflect mental and physical well-being such as greater emotional balance, compassion, and genuine happiness, as well as a potential buffering of stressful and traumatic experience when it does occur.” Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn (Lutz, Dunne, and Davidson 2007)

Opening the door

“The key to a mindful approach to stress involves activating a self-engagement system that likely involves attuning to the self and creating an inner sense of love with out fear, which may be at the heart of the relaxation state” (Dr. Daniel Siegel, Psychiatrist & Co-director of the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center and Author of *The Mindful Brain*)

Twelve Step Wisdom

- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change. The courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
- One day at a time
- Live life on life's terms
- This too shall pass

Mindfulness is a tool that teaches how to live the wisdom

UTILIZE GOOD SELF CARE

Caregivers must be prepared for working with the suffering. Expectations that being overwhelmed by emotional reactions is normal and predictable allows for proper care and planning.



Summary - Enjoy the Moment

Our greatest gift is the gift of this moment...being aware helps us to live in a manner that sets the foundation for all other moments yet to come.

Enjoy the Moment



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