Reintegration is Not One-Size-Fits-All: Gender and the Reintegration of Women Convicted of
Sexual Offences

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways gender plays a role in the reintegration of women convicted of sexual offences in Canada. Through the use of 15 qualitative interviews, I examine how staff and volunteers working with these women understand and approach their reintegration, and seek to determine what programs or supports currently exist for them in Canada. I find that women who have a co-accused require a different reintegrative approach than those who do not, as often their offences stem more from dependency than sexual deviancy. Additionally, I find that the stigma faced by both women convicted of sexual offences and their victims for failing to do their gender properly results in underreporting, and thus a serious lack of reintegrative services and support for these women in community. Moreover, those who work with women convicted of sexual offences can be biased in their beliefs about the danger of these women based on the expectations surrounding their gender, thus further contributing to a lack of services and support. Based on my research, there are currently no community reintegration programs specifically for women convicted of sexual offences in Canada. To improve the reintegrative experience for women convicted of sexual offences, gender-based training can be implemented for staff and volunteers who work in this field, and more communication and information sharing can take place to support others in this niche and developing area.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Larissa Doran. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Reintegration is Not One-Size-Fits-All: Gender and Female Sex Offender Reintegration" No. Pro00111891, on June 28th, 2021.

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Introduction

"Good luck with your research, female sex offenders are very difficult to work with," was the advice given to me from a sexual offender reintegration program coordinator when I spoke of my graduate school research project. I volunteered with the sexual offender reintegration program Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) in Halifax, Nova Scotia over a two-and-a-half-year period. Throughout my time as a volunteer in Halifax, only one female sexual offender participated in the program – every other core member (term used to refer to a sexual offender participating in CoSA) was male. The program coordinator confided in me about the struggles they faced with the female core member – she would not speak, they could not form a connection with her, and they were ready to give up on her. After this conversation with the coordinator of the Halifax site, I began to wonder why a program that has worked so effectively for all the other core members was not working for her. Originally, I had assumed it was an individual problem with this specific offender. It was not until I had a conversation with a coordinator from another CoSA site in Canada that I learned there was a pattern – this site had six female core members at the time of our conversation, and the coordinator revealed to me that they struggled with each and every one of them. It became clear to me that this was more than a personal issue, and I began to question the approach that was being taken to reintegrate female sexual offenders in a program that mainly serves male sexual offenders. I wanted to explore the ways the reintegration of sexual offenders differs based on gender and to learn about the different approaches currently being taken in Canada.

Research has consistently demonstrated that there are higher numbers of men who commit crime than women. In 2017, females accounted for only 25% of the individuals accused in police-reported crime in Canada, and males offended at higher rates than females for all three

Criminal Code violation types (violent crime, property crime, and other) (Savage, 2019). Because more men commit crimes than women, the criminal justice system was designed and shaped for the predominantly male offending population, overlooking women's specific experiences and needs, rendering them invisible (Comack, 2018; Kong & Aucoin, 2008). Not acknowledging the gendered experiences that lead to crime in the first place, paired with how women experience reintegration differently than men, can seriously hinder a woman's success in the community (Covington & Bloom, 2006).

Previous research on gendered issues regarding criminality or reintegration has focussed on female offenders more broadly. There is very little research done specifically on female sexual offenders, and the literature that exists tends to take more of a clinical angle. Much of this research is also based on quantitative data. To my knowledge, there have been no prior qualitative studies conducted in Canada concerning the reintegration of women convicted of sexual offences. The purpose of this research is to explore female sexual offender reintegration from the perspectives of individuals who work with these women in a reintegrative capacity, gaining insight into their experiences. Additionally, I wanted to determine what, if any, reintegration programs exist in Canada specifically for women who have offended sexually. Using semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 15 participants from across Canada, I answer the following two research questions: 1) *How do staff and volunteers who work with women convicted of sexual offences approach and understand their reintegration?* and 2) *What community programs or supports exist for reintegrating women who have offended sexually in Canada?*

This study is important because it addresses a significant gap in research surrounding not only female sexual offender reintegration, but also the ways that gender plays a role in their

reintegration into the community. It highlights the need for gender-specific practices and support, demonstrating how male and female sexual offenders differ – both in their reintegration, and in what brings them to offending in the first place. This research also brings attention to a unique aspect of women's sexual offending: the stigma placed upon these women by the public and justice system alike for violating the norms associated with their gender. There are many facets of women's sexual offending that men either do not experience, or experience to a significantly lesser degree. My hope is that this research shines a light on the "taboo" issue of women's sexual offending, alerting government and community stakeholders to the need for programming specifically for these women. It is not that these crimes are not happening – they are – they are just not being acknowledged and/or dealt with in the same way that men's sexual offences are, thus perpetuating gendered norms, impacting the ability of these women to access support post-incarceration and causing concern for public safety.

I am choosing to focus on the strict gender binary of male and female for this project because female sexual offenders alone are already very under-researched. As mentioned, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding female sexual offender reintegration and I would like to contribute specifically to this area. To extend my research outside of the gender binary would limit my ability to recruit participants as, based on my experience, there are very few sexual offenders at this time who identify outside of the binary. Perhaps future research on this topic could explore the reintegration of sex offenders who identify outside of the binary.

I turn now to Chapter 2, which provides a literature review covering the program Circles of Support and Accountability, what is known about female sexual offenders, the Pathways Approach, and existing treatment and programming for women convicted of sexual offences. Chapter 3 then presents the conceptual framework that provides the theoretical foundation to this

thesis. Next, in Chapter 4 the methodology and data analysis procedures are introduced and explained. Chapter 5 presents the findings of this research, highlighting the two main themes that emerged: Co-Accused Complications and A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. Finally, I conclude with limitations to the research, suggestions for future research, and implications of this project.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The topic of male sexual offending is arguably understudied, but research on female sexual offending is almost nonexistent. This appears to be a developing field in criminological and psychological literature. The lack of research literature on this topic could be attributed to many factors, including the outright denial from society that women can commit these crimes, leading to an absence of known female sexual offenders to include in research. In fact, until 1983 a woman could not be charged with committing rape or indecent assault, and a male could not be a victim of such an assault according to the Criminal Code of Canada (Saradijan, 2010). Most research that has been published in this area has focused on, for lack of a better term, trying to "figure out" female sexual offenders – typologies, pathways, how they differ from "regular" female offenders and male sexual offenders, or how to approach them from a clinical standpoint. There is virtually no research on what happens to these women after release from prison, and very little qualitative research done in this area – two gaps that I intend to fill with my study.

As such, this chapter focuses on highlighting what is known about female sexual offending and presenting other important connections to help inform my research. I begin with a description of the sexual offender reintegration program CoSA, as it was the program that sparked my interest in this topic and though it is not for women specifically, it is the only Canada-wide (and internationally known) community-based sexual offender reintegration program. Then, I detail what is known about female sexual offenders including how their offences differ from those of men, as well as two different typologies of female sexual offenders. Next, I introduce the Pathways Approach, which discusses the differences leading into and out of offending between men and women. This provides context into gender differences in reintegration needs and supports, and brings attention to the need to look at and address women's

offending separately from that of men. I also introduce the specific pathways for female sexual

offenders as determined by Gannon et al. (2010). The chapter ends with a section highlighting

current programs in Canada for female sexual offenders, as well as literature that discusses

treatment recommendations and approaches for these women.

CoSA

Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) was originally created by a male for a

male sex offender. CoSA was developed in 1994 in Ontario by a Mennonite Pastor – Harry Nigh

– when a high-profile, high-risk sex offender was released at his warrant expiry date into a very

angry community (Bates et al., 2012; Bates et al., 2014; Clarke et al., 2017; Duwe, 2012; Fox,

2013; Hannem & Petrunik, 2007; Wilson et al., 2005). The offender, Charlie Taylor, had just

served a seven-year sentence for sexually assaulting a young boy, and his release caused public

outcry. The prison psychologist working with Taylor contacted Harry Nigh, having concerns

about vigilante action against the offender (Clarke et al., 2017). Nigh agreed to assist the

offender, but quickly realized that he had too many risk factors for one person to handle. As

such, he called on a small circle of parishioners and friends to come together as volunteers to

assist in the offender's reintegration process (Clarke et al., 2017; Hannem & Petrunik, 2007;

Wilson et al., 2005).

A few months later, an offender with a similar profile was released from prison and

another pastor in Toronto, Hugh Kirkegaard, adopted Nigh's approach (Wilson et al., 2005). To

form this circle, individuals were recruited from local Christian faith communities and from the

criminal justice system (Hannem & Petrunik, 2007). Circle members took turns making daily

phone calls to ensure the offender was following his peace bond order, and to make sure that he

had access to necessities. A member of the circle was always available in case of a crisis

(Hannem & Petrunik, 2007). Not long after this, the Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario

accepted a contract from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to form a pilot project based on Nigh's and Kirkegaard's experiences to see if their approach could be used more broadly (Duwe, 2012; Wilson et al., 2005). Today, CoSA sites exist across Canada and the world. Sites in Canada are no longer associated with CSC, however, they now function under the directives of CoSA Canada which was established in 2015.

In practice, a CoSA circle consists of one core member and three to seven volunteers (Hannem & Petrunik, 2007; Wilson et al., 2005). Some circles also have an "outer" circle made up of professionals (parole officers, mental health workers, police officers, etc.) for when the inner circle requires further support (Wilson et al., 2005). Together, the members come up with what is known as a covenant, which must be followed by all members of the circle (Petrunik, 2002). Although not legally binding, the covenant holds the same value as a legally binding document within a circle (Petrunik, 2002). Covenants differ in every circle, as they outline the volunteers' expectations of the specific core member in their circle and vice-versa.

The entire circle meets on a regular basis, often once per week, but the core member can be in contact with a volunteer or coordinator whenever needed. Meetings between core members and volunteers can be formal (in circle) or informal. Informal meetings can include a volunteer and core member going for coffee or a walk for some extra support, or even a volunteer accompanying a core member when looking for an apartment (Petrunik, 2002). If core members have thoughts of reoffending, it is expected that they reveal these thoughts to the circle. If the core member reoffends and returns to prison, the circle may decide to remain intact and continue to provide support to the core member while incarcerated. Though the majority of core members participating in CoSA are men, the number of female core members has been increasing in recent years.

Women's Sexual Offending

Typically, when someone says the term "sex offender," a woman is not the first image that comes to mind. Media and sex offender laws have created an archetypical sexual offender – a perverted, aggressive, male predator who attacks a stranger – while females are seen as the weak and submissive victims (Cain & Anderson, 2016; Shelby & Hatch, 2014). When sexual offences involving female perpetrators are brought up, the discussion still relies heavily on the stereotype of an attractive schoolteacher who takes advantage of her younger male student (Klein & Cooper, 2017). These archetypes have led to a serious gender bias and skepticism among police, prosecutors, and other professionals involved in support and reintegration in cases involving female perpetrators (Cain & Anderson, 2016). Further, only 3% of Canadians accused of sexual assault are women (Savage, 2019), which causes female sexual offending to take a back seat in terms of level of importance.

Due to the very small numbers of *known* female sexual offenders in comparison to male offenders, there is a huge gap in the literature surrounding female sexual offenders. Women do offend sexually at lower rates than men (women constitute approximately 5% of all sexual offenders), but the fact that many of these types of crimes go unreported plays a significant role in the statistics relating to female sexual offenders (Cortoni et al., 2010). Victims (especially male victims) may not want to report what happened because of stereotypes surrounding male victimization at the hands of a female (Cain & Anderson, 2016). Moreover, because many of the victims of female sexual offenders are their own children, the abuse may go unnoticed. Women are typically the ones who bathe and dress their children, giving them more opportunities to engage in sexual touching. According to Plummer (1981), when men touch their children in the

same manner it may be more easily perceived as abuse. These are only some of the reasons that the rate of known female sexual offending pales in comparison to male sexual offending.

Furthermore, because women do not fit with the archetype of the typical sexual offender, their crimes may be taken less seriously by the public and the justice system – they may not be pursued by police or child welfare agencies as a result of the stereotypes and norms associated with female sexuality (Cain & Anderson, 2016). When females offend sexually, many professionals as well as society are quick to search for reasons why (something not usually done with male sexual offenders) and are quick to link it to prior victimization or mental illness – sometimes even loneliness (Cain & Anderson, 2016). Because of this, female sexual offenders often receive shorter sentences compared to their male counterparts, especially when a jury perceives the female offender to be physically attractive (Klein & Cooper, 2017). Researchers have suggested that the leniency in sentencing regarding female sexual offenders may also be due to the reluctance to believe that women can act in ways that are so outside of their gendered norms (Klein & Cooper, 2017). This discrepancy in sentencing is consistent with women who commit other types of crimes as well. Women are supposed to be nurturing, loving, motherly and kind – they are not supposed to sexually assault children or commit other violent offences. In some cases, society is in denial that a woman would ever *choose* to behave in this way.

Although male sexual offenders are more common than female sexual offenders, females are still an important group requiring attention. Contrary to popular belief, women are capable of committing sexual offences similar to those that are associated with males. It has long been an assumption that just because women do not have a penis and because they are often not as strong as men, that they are unable to commit the same kinds of sexual offences that men can (Klein & Cooper, 2017). This is simply not true, as highlighted by highly publicized cases like Karla

Homolka (who raped women, partially to fulfil her husband's deviant fantasies) or Eileen

Wuornos (who acted alone, using sex as a way to assault or kill her victims) (Klein & Cooper,

2017). The severity of the offence does not differ from male perpetrators, as female sexual

offenders have committed offences from touching to penetration (Klein & Cooper, 2017).

Women's sexual offending does, however, differ from men's in a number of ways. The

largest, and most notable difference between male and female sexual offenders is that

approximately one third of females co-offend, mainly acting alongside a male partner, often a

romantic or familial partner, with the strong likelihood that the woman is being coerced

(although this is not always the case). In comparison, only 12% of male sexual offenders co-

offend, but most often this is in groups with other males. The second key difference between

men and women is that women offend against their own sex at higher rates than men – 45% of

women's offences were against a victim of the same sex in comparison to only 12% of men's.

This is likely based on victim availability – women have more access to juveniles in their care,

for example (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020; Williams & Bierie, 2015). Third, unlike male sexual

offenders, females are less likely to be predatory or to use violence in their offences – they use

less force to coerce their victims than their male counterparts (Atkinson, 1995). This could be

due to the fact that female sexual offenders tend to victimize people they have a relationship

with, and are less likely than men to victimize someone unknown to them.

Matthews, Matthews & Speltz (1989) developed a female sexual offender typology based

on characteristics of these types of offenders and their offences. This typology has been

considered the most useful by other researchers (Atkinson, 1995). The first type of female sexual

offender is classified as the "teacher/lover". This is an adult woman who acts in a position of

power over her victims (i.e., teacher and student). She believes that her experiences with her

victims are expressions of kindness and love. This type of offender was typically abused as a child and then again in adulthood by partners. She is also likely to have a drug or alcohol addiction. The second category, "male-coerced/male-accompanied," involves a female who is usually influenced by a male to take part in sexual abuse (male-accompanied offenders take a more active role in the abuse). This male is often their partner, who threatens them with physical punishment if they refuse to take part in the abuse. These women function at a low to average level of intelligence, are passive, and have low self-esteem – they are often overdependent in relationships and abuse drugs and/or alcohol. The third type of female sexual offender is referred to as "predisposed," in that they are the ones who initiate the sexual abuse on their own. These offenders have been the victims of severe sexual abuse in childhood and come from families where sexual abuse has spanned generations. They will typically victimize their own family members – the offences are usually violent in nature and involve victims under six years old. These women are known to have low self-esteem, extreme anger, and traits associated with psychopathology (Matthews et al., 1989). Although said to be useful, this typology was only based on sixteen female sexual offenders, and as such, may not account for all types of offenders/offences.

Vandiver and Kercher (2004) created a more recent typology of female sexual offenders based on sex offender registry data for 471 registered female sexual offenders living in Texas – a much larger sample size than previous typologies. They developed six different categories of offenders based on the data: "heterosexual nurturers", "noncriminal homosexual offenders", "female sexual predators", "young adult child exploiters", "homosexual criminals", and "aggressive homosexual offenders". Heterosexual nurturers were an average age of thirty years old and victimized only males at an average age of twelve years old (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004).

This category is most typically associated with the "teacher who sleeps with her student" rhetoric, or the "teacher/lover" typology from Matthews et al. (1989), and as such is unlikely to reoffend. Noncriminal homosexual offenders were the least likely group to reoffend and the least likely to commit sexual assault. These offenders typically victimized young females, which could indicate that they act with a male accomplice (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004). Female sexual predators were the group most likely to reoffend and have a high average number of offences in comparison to other categories. The majority of their victims were male, at an average age of eleven. It is suggested that sexual offending may be part of these women's criminal disposition (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004). Young adult child exploiters are most likely to commit sexual assault, and the average age of their victims is seven. Half of the victims are related to the offenders in this category. Many of these offenders include mothers who victimized their own child (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004). Homosexual criminals were most likely to victimize both children and adults for economical as opposed to sexual reasons. Much of their offences include indecency with a child or "forcing behaviour" such as sexual performance of a child or compelling prostitution (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004). The final category, aggressive homosexual offenders were the oldest group of offenders at time of arrest, and victimized the oldest group of victims at an average age of thirty-one – almost all of the victims were female. The overall typology of a female sexual offender was described as a 32-year-old Caucasian woman who committed a sexual offence against a male or female victim, typically a child, who was known to the offender (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004).

Interestingly, though these typologies discuss women who sexually abuse children, they do not present these offences in a way that associates women with being paraphilic (i.e., being labelled a pedophile). The topic of paraphilias in women has been highly debated in the

literature, to the point where the DSM-IV present paraphilias as being primarily male issues.

Specifically, when defining pedophilia, the DSM-IV describes tactics that someone diagnosed

with pedophilia might use to gain access to their victims using language that portrays women as

the mothers of the children, not as potential offenders:

> [Individuals with pedophilia] . . . develop complicated techniques for obtaining access to
> children, which may include winning the trust of the child's mother, [or] marrying a
> woman with an attractive child . . . (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Denov,
> 2001, p. 313).

James Cantor (2015) argues that although there are cases of women who pursue sexual contact

with minors, it is still unclear whether their motivations are the same as male pedophiles'. This is

simply another area of women's sexual offending that is understudied at present.

The Pathways Approach

The pathways approach was developed over the past couple of decades by feminist

criminologists as a way to understand women's law violations, and to better grasp the particular

features that are prominent in the lives of women and girls leading to their involvement in

criminal activity (Comack, 2018). Key to this approach is positioning the standpoint of women at

the center of inquiry, placing special importance on their voices and experiences. This is

groundbreaking in terms of criminal justice research, as much of the theories surrounding

criminal activity have focused on the male standpoint, or have used males as the basis for

explaining women's criminality (Covington & Bloom, 2003; Franklin, 2008). Research using the

pathways approach suggests that women have endured traumatic events throughout their lives

that correspond directly to antisocial and criminal behaviour, as women's law violations are a

part of coping with, resisting, and surviving the abuse that has dominated much of their lives

(Comack, 2018; Franklin, 2008). In order to design effective programs for female offenders, it is important to consider their history, and how there are various life factors that may have contributed to their offending (Comack, 2018). The pathways approach was intended to emphasize the broader structural and gendered issues that relate to women's offending, rather than looking at women's offending as an individual issue. To fully understand the gendered needs of women who are reintegrating into the community, we must learn about the pathways that led them into crime in the first place.

      Pathways Into Crime[1]. Feminist researchers report significant gender differences between men and women, especially regarding their social location, pathways to crime, and experiences of imprisonment. The Violence Against Women survey was administered in Canada in the early 1990s, and the results showed that half of the respondents had experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of sixteen, with one in four being at the hands of a male partner (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990). At this time, however, little was known about the effects of this violence on women's everyday lives, and especially among incarcerated women. The Canadian Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990) found that 68% of the women interviewed had been abused as a child or adult, while 53% were sexually abused as an adult. These rates were significantly higher among Indigenous women, being 90% and 61% respectively. Despite these statistics being decades old, they are still relevant as the victimization trends have not changed. Recent Canadian statistics show that 95% of Indigenous women and 90% of white women incarcerated in Alberta federal prisons have experienced violent victimization in their lives, and 84% of both Indigenous and

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[1] Much of the Pathways literature has focused primarily on samples of only female offenders, and as such fails to acknowledge that the factors contributing to women's crime (i.e., prior victimization, mental health, and substance abuse problems) are in fact not unique to women. Additionally, the majority of studies take place in the United States and do not account for geographical differences (Kruttschnitt et al., 2019).

white women have experienced sexual victimization (Bucerius et al., 2021). When it comes to sexual offenders specifically, researchers have found that nearly all female sexual offenders have experienced sexual abuse in their childhood and/or adolescent years. Female sexual offenders had more than three times the odds of having been sexually abused as a child, four times the odds of being verbally abused, and more than three times the odds of emotional neglect and having an incarcerated family member compared to women in the general population (Klein & Cooper, 2017; Levenson et al., 2015).

Not only do a number of women offenders have abuse histories, but many have also endured troublesome childhoods – having to take care of siblings because parents were not around or sober enough to do so themselves, being removed from their families and bounced around through the child welfare system, being exposed to alcohol and drugs at a young age by family members, ending up on the streets as teens, becoming pregnant at an early age, and the list goes on (Comack, 2018; Covington & Bloom, 2007; Levenson et al., 2015). Many female offenders often have their first encounter with the justice system as a youth after running away to escape the violence that is present within their homes (Covington, 2003). For some young women, running away from home to escape their troubled family life only leads to more pain and abuse. Since many women are so young when they leave home, they tend to find themselves involved in the sex trade, gangs, or criminal activity as a way to earn money and survive (Gannon & Rose, 2008). Some women also get involved with older men at a young age because of the false promise of security, often leading to abusive relationships and early pregnancies. Abuse becomes such a pattern in these women's lives that the anger and trauma continue to build up until they finally decide to fight back – usually resulting in criminal charges. Comack (2018) posits that these law violations become a way for women to cope with, resist, and survive abuse.

Unfortunately, however, these coping strategies tend to take the form of "damage control techniques" in the form of drug and/or alcohol consumption (Comack, 2018, p.3). Far too often women turn to drugs or alcohol to cope with or attempt to block out the pain they have endured, leading them down a path of criminal offending (Comack, 2018; Covington, 2003). In many cases, women have become so intoxicated as a way of trying to cope with the abuse they have suffered, that they cannot remember committing the act that landed them in contact with the criminal justice system.

Statistically, female offenders are more likely than both male offenders and non-offending females to be diagnosed with mental health disorders. Ninety-four percent of federally sentenced women in Canada experienced symptoms consistent with a psychiatric disorder. Of the 94%, 52% showed symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), 69% showed symptoms of Major Depressive Episode, and 83% of Antisocial Personality Disorder (Derksen et al., 2012). Similar patterns emerge among provincially sentenced women as well. These mental health disorders are often interrelated with substance abuse and trauma. It is important to acknowledge that the traumatization of women does not stem solely from experiencing violence, but also from witnessing violence, and from the stigmatization of gender, race, poverty, incarceration, and/or sexual orientation (Covington, 2003). This speaks to the fact that these issues are not just individualized, but also intersectional and part of a broader systemic pattern.

Pathways Out of Crime. In order for a female offender to successfully reintegrate into society, the gendered issues that led them to crime in the first place need to be addressed. Not only are there gendered differences leading to offending for women, but there are also gendered differences that come into play creating barriers for women trying to abstain from crime. As women prepare to be released from prison, a risk assessment is typically performed on them to

determine their risk of reoffending. Feminist criminologists have found the risk assessment tools, as well as the way "risk" is conceptualized, are gendered, and fail to take race, social class, and other intersectional factors into account. As mentioned above, there is a higher number of male offenders than female, meaning the criminal justice system was designed for the male population; this is also true of risk assessment tools. Many risk assessment tools were designed with male offenders in mind, most having only been tested on men, yet are still being used on women – this includes the STABLE 2007 risk assessment tool used by CoSA (Comack, 2018; Covington, 2003; Covington & Bloom, 2003; Eher et al., 2012; Hannah-Moffat & Shaw, 2001). These tools tend to overstate the risk that women offenders pose to the public based on risk factors such as employment, marital/family status, associates, substance abuse, and community functioning. As already noted, many of these "risks" are related to or stem from women's victimization. To date, there are no tools that have been validated to assess the risk of sexual recidivism among women (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020). In her book, *Coming Back to Jail,* Comack writes: "Awaiting these women upon their release are the very same systemic processes and social and economic conditions that created their lived experience of trauma and led them into prison" (2018, p.30). In this way, women should be considered "at risk" rather than as posing a risk to community safety (Comack, 2018).

The dire circumstances that many female offenders face leading up to their arrest results in the majority of these women having little to no education or employment experience. A study in the United States showed that less than half of the women in state prisons were employed full-time prior to their arrest (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009). One of the main facets of successful reintegration is to be able to secure employment to earn money for housing, food, transportation, and so on, so that ex-offenders do not need to turn to crime to survive. For women, finding

employment proves to be more challenging than for men as many of the jobs that are typically held by women usually require some form of education or experience. Further, jobs in the childcare, health care, or education fields are disproportionately held by women, but having a criminal record makes them unattainable (Opsal & Foley, 2013). Because of this, many female ex-offenders end up working entry-level jobs that do not provide enough income for them to be self-sufficient, let alone to be able to support their children (Wesely & Dewey, 2018). Not only does the limited education and employment experience of women involved in the criminal justice system impact their likelihood of securing a job post-release, but women also must deal with the more traditional barriers to employment such as gender discrimination and the difficulties of balancing paid and unpaid work (Blitz, 2006). Unlike men, women who are released from prison need to grapple with navigating the gendered institutions that exist in society. Most women are entering into a labour market where a gender wage-gap exists and there is a lack of affordable childcare options. Further, many women are released into communities that offer few employment opportunities or access to services that could aid in their job search (Opsal & Foley, 2013).

Motherhood plays a huge role in a woman's reintegration success, as it interconnects with so many other gendered issues faced by women. There are far more mothers than fathers who lived with their children prior to incarceration, and many women end up losing custody of their children while incarcerated (Covington, 2003; Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009). Some of the most damaging aspects of prison for women are the separation from and concern about the well-being of their children – they constantly worry whether their children are being properly cared for, and if they will be able to maintain a bond with them despite the barriers they are facing (Collica, 2010). When fathers are incarcerated, the children typically remain in the care of the mother, but

when the mother is the one behind bars children are often placed in the care of another female

family member or the foster care system. This results in a lack of access to their children –

something not as often faced by a father (Collica, 2010)[2]. Women who have been incarcerated

are usually portrayed as being "bad moms" who cannot provide for their children, while the same

label is not as frequently applied to fathers who have been incarcerated (Covington, 2003). As

mentioned above, relationships are central to a woman's sense of self, so losing custody of their

children has an extremely negative effect on their wellbeing both while incarcerated and after

release – many women who end up reoffending have had their children taken out of their care

(Covington, 2003). Women who are trying to regain custody of their children must have

adequate housing, secure employment, and prove that they are abstaining from drugs or alcohol,

yet these requirements and the restrictions to attain them create a "Catch-22 that compounds their

problems" (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009, p. 322). For example, a woman with a criminal record

may only have access to minimum wage jobs which do not pay enough to be able to afford

adequate housing, preventing them from getting their children back. It seems as if women must

make a choice between their children or having employment that earns them a living wage (often

involving illegal activity), but they are typically unable to have both. Further, some women who

do have custody of their children when released from prison are afraid to get the mental health or

addictions help that they need out of the fear of having their children taken away from them,

once again placing them in a problematic situation, or a Catch-22 (Spjeldnes & Goodkind, 2009).

Research has found that women's narratives of re-entry often focus on the idea of having

to "start over," or of having "lost everything" (Comack, 2018). Due to the loss of relationships,

many women may turn to drugs and/or alcohol to cope, falling back into a cycle of criminal

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[2] This is assuming that the mother and father are in a functioning relationship (to some degree), which is not always
the case.

involvement. For some, the only support they may have on the outside are abusive partners or acquaintances who are involved in criminal habits – this fails to set women up for success in the community. While there is ample evidence to suggest the importance of social support in the lives of reintegrating offenders, these relationships need to be prosocial to be effective. This is complicated for women in particular because, for example, women are more likely than men to have a substance-using or co-offending history with family members or partners (Opsal & Foley, 2013). In this way, as difficult as it might be, sometimes starting over alone is integral to a woman's success in the community.

The pathways approach shines a light on the long and complex list of gendered demands and needs women face upon their re-entry into the community, which often times are connected directly to the very circumstances that led them to offending in the first place. In this way, it is clear that unless these gendered pathways to crime are addressed, women will keep going through the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

Offending Pathways of Female Sexual Offenders. In their (2008) study, Gannon & Rose developed the Descriptive Model of Female Sexual Offending (DMFSO). They interviewed twenty women convicted of a sexual offence against either an adult or a child, and two additional women who were not formally convicted but whose files indicated a sexual element was involved in their offence. The women were recruited from five different prisons and one probation area in England. The DMFSO describes the behavioural, cognitive, affective, and contextual factors leading up to, during, and post-offence. Based on the data from the 2008 study, Gannon & Rose (2010) found three distinct pathways to offending for female sexual offenders: the Explicit-Approach, Directed-Avoidant, and the Implicit-Disorganized.

The Explicit-Approach pathway represents women who have diverse goals for their offending such as sexual gratification, intimacy, or revenge. The key to this pathway is that the women's offences were premeditated and victims could be of any age. They experience significant positive affect about their offending and require little to no coercion to engage in the offence (i.e., this pathway does not require a male co-perpetrator). The women represented by this pathway generally wish to sexually offend and use a number of different offence styles. Women who offend against children are characterized by cognitions relating to children being dominant, sexual, and adult-like. Women who offended against adults are characterized by values concerning morality and accepting behaviours, and experience cognitions around entitlement and retribution. They would experience a strong positive affect regarding their behaviour. Sex-traffickers can be categorized in this pathway, approaching their offence operationally as a means to obtain a financial goal. Gannon et al. (2010) found overwhelming evidence demonstrating unstable and impoverished lifestyles prior to offending which may play a major role in creating goals aimed at alleviating boredom and meeting inappropriate sexual needs. Due to the wide range of offence types in this category, there could be a number of associated treatment implications. Women who offend in the pursuit of intimacy or sexual gratification could require work around sexual deviancy stemming from childhood and adult abuse, healthy relationships, or sexual norms. Those who offend for reasons of humiliation will require treatment based on aggressive norms, beliefs and values regarding entitlement, and antisocial characteristics. Finally, those who sex traffic would require education surrounding consent, sexual norms, and problem solving in terms of finding prosocial ways to earn money (Gannon et al., 2010).

The Directed-Avoidant pathway portrays women who have been directed to commit their offence at the hands of a coercive male. These women do not wish to engage in sexual offending at all, but have typically been physically or emotionally abused by their current and/or previous male partner. Women on this pathway reported thoughts relating to the nature of harm to the victim, strong negative affect, and strong values concerning intimacy and relationships (i.e., dependency issues). Importance was placed on the male's opinions over their own, and sometimes the women would become more involved in the offence just to please their partner. These women always offend against their own offspring and the offence period is the longest in comparison to the other two pathways. Treatment for women from this pathway should include therapeutic intervention focussing on their own victimization and self-esteem, development of coping strategies, and work on healthy relationships. These women would also benefit from education surrounding risk awareness and recognition of the signs associated with men who may target them and their children (Gannon et al., 2010).

The final pathway, Implicit-Disorganized, is characterized by women with either a lack of planning or implicit planning at the distal stage. Similar to the Directed-Avoidant pathway, these women have no desire to offend, rather, their offending is the result of impulsive and disorganized behaviour. Women on this pathway tend to have a higher number of previous offences, largely based on their inability to self-regulate. There are a number of cognitions experienced by women on this pathway – those who offend for revenge were driven by a strong negative affect, while women who offended against children associated the offence with a "fleeting positive affect" (Gannon et al., 2010, p. 374). Women on this pathway would benefit greatly from treatment surrounding impulsivity and self-regulation, as well as coping strategies for major life-stressors (Gannon et al., 2010).

In 2014, Lutfy and Derkzen tested Gannon et al.'s (2010) pathways on a sample of 14 female sexual offenders in Canadian prisons (Lutfy & Derkzen, 2014). They conducted semi-structured interviews with the women and coded their offence narratives to categorize them into the three different pathways. Their findings indicated that Gannon et al.'s pathways were able to classify most of the women in their sample, however 14% of their sample were not classifiable into any. On this basis, Lutfy and Derkzen proposed the addition of a fourth pathway – the Adopted-Approach – which would characterize women who actively approach co-offending in order to please their intimate partner. Motivations for this suggested pathway include sexual gratification and intimacy, and the woman is driven by a positive affect. Lutfy and Derkzen's 2014 model was further tested in Canada by Wanamaker et al. (2018) who found that over 90% of their sample fit into one of the four pathways, and their results were consistent with the findings of Lutfy and Derkzen (2014). The development of the DMFSO has implications for treatment and clinical practice, particularly the need for individual case formulation based on planning, goals, and methods of approaching potential victims (Gannon & Rose, 2008).

Existing Programming & Treatment for Female Sexual Offenders

To my knowledge, there are no community-based programs that currently exist in Canada specifically for female sexual offenders. Literature searches have shown that most programs for these women are only accessible while the women are incarcerated, and the programs available to them in community tend to be either sexual offender reintegration programs for both men and women (such as CoSA), or reintegration programs for female offenders more generally. The literature also notes that many female sexual offenders end up receiving one-on-one therapy from mental health clinicians such as psychologists or social workers.

Blanchette and Taylor (2010) provide an overview of the services available to these women in Canada, the UK, and the US. The only program in Canada mentioned in this article is Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) Sex Offender Therapy for Women program, available only for women sentenced federally. This program is based on cognitive-behavioural theory and is grounded in a relational context. There are five modules in the program: self-management; deviant arousal; cognitive distortions; intimacy, relationships and social functioning; and, empathy and victim awareness, but women are only referred to the modules that are seen as being relevant to their needs. Due to the low numbers of female sexual offenders in federal institutions at any given time, this program is typically delivered on an individual basis. Sessions usually last about an hour, and women are recommended to do no more than two sessions per week. As this article was written over 10 years ago, I searched for more up-to-date information on the program to see if any changes were made. CSC's website indicates that the program is now called the Women's Sex Offender Program (WSOP) (Correctional Service Canada, 2021). There is very little information on their website about the program, but it does appear to have changed. In order to participate in the WSOP, women must have first completed either the Women Offender Moderate Intensity Program, or the Indigenous Women Offender Moderate Intensity Program. These are programs that focus on issues for women offenders more generally, such as emotion management, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and communication skills (Correctional Service Canada, 2021). To participate in the WSOP, women must also be classified as moderate or high-risk to reoffend. The WSOP focuses on coping strategies and other behaviours linked to their sexual offending such as violence, substance abuse, trauma, and relationship issues. This program has a total of 59 sessions, and women can participate in up to

six sessions per week. It is delivered by a single facilitator, and can accommodate groups of up to 10 women (Correctional Service Canada, 2021).

There are slightly more articles in the literature that speak to the treatment needs of female sexual offenders than there are articles about programs. This could be a result of the individual basis by which treatment is typically approached with these women. It is worth noting, however, that much of the literature is based largely on what works for female offenders generally, with additions stating how it would, or could, differ for female sexual offenders. Cortoni and Stefanov (2020) posit that treatment for women who have committed sexual offences should target both offence-related factors and the broader context of the woman's life that maintains those factors. As such, goals of treatment should be:

> (a) to resolve the issues that have contributed to her offending behaviour; (b) to establish short- and long-term positive goals that are incompatible with a negative life and offending; (c) to develop flexibility, adaptability, and effective coping responses to improve her daily functioning; and (d) to improve the quality of her support network and familial, social, and romantic relationships (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020, p. 287).

Cortoni and Stefanov also believe that therapy and treatment should be gender- and trauma-informed and capitalize on the woman's strengths and resiliency factors, as far too often treatment focuses on negative attributes or deficits instead of the positive. Women also require a continuum of care in order to successfully reintegrate into the community – this includes the implementation of wraparound services combining multiple services to address different needs including mental health, substance abuse, educational and employment programs, supportive living and transportation services (Ashfield et al., 2010; Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020).

A key part of treatment for female sexual offenders is to develop coping skills and a well laid out plan for how to deal with life stressors so as not to reoffend (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020; Ford, 2010). Women who sexually offend tend to have higher numbers of adverse experiences in their lives, and often times turn to offending as a way to cope. In fact, a study by Saradijan (1996) found that women indicated higher levels of psychological distress including self-harm, depression, and anxiety when they were *not* sexually abusing children. In this way, it is vital to ensure that women who sexually offend have the coping skills necessary to deal with any life stressors that may come their way after release, as life after prison, especially with a sex offence background, is rife with challenges.

Ashfield et al. (2010) suggest that for treatment to be effective for women, it should not be done in mixed gender settings. This is due to the power imbalance associated, as well as the potential for mixed gender programs to lead to abusive relationships. This also includes the importance of having a female mental health practitioner, as some women have found it very overwhelming to disclose male-perpetrated abuse to a male practitioner and have felt revictimized. Ashfield et al. (2010) further believe that treatment should be informed by Relational Theory, as relationships are central to women's lives, but also play a role in a number of women's sexual offending patterns.

In terms of establishing rapport with clients, Ashfield et al. (2010) note that it is very important for female sexual offenders to believe in the practitioner's knowledge of and ability to work with their types of offences. Because there are so few female sexual offenders, clients may feel as if they are exceptionally deviant – it is critical that the practitioner highlight the fact that they are not alone in order to reduce the amount of guilt and shame associated with their offence. This will help to have more open and honest communication. Additionally, because sexual abuse

often occurs in the context of secrecy and lack of respect of the rights of others, practitioners should establish a relationship with their client based on openness, genuineness, and respect. This will decrease the potential to trigger a client's feelings of betrayal and distrust (Ashfield et al., 2010).

This chapter has provided background information on what is already known about female sexual offending and the treatment of these women. Because there is so little existing literature on this topic, I have also included supplementary literature on the differences between male and female offenders' pathways into and out of crime more broadly, as understanding these differences is foundational in the understanding of female sexual offending. This literature review provides context for the next chapter, which discusses the conceptual framework used to support my findings.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

This chapter outlines four sociological theories that will help to contextualize my research findings. Every one of my participants spoke to the stigma surrounding women who have been convicted of sexual offences, and how their crimes are seen as the ultimate gender role violation. A significant number of them also spoke about the relational aspect of women and how this plays a role in their reintegration into the community. While there are many theories that could help to inform or explain my research, it was really the focus on gender that stood out most to me. As such, this chapter provides an overview of the four main theories that were prominent in my exploratory data: stigma and labelling theory, doing gender, and relational theory.

Stigma & Labelling

According to Erving Goffman (1963), the concept of stigma originated with the Greeks, and was used to refer to "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier" (p.1). They would physically mark the body of the stigmatized person as a sign that they should be avoided, especially in public places. Although today we do not mark the bodies of others, stigma tends to work in the same way – those who are stigmatized are ostracized and tend to be excluded or avoided in society. As Goffman puts it, "society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories" (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). In this way, routine and social norms are developed, causing those who do not fit into certain categories or norms to be considered "less desirable," or "tainted". This is what Goffman deems as stigma.

Prior to meeting someone new, one might make assumptions about who or what the person may be, which can be referred to as their *virtual social identity*. However, once we get to know them better and learn about who they truly are, we come to know their *actual social*

identity. The discrepancy between the virtual and actual social identity is what leads to stigmatization. Goffman clarifies that not all "undesirable attributes" are cause for stigmatization, only the ones that do not fit with the preconceived ideas or stereotypes we have about the type of individual one should be (Goffman, 1963).

There are three types of stigma that Goffman discusses in his book, including "abominations of the body," "blemishes of individual character," and the stigma of race, nation and religion (Goffman, 1963, p. 4). He refers to those who fit within the expectations of society, or those who are not stigmatized, as "the normals". By assuming those who depart from the expectations of society are not normal, not only do we stigmatize them, but we designate them as being less than human. This means that those who are stigmatized are not given a fair chance at succeeding in their lives; they are not on the same level of playing field as the normals. Those who are stigmatized often feel a great deal of shame, as they themselves tend to hold the same standards about what is "normal" and what is not.

In some cases, it is possible for the stigmatized person to attempt to repair or correct the basis of the stigmatization. Goffman provides examples such as a physically deformed person undergoing plastic surgery, or a blind person getting eye treatment. We could also consider the steps that someone who has sexually offended might take to repair the harm they have caused and their dedication toward living a life free from reoffending. Although these people may try their best to rid themselves of the stigma, Goffman posits those who were stigmatized will never be able to achieve a true "normal" status. Instead, they will be seen as transforming from "someone with a particular blemish into someone with a record of having corrected a particular blemish" (Goffman, 1963, p. 9). This reinforces the idea that the stigmatized and the normal are

not on a level playing field – no matter what the stigmatized person does, they are unable to escape the feeling of being less than.

When those who are stigmatized interact with others, they may find themselves feeling unsure of how they will be perceived. They do not know how they will be categorized, but they may want to try and make a good impression. Goffman refers to this constant calculation of their actions as being "on" (Goffman, 1963, p. 14). The stigmatized may feel as if their minor accomplishments are being blown out of proportion by normals, as it may be assumed that someone like them is not capable of achieving the things normals can. Goffman provides an example of a normal who is astounded by the fact that a criminal can read fine literature, remarking, "fancy that . . . In some ways you're just like a human being!" (Goffman, 1963, p. 15). While minor accomplishments may be seen as great successes, any minor failings are seen as a direct result of the reason they are stigmatized. For example, someone with a mental illness may be afraid to get into a disagreement with their boss out of fear that it will be taken solely as a sign of their mental illness and not the problem at hand.

As a way of avoiding being "on" all the time, those who are stigmatized might attempt to "pass" as a normal. The ability for one to pass, however, depends on what Goffman calls the "visibility" of a stigma. Visibility refers to "how well or how badly the stigma is adapted to provide means of communicating that the individual possesses it" (Goffman, 1963, p. 48). In other words, for a stigma to be considered visible, one would have to know the cause of the stigma simply by looking at the person. For example, those who are stigmatized based on the colour of their skin or a physical disability that requires them to use a wheelchair would be considered to have a visible stigma because their differences are noticeable upon looking at them. According to Goffman, visibility is not to be confused with "known-about-ness" (when

others have previous knowledge of the stigma though it may not be visible), "obtrusiveness" (how much the stigma interferes with the flow of interaction), or the "perceived focus" (the conceptions we possess about the effect of certain stigmas) (Goffman, 1963, p. 49-50). Even though there are many stigmas that are not immediately visible, the ability to pass depends completely on the ability of the audience to "decode" or sense differences among people, or perhaps whether a member of the audience has the same stigma and is already passing.

There may come a point in time where a stigmatized person who is passing may want to reveal their difference to their friends and family. In today's society, the more there is about a person that deviates from the norm, the more that person is expected by others to disclose those deviations. Unfortunately, even though the person may have been effectively passing and therefore is not openly stigmatized, once revealing their differences, the established relationships with those friends and family are likely to change. Thoughts of who the person used to be, and who they will be going forward will be altered based on the revelation of the stigma (Goffman, 1963). The stigmatized person may never know whether their friends and family fully view them as normal, or whether they are stigmatizing them, thus causing them once again to be "on," even with those they considered close to them.

As we can see in Goffman's work (distinguishing between "the stigmatized" and "the normals" among others), stigma and labelling theory go hand in hand. Labelling theory has an extensive history, but is most commonly attributed to Howard Becker's 1963 book titled *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance.* Becker states that those who break the rules of society become labelled as outsiders – they cannot be trusted to live by the rules that were agreed upon by "the group" (Becker, 2018, p. 14). Further, he mentions those who commit crimes such as murder, rape, or treason become labelled as *true* outsiders, as their law violations are the

farthest outside of the norm. These norms or rules that constitute "deviance" are created by social groups and applied to particular people. Thus, a deviant is defined as "one to whom that label has been successfully applied," meaning the deviant must have engaged in what is considered deviant behaviour, gotten caught, and as a result been publicly labelled as a deviant (Becker, 2018, p. 26).

When one becomes labelled as a deviant, society is quick to assume that the person automatically possesses all the traits supposedly associated with said label. In other words, someone may only commit one criminal act and be labelled as a criminal, yet the word criminal comes with connotations and assumptions of character traits because of others who have been labelled as a criminal. In this way, the deviant label becomes a master status – one that overrides all others (Becker, 2018). Someone might have graduated top of their class and been very involved with their community, but if they break a rule and are labelled as a criminal, that is all society will see. Becker argues that "treating a person as though he were generally rather than specifically deviant produces a self-fulfilling prophecy. It sets in motion several mechanisms which conspire to shape the person in the image people have of him" (2018, p.66). The label may also prevent those who are labelled from participating in conventional groups within society, often forcing them to become isolated. Those labelled as deviant are denied of carrying out their everyday lives in the same way that most people can. In many cases it may be easier for someone to simply adhere to the label they have been given than it is to rid themselves of that label.

As far as labels go, "sex offender" is considered one of the most highly stigmatized in modern society (Mingus & Burchfield, 2012). Those who commit sexual offences are further stigmatized within the already stigmatized group of "criminals" (Ricciardelli & Moir, 2013). They are considered to be criminal deviants, however they are deviant from other "criminals"

because they are viewed as preying on the "weak" or "innocent," and their crimes enact taboos surrounding sexuality (Mingus & Burchfield, 2012; Ricciardelli & Moir, 2013). A sex offender's release is often publicized with their name and a photo, making it very difficult if not impossible to re-enter society without being recognized for the act they have committed. The sex offender label causes extreme difficulty when it comes to securing housing, finding employment, and building prosocial community support networks – the very things that decrease the likelihood of recidivism (Mingus & Burchfield, 2012). "Sex offender" becomes a master status for those who bear the label, quashing any other identity one might have including human being. Society typically expects someone who is labelled to face so much shame and guilt that they do not want to reoffend, and will turn toward a crime-free life (Braithwaite, 1989). However, the severe stigmatization associated with the sex offender label can result in poor coping strategies and often reoffence, which is the complete opposite.

Goffman's Stigma theory has been criticized for his use of the term "normal." Today, we understand normality to be a social construct – there is no single agreed upon definition of what it is to be "normal." In this way, the "normal" and the "stigmatized" are not persons, but rather perspectives (Travers, 1994). Goffman's idea of normal is something that is not interactional, meaning that no amount of interaction can redefine what is perceived as being normal. Because of this, Goffman's theory ignores the fact that there can be selves who are simultaneously not considered to be normal and not considered to be stigmatized. Travers (1994) compares Goffman to Garfinkel, another sociologist who writes about stigma theory. He argues that Goffman and Garfinkel both represent a "normative sociological spokesman for normal appearances," while they themselves are actually very "unusual" (p. 9). Their perspectives regarding stigma are both unique, and as such, cannot be considered "normative". In this instance, Goffman would be

considered to be one of those who do not fit into the category of "normal" nor "stigmatized".

Though I agree with this this criticism (who is the one who decides the definition of normal, anyways?) I believe Goffman's Stigma theory is still highly applicable to my research as those who commit sexual offences *are* highly stigmatized within society for committing crimes that are indisputably perceived as *not* being normal in any sense of the term. Stigma theory becomes even more relevant when considering women who have committed sexual offences, as society views them as being "doubly deviant" – they are stigmatized for their criminal violation *and* their violation of gender expectations (Miller, 2014, p. 25).

Doing Gender

West and Zimmerman (1987) pioneered the concept of "doing gender". They posit that unlike sex, which is biologically determined based on anatomy, hormones and physiology, gender is a social construct – it is a "routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). West and Zimmerman believe it important to differentiate between sex, sex category, and gender. As mentioned, sex is biologically determined at birth, classifying someone as either male or female. Placing someone in a sex category can be achieved through either their biologically determined sex, or by enactment of the "socially required identificatory displays" that would demonstrate one's belonging in either the category of male or female (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). Because one's actions determine their sex category, it is possible to, for example, be placed into the sex category of female even though one's sex may be male. Gender, then, is behaving and managing oneself based on the normative conceptions of what is appropriate based on one's sex category.

Though West and Zimmerman claim that gender is a social construct, it is still very much rooted in the biological sex differences between men and women. Over time, the way males and

females behave and interact with each other has produced norms relating to what is considered masculine and feminine. To "do gender" does not necessarily mean to live up to these norms relating to femininity and masculinity, but rather to "engage in behaviour at the risk of gender assessment" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 136). In other words, others will place us into a distinctive sex category based on the way that we act. These gender differences that we have created are not natural, essential, or biological. West and Zimmerman provide the example of separating men's and women's bathrooms – even though using the bathroom is a biological function shared by both men and women, we are expected to use separate bathrooms that are furnished differently based on the supposed difference between men and women (i.e., urinals versus toilets). These norms have been produced and reproduced, resulting in a standard of unnecessary difference.

West and Zimmerman believe the concept of doing gender is something that is introduced early on in our lives. As children grow, they want to learn how to present themselves as being more socially competent in comparison to those around them. In this stage, they are seen as transitioning from the identity of "baby" to that of "big boy" or "big girl". Here, they learn that to be a "big boy" consists of physical strength or other appropriate masculine skills, and to be a "big girl" means to value their appearance or to be feminine (West & Zimmerman 1987). The production and reproduction of these norms solidifies the concept of what it is to be a man or woman.

The repetition of gendered norms has made it so that sexual offending is thought of as a male offence – the stereotypical sexual offender has been described as being "a middle-aged, tattoo-free, Caucasian man that wears glasses" (Ricciardelli & Spencer, 2014, p. 437). Masculine "dominance" and feminine "weakness" has been naturalized on the body in this way. In other

words, every time it is assumed that a sex offence is committed by a man with a female victim, these gender norms are being reinforced. On the other hand, male child sexual offenders are thought to break with the standards of masculinity. That is, they fail to provide care for children, and as such "occupy a less-than-man position" (Ricciardelli & Spencer, 2014, p.436). The non-normative ideal that a male child sex offender represents leads to emasculation, making him a target for victimization.

We can think about the female sexual offender in the same way. Women are supposed to be motherly, nurturing, kind, and submissive. So, when a woman commits a sexual offence (especially against a child), this is most definitely not in accordance with the norms associated with being female – she is defying the nurturing and motherly traits associated with being a woman. These norms are problematic when it comes to reintegration for a female sexual offender because, as Judith Butler states in her work on gender: "those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" (1988, p. 522). Women who commit these types of offences may not be taken seriously and may not end up getting the help needed to keep from reoffending.

West and Zimmerman's theory of "doing gender" has been criticized for failing to dismantle gender inequity, and instead insinuating that change to the gender system of oppression is hopeless (Deutsch, 2007). Deutsch (2007) points to the fact that the theory fails to provide the option for people to resist the doing of gender, making it impossible to dismantle gender inequality. Even the language of "doing" points to the creation of difference, rather than the erasure of it. To solve this problem, Deutsch suggests using the phrase "doing gender" in reference to social interactions that reproduce gender difference, and the phrase "undoing gender" in reference to social interactions that reduce gender difference (2007). To avoid falling victim to this criticism, I use both "doing gender" and "undoing gender" accordingly throughout

my findings and discussion. In considering gender and the ways "man" and "woman" came to be, we must also look at the way men and women were socialized, and how this plays a role in the development of their psychology.

Relational Theory

Jean Baker Miller's book *Toward a New Psychology of Women* initiated the conversation surrounding relational theory. Miller writes about how dominant groups typically define the roles of their subordinates, and as such block or impede their development and freedom of expression. They legitimatize the oppression of the subordinate group, thus incorporating it into the guiding concepts of society (Miller, 1986). The dominants and subordinates Miller speaks of in this book are men and women, respectively. She argues that women are seen as being inferior to men, and are socialized into believing their job in life is to serve the needs of their husband and take care of their family – they are not to put their own needs first. In fact, Miller (1986) claims that women are taught to believe that working on their own self-development will only lead to disaster, and could result in the loss of any close relationships.

Because women are taught their main goal in life is to serve others, their sense of self-worth tends to hinge on the ability to take care of and give to others. This becomes extremely complex in the sense that women, much more than men, then believe that "any activity is more satisfying when it takes place in the context of relationships to other human beings" (Miller, 1986, p. 54). Their lives become centered around creating and maintaining relationships, so much so that the threat of a breakdown in relationship can lead to a total loss of self. Problematically, this also leads some women to believe others will love them more or become "permanently devoted to them" simply because they have served these others so much and so

well (Miller, 1986, p. 66). It becomes far too easy for women to equate the displeasure of a man with abandonment, and thus a loss of purpose in life.

All this is not to say that being relational is necessarily a negative thing. Because much of their identity develops through connections with others, women have a greater sense of the benefits and pleasures of close connection than men. Additionally, because women are seen as being "weak" and "vulnerable" while men are supposed to be "strong" and "powerful", women have an easier time acknowledging and dealing with vulnerabilities and feelings, allowing them to be more in touch with reality. Women find it easier to open up and admit their fears, allowing them the ability to more easily identify their needs and ask for help (Miller, 1986). One could argue then, that women are in fact the stronger of the sexes, and that they have more of a capacity for growth than men do.

Relational theorists posit that "mutuality, empathy, and power with others" are essential for relationships that will foster growth in women (Covington, 2003, p. 5). On the other hand, nonmutual or abusive relationships become what is coined a "depressive spiral," characterized by diminished zest or vitality, disempowerment, unclarity or confusion, diminished self-worth, and a turning away from relationships (Covington, 2003, p.6). For many female offenders, the depressive spiral defines most relationships throughout their lives, from abusive family members in childhood, to abusive partners and losing their children in adulthood. Women who were sexually abused in their childhood may attempt to "self-soothe" or search for connections with others in sexualized ways. This can sometimes take the form of relationships with younger partners as they are less likely to reject the woman, and are often less emotionally threatening than an adult partner would be (Levenson et al., 2015). Relationships such as these lead into a slippery slope of patterns of sexual deviance. It is not only abusive relationships that affect

women, but some women have also experienced substantial losses of parents, caregivers, siblings, partners, or children – many of which were a result of suicide or violence (Comack, 2018). This is especially prevalent among Indigenous women whose sisters or friends constitute a number of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. For women, the threatened loss of valued relationships plays a much greater role in offending than it does for men, and therefore has more implications for their reintegration needs (Covington, 2003).

Relational theory has been criticized as being one-dimensional, reinforcing dichotomous understandings of crime in the sense that women's crime is often referred to as being relational, while men's crime, even when committed in defence of peers, is not referred to in the same way (Miller, 2014). Additionally, the tendency to characterize women as emotional and expressive can discount their intentional aggression toward their victims, while men's aggression is typically not viewed as an emotional outburst. This takes away from the seriousness of women's offences and can discredit their victims. Finally, relational theory creates the idea that women have always been victims, or have always been oppressed, and "cannot be effective social agents on behalf of themselves or others" (Harding, 1987, p. 5). By focussing so much on women's victimization, relational theory ignores the victimization histories of men, which reinforces stereotypes that men cannot be victims or are not traumatized by abuse (Miller, 2014). By using this theory, my intention is not to be one-sided, but rather to demonstrate the ways in which gender has the potential to play a very prominent role in women's sexual offending (as will be discussed in my findings chapters, primarily in relation to women who have offended alongside a male partner). In no way will my use of this theory undermine the severity of the offences committed by these women, but I hope to highlight how relationships can create a pathway to

offending, as well as serve a purpose in the reintegration of women who have committed sexual offences, and how this differs from the needs of men.

This chapter outlined four theories: stigma theory, labelling theory, doing gender, and relational theory. All four of these theories play a very important role in making sense of my findings from this research. None of them stand alone in my thesis, but rather interact to support the findings from my interviews. For example, female sexual offenders become stigmatized and labelled for failing to "do" their gender properly, and relational theory speaks to a gendered aspect of being female. Each theory points to a facet of reintegration that has proved challenging for female sexual offenders. The following two chapters will put these theories into action, and will apply them to the two main themes that developed from my analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research aims to look at the connections among people, situations, and events. It emphasizes the descriptions participants give and the perspectives they hold, rather than focusing on quantifiable variables and statistical relationships (Maxwell, 2013). Through this, qualitative researchers can discover the contexts within which the participants act, and the processes by which these actions and events take place, allowing a deeper and more holistic understanding of the issue at hand. The inductive, open, and flexible approach used by qualitative research can also help to identify unanticipated phenomena and influences that may not be discovered by quantitative research, which tends to be more focused and narrow (Maxwell, 2013). The openness of qualitative methods also makes them optimal for obtaining large amounts of data from a small sample, which is important in cases such as this research project where the number of potential participants is low. Because of the extensive research gap in this area, and thus the exploratory nature of this project, a qualitative approach was the most fitting.

Qualitative research, particularly interviews, have been highly criticized for the fact that researchers may take what their participants say to be "truth" or "evidence" for their behaviours (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). Jerolmack and Khan (2014) posit that people often act in ways that are inconsistent with their expressed attitudes and provide inaccurate accounts of their past activities or behaviours. They refer to researchers' inference of participants' behaviours based solely on their verbal accounts as committing "attitudinal fallacy" (p.179). These scholars also claim that without context of the situation, interviewers can easily misunderstand the meaning of participants' words and accounts. To combat the attitudinal fallacy in my qualitative research study, I have chosen to focus on the *perspectives* of my participants and their *understanding* of

the reintegration of women convicted of sexual offences, as evidenced by my research questions. I would like to acknowledge upfront that my findings may be representative of the thoughts of many who work with women convicted of sexual offences but cannot be generalizable to all. This study is exploratory and I set out to do just that – explore what my participants feel is happening with the reintegration of these women to find out more on a topic that is significantly understudied, especially qualitatively, at present.

Going into this project, my goal was to conduct 10-20 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with CoSA staff, volunteers, and core members from CoSA sites across Canada. I wanted to ask program staff and volunteers for stories about their experiences with assisting female core members in their reintegration into the community, in order to determine whether a gendered approach is taken when working with women in CoSA. I had also hoped to interview female core members who participated in, or still are participating in CoSA for stories of their experiences, and for their reflections on the approaches being taken.

I received ethics approval on June 28th, 2021 and began recruitment immediately after. I contacted the Executive Director of CoSA Canada and asked first for permission to conduct this research, and second if they could circulate my recruitment script (see APPENDIX D) to all CoSA coordinators across the country. I received only one response from the initial email sent out by the executive director and scheduled two interviews – one with a coordinator and one with a volunteer – in August 2021. These two early interviews led me to realize that the problem was much bigger than I had originally anticipated. It was not only that CoSA was struggling with women convicted of sexual offences, but that there appeared to be little to no other programming or supports that CoSA staff could look to for help with their female clients. This, coupled with the small number of CoSA sites in Canada with experience with women convicted of sexual

offences prompted me to broaden my study. I decided to take the focus off CoSA specifically, and try to determine what, if any, programs or supports exist in Canada for women who have offended sexually and are reintegrating into the community, and how staff or volunteers of these programs approach the women's reintegration.

This change in direction required a new recruitment strategy, and therefore an amendment to my ethics application. The amendment was approved October 26th, 2021. To recruit this broader sample, I created a recruitment poster that was posted on my social media and shared, as well as circulated via the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)'s email list (see APPENDIX C). ATSA is an organization that is "dedicated to making society safer by preventing sexual abuse" through research, evidence-based practice, informed public policy, and collaborative community strategies (ATSA, 2017). Members of this association include treatment providers, researchers and educators, victims' rights advocates, law enforcement and court officials, and many other stakeholder groups who work in the area of sexual abuse. I also emailed most Elizabeth Fry Societies in Canada asking if they have worked with women convicted of sexual offences, or if they could refer me to any other programs or organizations in their area that might. I then followed up with all the CoSA coordinators across Canada asking the same.

Recruitment for my project proved to be very difficult – it was a very slow-moving seven months of trying to find anyone who, first of all, had experience working with women convicted of sexual offences since there are so few in Canada, and second had the time to speak to me about their experience. I received only one reply to my recruitment poster from my social media post, and zero replies from the ATSA email list. The overwhelming majority of my participants came from snowball sampling, most originating from my contacts within CoSA. During my

interviews, many of my participants admitted they felt they were generalizing their answers to

my questions as they had only worked with sometimes only one or two women convicted of

sexual offences. It is possible that this contributed to my difficulty with recruitment – perhaps

many people felt as if they did not have enough experience to speak on the subject, not knowing

that having worked with so few of these women is the norm in Canada.

I conducted 15 in-depth qualitative interviews with participants from across Canada

including staff from non-profit community organizations such as CoSA and the Elizabeth Fry

Society, social workers, forensic psychologists, ex-probation officers, and other stakeholders in

the community who have worked with women convicted of sexual offences trying to reintegrate

into society. Interviews took place from August 2021 to January 2022. My participants spanned

the map of Canada from provinces including Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and

British Columbia. Very interesting to note is that all my participants were female. I am not sure

if this is because women are more often assigned to work with these women than men, or if this

is simply the result of the snowball sampling. With the exception of two in-person interviews, all

interviews were conducted via Zoom or the telephone, lasting around 45 minutes to an hour and

a half in length. Participants were asked to tell stories of their experiences – both negative and

positive – working with women convicted of sexual offences, their thoughts on gender as it

relates to the reintegration of sexual offenders, and about the approach they take when working

with women, among other questions (see APPENDIX B).

In-depth interviews mimic a conversation in that the discussion is relaxed, open and

honest – these kinds of interviews, when effective, build on intimacy and require a solid rapport

(Johnson, 2001; Morris, 2018). In-depth interviews are said to be the best approach for questions

of greater depth, "where the knowledge sought is often taken for granted and not readily

articulated by most members", or "where different individuals involved in the same line of activity have complicated, multiple perspectives on some phenomenon" (Johnson, 2001). Both of these conditions were present among my participants.

I created an interview guide with topics that I wanted to cover and a few initial guiding questions (see APPENDIX B), but the interviews were mainly steered by the participants. The goal of these interviews was to extract as much information as possible from participants by using follow-up questions and probing for more information, while allowing the participant to express themselves however they desired (Morris, 2018). With this being said, I was prepared to "go with the flow," and not remain heavily anchored to my interview guide while at the same time ensuring that the conversation was not too tangential (Johnson, 2001, p.111). There were some instances where I had to redirect conversations as they started to stray too far away from the topic of the interview, but there were also times where the tangents my participants went on led to some interesting new perspectives or subjects that I had not previously considered.

In-depth interviews are beneficial in that they create a space for participants to tell their story, providing a range of insights and thoughts that may expand the interviewer's way of thinking. A section of my interview guide focussed specifically on asking participants for their stories rather than their opinions because this approach provides richer, more useful data, and the process is more satisfying to participants (Crocker, 2015; Crocker & Chartrand, 2015). Asking participants to tell me their story rather than their opinion can also change what they recount (Crocker, 2015). Despite not always asking directly for opinions, I acknowledge that it may not be possible to completely separate the two, as lived experience naturally forms opinion and vice-versa. As this study is exploratory, in-depth interviews are beneficial because they allow the

participant to decide what information is important, rather than the researcher having full reign over the discussion.

These types of interviews, however, are not without their limitations. First, there is the issue of deciding how far to go with probing the participant as it is sometimes difficult to anticipate the consequences of such probing (Johnson, 2001). It is possible that probing questions might lead a participant into areas or experiences they are not comfortable discussing. To reduce the likelihood of this happening, I made sure to clearly state at the beginning of interviews that my participants could skip questions or end the interview at any time without penalty. Further, because of the free-flowing conversational style of in-depth interviews, participants may be inclined to discuss topics that are not relevant to the research. It is important to know how and when it is appropriate to redirect the conversation in a way that does not affect rapport. Finally, since in-depth interviews usually last around an hour or longer, transcribing and analyzing these interviews can be very time-consuming. Even small numbers of in-depth interviews can take hours to analyze due to the amount of data produced from them. Wilson (2013) mentions that one hour of audio tape from a talkative person can take up to ten hours to review and transcribe, and the analysis of these data can take much longer.

Because this research took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, twelve of my fifteen interviews were conducted via Zoom, one was conducted via telephone, and only two were in person. At first, I thought using Zoom or the telephone would be a hinderance to the quality of my interviews, but virtual interviews allowed me the opportunity to speak to participants across the country – something that may not have been considered pre-pandemic due to the costs associated with travel. The pandemic also normalized virtual meetings, and, in my opinion, made people more open and relaxed to meeting without being face-to-face because for so long it was

not possible. Despite this, conducting my interviews using Zoom or the telephone required me to pay special attention to the development of rapport (the key to in-depth interviews), as using these mediums can *still* impede upon the rapport-building process. It is harder to form a trust-building relationship that allows for the free-flow of information when you are not physically in the same room as the participant. Rapport building in remote interviews takes much more work, but Weller (2017) suggests a good way to start to develop this rapport is to make small talk about the technology, or the space that is in the participant's background of their video. For example, an easy way to make a connection with someone might be to talk about the picture that is hanging on the wall behind them to engage them in a bit of an ice-breaker conversation. I began many of my interviews with a short introduction about myself and why I am interested in this research to give participants a sense of who I am. I also gave them an opportunity to ask me questions, and some participants would form connections with me based on my own introduction, relating something I said to something they have experienced.

There is, however, one problem with rapport building that can be unavoidable with remote interviews – technological or connection issues (Weller, 2017). If someone has a spotty internet connection and needs to continuously repeat their responses to questions, not only may it have a negative effect on rapport, but also can affect how in-depth they may go with their responses (Weller, 2017). This did happen with a small number of my interviews. One participant, who did their interview via telephone, was driving throughout the duration of the interview. This made it extremely difficult to hear their responses to my questions as the cell connection was spotty and would often cut out. I found myself having to repeat back each and every response to ensure I was correctly grasping what was said. This affected the rapport with this participant as they were noticeably irritated if I did not hear them accurately. During a

second interview, my internet connection cut out while my participant was mid-response to one of my questions and the Zoom meeting abruptly ended. Thankfully this participant was very understanding, and we were able to pick up where we left off once my internet connection was restored. To my knowledge this situation did not affect the rapport with this participant.

Despite the numerous challenges that come with doing in-depth interviews remotely, these interviews can also have some interesting benefits. First, remote interviews can be less daunting and more informal than in-person interviews (Weller, 2017). The fact that people can be in the comfort of their own home or space may put them more at ease, meaning they may be willing to give more in-depth responses. Further, using Zoom or the telephone allows the recorder and interview guide to be hidden from the participant's view, making for a more relaxing and casual environment – this is beneficial for in-depth interviews as it is important that the participant feels comfortable. Doing interviews remotely saved me time and money as (with the exception of two) I did not have to commute anywhere to meet with participants for interviews, and I was able to do them from my own home (Weller, 2017). As already mentioned, if the interviews were to be in person, I would not be able to afford to fly across the country to meet with participants. The fact that remote interviews are a time and money saver may have also benefitted me in that I may have been able to interview more participants than if the interviews were in-person – people may have been more willing to commit to doing a Zoom interview as it saves them time and money as well by not having to commute to an interview location.

Each interview was transcribed verbatim (with the exception of removing any identifying information) either manually or with the use of the transcription software Otter.ai. I then re-read each transcript while listening to the recording to ensure that everything was transcribed

precisely. To analyze my exploratory interview data, I used an inductive thematic approach. In other words, I used open coding – I approached my data without a pre-conceived idea of what I might find, trying to pull out what was happening rather than interpreting the data based on pre-existing theory (Gibbs, 2012). Using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo, I read the transcripts line-by-line, identifying passages or quotes that described some phenomena or ideas either relating to my research questions or that seemed otherwise important. I labelled these passages or quotes with a name that captured the ideas expressed – also known as the code (Gibbs, 2012). As I coded, I wrote memos so I could remember and understand my thought processes leading up to the codes that I created.

The codes that proved to be most useful for this thesis included: Co-accused Complications, Historical Trauma, Gendered Bias, Stigma – Harsh on Female Sexual Offenders, Stigma – Less Harsh on Female Sexual Offenders, Labelling, Female Sexual Offenders 'Left Out', and Women as Relational. These codes seemed to focus the most on the gendered aspects of women's sexual offending, and how their reintegration is impacted as a result. Originally, I thought that my code 'Female Sexual Offenders as Difficult' would have been prominent as 14 of the 15 participants spoke about this in one form or another, however the quotations in this code did not necessarily focus on the bigger issue of *why* they were more difficult. I also coded for 'Reintegration Needs,' hoping that some of the participants would shed light on specific needs that women have that differ from their male clients, but there did not seem to be much knowledge of what they truly needed or how they differed.

After I finished open coding, I went back through my codes using axial coding, grouping together codes that are either the same or similar, combining passages that explain the same idea, phenomenon, explanation, or activity to form categories (Gibbs, 2012). I then analyzed these

categories, assigning a title to each one that emphasized the themes emerging from them. As outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p.82). To get from a category to a theme I asked myself: "What is this category about?" and thought interpretively and analytically about what the category was telling me about my research question. Once I developed some preliminary themes, I refined them by examining each theme and the data excerpts associated with it individually, developing an analysis or story of what the theme was about. Then, I compared the themes against each other to ensure there was no overlap and that the themes each told their own unique story about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The two prominent themes that emerged from the data were Co-Accused Complications and A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. Co-Accused Complications consisted mainly of passages coded under Co-Accused Complications, Women as Relational, Historical Trauma, and Female Sexual Offenders 'Left Out'. A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing primarily consisted of quotations coded under Gendered Bias, both codes regarding Stigma, Labelling, and Female Sexual Offenders 'Left Out'. I then re-read my codes and transcripts to ensure I grasped the themes accurately, helping to establish validity and rigour in my research process.

Positionality

In the interest of reflexivity, it is pertinent to discuss how my positionality played a role in my data collection and analysis. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, I volunteered with Circles of Support and Accountability for a number of years, and I also worked as a research assistant on the national program evaluation of CoSA. This experience provided me with insider information, and a hybrid between insider and "trusted outsider" status (Bucerius, 2013). Through my volunteer and research experience I was able to form connections with the

Executive Director of CoSA Canada, as well as many of the CoSA site coordinators across the country. I believe this may have aided in my recruitment as my name would have been familiar to many of the coordinators I contacted asking to participate in my research. Coordinators may have been more willing to participate in an interview having known who I was, and may have been more forthcoming with information than they would be with someone who was not familiar with CoSA, or who was a true "outsider" due to the inexistence or reduced fear of malicious intent. I approached CoSA staff as a Masters student and not a CoSA volunteer, which I believe allowed participants to trust me with inside information they would not have typically shared with "real insiders" (Bucerius, 2013; Fonow & Cook, 1991). In addition, the majority of snowball sampling that occurred was initiated by my CoSA participants. It seemed as if they were willing to put in a lot of effort to assist me with my project. Had it not been for my prior connections, I am not sure I would have achieved the number of participants that I did.

Based on these prior connections and experiences, it would also be impossible to say that I went into this study completely unbiased. As mentioned, my conversations with two separate CoSA coordinators sparked the idea for this study, and did give me a preconceived idea of what kinds of questions I wanted to ask and what I might find. I did everything in my power to let my participants guide the interviews so as to reduce my biases and explore avenues I had not considered. During the data analysis process I kept my biases in mind, ensuring to highlight findings in my data that both supported my preconceived ideas and opposed them. My goal was to be as objective as possible, while also recognizing that complete objectivity is not possible in research.

Another aspect of my positionality worth addressing is the fact that I am a woman. This is important as all my participants were women, and the subject of the study is also women. Had

I been a man asking questions about the reintegration of women who had offended sexually, I am not convinced I would have been received by the participants in the same manner. There may be certain information that participants divulged to me that they may not have to a male researcher simply based on the shared experience of being a woman (while also acknowledging the intersectionality of the category of "woman"). It is also possible, then, that my own gender could have affected the way I analyzed the data – a male researcher may have had a different interpretation of the findings. I see this as a strength, however, as I feel it is important that women are the ones to discuss women's issues, especially considering the large focus on gender differences and inequalities in this research.

Chapter 4: Findings

As mentioned in my Methodology chapter, there were 15 participants in this study, all of whom were women. Participants worked with women convicted of sexual offences in different sectors, including non-profit, government, and private. Some had more experience working with women with this type of offence background than others, with their experience ranging from five months to about 15 years. However, as I learned, the length of experience does not relate to the number of women they have worked with. For example, one participant who had been in her position for 14 years had only worked with three women convicted of sexual offences, while another participant had only been in her position for two years and had already worked with two women convicted of sexual offences. It was not uncommon for participants to have only worked with a handful of these women throughout their careers, in fact, many participants had only worked with between one and three of them, with the highest number being 12. Most, but not all, had also worked with male sexual offenders.

Participants got into this line of work through various methods. Though I did not ask about levels of education, 11 of the 15 participants shared with me that they had an undergraduate degree or higher (fields of study included Criminology/Criminal Justice, Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Social Work, Law). Several of my participants started in the field as a result of their practicum or placement in their undergraduate degrees, or through volunteering with the organization prior to being hired. Others worked for various organizations first to gain experience, and fell into their current positions as a result of networking or chance. All of my participants felt this was a niche area, and though they were drawn to this work for various reasons, the overwhelming majority indicated a desire to work with populations that are

highly stigmatized and excluded from society in order to break down barriers and assumptions. Some participants were also motivated by an interest in restorative justice.

My goal with recruitment was to be able to interview participants who worked for reintegration programs specifically for women who had offended sexually. Unfortunately, from what I found, these programs do not exist in Canada. Those I interviewed who worked for non-profit organizations either supported women offenders in general or sexual offenders in general – there was no program in community that was designed exclusively to assist women with sexual offence backgrounds. In fact, when asked if they knew of any such programs, a few of my participants asked me if there was something I knew of that they did not.

What follows is an explanation and discussion of my research findings. Participants' names have been replaced with randomly selected pseudonyms in the interest of confidentiality. Two main themes came from my data: Co-accused Complications and A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. Co-accused Complications speaks to my first research question surrounding the ways staff and volunteers who work with women convicted of sexual offences understand and approach their reintegration. This theme highlights a distinct aspect of women's sexual offending and presents the idea that women who co-offend (offend with or at the hands of a male partner) have unique needs when reintegrating into the community. The second theme, A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, speaks to both research questions. First, it addresses my participants' (and others') approaches to and understanding of the reintegration of women who have offended sexually based on gender expectations and/or stereotypes. Second, it explains how these gender expectations/stereotypes lead to underreporting, resulting in a low number of women who become sentenced for these offences, and thus a lack of programming to support their reintegration.

Co-accused Complications

The first theme that arose from my analysis centres around women who offend sexually either at the hands of or in partnership with a male co-accused. Despite early research stating women who co-offend were *always* coerced by their male partners, we now know this is not the case – approximately half of the women who co-offend with a male partner are coerced, and the other half offend on their own will (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020; Gannon & Rose, 2008). As highlighted in the literature, the rates at which women co-offend are much higher than those of men, which sets female sexual offending apart from male sexual offending (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020; Williams & Bierie, 2015). More often than not, the males that women co-offend with are their partners. Interestingly, although the statistics show that approximately one third of female sexual offenders co-offend (Cortoni & Stefanov, 2020), most participants in this study reported that the majority of female sexual offenders they worked with had a male co-accused. In fact, some of my participants had *only* worked with women who co-offended.

Historical Trauma, Abusive Relationships & Dependency. Women who co-offend were described by one participant as being a "whole different ball game" (Emma); for most of these women reintegration support becomes less about deviancy and more about dependency. Many of the women my participants worked with who co-offended had extensive histories of abuse and trauma, and/or were in an abusive relationship at the time of their offence. As stated by Ford (2010) and confirmed by a number of my participants, many women are "excessively dependent or overly reliant on the coercive men in their lives, with some even placing their relationships with these men above those with their own children" (p.111). This was depicted by Oliva, who spoke of a client whose partner coerced her into sexually abusing her child while he videotaped it:

And, so as she was like, describing situations as she was assaulting her children, with this partner, like that was really hard for me to hear to kind of choose that partner over your own child. And the abuse that you're doing in the moment, like I understand, it's like, 'I was scared of him so I, you know, I punished my children. I put them in there. I locked them in the basement', like, I feel like I can handle all that stuff. But the idea of like being on camera sexually assaulting a child, while your partner like… the fear, the trauma that must have, like, that's hard to forget, right?

Another participant also described a similar situation:

The one before that was, he was getting her out of the house so he could abuse the baby. And she knew what was going on, she could see the damage that was being done it's terrible to the baby. But she needed him. She was scared of him, she needed him, um so (Emma).

This is something rarely seen in male sexual offenders. A number of my participants noted that the involvement of a co-accused made their female clients more difficult to work with because their cases were more complex. As a very blunt example of this, Emma said:

. . . their problems lead them to that. You know, dependent on the guy. So that's different than a man who rapes because he wants to control women or a man who's a pedophile. Now I think a couple of the women are, definitely also get involved in the sexual abuse and get kind of turned on to it too right? They're not the main instigators I think that's the difference. They don't start it on their own.

There was a common belief that male sexual offenders were easier to deal with because their motivations for their crimes tended to be more clearly laid out. Female sexual offenders, on the other hand, come with a whole host of "issues", some of which include addictions, mental health,

histories of sexual and physical victimization, and unhealthy relationship patterns. This is not to say that men do not also experience these things, but my participants felt that it was more prevalent among women, and women often had less tendency toward actual sexual deviancy as a result of the coercion they faced from their male partner. This makes it difficult for programs or organizations that typically work with male sexual offenders – they are not used to the emotional and relational work associated with women. For women who were coerced into committing sexual offences, it is possible that sexual deviancy did not play any role in their offences. As Sophie said: "I do not think that these women would be in the same circumstances if a man hadn't been – or another person hadn't been there, sort of encouraging the behaviour or almost forcing the behaviour". It is in these situations where relational theory becomes crucial in both understanding the crimes and supporting the women in their reintegration.

One aspect of relational theory which is of key importance when discussing sexual offences committed by women with a co-accused is that women place *so much* value on relationships (especially with their spouses or partners) that they will do whatever it takes to maintain them (Miller, 1986). Additionally, because women associate a loss of relationship with a loss of self, disappointing or displeasing their partner is often not something they are willing or able to do. Covington (2003) posits that connections in women's lives are so crucial that many psychological problems can be linked to disconnections or violations in their relationships, and that women are more likely to be motivated by relational concerns than men. Knowing this, it becomes clearer why some women will obey their partners and give in to coercion, even when it involves abusing their own children. Though they also value their relationships with their children, as Miller (1986) explains, women are raised to serve others – men first, and children second.

Reintegration Implications. Women who were coerced into sexual offending by their partner require specific considerations for proper reintegrative support. First, it is important to determine the role the woman played in the offence (i.e., solo offender, coerced co-offender, or active co-offender). The level of involvement in the offence speaks to the type and level of treatment or support required to assist in her reintegration. For example, Mia clarified:

> So usually the male accompanied have a lot of interpersonal relationship difficulty, maybe domestic violence, maybe addictions, difficulties with self esteem. So you know, they can't hold their own in relationships, so they get pulled into these situations, they're vulnerable to it. But either way, I mean, how do I try to explain this… it's not something that people regularly do right in response to, say, a stressor or something. So, either way, it's important to me to get at the role played by the woman.

More specifically, women who were coerced co-offenders require relational work, focussing on healthy relationships, boundaries, and "protecting their own integrity" (Abigail). One participant, Abigail, spoke of a client who was an excellent mother to her children, but when she got a boyfriend, everything went downhill. It became a relationship characterized by domestic violence and sexual pressure, mixed with her inability to say no to him. This is not uncommon with women who co-offend. To prevent situations like this from repeating themselves post-release, those relationship and boundary pieces need to be addressed. As a very sad but real example, Ava, a coordinator of a reintegration program told me that one of her clients had a positive experience while incarcerated because she learned in one of her treatment programs that she was not an object and had the ability to say no. Ava added:

> And while I am really, really, really glad that she learned that I am also absolutely heartbroken that it took her going to prison to learn that. Yeah. And I'm really curious if,

I don't know would a male sex offender program need to have a lesson on 'you are not an

object, and you can say no!' like??

This is a powerful statement and a fantastic way to summarize the relational aspect of women's

sexual offending. Not only does it demonstrate a key difference in the treatment of male and

female sexual offenders, but it emphasizes the patterns of domination and subordination that

Miller (1986) explains. It touches on the ways women feel the need to serve their partners and

keep them happy, and how their partner's needs tend to come before their own. For a woman to

be put in a position they know is wrong (such as sexually abusing their children) but still feel the

inability to say no speaks volumes to the importance women place on their relationships.

Because men were brought up to be the "dominant" ones in society (Miller, 1986), as my

participant alludes to, this kind of relational work would certainly very rarely, if ever, be required

with male sexual offenders.

Secondly, because unhealthy relationship patterns with men play such a prominent role in

these women's offences, it is best that women do not participate in co-ed reintegration

programming. Many participants consider it a best practice to have their female clients work

only with other women (or at least only women at the beginning) for a number of reasons.

Putting female sexual offenders in group sessions with male sexual offenders can create an

unwanted power dynamic (reverting women right back to the dominant-subordinate power

structure) that is not helpful for successful reintegration. Additionally, due to the extensive abuse

that many of these women have suffered, putting them in a group with other men could only end

up re-traumatizing them, thus not giving them a safe space to open up and talk about issues they

have faced/are facing. Further, co-ed groups allow the possibility for women to form

relationships with the other male sexual offenders in the group, which could only lead them into

another unhealthy relationship, and another offending cycle – this is something to be extremely mindful of given relational theory.

A third aspect that requires attention when supporting women who have co-offended is their accountability. For women who were coerced into offending, it is not uncommon to feel a strong desire to place all the responsibility on the co-accused. While my participants felt that in many cases their clients may not have offended if there were not a man involved, they also felt this does not relieve the woman of her culpability – despite the complexity of the offences, she still played her role in them. It is extremely vital to acknowledge that though the woman may have been victimized, she is also responsible for victimizing others. To get the woman to understand this and take accountability for the harm she has caused can be challenging. On the other hand, sometimes women who were coerced take on an extreme amount of guilt and feel they should be fully accountable for what took place. One of my participants articulated this when discussing one of her clients:

> And so, to go back to the other woman I supported, um, you know, she also had somebody who was a co-accused. And it would have been very easy to frame that as like, that wasn't her idea and it wasn't her show. But she really felt like 'I had a lot of places where I could have turned that situation around, and I didn't, and I didn't protect the children involved' and felt a great deal of guilt and shame at that (Zoey).

After experiencing abuse and victimization themselves, many women feel shame and even disgust for having put others through similar things they were put through. While it is positive that they acknowledge the suffering they have caused because of their offence(s), in these instances, it is important to recognize the other factors that were at play (i.e., coercion, trauma). Though accepting accountability and understanding harm is key when it comes to reducing

recidivism, accountability in cases involving coercion becomes a bit more of a balancing act –
women need to accept their role in the harm, but also need to realize the complexity of the
situation.

Risk is a fourth area to consider when working with women who were coerced into
sexual offending. As we know, levels of risk for sexual recidivism among women are already
very low, but my participants argued that levels are even lower for women who were coerced
unless they revert to a pattern of getting into an unhealthy relationship (Ashfield et al., 2010).
This is because, as mentioned, many of these women would likely not have offended in this way
had it not been for their male partner. This was explained by one participant who works as a
forensic psychologist:

> I'm thinking of a woman I was working with who was serving a life sentence and her risk
> was so low, and the probability of the same event ever occurring ever again was as close
> to zero as you could ever testify to, but she still had to serve a minimum amount of time
> (Mia).

This participant continues on to say that those who work with this population of offenders tend
not to understand their low recidivism risk levels:

> . . . my experience there is trying to get them to understand this is, it's really a hard way to
> put it, but on the one hand, there's a sort of view that, you know, women are all victims,
> and that's why everything happens that women do. And then there's this other view that,
> you know, women are actually really high risk . . . and you leave them long enough to
> themselves, and they'll ruin everything. And I, you know, the reality is somewhere in the
> middle, and it's really difficult working with them, because the parole officers think
> they're high risk . . . (Mia)

When supporting these women with their reintegration then, it is important to consider the factors that were present when they committed the offence. This connects back to the focus on unhealthy relationships and dependency, rather than sexual deviancy, and supports Kruttschnitt et al.'s (2019) argument that rather than focusing on adverse childhood experiences and the role they play in offending, we should consider the factors that immediately lead to crime (such as unhealthy adult relationships). To reduce the risk of recidivism for women with a co-accused, programs and support should take a relational approach, concentrating on the relationships in the women's lives and how to break the pattern of falling back into unhealthy ones. Women need to learn that it is okay to focus on their own desires and needs, and it is okay to disappoint people when they put themselves first (Miller, 1986). Though dependency can be an issue with these women, Miller (1986) wisely suggests that "independence" should not be the goal. Rather, women should aim to "feel effective and free along with feeling intense connections with other people" (p. 119). This allows for the healthy relationships needed for women to flourish, while at the same time promoting their personal growth. Women need not fear conflict, but rather welcome it and use it in the pursuit of building a better future for themselves (Miller, 1986).

This chapter focuses on the unique and gendered aspect of women's sexual offending that is co-offending, Unfortunately, the only support participants mentioned that is offered to their female clients on this issue is done in a one-on-one setting. There are simply not enough female sexual offenders to create a group program for this type of support, and the groups for women offenders more generally do not speak to the sexual aspect of their offending. The next chapter looks at the second theme that emerged from this research, A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, which will provide more of an explanation for the lack of services for women convicted of sexual offences.

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

This chapter discusses the second theme that emerged from my data, focusing on the ways gender plays a role – whether knowingly or not – in the reintegration of women convicted of sexual offences. First, I describe the stigma not only that these offenders face, but also the stigma their victims face, and how this leads to a lack of services in the community for reintegrative support. Then, I examine the gendered biases that exist among those who work with women convicted of sexual offences both in the justice system and in the community.

Female Sexual Offenders and Stigma. The amount of stigma faced by women convicted of sexual offences was something discussed by nearly all participants in this study. Interestingly, the dialogue surrounding these women and stigma was largely centered on their inability to "do" their gender properly. As has already been mentioned, those who commit sexual offences and bear the "sex offender" label are already some of the most highly stigmatized in society, but for women who commit these acts the level of stigmatization goes a step further. Women who sexually abuse others, especially children, are seen as committing the ultimate gender role violation. They are breaking with society's norms surrounding what a woman *should* be (i.e., nurturing, submissive, kind, motherly, etc.). This was echoed by Mia, who said:

> I do believe they are of all the criminalized groups, the most stigmatized, and I think, I think the women I would have to say are even more stigmatized in many ways. Because again, as I said, there's a higher expectation that a woman wouldn't do that and it just somehow is perceived as a greater violation. Say by a woman offending against her child and a man offending they're both offensive but for a woman, sick women are supposed to do that.

Several other participants felt the same way – women who sexually abuse others are "monsterized" by society in a way that men who commit the same acts are not. Though these crimes are widely unaccepted, it has almost become expected to see a male's name attached to a sexual offence. When a woman's name appears, it is "unimaginable" and "something outside of what we conceive of" (Zoey). We see this even in the way we talk about women who commit sexual offences. West & Zimmerman (1987) describe how many roles become "gender marked," meaning there are certain roles that are presumably filled by one gender, and special qualifiers must be added when there are exceptions to that rule (i.e., "female doctor" or "male nurse"). "Sexual offender" is one of the roles typically assumed to be filled by a male – it is common to refer to a woman who has committed a sexual offence as a "female sexual offender". In other words, women become the exception in this role. For a woman to intentionally hurt their own children or someone else's children is something that members of society are not able to wrap their heads around. This is because, as Saradijan (2010) explains:

> The social schema of maleness readily accommodates a lack of expectation of men to be nurturers and carers, an expectation that men's needs should and would be catered for, and acceptance of overt aggression, sexual initiation and even sexual assault on the part of the men. In contrast, the social schema of femaleness readily accommodates women as nurturers, protectors and carers . . . Women are seen as generally non-aggressive and asexual, except in response to men's desires and male construction of sexuality (p.13).

Because these norms surrounding maleness and femaleness are so strong, women who commit sexual offences are not only highly stigmatized by others, but carry a great deal of guilt and shame themselves. They know they have done something that breaks with society's expectations

of their gender and tend to shame themselves for their own crimes. A participant who works as a psychologist elaborated:

> And the difficulty with that is I think from a clinical perspective, women have a lot more guilt and shame and stigma, especially over offenses that involve either sexual offenses or, you know, maybe even child murder, right? There's a whole constellation of expectations around what women are supposed to be and do and the whole nurturing bit and everything like that. And these types of acts are so contrary to that. My experience is that they, for the most part, just really see themselves as pariahs, and they, they have enormous difficulty understanding and accepting themselves, for this kind of… this kind of act. Really have a hard time wrapping their head around it (Mia).

This participant also added that women who have committed sexual offences tend to worry extensively about how they are or will be perceived by others, and they are more likely than men to acknowledge the harm they have caused. The reasoning for this was unclear to my participants – some felt it was because many of these women had been victims themselves, others felt it was because women are more relational and emotional, and have a better ability to sense others' disappointment in them. According to Ashfield (2010), some women felt they had committed acts that not even professionals would have expected them to commit, resulting in an increase in their feelings of being "doubly deviant".

While the majority of participants felt women are more harshly stigmatized than men, there were a small number of participants who believed the opposite. Some felt that because it is so unexpected and taboo for women to commit sexual crimes, there is almost a denial of their actions. Women's crimes tend to be minimized or excused as something else (i.e., mental

illness), which can allow them the opportunity to reintegrate into the community more smoothly.

For example, one participant who used to work as a probation officer said:

> Yeah, like I was saying there's, and it's not something that women are suspected of as much also. So you know, say there's a volunteer opportunity… Somebody, a man would definitely be more inclined to be asked for a criminal record check or a vulnerable sector check where a woman might not, it might just be kind of, you know, let that fly? Yeah, so I think there's more stigma for male sex offenders (Hazel).

Another participant who works for a community-based reintegration program provided a real-life example:

> But she has done parole, and but since yeah since she got out of jail, she's always worked. She didn't really ever have a hard time finding a job. And interestingly, she's one of the people you can even like, when you google her name, it comes up. So it's, it's surprising. And I think that a big part of the reason is people don't expect this. Like, I think that people see her and they see this, like, high functioning woman in society who has a kid and you know, and like, so I don't even think it enters their mind. Whereas some of the guys that show up on like a construction site, you know, for work, and they're like, weird, and like, Google this guy at lunch, and then the person's fired by the end of the day. Like that happens so often. Women are able to kind of like fly under the radar a little bit more (Luna).

This ability to fly under the radar is the perfect demonstration of how society believes it is impossible for a woman to act so outside of the expectations associated with her gender. Based on my participants' explanations, it seems as if female sexual offenders are either disgusting because "how dare they" fail to do their gender properly, or females simply cannot offend

sexually/excuses are made for their behaviour because it is not in accordance with doing their gender properly.

Victims & Stigma. Another aspect affecting the reintegration of female sexual offenders, and perhaps one that is thought of less often, is the stigmatization of victims. Media has a tendency to sensationalize sexual offences committed by females, for example, most people can think of a news headline about a teacher who was in a sexual relationship with her male student. These stories are especially sensationalized in instances where the offender would be considered attractive (Participant Grace; (Klein & Cooper, 2017). Rather than broadcasting these relationships as the sexual abuse that they are, media outlets tend to portray them as a love story – we certainly do not see these types of headlines when it is a man in a relationship with an underaged girl. One participant reflected on these gender differences:

> I really, I feel like it just goes back to like, what I was saying about how the media portrays it. If a man is designated as a sex offender, it's like, 'get all the children away from him'. And I feel like if a woman's designated as a sex offender, especially if that woman is an attractive looking woman, it's like, it just gets into this weird, you know, like, 'oh, did she just like, sleep with like, her daughter's boyfriend' or like it… I think the thing is, whenever we think of female sex offenders, we always think, oh, they must be going for, like, seniors in high school, which is like, teetering on the line of being inappropriate, but it's still completely inappropriate. And I feel like whenever we think of male sex offenders, we think, 'Oh, they must be, you know, their crimes have been committed against children, which they there's just everybody has their own age group. Right? (Ellie).

Headlines that portray female-perpetrated sexual abuse in this way are often accompanied by the idea that the victim is "lucky" to have been "admired" by his abuser, and that these experiences are an initiation or a rite of passage (Saradijan, 2010). Luna confirmed these ideas:

> Well, and I mean, even like in [city], right now, or in [province], I should say there's like three different women teachers who are charged with various like types of offenses against students. And so it's teachers! And there's still this idea out there that like, but like, boys are lucky if this is happening, and like, they don't want to say no, and like, 'Wow, if I was 16, in school and my teacher…' you know? Like, there's all this like, kind of, like silliness out there about it. Also, so I feel like that, like, stigma or whatever is just…

Presenting female-perpetrated sexual abuse in this way gives society the notion that men cannot be considered victims. To "do" their gender properly, men (and boys) are supposed to enjoy sexual attention they receive from women. This, coupled with the idea that women cannot commit these types of offences in the first place leads to a great deal of stigmatization, and the associated feelings of guilt and shame to be placed upon males who are victimized by women (Saradijan, 2010). Boys and/or men who are sexually abused by a woman may feel emasculated and worry about others not seeing them as being masculine enough. They may also fear that they will end up being the ones accused of sexually assaulting the woman should they disclose the abuse (Saradijan, 2010). The fear of stigmatization for not being masculine enough, or not doing their gender properly results in a severe lack of disclosures on behalf of male victims of female-perpetrated sexual abuse, contributing to the very low numbers of known female sexual offenders.

Lack of Services. The stigmatization associated with not doing their gender properly for both the female perpetrators and the male victims leads to a lack of available reintegration services and resources for female sexual offenders in the community. The underreporting and denial of women's sexual offences results in low numbers of known (or sentenced) female sexual offenders. Because of this, there is assumed to be no need, and often times there is no budget, for female-specific reintegration supports for sexual offenders. A participant who works for a provincial government program explained:

> I don't go to a lot of workshops on female sex offenders, because I just don't have a lot on my caseload. So when you're spending $1,000, on a two day workshop, and you can pick this that you might see once a year, or this where you do every day, you're always gonna pick that workshop that is more relevant, right? (Olivia).

A number of other participants expressed their frustration in the lack of resources for female sexual offenders, but agreed that it is difficult to create programs specifically for female sexual offenders when they may only work with one or two of them at any given time. So, while no one wishes for there to be more female sexual offenders, it may not be possible to develop supports for them until there are. Chloe clarifies this:

> But like, if there was more of them, that might improve the experience, in some ways, because there'd be more opportunity for some of these bigger programs or like, group-based things that are more specific to people with that same background. So we haven't really had the opportunity to do that. But, you know, of course, if there's less people with that, with that type of offense, that's great.

The small numbers of female sexual offenders in need of reintegrative support also leads to an inability to form best practices. With the exception of a very small number of participants, there

were admittedly no written policies surrounding best practices for working with female sexual offenders. Some participants added that there were a number of community organizations who worked with either women offenders in general, or male sexual offenders who would not accept referrals of female sexual offenders because they were not equipped to work with them. Not having established best practices results in the majority of work that exists to be done on a trial-and-error basis. This leaves the door open for gendered bias in treatment and services.

Gendered Bias. Throughout my interviews I noticed many participants seemed to have an implicit bias when discussing their work with female sexual offenders. Though the fact that all my participants were women themselves could be a strong contributing factor to their bias, it is still bias nonetheless. Many participants expressed they would "go the extra mile" for their female clients, they felt more comfortable and at ease working with female versus male sexual offenders, and they simply did not feel as concerned about the dangerousness of their female clients. The following quotations are some examples:

> But it felt as though we were definitely kind of more… more intimate I guess with our female [client] or more willing to kind of help her with various things. Uh, give lifts, try and hook her up with you know different people in the community kind of thing you know just go the extra mile because we weren't concerned about the perception of me being a young woman for example and kind of going out and sort of doing a little bit extra for a male [client] might have just like… the optics of it aren't good, the concern about how he's perceiving that extra effort that we're making you know, like there's just more kind of caution I think there. Whereas with women I think we're more likely to just kind of go the extra mile a bit for her (Charlotte).

Maybe because she is a female I'm not as… in some ways I feel more comfortable with her, so I feel more comfortable like challenging her on some things in the same way that I feel more comfortable being a little bit over the – not over the top it's genuine about affirmations, it would just be, there's less restrictions in terms of 'oh how is he gonna take it, or is he gonna think that I'm coming on to him, or is he gonna think that there's three of us in the room that are just his fan club, or that we're out to get him because he's a sex offender'. Like with her that's not really there so I feel like I can be a little bit closer to um, like farther back from my persona of [program] staff and more like a human being to human being (Ava).

I've like dropped everything before to help somebody move last minute. Um, and, you know, I probably wouldn't have done for a guy or something to like, go… well, you know, what it means to like, go after hours into someone's home, help them move. Like, there's inherent safety risks with that. So like, things like that, because the safety issue is changed (Luna).

All three quotes speak to some aspect of doing gender, whether it is how society is perceiving their relationship with their clients, or how the client is perceiving their relationship with them. The interaction between genders has been normalized in such a way that any "extra" help or attention a woman gives to a man could be taken as a sign of attraction on the part of the woman, no matter her position. This could explain why the participants in my study felt more comfortable working with the female sexual offenders, but at the same time highlights a disregard for or downplaying of the crimes that have been committed. This can easily be

attributed to the gender roles placed on women in society, and how women are assumed to be weaker and more submissive than men.

There seems to be an overwhelming consensus for the idea that female sexual offenders are not as dangerous as male sexual offenders, despite having committed the same types and severity of offences. In fact, sexual acts by females are perceived as being less abusive than the same acts by males by both the public and professionals working with female sexual offenders and their victims (Saradijan, 2010). To this effect, one participant referred to female sexual offenders as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" (Mia). Perceptions of safety in working with female sexual offenders are also gendered and may not be accurate. Though the participants in my study may not have been the ideal victim types of the female sexual offenders they worked with, this does not necessarily mean they are safe. Some of the male sexual offenders they have worked with may only victimize children as well, but that does not mean my participants would let their guard down in the same way. In this way, we see almost a dual-processing of male and female sex offenders – one that is exercised within the criminal justice system as well.

Several participants spoke of their female clients receiving less severe sentences or probation/parole restrictions in comparison to their male clients. One participant who used to be a probation officer attested to this:

> Hazel: Female sex offenders would also have less for conditions, they wouldn't have as many conditions limiting, say their access to you know, 'you shall not be within you know, 100 metres of a daycare pool, whatever'.

> Larissa: They didn't have those?

Hazel: They could. But for the most part, they have less restrictive conditions. We can

have male offenders that would have, you know, 20 conditions easily. And I would say

on average, female sex offenders would have less conditions, you'd have maybe 10.

Other participants spoke of women who were allowed to have smart phones, women who did not

have parole restrictions regarding the use of alcohol despite alcohol use being a contributing

factor in their offences, and women who were still allowed access to their children despite

offending against children – all privileges my participants claimed their male clients were not

allowed. Further, one Canadian province (to my knowledge) has a special parole protocol for

women offenders that allows for more of a continuum of care between prison and community.

The coordinator of CoSA in this province described her experience with this:

Her institutional PO (parole officer) bent over backwards to have us in to the institution

to speak specifically about CoSA, how we could work with her. She arranged for

community… uh ETAs? Escorted Temporary Absence? Yeah. So she was able to have

two or three CoSA circles before actually being in community. We were able to go with

her into the halfway house. Like again, because… I'm assuming because they might just

have more time for it, like the amount of intentional 'how do we set this person up for

success?' and intentional communication, um again the parole officer being really

intentional about 'okay this is what's going on from my perspective, do you have any

questions for me? How do we work together to make sure that she's gonna succeed?' I

haven't experienced that with a male and with the other female that's coming out again I

got a call from someone inside saying 'hey this is our situation, how do we build this so

that when she comes out into community she's already got something established for

her?'

This coordinator mentions a key possibility as to why parole in this province goes above and beyond for women offenders, being they could potentially have more time and resources to do so given the lower number of female offenders. However, male offenders would still benefit from something like this, so it is still interesting that nothing similar has been implemented for men.

While on the one hand it is common for female sexual offenders to be treated more leniently, similarly to the stigma they face as discussed above, there are also instances where female sexual offenders are treated more harshly within the criminal justice system. One participant highlighted how in some cases where a woman had a male co-accused, the woman would receive a harsher sentence: "And I can point to a number of cases, I mean high profile cases where you know the woman's name and you don't know her partner's. Like, no one would recognize the partner's name and that's telling to me" (Zoey). For some in the justice system, there is still a tendency to punish those who do not "do" their gender properly; those who do not act in accordance with gender roles are considered to be deviant (Miller, 2014). A second participant – a psychologist – spoke of trying to work with a parole officer who seemed to have this perspective:

> So I worked with a case, and it was, it was an assessment case, but I followed it through and did some discharge planning as well in this case. And her parole officer and I were in completely different camps. I'm like, send this woman home. She's done her – she's eligible, she doesn't need a program, you know, and she was really… when I met her, she she, you know, she didn't have a lot of, you know, the messy background like women have. Some – or just people that you encounter in the criminal justice system have. She had a lot of supports very pro social, you know, an excellent community to return to, job to return to, and really seem to understand what had happened and was quite shocked by

her behaviour . . . And the parole officer was so disgusted with her offense, he, he and I

just could not agree. I was saying open the gates and let her be reintegrated and go on

with her life. And he was not in agreement (Mia).

Though the parole officer in this case was male, women working with this population were said

to hold similar views as well. Another participant spoke of an experience where a Crown

prosecutor said one of her female clients was evil. The harsh prosecution of women whose

offences oppose the feminine traits of caring, chastity and virtue, and passivity dates as far back

as the eighteenth century (Godfrey, 2014). Harsher punishment for women convicted of sexual

offences only leads to a more difficult transition back into the community after incarceration. It

adds to the stigma these women face and makes them less likely to want to open up and work on

the issues that led them to offend in the first place. This was summed up nicely by Mia, who

said:

You know, it was like the people who were supposed to be doing that work around her

couldn't make that differentiation for themselves. Because they just couldn't

conceptualize how any woman could ever have done how she did like, right? The

disconnect was so huge for her carers. They couldn't give her, they couldn't help her

separate herself from her behaviour, because they couldn't.

Although we have progressed as a society since the eighteenth century, it is still telling to see the

ways gender plays a role in the stigma and treatment of women who have offended, specifically

sexually. The idea that not doing one's gender properly makes a person deviant can have such

great effects on the support a woman receives, and her ability to successfully reintegrate into the

community. This conversation is not meant to take away from the acts these women have

committed, but rather to highlight the disparity in services women receive in comparison to men

who have offended sexually on the basis of a refusal to believe women are capable of acting in

ways not in accordance with the norms associated with their gender.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This exploratory study has shed light on a very under-researched topic in sociology and criminology. Through interviews with 15 staff and volunteers supporting women convicted of sexual offences in their reintegration, I have uncovered two main themes relating to the ways gender plays a role in the reintegration of female sexual offenders: Co-accused Complications and A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. Using stigma and labelling theories, relational theory, and doing gender to inform my findings, I explain how those who work with women convicted of sexual offences understand and approach the reintegration of these women, and how a strong fixation on gender roles/expectations leads to a lack of reintegrative support and services specifically for these women in Canada.

Co-accused Complications highlights a unique aspect of women's sexual offending, being that a significant number of women who commit sexual offences have a co-accused. The co-accused is typically a male partner, and there are many instances where women have been coerced into sexual offending at the hands of their co-accused. This has implications for their reintegration in the sense that these women may not be sexually deviant and require relational support or treatment focussing on healthy relationships, boundaries, and self-esteem. This is something typically not seen with male sexual offenders. Additionally, the power dynamics and unhealthy relationships with a co-accused explain why female sexual offenders cannot be placed into co-ed reintegration programs – this may only serve to retraumatize women or contribute to their offence pattern.

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing points to the gender roles or expectations surrounding gender that society upholds, and how these impact the reintegration of women convicted of sexual offences. It is not only the gendered expectations of women that play a role in this (women

should be motherly, nurturing, submissive, etc.), but also the expectations placed on men (men cannot be victims of sexual assault perpetrated by women, they should enjoy the attention, etc.). Female sexual offenders and male victims both face a significant amount of stigma in society for violating the norms associated with their gender. These types of offences are underreported because of the stigma victims face, and women often receive lighter sentences and probation/parole restrictions (if sentenced at all) for these crimes than men do because they are not perceived to be as dangerous. This points to a gendered bias in professionals who work with female sexual offenders, and results in a lack – or based on my findings, a non-existence – of reintegrative services and support specifically for women convicted of sexual offences in Canada.

Limitations

Limitations to this study include the small sample size, the gender of my sample, time constraints, and the lack of a discussion surrounding race. First, the findings from my research were based on interviews with 15 participants, and as such cannot be representative of all staff and volunteers who work with female sexual offenders in a reintegrative capacity. Canada is a vast country, and there were some provinces and territories not represented in my study (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and all three Northern Territories). Additionally, one province in particular had more representation than others, while some provinces were only represented by one participant. The experiences of one person cannot be generalizable to the whole province, as situations can differ within provinces as well. Second, the gender of the participants can be considered a big limitation, as all 15 were female. As already mentioned throughout my thesis, I am not sure if this was a result of the snowball sampling that took place, or if it just happens that the majority of those who work with

female sexual offenders tend to be women. Either way, there are, in fact, men who work with female sexual offenders in a reintegrative capacity in Canada, and their perspectives were unintentionally excluded from this study. Because of this, it is possible that my findings are very one-sided, as I am sure the experience working with these women would differ based on the gender of the professional. Third, the time constraints on this degree put a limitation on the length of time that could be spent on recruitment, as well as the number of interviews that could be conducted. Because qualitative data is so complex and the transcription and analysis stages are time consuming, it would not have been feasible to conduct more interviews with the goal of graduating in a two-year timeframe. Finally, I acknowledge that there is a lack of a discussion about race in this thesis. I did not ask participants to disclose their race or the race of their clients, and I do not believe it appropriate to make assumptions about race. Only two participants very briefly spoke about Indigenous issues, one of them mentioning that despite the high rates of Indigenous people who are incarcerated, the majority of their clients are not Indigenous. The intersectionality of race is very important to consider when thinking about the reintegration of women convicted of sexual offences as no two women experience reintegration the same way, but unfortunately this was not a topic that my participants discussed in any detail.

Future Research

Given this topic is so understudied, there are several directions future research could go in. However, there are three main recommendations for future research that I was alerted to throughout working on this thesis research.

The first route future research could take would be to interview parole and/or probation officers on their experiences working with women convicted of sexual offences. I believe this would provide the opportunity to get a more expansive understanding of any gender biases

present within the justice system, but it would also allow for a deeper dive into the policies and/or practices used by probation and parole when working with these women (i.e., the program I mentioned that one province's parole officers use when working with women offenders). It is my belief that government-run reintegration work would look different than community-based reintegration work, and it would be interesting to be able to see how they differ. This could also allow for a more gender-diverse participant base. Interviewing parole officers was something I had hoped to be able to do for this project, but during the recruitment stage I learned that I would need to apply for Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) approval, which could take upwards of six months. Unfortunately, this did not fit with the timeline of this study.

A second route future research could take would be to qualitatively examine the differences in the reintegration of women who commit contact sexual offences and women who commit sex trafficking offences. I was alerted to this by one of my participants, who said that although both are classified as sexual offences, the reintegration journey for women who have committed either type of offence can look extremely different. For example, this participant said women who commit each type of offence would face the same reintegrative barriers (i.e., sex offender registration, parole restrictions, etc.), but the treatment they receive needs to target different motivations. Those who participate in sex trafficking may not be sexually deviant – their offences could be less about the sexual aspect, and more about the money they earn. A few different participants had mentioned that sex traffickers will justify their offences and tend not to see the harm they have caused. For example, as described by one participant:

> So, I had a female sex offender who she held a girl, she and her co accused, held a girl
>
> hostage in a cupboard for a couple of weeks and pimped her out on Craigslist. And they
>
> basically like her and her friend would hold this girl down when the Johns wanted to do

stuff that she wasn't okay with . . . She did not care. It was all it was drug trade related. So she was really she was involved in gangs. So she had no use for you know, the criminal justice system. She in her mind within their gang justice system she did nothing wrong because this girl had drug debt, she deserved pay. So yeah, there was no getting through to her. She had no remorse. There was no yeah, there was no insight whatsoever (Hazel).

Because of the lack of insight, sex traffickers also tend to reoffend at significantly higher rates than women who commit contact sexual offences. Canadian researcher Franca Cortoni has done some work in this area (see (Cortoni et al., 2015), but it is very brief and based on quantitative data. By the time I learned of the differences between the two, it was already too late to include research about it in my study. I also believe this is a very interesting and important topic that could generate enough information to form its own project, and has serious implications for reintegrative support.

The final direction future research could take would be to do a more intersectional analysis of this topic. As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis focused only on the gender binary of male and female sexual offenders, and did not account for the differences faced by sexual offenders who identify outside of the binary. It would be interesting to see how these offenders experience reintegration, and how their needs might differ from cisgender male and female sexual offenders. Additionally, this thesis did not address the ways that race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, religion, etc. intersect with gender and can impact or change one's reintegrative experience. It is very important for future research, especially research that has recommendations for policy change or programming, to consider these factors.

Suggestions for Improvement

  The most blatantly clear implication of this research points to the need for reintegration programs or support for women convicted of sexual offences. However, acknowledging that this may not be possible given the currently low number of women with these needs, there are other, more achievable improvements that can be made. One of the questions I asked participants was "do you think there is anything that needs to change to improve the experience for female sexual offenders at your program/organization?". The most common response was that gender-based training needs to be implemented for staff and volunteers, but tailored specifically to those who commit sexual offences. This could include training regarding trauma-informed care, healthy relationship work, and how to create a safe space for women who participate in their program. A number of participants felt as if they did not have the proper tools or knowledge on how to work with women who have committed sexual offences, and really believed they could benefit from being able to consult with or receive training from an expert or professional in this field.

  Another, seemingly easy suggestion for improvement is to talk about it more. There needs to be more conversation about women's sexual offending in general, but also more communication and collaboration among those who work with women convicted of sexual offences. This was explained excellently by Olivia:

> I think we need to talk about it more. And I think we need to have conversations and not just conversations among ourselves, but conversations with the legal system, with the Crown's office, with the court system, really open lines of communication between the systems and you know, what is going on? Are we really not seeing those charges? Are they not getting treatments? Like what is going on? Because, you know, I have a hard time believing that those behaviours are not happening. But how are we justifying them?

Or how are we not justifying them? Or how are we -- are those women falling through the cracks and not getting treatment services at all? Like, maybe they're not being offered? Maybe that's not a stamp. Like the male sex offenders it's like almost like a stamp, they get assessment and treatment is determined by their appeal. Maybe females don't get that stamp? I don't know.

Opening up lines of communication between those in the justice system and those who do reintegration work in community could help to fill some of the gaps service providers see, and could also allow for information sharing on "what works" or best practices that other service providers are developing. Information sharing would provide an immense amount of support for those working with women convicted of sexual offences as it would promote a sense of unity in this small and emerging field, as well as work to improve programming for the women based on the positive and effective experiences of others doing this work.

The research presented in this thesis is very important because to my knowledge, there has not been anything like it done before. It contributes to filling a significant gap in research surrounding female sexual offenders, and more specifically, their reintegration. The fact that the reintegration experiences and needs of male and female sexual offenders are so different, yet there are no programs for women in community, speaks volumes. My hope is that professionals who work in this field, especially professionals who work with female sexual offenders, will read these findings and be able to have a better understanding of the importance of considering gender in their support work. Moreover, despite the low numbers of female sexual offenders in Canada, I hope this illuminates the need for reintegration programs designed for female sexual offenders. Without them, many women convicted of sexual offences are not getting the treatment they need or are being left to the wayside. Not providing the proper support for these women perpetuates

the idea that they are doubly deviant, and continues to uphold the gender expectations placed on men and women. Taking steps to breaking down these barriers includes acknowledging the harm women can cause, including to men, and supporting them through their reintegration process in a way that will keep them on a path free from reoffending.

<div align="center">**References**</div>

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INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM

Reintegration Is Not One-Size-Fits-All: Gender and Female Sex Offender Reintegration

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Background and Purpose
For this study I will be exploring the approaches that program staff and/or volunteers take when assisting with the re-entry of women convicted of sexual offences. I am hoping to interview between 10 and 20 people involved with the reintegration of these women in some capacity. You are being asked to participate in this study because you either currently support women convicted of a sexual offence who are reintegrating into the community, or you have in the past. Your interview will help me to gain knowledge on the ways that gender plays a role in the reintegration of people convicted of sexual offences. This research will be used in support of the completion of my Masters degree in Sociology.

Study Procedures
The interview will take 45 minutes to one hour and will be scheduled at a time that works best for you. The interview will be in person (when possible, and as long as you are comfortable – all COVID-19 protocols will be followed), or we will use either Zoom or the telephone – whichever you prefer. In person interviews will be held either your local office, or in a more private area of a public space, such as a coffee shop. If it is okay with you, I would like to record our interview so that I can use it to transcribe our conversation.

Benefits and Risks
There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, but I hope that you will benefit from this experience by reflecting upon and sharing your experiences. There are also no immediate risks to you for participating in this study. You may feel uncomfortable telling me some of your experiences, but please know that we can take a break or stop the interview at any time without penalty.

If you choose to participate in an in-person interview, there will be a risk of COVID-19 exposure. In order to mitigate this risk, you will be asked if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 and/or have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19 prior to the interview. We will also wear masks if six feet of distance between us is not possible, and I will provide hand sanitizer. Please know that if you are not comfortable with this, we can do the interview using Zoom or the telephone.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right not to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable responding to, and you also have the right to end the interview at any point. You may also withdraw any information that you have shared with me up until that point. Even if you have agreed to participate in the study, you are able to change your mind and withdraw at any time. If you wish to have your information withdrawn, please let me know within two weeks of your interview. Recordings, transcripts, and any other material regarding your participation will be deleted.

Confidentiality & Anonymity

All materials collected in this interview will be kept confidential. I will make every effort to ensure that your stories are de-identified as much as possible. Your name will not appear in transcripts, findings, or results. All recordings, transcripts, and notes will be kept in a password protected file on my password protected computer, and only I will have access to them. All data will be kept for a minimum of 5 years after the completion of my Masters degree.

Further Information

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to ask me before, during, or after the interview. You can reach me at ldoran@ualberta.ca or ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Do you consent to being audio recorded? Yes☐ No☐

Verbal consent granted ☐

_____   _____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Interview Guide – General Program/Organization Staff

Hi, my name is Larissa and I'm a Masters student at the University of Alberta in the department of Sociology. I have done volunteer work with the sex offender reintegration program CoSA in Halifax, so I've got some prior knowledge regarding sex offender reintegration. I am excited to learn about your experience and ask you some questions. Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. Today I'll be asking you about your experiences with the reintegration of sex offenders, more specifically as it relates to gender. I just want to remind you before we begin that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, so you can withdraw at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. First, let's talk a little bit about how you got involved with [program/organization]…
   a. How did you find out about it?
      Probes: Who did you talk to? What happened?
   b. How long have you been involved with the program and what is your current position?
   c. Was there something about [program/organization] in particular that interested you? What was it?
      Probes: What convinced you to become involved? Why? [*I know that I was drawn to CoSA because I had seen research that proved that it reduced recidivism. I also liked how the program reduces the stigma attached to sex offenders.*]

2. Now I'd like to learn about how your program/organization assists sex offenders in their reintegration
   a. What is your role as a staff person? Could you describe what you do on a day-to-day basis?
   b. Does your program/organization have volunteers? What role do they play?
   c. What work do you do you directly with sex offenders/how are you involved with their reintegration?
   d. Are there any policies that exist relating to gender? If so, could you send me a copy?

3. Now I would like to hear about your experiences working with female sex offenders
   a. Could you tell me a story about a really great experience that you had working with a female sex offender?
      Probes: What happened? Why does this experience stand out to you? Is there anything that would have made this experience even better?
   b. Could you tell me a story about a difficult experience you've had working with a female sex offender?
      Probes: What made it difficult? What do you think would have made this experience better?

  c. Are there any other times that you've worked with a female sex offender that stand out to you? Could you describe that situation to me?
4. Finally, I want to hear your overall thoughts about gender and sex offender reintegration
  a. Based on your experience, is there a difference between the reintegration needs of male and female sex offenders? Could you describe these differences to me?
  b. Do you take the same approach when working with women as you do with men? Why or why not?
  c. What is your perspective on the "sex offender" label? Do you feel that it impacts women differently than men?
    i. In what ways does [program/organization] try to reduce the effects of the "sex offender" label?
  d. Do you think there is anything that needs to change to improve the experience for female sex offenders at [program/organization]?

5. Those are all the questions that I've got for you today… Do you have anything else that you'd like to add, or anything you would like to ask me?

Thank you again for taking your time to do this interview, and thank you for sharing your experiences with me. I appreciate it very much, and I've learned a lot from your answers. If you have any other questions later on, please feel free to send me an email.

Are you interested in participating in a research study?

Do you work with **women** who have been convicted of a sexual offence and are reintegrating into the community? Do you work in Canada?

If so, your participation in a research interview would be greatly appreciated!

Participants will be asked a series of questions regarding their experiences working with women who have been convicted of a sexual offence to examine the ways gender plays (or does not play) a role in their reintegration. The interview will take place via Zoom, the telephone, or in person if possible, and will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Participants can reside anywhere across Canada. This research will be used in support of the completion of a Masters degree in Sociology.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Larissa Doran at ldoran@ualberta.ca

Supervision on this research project provided by Dr. Jana Grekul: jgrekul@ualberta.ca

Thank you for your time and consideration!

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615. The study number is Pro00111891.

Appendix D: Recruitment Script

Script to Be Emailed to Site Coordinators via ED of CoSA Canada

Good Morning/Afternoon,

My name is Larissa Doran and I am a Masters student in Sociology at the University of Alberta. I volunteered with CoSA in Halifax for over two years, and I was also a research assistant working with Dr. Diane Crocker for two years on the CoSA National Capacity Project – as such, some of you may recognize my name!

My Masters thesis research is focussing on female sex offender reintegration, particularly female core members participating in CoSA. This research will involve interviews with staff and volunteers across Canada who have worked with female core members, as well as any female core members who are participating/have participated in CoSA in order to gain insight on their experiences with the program.

As a coordinator/staff person at a CoSA site in Canada, if you have had any experience working with female core members I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in the research as someone to be interviewed. The interview will last around an hour and will take place over Zoom. Please note your participation in this study will be confidential and your decision to participate or not will not have any effect on your position with CoSA.

I would also like to invite you to extend the invitation to core members or volunteers at your site who you think might be interested in participating in the research. If you have female core members at your site, please contact me so that we may discuss this process further.

Additionally, please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at ldoran@ualberta.ca or ████████████.

(The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.)

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Larissa Doran