


**When Mom Goes to Prison:
Incarcerated Mothers and Their Children**

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
APHA Conference – Philadelphia, PA – November 9, 2009



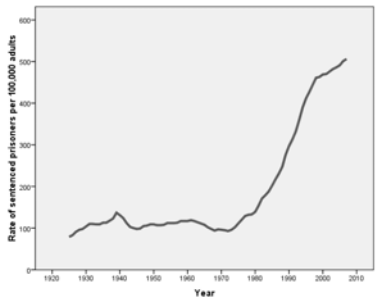
Presenter Disclosures
Jane Siegel

(1) **The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

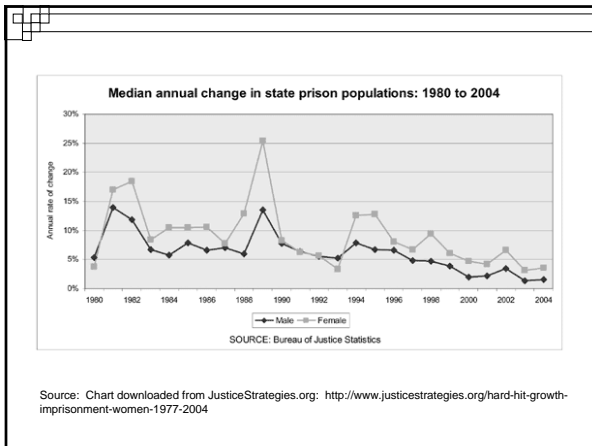
No relationships to disclose



Incarceration Rates, 1925-2007



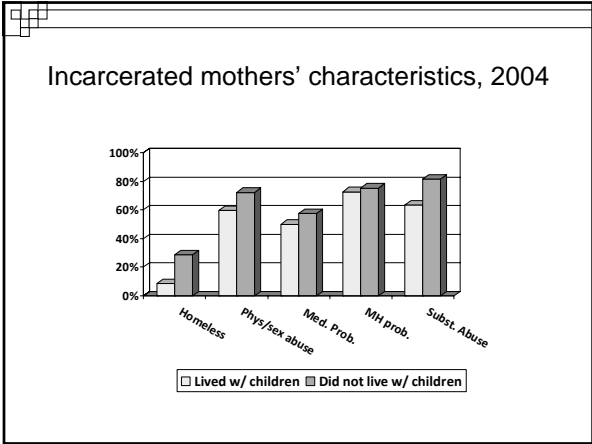
Year	Rate of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 adults
1925	100
1930	110
1940	120
1950	110
1960	110
1970	100
1980	150
1990	300
2000	450
2007	500



Source: Chart downloaded from JusticeStrategies.org: <http://www.justicestrategies.org/hard-hit-growth-imprisonment-women-1977-2004>

- ### Prior Research
- Internalizing problems of children of prisoners
 - Sadness
 - Withdrawal
 - Fearfulness
 - Anxiety
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Depression
 - Low self esteem

- ### Prior Research
- Behavioral problems of children of prisoners
 - Aggression
 - Delinquency
 - School problems (academic, behavioral)
 - Truancy
 - Defiance



Methods

- Semi-structured, qualitative interviews with:
 - children of female arrestees, pre and post conviction (N = 50)
 - children of long-term prisoners (N = 17)
 - mothers of all children (N = 74)
 - 16 guardians

Sample Characteristics Children of long-term prisoners

	Total (N=17)	Girls (N=9)	Boys (N=8)
Average age	12.2	12.8	11.6
Age range	8 – 18	9 – 18	8 – 18
Race			
African American	59%	67%	50%
White	41%	33%	50%

Sample Characteristics
Children of long-term prisoners

- All but one living with relative
 - Grandmother 9
 - Aunt 2
 - Father 2
 - Grandfather 1
 - Uncle 1
 - Great grandmother 1
 - Unrelated couple 1
- Several lived apart from mother before prison

Issues

- Building identity as different from criminal one
 - Engage in typical, prosocial activities
- Stigma
- Coping with father absence
 - Two parents in prison
 - Deceased, never part of life

Issues

- Emotional difficulties
 - Sense of longing for family
 - Depression, sadness
 - Reconciling negative image of mother with person they love
 - Conflict between loyalty to absent parent and non-incarcerated guardian
 - Regret for loss of involvement in child's life

Barriers to ongoing relationship


- Unable to speak to or see mother without cooperation, consent of adult
 - Parent-guardian relationship
- Logistical problems
 - Distance to prison, transportation
 - Visiting hours, conditions
- Limitations on communication by phone

All's well that ends well?

- Re-entry challenges
 - Housing, employment
 - Assumption of parental responsibilities
 - Re-defending
- Emotional challenges
 - Divided loyalties
 - Resentment/disappointment

Implications/Recommendations

- Support for children that helps them maintain contact with mother
 - Visitation, affordable phone calls
 - Furloughs
- Support for mothers
 - Meaningful treatment and post-release support
 - Financial support
- Support for children that helps them deal with emotional issues

 Implications/Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Support for caregivers■ Sentencing reform■ Alternatives to prison<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Community based facilities and programs
