



REAL HOMES

REAL HELP

REAL WORK

*Stella's
Circle*

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Hope Lives Here

Trauma Work with Female Prisoners

July 31, 2016

St John's

PTSD Multidisciplinary Conference

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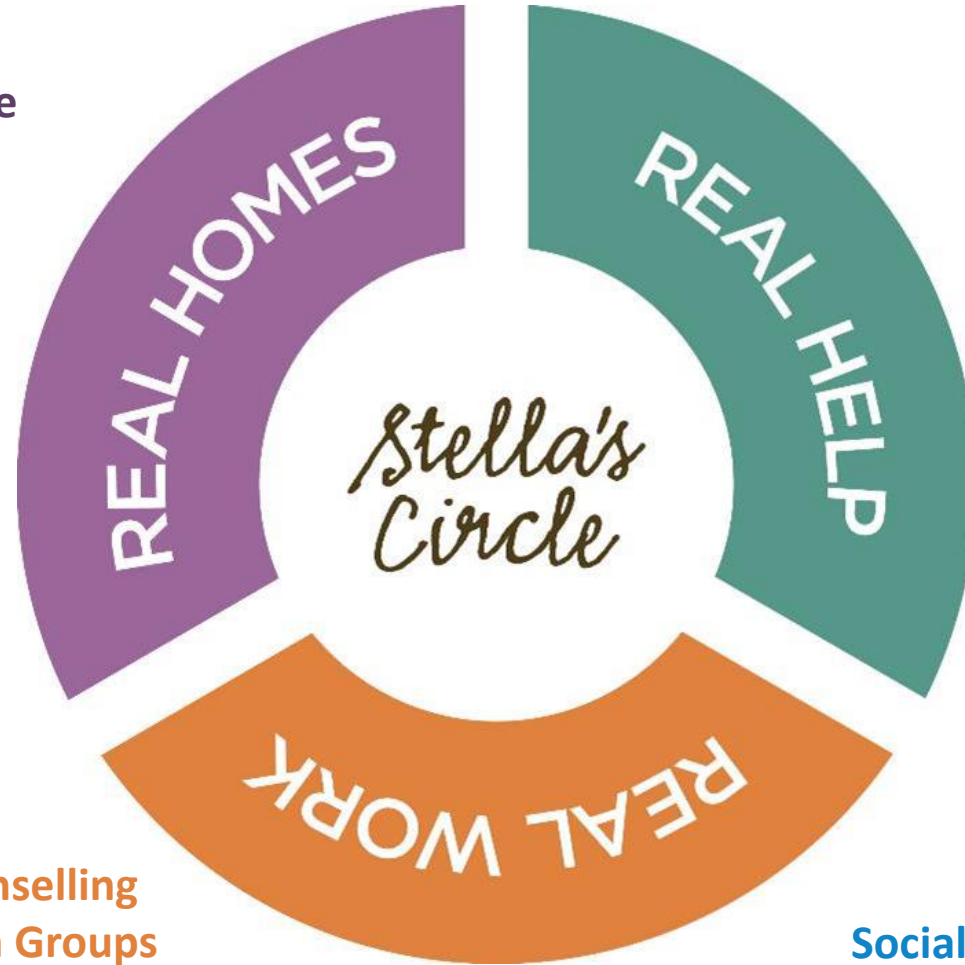
About Stella's Circle

- Mission: Transforming lives through Real Homes, Real Help, Real Work
- Founded by Dr. Stella Burry in 1945 with opening of Emmanuel House
- 125 staff
- Annual operating budget of \$8.6 million
- Serves 1000 participants annually



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Naomi Centre
Brian Martin Housing Resource Centre
Jess's Place
Front Step (with Choices for Youth)



Intake Assessments & Individual Counselling
Employment Counselling & Transition Groups
ABE Level 1
Work Experience

Community Support Program
Just Us Women's Centre
Emmanuel House



Social Enterprises: Hungry Heart Café & Catering, Clean Start,

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Just Us Women's Centre

- Provides support to women who have been in conflict with the law
- Individual and group counselling in the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women and in the community
- 2 Social workers and 1 outreach worker



Women in Prison

- Poor, under educated, have limited access to employment and are living in poor housing conditions
- 80% of imprisoned women in Canada are convicted of economic related charges such as fraud or theft under \$5000
- Its is estimated that 90% of women in prison have been involved in drug or alcohol use. Two thirds of women with substance use issues also report mental health issues
- Incarcerated women have typically experienced multiple traumas

*Statistics are from Canadian Association of E Fry Societies

Prison and the Body

- Frigon (2003) theorizes that women's bodies in prisons are both *sites of control* and *sites of resistance*.
- Control:
 - “Degradation ceremonies”
 - Surveillance
 - Sensory deprivation
- Resistance
 - Sense of safety
 - Access to self care
 - Body modification.

Prison as Trauma

- Loss of freedom
- Disconnected from family
- Lack of control over physical space
- Security measures as triggering
- Grief and loss
- Withdrawal from substances
- Reminders of past traumas

Process of Beginning the Work

- Our knowledge of trauma was basic and more intuitive than informed until we attended training with Stephanie Covington in 2013
- Spoke to the reality of women's lives- interpersonal trauma
- Importance of safety first

Stages of Trauma Treatment

- First stage- safety
- Second stage- remembering
- Third stage - reconnection

Challenges in Prison

- Fears of staff, admin
- Logistics: space, privacy etc time to train staff
- Length of sentences
- Our own concerns that we would be wrong and what staff feared, would indeed happen
- Creating warm space
- Fears of the women
- Women's need to please

What we Learned

- Acknowledgement of trauma can have a huge impact on healing
- Women want it ..ask about it and attend
- No increase in negative behaviors
- No issues reported from staff
- It matters
- Perpetrators and victims
- Multi layered experience

Quotes

- “I realized how many other people have been through similar situations as me and feel the same about it, I thought I was alone as in no body else has felt that way, but they have and they have survived.”
- “It allows you to recognize what is making you feel the most tortured over and it helps you start coming to terms with your tormenting issue.”
- “I was able to share my story without an emotional breakdown.” (in response to “what did you learn that surprised you?)

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Future

- Evaluation
- Male needs

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Amy Sheppard & Karen Pennell

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References

- Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. (ND). *Fact Sheets in PDF* <http://www.caefs.ca/resources/fact-sheets-in-pdf/>
- Frigon, S. (2003). Body talk: Chronicles of women's experiences in prison. In Martinez & M. Stuart. (Eds.), *Out of the ivory tower: Feminist research for social change*. (pp. 131-153). Toronto: Sumach Press.
- Frigon, S. (2007). Do women's bodies matter? In G.C. Pavlich, & M. J. Hird (Eds.), *Questioning sociology: A Canadian perspective*. (pp. 239-251). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford UP.