

# The forgotten offenders

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



“ The Forgotten Offenders” Until recently the female offender was generally overlooked by an overwhelmingly male-dominated criminal justice system. There are so few women in prison in then men. Approximately 5, 600 out of 196, 000 inmates in state and federal prisons are women. Because of the small proportion of female prisoners, female facilities are not as well-equipped as male prisons. Educational and vocational training programs are limited. Life requires a plan in all of at least five basic life areas. These include: • Subsistence Residence • Children and family • Health, mental health and sobriety • Criminal justice compliance The ability to function successfully in the community requires a plan in all of the areas and equipping woman in each of these areas is masked by prisons. The criminal justice system discourages women from coming together, trusting, speaking about personal issues, and forming relationships. Women engage more often in self-mutilating behaviors, such as cutting, as well as verbally abusive and disruptive behaviors.

They are also more likely to have a coexisting psychiatric disorder, have lower self-esteem, and more likely to use prescribed medications. With the higher rate of mental illness among female offenders, high rates of medication are given to them. The chance that they will become addicted to the medication is extremely high. Based on the crimes woman commit, they inconvenience society less then the crimes men commit and are usually non-violent and do not present a risk to public safety.

These reasons alone should sentence women to community corrections whenever possible. This is important for several reasons: • To reduce the incidence and the costs of incarceration • To improve outcomes for women

and their children • To demonstrate an approach that may also be more effective with men. However, due to lack of treatment programs provided, most women in the criminal justice system are poor, undereducated, and unskilled. They are likely to re-offend and end up incarcerated again