RESONANCE

Helping Women Recover: The Impact of a Wraparound Intervention for Women Reintegrating after Incarceration

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Introduction

Between 1980 to 2019, the number of women incarcerated in the United States has risen by over 700% (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019). Moreover, the state of Oklahoma has one of the highest rates of female incarceration in the United States (Carson, 2020).

The meteoric rise in the incarceration rate among women is thought to be in part a product of post-release barriers to reentry for women recently incarcerated. When women are released from jail or prison, many are often ill-prepared to face issues that were present prior to their initial incarceration, such as victimization, poverty, difficulties in school, limited work experience, substance use disorders, mental health issues, and parenting difficulties. As a result, recidivism is common, which contributes to high overall incarceration rates. Thus, developing wraparound programs to assist women being released from prison has value both to the individuals and society.

The current study presents results from a program entitled Helping Women Recover (HWR) administered to women decarcerating in Oklahoma. The program was administered by a nonprofit agency named Resonance Center for Women. HWR is a novel program that aids clients pre-release. The goal of the evaluation was to determine if the approach of HWR holds value to reducing the potential for recidivism.

Methods

Procedure: Using a pre/posttest design, Resonance staff collected surveys, containing established psychometric scales, to test HWR participants (N = 22) at both the beginning of the program and at program completion. HWR lasted 24 weeks. Using the data analysis methods described below, OU researchers then analyzed changes in scores from pre to post to evaluate program effectiveness.

Participants: The mean age of the sample was 35.97 years (SD = 9.45). Regarding the ethnicity of the sample, 55% of the individuals identified as white, while 45% identified as minority.

Helping Women Recover Intervention: Participants were all exposed to a 24-week program of wraparound supports designed to assist them to reintegrate post incarceration. The intervention was designed to assist with an array of variables that have been linked to recidivism post release, which includes assistance with substance abuse issues, mental health, and job readiness.

Methods (Continued)

Data Analysis. The results were analyzed using a paired samples t test coupled with Bonferroni corrections. Bonferroni corrections were used to adjust for the possibility of Type I errors that stem from performing multiple inferential statistics tests on the same data set.

Scales

TCU Criminal Thinking Scale (TCU-CTS). Individuals' scores on the TCU-CTS are thought to be linked to future criminal activity (Knight et al, 2006). The CTS contains 6 dimensions, which consist of 1.) entitlement; 2.) justification; 3.) power orientation; 4.) cold heartedness; 5.) criminal rationalization; and 6.) personal irresponsibility. Lower scores in each category are thought to be indicative of a lower likelihood of future criminal behavior (Knight et al, 2006).

Adult Hope Scale (AHS). Hope is a mindset that is associated with motivation and goal pursuit (Snyder, et al, 1991). The AHS was included as an outcome measure because AHS scores have been predictive of prosocial behaviors, such as academic and professional achievement (Snyder et al., 1991).

Results

Per Bonferroni corrections, the results indicated a statistically significant change in the expected directions on 4 of 6 CTS dimensions and on the AHS. Effect size heuristics suggests all changes were "large" (Cohen, 1988). The precise values of each dimension of the scales are depicted in Table 1:

Table 1: Pre and Post Test Scores on Selected Scales for Helping Women Recover 2 Clients (N = 22)

Scale	Pre-Test Group Mean	Post-Test Group Mean	Mean Difference	p value	Effect Size
CTS: Entitlement	12.7	8.0	-4.7	< .001*	1.88
CTS: Justification	15.4	7.1	-8.3	< .001*	4.6**
CTS: Power Orientation	20.5	12.8	-7.7	< .001*	2.3**
CTS: Cold Heartedness	9.7	9.6	-0.1	.88	.04
CTS: Criminal Rationalization	19.2	16.5	-2.7	.014	2.9**
CTS: Personal Irresponsibility	14.9	9.9	-5.0	.001*	1.6**
Hope	36.0	50.0	+14.0	< .001*	-2.7**

Notes. - *statistically significant per Bonferroni corrections (*p* = .05/07 = .007)
**large effect size

Conclusion

For 4 of the 6 dimensions of the CTS, HWR participants demonstrated significant and robust changes from pre to post in directions that suggests a positive impact of HWR. Likewise, for the AHS, scores from pre to post suggest that HWR also had a large and positive impact on participants' hope levels.

Overall, the data supports that HWR is a program that positively impacts clients in ways that are linked to lower recidivism.

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