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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EDUCATIONAL DRAMA PROGRAMMING IN PRISON

BY

KAREN B. COGAN 

A thesis

submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of a Master Of Education

in

Counselling Psychology

Department of Educational Psychology

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1995

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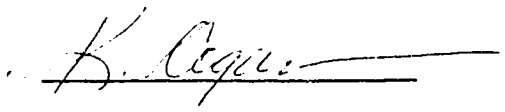

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Educational Drama Programming in Prison submitted by Karen B. Cogan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of a Master of Education in Counselling Psychology.

Dr. B. L. Paulson (Supervisor)

Dr. T.O. Maguire

Prof. D. Barnet

Mon. Sept. 25/95

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved grandmother, Cecilia Katz, who taught me the importance of passing on life experience through stories.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents three papers focusing on the use of educational drama as a vehicle for change in prison populations. The first paper examines drama programming implemented in prisons, their theoretical rationale, and selected research in the area. The second paper presents findings from a phenomenological study investigating the experiences of 7 male inmates in a maximum security prison who researched, wrote, and performed a play about family violence in a Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP). By creating an environment of safety, the FVDPP allowed participants to risk experimenting with positive roles, receive acknowledgement for their stories, learn conflict management, communication skills, and experience a sense of accomplishment and purpose. The third paper examines the collective creation model implemented in the FVDPP and illustrates in four case studies how the research, exploration, and performance processes facilitated learning, healing, and growth in participants who reported histories of childhood abuse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the participants of the FVDPP who shared their experiences of the program and their life stories. I thank Deborah Hurford, the head facilitator of the FVDPP and Artistic and Executive Director of Azimuth Theatre Association, who provided me with pertinent information regarding program development. I also thank Chuck Andrews, Chief of Education and Training at the Institution for his efforts in providing me with relevant institutional research. I thank my thesis advisor Dr. Barbara Paulson, and my committee members, Dr. Thomas Maguire and Prof. David Barnet for their support and guidance.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis consists of three papers that explore the use of drama as a vehicle for change with inmate populations. The first paper titled Drama as a vehicle for change in prisons (Cogan, 1985) provides an overview of the differing types of drama programming that are implemented in prison populations. A developmental theoretical paradigm is provided to illustrate the rationale for providing educational drama programming for offenders. The paper indicates that while research, theory, and experience suggest that drama is an effective vehicle for facilitating cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes in inmate populations, further research is required to determine the behavioral and internal changes associated with this kind of programming. An argument is made for the importance of phenomenological research in the area in order to understand the experience of drama programming from the perspective of inmate participants.

The second paper is titled Picking up the pieces: Inmates' experiences of a family violence drama project (Cogan & Paulson, 1995). This paper reports the findings from a phenomenological study examining the shared group experiences of 7 inmates who were participants in an educational Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP). Funded by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), the 17 week program was facilitated by Azimuth Theatre Association in a maximum security Canadian prison housing adult males. Following an adaptation of the collective creation model (Barnet, 1989; Berry & Reinbold, 1992), the participants researched, wrote, and performed a play entitled Picking up the pieces (FVDPP, 1994), dealing with the topic of family violence. Data for this study were collected through two semi-structured interviews with the 7 participants involved in the FVDPP and participant observation by myself. I am the principal author of this article and have as a co-author my thesis advisor, Dr. B.L. Paulson, who assisted in the data analysis and played an editorial role in the writing process.

I learned about Azimuth Theatre's interest in obtaining an independent evaluation of the pilot project through my thesis advisor, Dr. Paulson, and contacted Deborah Hurford, Executive Director of Azimuth Theatre and the head facilitator of the project. Having been trained and worked as a professional actor for several years before embarking upon a Master's degree in Educational Psychology, I saw my involvement in the project as an opportunity to use my training in both drama and psychology in order to come

to understand the experience of the participants. I was informed by Ms. Hurford that the inmates had expressed negative feelings towards psychologists, psychology students, and assessment. The participants verified this during my first meeting and explained that they believed psychological reports and evaluations were often detrimental to parole and transfers. With this in mind, I explained the purpose of the study and shared how my involvement in theatre and psychology connected with my interest in the inmate drama project. At the request of the group, I presented a dramatic monologue and song. This presentation felt like an audition or initiation, whereby I was challenged to take a risk in front of the group as a prerequisite for being involved in the project. The "audition" appears to have been a critical step in building rapport with the group and obtaining their consent for participation in the study.

The third paper is titled Working through family violence with offenders: A collective creation model (Cogan, 1985). This paper presents further findings from the FVDPP phenomenological study described in the second paper. While the second paper focuses on the shared group experiences of the 7 participants of the FVDPP, this paper focuses more specifically on the impact of the program on 4 individual participants who reported histories of childhood abuse. This paper provides a detailed description of the collective creation process as implemented in the FVDPP and the rationale for using this model with offenders with histories of childhood victimization. The paper provides case studies which illustrate the differing ways the program appears to have facilitated learning and growth in 4 participants who reported that they had been victims of childhood victimization including physical, sexual, psychological abuse, neglect, and the witnessing of family violence. Data for this paper were collected through two semi-structured interviews with 4 participants of the FVDPP and participant observation by myself.

Findings detailed in papers two and three are consistent with theory and research reviewed in the first paper, suggesting that drama is a powerful vehicle for emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development in offender populations. By creating a safe environment, the FVDPP allowed participants to experiment with positive roles, to share and have their stories witnessed and acknowledged. The psychoeducational component of the program facilitated participants' understanding of the issue of family violence and normalized feelings for those who had been abused as children. Further, participants practiced problem solving strategies and discovered their personal potential

and creativity. Findings also suggest that participants gained a sense of purpose through connecting with the group, receiving positive feedback from the invited audiences, and acting in leadership roles. The third paper indicates that the FVDPP was particularly effective in facilitating learning and growth in offenders who had been victims of childhood abuse. These three papers constitute the paper format thesis. Procedures and results from the FVDPP study are presented in papers two and three and will not be detailed at this time.

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Running head: DRAMA AS A VEHICLE FOR CHANGE IN PRISONS

Drama As a Vehicle for Change in Prisons

by

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Drama programming in prisons by theatre artists emerged in North America in the 1960's as the humanistic approaches in psychotherapy encouraged the use of creativity, role play, and fantasy as therapeutic interventions (Cleveland, 1994; Fink, 1984). During this time, a zeitgeist of raised social consciousness coupled with limited theatre opportunities, propelled professional artists into institutions such as schools, hospitals, and prisons (Fink, 1984; Hart, 1986a). This paper will explore the use of drama as a vehicle for change in prisons, examining the types of programming offered in correctional institutions, the goals and theoretical underpinnings of these programs in the context of correctional education, and selected research which had been conducted in this area. Further, this paper will conclude with suggestions for future research implications.

Drama Education Defined

Over the years, drama, or "the process of thinking/acting 'as if'" (Courtney, 1989, p. 14) has been used as an effective vehicle for change in schools, therapeutic settings, hospitals, and prisons (Cleveland, 1992; Fink, 1984; Hart, 1986a; Landy, 1986). Dramatic action requires an actor "to distinguish between either one aspect of the self and another or between self and non-self" (Landy, 1986, p. 5). Drama is used as a form of psychotherapy in Gestalt therapy, psychodrama, and drama therapy to bring about intrapsychic, interpersonal, and behavioral change (Petitti, 1992, p. 41). Educational drama, in contrast, refers to "the use of dramatic play for learning" (Courtney, 1989, p. 14). Exercises such as role-play, improvisation, and mirroring are used both in preparation of theatrical presentations and as personal and group development techniques (Courtney, 1989; Spolin, 1963; Way, 1967). Particular emphasis is placed on the exploration of the five senses, the development of the imagination, and on working in a group. According to Landy (1986), objectives of drama in education are: "learning about drama, learning about learning, and learning about thinking, feeling, and speaking" (p.14). Drama education is also used to build concentration, imagination, cooperation, and develop problem solving and communication skills (Courtney, 1989; Way, 1967). Further, drama can be used as a means of emotional release, as well as challenging attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. (Landy, 1986; Scheff, 1979).

Given the overlap of drama techniques in the fields of education and psychotherapy, it has become difficult to differentiate the role of drama in

education as opposed to its role in therapy. Fink (1984), distinguishing between the disciplines clarifies: "Specifically, drama therapy refers to those activities in which there is an established therapeutic understanding between the patient and therapist and the therapeutic goals are primary, and not incidental, to the ongoing activity" (p. 767). Drama programs in prisons generally focus on educational and recreational goals and are commonly run by actors and drama teachers as opposed to drama therapists. As Landy (1986) notes, however:

> Prison theatre artists, whether drama therapists or not, whether working through improvisation or theatre performance, utilize the natural drama of prisoners, the myriad of masks, disguises and roles, to help uncover the reality of the self, the family, and society. To the extent that they are successful in establishing a balance of distance between self and role, self and other, individual, and society, they are, indeed, realizing therapeutic goals. (p. 207)

Drama Programs in Prisons

Theatrical Presentations by Artists

Drama and theatre programming in correctional institutions take many forms, and often have differing goals and objectives. In some cases, artists have presented plays for inmate audiences as a recreational, educational, social, or political vehicle. Groups such as the Theatre for the Forgotten (Hart, 1986a; Landy, 1986; Ryan, 1976) in New York State have presented plays in prisons with a view to entertaining offender audiences, believing in the therapeutic value of pure entertainment. Others, such as Geese Theatre in the United States and England (Cleveland, 1992; Grace, 1993), The Street Theatre Caravan, The Family, and The Guthrie Theatre, in the United States (Landy, 1986; Ryan, 1976); Catalyst Theatre (Filewod, 1987), Azimuth Theatre (Hurford, 1994), Major Roadworks Theatre, and La Troupe de theatre d'Archambault (Snell, 1990) in Canada, have presented theatrical productions with the intent of educating or sending social or political messages. The plays may be new works created by professional artists or offenders, or they may be classical or contemporary pieces. Although some productions feature talk-back sessions following the performance, their main focus is presentational as opposed to being interactive. A unique participatory theatre approach utilized by Catalyst Theatre of Edmonton, Alberta (Filewod, 1987) requires inmates to

enter into the scenes during the performance, improvise, and give the characters advice. In this way, the play changes during each performance, reflecting the nuances and relevant issues in each prison, as well as encouraging inmates to practice decision making skills and observe the consequences of their choices.

Drama Workshops, Playwriting, and Inmate Theatrical Presentations

Drama workshops, as opposed to most theatrical presentations performed by artists, involve greater active involvement on the part of inmates. Although these programs vary in length, content, and in goals, most involve the teaching of acting techniques such as warm up exercises, improvisational games, and role play. Some programs, such as those conducted by Major Roadworks (Snell, 1990), Azimuth Theatre (Hurford, 1994), Geese Theatre (Cleveland, 1992; Grace, 1993), The Family (Camillo & Khosropur, 1986), Cell Block theatre (Gordon, 1981), as well as those described in Finio (1986), Mettee (1983), and Sutton (1992) culminate in a performance of a published play or one that has been created by the participants. In 1994, for example, Azimuth Theatre (Hurford, 1994) of Edmonton, Alberta conducted a Family Violence Drama Pilot Project in a Canadian maximum federal institution for adult males. The purpose of the project was to develop a social theatre program which utilized an adaptation of the collective creation model (Berry & Reinbold, 1992) to empower inmate participants to research, create, and perform a collective drama on the theme of family violence. Further, the program was implemented in an attempt to promote learning as well as positive attitude and behavioral changes amongst participants in relation to violent behavior. Similarly, since 1973, Fleury-Mérogis prison (Sutton, 1992) in France has offered "popular creativity workshops", whereby the facilitator works with inmates to create a play which is rehearsed and performed by the inmates. The facilitator claims that while the program is not conceived as a therapeutic vehicle, observation and experience suggest that "the result is nonetheless a manifest increase in self-esteem and the chances of successful reintegration into society" (p. 36).

While some programs are short in duration, others such as The Family (Camillo & Khosropur 1986; Hart, 1986a; Landy, 1986; Ryan, 1976) in New York; The Institutional Theatre Society (Snell, 1990), and William Head On Stage (Fuhr, Chelsey, & Fry, 1992; Snell, 1990) in British Columbia, Canada have evolved into long-term repertory companies run by inmates and ex-

inmates. Hart (1986a, 1986b) describes The Family's workshops which have been facilitated throughout the United States and in France:

> The Family's workshop process can be seen as a means for individual and collective story telling. Actors recount their personal experience in imagination exercises and improvisation and in their song, poetry, and scene writing. The ensemble plays out its members' shared experiences by creating a collective story through improvisation. (Hart,1986a, p. 35)

The William Head On Stage Theatre Society (Fuhr et al., 1992; Snell, 1990), initially called the The William Head Amateur Theatre Society, was conceived and organized in 1981 by the inmates at William Head Institution, in British Columbia, Canada, who were enrolled in a drama course through the University of Victoria prison program. The society produces plays at the institution and the inmates are in charge of staging, lighting, and advertising the productions to the general community outside of the prison. Ex-inmates return to the prison to direct productions and support the program.

Another long-term arts program, currently facilitated in Californian prisons is called Arts-In-Corrections (A-I-C) (Cleveland, 1994, 1992, 1989). Since 1977, the California Department of Corrections has been dedicated to arts programming and currently has developed a state wide A-I-C program, offering workshops including drama, dance, creative writing, and drawing. The program's mission is to "make available a place where possibility and choice and skill are rewards for those who accept a personal responsibility for their own success or failure" and "to improve the prison experience by providing participants with an opportunity to affect their environment and begin changing their attitudes about themselves and others" (Cleveland, 1994, p. 62). During the 1991-92 program year, Cleveland (1994) reports that "over 700 Arts-In-Corrections faculty artists provided more than 100,000 hours of instruction to 8,000 inmate participants" and "During the same period, 361 performances by inmates and outside professional music, dance, and theatre groups were provided to an audience of more than 20,000 inmates and staff" (p. 61). Advocating for the efficacy of the arts process, Jim Carlson, the Californian A-I-C manager comments:

> It would be naive to believe that the creation of one or two pieces of art is going to markedly alter one's value system overnight. It has been our experience, though, that over time each step forward in the personal struggle for mastery and completion in the artistic process is a small

> down payment on a new and solid sense of respect for one's self and one's fellows. The vast majority of our participants will not become "artists," but many will retain the capacity for self-discipline and self-sufficiency. For some, these modest steps are life changing experiences. (p. 62)

While the previously described programs focus primarily on educative, training, social, or political goals, others such such as Cell Block Theatre (Gordon, 1981) and Skills Through Drama (Melnick, 1984) have adopted stronger therapeutic aims. Both of these programs have used improvisation as a means of working through relevant conflicts. The Cell Block Theatre program, now defunct, required that participants resolve fictional conflicts in improvisation without using violence, calling the police, or walking away (Gordon, 1981). As Landy (1986) explains, Cell Block's approach was more directly therapeutic than many other drama programs in prisons since it "encouraged the expression and the exploration of emotion and helped the person move towards catharsis and recognition" (p. 205). Skills through Drama (Melnick, 1984) combined an educational and therapeutic approach, integrating improvisational strategies to work through simulated conflicts, training participants to act with intentionality, while developing their reading and writing skills.

Moreno's Psychodrama

Psychodrama, is a form of psychotherapy whereby individuals, guided by a therapist who is called a "director", "explore the psychological dimensions of their problems through the enactment of conflict situations" (Blatner, 1988, p.7). Sociodrama, is a form of psychodrama which focuses on resolving group issues as opposed to individual concerns. Unlike many drama programs by artists who focus on fictional conflicts to teach communication and conflict management skills among others, psychodrama and sociodrama aim at resolving actual personal problems and shared issues in improvisation. Created by J.L Moreno (Moreno, 1972, 1953) in the early 1900's, psychodrama has been used effectively in prison populations since the latter 1920's, assisting inmates to develop spontaneity required for healthy functioning in society (Byrne, 1976; Haskell, 1974; Hollander, 1974; Hooper, Lockwood, & Inciardi, 1993; Stallone, 1993). Psychodrama has also been effective in alleviating stuttering difficulties in inmates (Haskell & Larr, 1974).

Despite psychodrama's ability to affect change in prison populations, as Gordon (1981) notes, in many cases overt therapy elicits resistance on the part of inmates who distrust the prison setting and feel bombarded by prison programming agendas:

> When actual therapy is performed, the inmates resist the "shrink" because of language/cultural barriers, imposed authority, and mistrust. They know that confidentiality most often is missing and that the "shrink's" reports are recorded in inmates' "jackets" for use by prison authorities in parole hearings, reduction of sentence, etc. . . . Theatre training, on the other hand, can use the language, the circumstances, the actual life experience of the offender in dealing with his problems. (p. 311)

As William Cleveland (Count-Van Manen, 1991), psychologist and director of California's Arts-In-Corrections program elucidates further: "The more the arts become art therapy, the more these are legitimized and the less their effectiveness" (p. 262).

In addition to therapeutic resistance on the part of inmates, the facilitation of psychodrama and other forms of drama therapy require specialized training with which relatively few therapists are equipped (Haskell, 1974; Landy, 1986). For these reasons, many prisons have elected to implement educational drama programming run by professional artists as opposed to therapists trained in psychodrama. Due to the inherent overlap of drama education and therapy, these programs are often supervised by trained psychologists and psychiatrists.

Drama Programming in the Context of Correctional Education

Over the past 20 years, correctional institutions have implemented a multitude of rehabilitative strategies in reaction to the infamous conclusion by Martinson (1974) that "nothing works". With this criticism, medical and sociological models of criminality and associated treatments perceived as being ineffective have fallen by the wayside and have been replaced with newer alternatives (Duguid, 1985). One innovative developmental paradigm (Ayers, 1981a; Duguid, 1993, 1985, 1981a, 1981b; Morin, 1981) suggests that the offender is developmentally arrested. Unlike theories that see inmates as sick or as victims, this model sees the offender as a decision maker with deficits in cognitive, social, and moral development. The goal of the "educational

growth model" (Ayers, 1981a), then, is to provide appropriate educational training to facilitate development and the necessary tools to function in law abiding society. Duguid (1985) argues for the importance of developing offenders' reasoning, problem solving, and decision making skills:

> The specific skills referred to include the awareness of cause and effect relationships, the ability to perceive issues in sufficient detail to make proper judgements, the ability to compare long-term vs short-term outcomes, the ability to be empathetic- to put oneself in someone else's place. (p. 332)

Key to this model, is the idea that the attitudes, values, and thinking of offenders must be changed in order to facilitate behavioral change (Duguid, 1993, 1985, 1981a, 1981b). Further, this model argues that in order for such "habilitative" education to be effective, it must construct an alternative environment "that is isolated from the remainder of the prison in as many aspects of daily life and governance as possible" (Duguid, 1993, p. 54). Not surprisingly, following this model, the innovative University of Victoria (Ayers, 1981b) and Simon Fraser University prison programs (Duguid, 1993), which received much acclaim, included a fine arts program "with opportunities for performance and role taking" (p.55).

Drama and Development

Research suggests that successful correctional programs use community resources and establish an environment of trust and open communication where role modelling, positive reinforcement, problem solving, and interpersonal development can take place (Gendreau & Ross, 1987, 1983-1984). Landy (1986) notes that "Drama is . . . a separation of realities. Dramatized reality is different in space, time, and consequence from every day life" (p.5). The medium of drama is therefore conducive to conceptually separating the group from the prison as a whole, in order to facilitate the necessary conditions for "habilitative" education. Further, the environment is enhanced by having professional artists and teachers from outside the prison run the programs, serving as positive role models and connecting inmates with the outside community (Cleveland, 1994; Hart, 1986a; Jepson, 1989).

While traditional therapies and education require that insights gained during therapy or classroom hours be integrated outside in regular settings, drama programming provides a milieu to practice new behaviors, explore new insights, and gain feedback and positive reinforcement from fellow group

members and facilitators (Gordon, 1981). This is extremely important in the prison setting, since this type of exploration and integration is not a possibility given the reality of the regular prison environment. Research supports this contention, indicating that successful correctional programs motivate inmate involvement, utilize structured activities, and provide participants with positive reinforcement for socially appropriate behavior (Coulson & Nutbrown, 1992).

Cognitive development

The power of drama as a vehicle for change with inmates seems to lie in its ability to facilitate cognitive, behavioral, and affective expansion, while working at the developmental level of the offender. Developmentalists such as Piaget (1964) describe how the development of cognition is acquired through processes and sequences starting with the sensorimotor stage of bodily movements and culminating in formal operational stage where abstract thinking is established. As Duguid (1981b) notes, "most criminals have remained at the concrete operational stage, a 'way of thinking' most characteristic of adolescence" (p. 46). Further, recent statistics (Correctional Service of Canada, 1992) suggest that 65% of offenders test lower than a grade 8 completion level, while 82% test lower than a grade 10 completion level upon arriving at prison. Most conventional therapies are highly verbal in nature, non-active, and often require abstract thinking. Dramatic play, with its focus on exploration of sensory awareness, the physical, and imagination is likely a more appropriate intervention for those who are developmentally arrested. As Courtney (1989) notes: "Acting is the way we live with our environment, finding adjustment in play. The young child facing what is not understood, plays with it, until he does" (p.17). Piaget (1964) suggests the importance of cognitive conflict to propel accommodation or the changing of cognitive structures. Drama allows participants to gradually move towards more advanced cognitive developmental stages, through the movement from sensory awareness exercises, to increasingly complex exercises such as role play, improvisation, and in some cases, performance (Johnson, 1982).

Behavioral development

In addition to enhancing cognition, drama is conducive to fostering behavioral development. Research (White, Labouvie, & Bates, 1985) suggests a link between sensation seeking with delinquency. Blatner (1988) defines "acting-out" behavior to be "a psychological defence mechanism by which as individual discharges internal impulses through symbolic or actual enactment"

(p. 1). Working with inmates' preferences, drama's action-based exercises channel participants' impulses towards sensation seeking and "acting out" into a socially adaptive arena of "acting in" (p.1). This may explain Count-Van Manen's (1991) investigative conclusion that "Drama work in prisons is not well documented, although there is a cumulative consensus: the more arts involvement in prisons, the less aggression" (p. 277). Drama programming uses the offenders "acting out" tendencies as a strength to foster motivation for participation and behavioral development.

Cognitive-behavioral connections

Dramatic play connects cognition and behavior, a bridge which is crucial to the development of effective decision making. As Sacks (1981) suggests, "Acting-out patients isolate what they do from what they think. Drama, by its nature, mediates between act and idea and thereby forms the bridge. Dramatic acting can facilitate reintegration of these ego functions" (p.39). Due to cognitive and communication deficiencies, violence often becomes the inmate's only means of expression (Gordon, 1981). Ryan (1976) explains that acting techniques, normally used to help professional actors free the body and act spontaneously in any given situation, are paradoxically used in prisons to teach inmates to "hesitate- observe, listen, hear, and to articulate verbally what he means and feels" (p.32). Dramatic improvisation becomes a problem solving experience, whereby participants learn to choose an intention or a goal and explore active means of achieving it (Gordon, 1981; Weiner, 1994). Further, improvisation provides a means of experiencing the consequences of these choices in safety and experiment with alternative choices should the initial efforts be unsuccessful or yield undesirable consequences. As Hart (1986a) notes:

> Performance provides people with a way to look at choices and circumstances of their lives inside and outside prison through active re-creation of them. They can rethink, modify, and through imagination expand their range of options for dealing with the world they will re-enter. They can shape that re-creation through any number of visual, auditory, and kinetic modes that do not impose the linguistic and technical demands of more conventional media of communication such as writing and rhetorical argument. (p. 19)

Communication and problem solving skills are further developed through the experience of working in a drama group (Courtney, 1982). Improvising, writing,

and acting in plays requires that participants learn to negotiate, compromise, and solve conflict in nonviolent ways.

Development of self through role play

As Gray Smith (Ryan, 1976), head of the Street Theatre company comments: "Inmates will tell you that they have been acting all of their lives. What they usually mean is a highly developed repertory of appearances. The workshops break down the appearances and attempt to discover what is real" (p. 42). Distinct from the regular ongoings of the prison routine, the drama group becomes a microcosm of society, allowing participants to explore their relationship with the self, others, and society. Role playing becomes a key ingredient for this exploration. The importance of role development in relation to the self has been widely acknowledged (Cooley, 1922; Landy, 1990; Mead, 1934; Moreno, 1953; Sarbin & Allen,1968). Mead (1934) and Cooley (1922) argue that the roles people play affect their behavior and their view of themselves. Being labeled a delinquent or criminal can put into play the development of a "criminal self-image" (Vold & Bernard, 1986, p. 255), which in turn may solidify an individual's role as a criminal and perpetuate the associated decisions and behaviors (Duguid, 1985). Further, role expectations and conduct codes are extremely strong in the prison setting, and inmates often suffer severe punishment if they deviate from expected roles and behavior (Mettee, 1983). As a consequence, role rigidity often occurs, whereby inmates become the role they play and are unable or unwilling to move easily from role to role.

Landy (1990) and Sarbin & Allen (1968) argue that the more roles a person can play, the better one can adapt and cope with life's changing circumstances. Moreno (1972) argues that the self, which is made up of a cluster of roles, expands through a process of "retrojection" whereby an individual is able to receive and identify with others' ideas and feelings. Given that the essence of drama is role taking, drama education allows inmates to practice role exploration in safety without fearing punishment for "trying on" new behaviors. Landy (1990) explains that drama, using theatre, role, and story allows individuals to engage in characterization and action to discover the nature of their many "internal cast of characters" (p. 224).

Cooley's (1922) sociological concept of the looking glass self, recognizes that individuals come to know themselves by internalizing the images that others have of them. As Courtney (1982) elucidates:

> Aesthetic meaning occurs not only by creating art but also in witnessing others create art. We learn both as actor and audience. Thus the arts lead to acknowledgement of others; their witnessing of our artistic acts, and our witnessing of theirs, provides meaning beyond that for which we alone are responsible. (p.159)

As participants in drama programs experiment with new and positive roles, they are seen by others in a new light, and have these positive perceptions reflected back to them, thereby enhancing, and reinforcing a more positive self-concept and increasing self-confidence.

Development of affective connections and empathy

Mahoney (1991) argues that exploring the full range of feelings in "socially responsible and self-caring ways" (p. 178) is key to healthy developmental change. While educational drama often does not aim at emotional release as a primary goal, the experience of story telling, improvisation, and role play fosters emotional connections, release, and working through personal conflicts behind the safety of the role (Count-Van Manen, 1991; Scheff, 1979; McCaslin,1981).

Role playing is not only helpful in the development of self understanding, but also in understanding and empathizing with others. The offender, arrested at an egocentric stage of development, often makes choices without regard to the impact that decision will have on others. As Duguid (1981b) notes, empathy for others is a crucial developmental milestone which fosters moral decision making. Role reversal, a technique developed by Moreno (1972, 1953), whereby an individual switches roles with another actor in improvisations, is critical in facilitating the experiential knowing of another person's perspective and the development of empathy for others.

Development of mastery, responsibility, and competence

Impulsivity and a need for instant gratification have been noted as characteristics of many offenders (Cyr, 1994; Gordon, 1981). Eleanor Irwin (as cited in Landy, 1986) defines therapeutic experience as being "Any experience which helps an individual feel a greater sense of competence" (p. 40). Drama programs can assist offenders in developing the discipline required to stick with a process and experience the resulting feelings of success and competence (Cleveland, 1994), rather than perpetuating feelings of failure that come with abandoning long-range goals for the sake of immediate gratification. Mastery can be achieved initially through successes in sensory exercises,

brief improvisations, or role plays. Working towards a performance moves participants to a further developmental stage as the repetitive nature of rehearsal is used as a means of training delayed gratification for the sake of a long range goal (Gordon, 1981). Further, preparing for a production necessitates that participants work as a team and be responsible to others rather than abandoning the process prematurely (Spolin, 1963; Waren, 1986; Weiner, 1994). In programs that culminate in performance, participants are given the opportunity to gain positive and reinforcing feedback for their developmental accomplishments. Emunah and Johnson (1983) explain that this is a powerful experience, especially in programs where participants have collectively created the play themselves:

> Since in improvisational drama one creates and performs with one's own self/body, ownership is nearly unavoidable. The self is the material of the creation, and the self is being applauded. The impact on self-image is extraordinarily powerful. (p. 236)

For participants developmentally incapable of recognizing subtle changes or accomplishments throughout their involvement in the dramatic process, the performance becomes a concrete manifestation of their accomplishment. The performance signals to participants in a concrete way that they have succeeded in being responsible, disciplined, in meeting a long range goal, and in doing so, enhances participants' feeling of competence and self-worth.

Research

Despite a great deal of theory about the use of drama as a vehicle for development and change, there is a surprising lack of documented research exploring the impact of drama/theatre programs in prisons. There are several reasons that can explain this lack of research. As others (Cleveland, 1994; Count-Van Manen, 1991; Finio, 1986; Hart, 1986a) have noted, measuring the direct impact of drama programming on inmate participants is extremely difficult. Funding for drama and many other correctional programs is dependent upon changing institutional policies and priorities, and as a result they often lack continuity. Further, controlled experimentation is almost impossible due to unexpected prison lockdowns and the fluctuating nature of prison drama groups due to the transiency of the prison population. Behavioral change can also be difficult to measure in the context of a prison setting, where inmates may resort to violence as a means of survival. A final challenge in measuring impact

is the difficulty in accurately measuring internal changes related to attitude, emotions, and self-concept in a quantitative fashion. As Landy (1986) explains:

> Dramatic education is an aesthetic education, a learning through art and play. To specify its goals behaviorally is problematic, because many of the qualitative changes that occur through drama are internal and non-observable. . . . The meaning of dramatic experience does not necessarily manifest itself immediately, and dramatic learning is not necessarily attached to a specific content. (p. 10)

Quantitative Research

In evaluating the impact of drama/theatre programs, quantitative research has generally focused on measurable signs of successful correction using recidivism and infraction rates in inmate's prison records as indices of "objective" measures of the success of programs. Cost/benefit analyses have also been employed to measure the economic efficiency of programming. The focus on recidivism implies that programs are successful to the degree that offenders who have been through them do not relapse into crime upon their release. One such 3 year study conducted by Theatre Without Bars (as cited in Snell, 1990) between 1979 and 1981 showed a 50% reduction in recidivism by New Jersey inmates involved in arts programming compared with individuals who had not participated in the program. In addition, the study showed that participants as opposed to nonparticipants had a 65% greater chance of employment upon release. A 1988 California Arts-In-Corrections (A-I-C) recidivism study (as cited in Cleveland, 1994) of 177 randomly selected inmates who participated in at least one A-I-C class per week for a minimum of 6 months, showed that "A-I-C participants had a significantly higher percentage of favourable outcomes than did the overall release population studied" (p. 60). Six months after release, A-I-C participants showed a favourable rate of 15.75% higher than the overall released population during the same period. Further, 2 years post release, this difference increased by 27 percentage points. Melnick's (1984) study of the impact of a 1978/79 Skills Through Drama Program indicated improvements in inmates' basic educational skills of reading, mathematics and language as measured by the California Achievement Test, as well as a recidivism rate of 29.6%, 7 months post the program, as compared to national average of 85% during that same period. Her study also showed that 71.4 % of the participants became regularly employed within 6 months of being released.

Infraction of prison rules is another way that behavior change is measured in quantitative research. A 1980 study of the impact of a 4 year arts program entitled Culture in 60 state prisons throughout the United States reported "significant drops in aggression, varying from 54% to 100%" (as cited in Count-Van Manen, 1991, p. 278). A 1983 cost/benefit analysis of four Californian Arts-In-Corrections programs concluded that the program resulted in "69 percent more in measurable benefits than costs" (as cited in Cleveland, 1994, p. 59). The study indicated that between 75 and 85 percent of the participants in two particular facilities "demonstrated improved behavior through fewer disciplinary actions" (p. 59). Fischoff's study (as cited in Ryan, 1976) also indicated decreased infraction rates in those inmates participating in drama programs in three correctional facilities in the New York city and state system. In a recent study of the impact of a 1 year psychodrama program on 66 inmate participants in a Kentucky correctional facility, Stallone (1993) reports that a 6 month pre- and post investigation of participants' institutional disciplinary reports indicated a significant reduction in unacceptable behaviors on the part of participants as compared to the general inmate population. Schramski & Harvey's (1983) research review on the impact of psychodrama and role playing in correctional settings concludes with "cautious optimism", indicating that while the majority of studies suggest that this type of programming yields positive outcomes on institutional and post-institutional adjustment, "more well-designed and adequately reported studies" are required (p. 249).

Optimistic as these studies are, narrowly defining successful rehabilitation as reduced recidivism and infraction rates omits the possibility of evaluating the less obvious changes in participants such as cognition, affect, and self-concept. Further, recidivism rates are often highly inaccurate in that they assume that all those who relapse into crime are detected. In addition, relapse is defined so broadly, including any infraction regardless of how small, negating the possibility of a degree in change. While infraction rate studies purport to be scientific and objective, they are dependent upon the differing perceptions, attitudes, and agendas of correctional officers who decide and report when infractions have been committed. Further, due to the inaccessibility of research in this field, many of these finding were located in secondary sources (Cleveland, 1994; Count-Van Manen, 1991; Ryan, 1976; Snell, 1990) which give few details of methodology, the number of subjects in

the study, and comparison groups, which are required for close scrutiny of the results.

Qualitative Research

Despite arguments for the importance of creativity in the discovery of personal meaning (Frankl, 1984; Maslow, 1977; Shoham, 1984), little research has focused on the meaning that the creative process has in the lives of individuals participating in drama programs. Those studies that use anything that remotely resemble qualitative research tend to be in case study form, describing drama programming, and exploring facilitators' and prison administrators' perceptions of the experiences of inmates. Mettee (1983) reports that a 2.5 year program in a medium security prison which involved developing drama skills of participants and performances of eight plays by inmates, provided participants with a means of expression, tension release, taught interpersonal skills necessary for working productively in groups, responsibility, and increased the self-esteem of participants. Fischoff's study (as cited in Ryan, 1976), evaluating the efficacy of a theatre program in a New York city prison, interviewed prison personnel to access their perceptions of the program's impact on inmates. Fischoff reports that:

> In the main, personnel interviewed indicated strong support for [the program] and enthusiastically recommended the total program refunding. They felt that play production had a very beneficial effect on the inmate's sense of self-worth, his inter-personal relation with other inmates and COs, and that it provided an opportunity for the release of tension and pressure that accumulates during the monotony and routine of incarceration. (p.39)

Hart (1986a) reports the impact of the Theatre in Prisons Project in the United States, concluding that arts programming was successful with "a portion of the inmate population" in helping inmates cope with prison life, developing "new skills and a better sense of self", while helping them "relate to other people" (p.12).

In a rare exception, Melnick's (1984) Skills Through Drama study includes brief comments made by inmates through videotaped and written comments who advocated for this program. One participant said:

> It used to be, if I wanted to get attention when I walked into a room, I just walked in with a gun. If I got angry, I used the gun. Through the Skills

> through Drama classes, I know I can get attention. I can express my anger without a gun. (p.112)

Although refreshing to hear the comments of inmate participants, these descriptions are brief and out of context. In contrast, an informative documentary film entitled Theatre behind bars (Fuhr et al., 1992), reveals the experiences of inmates involved in the William Head On Stage (W.H.O.S) theatre program at a medium prison located in British Columbia, Canada. One inmate explained that he became involved in crime for the emotional "rush" and that performing on stage provided him with a positive outlet to experience fear, thrill, and excitement. Others shared that the program had taught them "patience", "commitment", "responsibility", and gave them the experience of "feeling like a success rather than a failure" in life. Still another inmate shared that the program made him realize that "I am not as limited as I thought I was. I feel like I know where I am going and how I can get there".

Implications For Further Research

The most evident problem with qualitative studies of drama programming in prisons is that few researchers have communicated directly with participants of the programs. The limitations of these studies are twofold. Firstly, facilitators often have a personal stake in the impact of programming. Their earnest desire to create positive change may inadvertently skew their perception of the program's impact. Secondly, internal, emotional and perceptual changes of participants may go unrecognized by the outside observer.

It is interesting to note that although drama programs tend to advocate healing, self-expression, authenticity, and growth as a goal of the programming, research designs tend to reinforce participants as patients or deviants by neglecting to give them an opportunity to voice their own experiences. By focusing almost exclusively on the outward behavior of participants, researchers inadvertently reinforce the notion of inmates as deviants who need to be "fixed", rather than human beings with an inner life-world of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and experiences.

In this age of accountability and limited programming funding, the lack of research suggests a strong need for well developed studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to improve drama programming and report their efficacy or lack thereof in prison populations. As Duguid (1993) notes "when contracting into government systems for delivery of service, awareness of policy shifts is crucial, accountability a constant reality, and

research into the effectiveness and efficiency a necessity" (p. 60). As Hart (1986a) echos:

> Initially, arts programs were stop-gap measures established and tolerated in prisons in reaction to liberal political currents. If they are to continue in strength and become a major influence on rehabilitation, the arts will have to come to a deeper understanding of their relationship to the population they serve and the institutions they occupy. (p.17)

Given today's political climate and society's pervasive perception of the arts as a luxury rather than a necessity, it is likely that correctional funding for drama programming will be eliminated if research does not document its effectiveness as a vehicle for change.

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Picking up the Pieces:
Inmates' Experiences of a Family Violence Drama Project

by

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Prison is often a dehumanizing environment where inmates spend years in a breeding ground of violence. Research indicates that violence is prevalent both in the family histories of inmates and in prison life itself. In a Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) study, 935 randomly sampled files of male inmates revealed that 50.2% of the sample had been abused by one or more family member in childhood (Robinson, 1995). Physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, neglect, and witnessing the abuse of other family members were included in the results. Further, the study indicated that approximately one third of the sample had perpetrated family violence themselves. Violence is not only prevalent in the family histories of offenders, but is also perpetuated in the prison environment. Cooley (1993) reported that 47% of the inmates sampled suffered personal and or property victimizations during their prison experience.

In an attempt to break this insidious cycle of violence, the CSC began a Family Violence Initiative in 1988, funding prison programming to combat family and prison violence (Cyr, 1994). The Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP) is one such program which was conducted at a maximum security prison housing adult males. This paper reports on the experiences of 7 male inmates involved in the FVDPP.

Drama and Development

Since the latter 1960's, theatre artists have worked in prisons, utilizing improvisation, theatre, and performance to facilitate inmates' explorations of the self, the family, and society (Landy, 1986). Ayers (1981) and Duguid (1985, 1981a, 1981b) offer a useful developmental paradigm that sheds light on the efficacy of drama as a vehicle for change in inmate populations. This model conceives of the offender as being developmentally arrested with deficits in cognitive, social, and moral development. Piaget (1964) conceptualizes the advancement of cognition through processes and sequences beginning with the sensorimotor stage of bodily movements and culminating in the formal operational stage where abstract thinking is established. Duguid (1981b) and Ayers (1981) argue that many offenders are arrested at the concrete operational stage of cognitive development and require "habilitative" programming to enhance reasoning, problem solving, and decision making skills.

The power of drama with an inmate population appears to lie in its ability to motivate participation, and utilize participants' strengths and developmental

capabilities to facilitate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral growth (Cogan, 1995). White, Labouvie, & Bates (1985) suggest a link between sensation seeking and the development of delinquent behavior. Drama's action-based exercises channel participants' impulses towards sensation seeking and "acting out" into a socially adaptive arena (Blatner, 1988; Sacks, 1981). Through movement from sensory awareness exercises, to increasingly complex exercises such as role play, improvisation, and in some cases, performance, drama allows participants to gradually move towards more advanced cognitive developmental stages (Johnson, 1982).

Effective correctional programs are characteristically multifaceted, utilizing community resources, anti-criminal modelling and reinforcement, teaching problem solving skills, and providing opportunities for developing interpersonal relationships in an atmosphere of trust and open communication (Gendreau & Ross, 1987, 1983-1984). Further successful programs motivate inmate involvement and utilize structured activities (Coulson & Nutbrown, 1992). The FVDPP, as will be subsequently be described, incorporated all of these elements.

Drama in Prisons

Despite extensive theory about the use of drama as a vehicle for personal learning and change (Blatner, 1988; Cleveland, 1994, 1992; Count-Van Manen, 1991; Courtney, 1989; Fink, 1984; Hart, 1986; Haskell, 1974; Landy,1986; Sacks, 1981; Waren, 1986) there is relatively little research exploring the impact of drama/theatre programs in prison populations. In evaluating the effects of drama programs on the lives of inmates, quantitative studies have confined their research to measurable signs such as infraction rates, recidivism rates, cost/benefit analyses (as cited in Cleveland, 1994; Stallone, 1993; as cited in Ryan, 1976), and cognitive development (Melnick, 1984). Qualitative studies include descriptive reports of programming and their effects from the viewpoint of facilitators, prison psychologists, and administration (Gordon, 1981; Mettee, 1983; as cited in Ryan, 1974). A notable exception can be found in a documentary film entitled Theatre behind bars (Fuhr, Chelsey, & Fry, 1992), where inmates at William Head Institution, a medium security prison located in British Columbia, were interviewed and shared their experiences of being part of the institution's theatre program.

The most evident weakness with studies of drama programming in prisons is that few researchers have communicated directly with participants of

the programs. As a consequence, internal, emotional and perceptual changes of participants may go unrecognized by the outside observer (Courtney, 1987; Landy, 1986). It was the intention of this study to follow the lead of Fuhr et. al (1992) and go directly to the program participants to understand the inner experience of the Family Violence Drama Project from the "life-world" of 7 inmates.

The use of qualitative, phenomenological methods (Colaizzi, 1978; Pocklinghorne, 1983) places more autonomy in the auspices of the participants. In this process the researcher asked seven inmates who were involved the FVDPP to describe the experience from their perspective in order to answer the research question: What is the experience of inmates involved in a Family Violence Drama Project? Participants were asked such questions as: How did they come to join the group? What feelings did they have during their experience in the group? What meaning did the group have for them? In posing these kinds of questions an emphasis is placed on description, exploration, and understanding, as opposed to explanation, measurement, and prediction.

The Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP)

The Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP) was conceived as a educational program as opposed to a psychotherapeutic process. While the primary goals of the FVDPP were to encourage critical thought, discussion, and empower participants to create a collective drama on the theme of family violence, it was also implemented to promote learning as well as positive attitude and behavioral changes amongst participants in relation to violent behavior.

The FVDPP was marketed to inmates as a drama course eligible for grade 10 credit, whereby participants would develop acting skills and learn to create and perform a play dealing with the subject of family violence. Inmates were informed that those who met the grade 10 curriculum standards would receive a certificate and a Drama 10 credit upon completion of the project.

The decision to develop an educational program as opposed to a therapy group was threefold. Firstly, although the project consultants and resource team included chartered psychologists, the facilitators, who would be working directly with the participants were not therapists, but rather professional artists. Secondly, inmate populations have typically been more open to becoming involved in educational programming or drama classes than

in the therapy process (Gordon, 1981; Melnick, 1984). A third reason for adopting an educational program was related to the administration's understanding of the prison culture's rules and mores. Certain family violence crimes, such as those perpetrated against women and children, are not considered acceptable among the inmate culture. Those suspected of perpetrating such crimes are often at great personal risk (Bowker, 1980; Toch, 1977). In order to make participation in the program safe for inmates and encourage their involvement, it was important that the program be developed and marketed as an educational vehicle, rather than a therapy group for perpetrators of family violence.

Funded by the CSC, the 17 week educational program took place between March and July, 1994, and was conducted by Azimuth Theatre Association, a non-profit organization committed to the development of research-based performance art which examines critical social issues. Throughout the program, invited guests including health care professionals and professional artists were brought into the group as a means of educating participants in the area of family violence and dramatic expression.

The group met for 2 hour sessions for an average of 3 times per week for 17 weeks, for a total of 107 classroom hours. During the first 15 weeks of the program participants were trained in the areas of voice and speech, acting, improvisation, and role play (Linklater, 1976; Selman, 1992; Spolin, 1975, 1963). Further, the group studied the area of family violence, and guided by an adaptation of the collective creation model (Berry & Reinbold, 1992) as well as findings from Balshaw (1993), developed and rehearsed their collective play, Picking up the pieces (FVDPP, 1994) which focused on the theme of family violence. During the 16th week of the program, the group performed their collective play for two audiences, one made up of selected inmates, and another for prison administration, psychologists, as well as community health care professionals and artists. Both performances culminated in a question and answer session, allowing audience members to ask the participants about the collective process and offer feedback. During the same week, the group met to debrief the process, and were awarded Drama 10 certificates. During the final week of the program, participants were involved in a writing workshop and completed a closure process for the group. The group process and performances were recorded on videotape as a means of documenting the FVDPP.

Family Violence Definition

In accordance with the guidelines set out by the Family Violence Programming initiative of the CSC (Cyr, 1994), Azimuth Theatre used the following definition of family violence as a guide for the project development:

> The intra-familial and extra-familial abuse of children and youth, of older persons and abuse of women by their male partners. It can take a number of forms in addition to physical assault such as intimidation, mental or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, deprivation, and financial exploitations. The term "family" refers to a group of individuals who are related by affection, kinship, dependency, or trust. Furthermore it is meant to reflect the diversity of living arrangements present in our society. (p. 2)

In addition to the above definition, the facilitators also targeted verbal abuse and the cycle of violence in dysfunctional family relationships.

The Collective Creation Model

The FVDPP implemented an adaptation of the collective creation model (Berry & Reinbold, 1992), whereby a play is researched, written, and performed by a group of individuals. This process evolved out of the pioneering work of popular theatre artists between the 1960's and '80's (Barnet, 1989; Filewod, 1987; Shank, 1972).

In the FVDPP collective process, a series of scenes or vignettes dealing with issues of family violence were created by the participants through a process of research, synthesis, exploration, refining, rehearsal, and scripting. Although the model is depicted as a linear, step by step approach (Berry & Reinbold, 1992), in reality it is more akin to a hermeneutic process. The collective is considered an evolving "work in progress" that is constantly being adapted, molded, and developed by the group members. Although the culminating performance is a key element of the model, the process of exploration as well as the development and refining of the collective is equally, if not more crucial to the learning process.

Method

Participants

Of the 11 group members that volunteered for the FVDPP, 7 completed the program and agreed to be participants in the study. Of the 4 participants that did not complete the program, two left the project prematurely due to prison

transfers, one left due to conflicts in scheduling with his work at the prison, while one member failed to continue for unknown reasons. The 7 participants that completed the program and participated in this study ranged in age from 24 to 40 years with a mean average education of grade 9. Two additional inmates joined the group during the last two weeks of the project and were involved as musicians and performers in the final production, but were not interviewed due to their limited involvement. At the time of the interviews, participants had served a mean average of 3.7 years in prison for such offences as armed robbery, trafficking, aggravated assault, and the use of firearms. Four out of the 7 participants reported histories of childhood victimization and substance abuse.

Data Collection

Data were collected by the principal author of this paper through two audiotaped semi-structured interviews (Becker, 1986; Kvale, 1983) with each participant, one interview prior to the performance, during the 13th week of the program, and a second interview after the performances, during the 17th week of the program. Prior to the second interview, participants received a transcript of their first interview. The second interview focused primarily on the experience of performing in front of an audience. Further, participants were asked to clarify comments in the first interview and share their experiences of the program subsequent to the first interview.

In addition to the 14 interviews conducted, data were collected by the principal author through participation observation (Jorgensen, 1989; Spradley, 1980; Stake, 1975) on 12 occasions when the researcher joined the group in a workshop on sexual abuse, in warm-up exercises, improvisation, and attended the performances of the collective play. The participant observation was a crucial part of the study, providing a rich source of data; allowing the researcher to build rapport with participants, and understand their experience in the context of a prison world.

Data Analysis

Each of the 14 interviews was transcribed and identifying data were altered to protect confidentiality. A hierarchical thematic analysis procedure was used to extract the structure of the experience of participating in the FVDPP as perceived by group members. The steps used in this study follow those outlined by Colaizzi (1978). An initial reading of each of the 14 protocols was undertaken to obtain an impression of the meaning of each participant's

experience of being in the program. Initial themes were noted as the protocol was read. Statements within the protocol that were relevant to the phenomenon were then identified as meaning units. These statements were in turn paraphrased to reflect the basic meaning. Finally, each of the 358 meaning units was given a theme label that corresponded with its essential meaning.

A critical feature of this type of thematic analysis is the necessity of reading beyond the surface structure of statements to capture the deeper meaning. It is imperative that the meaning legitimately comes from the data itself. This requires that the researcher attempt to limit the influence of presuppositions on the meaning extracted. Prior to this study, the researcher had been professionally trained in the area of drama, and was intrigued by the notion of its use as a vehicle for learning and growth. At the same time, the researcher was aware of being initially sceptical about the efficacy of such a program with inmates, given the backgrounds of participants and the restrictive atmosphere in a maximum security prison. Participant observation was critical in providing the researcher with an understanding of participants' process in the FVDPP. The researcher referred to field notes throughout the data analysis.

The result of this meaning analysis was a first order cluster of themes that reflect the structure of the experience of group participants. Finally, a second order clustering of themes was constructed to reduce the structure of experience to a more concise formulation.

The validity of the participants' experiences of the FVDPP as reported in interviews may be challenged due to participants' criminal histories. While participants were told that their reports were confidential and would in no way affect their chances of parole or transfer, it is possible that participants may have falsely described or exaggerated their experiences in an attempt to impress the researcher or to improve their institutional records. Still, field observations by the researcher were consistent with verbal reports by participants and suggested that participants were thoroughly involved in the collective process.

Findings

Originally 14 primary first order themes were derived during the analysis of meaning units, which were further grouped into 3 second order themes. The following discussion presents each of the 14 primary themes grouped into the context of the following second order themes: 1) Creating a Context for Risking,

2) Healing and Growth Through Developmental Processes, and 3) Humanization and Sense of Purpose Gained Through Connection.

Table 2-1

Second Order Thematic Description of Participants' FVDPP Experience

Creating the Context for Risking	1. Fear of Potential Stigmatization
	2. Motivation: Overcoming Fear
	3. Developing Trust
Healing and Growth Through Developmental Processes	4. Role Experimentation
	5. Narrative Facilitates Resolving Emotions
	6. Learning to Deal With Conflict Through Group Process
	7. Importance of Taking Responsibility for Behavior
	8. Developing and Practicing Problem Solving Strategies
	12. Insight, Healing, and Validation Through Psychoeducation
	13. Discovery of Personal Potential and Creativity
Sense of Purpose Gained Through Connection	9. Connection With Group and Community Fosters Feeling of Acceptance
	10. Sense of Purpose Gained Through Acting in a Leadership Role
	11. Sense of Accomplishment and Elevated Self-esteem Through Feedback
	14. Feeling of loss With Closure of Program

Theme: Creating the Context for Risking

Fear of Potential Stigmatization

Participants initially appeared to resist full involvement in the process until the safety of the group and environmental setting was established. This need for safety is consistent with the process that many individuals involved in group psychotherapy experience (Yalom, 1985). The prison setting heightened this need for safety among participants who were concerned that their involvement in the program might be detrimental to their status amongst the general inmate population and the prison administration. Participants described their initial cynicism of the possibility of the program being successful, explaining that the prison "isn't a normal situation" and that in their environment "trust" and authenticity do not exist.

Participants explained that as inmates they are stripped of most of their rights and freedoms, and as a result their reputation in prison is considered of utmost importance: "There's only a couple of things you have in prison. It's your pride, and it's your honor. If you lose those you've got fuck all in prison." As a result, participants were extremely reluctant to participate in warm-up drama exercises where they looked and sounded "silly":

> In places like this . . . it's not a good thing to be a goof or a waterhead, eh? And, man, if people seen what we do in that classroom that's what a lot of people would be calling us, right? And that's just like hitting someone when you call them that. You got to do something about it. . . . [it's like being called] a fucking idiot. It's like you're nothing.

Reputation in prison is not only an issue of pride, but also one of safety. As participants explained, those who are considered weak or perpetrators of unacceptable crimes such as rape or child sexual abuse are victimized. Participants who portrayed perpetrators of violence in scenes shared their concern that their involvement might tarnish their reputation and make them suspect of unacceptable violent crimes. Participants feared that they might be exposed via the videotaping of sessions, leaks from fellow participants, and a small window in the classroom door, through which inmates outside the program might peek.

Motivation: Overcoming Fear

Despite their fears, participants described a strong desire to take a personal risk and meet a challenge which motivated them to stay in the program. For some this involved a need to sing, write, perform, or act in public:

"I wanted to get over stage fright, I guess you could call it, and I thought maybe this would help me. . . . I'm really self-conscious around a lot of people and I thought this might give me confidence". For others, this involved a need to work through personal issues relating to family violence:

> I remember . . . we brainstormed one day about all different types of things in relation to family violence. And we had at least three rows on that blackboard, eh? And when I went through that list, there was a few things that I could identify with there, right? . . . Things that have happened in my life. Things that I was doing myself personally. . . . You know when it hits you, that's probably one of the reasons why I wanted to split right away because I figured, well, I'll deal with this on my own time in my own way, right? Then you realize that it's not something that you can just sluff off, eh? It's gotta be dealt with.

Developing Trust

As the group evolved, participants came to gain trust in one another and the facilitators, and the program became conceptualized as being separate from the rest of the prison. This conceptual separation of the program from the rest of the prison was a salient element, and necessary foundation for authentic expression during the program. These findings are consistent with with Ayers (1981) and Duguid (1985, 1981) who stress the need for "habilitative" programming to be separated from the every day operation of the prison in order to establish conditions that facilitate learning.

With time, participants came to trust the group members and experience the group as a haven where they could express themselves creatively and discuss family violence without suffering rebuke. Group members read each others' attitude and body language at the beginning of each session to ensure that the group was a safe place to explore, to trust in the process, and to let go of personal ego. As one participant explained, rules of confidentiality ensured that the privacy of group members was protected from the general inmate population:

> Within the group, it was like, what we did here, we never really talked about out there. So it was tight knit, you know? If we did talk about the play out there, it was only to try and explain what we were doing. We weren't telling people out there our feelings that we were spilling, you know? It was more just what we doing in the play.

Safety and trust were nurtured further as participants experienced facilitators treating them with human respect. The FVDPP group became conceptualized by participants as being separate from the rest of the prison, a place that was "normal", where their voices were heard by facilitators and group members, where personal boundaries were respected.

Theme: Healing and Growth Through Developmental Processes

Participants underwent a series of developmental processes which served to facilitate role experimentation, emotional connections, and release. Increasingly, group members discovered that they had developed and practiced communication and conflict management skills that helped them deal with challenges in nonviolent ways. Acting techniques and warm-up exercises taught participants focusing and relaxing skills and encouraged creative play. Participants described that they developed a new understanding of the continuum of family violence, increasing their ability to make choices in their lives. Finally, the mastery of the performances gave participants a sense of accomplishment, of competence, and a greater sense of confidence.

Five participants described the experience as being a transcendent, "spiritual", life altering experience, while two participants underplayed their personal development as a whole, and focused more specifically on particular skills that they gained. The data are consistent with an educational growth model espoused by Ayers (1981), which sees inmates as being developmentally delayed and in need of "habituation", or moving through key developmental stages through training opportunities.

Role Experimentation

The Participants reported that the program facilitated the channelling of "acting" skills and creativity that participants had previously honed in their criminal lifestyle into a socially adaptive avenue. Role playing fostered a sense of distance and safety, allowing participants to explore and expand their role repertoire and get in touch with hidden parts of themselves.

> Okay, like I'd say it's like even when I was on the street, right, I always had to put on this front, eh? You're solid and there's all this shit, right? Nobody sees the other side of you, eh? In here, you're able to come here and just do things that you've never done before--well, that I've never done before [laughing]. Like, I've never jumped around in a circle like that. A lot of people, a lot of my friends and my family from out on the

> street, if they seen me doing things like that, they'd say, "hey, this ain't the guy I know. This ain't the guy that went to jail".

In some cases, taking on the role of others provided an escape from the realities of prison life. In contrast to the general prison, where inmates are expected to act in an introverted fashion, the program encouraged the participants to explore aspects of their extroverted selves. Experiencing the self, being witnessed by others, and witnessing fellow participants in positive roles, inspired group members to take risks and be open to the possibility of positive growth and development in the self and others.

Further, role play, improvisation, and writing facilitated the exploration of unfamiliar characters in novel situations, the development of creative problem solving skills, and fostered empathy for others through an experiential knowing of others' experiences. In some cases, participants felt uncomfortable in retrospect, having played the role of a perpetrator, claiming they did not feel comfortable with the feelings associated with the role. Since certain roles are not safe to explore in the general prison, participants were challenged with the task of learning role flexibility as they moved in and out of the group into the regular prison setting.

Narrative Facilitates Resolving Emotions

Writing, acting, and watching the performances of invited artists connected participants with emotions of "sadness", "anger", "regret", "hatred", "pain", "shame", and "loss", and provided an avenue for releasing these suppressed emotions.

> It was, like I was getting something out. Something that's been hidden inside. Like when I wrote it I got the same feeling, but it was just a story, eh? Then when I had to turn it into a play, then when I had to do it, it was like I was growing inside, I was letting something out and it was helping me to grow inside. It's quite spiritual. I figure that I'm still a kid cuz I never got to grow up, you know? Because I was tossed around, and I wasn't allowed to do a lot of things that other kids were allowed to do.

Several participants indicated that they were able to express personal stories in safety by claiming that the material was fictional:

> I think this is a good tool, this program here--for understanding and a little healing too, as well. To act out your feelings in a place where you can act it out and not really get caught for it, you know? . . . You can maybe act out something that happened to you and no one's got to know that it

> happened to you. You can just say it's family violence, you know, that's what the subject is. It's a good way of getting it out.

For one individual the healing was accompanied by a flooding of painful memories and associated feelings of past childhood physical and sexual abuse. Due to strong distrust of prison psychologists and feeling of unsafety with group members, this individual felt he has no place to turn and struggled to work through his unfinished business on his own.

Learning to Deal With Conflict Through Group Processes

Participants practiced dealing with conflict in healthy ways as they faced power struggles between themselves, between the group and facilitators, and between the group and the prison administration. Group dynamics included personality conflicts, trust issues, power struggles, communication difficulties, and emotional fragility:

> There was almost several violent confrontations, you know, between people for no reason. . . . An example of that was when one of the guys thought he had to move [a prop] from this corner of the room to that corner of the room. I explained to him why it shouldn't be done, you know as far is it's just not logical. . . . But he insisted he had to do this. Like I mean this was life or death. So [I said] "Okay fine". Then he did it and realized it didn't work. . . . So for me it was a sacrifice of ego and . . . a patience thing as well.

Conflict arose when particular participants were perceived as using the program to meet and impress female facilitators and audience members. Participants experienced a sense of frustration as the administration set time constraints on the rehearsal process, pushed forward the performance date midway though the program without the consent of the group, and limited the celebration/closure process prior to the performances and during the final graduation party.

Taking Responsibility for Behavior

Group members described that they gained insight into their ability to make life choices and decisions. Further, participants made cognitive connections between the negative consequences of past choices and took responsibility for behaviors that hindered their personal development and relationships:

> You know I think I've learned . . . that a big part of staying out has to do with me. Like the friends I keep, the places I go. Like [when I was out] I

> went to a place where I had to carry a knife cuz I knew it was really dangerous part of the city. That was one of my big mistakes . . . I've learned from my mistakes anyway.

Learning to think before taking action, communicating effectively, pursuing life goals, "teaching my kids something different", working through unfinished business and associated feelings, and choosing or rejecting a criminal/violent lifestyle were among the issues explored.

Developing and Practicing Problem Solving Strategies

Throughout the rehearsal process and performance the participants learned skills to cope with conflict, criticism, and anxiety. In performance, participants experienced the benefits of their rehearsal preparation in alleviating anxiety. Several found themselves practicing communication/conflict management skills in and outside the group. In doing so, they discovered that stopping and considering the consequences of their actions served to circumvent potentially violent consequences.

> I'm more cautious I guess, before I say anything, or do anything. I got into an argument in here about two weeks, I guess. And it could have ended up in fisticuffs if I wouldn't have stopped and thought about what was happening, you know? Cuz he was just provoking me and he wanted to fight, you know? And I just thought, "well, why should I lose everything I've gained through everything like the programs and my own self-esteem and that? Why should I throw it all down the tubes for one fist fight?" I just stuck out my hand and shook his hand and says "no hard feelings, see you later." He was in shock. He grabbed my hand and shook it and says, "okay".

Insight, Healing, and Validation Through Psychoeducation

The educational component of the program served to validate participants' personal experience and knowledge base, demonstrate to participants who had been victims of childhood abuse that they were not alone, normalize their feelings associated with the abuse, debunk false beliefs, provide the participants with new paradigms of family violence, as well as explain a continuum of violence to which participants could relate.

> [The program] made me see myself as one of the unfortunate kids, you know, that was at the wrong place at the wrong time, you know? . . . It's made me see that the guy who abused me when I was a kid was really sick, you know? I used to blame myself too for the stuff that happened to

> me but I can see now that this guy was really sick. That's no excuse for a guy to do that. Even to this day, I still don't think it was right. Even if he was sick, if he had problems, he was grown up, you know? He was looking after four kids. He should have been more responsible.

While the educational component was effective in educating participants about the negative impact of family violence, in one case, a participant shared that while he disagreed with violence perpetrated against the family and law abiding society, he believed that violence in the context of the criminal world was an understood and acceptable "part of that game", negating the negative impact that violence in that context might have on people within and outside the "circle" of the crime world. Consistent with the developmental paradigm proposed by Ayers (1981) and Duguid (1981), who suggest that the offender is often arrested at a concrete operational stage of cognitive development, this participant failed to transfer his understanding of family violence to violence in the criminal world. This type of generalization would have required abstract thinking, characteristic of a more advanced developmental stage described by Piaget (1964) as formal operations.

Discovery of Personal Potential and Creativity

Creative exploration in the form of writing, acting, and singing facilitated the discovery and rediscovery of personal potentiality and talent. Mastering a creative skill or successfully meeting the goal of performing elicited a feeling of euphoria, growth, and personal transformation in five cases. One participant explained that he had experienced a "significant turning point" in his life, while another described his new found ability to look people in the eye due to his elevated self-confidence.

> It was a good experience for me, for getting me out of my shell. . . . Well, I can look you in the eye now, so. . . . I couldn't look anybody in the eye, like, it felt intimidating when people looked me in the eye. I was very outspoken when people did look me in the eye. It's really helped me out. It's brought me out, anyway, made me a lot more confident in myself.

Participants described themselves as feeling "high", "like a kid taking out a new toy", "out of my shell", more "confident", "fulfilled", and having "greater self-esteem".

Theme: Sense of Purpose Gained Through Connection

Connection With Group and Community Fosters Feeling of Acceptance

Participants described the program as having provided them with a sense of purpose in the context of a prison setting where little hope exists, and inmates struggle with feelings of boredom, loneliness, and a sense of the existential meaninglessness. Their connection with the group as a kind of "family", where each person contributed to the whole, facilitated the development of trust, understanding, and mutual support. Participants experienced a sense of connection with the larger community, including the audience from outside the prison, professional artists, and community health care professionals brought in as invited guests. From the inmate audience, participants gained respect, whereas from the invited audience receiving acceptance and approval were more important.

The group became strengthened through a process of working through conflict, and learning to forgive and transcend hurdles for the sake of a common goal. Participants came to see alternate sides of group members and came to accept one another. The group banded together and advocated for itself in order to convince the CSC that they required additional rehearsal time prior to the performance. Hope and motivation were ignited through the experience of sharing personal stories and working together towards a common goal.

> Everybody got close through the performances and that and even the performances I wasn't in, I felt like I was participating in some way, you know? It was through my support, or if I had an idea I'd throw in my idea, and if they used it they used it, and if they didn't at least I gave them my idea. It made me feel like I was part of it all, not just my scenes, which just makes a guy feel good.

Although fear tempted certain members to quit before the performance, a sense of loyalty and responsibility to the facilitators and fellow group members pushed the participants to honor their commitment. Supporting and being supported by the group gave participants the courage to perform and fostered a sense of being part of a family or community.

Sense of Purpose Gained Though Acting in a Leadership Role

Participants shared that an increasing understanding of family violence motivated them to take a leadership role, educating the inmate population, with a view to facilitating healing in others and breaking of the chain of family

violence. Although an empowering experience, participants explained that this was a difficult task since family violence is a taboo subject in prison which is vehemently denied, despite its relevance in the prison setting and in the the backgrounds of many inmates:

> I think in that way, this has helped me because I can see other people fighting the same battle, you know, and coming at it from a different angle--whereas normally I'm doing it alone. And even confronting somebody who's sexually assaulting somebody else on a regular basis . . . in the penitentiary setting, is like walking on eggshells, or razor blades, you know. Asking to get killed. Intervening in situations like that, right, and then seeing that there's more people working on the same project.

Participants acted as leaders both within the group and outside in the general population by acting as role models, inspiring and encouraging other inmates to get in touch with and explore their creativity, speaking out against family violence and standing up for the program in the face of criticism. Participants became inspired to write plays and perform for young offenders as a means of delinquency prevention. One participant gained teaching opportunities in drama as a result of his participation in the program. Participants described that they experienced a sense of meaning and purpose as they raised awareness and took an active role in making a positive impact on others.

Sense of Accomplishment and Elevated Self-esteem Through Feedback

Positive acknowledgement from the inmate and invited audiences made participants feel that their message has been heard, and fostered a sense of validation and accomplishment. Participants felt a sense of relief and surprise to find that the inmate audience was respectful and supportive for the most part:

> I did look in the audience a few times and when we were doing it with the convicts, you'd get a few smiles and a few thumbs up, eh? It sort of throws you off a bit because you're not expecting it. I wasn't expecting it. I was just expecting them to be sitting there, not to give me a thumbs up. Sort of threw me off, just stopped me in my line--made me sort of not forget my line, but just stutter step it I guess. But overall, I think the way I feel about it it went over good. We got all positive feedback from it and I enjoyed it. It was like an adrenalin rush. It made me feel good. Really good. Like, I wasn't screwing up, you know? Like they were getting the message and then it made me feel super.

Participants recognized that the inmate audience was less capable of acknowledging the full impact of the performance for reputation reasons. Further, criticism by one individual inmate audience member was recognized as being irrelevant and a reflection on the inmate himself rather than on the performance. Positive reinforcement and meaningful questioning from the invited audience/administration held more weight for the participants. One participant expressed that just prior to performing he felt anxiety, developed a migraine headache, and felt like "a little kid waiting for approval". He shared that his need to be acknowledged and reinforced from the outside community and the administration was fulfilled:

> Like one woman came up and she said that I did a really good job and that I knew how to draw in the crowd, eh? Through my performance. Well, I never knew that before, so like, it sort of--well, it makes you feel good. It gives you confidence, you know? In a place where you don't get much confidence from anybody, you know? You're a convict and that's it. You got a number and you're locked up.

There was a sense that the group had proven the success of the FVDPP to the authorities who had the power to reinstate the program in the future.

Sense of Loss With Closure of The Program

With the completion of the program, participants expressed a feeling of loss as they left the togetherness of the group; the stimulation of the program, and returned to regular prison routine. One participant reflected that the program "got [him] up in the mornings" and "helped [him] sleep at night", while another said that he missed "the togetherness" of the group. This feeling of loss strengthened participants' belief in the efficacy of the program and fuelled their motivation to fight for the continuance of the program in the future for the sake of themselves and other inmates:

> It was so gratifying. I really enjoyed it. I kind of miss it now. I got used to it, now it's gone. Back to the same old routine. But we can still keep it alive. That's what we're working on now.

Discussion

Participants described a sense of personal discovery and change in this program. Writing a collective play required that participants be responsible to the group and work through conflict in nonviolent ways. Behind the safety of the role, participants risked exploring alternative sides of themselves and

witnessed their fellow group members in new and positive roles. Several of the participants shared that they infused the collective narrative with their own personal stories. Claiming that the narrative was fictional to outsiders, these group members described that they were able to make emotional connections, work through unfinished business, and have their stories witnessed without feeling exposed. Further, writing and performing a play about family violence allowed group members to gain a sense of purpose and experience themselves as positive role models and leaders.

Through the performances, participants mastered a challenging goal, thereby developing their self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. Learning about the continuum of family violence validated those who experienced childhood abuse, allowing them to name their experiences, while educating and fostering empathy in those who had less awareness of the issue. In one case, a participant who learned about family violence failed to recognize the negative impact of violence within the crime world on society as a whole. The facilitation of role expansion and flexibility appears to have been a crucial element for participants in seeing themselves as worthwhile human being with abilities and potential. In addition, participants began taking responsibility for their role in violent behavior. Participants explored in improvisation, nonviolent means of conflict resolution and also practiced these skills outside of the group setting.

Receiving positive feedback from the inmate and invited audiences made up of community members and health care professionals was a healing experience for the participants, helping them feel accepted as human beings. Additionally, working together as a group alongside community artists and health care professionals, gave participants a sense of connection and belonging amidst an alienating environment.

The limitations of this study include the inability to validate the analysis with participants due to the realities of prison parole and transfers. Further, the study focuses on the internal experiences of participants and offers little insight into long-term effects that the program may have had.

Conclusions

The effectiveness of the FVDPP seems to lie in its ability to motivate prison inmates to engage in socially acceptable risk taking. As Sacks (1981) and Blatner (1988) have noted, drama motivates those individuals who are

high risk takers and engage in acting-out behavior. The pleasurable aspects of drama enlists inmate participation, while simultaneously teaching the importance of discipline, authenticity, and responsibility. Consistent with Johnson (1982), the drama process, with its emphasis on sensorimotor exercises, role play, improvisation, and narrative, allowed inmates to undergo key social, emotional, and, behavioral developmental processes. Given the strong resistance that many inmates have towards prison programming and particularly psychotherapy, the educational approach of the drama program seems an important choice. Although the FVDPP had a strong therapeutic value for participants, the educational focus of the drama program motivated inmate involvement and provided the necessary milieu for intrapsychic and interpersonal development to take place.

An additional finding involves the inmates' need for safety in an otherwise unsafe environment. Consistent with suggested prerequisites for successful group psychotherapy (Yalom,1985) and habilitative correctional education (Duguid, 1985; Gendreau & Ross, 1987, 1983-1984), findings indicate that inmates participating in the FVDPP required that the classroom setting provide a sense of safety. Risk taking in the FVDPP was only possible with the establishment of a secure environment and a commitment to confidentiality. This poses a challenge in the prison setting, where security necessitates that inmates be visibly accessible at all times. Further, although videotaping of the process is an important element to document the program, it is crucial that inmates know who will be viewing these tapes, and when this will be occurring. Those who play characters of perpetrators need to be debriefed and ensured that their portrayal will not be detrimental to their position with the CSC in terms of parole or transfer. In addition, since the performance of a collective is a stressful experience for participants, it is important that the production dates set are not externally altered, making the rehearsal period shorter, and intensifying participants' feeling that they are unprepared for the challenge.

While the FVDPP placed an emphasis on both the process and the final product of performances, the data suggest that the performances were particularly powerful experiences for participants. Not only did the performances provide a long range goal for the group, but they allowed participants to take on leadership roles and act as role models for the general inmate population. From a developmental perspective, the performances

appear to have served as concrete proof for participants that they had achieved a desired goal. Further, the feedback following the performances, and most specifically that which came from the invited audience made up of prison administration, health care professionals, and artists, provided the participants with an opportunity to feel connected with society, as opposed to feeling rejected and isolated.

Although the FVDPP effectively educated participants regarding the negative impact of family violence, the failure of one participant to recognize the negative impact of violence in the criminal world on society as a whole, suggests that the program might be more effective if it conceptualized society as being an extended family, which is directly or indirectly impacted by violence in any sphere. From a developmental conceptualization, widening the topic of family violence to that of violence in general might be more effective in assisting participants to recognize the negative impact of violence in the criminal world, without requiring abstract thinking, characteristic of the more advanced developmental stage of formal operations.

A critical implication of this study is related to the triggering of past abuse in participants. Given the subject matter of the program and research (Robinson, 1995; Taylor, 1995) suggesting significant rates of childhood abuse in the histories of offenders, it is imperative that a system be developed whereby participants can work through painful feelings with a qualified professionals without fearing that the material will be used against them.

This study demonstrates that powerful therapeutic changes can evolve when inmates are motivated to participate in the intensive process of educational drama using the collective creation model. While other research (Cleveland, 1994; as cited in Count-Van Manen, 1991; Melnick, 1984; as cited in Ryan, 1976; Stallone, 1993) suggests that drama programming is effective in reducing offenders' recidivism and infraction rates, this study may provide insight into the efficacy of drama programming by investigating the experiences of offender participants throughout the process. Given these results in a maximum security prison, it is recommended that programming of this nature be implemented and studied with young offenders as well as with those in minimum and medium security correctional settings as a means of earlier intervention.

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Running head: WORKING THROUGH FAMILY VIOLENCE WITH OFFENDERS

Working Through Family Violence With Offenders : A Collective Creation Model

by

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Dare you to...
step into the melee of horror
with your heart in your hand
willing to watch it trampled
only to bandage it and hand it back again
-Family Violence Drama Pilot Project, 1994

This poetry passage is part of a collective play which was written and performed by seven inmates who participated in a Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP) at a maximum security prison housing adult male offenders. Facilitated by Azimuth Theatre Association, the 17 week program followed an adaptation of the collective creation model (Barnet, 1989; Berry & Reinbold, 1992) whereby participants researched, wrote, and performed a play entitled Picking up the pieces (FVDPP, 1994), which focused on the issue of family violence. As part of the play, the poem above challenged an inmate and invited audience to take responsibility for their behavior and learn nonviolent ways of solving conflicts.

Although drama programming has been conducted in prisons as a vehicle for change (Cleveland, 1994, 1992; Count-Van Manen, 1991: Gordon, 1981; Grace, 1993; Hart, 1986; Landy, 1986; Melnick, 1984; Mettee, 1983; Ryan, 1976), little research has examined the impact of such programming on the lives of offenders. This paper builds on a phenomenological study (Cogan & Paulson, 1995) which describes the group experience of 7 male inmates who were participants in the FVDPP. While the previous study examines the shared experiences of all 7 participants, the purpose of this paper is to describe the ways in which the collective creation model (Barnet, 1989; Berry & Reinbold, 1992) utilized in the FVDPP served as a vehicle for working through issues of family violence with 4 participants who reported histories of childhood victimization. The paper briefly examines selected theory and research in the area of family violence as it relates to inmates who are survivors of childhood abuse. A theoretical rationale for the effectiveness of drama programming with this population is provided along with a description of the collective creation process as implemented in the FVDPP. To illustrate the ways in which this model appears to have impacted participants, four case studies are presented. Programming suggestions and future research implications conclude the discussion.

Family Violence, Offenders, and Survivors

Childhood victimization including sexual, physical, psychological abuse, and neglect has been correlated with long term consequences of adult aggression and criminal behavior (McCord, 1983; Pollock et al., 1990; Widom, 1989). Robinson (1995) reports that approximately 50% of male offender files (n=935) in federal institutions indicated that the individuals had been victims of some form of family violence including physical, sexual, psychological abuse, neglect, or the witnessing of family violence. Taylor's (1995) interview study with male offenders reveals even higher rates of childhood maltreatment in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal male offenders, suggesting that offender file studies may underestimate the incidences of family violence in the histories of offenders.

Dutton & Hart (1992a) indicate that inmates who had been abused as children were 3 times more likely than non-abused offenders to perpetrate violence as adults. Robinson (1995) reports that one in three files of male offenders (n=935) in federal institutions identified the offender as having perpetrated some form of family violence including partner or child abuse. Violence in the families of offenders has been linked with subsequent wife assault (Dutton & Hart, 1992b; Tolman & Bennett, 1990). Histories of sexual victimization in men are often linked with the perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior, while histories of physical abuse are commonly linked with physically aggressive behavior (Dutton & Hart, 1992a).

While childhood maltreatment has been linked with criminality and subsequent perpetration of abuse, other common long-term effects are post-traumatic stress, cognitive distortions, aggression, altered emotionality, dissociation, impaired self-reference, disturbed relatedness, and avoidance (Briere, 1992). Emotional reactions to childhood victimization may include anxiety and fear, depression, decreased self-esteem, anger, guilt, and shame (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Further, research suggests that survivors of abuse are more likely to become dependent on alcohol or drugs than those without abuse histories (Dembo et al., 1989). While psychoeducational and therapeutic interventions aim at ameliorating the negative psychological and behavioral effects of childhood victimization on survivors, further research is required to determine which kinds of approaches are effective in doing so (Briere, 1992; Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Yllö, 1988).

Drama As a Vehicle for Change

Recognizing the high risk of family violence in the histories of inmate populations, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), funded by the federal government Family Violence Initiative, began offering educational and treatment programs for offenders in 1988 in an attempt to break the intergenerational cycle of family violence (Cyr, 1994). Since childhood victimization often interferes with normal human development, the goals of therapeutic interventions should focus on growth and development, utilizing a survivor's existing skills "to move beyond his or her current level of adaptive functioning" (Briere, 1992, p. 82). Blatner (1988) indicates drama programming channels the offender's impulse to "act out" into a socially acceptable avenue, thereby using this tendency as a strength. Ayers (1981) and Duguid (1985, 1981) suggest that the offender is developmentally arrested and in need of "habilitative" educational programming to facilitate the enhancement of empathy for others, reasoning, and problem solving skills. As described in Cogan (1995) and Cogan & Paulson (1995), the effectiveness of drama programming with the offender population appears to lie in its ability to motivate involvement and facilitate cognitive, behavioral, and emotional enhancement while working at an appropriate developmental level of the participants. Drama can assist individuals in moving towards more advanced cognitive developmental stages through involvement in sensorimotor exercises to increasingly complex exercises such as role play, improvisation, and performance (Johnson, 1982).

Given that offenders often resist psychotherapy (Gordon, 1981; Count-Van Manen, 1991), the educational focus of drama programming may be more effective in motivating offender participation. As others (Ayers, 1981; Duguid, 1985) have suggested, "habilitation" in prisons is best achieved when the programs are conceptualized as being separate from the regular on-goings of the prison. Professional artists from outside the prison who facilitate the dramatic process effectively create an environment that is conceptually separate from the regular on-goings on prison life. While the FVDPP was conceived and facilitated as an educational program as opposed to drama therapy, Cogan & Paulson (1995) suggest that the program had strong therapeutic benefits, enhancing participants' relationship with themselves and others.

The Family Violence Drama Pilot Project (FVDPP)

Over a period of 17 weeks, the group met on an average of 3 times per week for a total of 107 classroom hours. The program fulfilled the grade 10 drama curriculum and participants who met the curriculum standards received Drama 10 credits upon the completion of the program. The purpose of the family violence project was threefold:

1. To develop and pilot test a social theatre program which utilized an adaptation of the collective creation process (Berry & Reinbold, 1992) as a tool to address family violence issues with inmates.
2. To empower inmate participants with the guidance, skills, and resources to create a collective drama on the theme of family violence.
3. To encourage critical thought and discussion about family violence. (Hurford, 1994, p. 8).

In addition to these primary objectives, the program was implemented in an attempt to promote learning as well as positive attitude and behavioral changes amongst participants in relation to violent behavior.

The program took place at the Adult Learning Center in the institution and was facilitated by three individuals trained in the areas of social theatre, family violence prevention, drama, music, directing, and playwriting. Project consultants, including two chartered psychologists, as well as a resource team made up of educators, prison administration, and community health care professionals, met with the facilitators throughout the project to refine the process, debrief, and prevent potential problems. Throughout the FVDPP, invited guests including health care professionals trained in the area of family violence and prevention as well as professional actors and playwrights, were brought into the group as a means of educating participants in the area of family violence and dramatic expression.

Method

Participants

While involvement in the program was voluntary, 4 out of the 7 FVDPP participants indicated during interviews with the researcher that they had been victims of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual, psychological abuse, witnessing of abuse, and neglect. These same individuals shared that they had struggled with histories of substance abuse. The 4 participants ranged from 26 to 40 years of age. At the time of interviews, participants had served a mean

average of 4 years in prison. Though none of these individuals reported being perpetrators of family violence, two reported general histories of violent behavior and emotional abuse.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews (Becker, 1986; Kvale, 1983; Pocklinghorne, 1989) with each of the 4 participants as well as field notes taken through participation observation (Jorgensen, 1989; Spradley; 1980) on 12 occasions throughout the program. Interviews were recorded on audiotape and transcribed. Identifying information was changed to protect the anonymity of participants. As described in greater detail in Cogan & Paulson (1995), a hierarchical thematic analysis procedure as outlined by Colaizzi (1978) was used to extract the structure of the experience of participating in the Family Violence Drama Project as perceived by all 7 group members. While the previous study (Cogan & Paulson, 1995) reported the group experience of the program as reflected in the second order thematic analysis, this paper draws from the thematic analysis of individual protocols of the 4 participants who reported histories of childhood victimization. Due to the realities of prison parole and transfer, the researcher was unable to consult with the participants subsequent to the analysis to obtain their feedback. The researcher referred to field notes throughout the data analysis.

While the validity of the self-reports of childhood abuse might be questioned due to the criminal backgrounds of the participants, it should be noted that the proportion of participants (4 out of 7) who reported having been victims of childhood abuse is consistent with studies reporting instances of childhood victimization in the histories of offenders (Dutton & Hart, 1992b; Robinson, 1995; Taylor, 1995). In addition, participants' described feelings and reactions to their reported abuse are consistent with the literature in the area of childhood victimization (Briere, 1992; Courtois, 1988; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Verbal reports from the participants support research (Bowker,1980; Toch, 1977) suggesting that appearing weak can lead to victimization by other members of the inmate population. Participants indicated that sharing their histories of abuse was a risk and only agreed to relate their experiences knowing that the information was anonymous and would not be shared with the inmate population. While it appears less likely that participants would make false reports of past abuse, it is perhaps more probable that some may have failed to report the perpetration of violence within their families.

The case studies presented are based on the experiences of the participants working through histories of childhood abuse as reported by them and observed by the researcher during participant observation. The validity of the participants' experiences of the FVDPP as reported in interviews may be in question due to participants' criminal histories. While group members were told that their reports were confidential and would in no way affect their parole or transfer status, it is possible that participants may have falsely described or enhanced their experiences in an attempt to impress the researcher or improve their institutional records. Field observations by the researcher, however, were consistent with reports by group members and suggested that participants were thoroughly involved in the collective process.

The Collective Creation Model

The collective creation model (Barnet, 1989; Berry & Reinbold, 1992; Shank, 1972) involves a process whereby a play is researched, written, and performed by a group of individuals. Although depicted as a linear model in Berry & Reinbold (1992), the collective creation is in reality a spiralling process whereby dramatic material, based in fiction or non-fiction evolves primarily through improvisation. The collective creation allows for a continuum of personal disclosure, interpersonal connection, and emotional commitment, depending on the comfortability of the participants involved and the trust established in the group.

While the collective creation may implement a variety of dramatic forms, in the FVDPP, a series of scenes, poems, and songs dealing with issues of family violence were created by the participants through a process of topic selection, research, synthesis, exploration, refining, rehearsal, and scripting. Though much of the collective play in the FVDPP emerged out of improvisation, participants also wrote material outside of classroom hours and then brought in the material to be developed by the group. While the process culminates in a performance of the play in front of an audience, the collective creation model places a strong emphasis on the process as well as the final product of the performance.

Research indicates that effective correctional programs are multifaceted, utilizing community resources, anti-criminal modelling and reinforcement, teaching problem solving skills, and providing opportunities for developing interpersonal relationships in an atmosphere of trust and open communication

(Gendreau & Ross, 1987, 1983-1984). Coulson & Nutbrown (1992) indicate that successful correctional programs motivate inmate involvement, utilize structured activities, and positive reinforcement. As the following section illustrates, The collective creation model, as implemented in the FVDPP, has incorporated all of these elements.

Topic Choice: Family Violence

Although the topic of the collective play is often chosen by the group of students or actors who are creating the piece, in other cases, such as in the FVDPP, the topic was chosen by the facilitators (Berry & Reinbold, 1992). In accordance with the guidelines set out by the Family Violence Programming initiative of the Correctional Service of Canada (Cyr, 1994), Azimuth Theatre utilized the following definition of family violence as a guide for the FVDPP:

> The intra-familial and extra-familial abuse of children and youth, of older persons and abuse of women by their male partners. It can take a number of forms in addition to physical assault such as intimidation, mental or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, deprivation, and financial exploitations. The term "family" refers to a group of individuals who are related by affection, kinship, dependency, or trust. Furthermore it is meant to reflect the diversity of living arrangements present in our society. (p. 2)

In order to explore a wide continuum of family violence, the facilitators also targeted verbal abuse, and the cycle of violence in dysfunctional families and relationships.

Having the topic of family violence mandated by the program appears to have been an important factor in motivating participants to explore the issue in the context of a prison where family violence is a taboo subject (Cogan & Paulson, 1995). Although all 4 participants in this study reported experiences of childhood abuse and neglect in their past, they said that they were able to learn and explore their feelings in safety by claiming that the material was fictional and created to fulfil the program's mandate.

While safety is the foundation of individual and group therapy (Mahoney, 1991; Rogers, 1961; Yalom, 1985) as well as the creative process (Berry & Reinbold, 1992; Gordon, 1981), it is even more critical in the prison environment. As Nick, one of the participants of the FVDPP explained "If you show your feelings [in prison], some people take it as a weakness. And they'll take advantage of you or something . . . . That's just the way it is, I guess". In

order to facilitate exploration of the topic in safety, the head facilitator set confidentiality as a ground rule for the group. Further, at the beginning and end of each FVDPP session, the group gathered in a "trust circle", a ritual aimed at focusing the participants and reinforcing the group's commitment to trust, confidentiality, and mutual support.

The need for safety in the FVDPP was further heightened for participants who were survivors of childhood abuse by their families. Clinical observations suggest that abuse by family members often increases survivors' difficulty in trusting others and forming interpersonal relationships (Courtois, 1988; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Survivors of childhood abuse are often fearful of being betrayed and abandoned (Briere, 1992). This is not surprising when examined through a developmental model. Trust is the earliest development task and is a crucial building block for subsequent personality development.(Erikson, 1980). If trust is impeded, further development is often stunted. Since violation of trust in the form of abuse often impedes healthy human development, the establishment of trust and safety is critical to facilitate a survivor's movement through subsequent developmental stages (Briere, 1992; Courtois, 1988; McCann & Pearlman, 1990).

Research

The content of a collective creation is guided by the knowledge of participants. The research component of the collective, therefore, aims to increase the knowledge base of participants, to stimulate critical thinking and creativity, and to generate ideas. During the first 15 weeks of the FVDPP, participants gathered information about the topic of family violence, exploring their own experiences and stories of abuse, as well as pertinent articles, videos, and music. In addition, research included lectures from guest speakers trained in the area of family violence and prevention, as well as theatrical presentations performed by local professional actors, focusing on the theme of family violence.

During the research stage, participants were able to obtain information about the causes and effects of family violence. Psychoeducational approaches have been strongly advocated in working with survivors of childhood abuse (Briere, 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990) in order to facilitate normalization, whereby survivors learn that they were not responsible for abuse they suffered, and come to recognize that their reactions and feelings around the abuse are not abnormal, but rather normal reactions to abnormal

situations. As Briere (1992) elucidates "This understanding promotes the survivor's developing self-acceptance, and assists in his or her rejection of the myth of personal badness" (p.87). Psychoeducation is also important in elucidating the importance of taking responsibility for abusive behavior and finding new ways of coping (Scher & Stevens, 1987).

Synthesis

The synthesis stage involves a process whereby ideas are generated, organized, clustered, and in some cases, eliminated (Berry & Reinbold, 1992). In the FVDPP, participants worked with the facilitators, brainstorming issues surrounding family violence and categorizing the themes to reflect a framework for the collective play. The facilitators overviewed the evolving material to ensure that participants did not exclude relevant information nor include inaccurate information. This stage of the program aimed at facilitating group cohesiveness, collaboration, and negotiation. Further, this process required that participants communicate with one another in order to solve conflicts rather than using violence as a means of solving disputes. As social learning theory and research suggests, the intergenerational cycle of family violence is often facilitated through modelling of violent behavior by role models (Tolman & Bennett, 1990; Scher & Stevens). Those who have been directly abused or have witnessed abuse often learn that violence is a way to resolve conflicts. During this process of the FVDPP, facilitators modelled and encouraged new alternatives to solving conflicts. Further, participants were given positive reinforcement for developing these new behaviors.

Exploration

The function of the exploration stage is to transform ideas generated in the research and synthesis stages into dramatic form. In order to prepare group members for this process, the acting skills of participants were developed throughout the collective process through vocal and physical training, breathing and focusing exercises, role-play, and improvisational games (Linklater, 1976; Selman, 1992; Spolin, 1963). These drama exercises are parallel to many therapeutic relaxation and exploratory exercises (Borysenko, 1989; Landy, 1986; Mahoney 1991). Each session of the FVDPP began with a physical and vocal warm-up, which was lead by facilitators for the first 5 weeks and then by participants for the duration of the program. The warm-up was conducted in a circle, reinforcing the group cohesiveness. Exercises including breathing, physical, and vocal training were implemented to facilitate

the focus, discipline, and relaxation necessary for the creative process, and to provide participants with tools to deal with the unavoidable anxiety associated with performance.

Drama exercises such as mirroring, sculpting, and tableaus (Emunah, 1994; Spolin, 1963) were implemented to encourage sensory awareness, listening skills, role flexibility, self-expression, and the exploration of family violence themes in dramatic form. Improvisation and role play exercises were utilized to train participants to choose an intention in a scene and find effective means of achieving the chosen intention or goal (Selman, 1992). As Balshaw (1993) suggests, learning to live intentionally is a core variable in accounting for nonviolent behavior. These exercises provided participants with the opportunity to replay and revise improvisations if their initial efforts proved unsuccessful. In this way, participants were given the opportunity to act with intention observe the consequences of their choices, and explore alternative actions.

Role play is also critical in allowing participants to expand their role repertoires and come to understand the feelings of others through role reversal (Landy, 1986). As Mettee (1983) notes, offenders are required to follow a rigid prison routine and rules and as a result often get stuck in negative roles. Further, the nature of the prison environment discourages the revealing of authentic feelings. While this is detrimental to the self-concept of all offenders, victims of child abuse may experience an additional negative impact from suppressing their feelings behind fixed roles (Courtois, 1988).

Given that abuse survivors often suffer from negative self-concepts (Briere, 1992), role play provided participants with the opportunity to "try on" new positive roles, thereby experiencing themselves in a positive light, and developing more positive self-images. As Landy (1986) elucidates, paradoxically, drama facilitates the removal of false masks and the exploration of authentic aspects of the self behind the safety of a character or role. The exploration process also appears to have provided a safe venue for acting out feelings, thereby facilitating emotional release. Emotional expression is a fundamental component of healthy human development (Mahoney, 1991) and is particularly important component in the healing process of individuals who have survived the trauma of childhood victimization (Briere, 1992; Courtois, 1988).

Refining

During the refining stage, the group continued to make choices regarding the inclusion or deletion of scene work and songs, discussing the goals of the collective play and the desired impact of their work on the audience. Reflecting on the desired impact of the play on the audience required that participants develop the skill of acting with intention by seeing a goal and finding ways of communicating their message effectively. Like the Synthesis process, refining the collective challenged group members to work through differences of opinion, power struggles, communicate effectively, make compromises, and learn to resolve conflict through nonviolent means. Further, this stage necessitated that individuals sacrifice personal goals for the sake of the group objectives.

Rehearsal

In many collectives, the rehearsal process is minimal, and the exploration process continues during and after the performance, allowing the play to constantly develop and change (Barnet, 1989). In addition, collective scripts are often not transcribed in order to encourage flexibility in the creative process. In the FVDPP, however, participants rehearsed the written collective for two weeks prior to the performance. Rehearsal was implemented in the FVDPP in order to ensure that participants felt prepared and sufficiently safe to perform in front of an audience. Each scene was rehearsed extensively with equal emphasis being placed on content and dramatic form. The rehearsal process required that participants work towards a common goal, and be responsible to the group by being prepared and attending rehearsals regularly and on time. Further, the repetitive nature of the rehearsal process was used as a means of teaching inmates patience, self-discipline, the value of process, and working towards a desired long range goal (Gordon, 1981; Ryan, 1976).

Scripting

Although the collective had been scripted throughout the FVDPP, during this final scripting stage, scenes, poems, and songs were edited, fine tuned, and strung together in a meaningful order to create a collective play. Through a brainstorming process and a democratic vote, the group entitled their collective play Picking up the pieces (FVDPP, 1994). Again, this required that the group work through power struggles and come to a collective decision.

Performance

As Barnet (1989) notes, "part of the dramatic power of the collective creation is the desire of the actors to share their insights with the audience" (p.107). The culmination of the FVDPP was marked by two performances of Picking up the pieces (FVDPP, 1994), one to a selected inmate audience, and the other to an audience made up of corrections staff, project consultants, community health care professionals, and other community members. Both performances, scheduled on two consecutive days, were followed by question and answer discussions, allowing audience members to respond to the play, ask the participants questions regarding the creative process, and offer participants feedback. Emunah and Johnson (1983) liken the performance to "a planned crisis" (p.236) which allows participants to utilize their new skills to meet a desired goal. Further, they explain that the performance provides participants with positive attention through socially approved means, and serves to promote feelings of competence, pride, and elevated self-worth:

> The demands of acting in front of an audience are experienced as greater-than-ordinary demands, bringing about a sensation at this point of taking leaps, not mere steps. To the cast members, it seems that the potential achievement in the upcoming performance could compensate for hundreds of failed experiences. (p.236)

Internalizing the negative messages received during childhood, adults survivors of abuse often suffer from a sense of worthlessness, believing themselves to be unlovable, bad, stupid, and incapable of getting things "right" (Finkelhor & Browne, 1995; Leehan & Wilson, 1985). The performance provides participants with an opportunity to accomplish a goal, receive positive reinforcement for socially acceptable behavior, and be witnessed by others and themselves in positive roles.

Case Studies

The following case studies describe the experience of 4 participants during the collective process in working through their issues of childhood abuse. The case studies are presented to demonstrate the ways in which the multifaceted FVDPP affected 4 inmate participants with differing personality characteristics, abilities, needs, and histories of childhood abuse. Although each of the 4 participants shared diverse experiences, they all described how their involvement in the collective creation assisted them in their continuing

processes of working through the effects of childhood abuse. During interviews, participants revealed histories of extreme childhood abuse. Due to ethical concerns of confidentiality and the sensitive nature of the participants' histories, details of abuse will be minimal. Rather, case studies will focus on the impact of differing stages of the collective process.

Normalization and Learning to Cope: Ben

Ben presented as a quiet, introverted individual, one who participated in the program, but often preferred to be an observer, and as he described "remain in the shadows" rather than be in the centre of attention. Ben shared experiences of being sexually and physically victimized beginning at the age of four years old. Ben explained that the memories of his childhood were still clear in his mind and that he often experienced feelings of rage, fear, anxiety, and suffered from nightmares that replayed the abuse he suffered. He explained that feelings of rage had lead to him reacting with violence in his past: "I've been dealing with this stuff since I come into prison. Because I've realized that it was these feelings, childhood feelings, that brought me to prison. So I've been trying to deal with them".

While Ben explained that performing the collective was a powerful experience for him, helping him "come out of his shell" and proving to himself that he was capable of achieving a goal, standing in front of an audience and performing, he described the research and exploration stages of the collective as being instrumental in helping him learn new ways of coping with his feelings relating to his abuse, without having to expose his past. Ben described that the research process allowed him to learn about family violence, have his feelings normalized, and realize that he was not alone. Of particular significance for Ben were performances by outside artists who presented plays dealing with the topic of family violence:

> I could bond with the person doing the performance. You know how they must have felt. I was getting to the point where I was forgetting about the acting and getting right into the problem, you know? It was real for me, eh? It had its positive parts too, eh? Positive parts where, at the end they would talk about it and if there were things I didn't understand I could speak up. But I basically understood everything, all the hidden meanings, you know? When something like this comes along, it still hits home with me and it's kind of hard to take. It's never going to be easy, but

> I hope I can deal with it in a positive way rather than running from it--cuz I used to run.

As Ben explained, the research component of the program helped him see that he was not at fault for the abuse he suffered, that he was simply "at the wrong place at the wrong time" and that the adults who abused him were responsible.

Ben recognized that he needed to learn to deal with his feelings of anger and manage his violent behavior. He explained that the warm-up exercises in the exploration process of the program were helpful in providing him with strategies to deal with his feelings and behaviors. Ben indicated that breathing exercises gave him a way to take pause and experience relaxation when he felt "stressed out". As Ben described, the improvisational component of the program taught him to stop and consider consequences before taking action. In addition, Ben shared that the child-like nature of many of the warm-up drama games allowed him to practice being "silly" rather than always having to be "tough":

> It's helped me out. I've walked away from a couple of fights already. It's just not worth it. I practice swallowing my pride coming to this group and swallowing my pride before I get into a fight. . . . Being able to swallow your pride and living with it, I think that's a real accomplishment for the people living inside. And I find that coming to this group and doing that basically every day, the silly games we play, the faces, the funny faces that we make during the warm-ups, during plays, that's really helped me out to be comfortable with it, you know? It's a real beneficial part of staying out of trouble in the joint here. So it has helped me out, anyways.

While Ben expressed that the program was beneficial to his healing, he also shared that it brought up painful feelings that he had difficulty dealing with on his own. Ben explained that he felt unable to share this with the prison psychologists for fear that they would suspect that he would "hurt someone" which might be detrimental to his parole. During the interview process, Ben indicated that he wanted to deal with his feelings when he left the prison in a short time. With the permission of the prison authorities, the interviewer provided Ben with contacts for appropriate psychological services upon his release.

Self-healing Through Creativity and Leadership: Gordon

Gordon shared that he ran away from home at the age of fourteen in an attempt to put an end to the physical and emotional abuse of his "mangled childhood". In the process, Gordon explained that he became a cocaine addict for 17 years, abused alcohol, and became involved in criminal activities. Gordon described that his attempts to get back at his father resulted in a self-destructive lifestyle that was destroying himself and others in the process.

Gordon explained that he made it a personal goal to learn about family violence many years before the FVDPP. As a result, the research stage of the program did not provide him with new information, but rather substantiated and validated his existing knowledge. Gordon shared that the exploration process was key to his personal healing, reawakening his talents in writing music, scenes, and poetry. He described the group as being a place where he could "just be", allowing him to share his feelings and ideas without fear of ostracism or rebuke. Gordon repeatedly referred to his new found talents as "toys" that he could "play" with and described his desire to be "fed" and "feed others" through artistic means. Gordon's use of child-like language appears to be an emotional return to childhood to reclaim the positive affirmation that he longed for as a boy. As Landy (1986) explains, "Dramatic learning is not the acquisition of new tools, tricks, and exercises but, rather their elimination in order to model the process that infants use to make sense of the world: that of play" (p.11).

Throughout the collective process, Gordon played a strong leadership role in the group, creating material that reflected his own and others' experiences. He shared his materials with group members and encouraged others in the group to participate in the program more fully. Several participants in the FVDPP explained that they had joined the group due to Gordon's encouragement. It appears that the group was able to impact Gordon's life by giving him the opportunity to help others who had suffered abuse and encourage the creativity in others. As Gordon expressed, performing the collective in front of an inmate audience provided him with a venue to raise the awareness of family abuse in the inmate population. Further, he explained that the creative process and the performance provided him with an alternate outlet for his feelings, and his need for "risk" and "challenge". He expressed that the process gave him a "high" which was "better than a long drug ride".

Learning to Trust Others and Revising Life Stories: Mike

Mike shared that he never knew his natural parents and grew up in the foster home system, moving from one home to another:

> Like during the course of my early years when I was bounced around all the time I was always told by different foster homes, "oh, we love you", "you can trust us", "we care about you", and . . . then a little while later they'd yank me out of there and they'd stick me somewhere else. And I'd hear the same thing over and over and over and then after awhile I started getting to that age where it didn't hold no water with me any more. It was like I cut those feelings off. I shut them out and I started building a wall around myself and it's not good, eh? But unfortunately I learned the hard way, if you want to say that.

Mike explained that he had a history of drug abuse and found that he was "emotionally abusive" in his relationships with women. He explained that trust was an issue that plagued his relationships and that he found himself keeping people "at arms length" and putting them "through a little routine" in order to prove that they were trustworthy.

Mike described the program as being beneficial to his learning in several ways. He shared that the research component of the program made him aware that one could be abused emotionally. Not only did Mike explain that this helped him understand his own reactions in lieu of his foster care experiences, but also made helped him identify and take responsibility for his own behavior in relationships.

Mike described that his difficulty in trusting people manifested itself in the group throughout the collective process. Midway through the collective process, Mike discovered that the facilitator had shown a videotape of the group's progress to the prison administration before obtaining consent from the group. Mike explained that he confronted the facilitator and felt that she had betrayed his and the group's trust. When the facilitator apologized for the misunderstanding and allowed Mike and the other group members to view the videotape, Mike realized that the group had been presented in a positive light, that the facilitator had not intended to betray him, rather that there had been a misunderstanding that needed to be resolved. The tape incident appears to have provided Mike with an opportunity to work through trust issues in a positive manner.

The exploration process of the collective was key to Mike's working through issues pertaining to his past relationships. Mike improvised and wrote a scene about a particular incident in his relationship, where he felt he had reacted in an emotionally abusive fashion. In writing the ending of the scene, Mike explained that he was able to revise and rehearse the situation to reflect how he wished he had reacted at the time:

> I wrote that cuz I was thinking about a situation I had with the ex one time and the final outcome of this scene is the way I wish I would have handled it at the time, but I didn't. I handled it altogether in a totally different way. I was way out of line, eh? . . . I guess I wish I could have used the nonviolent way, like communicating, working out the problem, stuff like that, right? Instead of using the emotional abuse that I inflicted on her at the time. Most of [the scene] is fact. It's the ending that's pretty well fiction, eh? Like how he goes about resolving the issue and everything, right?

While the prison environment offers little opportunity to practice positive social relationships, the improvisations, scripting, and rehearsals provided Mike with a means of revising his story and practice a new way of relating in his personal relationships. Further, the performance provided him with a means of being witnessed and reinforced for his new behaviors.

Having Personal Stories Witnessed and Validated: Nick

Nick described that he was physically and emotionally abused by his grandparents who were his primary caregivers and that he started running away from home at the age of six in order to avoid beatings. While Nick shared the pain of severe physical abuse, he recollected most strongly a story reflecting his need for recognition, love, and approval:

> I love drawing and I drew a picture one time and it was for a contest in one of those magazines. You have to draw that deer. Well, I drew it. It took me about twelve hours to draw it and I drew it hair by hair. Identical to that. Cuz they said the closest one to it would win, eh? So I drew it hair by hair and my grandmother got drunk and she just crushed me cuz she just grabbed it and ripped it up, eh? She said that I couldn't draw. I [had] asked for . . . a stamp [to send the picture in to the contest]. I think it was six cents back then. Six cents for a stamp, so I could mail this. And I guess I was cutting into her morning fund.

Nick shared a personal history riddled with alcohol abuse, violence, and criminal activities. Like Mike, Nick found the research component helpful in identifying the issue of emotional abuse. Nick shared that for him the group came to feel like a "family" where he felt supported. He said that he realized that he tended to treat people abusively and started to stop and consider what he said to people before he spoke and indicated that this had assisted him in avoiding violent confrontations in the prison:

> I think the program has taught me to just stop and think before I go ahead with my actions. It's something that I've never done before. I've always done things on inspiration, impulse--just gung-ho. And if it turned out good, it turned out good, but if it turned out bad [I'd think] "God. I shouldn't have done that--should have stopped and thought about it". Now I've learned to stop and think about it and hopefully I'll continue to do the same.

During the exploration process, Nick wrote a scene whereby he shared his childhood story to a child. Not only did this provide him with a way to voice his story behind the safety of the role and the mandated topic of family violence, but it also served as a wish fulfilment. As Nick explained "it was important to tell a kid the story of my childhood". Having been abused as a child, and unable to see his own children, in this scene, Nick was able to treat a child the way he wished that he had been treated.

While the exploration phase was key to Nick's development, he shared that it was especially important that he perform in front of the invited audience made up of health care professionals, artists, and prison administration. Nick shared that he felt that he was "a kid waiting to get approval" prior to the performance. Although he expressed that it was difficult for him to "tell people [his] story", he realized that he needed to "get it out". Further, Nick benefited from the positive feedback he received from the audience subsequent to the performance and was able to receive the approval and recognition for his talents that he had been denied as a child.

Conclusions and Implications for Programming and Research

This paper has examined the collective creation model as implemented by the FVDPP. Further, it has illustrated through case studies, the way in which this model impacted four offenders who reported that they had been victims of childhood abuse. While all eight components are key to the

collective creation process, participants indicated that the research, exploration, and performance stages were particularly effective in their process of working through issues of childhood abuse.

The research stage provided participants with psychoeducation in the area of family violence. This component of the program appears to have taught participants about a wide continuum of family violence, expanding their understanding of the issue to include psychological abuse. In three cases, participants shared that they discovered that the had been emotionally abused by their parents and recognized their tendency in perpetrating psychological abuse in their interpersonal relationships. For one participant who had previously researched the topic, this stage served to validate his knowledge and understanding of abuse. The research component also appears to have been instrumental in normalizing participants' feelings in relation to the childhood abuse they experienced. This stage was particularly effective for one participant who was shy and not emotionally ready to deal with his feelings directly through improvisation and writing. For this participant, being a quiet observer was a powerful experience and provided him with an outlet to process his feelings at a distance.

The exploration stage appears to have been effective in providing participants with an active means of expressing their feelings behind the safety of a role and the mandated topic of family violence. Participants described that developing the collective play through improvisation, role play, and drama exercises provided them with the opportunity to explore, revise, and have their stories witnessed in safety. One participant explained that this process provided him with helpful relaxation techniques which alleviated his stress, while 3 participants said that the improvisation taught them to stop and consider their actions instead of reacting with violence in conflict situations. All 4 participants expressed that this process provided them with an emotional release.

While many of the drama exercises utilized in the exploration stage are parallel to therapeutic relaxation and exploratory techniques, the fact that the FVDPP was conceived and facilitated as an educational program as opposed to therapy appears to have provided participants with the necessary safety to explore. Consistent with Johnson (1982), the variety of exploratory exercises appear to have provided participants of differing developmental levels the opportunity to work through their issues around childhood abuse in different

ways. For some, the sensorimotor exercises such as breathing techniques were highly effective, whereas for others, the exploration of family violence in tableaus, mirroring exercises, and improvisation were instrumental in facilitating learning and growth.

The performance stage provided participants with the opportunity to take on leadership roles and experience a sense of competence, through creativity, performance, and feedback from the invited audience. Many survivors of childhood abuse suffer from stigmatization, internalizing destructive messages that have been sent to them by perpetrators (Briere, 1992; Courtois, 1988). The power of the performance seems to have been in providing participants with a concrete vehicle in which to achieve a goal, experience themselves in positive roles, and have their stories acknowledged by others.

Consistent with literature in the area of individual (Rogers, 1961) and group therapy (Yalom, 1985), the trust and confidentiality established in the group appears to have been a key component to the effectiveness of the program. Participants indicated that they felt supported by the group and as a result were able to express themselves without fear of being ostracised. Further, the educational focus of the program allowed participants with the opportunity to learn about family violence and work through their feelings without overtly disclosing their histories. Given that the prison is generally an unsafe environment to disclose authentic feelings, particularly in the area of family violence, the educational focus seems to have been beneficial. The powerful impact of the program as reported by participants suggests a need for the implementation of a support system whereby participants can work through unresolved issues, should they find painful memories have been triggered. This is a challenge in the prison environment since participants often resist talking to psychologists who are part of the system for fear that the information they divulge in therapy will be detrimental to their transfer or parole status.

Although the qualitative methodology has its limitations, this study suggests strong benefits of this type of research, particularly with offenders who are survivors of childhood victimization. As Kvale (1983) notes, the qualitative interview is similar to that of a therapeutic interview, given its emphasis on rapport and on the meaning of individuals' experiences from their perspective. If the researcher is not part of the prison system, offenders may be more willing to share their experiences and provide invaluable information for effective program development. Further, the interview process encourages

participants to the reflect upon their experiences, providing another opportunity for participants to integrate their learning. In one particular case, the qualitative interview indicated that a participant required further psychological counselling and the interviewer was able to provide this information to the individual. Although quantitative research is needed to determine the long-term impact of such programming on the behavior of participants, phenomenological studies may assist facilitators and prison administration to tailor their programs to the needs of offenders based on their personal experiences.

While this study reports that the FVDPP has had a strong impact on participants, its limitation lies in its inability to capture long-term emotional and behavioral effects that the program may have had on participants. Given that the prison environment is generally not conducive to working through personal issues in safety, it is difficult to know whether the benefits of such programming are long lasting or whether they are lost in the midst of the prison environment. Follow-up studies are necessary to determine whether such programming is effective in promoting long-term emotional and behavioral changes in participants.

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APPENDIX A:
Written Study Description

My name is Karen Cogan and I am a masters student in the counselling program of the Educational Psychology Department at the University of Alberta. My research involves an investigation of the experience of how an inmate at the Edmonton Institution experiences being involved in the Family Violence Drama Project.

By being at several of your drama classes and having the opportunity to interview you, I hope to come to understand your experience of being part of this drama program. I have studied drama and acting for the past fifteen years and am a Bachelor of Fine Arts graduate from the acting program at the University of Alberta. I have worked as a professional actor for six years and during that time became interested in the possibility of using drama as a way of learning and exploring. I am interested in learning about this topic because I am curious about the possible impact of drama programs on people with different backgrounds and experiences.

If you choose to participate in the study, we will have three interviews together. The first interview will give us an opportunity to meet, get acquainted and for me to explain the study to you.

Before our second interview, I would appreciate it if you would take some time to think about your experiences as they relate to the topic we are exploring. As you think about your experience from time to time, you may want to jot down your thoughts or feelings (but this is not necessary).

When we meet again for our second interview I will ask you to describe your experience of being involved in the Family Violence Drama Project in as much detail as possible. It is important that you describe your **actual experience** rather than your opinions on the topic we are exploring. Remember that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Also, it is important that you don't tell me what you think I want you to tell me: I want to learn about your experience of being involved in this drama project, *whatever* they may be for you. The interview will take between one half to one hour long. Another interview may be necessary if we find that we haven't had enough time to adequately explore your experiences.

After I have completed the study I will be happy to share my findings with you. If you are no longer at the institution by the time the study is complete, you

will be able to obtain a copy of the study through the Learning Center at the institution.

I would also like to remind you that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you can opt out at any time. All information will be kept strictly anonymous and will not effect your treatment at the Edmonton Institution in any way. If you decide that you no longer want to participate in the study, all information about you will be destroyed.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, you can contact me through Deborah Hurford, your drama program leader.
I look forward to hearing about your experience of the program.

APPENDIX B:
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I, _____, voluntarily consent (agree) to participate in an interview with the researcher, a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. The purpose of this study has been explained to me and I understand that the information given by me will be used solely for the purpose of researching and evaluating the Family Violence Drama Project .

I agree to participate in the study and am willing to share my experiences with the researcher. I am aware that two interviews of approximately one half to one hour in length each will be tape recorded and that the tapes will be erased as soon as they have been transcribed (written out). I understand that my participation in the study will in no way help or harm the possibility of parole, transfer, or any other treatment at the Edmonton Institution. Further, I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can opt out of the study at any point without suffering negative consequences. I am also aware that if talking about my experiences raises any concerns for me which I wish to discuss further with a counsellor, the researcher will suggest individuals I might contact.

I am aware that all information associated with this study is strictly anonymous and that my identity, or that of any other persons I mention will not be revealed at any time. When transcribing the interview recordings the researcher will use code names for my name and for those of any individuals that I mention. Interview recordings will be stored in a secure place and then erased when the transcripts have been completed.

I am also aware that the information obtained from the interviews will be used by the researcher solely for the purposes of this study and that portions of the interview transcripts may be included at the end of the researcher's thesis (written research project).

Participant Signature: _____

Date:_____

APPENDIX C:
CONSENT TO PRINT MATERIALS

I, _____, voluntarily consent (agree) to allow the researcher to print selections of the scenes, monologues, poems, and songs that I wrote for the Family Violence Drama Project in the thesis containing the program evaluation. The purpose of this study has been explained to me and I understand that the materials given by me will be used solely for the purpose of researching and evaluating the Family Violence Drama Project.

I understand that my participation in the study will in no way help or harm the possibility of parole, transfer, or any other treatment at the Edmonton Institution. Further, I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can opt out of the study at any point without suffering negative consequences.

I am aware that all information associated with this study is strictly anonymous and that my identity, or that of any other persons I mention in my writings will not be revealed at any time.

Participant Signature: _____
Date:_____

APPENDIX D:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General Information:
Age, education, length of time in prison, reason for incarceration

Research Question:
What has your experience of being involved with the drama project been?

Possible Interview Prompts

Motivation:
What motivated you to volunteer to participate in the program?

How did you hear about the program?

What did you think the program would be like when you first heard about it/started your involvement with it?

What was your experience in the area of drama before you started the program?

What was your understanding of family violence before the program started?

Have you been affected by family violence personally?

What role (if any) has violence played in your life?

Feelings About the Experience:

How (if at all) did your feelings about the project change as you became involved in the program?

What has your experience been of creating scenes and working towards creating a play?

What (if any) parts of the program did you particularly enjoy?

What (if any) parts of the program did you particularly dislike or have difficulty with?

How do you feel about performing your drama to various groups? [before the performances]

What was it like performing in front of the inmate audience? [after the performances]

What was it like performing in front of the invited audience? [after the performances]

Learning About the Self and Others:

What (if any thing) have you learned/discovered about yourself during this program?

Has the program affected you personally in any ways, and if so how?

Have you made any discoveries about others during the program? If so, what kinds?

How (if at all) has your involvement in the program made you feel or think differently about yourself?

How (if at all) has your involvement in the pr[illegible]ade you feel or think differently about others?

What was your experience of working in a [illegible]?

How (if at all) has your involvement in the program influenced your understanding of or feelings about family violence?

Have you found that participation brought up some feelings for you? If so, what kinds?

How (if at all) has the program affected how you think about your future?

Has your experience in the program caused you to make any decisions or changes in your life? If so, what kinds?

APPENDIX E:
Sample of Thematic Data Analysis

Meaning Unit Excerpts	Paraphrases	Themes
201. It was scary [when he first joined the group]. I was really um sort of embarrassed to do these warm-up exercises. I was scared to make myself look stupid in front of everybody else.	Initial fear of embarrassing himself in front of other inmates while participating in the drama exercises.	Fear of losing face, being exposed.
202. I guess there was sort of a trust in the group after a while and swallowing my pride I guess has to do with a little of. . . . feeling more comfortable with the guys that are in the group, getting to know them after a certain amount of time.	Building trust among group members gave him the confidence to let go of his mask and become become involved in the process.	Building trust with group fosters safety necessary for the letting go of personal ego.
203. I'm sort of a shy person. It sort of brings me out of my shell. To be able to get up and perform in front of my peers you know helps me out in the population to be more outgoing. To handle my problems in a different way rather than fighting.	Performing in front of his peers helps him develop social/ communication skills that he has difficulty with as an introverted person. In addition, the improvisations facilitate the discovery of alternate ways of dealing with conflict that do not include violence.	Development of communication/ conflict resolution skills.