

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Counseling Women in Prison on Forgiveness, Guilt and Shame

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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There is a lack of adequate counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame in the women's prison. Without effective counseling on those subjects while incarcerated, there is potential for the female offender to reoffend. Adequate counseling could increase the recidivism rate. Counselors in the prison system address behavior issues, acclimation of prison life and rehabilitation programs. Addressing the issues that precipitates criminal behavior and helping the offender understand the factors that lead them to engage in criminal behavior are overly complex. With passable counseling the offenders have the propensity to release the hurt and pain they have lived with and become productive citizens in their community. The nexus between moral injury and criminal behavior enlarges an individual's predisposition to engage in criminal activity. A number of female offenders and some certified counselors in the field will participate in surveys addressing feelings of unforgiveness, guilt, and shame. The offenders will express their desire to reach freedom from the pain of their past. The measure of success will be seen within the period of their incarceration. Pre/post-test will be distributed to the voluntary offender to demonstrate growth in the area of forgiveness, guilt, and shame. The efficacy of counseling interventions and the use of collaborative strategies to combat unforgiveness, guilt, and shame in prison could reduce the probability of an individual reoffending. This is an examination of the importance of adequate counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame in an effort to reduce recidivism and set the women on a path to spiritual freedom.

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Abbreviations

AMOS	<i>Analysis of a moment structure</i>
ANOVA	<i>Analysis of Variance Model</i>
CBT	<i>Cognitive Behavior Treatment</i>
FGS	<i>Forgiveness, Guilt and Shame</i>
HIPAA	<i>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996</i>
MIE	<i>Moral Injurious Experience</i>
OJT	<i>On the Job Training</i>
PHI	<i>Protected Healthcare Information</i>
RRA	<i>Recidivism Risk Assessment</i>
SEM	<i>Structural Equation Mode</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to address the lack of counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame (FGS) in the women prison facilities. With appropriate counseling, women could successfully reenter society and become productive citizens. Women who receive long or life sentences could become model inmates, decreasing the likelihood of prison fights and behavioral issues while incarcerated as well as increasing the probability of full participation in prison programs. By addressing the core behavioral issues that result in a criminal lifestyle, the female offenders are less likely to re-offend after their release or while incarcerated. The long-term effect is safer streets and reduction in the recidivism rate.

Prison counselors are essential members of the criminal justice system. While the offender is incarcerated the prison, counselor is responsible for assisting offenders with getting acclimated to prison life. They help offenders develop relapse plans and they evaluate offenders through assessments to determine treatment options. Before the offender's release date, an exit interview is given by the counselor to assess whether the offender is suitable for reentry into society. The assessments given while incarcerated are biopsychosocial, they focus on the offender's biological, psychological, and social case histories. Some counselors speak with family members to understand the offender's past and obtain pertinent information that could assist with recovery. It is through the recommendation of the counselor that disciplinary action or privileges are administered to offenders exhibiting poor or acceptable behavior.

A prison counselor has a wide range of responsibilities. They are tasked with spending time with the offender; continuous extensive training on how to implement various programs, and never-ending on the job training (OJT) with peers. It could be assumed that if counselors

shed more light on moral injury, which addresses FGS, prison counselors could contribute to the resolution of the high incarceration rate. Prison populations would not experience the high rate of recidivism and these measures could help with prison reform.

Ministry Context

According to recent data published by the US Department of Justice Statistics, the number of women entering prison has grown exponentially. Between 1980 and 2017, the number of incarcerated women amplified more than 75%, rising from 26, 378 in 1980 to 225,060 in 2017.¹ The criminal justice system can be credited with enforcing extensive efforts, stricter sentences, and post-conviction barriers to reentry. Statistics reflect that nationally, about 1 in 8 (13%) of people released from state prison, and more than 1 and 6 (18%) of people released from jail are women.

Rise in Women's Incarceration

Statistically, there are more men in prison than women, though women are being incarcerated at twice the rate as men since 1980. There are 1.3 million women under the guidance of the criminal justice system today.² Physical and sexual trauma at the hands of men contribute to the rise in women imprisonment. Due to traumatic experiences the women rage against the system as a cry for help. Most of the offenders have experienced abuse that catapulted their lives into drugs and alcohol abuse. There has been a noticeable increase in women arrested for drugs and alcohol. The contribution to the rate increase may also be ascribed to the disproportionate number of women in the local jails over the men. Some women are in a

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics: *Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States, Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear Series* (1997-2017). Prisoners Series (1986-2018). Washington, DC.

² Bronson, J., & Carson E.A. *Prisoners in 2017*. (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019), 3.

holding pattern. The women are being detained in a pretrial detention area of the county jail until their day in court. Some women are held in the county jail due to the case processing time, which is the time it takes to process a felon. Cases are typically behind because caseloads are heavy. The rate of women incarcerated can also be due to violations, they receive punishment for violating probation or parole or because they receive lengthy jail sentences. Between 1980 and 2017, the number of incarcerated women increased by more than 700%, rising from a total of 26,378 in 1980 to 222,455 in 2017.

Rise in Women’s Incarceration, 1980-2017

	Federal Prison	State Prison	Jail
1980	1,399	11,859	13,120
1985	2,404	20,695	19,077
1990	5,011	38,834	37,178
1995	7,398	61,070	51,318
2000	10,245	82,989	70,987
2005	12,422	95,096	94,571
2010	13,549	99,273	92,368
2015	12,953	98,538	98,800
2017	12,329	95,626	114,500

**Prison figures are from year-end 2017 while jail figure is from year-end 2018, the latest available data from the sources used. Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics: Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States 1850-1984 (1986); Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear Series (1997-2017), Prisoners Series (1986-2019). Washington, DC.³*

³ Bureau of Justice Statistics: *Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States 1850-1984 (1986); Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear Series (1997-2017), Prisoners Series (1986-2019)*. Washington, DC.

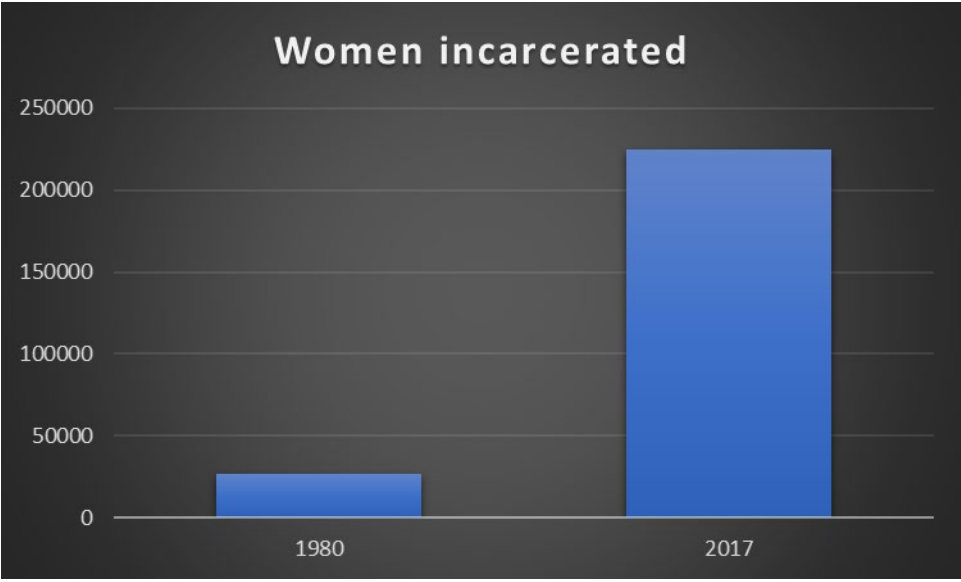
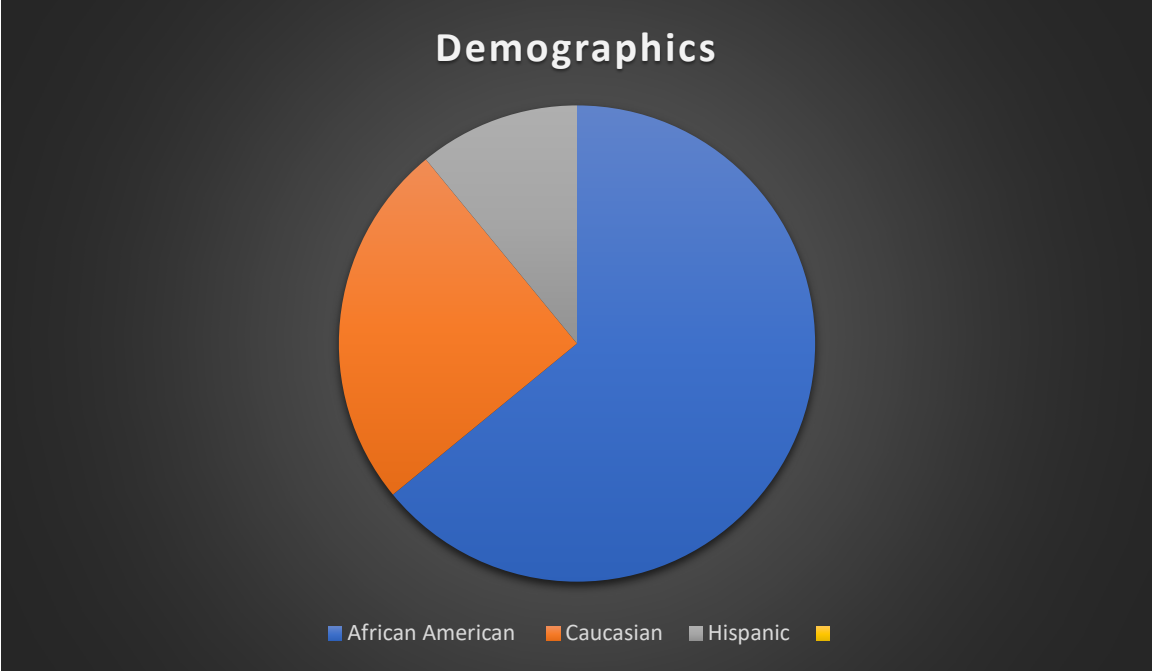
Race and Ethnicity Behind the Walls

In 2017, the rate of African American women in prison is astounding. There are approximately 92 per 100,000 African American women incarcerated which is twice the rate of imprisoned Caucasian women which is rated at 49 per 100,000. Hispanic women being imprisoned has increased; they were imprisoned 1.3 times more than Caucasian women at 67 vs. 49 per 100,000. As of recent, the rate for African American women has made a substantial regression from the year 2000, African American women were 205 per 100,000 decreasing to 92% while the rate for Caucasian and Hispanic women has enlarged from 34% to 49%. From the federal prison level there has been a significant decline in black women being incarcerated at a rate of 55% while the rate rose by 44% for Caucasian women in prison.

State Variations

The state in which a woman resides contributes to the rate of incarceration. Nationally 63 out of every 100,000 women were incarcerated in 2017. The state containing the highest level of incarcerated women is Oklahoma at 157%. The state with the lowest number of female offenders is Massachusetts at 9%. Most women in state prison are there for drug or property offenses. In fact, twenty-five percent of women have served time because of drug offenses which increased dramatically since 1986 from 12% to 25% in 2017. Men in comparison are in prison for drug offenses at a rate of 14%. Twenty-six percent of women have committed property crimes compared to 17% of men.⁴

⁴ Bureau of Justice Statistics: *Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States 1850-1984 (1986)*; *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear Series (1997-2017)*, Prisoners Series (1986-2019). Washington, DC.



Incarcerated Young Girls

African American girls are more likely to be imprisoned than young Caucasian girls. Girls between the age of 12 and 17 account for 47% of the incarcerated population. Caucasian girls between the age of 12 and 17 equate to 32% of the offender population. Native Americans rank highest at more than four times the rate of white girls at 134%. African American girls are three and a half times as likely to spend time locked away at a rate of 110%. While young Latina

girls are 38% likely to become part of the criminal justice system these young female girl's account for a greater proportion of people to be incarcerated although their offenses are considered low-level crimes. Truancy offenses are committed the majority of the time by girls at 38%.⁵

In 2015, Wyoming held the highest number of young female offenders at 197% while New Jersey held the lowest at 7%. Research reflects that girls comprise a growing proportion of arrests as teens from 1980-2017. There has been a 716% increase in the number of women incarcerated in the US since 1980. North Carolina, the state chosen for this project, has a state imprisonment rate of 639%, this number includes the probation and parole population. This means that in North Carolina, the prison population consists of 67,000 people, excluding those that are currently on probation or parole.⁶ Presently there are 2,325 women incarcerated in North Carolina, 1600 of those women are in the facility where the research for this project will be conducted. Women are the fastest-growing population within the prison system; therefore, attention needs to be given to the underlying issue that brought them there.

This study will attempt to reflect the importance and the benefits of adequate counseling in a female prison. The women should be viewed as more than a prison number and more than a statistic. This study is meant to reflect that each woman behind the walls of prison is unique and significant and what they feel, the hurt and pain they have experienced is valid and should be explored for complete healing.⁷

⁵ Bronson, J., & Carson E.A. *Prisoners in 2017*. (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2019), 4.

⁶ Prison Policy Initiative/ North Carolina www.prisonpolicy.org/North_Carolina. 2018.

⁷ Minton, T.D. *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2011 Statistical Tables*. (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014), 6.

Without resources to help heal the pain and hurt behind their bad choices, many women will continue down a destructive path staying stuck in the penal system. Due to unresolved trauma and elevated rates of substance dependency, the rate of incarceration for women will continue to increase unless true intervention takes place. It is vital that prison counselors understand how past trauma affects current outcomes relating to women becoming habitual offenders.⁸ Past trauma which resulted in not being able to forgive and holding on to guilt and shame are directly associated with the onset of a criminal lifestyle.

Robin Marvel expressed that accepting healing from childhood trauma allows an individual to let the pain go, and releases an individual from guilt, shame, and destructive behavior.⁹ She offers that childhood trauma must be acknowledged and accepted before healing can take place and an individual can flourish as an adult.¹⁰ Any negative situations at a young age can change a person's perspective and possibly change the trajectory of their lives. Suffering with traumatic experiences deserves attention and should not be taken lightly. The implications that come with trauma affect the individual and their family and friends.

Female offenders have unique counseling needs because of their life experiences. The first step in effectively counseling female offenders is to recognize the differences in counseling women over men. The goal of imprisonment is to punish and rehabilitate. If the paradigm is to rehabilitate, which in corrections means to restore to a state before criminal behavior became prevalent. Restoration to a mindset before becoming a criminal could prove detrimental for some

⁸ Lynch, S., Fritch, A., & Heath, N. *Looking Beneath the Surface: The Nature of Incarcerated Women's Experiences of Interpersonal Violence, Treatment Needs, and Mental Health*. (Idaho University Feminist Criminology, 2012) p 7, 381-400.

⁹ Robin Marvel, *Healing Childhood Trauma: Transforming Pain into Purpose with Post Traumatic Growth*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Loving Healing Press, 2020), 7.

¹⁰ Marvel, 11.

offenders whose past is full of hurt and pain because they had no sense of normalcy before their criminal behavior.

Programs in prison are offered to counter improper behavior. The programs are meant to be rehabilitative, however, the offender could suggest the programs are more punitive in nature. It is through prison programming a counselor assists the offender with interpersonal skills that will help them achieve surface personal fulfillment. Surface fulfillment in the sense that a deep dive into the offender's past is never acquired. According to Jocelyn Pollock, author of *Counseling Women in Prison* the programs offered in prison are meant to alter attitudes, change behaviors, and prevent future criminal acts.¹¹ Prison counselors are equipped to handle the maladaptive behaviors of the offender; however, they fall short when it comes to focusing on moral injuries that if treated could help the offenders sustain within the walls and upon reentry into their communities. Counseling in prison can be a unique experience in that the individual receiving counseling does not have the responsibilities most people have day-to-day i.e., paying bills, buying food, keeping a roof over their head. Their stressors are abnormal, they must adapt to an environment that, if not careful could further damage their psyche. The programs offered counters the abnormal stressors. Some of the programs offered in prison promotes wellness that reaches beyond the walls, though not every offender takes advantage of them. According to Kratcoski, the goal of a prison counselor is to assist the offender with establishing a lifestyle that is satisfying and includes conforming to rules and regulations that society has put in place to protect the community.¹² The counselor is focused on assisting the offender with adapting to their present situation; less focus is placed on self, family, or life after lockup.

¹¹ Jocelyn Pollock. *Counseling Women in Prison*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 15.

¹² Peter Kratcoski. *Correctional Counseling and Treatment*. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017), 10.

Prison counselors need continuous training because the dynamics of therapy and the changing landscape of humanity demands continuous growth by learning, unlearning and relearning behaviors. Through partnerships with mental health physicians and the prison chaplains many of these counselors could help female offenders overcome their adversities. Counselors could better support the offenders, aiding in their attempt to change their behaviors and lifestyle. Utilizing the structural equation modeling system (SEM) research suggests that childhood trauma and afflictions contribute to moral injury and adult victimization experiences.¹³ Childhood and adult victimization experiences are not causally related to the offenses. Alternatively, both contribute to moral injury. Female offenders' experiences were significant predictors of their ability to re-offend. Results of the SEM also suggest, criminal offenses can be attributed to a female offender's mental health.¹⁴

Understanding female offenders' journey to becoming offenders, to include the risk of continuing to offend will help elucidate the intricacies of the female prison population and establish contributing factors and intervening techniques that may ameliorate or exacerbate the underlying concern.¹⁵

¹³ Currier, J.M., Holland, J.M., Rojas-Flores, L., Herrera, S., & Foy, D. Morally Injurious Experiences and Meaning in Salvadorian Teachers Exposed to Violence. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, (American Psychological Association, 2015) 7 (1), 24-33.

¹⁴ Green, B.L., Miranda, J., Daroowalla, A., & Siddique, J. *Trauma Exposure, Mental Health Functioning, and Program Needs of Women in Jail*. (Northwestern University: 2005), *Crime and Delinquency*, 51, 133-151.

¹⁵ Hills, H., Siegfried, C., & Ickowitz, A. (2004) *Effective Prison Mental Health Services: Guidelines to Expand and Improve Treatment*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2004), 30.

Problem Presented

The problem is the lack of adequate counseling in the women prison on the subjects of forgiveness, guilt, and shame. Counselors that neglect to address forgiveness, guilt, and shame are essentially contributing to existential behavior of the offender. Forgiveness, guilt, and shame are emotions that if not given proper attention could impact an individual negatively and create internal moral injury. Many experts believe female offenders end up in prison because they have underlying issues with forgiveness, guilt, and shame, making it difficult for them to cope in the real world without being mischievous.¹⁶ Counselors in prison hold special relevance to the field of criminology and attribute to the process of rehabilitation. With improper counseling, female offenders are more likely to suffer depression and become repeat offenders.

A counselor's job is challenging from their viewpoint it is difficult to navigate through the challenge of optimizing the offender's mental health and moral injury issues while providing programs that address life skills, drug addictions and sexual victimization. Instead of focusing on moral injury which could essentially help an offender upon release and reduce the recidivism rate counselors in the prison system have found it acceptable to focus on assisting an offender with the prison experience and building healthy relationships while incarcerated.

Most counseling done in prison neglects to fully address the significant problem that could make the women positive contributors to society or better human beings, while reducing the probability of recidivism. The focus is more on the prison experience. At the facility where research will be conducted the female offenders are housed in dorms that hold 150-200 other women with various personalities, most with mental illnesses. They eat breakfast at 5 am in the

¹⁶ Patricia Voorhis Van & Emily J. Salisbury *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation*. (Routledge, New York: NY, 2016), 6.

morning, lunch at 10 am in the morning and dinner at 3 pm. They are told when to sleep and wake up. They are assigned jobs where their pay ranges from \$1.00 to \$4.00 a day. An offender making \$4.00 typically works in Chaplain Service or in the kitchen. If it is a new offender, they risk getting into fights or being bullied (when they are tested). The suicide attempt/success rate is much higher for those entering prison for the first time than for those who have been in prison for a while. Negative thoughts begin to manifest about themselves and others, and the offender develops unhealthy coping skills.

Without attention on the issue of forgiveness, guilt, and shame these women are often released from prison unprepared to manage their lives, their pain and hurt, as well as new issues that manifested themselves while incarcerated. Female offenders have critical issues that unfortunately brought them to prison, most of which are unmet within the prison environment. The goal should be to eradicate the chance to re-offend while simultaneously reducing the recidivism rate. Counselors should also seek to assist with the offender's internal conflict by developing social cognition and patterns governing their interactions.¹⁷

There is a tremendous need for forgiveness, guilt, and shame counseling sessions in the women's prison. Well-trained counselors will make a real difference in the lives of female offenders by imparting in them the importance of forgiveness and letting go of guilt and shame. This counseling can be conducted in a group setting or one-on-one with the goal of healing God's people and healing the land.

¹⁷ Adam K Matz. and Nathan C Love, "*An Exploration of Correctional Counselor Workloads in a Midwestern State*" (Criminal Justice Faculty Publications, 2020), 3.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research project is to increase awareness of the need to provide adequate counseling in the women's prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. This research will be conducted with a select group of female offenders at Brownstone Correctional Institute for Women on the subjects of forgiveness, guilt, and shame. Female prisoners have feelings and emotions much like any other person. The female prisoners should be seen as people who have suffered pain, caused pain, and made mistakes. If they were provided a better understanding of what lies beneath the surface of their being, they could fully grasp what contributed to their current state of mind and change their way of thinking.

Sufficient counseling is needed for the offenders to begin the healing process, abandoning old thoughts, and adopting a new way of thinking about themselves and others. Graham believes everyone carries moral wounds. No one is exempt from hurting or being hurt by another person's actions.¹⁸ Counselors do their best to address the surface issues plaguing female offenders, however, little is done to augment mental health or moral injury while a great deal is on impetus for depreciation of mental health due to the focus being on prison acclimation and not life after release.¹⁹

Addressing the moral issues that deem problematic in the life of the offender creates insight and awareness into their being. The counselor should never mean to abash the offender but build them up to become productive contributors to their community. An ablution of sorts, adequate counseling can be viewed as a cleansing of the past. Identifying the guilt and the shame felt by the offender gives power back to the individual. Many women in prison were never taught

¹⁸ Larry Graham, *Moral Injury: Restoring Wounded Souls*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017), 8.

¹⁹ Pollock, 6.

healthy coping skills. Acceptable counseling for women in prison could equip them with coping skills that could be utilized in society therefore, reducing the recidivism rates. A counselor who clearly defines forgiveness, guilt, and shame as an issue will assist the female offenders with reframing their narrative.

Counseling women in prison and addressing forgiveness, guilt, and shame will lead to positive results, the recidivism rate could decrease, and the women could develop coping skills that teach them how to forgive themselves and others. They will understand guilt should not have a negative connotation and having shame causes self-esteem issues and creates a myriad of other problems.

This will empower the women, allowing them to utilize healthy behavior when they reenter society. For the women who will never enter society, the behaviors learned will assist them with day-to-day living within the walls of the prison.

Basic Assumptions

This researcher has made several assumptions throughout this paper. First, it is assumed counselors in prison are not adequately trained or lack the time to provide counsel on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. This assumption is made due to the lack of focus on those topics and the emphatic focus on adjusting to prison life. It is equally assumed that partnering with mental health physicians and the prison chaplain could assist in the increased awareness of FGS. This partnership will encapsulate the needs of the offender, therefore, embedding positivity into their very being and erasing the negative thoughts about self and others. It is assumed that the female offenders desire to rid themselves of the negative thoughts about self and others and become productive. Second, this researcher is assuming that if female offenders are counseled on moral injuries which births unforgiveness, guilt, and shame they could become productive

citizens, therefore, decreasing the recidivism rate. There is also the assumption that the offender's will be open to such an in-depth epistemic type of counseling. Female offenders are open to sharing their feelings and concerns once they build trust. It is their belief that if they can do better, they desire to make the attempt.

It is presumptuous to believe that this researcher is giving voice to the female offender population, who suffer silently with moral injury. It is equally presumptuous to assume without the resources to help heal the hurt and pain behind the bad decisions the offender made they will continue to be destructive. Though plenty of women leave prison and lead normal lives because of the experience they had while in prison there are more that return to prison because they are unable to break the cycle and because they have not adequately healed from the past.

Finally, childhood and adult trauma is not the cause for most females being incarcerated. There are a number of female offenders in prison who had extraordinary upbringings, however, one impulsive bad decision landed them in prison. Purportedly, there are more who have been damaged during their childhood experiences and as adults, resulting in the astronomical number of female offenders in prison. To justify the assumptions being made, this researcher will conduct two types of surveys. One survey will address the offenders and the other will be given to prison employees that directly assist the offenders. The surveys will be conducted with the hope each participant will answer honestly. Anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved, and volunteers of the survey may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Definitions

In this research document, the following term will be utilized, biopsychosocial, collaborative accountability, moral dissonance, moral injury, and recidivism.

Biopsychosocial is defined as the interconnection between biology, psychology and social factors that governs an individual.²⁰

Collaborative accountability is defined as shared goals and measures that matter for the betterment of an organization or individual.

Moral dissonance is an important term utilized through this research paper. Moral dissonance occurs when a person has internal battle with right and wrong. Graham suggests that moral dissonance also called moral stress is when the internal sense of right and wrong is in conflict.²¹

Moral injury by definition according to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, is a distressing psychological, social and oftentimes spiritual aftermath of exposure to traumatic events.²² Larry Graham defines moral injury as, “the erosive diminishment of our souls because of our moral actions and the actions of others against us sometimes have harmful outcomes.”²³

²⁰ Matthew Martens. *The Use of Structural Equation Modeling in Psychology Research*. The Counseling Psychologist 2015, 33(3): 269-298.

²¹ Graham, 10.

²²PTSD National Center for PTSD www.ptsd.va.gov.

²³ Graham, xi.

Panhuman Anthropology is defined as the study of all things affecting human society and culture.

Recidivism will be discussed as it is the intent of this researcher to present this study as a means of reducing the recidivism rate. Recidivism is defined by Webster Dictionary as a “tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior.”²⁴ Angela Leverentz defines recidivism as the likelihood of someone having further involvement with the justice system.”²⁵

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. The goal of this study is to understand how effective counseling in the female prison on forgiveness, guilt and shame could reduce the rate of recidivism and possibly lead the offender to spiritual freedom. This researcher was approved to conduct this study at Brownstone Correctional Institute for Women with the participation of female offenders, social workers, case managers, chaplain, and mental health workers. The first limitation concerns the partial amount of people who signed up as volunteers. With approval to conduct the study, only a limited amount volunteered in a prison that houses 1600, it could potentially impact the study, reducing the quality of the findings.

The second limitation, the study is being conducted during a pandemic. COVID-19 has restricted all movement on the grounds for the offenders and staff creating a situation where the researcher must rely on the prison mailing system to send and receive data to support research findings or the hope that the restrictions ease and movement is allowed. The current restrictions remain in place while COVID-19 is in general circulation, which exacerbates the challenge of

²⁴ Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (11th ed). (2020). Merriam Webster Incorporated.

²⁵ Andrea Leverentz. *Beyond Recidivism*. (New York, NY: New York Press, 2020), 4.

documents being completed correctly or at all. Due to COVID-19 it is impossible to generalize the results based on those twenty participants.

Third, there are HIPAA privacy regulations in place to protect the offenders. HIPAA protects the offender's medical information from being disclosed. There are hefty penalties in place for HIPAA violations. The fine is up to 250,000 with a maximum jail term of ten years. For example, an offender with mental illness recorded is deemed as having "protected healthcare information," also known as PHI. Under the rule of HIPAA, a researcher is unable to violate the terms of HIPAA for the purpose of research. Therefore, the offender could disregard a question focused on mental illness causing an impact to the study.

Some alternative methodologies to combat the limitations listed; write a proposal reflecting the need to speak with half the offender population, bringing effective results to the study. Create an area in each dorm where social distancing can be practiced, interviews can be conducted, and PPE gear is worn. Having participants sign confidentiality disclosures could ensure HIPAA is not violated and the offender's privacy remains undamaged.

Delimitations

The purpose of this study is to provide adequate counseling to select women at Brownstone Correctional Institute for women on the subjects of FGS. This study is not intended to cover the various training a prison counselor could invest in to be better equipped to speak to offenders about moral injury. This study is also not intended to address the role of family in the life of the offender. Several factors delimit this study. This study focuses on female adult offenders in North Carolina. Second, this researcher will rely on participants who show interest and will make themselves available to engage in the study. Finally, this researcher will not focus

on male offenders in this study. Accordingly, the findings of this study will be generalizable to the female prison population in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Thesis Statement

If select women at Brownstone Correctional Institute for Women received adequate counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame; spiritual freedom may be one of the results in conjunction with other positive outcomes. Counselors in prison should attempt to counteract the behaviors learned prior to prison and teach coping skills to equip the women with daily life. Women in prison often experience unforgiveness, they have difficulty forgiving themselves and others. They feel guilt and shame for the things they have done or put those closest to them through. Guilt and shame are traumatizing. These emotions can induce bitterness, blame, and a desire to retaliate against others especially the contributor to the pain. These women deserve to be taught the power that comes with forgiveness. Forgiveness releases an individual from their past pain.²⁶ Jamieson believed education and constant training on forgiveness, guilt, and shame is the key to creating awareness and becoming well-versed to teach healthy coping skills to the women in prison. Pedlar states, “there has been a long-standing concern among those involved with the care and rehabilitation of sentenced women that the prison system more adequately addresses women’s needs.”²⁷ Women’s needs in prison differ from that of men as their level of trauma differs. Not only should prison counselors assist with the acclimation of prison life, but they should also help prepare the offender for life beyond the walls of the prison. Prison life is

²⁶ Phillip Jamieson. *The Face of Forgiveness: A Pastoral Theology of Shame and Redemption*. (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 16.

²⁷ Alison Pedler, Susan Arai, Felice Yuen, Darla Fortune. *Community Re-Entry*. (New York: Routledge, 2018) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4324/9781351204477>.

not “normal,” primary concentration on prison life does nothing for the offender once they are released and the chains are off, the doors are open, and they are considered free. In order to explain forgiveness, guilt, and shame an essential equation must be adapted between the ethical and theological understanding of guilt and shame.²⁸ Apologizing is only one form of forgiveness and to understand guilt there must be understanding of shame. Research on the study of forgiveness, guilt, and shame has been ignored which explains why so many people hold on to past pain. Freedom can only be accomplished when the pain of the past is released and there is room for forgiveness; and guilt and shame no longer have the power it once had over the life of the offender.

Counseling in prison should not only be viewed as an act of reducing the negative effects of the prison experience but a desire to equip the offender to live a productive life outside the walls of the prison environment. Addressing the struggles, the offender faces upon release, the pain from the past, the guilt of their crime will help the offender move past the prison world never to return. Pollock suggests the goal of treatment related to the criminal behavior is somewhat addressed, however, the actual criminal behavior is ignored.

The programs offered while in prison are deemed successful based on how they affect the recidivism rate. However, they should be viewed as successful based on the offender’s ability to move from a higher level of functioning both cognitively and emotionally.²⁹ A strong reentry program is needed that focuses not only on the act that brought the offender to prison but the pain behind the act. For a counselor to effectively guide a female offender to a place where they

²⁸ Rudy Denton. “*Utilising Forgiveness to Help Sexually Abused Adolescents Break Free from Guilt and Shame. A Pastoral Gestalt Theory.*” (ACTA Theologica, 2014) 34 (2), 5-28.

²⁹ Pollock, 5.

are no longer defined by their experiences or held prisoners to their past, the counselor must believe in the efficacy of forgiveness and be aware that unforgiveness is what births guilt and shame when untreated. Underlying factors must be determined in order to adequately guide offenders to understand the current behavior patterns. These women need to be assured their time in prison doesn't make them "fallen women" who have somehow breached the societal expectation of how women behave. They are children of a forgiving God and forgiving themselves and others is a step toward progressing positively.

Women leaving prison have overarching challenges due to the trauma they have experienced, addressing the issues could result in these women becoming valuable members of society. An understanding of the carceral experience of the female offender is important, however, an intervention program that addresses forgiveness, guilt and shame must be implemented as it is relative to the rehabilitation and reintegration process. According to Pedlar et al., a vast majority of women in prison have traumatic back stories that include abuse which played a significant role on their being in prison.³⁰ Counselors should address the trauma and the stigma of imprisonment and all related experiences that could affect the female offender upon reentry into their communities. The objective is for the women to reintegrate into society, become productive citizens with jobs, homes and families, and never engage in behaviors that will lead them back to prison.

Therefore, the goal of this thesis is to examine the importance of counseling on forgiveness, guilt and shame in the women's prison, the antecedents of guilt and shame and the efficacy of forgiveness. A prison counselor can be credited for the success of the reduction of recidivism and the increase of law-abiding behavior, however there is continued work that needs

³⁰ Pedlar, 16.

to be done in the area of mental health, and moral injury. The work presented in this thesis is worthwhile and may be utilized in any setting where the objective is freedom from the stronghold of unforgiveness, guilt and shame.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

In recent years, the nation's commitment to reducing the recidivism rate has decreased. If emphasis is placed on the underlying issues that brought the female offender to prison the result could be a reduction in the recidivism rate. As a foundational discipline for counseling, prison counselors can make important contributions to the evaluation, implementation, and design of female prisons, therefore, improving the recidivism rate.

Allowing the underlying issue of the offender to be the principle focus of a prison counselor will permit counselors to meritoriously assist the female offenders with life within and life beyond the walls of the prison. Engagement with the offenders becomes relevant when considering the developmental orientation of the offender population. Developmental theory informs the counselor and serves as the foundation for research and best practices. Developmental theory aligns with the dominant purpose of a counselor, that is, to foster and develop the minds of an individual.

The term moral injury is synonymous with those who have served in the military; however, it has become more recognized as an injury suffered by most people. The term moral injury encompasses damage done to an individual's conscience or moral compass. It refers to emotional, social, spiritual, and psychological impacts that violate an entity's moral values triggering unhealthy behaviors and detrimental actions. The behaviors that could be conceptualized on a continuum range from unforgiveness, guilt, and shame. Adoption of these emotions are considered problematic and harmful to the individual exhibiting them. Holding on to these emotions have negative psychological, emotional, and physical consequences.

Literature Review

Exploration of forgiveness, guilt, and shame in the female prison system could prove beneficial to the overall well-being of the female offender, the penial system, and the community in which the individual resides. There have been a few dozen books, a plethora of studies and a tremendous number of articles written on forgiveness, guilt and shame which signifies its importance. Cunningham et al. believes guilt is directly associated with personal behavior while shame derives from an individual's personal identity.³¹ Shame and guilt are similar because they both characteristically result from internal ascriptions. Both guilt and shame are considerably unstable emotions often causing offensive behavior to be portrayed.

Shame and guilt have similar emotions called "self-conscious" emotions which only reveal themselves in response to negative assessments completed on self.³² Shame and guilt affects all individuals, these emotions care nothing about class, race, religion, or sex. If left untreated these emotions could eventually cause an individual to harm themselves or others.

Unforgiveness promotes dissonance between an individual's past and present, the discord unforgiveness births results in an individual feeling an enormous amount of guilt and shame. Unforgiveness, guilt, and shame creates moral injuries that cause harm to themselves and others. Spiritual freedom is attainable when the underlying issues of FGS are addressed.

Practicing forgiveness is known to create healthy behaviors that sanction creativity and positivity

²⁶ Katherine Cunningham, Joann L Davis, Sarah M Wilson, Patricia A Resick. "A Relative Weights Comparison of Trauma-Related Shame and Guilt as Predictors of DSM-5 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Severity among US Veterans and Military Members," (British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 2018) 57(2), 165, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12163>.

³² Marisa Crowder & Kemmelmeier, M. "Cultural Differences in Shame and Guilt as Understandable Reasons for Suicide," (Psychological Report, 2018) 12(3), 399, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.177%2F0033294117728288>.

to thrive. Every act of forgiveness is embedded within a framework construed by the people involved in and the nature of the specific offense.³³ In other words, forgiveness, like exercise, is good for your health. Failure to forgive could result in vengeance and internal conflict, however, by deciding to forgive, an individual could lead a prosocial life, with positive outcomes and benefits.³⁴ A summary of the literature will be conducted with a focus on moral injuries and wounded souls, dissonance and dilemmas, guilt, shame, and forgiveness.

Moral Injuries and Wounded Souls

Moral injury is defined as the diminishment of vitality that comes when a person is unable to do what they believe is right or when doing the right thing results in harm to others and to themselves.³⁵ Moral injury is a disruption in an individual's confidence and an inability to behave in a just and ethical manner.³⁶ They range from a small bruise to fatal injuries which include rape, child abuse and any crime committed against another human being. These types of injuries stem from stress accumulated in morally dissonant environments as well as from failure to align with a human beings' personal code. Graham suggests care providers focus on sharing the risks and journey alongside the counselee, making discoveries along the way. It could also benefit them to practice active listening especially if the hope is that the counselee is actively listening.³⁷ Collaborative accountability is needed to face the challenges moral injuries produce.

³³ Ryan Fehr, Michelle J Gelfand, Monisha Nag, *The Road to Forgiveness: "A Meta-Analytic Synthesis of its Situational and Dispositional Correlates."* Psychological Bulletin, (University of Maryland, 2010) 136(5), 894-914.

³⁴ Ibid, 895.

³⁵ Graham, 78.

³⁶ Drescher, K. D., Foy, D. W., Kelly, C., Leshner, A., Schutz, K., & Litz, B. (2011). *An Exploration of the Viability and Usefulness of the Construct of Moral Injury in War Veterans.* Traumatology, 17(1), 8–13.

³⁷ Ibid, 11.

As evidenced in the above statement each person's soul has been wounded in some way. Graham believes "the soul is an integrative process at the center of persons and communities...the soul is the integrating center of awareness, meaning, value of the cumulative pain, joy, pleasure, and sensibilities of the human body."³⁸ Everyday living for an individual not giving attention to their moral injuries diminishes their sense of worth and destabilizes their moral scope. Many individuals underlying issue is their struggle with low self-concept or lack of worth.³⁹ A wounded soul houses the pain and anguish of the past. It stores the highest aspirations and greatest values. The soul is where transformation takes place, where healing evolves.

Moral injuries can be healed, however, the process according to Graham requires an individual to embrace their moral pain. To combat moral injuries Graham insists, there is a need for togetherness. To conquer the moral challenges affecting each life and to heal from the pain inflicted on oneself and others, collaborative accountability is necessary.⁴⁰ To explore the fullness of life takes a collaborative effort. Healing is a possibility and growth comes when God challenges us. According to Jamieson, in order to understand how to heal the world, there must be a consideration of humanity as the Bible reveals it.⁴¹

Moral injury is a theory that affects every living being. Graham posits, moral injury is the caustic ruination of the soul because of the actions of an individual and others that results in harmful outcomes.⁴² Naming the moral dynamics clearly could enable a reframe of strategies,

³⁸ Graham, 79.

³⁹ Norman Wright. *The Complete Guide to Crisis & Trauma Counseling: What to Do and Say When it Matters Most*. (Minneapolis, MN, 2011), 25.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 80.

⁴¹ Jamieson, 18.

⁴² Jamieson, xi.

essentially causing positive outcomes. Understanding where the pain stems from has as much validity as understanding the pain the individual is causing their family and friends. There are a number of women in prison with moral injuries and due to elevated rates of interpersonal victimization; the number of women in prison is continuously rising. This rise is due to the trauma they experience. Higher rates of moral injury coincide with higher rates of anxiety, depression, and anger. Without interventions to address their moral injuries the female offenders will return to their communities with severe mental health issues. Unresolved trauma is a barrier to the reintegration process.

Empirical studies have shown that moral injury encompasses many perceptions, including guilt, shame, and spiritual concerns. Failure to address moral injury results in an individual struggling with issues of guilt and shame. If unaddressed, such injuries may diminish meaning of life, and lead to morally injurious events.

Dissonance and Dilemmas

Childhood and adult moral injurious experiences (MIE) increase the risk of mental health problems, therefore, increasing the likelihood of criminal offenses. Litz suggests that MIE's play a central role in posttraumatic maladjustment. In support of these findings, Drescher located twenty-three clinical professionals to support the claim.⁴³ Accepting moral dissonance and moral dilemmas could alleviate the hold of moral injury.⁴⁴ Dissonance and dilemma are indivisibly convoluted. Dissonance occurs when the mind holds on to two conflicting thoughts creating a

⁴³ Brett T Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P Nash, Caroline Silva, Shira Maguen. "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy." (Clinical Psychology Review, 2009), 29(8),695-706.

⁴⁴ Graham, 55.

battle between right and wrong culminating into an ethical dilemma. Graham believes changing attitudes could decrease the effects of moral dissonance. Guiding the mind towards positive cognitive thinking and away from a moral disengaged train of thought is the ultimate goal. Moral disengagement occurs when someone is convinced what they have done was not unethical.⁴⁵ A decision to change from old patterns of behavior and adopt a new, healthy behavior will please God.⁴⁶

Advancing morally requires pressing moral dilemmas, responding to dissonance and dilemmas with solid solutions. Contextual creativity is defined as the capacity to receive the concrete circumstances that create the dissonance and dilemmas of life and to imaginatively respond with creative alternatives.⁴⁷ The heart and mind contain the ability to shape how life is viewed. Through contextual creativity, one could find hope Jamieson explains, when it is difficult to flow freely within the present. This usually means that an individual is holding on to the past.⁴⁸ To live morally means fulfilling obligations to the people God assigned to an individual and doing what is believed to be morally right. It does not mean escaping the grasp of moral injury. Having high moral standards simply means a person does not allow their wounds to bind them and hold them hostage. In fact, one could conclude that moral living is highly contentious. Graham states, it puts individuals and groups in immutable conflict.⁴⁹ Life is

⁴⁵ Robert A Baron, Hao Zhao, Qing Miao. “*Personal motives, moral disengagement, and unethical decisions by entrepreneurs: Cognitive mechanisms on the “slippery slope”*” (Journal of Business Ethics, 2015) 128(1), 107–118.

⁴⁶ Tim Clinton & Ron Hawkins. *The New Christian Counselor: A Fresh Biblical & Transformational Approach*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Harvest House, 2015), 139.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 55.

⁴⁸ Jamieson, 23.

⁴⁹ Graham, 56.

contrived with moral dissonance. A moral psychologist would suggest an individual keep anyone out of their circle who could pose a threat to those inside the circle.

Jonathan Haidt, a moral psychologist, and a contributor to the study of moral living has been of great assistance to Graham's work on moral dissonance. This in turn has disproved the belief of Haidt in the process. Haidt believes moral living leaves a person blind or keeps them bound. In contrast to Graham, who argues for comprehensive panhuman anthropology, which is a complete study of all things affecting human society and culture. This comprehensive study would include moral injury as its effects are evident in society today. Graham believes the study would contribute to the uniqueness of humans while simultaneously recognizing that human well-being requires relational justice in every relationship. He further adds, a moral psychologist would emphasize the narratives in distinct social groups rather than focusing on every group.⁵⁰ Graham makes a comparison between the Democrats and the Republicans adding, the Republicans are only concerned with maintaining the needs and desires of their group. While the Democrats are focused on benefiting everyone. The Republicans are exclusive, and the Democrats are inclusive.

Though Graham disagrees with the logic of a moral psychologist, he does believe what they offer is useful to anyone interested in understanding how moral compasses and moral dissonances are formed and how they could be modified. Graham believes a moral psychologist provides three resources. First, they offer the notion of moral foundations and moral matrices. Second, they provide insight on the notion of moral tribes. Finally, they identify moral narratives. Together the three elements offered by moral psychologists provide understanding of what Graham considers contributes to an individual's moral compass "moral dissonance,

⁵⁰ Graham, 57.

dilemmas, injury and healing.”⁵¹ There are six moral foundations identified by Haidt that form moral orientation. These foundations are the basis from which moral matrices for an individual or a social group are formed. The six moral foundations are: (1) care/harm, (2) liberty/oppression, (3) fairness/cheating, (4) loyalty/ betrayal, (5) authority/subversion, and (6) sanctity/degradation.⁵² Haidt believes there should be more loyalty to one’s own group instead of individual autonomy. However, Jones suggests if individual autonomy is all that matters, forgiveness and reconciliation are not important.⁵³ According to his theory, the more limited the moral foundation lessens the capacity to establish the desired society.⁵⁴ Haidt believes “morality binds and blinds. It binds an individual into ideological teams that fight each other as though the fate of the world depended on their side winning each battle. It blinds an individual to the fact that each team is composed of good people that have something to say.”⁵⁵

Haidt’s theory is the reverberation of moral dissonances that lack harmony in the world. This theory is the result of great conflict and the source of moral injury. What Graham is offering is total connection to one another. Wright suggests, everyone remains connected to one another,⁵⁶ creating a collaborative engagement that could lead to rehabilitation and prevent as well as heal the moral injuries moving forward.

⁵¹ Graham, 55.

⁵² Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 111.

⁵³ Gregory Jones. *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 37.

⁵⁴ Graham, 58.

⁵⁵Haidt, 27.

⁵⁶ Wright, 211.

Guilt and Shame

Two components of moral injury are guilt and shame. Individuals who believe their being is socially unacceptable and they place value on how others view them are susceptible to experiencing guilt and shame.⁵⁷ Guilt and shame are emotions that are considered self-conscious. They are related to self-worth and the individual's consciousness of another individual's reaction toward self. Burns understands guilt and shame may attribute to the rehabilitation process.⁵⁸ Many people struggle with guilt and shame. Shame, according to Freud, is caused by an external impact, while guilt is an internally related experience. Werden believes that guilt and shame are both intrapersonal tensions.⁵⁹ People find it difficult to either let go of something they have done or something that has been done to them. Holding on to guilt and shame can essentially harm the soul. According to Burns, some counselors consider people who carry guilt and shame issues to have wounds that run deeper than physical or psychological. They believe the wounds have injured the soul of the person.

Guilt and shame are also considered moral emotions that are self-referential and negatively balanced. They each are experienced when failure occurs. Shame has a strong connection to self-values, identity, and ideals. Guilt, however, is attributed to social norms

⁵⁷ Jacob Zimmerman, Amanda Morrison & Heimberg, R.G. "*society anxiety submissiveness, and shame in men and women: A moderation mediation analysis*". (British Journal of Clinical psychology, 2015) 54, 1-15 [Google Scholar].

⁵⁸ Jami Burns. *Being the Light of Hope: "Understanding Shame and Guilt as a Correctional Chaplain."* Correction Today, 2018 80(2), 10.

⁵⁹ Rita Werden, *Schamkultur und Schuldkultur. Revision einer Theorie*. Munster: (Aschendorff Verlag, 2015) [Google Scholar].

oriented toward others.⁶⁰ Anxiety could be fought with a thorough exploration on guilt and shame or at the least coping mechanisms could be created that could ease the sense of inadequacies that have manifested in an individual. Guilt and shame undermine an individual's self-efficacy, paving a way for behavioral issues that could result in criminal activity.⁶¹ Transforming guilt and shame is the key to personal development.⁶² The aim should be to acknowledge and work through the negative aspect and transform the experiences into positives that enhance self-worth.

Intervention Should Address FGS

Addressing victimization and moral injury will have limited efficacy if counselors neglect the issues resulting from those topics, which are forgiveness, guilt, and shame. These distal challenges should be addressed in an effort to assist the women with their social needs. Comprehensive intervention models should be utilized for female offenders to gain control of their future and move between their arrest, being incarcerated and their community.

Forgiveness intervention combines cognitive, affective, and behavioral strategies to assist an individual finding it difficult to forgive.⁶³ It is important to identify and confront the offense that was caused because it will help an individual better overcome the injury. It is equally important to release the anger associated with the offense such as guilt and shame. A counselor could encourage a change of heart toward the unforgiven person to effectively progress to a

⁶⁰ Elisabeth Vanderheidon & Claude- Helene Mayer, "*The value of shame. Exploring a health resource in cultural context*," (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017) [Google Scholar].

⁶¹ Claude-Helene Mayer, Elisabeth Vanderheiden, "*The bright side of shame. Transforming and growing through practical applications in cultural contexts*" (pp v-xi) (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2019) [Google Scholar].

⁶² Paul Wong, Foreword: "*from shame to wholeness: an existential*" (positive psychology perspective, 2019). [Google Scholar].

⁶³ Sadaf Akhtar, Jane Barlow, "*Forgiveness Therapy for the Promotion of Mental Well-Being: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis*," (Trauma, Violence & Abuse, 2018), 19 (1), 107-122.

place of empathy and compassion for the person. Another intervention tactic a counselor could utilize is allowing the person to consider forgiveness as an option toward the healing process. Understanding the injury suffered produces a new and more purposeful life. Based on Everett Worthington's book, *Five Steps to Forgiveness*, the REACH plan helps people reconcile their feelings with other people. REACH, an acronym meaning, recall the hurt, empathize with the one who hurt you; altruistically decide to forgive; commit publicly to forgiveness; and hold on to forgiveness.⁶⁴ The REACH program offers freedom from the shackles of unforgiveness through a five-step plan.

Guilt

According to Mayer et al., counseling is a form of intervening, preventing, and providing a supportive relationship that fosters growth and increased knowledge of self-competences, behavioral competencies, and self-control.⁶⁵ People who see life as meaningful and manageable are more likely to maximize their potential in society. Counseling an individual on guilt can create healthy attitudes that contribute to the individual's well-being. Supporting an individual struggling with guilt could promote concepts of self-awareness, self-determination, and self-forgiveness. A prison counselor could assist the women by examining the origins of their guilt. Once the origin is understood the offender should face the feelings of guilt, calling it out.

Through effective counseling the offender will gain perspective on guilt and irrational guilt. Guilt could build character, causing an individual to change behaviors due to pain caused by the individual. Irrational guilt involves feelings of guilt for something that an individual had

⁶⁴ Everett Worthington, *Five Steps to Forgiveness: The Art and Science of Forgiving*. (New York, NY: Crown, 2001), 53.

⁶⁵ Claude-Helene Mayer, Elisabeth Vanderheiden & Rudolf M Oosthuizen, "Transforming Shame, guilt and Anxiety Through a Salutogenic PPI.0 and PP2.0 counseling Framework," (Counseling Psychology Quarterly, 2019) 32:3-4, 430-452.

little control over. Promoting healthy behavior change causes the actions that trigger feelings of guilt and shame to dissipate, establishing new values and being proactive about the present, dwelling less on the past. Shame is a feeling of inferiority which requires a counselor to show a woman their worth and importance through the eyes of family, friends, and community. Irrational thoughts and beliefs fuel shame and inappropriately placed guilt.

Jamieson believes there are three different types of guilt: civil guilt, existential religious guilt, and psychologic guilt.⁶⁶ Civil guilt, an objective state of guilt relates to societal standards of living. The example given is when a person receives a ticket and decides to pay it. According to the law when found guilty, a plea of guilt is accepted as well as any money owed. Existential religious guilt is also an objective state, it involves the human experience. This type of guilt examines whether there was a contravention in a relationship, whether that relationship is with another person, the God they serve or themselves. Last, psychological guilt, which is subjective, the example given is that of someone committing a crime, a person can experience guilt behind the act, however, they may also feel objectively guilty as well making it difficult for the person to forgive themselves.⁶⁷ Feelings of guilt and shame are problematic and lead to psychological disorders that run deep.⁶⁸ It has been written that guilt is a gift that keeps on giving because it is a reminder of our sin. The problem with guilt is the conscience. The conscience is not reliable enough a source to distinguish between true guilt. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose work has been examined throughout the years due to his study of the conscience desired to understand where

⁶⁶ Jamieson, 49.

⁶⁷ Jamieson, 50.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 54.

the line is between guilt, doing wrong, and neurotic self-condemnation.⁶⁹ Jamieson believes through the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer people will gain an understanding that the Bible has intertwined sin and guilt as relates to shame.⁷⁰ Bruce Narramore quotes Bonhoeffer by stating, when people convict themselves, neglect their actions, lines become crossed and guilt becomes confusing.⁷¹

Shame

According to Jamieson, guilt, shame, anger, and resentment, each come from an unforgiving state of being.⁷² Individuals dealing with shame tend to want to vanish or avoid others. This defense mechanism is lead out of fear and anxiety.⁷³ Myra Mendible suggests, “shame is one of the most coercive, painful, and intriguing of human emotions.”⁷⁴ Shame produces something within which makes an individual believe they are extremely flawed. Shame stems from traumatic childhood events and unfortunately no one is exempt from feelings of shame. Burns suggests, guilt is the result of doing something wrong, while shame would make one believe something is wrong with them.⁷⁵ The greatest way to combat the shame one feels is to name the issue.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 55.

⁷⁰ Jamieson, 14.

⁷¹ Bruce Narramore, *No Condemnation: Rethinking Guilt Motivation in Counseling, Preaching & Parenting*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 149.

⁷² Ibid, 24.

⁷³ Mikaela Cibich, Michael Wenzel, Lydia Woodyatt, “moving beyond “shame is bad.” *How a functional emotion can become problematic.*” (Social personal Psychology Compass, 2016) 10, 471-483 [Google Scholar].

⁷⁴ Myra Mendible, “*American Shame: Stigma and the Body Politics.*” (Bloomington, Indiana: University Press, 2016), 57.

⁷⁵ Burns, 10.

The use of psychotherapy to combat shame could prove beneficial and result in an efficacious lifestyle.⁷⁶ Naming the issue gives the individual dominion over it. Shame can also be a response to how an individual views themselves after an insurmountable amount of self-reflection. Being shameful is debilitating. There should be a level of discomfort when going against the grain of the Gospel. Shame does not always have to reflect negative experience; it has positive effects as well. Shame can be viewed in two ways destructive or constructive. Either an individual could use the shameful thoughts to motivate greatness or cause destruction in the individual's life. Experiencing shame is about the individual; finding inadequacies within one's being, whereas with guilt, actions are judged and deemed inadequate. Jamieson believes, guilt is the difference between knowing what a person should do but deciding not to do it, shame is the difference between knowing who a person is meant to be and deciding against being that person.⁷⁷ Shame is incapacitating, which explains why people experiencing shame develop defense mechanisms. There are six strategies used to protect a person from shame. First, there is rage; rage is a way of shifting shame from self on another person. Second is contempt; when this defensive strategy is utilized, an individual appears to be condescending and judgmental toward self and others. Third is striving for power; an individual will strive to appear stronger than they feel. Fourth is striving for perfection; the shameful individual feels defective, and they manifest their worth by being competitive. Fifth is transference of blame; they assign blame to others. The final strategy is internal withdrawal; this strategy is used to retreat to an alternative reality where the shamed individual has greatness not recognized by others.⁷⁸ Everyone experiences shame, it

⁷⁶ M Sinha, *Shame and Psychotherapy: Theory Method and practice*. (Cham: Springer International, 2017), 251-277 [Google Scholar].

⁷⁷ Jamieson, 62.

⁷⁸ Jamieson, 65-66.

is when those experiences become habitual that it becomes a problem that develops into unforgiveness.

What matters most in life is an individual's values and significance. According to Jayson Georges, the value placed on shame guides most of the world's culture. The desire to avoid feelings of shame is hardwired into the brain. Scientific research states that the limbic system in the brain senses shame in the same manner it senses physical threats. Each type of threat triggers a self-preservatory instinct.⁷⁹ Cunningham believes not only does self-preservatory instincts appear but a need to withdraw to protect one's status also ignites.⁸⁰ Contrastive to guilt, shame requires more than forgiveness of wrong it requires personal transformation.⁸¹ Transformation comes when an individual feels worthy enough to restore the shamed individual. A counselor, chaplain or social worker can assist with the restoration process.

Forgiveness

Before understanding forgiveness, it is important to touch on unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is unhealthy, it is defined as a state of emotional and mental anguish that has a consequence that can affect the entire being. It creates a storm of distress and a hardened heart that allows anger and bitterness to reside. When an individual ruminates on the offense it begins to consume every thought. Unforgiveness affects the spirit, it prevents an individual from spiritually growing and staying connected to God. Unforgiveness creates an invisible wall between the individual and God. Forgiveness is healthy and speaks to the character and integrity

⁷⁹ Jayson George & Mark D Baker. *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials*. (Downers Grove, ILL: IVP Academics, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2016).

⁸⁰ Cunningham, 165.

⁸¹ Georges, 15.

of an individual. According to Worthington, “forgiveness is commonly recognized to be distinct from pardoning, condoning, excusing, justifying, forgetting and (usually) reconciling.” Most researchers define forgiveness as a prosocial change in thoughts motivations and behaviors.⁸² There is a breadth of research on interventions that promote forgiveness. However, not enough attention is given to the topic in the female prison system. The process of forgiveness could be a helpful therapeutic intervention. According to Assioglu, unforgiveness has proven to be an important source of stress in an individual’s life.⁸³ Forgiveness occurs when a person understands the difference between guilt and shame.⁸⁴ An individual comes to a point where they no longer desire to endure the hurt and disappointment that continues to crowd their ability to fully embrace their day-to-day living. Forgiving someone is a choice, it gives a person strength, it helps turn them from their past, it helps them look toward the future and it helps them choose a new way to view things and themselves. Forgiveness speaks to the integrity and character of an individual. Vitz believes, forgiveness comes at a cost to the forgiver. It requires giving up a “justly owed debt” due to harm that was caused.⁸⁵ There are two types of forgiveness, emotional and decisional. Emotional forgiveness is “experiencing emotional replacement of negative

⁸² Everett L Worthington (Ed.), Nathaniel G Wade (ED.) Handbook of Forgiveness. (New York: Routledge, 2020) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4324/9781351123341>.

⁸³ Onal, A., Yalcin, Y. & Yalcin, A. Asli and IHHAN Yalcin. “*Forgiveness of Others and Self Forgiveness: The Predictive Role of Cognition Distortions, Empathy and Rumination.*” (Eurasian Journal of Educational Research (EJER), 2017) 17-68; 99-122.

⁸⁴ Jamieson, 67.

⁸⁵ Paul C Vitz, “*Addressing Moderate Interpersonal Hatred Before Addressing Forgiveness in Psychotherapy and Counseling: A Proposed Model.*” (J Relig Health, 2018) 57, 725-737.

unforgiving emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions. Decisional forgiveness is “controlling our behavioral intentions.”⁸⁶

Forgiveness is related to both psychological well-being and the ability to maintain interpersonal relationships.⁸⁷ The process of forgiveness to include, function, benefits, and limitations could promote healthy behaviors. Everett Worthington addressed the issue of decisional and emotional forgiveness by stating, there may be a significant gap between decisional and emotional forgiveness. A person could decide to forgive someone before the person feels different about the person they forgave. He further suggests God requires decisional forgiveness from everyone, while simultaneously desiring everyone to emotionally forgive others. Clinton posits, forgiveness involves change that encapsulates the mental, motivational, and emotional sides of people.⁸⁸ It does not come easy and should be practiced to perfect. Unforgiveness is a form of rebellion which could blind an individual from the dangers ahead of them. Forgiveness is further complicated by guilt and shame felt over wrongdoings. Research has proven that the ability to forgive is causally related to low levels of shame and depression and high levels of mental health and making meaning of life.⁸⁹

Most people confuse forgiveness and reconciliation. There is a strong distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness takes one person while reconciliation takes a

⁸⁶ Lichtenfeld, S., Buechner, V. L., Maier, M. A., & Fernández-Capo, M. (2015). “*Forgive and Forget: Differences between Decisional and Emotional Forgiveness.*” *PloS one*, 10(5), e0125561. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0125561>

⁸⁷ Marilyn A Cornish & Nathaniel G Wade.” *Working Through Past Wrongdoing: Examination of a Self-Forgiveness Counseling Intervention.*” (*Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 2015) 62.3: 521-528.

⁸⁸ Tim Clinton & Ron Hawkins. *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling.* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2011), 117.

⁸⁹ Cornish, 521.

minimum of two people. God desires everyone to forgive, however; though reconciliation is great in God's eyes it's not required. The problem with forgiveness is rooted in the grounded misidentification of God.⁹⁰ If there was understanding about how God forgives, there would be clarity on the importance of forgiveness in our daily lives. The failure to recognize the work God put into forgiveness is ultimately a failure in the practice of forgiveness. Forgiveness is offered in most religions. They convey to the believer a worldview that aids the act of forgiveness. As relates to forgiveness a believer, could follow the God they believe in, achieve their purpose, and improve on relationships all relationships to include the relationship they have developed with God. Forgiveness can be difficult because forgiveness identifies a loss. Letting go of the thought of the loss could assist in freedom from unforgiveness. Forgiveness is effective, there is a pragmatic frame of mind needed to obtain true forgiveness. Forgiveness isn't an act of determination. Forgiveness is possible through cooperation.⁹¹

Collaborative Strategies to Combat Unforgiveness

Unresolved moral injuries may result in unforgiveness of self and others. It debilitates an individual, making it difficult to maneuver through life effectively. It could also cause guilt that festers within and destroys a person from the inside out, which in turn could create psychological disorders. Unaddressed moral injuries may also cause shame. Shame is incapacitating because it will make an individual believe they are not good enough. A trained counselor could assist someone with combating moral injuries, first, by naming them and then by developing a plan of action. In searching for counsel an individual should seek out someone they are comfortable

⁹⁰ Clinton, 7.

⁹¹Lysa Trkeurst, *Forgiving What You Can't Forget: Discover How to Move on, Make Peace with Painful Memories and Create a Life that's Beautiful Again*. (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2020), 35.

sharing their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs.⁹² The counselor should make the space safe and sacred enough for the counselee to feel safe and comfortable enough to reveal themselves. People need a trusted and credible person to encourage them, sit in lament with them, and be present with them during times when they are discovering who they are and how to best handle their concerns. An effective strategy to assist someone living with moral injury could be to assist the individual with naming the moral injury whether its guilt or shame, also, frame the moral injury which moves the issue from an internal place to an open platform. Naming the moral injury paralyzes the issue, framing the moral issue empowers an individual to desire change. Finally, enact moral change, employ the true strength God has placed inside of an individual and live with and in that space.⁹³

Theological Foundations

Theology plays an important role in assisting people with their counseling needs. The utilization of religion in prison can uplift the offenders, possibly curtailing the recidivism rate. Religion helps the offender gain perspective of what it means to be made in God's image. Armed with the knowledge that God created them in His image also helps them realize they have the capacity to alter their lives for the better. Jesus desires for care to be given to people in prison. Matt 25:36-40, states, "I was in prison, and you came to visit me; this act of care reflects the love of God". Matthew Henry's commentary suggests good deeds done for the sake of God, through Jesus Christ are markings of the character believers are expected to exhibit.⁹⁴ The pervasive

⁹² John Thomas & Lisa Sosin. *Therapeutic Expedition: Equipping the Christian Counselor for the Journey*. (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), 82.

⁹³ Graham, 114.

⁹⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew 25. Matthew Henry Bible Commentary*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2014), 152.

concern for guilt and shame in the Bible gives precedent for addressing guilt-shame dynamics in counseling. Some counselors would argue that counseling and theology are not connected.

However, the assertion that counseling is a theological discipline is an accurate hypothesis.⁹⁵

Counseling is a profession that emphasizes growth in the span of a lifetime.⁹⁶ Counseling provides a scriptural basis for determining God's will for an individual's life (2 Tim 3:16).

Counselors provide a constant reminder that redemption was gained through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and God honors those who have shame. Abraham provides the greatest example of that in Gen 18:1-19. The assumption that theology in counseling is useful only to those who are studying to become ministers of the gospel or pastor of a congregation limits the role of theology. Theology informs everything in life. The Bible provides guidance for counseling among the many guilt- shame contexts in the world today.

Contextualizing content of faith for the benefit of counseling women in prison on FGS is essential. Theology should be embedded in the values and language of an individual providing care. Applying God's truth to the needs of His people will assist the offender in prison with the burden of FGS.

Rehabilitation and restoration are important as they promote the well-being of the offender. It is through the rehabilitation process people could uncover their beliefs. Staying in an unhealthy head space, blaming others for unpleasant behavior, and defining life based on what was done to an individual will continue to increase the pain of the past. Restorations takes forgiveness. When forgiveness takes place, the individual is not excusing what was done to them; they are freeing themselves of the pain through the grace of God. Lysa Terkeurst states,

⁹⁵ Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 11.

⁹⁶ Samuel Gladding, *Counseling a Comprehensive Profession*. (New York, NY: Pearson, 2018), 50.

“grace assures a person it is safe to soften the heart while truth sets the individual free” (John 8:32). Throughout the scriptures, grace and truth are kept together (John 1:14, 17).⁹⁷ It takes more than grace to heal from the past, it also takes truth and a desire to be rehabilitated.

There are three models of rehabilitation which explores human nature and aligns with Christian theological principles. The first, restorative justice, focuses on deposing the collective damage of a crime by offering restoration through restitution and reconciliation. The second model is the God lives method. This method focuses on rehabilitation from the standpoint that crime is a way of obtaining the good life. The third model involves the community, which encourages healing in the community. This method promotes prosocial practices which aids the offender with getting reacclimated into society. By incorporating these methods of rehabilitation, counselors can convalesce the undertaking of redemption in the prison system.

The bible teaches that people should confess their sins to each other and pray for one another for healing to occur (Jas 5:16). The Pillar New Testament commentary states, “the confession of sin to each other was about restoration of relationships, moreover, it suggests the possibility of healing.”⁹⁸ In context of counseling women in prison, upon confession of the sin committed, naming the pain that was caused, potential healing is possible. While the hope is to reduce the prison population, without attempting to curtail the behavior that causes return visits the system much like the offenders will continue to need healing. 2 Chr 7:14 says, if God’s people humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways the land will be healed. Recidivism is possible; however, it requires more than prison programs or surface

⁹⁷ Terkeurst, 139.

⁹⁸ Leon Morris, James Edwards, DA Carson, Gene Green. Douglas Moo, *Pillar New Testament Commentary, James 5:16*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 798.

counseling sessions. It requires an all-hands-on deck approach that does not dehumanize the offender.

Biblical Perspective of Prison

The bible has dozens of references to prisons and offenders; Gen 37 speaks about the imprisonment of Joseph. Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, even Jesus was arrested and executed. Prisons have held some extraordinary biblical figures. Joseph, sold by his brothers, unjustly imprisoned by Potiphar also provides prospective on prison. The most popular (and recidivist) was Apostle Paul, who was familiar with the correctional system.

Paul was an individual prior to conversion responsible for the conviction of others. It has been written that Apostle Paul was imprisoned seven times. In examining the biblical perspective of prison there must be understanding that prison was different in the biblical days. There were communal bonds formed and a variety of options available for punishment. In biblical times prison was a means to oppress more than a way to seek justice. Currently, prison has the capacity to damage the already damaged. In Scripture, imprisonment is utilized as a metaphor for various types of distress. The Bible emphasis of prison whether the physical space or the imprisonment of the mind, fuels the belief that the spirit of prison correlates with the spirit of death.⁹⁹

Prison has not failed to thwart bad behavior because the prison system is “identical in spirit” with the behaviors considered bad. Putting broken people in a broken environment defeats the purpose. God’s desire is not to cultivate the system but set the offender free. The Bible says God wants to set the captive free (Luke 4:18). It is not God’s hope that people remain in prison (metaphorically or otherwise), He desires to break the chains of bondage (Nahum 1:13). The

⁹⁹ Lee Griffith, *The Fall of the Prison: Biblical Perspective on Prison Abolition*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 87.

same God that feeds the hungry is the same God that can set the offender free from the pain of the past, the suffering in their mind and the bondage of a prison cell.

Biblical Perspective of Counseling

The bible is the revealed truth about God; however, God has given man revelations outside of His Word in the form of social science. These enlightenments help man discover truths about others that will assist them throughout life. Theology and psychology are sciences that can be integrated, however, due to the nature of theology care must be given when discussing Gods Word. When integrating the two sciences one must uncover the individual's personal philosophy and biblical worldview. Spirituality affects people's lives which could impact thoughts, therefore, an introduction to Christ in counseling will influence a different mindset. The bible teaches that wisdom is found by those who seek counsel (Prov 13:10).

Psychology, though useful, could never pass a test of inerrancy. Psychology is a separate discipline than theology and not a subset of theology. In the same manner, religion must not adopt a view that suggests reasoning because it polarizes itself breaking down the relationship between God and His creation. Psychology is not synonymous with theology; however, it also can't be separate. A great example of the two sciences merging together can be found in scripture. Believers are told to trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding, in all ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thine path (Prov 3:5-6).

Both sciences are effective when used in a counseling setting. Many of the initial characteristics of psychology are found in the bible. Combining psychological truth to biblical truth helps man achieve a higher sense of God and self. A counselor seeks to make a difference in the lives of the people they assist. Their influence should leave an indelible mark sparking positive change beyond the walls of the counseling office.

Made in the Image of God

For the praxis of the subject matter, the words of theologians; narratives, scripture, both Old and New Testament, will be utilized for the purpose of identifying the ongoing need for counseling. Christian theology seeks to utilize the bible as a resource for the purpose of revealing God and His devotion to His people. Scripture teaches that people are created in God's image (Gen 1: 26-27) which means people encapsulate attributes that God Himself has. These qualities are self-awareness, capacity to make the correct moral choices, love for God, self, and others. These attributes reflect the body and the spirit as interrelated and should not be viewed as natural enemies or opposites of each other. To understand man's purpose, there must be understanding of God's image. If man is to gain knowledge about their true identity there must be a relationship with the source of their identity.

Therefore, establishing a reputation for toughness even on small matters is not necessary to protect an individual. When we lead with love defenses dissipate. According to Cohen et al., "defense of honor can be an important part of defense of self."¹⁰⁰

Man is a special creature sharing in God's nature as intelligent beings full of wisdom, compassion, love, and creativity. Being made in the likeness of God, humans are spiritual creatures with a bodily form. Though humans are not of the same essence of God, we share similarities. Man has a function; people are self-conscious beings which means they are fully aware they exist. Being equipped with self-consciousness gives man the ability to think rationally. Humans have the ability to think about the variables of a situation, how it could affect family and friends and conclusively decide against proceeding based on the positive or negative

¹⁰⁰ Dov Cohen, Richard Nesbett, Brian Bowdle, Norbert Schwartz, "Insult, Aggression, and the Southern Culture of Honor: An 'Experimental Ethnography.'" (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1996), 70 (5); 945-960.

perceived outcome. Man was created to protect and provide. Man was created to fellowship, to be in community with one another. The fellowship the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has is the same fellowship God requires man to exhibit with each other.

The authority to rule over the Creator's creation has been given to man. God entrusted man to care for the land, rule over the animals and take care of each other. God making man in His image reflects the level of trust He has in His people. Man has been mandated to rule over creation. Man is considered an active creator in the world. Unlike animals, men are not bound by their environment. Being active creators in the world people are self-determined. People have been given free-will, a gift from God that reflects His sovereignty. All people have been given a moral compass that guides their decisions, helping to decide what is right and wrong. Man, being made in God's image are to emulate God's love. God desires that people reciprocate His love by obeying Him. Because of free-will people are given a choice to be obedient.

The make-up of man, being moral beings with a conscience to understand right from wrong, guilt from shame, people are commanded to be holy as God is holy (Lev 19:2). Having a sound biblical worldview will assist with keeping God's commandment to have high moral standards and being aware of God's will for one's life. Man is accountable for maintaining moral standards. Complete submission to God reveals appreciation for being chosen to replicate His image and abide by the moral standards set in place. Man is an emotional being. People have the ability to express anger, joy, grief, happiness, guilt, love, or shame because of their self-consciousness. Emotions tend to motivate a person to activate certain behaviors. Emotions affect daily rituals, perceptions of people and attitudes.

The image of God consists of intellect, self-consciousness, self-determination, moral standards, man's creativity, and emotions. Being made in the image of God, man should desire to

build strong community, be willing to communicate and build each other up, understand and adhere to right and wrong, and use expressions of love not hate toward one another.

Fundamentals of Counseling

Counseling is a short term, interpersonal, way of assisting people with their problems. The Bible states that a nation falls through a lack of guidance (Prov 11:14). It is a profession that takes patience and uses science to change behaviors which ultimately changes lives. Counseling as a profession grew out of a desire to provide guidance during the early 1900's, wisdom is found by those who take advice (Prov 13:10). The movement grew out of a desire to assist people of all ages with making proper decisions about life while simultaneously discovering who they are meant to become.¹⁰¹

Counseling deals with concerns from personal, social, educational, and emotional. In counseling there are a variety of subspecialties. Counselors can work in colleges, prisons, marriage and family, rehabilitation or as addiction counselors. A counselor works in their area of expertise to include intra- or interpersonal concerns. The Bible states, that good counsel can lead to a glorious destiny (Ps 73:24). Most clients have situational or developmental areas of concern. Counseling helps people adapt a new way of making decisions and formulating new behaviors and patterns. Counselors usually earn a master's degree or higher. They are members of an elite organization who maintains ethical standards and adheres to ethical codes. 1 Cor 3:16-17 states, that God's spirit dwells within His people and anyone willing to destroy the temple will be destroyed by the Creator. In counseling, it is imperative to convey God's intentions for the individual's life.

¹⁰¹ Gladding, 4

A counselor's main objective is to provide guidance to their client. It is their responsibility to teach their client the way they should go (Ps 32:8). One of the ways they ensure they are reaching that objective is through performing assessments on the client. The assessment helps the counselor decide on the appropriate treatment option, for example if a client suffers from substance abuse, the client should be given behavioral goals that align with that particular treatment. Scripture states, people should listen to advice, receive the discipline that comes with the advice to have wisdom in the end (Prov 19:20). One of the primary goals of counseling on FGS is healing without backlash.¹⁰² Counselors accomplish this goal by sharing the attributes that human beings share with God. It is equally important to discover what went wrong and exactly when it occurred. Once this is uncovered a plan can be implemented to reinforce the Godly attributes that should be exhibited.¹⁰³

Counselors should encourage people to love, fellowship, grow, present themselves holy, and pray for direction (Heb 10:25). Counseling provides individual pardons and self-forgiveness that can essentially shape an individual's theological formulations.

Effective Counseling Method

Effective counseling can help enhance relationships and build friendships.¹⁰⁴ Psychodynamic therapy is rooted in the Freudian theory. This type of counseling involves building resilient therapist-patient alliances. The goal is to use an introspective approach to counseling; developing psychological tools to combat the complicated feelings that arise within

¹⁰² Tim Lomas & Itai Ivztan, "*second wave positive psychology: Exploring the positive- negative dialectics of well-being.*" (Journal of Positive Psychology, 2016) 1, 3-16 [Google Scholar].

¹⁰³ Thomas Edgington, *Theological Foundations of Counseling*. (Leesburg, IN: Edgington Publications, 2015), 108.

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Joseph & Shifra Sagy, "*Positive psychology in the context of salutogenesis.*" (The handbook of salutogenesis, 2017), 83-88) Springer: Cham [Google Scholar].

the counselee. Psychotherapy also developed by Sigmund Freud is a successful form of counseling. Nicknamed the “talking therapy,” psychotherapy focuses on speaking with a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other mental health trained provider to share coping skills. People are built to be in community, to encourage and build each other up (1 Thess 5:11).

Through counseling an individual will learn about mood, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. There are a range of therapy treatments that help with mental health, emotional and psychiatric disorders. Counselors are to continuously encourage forward movement (Heb 3:13). The goal is to help ease the feelings of anxiety and depression. Counselors are to carry the burdens of those they assist as it fulfills the law of Christ (Gal 6:2). The biopsychosocial model of therapy is a significant aspect of psychopathology because it can be viewed as a hindrance or a means of glorifying God and human wellness.¹⁰⁵

The Theological Foundation of Counseling

The theological foundation of counseling is designed to provide the counselor with a biblical view from which to counsel. Positive psychology is the foundation which counseling on FGS is built upon. Self-confidence and power can be regained with a supportive spiritual base. It also provides understanding of biblical theories to assist those in need of guidance. Once a counselor assesses the proper biblical theory or personality, they are better equipped to assist individuals with their issues essentially getting them back to where God intended for them. Human beings are meant to flourish. Having a flourishing life is best accomplished when God is at the center of a person’s life.¹⁰⁶ The bible teaches that human behavior is imitative in body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess 5:23).

¹⁰⁵ Eric Johnson, *God and Soul Care: The Therapeutic Resources of the Christian Faith*. (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity, 2017), 271.

¹⁰⁶ Johnson, 4.

A spectrum of ecclesial understandings of counseling must emerge to accomplish God's purpose in creation. Helping an individual grow in Christ is the catalyst to assisting with solving their problems. The prophet Isaiah referred to Jesus Christ as the Wonderful Counselor. A counselor should seek to exhibit the characteristics of Christ. The Bible states, without counsel plans can fail, however with advisors' plans can succeed (Prov 15:22).

The Importance of Scripture in Counseling

The sufficiency of scripture should inform the nature of counseling. Scripture states that people are full of goodness, and knowledge and able to admonish one another (Rom 15:14). It is the job of the counselor to contribute to the betterment of the people of God. Often counselors work in an environment where their client is motivated to resolve their issues or seek assistance. The intricacies of providing counsel in a prison setting, an environment where the client is hostile and oft times in denial is essentially difficult to understand. It is the perfect environment for Scripture. It is necessary to begin counseling by emphatically stating that God's truth applies to all His people. Apostle Paul renders an excellent example of the nature of counseling. He posits that a counselor should be gentle, like a mother caring for a child. Share the Gospel and life with God's people (1Thess 2:7-8). Counseling encompasses the commands made in the New Testament which discusses how people should minister one to another. Without care from a counselor in the prison system the risk of reoffending and reducing recidivism is substantial.

Theoretical Foundations

There is no sound theoretical framework that explains the difficulty in providing counseling in a providing counseling in a prison setting. Quality of care is important, especially

in regard to the desire to reintegrate the offenders into society. The present theoretical foundation acknowledges the importance of counseling women in prison on FGS as a means to reduce the recidivism rate and ensure spiritual freedom. Effectively treating offenders while they are detained could reduce recidivism. When it comes to treatment in prison, several stakeholders, the offender, the counselor, the prison system, the government, and society contribute to the treatment plan. Garson's structural equation model (SEM) provided the framework for this study. Garson posits, SEM serves purposes comparable to multiple regression, which reflects multiple dormant autonomous variables. Each of these are acknowledged by multiple gauges; the modeling of intermediaries will contribute to both causes and effects.¹⁰⁷ In the context of counseling, SEM has become overwhelmingly popular for examining data in the field of social science.

For a counselor or researcher interested in studying the concept of depression using the analysis of variance model (AMOS); which allows a comparison of the effects of multiple levels of observed data standards into components that are explicable; they would include one self-report depression scale as the dependent variable. This allows the researcher to roughly construe the measure because it characterizes the entire concept of depression.

In contrast, the SEM could blatantly model the dormant concept of depression rather than depending on variables as a replacement for the concept. Furthermore, SEM has the advantage over other analytical techniques because it can be studied in one inquiry.¹⁰⁸ SEM could be compared to mutual quantitative methods. It is similar to correlation, multiple

¹⁰⁷ David Garson, *Structural Equation Modeling*. (Asheboro, NC: Statistical Publishing: Kindle, 2015).

¹⁰⁸ Matthew Martens, "The Use of Structural Equation Modeling in Counseling Psychology Research." (*The Counseling Psychologist*, 2015) 33 (3): 269-298.

regression, and (AMOS). SEM and these other techniques are similar because all four statistical procedures are considered linear models, each technique is valid only when detailed assumptions are met, and neither of the techniques implies causality which are generally hypothesized. Causality is unable to be determined by results of either technique listed. It can, however, be determined by the soundness of the underlying theory being suggested.¹⁰⁹

Assessing the Fit for SEM

According to Quintana, there has been considerable use of structural equation modeling (SEM) in counseling.¹¹⁰ Structural equation modeling is a family of statistical techniques permitting researchers to test multivariate models.¹¹¹ SEM can be viewed as a hybrid of both factor and path analysis. One of the goals of the SEM model is to provide an ungenerous summary of the interrelationship among variables. In counseling, SEM is utilized more as an analytical tool. Most counselors are interested in the path portion of the SEM technique because it provides a pathway to how relationships are formed, (i.e., relationship between an individual and drugs, alcohol, or sex). This is deemed invaluable because it leads to the root of the pain being self-inflicted.

When utilizing the SEM procedure, it is imperative that a researcher measure how the conjectured model will fit the observed information. Quintana suggests, “SEM represents innovative procedures for evaluating the consistency of theoretical models with empirical data.”

¹⁰⁹ Weston, 722-723.

¹¹⁰ Stephen Quintana & SE Maxwell, “*Implications of Recent Developments in Structural Equation Modeling for Counseling Psychology.*” (The Counseling Psychologist, 2016) 27(4): 485-527.

¹¹¹ Rebecca Weston & Paul A. Gore, “*Brief Guide to Structural Equation Modeling.*” (The Counseling Psychologist, 2016) 34 (5) 719-75.

¹¹² There are six steps to model testing utilizing SEM: (1) data collection, (2) model specification, (3) identification, (4) estimation, (5) evaluation, and (6) modification. Data collection is complete when the model is specified. This step helps the researcher determine the relationship between the variables. Model specification occurs when researchers identify which relationships are hypothesized to exist or not exist among the variables. Model identification is when researcher tests a hypothesis to determine variable weaknesses. Estimation is complete after specifying the model, identifying the model, collecting relevant data, and addressing any concerns. Estimation requires a researcher to determine the value of any unknown parameter and all errors aligned with the value. To evaluate the model the researcher must determine whether the model adequately reflects significance and strength of the observed data. Modifications occur most times because the projected model is rarely the best fit.¹¹³

SEM Advantages

According to Garson, the advantages of SEM compared to other models are the flexible assumptions that could be made. There are a variety of SEM models. SEM procedures evaluate theoretical models that include comparing competing models and rejecting models based on the consistency. SEMs are built from raw data stemming from a correlation matrix or a covariance matrix. One of the advantages SEMs has over other methods is its ability to accommodate estimates of variances.¹¹⁴ SEM is viewed as a confirmatory rather than exploratory procedure. It utilizes one of three methodologies. The first method pertains to the strictly confirmatory approach. This approach uses a model to test the SEM goodness-of-fit tests to extrapolate if

¹¹² Quintana, 486.

¹¹³ Weston, 729-744.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 731.

patterns of variance and covariance is consistent with a structural model. The second method is an alternative model approach. Two or more causal models are tested to decipher the best fit. There are usually three or four measures to report. However, this approach encounters problems specific to researchers being unable to locate literature to support the findings. The third approach pertains to the model development approach. This approach consists of a researcher locating a model through the SEM process finding it to be deficient, and the researcher tests an alternative model. The use of SEM in counseling allows the counselor to posit latent constructs that address the underlying causes of destructive behavior.¹¹⁵ The concern this model offers is that models confirmed in this manner are not as stable. Researchers typically overcome this concern by using a cross-validation strategy, meaning the model is developed using a calibration data sample in conjunction with an independent validation sample.¹¹⁶

Benefits of SEM in Counseling

SEM has the ability of identifying and removing weaknesses in a model while presenting the improved model as if it is the original work. SEM has the capacity to test the relationships among concepts. This technique allows multiple measures to be represented and addresses each issue. This is important to point out because it allows researchers to validate the concepts.¹¹⁷ Regardless of the approach the goal remains the same to assess relationships among both manifest (directly measured or observed behaviors) and latent (the underlying construct). The SEM approach has served as highly beneficial in the field of counseling. For example, a counselor could use latent constructs that represent personality characteristics associated with the

¹¹⁵ Quintana, 487.

¹¹⁶ Garson, kindle.

¹¹⁷ Weston, 723.

individual (i.e., guilt or shame for becoming addicted to drugs or becoming an alcoholic). The counselor could address the familial factors associated with the personality trait (i.e., mother, father, grandparent) that may exhibit similar traits. The counselor could then create strategies to lessen the use of drugs and alcohol increasing self-value. The SEM model can be diagrammed which allows for a visual interpretation of the factors discussed during counseling.¹¹⁸

Emphasizing the issues associated with continuing to consume the pain that donates to unwholesome decisions sheds light on the underlying issue with each dormant variable including several indicator measures. SEM in counseling reflects an integrated interaction takes place between the psychophysical and the psychological.¹¹⁹ Without the care counselors provide utilizing the SEM model individuals are at risk of continuing the maladaptive to behavior they become accustomed to betraying.

Concerns of SEM in Counseling

There are some critical gaps in literature regarding SEM leaving many in the field of social science to have noticeable concerns in relation to SEM, in the field of psychology. This includes lack of credible alternative models, failure to assess multivariate normality before utilizing SEM data, failure to assess the fit of the path model separately from the measurement model, failure to report full parameter estimates, and failure to assess how well the theoretical model fits the analysis.¹²⁰ The interpretation of SEM findings involves careful evaluation of many outstanding results. Several statistical tests must be examined to determine the relationship

¹¹⁸ Quintana, 491.

¹¹⁹ Denton, 5.

¹²⁰ Martens, 272.

among the concepts and the observed variables.¹²¹ The use of SEM also constitutes controversy regarding what is considered acceptably fit data for the particular study. Though these are valid concerns the SEM technique produces overall the greatest and most reliable results in the field.

SEM practices specific to counseling serve several purposes. First, an empirical view allows findings to be presented in a statistical format. This allows a person to draw their own conclusions. Second, a counselor could gauge the SEM research published in the field of study. Finally, the counselor could use the SEM to develop and enhance current psychological assessments creating a dent in the gaps of literature in the field.

More courses are being offered on SEM research in counseling which should advance the practice of SEM. Refining practices in SEM could enhance the field of social science, consequently, arming counselors to commendably provide appropriate supervision in all surroundings where counseling is a possibility.

Goal-Directed Care

Not very much emphasis is given about the subjective need for care in prison. Treatment should be designed with the intention of assisting the offender and the reduction of recidivism. Counselors provide individual care and advise the offender on specific programs available to support the offender while in prison. Counseling in prison does not mirror that of a traditional setting, the environment is harsh and hostile the majority of the time, which could make it difficult to build a solid rapport with the offenders. One of the central concentrations of a counselor in prison is to promote behavior that mirrors how the offender should behave upon reentry into their communities. Prison counselors are faced with the ambiguity of both the original prison protocol and the needs of the offender through offering a one-size-fits-all

¹²¹ Weston, 723.

counseling approach on one hand, and a therapeutic approach, on the other. Which falls short when a counselor is providing care to an offender with a mental illness or moral injury.

A quarter of the prison population requires a mental health professional as part of their care team. Offenders suffering from some form of moral injury or mental health issues has become a characteristic of the prison system. From the perspective of the counseling professional, offenders suffering with mental illness deserve care while the offender suffering with moral injury receives cookie-cutter care. Developing a therapeutic alliance with the offender and learning to adapt general clinical skills is crucial to counseling in the prison system. Both the counselor and offender form a therapeutic partnership to reach the desired treatment goal. A positive therapeutic relationship leads to positive treatment outcomes. Obtaining both the information about counseling, and the specific setting within the prison will provide the counseling framework needed for counseling in prison. The application of a regularly recognized need in the absence of an idiosyncratic need, regarding the reduction of recidivism with the penial system needs attention. Addressing the dynamic through adequate counseling treatment will presumably assist in the reduction of recidivism. Research has shown that the majority of released offenders recidivate, particularly within three years of release from prison.¹²²

Having adequate knowledge of theories and research adds to the competency level of a counselor. Counselors should continue to research in their field to increase their knowledge of social reality relating to the human mind and behavioral patterns in the prison system. Because counseling is an ongoing field where research is continuously being conducted a counselor, especially in the prison system should stay abreast of developments relating to human behavior.

¹²² Duwe, G. “*The Use and Impact of Correctional Programming for Inmates on Pre- and Post- Release Outcomes.*” (US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2017), 20.

Counseling is about communication which includes not just verbal but writing and listening to the offenders. Good communication can assist an offender with evaluating their issues accurately. The ability to document progress or violations helps the staff gain understanding of the offender and the reasons behind the behavior they exhibit.

In situations where suffering and maladaptive behavior is not reflected, the offender will not seek assistance. When the offender seeks assistance, it is determined by staff where the offender will receive the assistance as prison security supersedes care. During the time of care the offender utilizes the approach-avoid method which influences the decision to continue with treatment. Counseling the offenders is a necessary part of assisting them with reentry into their respective communities. Offenders' judgment risks and recidivistic tendencies differ from the prison employee. Most offenders give little thought to seeking counseling that could heal their wounded souls and keep them from returning to prison.

Theoretical Orientation of Counseling in Prison

Identifying the issue an offender is faced with is only half the battle. A prison counselor must be willing to identify how the problem developed and cultivate a treatment plan to combat the issue. With a plethora of options to choose from, a counselor's theoretical orientation guides their ability to be effective in an environment that deserves more than one-size-fits-all care. The cognitive behavior method is the best approach to treatment in a prison setting. It focuses on thinking styles that ultimately leads the offender to speak about the offense that brought them to prison and past pain that holds them hostage from progressing. Cognitive behavior therapy targets dysfunctional attitudes and perceptions that inspires dysfunctional behavior. Most offenders exhibit thinking skills that can be altered in an environment where effective counseling is provided. Counseling should be matched to an offender's risk of reoffending, addressing moral

injury should be incorporated in risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model. The RNR model analyses the offender risk utilizing risk assessment tools that have been normalized and validated for accuracy. An accountability technique that could prove beneficial is checking in on the offender in their dorm, during their dining time, and during social settings.

Counseling designed to support the desire to reduce the recidivism rate combined with the traditional values of a prison intervention program while maintaining integrity upon implementation should be successful. The principles of effective counseling guide the framework for positive outcome post prison. However, assigning offenders to interventions not associated with their criminogenic need or responsivity issue is detrimental to the offender and the community they return too. The use of counseling to reinforce desired behaviors pre-prison and post- prison can effectively promote positive change. The appropriate role of a counselor within the context of prison-based treatment would be to encourage change in offenders cognitive process through counseling and programs that invoke positive change. By promoting offender involvement in their treatment plan, it could attenuate recidivism.

Challenges of Counseling in Prison

Prison counseling is a highly intensive profession. The counselor is typically equipped to tackle the issues that coincide with the correctional environment. Kupersanin states, working as a counselor in prison setting is similar to practicing in a foreign country.¹²³ Prisons have a culture all their own with language and customs unfamiliar to the outside world. The members of the organization, the offenders and staff play a vital role in the environment. One of the challenges in prison counseling arises from the debate whether the treatment utilized in counseling is effective. Due to the high rate of recidivism the area of counseling receives the most pushback for

¹²³ Eve Kupersanin, "Prison Psychiatrists Must Overcome Barriers to Effective Care." (Psychiatric News, 2001) 36 (13).

ineffectiveness. It is believed that the methods used are not helping the offender, therefore re-offenses continue to occur.

Working with offenders who have committed unspeakable crimes could pose as a challenge for a prison counselor. It could evoke emotions that cause the counselor to have biased feelings toward the offender. It is understood that the offender is being punished for the crime they committed and should not suffer condemnation from an individual selected to provide them with a service. It is equally understood that the offender needs and deserves help, not punishment, and the prison is a place to correct behavior. The challenge to providing the care to offenders, several offenders could choose not to participate in the rehabilitation process.

Oftentimes administrative staff and officers are more interested in the security aspect the care piece is ignored. Prison counselors in most cases are unable to be as thorough in their work as they need to be because staff misunderstands their role in the prison or is not exactly clear on the intentions of the counselor. With sufficient training and clear communication this issue could easily be one that turns around in favor of the counselor. Human relationships are based on the desire to understand one another's behavioral patterns.

An additional challenge for counselors in prison comes in the form of race and cultural diversity. Some offenders would rather suffer with their situation instead of get assistance from a counselor because of their ethnicity. It is believed that experiences may be different because of race, therefore, someone of the opposite race of a counselor may refuse care because they feel the counselor wouldn't understand or does not share similar experience due to their background. Cultural diversity in counseling in prison could eliminate the barrier of race.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Counseling female offenders on forgiveness, guilt, and shame will be the focus of this study. A quantitative study will be utilized to increase understanding on the participants knowledge on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. Purposeful sampling will be used to identify people who work with female offenders as counselors and a select group of female offenders to complete this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the importance of counseling female offenders on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. The employee interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured format and the female offenders will be interviewed in the prison auditorium based on a schedule for the purpose of confidentiality. The collection of data during this interview will be an important part of this study. In order to have additional ways to record data, the researcher will incorporate additional instruments to obtain data to include interview protocol, note-taking, and a researcher's journal. A statistician will compile all the data collected to assist with forming the importance of counseling in a female prison. There will be a five-question survey for the counselors and a ten-question questionnaire for the offenders to shed light on the topic. The quantitative study will be performed using the REACH model. The REACH model emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and letting go of guilt and shame. Levels of forgiveness will be created similar to the levels of grief to further bring awareness to the offender's status regarding forgiveness.

Unforgiveness creates a stress hormone which could affect every system of the body, to include cardiovascular, immune, and the digestive system. This study will attempt to counteract as much stress already caused to the participant. Though it may provide a sense of power not to forgive it also destroys the body from the inside out. The REACH method will allow the women

to think critically about the pain they suffered and work toward forgiving self and others. This method will provide several approaches to forgiveness i.e., forgiving being necessary because someday there will be a desire to be forgiven.

Intervention Design

Given the high occurrence and interconnected nature of victimization and moral injury among women in prison; complete assessment and integrated treatments will be incorporated in this study offered in the criminal justice system. The implementation of the life skills program is one part of a larger dichotomy within the prison system. For maximum results prison counselors will gain a working knowledge of the multifaceted relationship between moral injury and victimization among female offenders. The selected treatment will be understood by female offenders within a single theoretical structure. Counselors participating in the study will strive to provide a safe environment; and create an emotional and physical safe zone for the offenders to express themselves. Treatment will be a collaborative effort with the offender and counselor setting realistic goals together.

Integrating Cognitive-Behavioral treatment to promote understanding of triggers (i.e., flashbacks or emotional flooding) will corroborate success outside of prison. Counselors will assist the offenders by building skill sets that allow the women to gain control of their trauma. Incorporating a collaborative intervention plan in each session will serve as a reminder for the women; it could also reduce their trauma symptoms. The female offenders will be fully aware of the consequence of non-compliant behaviors discussed during the creation of the collaborative goals; (i.e., positive drug test may result in single-cell lockdown).

Confidentiality will be of paramount concern. Providing anonymity will be important within the penial system and attention will be given to gathering, keeping, and sharing an

individual's information. The women will be informed in writing that information gathered during the treatment process will not be shared with outside entities and the information will be limited for those within the prison system. Intervention strategies that incorporate outreach resources outside of the prison will be suggested as they will provide continuous engagement to the women as they acclimate themselves back into society.

Offering peer-led groups will prove beneficial as most people will listen to people they deem successful and on the same level. Peer-led programs will promote healthy behavior and reduce the stigma associated with the trauma. Allowing peer-led groups in prison will increase the women's self-esteem because they could be assigned accountability partners that will encourage their growth and discourage counterproductive behavior.

With approval to conduct this study for up to 120-days, this researcher would begin the data collection portion of this study once the IRB approval requirement has been met. This researcher will begin with the people who work in the field, case managers, social workers, mental health, and chaplains. This researcher will have a five-question survey for those employed by the prison. The following questions will be listed on the survey:

- What is the correlation between forgiveness and trauma?
- Do you think people understand the concept of forgiveness? What is your understanding of forgiveness?
- What steps would you take if an offender expressed issues with forgiveness, guilt, and shame?
- Do you believe the prison counselor could use training on forgiveness, guilt, and shame? How do you feel this training could be provided?

- Do you believe counseling on forgiveness, guilt and shame could help the offenders and reduce the recidivism rate?

This researcher would go to the offices of the workers to obtain the answers to the five-question survey.

This researcher would interview as many female offenders as possible to maximize the amount of data and achieve a desired number of positive results. The offenders would range from people serving prison sentences from one year to life. This researcher would have a ten-question questionnaire for the twenty female offenders who volunteered for the study. The following questions for the female offenders will be the following:

- How do you define forgiveness, guilt, and shame?
- Do you find it difficult to let go of the past?
- What or who was the catalyst for your behavior?
- How were your feelings and mistakes handled growing up? Were they forgiven, judged, or punished?
- Could you write yourself an empathetic letter of understanding, appreciation, and forgiveness? What would the letter say?
- Do you think the pain you experienced in your past contributed to where you are today?
- What are your hopes?
- If you could get help with the internal scars you have, would you seek the help?
- Have you ever spoken to anyone about your past pain?
- How do you define spiritual freedom?

There will be continuous movement throughout the prison, therefore, this researcher would meet the female offenders in the auditorium where social distancing can be practiced due to the COVID pandemic.

What this researcher hopes to gain from this study is a new outlook on counseling women in prison. This researcher believes this perspective can be obtained from the case managers, social workers, and mental health workers, and female offenders that participate in the study.

Continuum of Care

The transition from a life of confinement and institutionalization to freedom comes with a great deal of new responsibilities and a maze of conflicting emotions. For the average citizen, surviving and thriving in the outside world can be a day-to-day challenge. Ex-offenders leaving a period of incarceration will find it exceedingly difficult, on their own, to obtain the things that most people take for granted - food, clothing, housing, job assistance, family integration and emotional support. Reentry into society can be difficult for these women.

The majority of women incarcerated will return to their communities unequipped. Prison should offer interventions that are designed to equip the women to adjust to life beyond the walls of prison. The interventions offered should be a continuum of care that moves with the women as they maneuver from incarceration to the community. The offender should be offered much-needed support and the guidance necessary as she plans and prepares to re-enter society. Restoration, transformation, integration, encouragement, and life coaching should be the main objectives in prison counseling.

Partnering with community programs that implement gender-responsive policies and programs will assist with treatment of past trauma. With a goal to assist the women change, grow, and heal from past pain treatment must expand beyond the prison. It is critical that the

women be placed in programs where positive relationships are the core element. Counselors in prison need to provide a setting where women can develop healthy relationships so when they reenter society, they will be comfortable trusting people who desire to help them. If women are to successfully reintegrate back into society, there must be a continuum of care that connects them to their community.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Studies show that as many as four out of five female offenders have been abused as children, either physically, sexually, or emotionally. Such abuse can develop deep wounds, low self-esteem, anger, and a lifetime of residual scarring. Offenders desperately need a true encounter and expression of God's love. This encounter can begin with adequate counseling in the prison system. The first step of the intervention process plan involves a collaboration between the researcher, case manager and mental health workers. In this setting, the prison employees will collaborate on the type of cognitive behavior treatment needed to assist the offenders volunteering for the study. Though there are twenty-five CBT techniques, cognitive processing therapy assists people who have survived physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

When considering implementing cognitive processing therapy, it is important to develop a plan that will facilitate the desired outcome within the context of the offender. The second step is to evaluate the needs of the offender by assessing the barriers that could hinder their growth. Identifying the barriers such as a desire to remain the way they are or the inability to forgive self and others in conjunction with claiming the abuse as deserving will aid in the implementation of the intervention. When mounting a plan to address the needs of the offenders, specific goals, a timeline for meeting the goal, and monitoring the developments should be included. The third step in the implementation is offender involvement. The offenders will participate in an initial

one-on-one session, giving them space to express some of the pain they have held onto all these years. In this setting, the offender will verbalize how they answered the questionnaire. Beliefs and knowledge of what contributes to unforgiveness, guilt, and shame is addressed in a professional manner. In order to develop trust among the researcher and offender, the researcher will be provided multiple opportunities to exhibit care to the offender during the implementation phase. The offenders will establish accountability partners in the group settings. The prison employees, researcher and the offenders will develop a shared vision because it is crucial during the process to obtain a similar goal and a supportive team provides culpability.

In order for change to occur, it is important for the offenders to develop coping skills that will assist them upon reentry into their communities. The goal of the counselor is to help the offender identify the pain, name it, understand how it relates to behaviors that brought them to prison and exercise the skills learned to combat the desire to behave badly. The research will be responsible for leading the development and implementation of the cognitive processing therapy. It is important for the researcher to support the prison employees by providing sound feedback on what is needed for the offenders to be equipped for life beyond the walls. By providing staff development, participating in cooperative team meetings, counselors will effectively assist offenders and monitor their progress. Counselors play an essential role in the implementation stage. It is important for counselors to understand the weight of their role. Counselors should develop a variety of strategies to assist offenders, continuously reinforcing skills useful for society.

Chapter 4

Results

Presentation of Data

There is a lack of adequate counseling in the women's prison on the subject of forgiveness, guilt, and shame. The purpose of this study is to increase awareness on the importance of providing adequate counseling to select women at Brownstone Correctional Institute for Women on the subject of forgiveness, guilt, and shame because it could free the women of the moral injury they have held, and possibly provide them with spiritual freedom, and reduce the recidivism rate. Within the realm of women in prison there is limited studies that look at the importance of counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. To date none have been found that specifically targets women in prison. Though the topic of FGS has been broached, there seems to be a lack of published literature that focuses on models and theories that highlight incarcerated women with these underlying issues.

Reflective journals were kept as analysis of the data on the study was guided by informative examples aimed to assess the viewpoints of the participants. Participants gained perspective of their experiences which stem from morally injurious behavior and provided meaning to the offender's maladaptive actions. Several counseling methodologies were applied to gather data. Freud's psychotherapy method offered coping skills while cognitive behavior therapy was used to assist with attitude and behavior adjustments. Risk assessment tools were used to outline the possibility of future criminal behavior. This tool was provided by a case manager working in the field.

SEM is a correlation research technique that impacts the analysis on several levels, measurement scales, range restrictions and insufficient data. The data was intensely screened

using the AMOS analysis statistical software. In exploring the SEM model, the theoretical edifices that inform the participants' compartment were revealed. As the theoretical framework was Garson's structural equation model (SEM), a revelatory model suitable for the present study as it enabled the researcher to survey participants' view on forgiveness, guilt, and shame in the context of their upbringing, beliefs, and values. The researcher made every attempt to place value in the participants making meaning of what was offered in the safe space.

This study was conducted using a mixed method. There is a lack of mixed method studies that address FGS in women's prison. The mixed method was utilized as it allows the incorporation of social and cultural aspects that provides a more thorough explanation of the findings through grouping likeminded views on the topic. A number of qualitative methodologies were considered for the study to collect data, however due to the number of offenders that volunteered the mixed method was chosen combined with a semi-structured view often used in qualitative studies. The semi- structural method was chosen because this method can be viewed as part of a continuum to the study. It allowed the interviews to flow and participants to speak freely. The semi-structured method allowed for important issues to be uncovered, and others to enumerate on the ongoing interaction closing the gap on the findings.

There were three pods of women, fifty-six people in each quad. However, not all offenders participated in the study. Each quad would spend a month completing Bible Studies, homework activities on the studies, being assigned accountability partners and one-on-ones. The Bible studies were guided by the stories of Joseph, Stephen & Jesus while simultaneously applying the REACH approach to forgiveness. Chairs were set in a circle with the facilitator in the circle with the offenders (social distancing was in place). Everyone was given the opportunity to read a Scripture, share a story or share a Bible verse. Bible verses were provided

weekly to assist with the importance of forgiveness, guilt, and shame. The participants also learned Reinhold Niebuhr prayer, a prayer adopted by the Armed Forces and Alcoholics Anonymous, the Serenity Prayer.¹²⁴

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things, I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to know the difference.¹²⁵

The Bible studies and the one-on-one sessions were one hour, starting at 12pm. Throughout the one-on-one counseling sessions an employee volunteer was present to gain understanding of the offender. During the one-on-one session the participants were asked to ‘imagine the person they trust most decides to betray them how would they move toward forgiving the individual?’ All activities took place in the auditorium. Though a circle was formed with the chairs social distancing due to the pandemic was in place to ensure safety. Masks made it sometimes difficult to understand the offenders. Clarity was required in cases where the offender was not understood due to the mask mandate.

The psycho analysis and cognitive therapy methods were the most appropriate methods as they help reshape how the offender views themselves. This method allowed the offenders to talk through their emotions and make sense of their anger and conclude that peace is worth more than resentment. While it is true that everyone experiences being wounded whether through hurt caused by someone else or self-inflicted it is important not to diminish self-worth due to those wounds. Because the soul houses the pain of the past the study aimed to heal the soul by placing

¹²⁴ Spoelstra, 159

¹²⁵ Serenity Prayer, commonly attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr.//www.thevoiceforlove.com/serenity-prayer.html; http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/11/us/11prayer.html?_r=0.

value in how God views the participants. This was done through a study on Gen 1:27 and the attributes of God. It is understood that humanity is revealed in Scripture, therefore, the researcher introduced the participant to a new way of viewing themselves. Accountability partners were established to continue to add value in times when reminders were needed on how the participants are viewed by God. The offenders understand their approach to the hurt people cause them or they cause themselves can affect their inner being. Inner and outer posture is everything, the actions that wound externally could affect internally if it is allowed.

While performing analytics of the information the researcher sustained awareness of personal beliefs and values. Expression of self-reflection was continually encouraged in every meeting and practiced by the researcher in an effort to properly formulate the data collected. In analyzing the findings, the researcher remained engaged with the data. The focal point of the data was the interviews, the Bible study on Jesus forgiving the people responsible for His death, Joseph forgiving his brothers for selling him into slavery, Potiphar's wife for lying on him and having him thrown in prison, and Stephen forgiving the people before he was stoned to death. The one-on-one sessions occurred weekly with each participant. Conducting interviews and through the interactive Bible studies a richness was added to a most often complex topic. Notes were taken during and after each class and individual session to capture all relevant material for the study.

At different points the participants in each quad expressed appreciation for participating and learning how to cope with FGS. Three offenders wrote thank you letters expressing their appreciation saying how much better they feel about themselves and their situation because of her involvement in the study.

The aim of this quantitative study is to discover how addressing FGS in the prison system could catapult the rehabilitation process. It also aims through study findings to evaluate the necessity of incorporating prison programs that promote FGS.

The Risk Assessment Tool

The risk assessment tool was utilized to determine the current needs of the offender volunteering for the study. Risk assessment tools are used to manage and assess the correctional population. Public safety is priority number one as relates to risk assessment tests. Supervision and aftercare treatment received is also determined through the risk assessment tool. This process is done when the offender meets with their case manager and should be updated every three to six months based on progress. It also evaluates the risk of reoffending and selects programs for the offender. This assessment tool does not offer questions that address FGS and the struggles that accompany them. It does assign a value to each offender that most often comes with judgment. To assess the form the information is plugged into the system and a number populates that makes suggestions on the exterior problems the offender struggles with while offering programs for the offender to consider toward their rehabilitation process.

The offenders with a level three or above are deemed subject to reoffend as they have issues with drug and alcohol abuse. The risk assessment tool is used throughout the state in the jails, prisons and detention centers. Although considered a helpful tool it fails the offenders in addressing moral issues that could impact the offenders positively, provoking thought and changing the trajectory of their being. The offenders are aware that the assessments should be done and anticipate their ratings. One offender stated she had not had a new assessment since she arrived, and she has been here two years and she leave in three months.

Risk assessment tools are considered credible instruments of judgment. Most of the staff assigned to administer the test believes the assessment helps inform the system of the offender's likelihood to reduce recidivism. Offenders should believe in the facilities desire to assist them through the findings in the assessment. Transparency is necessary, by understanding the risk factors proper assistance can be offered to the offender and public safety would be ensured. Through maturation and proper supervision, the offender could make a considerable change that significantly impacts their lives.

Analysis of Data

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on FGS. The software used to analyze the data is AMOS, a trusted software system among corporations. Storage and retrieval of the data was a simplistic process. Though it is understood that the software system would not be sensitive to the data the convenience of the software overshadowed the lack of emotion. One hundred and three female offenders participated in the study; all of the offenders were high school dropouts. Four employees to include the education supervisor, a case manager, prison social worker, and an officer who volunteered to sit in during each session. Of the female offenders that participated 30 were white, 11 were black, 22 were native American, and 40 were Hispanic. All participants were above the age of 18 years old. The staff that volunteered for the study were both male and female.

Table 1.3 provides data on the female offender participants interviewed according to their race and age. The offenders listed are familiar with life in prison as they have cycled through the penial system at least one other time prior to this one.

	# of Participants	Age
Black	11	18-45
White	30	18-65
Hispanic	40	18-35
Indian	22	18-40

Interpretation of Data

Rapport had been established because the researcher is familiar with the offenders where the study was conducted. The researcher worked with the female offenders and employee volunteers for three months, listening and providing feedback essential to their growth. The responses gathered from the surveys have been thoroughly analyzed using Survey Monkey and a professional statistician. The focus of this chapter is to present the data that was gathered to move the discussion forward in the concluding chapter.

The ability or desire to forgive was assessed utilizing the REACH approach while guilt and shame proneness was assessed together as they are often correlated and function as interchangeable suppressors. The participants gained knowledge on the benefits of forgiveness and letting go of guilt and shame, learning that forgiveness is great for one’s mental and physical wellbeing and allowing guilt and shame to never take root in one’s life is beneficial to future and past relationships and the individual’s spiritual walk. The participants were also educated on the levels of forgiveness established through research by the researcher. The belief is just as there are levels to grief; forgiveness has levels. There are seven levels to forgiveness; first there must be an acknowledgment of hurt, second, consider how the hurt affects the individual seeking to

forgive, third, accept that the past can't change, what's been done is done, fourth, make the decision to forgive, determine that forgiveness is attainable, fifth, repair relationships, once at this level the repairing may look different for each person; some may seek to rebuild while others decide to move toward forgiveness however, sever the relationship. Determining how to move forward in the relationship is solely based on the individual. The sixth level in forgiveness is learning from the past and the last level is full forgiveness.

Benefits of Forgiveness

Holding on to grudges even if it is with self could cause unnecessary stress which could raise blood pressure and heart rate causing heart attacks or a possible stroke. Depression could set in causing an individual to have moments of anger and frustration.

The exercise below was utilized with the offenders to assess their level of forgiveness:

Write down a time when you forgave something you deemed the hardest thing you could forgive. What were the benefits? Using that event respond to the following prompts on how it made you feel to forgive; zero= not better, 1= somewhat better, 2=for much better.

After forgiving I felt better physically
After forgiving, I felt less negative and more positive psychologically or emotionally.
After forgiving my relationship got better
After forgiving, I felt spiritually more connected ¹²⁶

Sixty-three of the offenders believed they felt much better physically after forgiving someone, twenty-eight offenders failed to recognize whether they felt better marking their answer as being somewhat better and twelve offenders believe after forgiving someone it had no

¹²⁶ Worthington, 10.

effect on them physically. Fifty-eight offenders believe they felt less negative and more positive psychologically or emotionally after fully forgiving someone while the same twenty-eight offenders who could not recognize if forgiving someone made them feel better also could not determine if they felt less negative and more positive psychologically and emotionally. Seventeen offenders believed that forgiveness had no bearing on their psychological or emotional wellbeing. Of the one hundred and three participants only fifty-five agree that their relationship with the individual they forgave got better, twenty-five stated their relationships got somewhat better and twenty-three offenders shared that their relationships did not get better, in most cases ended. Sixty-three offenders believe forgiveness helped them become more spiritually connected. Twenty-eight offenders shared they somewhat agree that forgiveness helped them spiritually and twelve offenders stated forgiveness did not make them feel more spiritually connected. The researcher expressed how forgiveness is not for the individual being forgiven it is for the individual forgiving, the same grace given to us by God is the same grace we should expose the people needing forgiveness too.

Science reflects that forgiveness could make a person happier, healthier, and more spiritual, however it does not come easy and should be practiced. The first step is deciding to forgive. Once the decision to forgive has been made, emotional forgiveness takes place as they are linked.

Evocative Results

The offenders were told the story of Jesus, Joseph, and Stephen in the Bible as their stories reflect the ultimate examples of true forgiveness. The Bible was a major source in the settings as it provides stories about failures and disappointments as a way to give hope to the hopeless. The researcher began in Gen 27 with the story of Jacob and Esau. The researcher

shared with the offenders the root to their discord typically begins with their family. This allowed space for the offenders to uncover their family history and recall the origin of the dysfunction within their perspective families. The majority of the offenders agreed and shared that the source of their contention stemmed from their upbringing. Most contributed stories about being yelled at or blamed for moral failures that were clearly not their fault i.e., being raped by a family member and disclosing to a parent that it happened and being told they did something to provoke it. At least ten offenders shared similar stories of being told by a parent to steal out of stores contributing to the reason they are incarcerated today. Most agree the behaviors taught by their parents or the people who raised them prevented the offenders from having a normal childhood. The damage done in their younger years was the catalyst to the behaviors shown today. There was more praise for misbehavior than consequences. Weekly Bible verses were given and committed to memory to assist the offenders during times of despair. An understanding that an individual can't control the situations that happens around them. We all fail at some point in life, but God is bigger than any failure. There can be comfort in knowing that God is with an individual. God knows and cares for all, Psalms 34:18-20.

It was noted in the one on ones that Forgiving does not mean an individual must forget. The offenders participated in an exercise called the Injustice Gap. In this exercise the offenders were to rank their reactions to the wrongs they have experienced from one to four from easiest to forgive (1) to hardest to forgive (4). Seventy-three offenders stated they found it hardest to forgive when the people who hurt them repeatedly stated they did not do anything wrong toward them. Thirty offenders found it easiest to forgive someone who could not see the wrong they had done toward them. All the offenders agreed that the effects of the wrong done against them really hurt them badly. They each ranked that question a four. Sixty-one offenders shared when tears

were involved in the apology it made the wrongdoing easiest to forgive. Forty- two offenders were not moved by the tears, in fact, the tears made the apology difficult to forgive. When an apology was followed by a kind gesture to help lessen the hurt the same sixty-one offenders stated it was easier to forgive, while forty-two offenders were not moved by the kind gesture some voicing that it was equivalent to “buying the way back into their lives.” Most of the offenders have unresolved issues with the wrongdoing which occurred in their lives which speaks to injustice gap that remains making it difficult to reach full forgiveness.¹²⁷

Injustice Gaps: easiest to forgive (1), hardest to forgive (4)

Hurt you deeply and yet repeatedly says, “I didn’t do anything wrong.”	
Didn’t really hurt you that badly.	
Hurt you deeply but cried and apologized sincerely	
Hurt you deeply but apologized and did something nice to make up for the hurt	

¹²⁷ Worthington, 13.

There are many strategies used to overcome shame and guilt; being aware of the difference between the two could construct a productive attitude towards letting go shame and guilt for good. The participants were given the researchers definition of shame and guilt. Shame is how a person feels about themselves and guilt is how a person's actions affect others. Guilty feelings come from doing something bad while shameful feelings come from thinking you as a person is bad. The offender participants were given several methods to overcome shame and guilt. They were first told to acknowledge the thoughts they have about shame and guilt. Being aware and identifying with feelings is the first step in achieving full potential in life. Second, the offenders were encouraged to spend one hour a day in meditation to explore where the feelings of shame and guilt stem from. The researcher provided Bibles to each offender and encouraged them to read the first two chapters of Ephesians and write down everything the chapters say they are. This exercise could change the way the offenders see themselves going forward.

The offenders were asked to journal what comes out of the meditation time because journaling has been known to be a liberating way to express thoughts and feelings. They were encouraged to stop expecting perfection from themselves and other people because it is unrealistic. Last, the participants were asked to consider other perspectives, debunk the shameful feelings by asking questions about why shame is present, instead of beating oneself up speak positivity. Positive self-talk counters negative self-talk and thoughts.¹²⁸

Developing a resilience to shame and guilt is possible when an individual decides to express the emotions that shame and guilt invoke rather than overlooking the feelings and the negative behaviors that accompany shame and guilt. At the base of each strategy is awareness when shame and guilt are rearing its ugly head. When this happens, it is necessary to practice

¹²⁸ Anthony Felix, *Shame and Guilt: Overcoming Shame and Guilt Step by Step Guide on How to Overcome Shame and Guilt for Good*, Fantonpublishers.com, 2019.

self-care, offer self-forgiveness don't allow time to lag immediately begin repairing thoughts and the narrative should change.

During a Bible study lesson a question was posed about feeling less than or shameful. The question was asked by one of the Caucasian offenders in her thirties. She wanted to know best practices to help her feel less shameful. The researcher shared the eleven disciplines with the offenders, explaining the disciplines are actions that motivates growth and leaves little room for negative thoughts about self and others. The disciplines were written on a board and discussed in detail for the purpose of clarity. It was established early on that practicing one or all of the eleven disciplines (reading the Bible, prayer, worship, evangelism, service, stewardship, fasting, silence and solitude, journaling, and learning) could aid in spiritual growth and combat feelings of being less than or shameful. More than half of the participants (78 to be exact) agreed to journal and pray more while ten offenders shared their commitment to reading and praying more. Fifteen of the offenders shared they already read, journal, and pray daily, and it helps them focus less on them. Also offered in the space was the importance of writing feelings down, writing poetry or letters to self, those who were wronged by them or who wronged them as it could alleviate the hurt.

While in one-on-ones a third chair was added to represent either the person they wanted to forgive, or the person they were seeking forgiveness from. In this exercise the offender (most with tears) poured out apologies or reasons they were ready to forgive. After the exercise the researcher asked the participants how they felt; a high percentage of them felt much better. Most shared they felt released from the hold they felt they were in, others expressed they felt lighter, never having experienced an exercise that allowed them to hypothetically address the person they wronged. Not surprisingly, those who wanted to forgive themselves struggled the most with

the exercise as it was themselves they were seeking forgiveness for. Through tears and profanity, expressions of unforgiveness were conveyed along with reasons why forgiveness would not be attainable for themselves.

Four different job families within the prison participated in the study, a case manager, social worker, mental health worker and a chaplain. While they are experts in their respective fields, they allowed the researcher to lead each group session. The employee volunteers were given a survey to grasp their understanding of forgiveness, guilt, and shame. Each of the job families selected works closely with the offenders and could be the voice of reason to enact a pivot in how the offender shows up in their lives and in their communities upon release. Though each answered the questions differently they all seek similar results for the offenders, freedom from anything holding them back from becoming productive citizens. The chaplain and case manager were present for every Bible study and one-on-one while the other employee participants sat in sessions as their schedule allowed.

When asked for the correlation between forgiveness and trauma, the case manager recognized there is a correlation however could not verbalize how they correlate. The case manager did offer that “in order for individuals to be productive after a traumatic occurrence the process of forgiveness is necessary.” The social worker answered the question by recognizing the correlation, however, focused on the trauma part. The social worker stated that trauma interrupts an individual’s being, therefore, it is important to address the trauma and place forgiveness on the backburner until the tools to address the trauma have been successfully utilized. The mental health worker also agreed there is a correlation between forgiveness and trauma adding that forgiveness plays a significant role in letting go of traumatic experiences, however, forgiveness is not mentioned in trauma therapy because the person receiving the care could think the person

helping them is condoning what happened to them. The chaplain agreed there is a correlation, also offering forgiveness makes you whole.

The researcher asked the employee participants if they believed people understand the concept of forgiveness and to expound on their understanding of forgiveness. The answers to the first portion of the question were similar for each participant. They each stated people don't fully understand the concept of forgiveness the chaplain added the evidence is found in the amount of hate in the world. Answers varied as the participants defined forgiveness, the case manager defined forgiveness as an action word, and giving a person or yourself a second chance. The social worker pointed out how imperfect people are adding that forgiveness is defined as recognizing human fragilities. The mental health worker demarcated forgiveness as a way to heal physically and mentally. The chaplain's understanding of forgiveness provided a more religious answer. Per the chaplain forgiveness is the act of showing mercy to yourself or someone who has wronged an individual. The key to forgiving someone is offering to forgive when the person is not deserving.

When the researcher met with the employee participants for a round table discussion about the steps they take if an offender expresses issues with forgiveness, guilt, and, shame it was quickly discovered it is a topic that comes to the forefront daily. The standard practice in the prison is to pass the offender off to a person who could best meet their particular need. The chain of command for the offender is to see their case manager first who will refer them to a social worker who then refers them to a mental health or chaplain service worker. The focus per the employee participants is to get the offender through their time in prison. There is a recidivism program, however, it has been inactive for two or more years within this particular prison. There has been no activity, no community involvement, no trainings, no one sitting in the seat to push

the prison to require the job families that spends the most time with the offenders to dig deeper. Though case managers, social workers, mental health workers and chaplains are available upon request they realistically do not give adequate time to the root of all the contention in the offender's life, however, they hear about it in every interaction. The offender's express feelings of unforgiveness, shame, and guilt in most interactions. The employees agree they do their best to aid the offenders, however, they all agree they pass the offender to the chaplain as a last resort.

The researcher asked how difficult it would be to work together to assist the offender especially after witnessing first-hand how deep the hurt runs and the scars cut the answer given across the board was attempts will be made however, realistically time is a factor. The prison desires for the employees to pour enough into the offenders that they behave while there, not enough time is given to the employees to spend with the offenders because caseloads are huge. The time spent with the offenders while conducting this research provided clarity to the employees who shared what was learned with their perspective departments.

With all the specialist working within the prison, behavioral specialist, case managers, chaplains, social workers, psychiatrist/psychologists, academic advisors/teachers, and substance abuse counselors, training should be continuous the training should also be inclusive to involve each job family allowing each job family to glean from one another and develop a commonality which is to make the offenders better individuals that will be better for their families and communities and never return to prison.

The recidivism rate is high especially among female offenders. Though the goal should never be to come to prison to obtain tools to cope with or identify the source of discord in an individual's life the hope should be that while incarcerated a person could take advantage of opportunities that could enhance their lives upon release, making their desire to commit crimes

less possible and active productive lives more possible. The goal of the researcher was to bring to the attention of the people who work closely with offenders the need for adequate counseling on FGS which could counter any unproductive behaviors and essentially reduce the recidivism rate and create productive citizens.

The participants were asked if they believed counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame could help the offenders and reduce the recidivism rate. The participants all agreed that counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame could be beneficial. The case manager offered that programs should be created that focus on FGS. "It could be an effective way to address some unresolved issues." The social worker added it should be mandatory for all offenders to take a workshop on FGS because it is a "continual process that requires action." The mental health employee offered having the workshops would be great, addressing the unresolved issues could prove beneficial, however, desire to change to allow themselves to be vulnerable enough to "be real with self and others" is a necessary step that can't be ignored.

The question was posed regarding measures the staff should implement to ensure the offender can be vulnerable and not appear weak. The chaplain chimed in by stating have Bible Studies share with the offender's real people who have suffered from FGS allow the veil to fall on their vulnerability and reflect their outcome. "Forgiveness, guilt, and shame is a protective mechanism used to prevent suffering further suffering or cause suffering, unveil the moral injury and like the serpent it will go away." People usually cover their mistakes and hide away from their reality because they find it easier than facing the discord and addressing the underlying issue not realizing confronting the issue could bring spiritual freedom and a better future for themselves, their families, and communities.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implication of the study is that counseling women in prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame should become a common practice because the underestimation of attention on the topic accounts for the high recidivism rate. One major implication of this convergent study is that forgiveness can improve an individual's mental/physical health and wellbeing according to the exercises completed by the offenders during group sessions. Worthington's REACH model can provide the framework for counselors to study and conceptualize programs that will refine the offender's mindset. Garson's Structural Equation Model (SEM) provides the framework for the study and establishes the plausibility of counseling women in prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. The SEM computer program called AMOS was utilized to collect the data necessary to obtain a conclusive analysis.

The efficacy of counseling in prison is indomitable because the SEM model provides the value in counseling. The SEM model is utilized to determine whether a direct correlation between forgiveness, guilt, and shame and reoffending in the female offender population.

This study was intended to provide insight on the need for counseling women in prison on FGS. Prison staff on all levels could garner awareness on how effective counseling on FGS benefits the female offender and reduces recidivism. Utilizing the cognitive therapy approach allowed the women to freely express themselves. A significant decrease in self-inflicting injuries, prison fights, and expressions of depression and anxiety is the result. This research on FGS was evaluated through Bible Studies on Jesus, Joseph, and Stephen, group sessions and one-on-one

counseling with the researcher and a volunteer staff participant. One hundred and three female offenders volunteered for the study on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. Each participant received individual counseling on FGS. The group sessions, and underutilized literature on counseling women in prison on FGS assisted in moving the needle forward toward healing. This study attempted to close the gap in the literature by offering to view forgiveness and the release of guilt and shame as a move forward in reconciling with behaviors unbecoming of a person made in the image of God. This study looked at the impact in its totality on the benefits of counseling women in prison, specifically, how counseling could affect the women from a social and emotional standpoint.

Although guilt and shame were expressed by all the offender volunteers each offender walked away with a positive view on the need to forgive and discard of shameful thoughts, feelings, and guilt. Based on the data the offenders found participating in the study beneficial, garnering coping skills that could assist them when faced with situations that could trigger feelings that cause unforgiveness, guilt, and shame to become prevalent in their lives again.

Four employees that work closely with the offenders participated in the study and they each gained a new perspective as relates to the importance of counseling women in prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame. The employee volunteers agreed that to successfully assist female offenders with their moral injuries those that have access to the offenders must understand FGS and participate in trainings.

Practical Implications

It would be beneficial to continue the examination of counseling women in prison on FGS in the prison system. It could increase the value in the offender and decrease the anger and hurt felt for those who have caused the pain. This study suggests counseling women in prison on

FGS could result in successful reentry to society, spiritual freedom, and a reduction on the recidivism rate. The potential for pragmatic change is apparent on several levels, practical, individual, and societal. People who suffer trauma are more likely to hold on to unforgiveness and have difficulty with feelings of guilt and shame. A logical reason for working with offenders on FGS is to change their view of self, reduce negative thoughts and destructive behaviors. Understanding triggers and the stress of holding the negativity could help lessen the likelihood of carrying future offenses. The participants understood they had to make a conscious decision regarding how long they will internalize an offense against them. It would be practical to examine how continuous Bible studies on FGS could reconstruct the female offender's mindset. With Biblical examples of forgiveness, guilt, and shame in the Bible the offenders could become noticeably less aggressive, agitated, and likely to project anger onto someone else. The offenders admitted to feeling a change in their attitude about the person or situation that caused them pain in the past. Most mended relationships with family and friends they felt were contributors to their experience.

The employee volunteers found value in the offender's willingness to be open about their past. Showing interest in the female offender's desire to reconcile their emotions added an additional extension of care the offenders were not familiar with. The employees were motivated to spend more time ensuring those they assist with moral injury because they witnessed the freedom that came with releasing unforgiveness, guilt, and shame.

The participants became aware of their ability to persevere and utilize the strength they possess. They attribute their current circumstance as a reflection of their resilience. The offenders learned to close the gap on the dissonance unforgiveness, guilt and, shame creates between their past and present.

Strengths/ Weaknesses

Strengths

A few strong points of my research include the fact there is very little literature on the topic of counseling women in prison on FGS. With the exception of Joycelyn Pollock who wrote a book on counseling women in prison, no literature specifies a particular area of focus to counsel on. Due to this fact my research stands out and can be considered an authority on the subject. An additional strength in my research can be seen in the research itself. Meeting with the female offenders and the employee volunteers solidified my purpose for conducting the study. The female offenders allowed themselves to be fully present, vulnerable and open to what was offered in the space by way of coping skills, knowledge about the importance of not being stuck in a past that is painful and spiritual freedom.

The employee volunteers walked away with a renewed sense of purpose to be more effective in their job families. They understand due to the responses given during group and individual sessions that women in prison respond best to treatment. They thrive off being able to meet with someone who will pour into them and provide insight on how they can become better human beings. The employee volunteers all agreed that counseling women in prison on FGS could prove beneficial to the women, their families and community.

The activities done in the groups were offered through literature from Spoetra and Worthington. The activities were enriching and provoked the offender participants to become highly interested in full recovery, mind, body, and spirit and the employee participants to help the offenders reach a level of freedom that enhances their desire never to return to prison or make the most of the time they have while in prison. The exercises were meant to enact the

participants ability to recognize when an individual suffers from FGS and how to handle when they encompass an experience that could cause them pain and aim for a different reaction than they have used in the past. The participants, both the offender and employees are able to apply the concepts learned to their daily lives and in their professions. They are also able to pay it forward by advising others.

Weaknesses

There are a few weaknesses worth mentioning, first, one of the strengths of the paper is also a weakness. Because there is not enough literature on the subject of counseling women in prison on FGS it was difficult to cite literature on the topic which created obstacles for the researcher elevating the researcher to glean from literature on counseling, forgiveness, guilt and shame separately, combining the information together to inform the reader on the importance of the topic. The lack of literature also reflects how unimportant the topic is to society, therefore, yielding change in the field may be obsolete.

Another weakness in the study, not enough was written about an aftercare process for the offenders who suffer with FGS. Without continuous work in the area of FGS female offenders could revert back to a familial state of being.

Finally, the most obvious hurdle was the researcher was only able to observe and facilitate a small number of offenders. One hundred three female offenders participated in a facility that houses 1500-1700 offenders and only four employees volunteered from the facility and the prison has four hundred employees that make contact and could make a difference in the lives of the female offender.

Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that counseling women in prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame allows them to work through pain from their past, promotes spiritual freedom and may reduce recidivism. Counseling on FGS can improve female offenders emotional and physical being, motivating them to reenter society with a positive view on life. For those with life sentences, counseling will reframe behaviors that are deemed counterproductive and provide the potential for better behaved long-termers. During the development of this study several recommendations for future research were identified. One area that could prove beneficial, create programs that address FGS, i.e., Bible studies, spirituality groups that allow women of all faith denominations to participate in discussions on women of the Bible and how they overcame adversity. There was an overwhelming feeling of gratefulness on the Bible studies on FGS from the offenders and the employee participants. Additionally, research on training programs for prison employees that work with offenders in a counseling capacity could impact the care provided.

Potential research could focus on how much time is allocated for the employees to spend with the offenders when issues FGS are detected. The service provided should not be like serving fast food there should be care/concern and an allotted amount of time placed into supporting the offenders (the get them in and out process is ineffective). The goal should always be to help them work through their transgressions and become productive people.

Additionally, research on the offender's support system and the role they play in helping influence the offenders process on FGS could contribute to the study. The offenders support system can provide a different perspective that could prove instrumental in getting the offender reacclimated to society.

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Appendix A

June 16, 2021

Counseling Women in Prison on Forgiveness, Guilt, and Shame

Dear Participant:

As a student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to shed light on the importance of counseling on forgiveness, guilt, and shame in the prison system to help the female prison population with achieving spiritual freedom. This researcher will ask questions such as This research will ask questions such as Can you define forgiveness, guilt, and shame? How were your feelings and mistakes handled growing up? Were they forgiven, judged, or punished? Do you find it difficult to let go of the past? I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Participants must suffer from an inability to forgive and to let go of feelings of guilt and shame. Participants, if willing, will be asked to relive past trauma to ensure present healing. Participants will complete a questionnaire (30 minutes) and take part in a Bible study during counseling sessions. The meetings will be for one hour three times a week for three months. Your name will be collected as part of your participation, but your identity will be kept confidential.

In order to participate, please write your name on the sign-up sheet in the dorm.

A consent document will be given to you at the time of the screening interview if you are chosen to participate. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

If you are chosen to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent document and return it to me at the conclusion of the screening interview.

Sincerely,

Chaplain Key

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Female Offenders

- Define forgiveness, guilt, and shame?
- Do you find it difficult to let go of the past?
- What or who was the catalyst for your behavior?
- How were your feelings and mistakes handled growing up? Were they forgiven, judged, or punished?
- Could you write yourself an empathetic letter of understanding, appreciation, and forgiveness? What would the letter say?
- Do you think the pain you experienced in your past contributed to where you are today?
- What are your hopes?
- If you could get help with the internal scars you have would you seek the help?
- Have you ever spoken to anyone about your past pain?
- How do you define spiritual freedom?

Appendix C

Survey Questionnaire for Staff

What is the correlation between forgiveness and trauma?

Do you think people understand the concept of forgiveness?

What steps would you take if an offender expressed issues with forgiveness, guilt, and shame?

Do you believe the prison counselor could use training on forgiveness, guilt, and shame?

Do you believe counseling on forgiveness, guilt and shame could help the offenders and reduce the recidivism rate?

Appendix D

The Risk Assessment Tool

Offender's Employment/ School History

Has the offender ever been fired from a job?

Has the offender ever been expelled from school?

Has the offender ever been in the same job for a year?

If self-employed did the offender have a tax-ID

Offender's Life Skills

What activities did the offender like to do with family- were these positive activities?

Offender's Childhood

While growing up was the offender ever placed in child protective custody?

Did neighbors or other relatives have to provide food for the offender because the parents could not?

Did the offender take on the role of parent or hold parental responsibilities while growing up?

Did the adults or the offender abuse drugs and alcohol in the childhood home?

Did the offender get punished for things as a child that appeared to be for no reason?

Current Social Support Situation

Who was the offender living with before incarceration?

Does the offender believe their family will stay in contact while they are incarcerated?

Can the offender rely on their family for emotional/financial support?

Has the offender had a protective order against family?

Do they recall arguments or fights in the household?

Does the thought of family trigger a need to regress to criminal behavior?

Was the offender in an abusive (physical or emotional) relationship?

Offender's Housing Prior to Incarceration

Was the offender homeless?

Did the offender have basic utilities?

Does the offender intend on returning to the residence after incarceration?

Substance Abuse

Are there track marks or visible signs of drug abuse on the offender?

Has the offender tested positive for drugs since being incarcerated?

Has the offender self-reported an increase or decrease in drug use?

Offenders Thinking, Behavior and Attitude

Does the offender have assaultive infractions or assaultive crimes?

Does the offender think before reacting?

Does the offender have a history of repeated infractions, violations, or crime?

Does the offender appear argumentative?

Appendix E

Consent Form for Offenders

Title of the Project: Counseling Women in Prison on Forgiveness, Guilt and Shame

Principal Investigator: Chaplain Key

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age, and a current female offender. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is shed light on the importance of counseling women in prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame to reduce recidivism and possibly bring spiritual freedom to the female offender.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Be open to speaking about your past for a minimum of thirty minutes to an hour.
2. Be open to group settings where participants will openly discuss past trauma for a minimum of an hour.
3. Be open to individual counsel for a minimum of an hour.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are spiritual freedom.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include the reduction of recidivism.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher[s] will have access to the records.

Participant responses will be anonymous. / Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of [pseudonyms/codes]./ Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.].

Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Interviews/focus groups] will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher[s] will have access to these recordings.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as chaplain for the prison. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the prison facility. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials.] Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Chaplain Key. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me through mail or the officer on duty to receive a face-to-face contact.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix F

Consent Form for Employees

Title of the Project: Counseling Women in Prison on Forgiveness, Guilt, and Shame

Principal Investigator: Chaplain Key

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be an employee of the prison. You must work as a capacity of a social worker, case manager and mental health employee. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is shed light on the importance of counseling women in prison on forgiveness, guilt, and shame to reduce recidivism and possibly bring spiritual freedom to the female offender.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

4. Complete a survey, which should take one hour.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants may adopt a more helpful way of assisting the incarcerated women in the prison. Participants may become more familiar with the female offenders and desire to dig deeper with those not chosen for the study.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

There are no risks involved in this study.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. The surveys will be the only written information collected from the participants. Names will be placed on the surveys, but they will be removed and replaced with pseudonyms to protect participant privacy.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as chaplain for the prison. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the prison facility. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Chaplain Key. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me through the company email.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

June 28, 2021

Lashawnda Key
Mario Garcia

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY20-21-349 Counseling Women in Prison on Forgiveness, Guilt, and Shame

Dear Lashawnda Key, Mario Garcia:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: June 28, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office