

Post-Incarceration Syndrome (PICS): A Personal Case Study

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(underlined = presenter)

Background Little is known about post-incarceration syndrome (PICS) and its possible association with women's difficulties with community re-integration following their release from prison. The objective of this presentation is 1) to describe my personal difficulty in reintegrating after prolonged incarceration(s) 2) to demonstrate that my symptoms, and those experienced by other women, are consistent with PICS 3) to suggest ways to reduce PICS for other women.

Methods Narrative presentation based on personal journal entries and experiences, interviews with key informants, and published material about PICS

Results I will describe my difficulties with (re)integration after seven years in and out of the correctional system by way of personal vignettes of extreme anxiety and panic symptoms that I experienced. I will describe the measures and supports by which I overcame my condition, and how my need to understand my symptoms led me to discover information about PICS. I will present narratives from my interviews from of key informants (M2W2 and Alouette Addiction Services), who supported me through this condition, and narratives of other former inmates, who also experienced symptoms consistent with PICS.

Discussion I will discuss: the implications of long prison sentences for women without rehabilitation programs or addiction treatment; ways to address PICS; research ideas around PICS; the need for education about PICS for women prior to their release so that they know what to expect when symptoms happen.

Ways forward This presentation will provide opportunity for brain-storming of ideas from prison, academic and community members regarding ways to reduce the impact of PICS on women as they prepare for prison release.