Gender-Responsive Programming and Evaluation for Females in the Criminal Justice System: A Shift from *What Works?* to *What is the Work?*

By

Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
Center for Gender and Justice
La Jolla, CA

and

Barbara E. Bloom, Ph.D.
Administration of Justice Department
San Jose State University

There has been much debate about the effectiveness of correctional interventions since the mid-1970s when Robert Martinson's (1974) landmark article "What Works? Questions and Answers About Penal Reform" was published. Martinson provided a meta-analysis of over 200 studies of correctional programs and his overriding conclusion was that rehabilitative efforts had no "appreciable effect on recidivism" (p. 25). As a result of this finding, the phrase "nothing works" was embraced by conservatives and liberals alike to support their respective positions on rehabilitation.

A Shift from "*Nothing Works*" to *What Works?*

In the aftermath of "nothing works," criminologists, sociologists and psychologists have been attempting to develop new theories and approaches for correctional interventions in order to answer the question*: What works*? Since the early 1980s, researchers have documented evidence supporting the positive impact of correctional interventions (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Andrews & Kiessling, 1980; Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990; Andrews, Zinger et al., 1990; Cullen & Gendreau, 1989; Gendreau & Ross, 1987; Palmer, 1996; Gendreau, 1996; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996). This evidence has included individual program evaluations and meta-analyses of program evaluations. Research focusing on "what works?" has reaffirmed the traditional rehabilitation goal of corrections.

Throughout the 1990s, much of the research on correctional interventions has been conducted by Canadian psychologists who argue that it is possible to target the appropriate group of offenders with the appropriate type of treatment. Gendreau, Andrews, Bonta and others in the "Ottawa School" have developed a theory called the

"psychology of criminal conduct." The psychology of criminal conduct is a theory based on the general psychology of human behavior. The antecedents to the psychology of criminal conduct include the following: (1) the radical behavioral perspective of B.F. Skinner, (2) the cognitive-behavioral perspective of Albert Bandura and other social learning theorists, (3) the early work of symbolic interactionist George Herbert Mead, (4) the work of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck during the 1940s, and (5) the psychosocial bonding perspective of Travis Hirschi in the late 1960s (Lauen, 1997).

One of the primary objectives of the psychology of criminal conduct is to understand why people vary in the number, type, and variety of criminal acts in which they engage. The emphasis of correctional programming is placed on criminogenic risks and needs that are directly related to recidivism. The belief is that treating offenders reduces recidivism.
The philosophy is that interventions should be concentrated on those offenders who represent the greatest risk. The focus on risk is related to the development of effective methods of assessing and managing 'risky' individuals and 'risky' behaviors. Risk factors within this context refer to personal characteristics that can be assessed prior to treatment and also predict future criminal behavior (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990).

The assessment of risk continues to play a critical role in correctional management, supervision, and programming. However, concerns have been raised about the reliability and validity of risk assessment instruments as they relate to women and people of color. Hannah-Moffat (1999) argues that the concept of risk is gendered and 'racialised'. Most risk assessment instruments are developed for white males and the use of these tools with women and nonwhite offender populations raises empirical and theoretical questions (p. 6).

As Deputy Commissioner for Women, Correctional Service of Canada, Nancy Stableforth (1999) asserts:

> There are respected and well known researchers who believe that criminogenic needs of women offenders is a concept that requires further investigation; that the parameters of effective programs for women offenders have yet to receive basic validation; that women's pathways to crime have not received sufficient research attention; and that methodologies appropriate for women offender research must be specifically developed and selected to be responsible not only to gender issues, but also to the reality of the small number of women (p.5).

The emphasis on criminogenic factors tends to locate the crime problem within the individual and does not allow for a macro-level analysis of crime. Nor does it examine the behavior of criminal justice agents or agencies (McMahon, 1999). Kendall (1994a; 1994b) stresses the danger of therapeutic approaches that locate the problem within the individual and claims that in correctional settings, there is still a power imbalance between staff and inmates. As she points out, a psychological approach reduces the problems from the "political to the personal" (p. 2). An examination of the role of criminal justice agents and agencies in terms of determining who ends up in the criminal

justice system is called for. Additionally, what is the risk introduced by the environment or the individual conducting the assessment?

Bloom (1998) questions: Does women's offending relate to criminogenic risks and needs, or is it a factor of the complex interconnection of race, class, gender, trauma, or both? The philosophy of criminogenic risks and needs does not consider factors such as economic marginalization, the role of patriarchy, sexual victimization, or "women's place" in society. Nor does the existing literature address the concerns of those scholars who study women offenders. For example, studies of risk assessment practices suggest that the risk posed by women offenders is quite different than the risks posed by their male counterparts. Additionally, most classification systems tend to use a woman's offense as a primary predictor of risk; however, research indicates that a woman's offense often has little relationship to her adjustment to prison and is also a weak predictor of success after release to the community (Shaw & Dubois, 1995). Instead of criminogenic factors, women's risk for re-offending may be tied to the lack of transitional programs and support systems which can help them reintegrate into their communities.

Crime Myths

Crime myths have permeated correctional policy, practice and research. Collectively, myths create our social reality of crime and justice, determining who ends up in the criminal justice system. These myths or beliefs become part of a society's cultural codes and they become reified by the criminal justice system and society at-large. Historically, a myth that has been perpetuated is that crime is an individual problem and conceived this way, there is no social or structural solution to the problem of crime. The relationship between the lawbreakers and the law enforcers is seldom discussed in criminological theory, nor are the social problems or factors that often impact on individual offenders explored. Economic inequality, poverty, unemployment, racism, and sexism are conditions that can lead to crime but are often ignored while we search for solutions within the individual.

Additionally, crime myths change our perception and understanding of crime and criminal behavior by offering simplistic solutions to complex problems. When crime control policy is developed based on myth or misconception, it has the effect of diverting attention and resources from the real social problems to simplistic individualistic solutions. When crime myths become the lens with which we view those who violate the law, they impact program philosophy and design. Offenders are stereotyped as pathological, deviant, antisocial, and their behavior is analyzed.

What Works?: **Asking Questions**

Several studies highlight the importance of designing research that examines the effects of both treatment components and approaches to the delivery of treatment in programs for women offenders (Austin et al., 1992; Koons et al., 1997). Elements such as a multidimensional approach, individualized treatment plans, opportunities for competency and skill building and providing a continuum of care, are treatment components that can be included in such an evaluation design. The information necessary to reflect an

intervention's complexities or potential for success goes beyond simply asking how successful are the behavioral approaches.

Traditionally, program effectiveness has been measured by a reduction in recidivism. A growing number of researchers assert that the use of recidivism as a measure of program success is problematic (Hudson, 1987; Jones, 1996; Petersilia & Turner, 1993; Kendall, 1998; Bloom, 1998). The fact that an individual does not recidivate does not fully elucidate other important aspects of the person's life. For example, a formerly incarcerated woman may be having difficulty finding employment, regaining custody of her children, or she may be in an abusive relationship. These factors may be more important, telling us more about the quality of a woman's life and her risk for recidivism.

The assumption underlying the emphasis on actuarial measures is that program effectiveness can best be determined by more precise scientific methods. However, Kendall (and others) cautions that sole reliance on such methods is misguided. She claims that "actuarial methods tend to pathologize and individualize women's lawbreaking rather than contextualize it" (1998, p. 367).

In order to provide a basis of verification for certain approaches to individual law breaking behavior, some researchers continue to ask the question: *What works?* Gendreau, Andrews, and others developed their theory of criminal conduct which is driven by certain assumptions about criminal offenders (i.e., criminal thinking, antisocial personalities, etc.) with the intent of reaffirming rehabilitation. While this aspect of the work appears successful, it is focused on a specific population and doesn't look at programs, settings, and systems. Myths can only be challenged by critical analysis. The researcher's frame of reference or theoretical perspective will guide the way in which the research is conducted. The methods used to evaluate program effectiveness will depend on the type of data that researchers regard as valuable. Ultimately, the questions we ask and how we ask them will influence the answers we get.

What is the Work?

Clearly, the "what works?" scholarship does not accurately reflect what is known about women in the criminal justice system nor what is needed in order to create gender-responsive programs for this population. Thus, we suggest a shift in the question from *What works?* to *What is the work?*

Our response to *What is the work?* is:

> **Prevention**
> - Create a community response to the issues that impact women's lives and increase their risk for criminal justice involvement. In order to prevent women from entering the system, community-based substance abuse treatment, economic support, and a community response to violence against women should be provided.

Do no harm
- For women who have criminal justice involvement, create alternatives to secure custody. Modify standard policies and procedures (restraint, body searches, isolation) that often retraumatize survivors of prior abuse. Develop a culture/environment within correctional settings which deems abuse by staff to be unacceptable and culpable.

Create gender-responsive services
- For women who are in the system, provide services (both in context, i.e. culture/environment, and content) that are comprehensive and relate to the reality of women's lives. Programs should take into consideration the larger social issues of poverty, race, and gender inequalities, as well as individual factors that impact women in the criminal justice system. Services should also be responsive to the cultural backgrounds of women (Bloom & Covington, 1998).

Build community support
- Develop a system of support within our communities that provides assistance to women (housing, employment, transportation, family reunification, childcare, drug and alcohol treatment, peer support, and aftercare) who are returning to their communities.

New Science

In order to do "the work," it is important to have a framework of thought that provides the foundation of a theory-in-use model for women in the criminal justice system. What is needed is a scientific model that can undergird both programming and evaluation, as well as integrate theory and practice. For over twenty years, thinkers have seen that a science based on a physical science model was inadequate for understanding the workings of a human system. Corporate America has been one of the largest consumers of research methodology to study, predict, and analyze human behavior and systems. Perhaps the criminal justice system can learn from the gurus of the business world. For example, the following statements reflect a shift within that field:

> "…the study of organizations would never be on the right track until they abandoned their long-standing commitment to Newtonian thinking and started to view human organizations through the lens of modern science, especially quantum physics and evolutionary biology. To express that belief I always like to quote a phrase attributed to Gregory Bateson that says 'most of our problems arise from the difference between the way man thinks and the way nature works' " (Johnson, 1997, p.2).

> "Dr. Deming spoke in unmistakable, quantum terms when he referred to 'the crisis' in our organizational lives as a crisis of perception. The crisis would not be resolved, in his view, with mere tools and techniques – only with new thinking. He made it quite clear that the way 'out of the crisis'

was only through a deep transformation in the way we think about ourselves, about other humans, and about the world we inhabit" (Johnson, 1997, p.3).

" … describing the world through any mechanistic set of measurement is like partaking of a meal by eating the menu" (Bateson, 1980, p.56).

Given the shifts that are occurring in other fields and the paradigm shift that is occurring from 17th century western science to the new sciences, we are proposing that the work with female offenders be grounded in the new sciences. The word "paradigm" has been described as "the basic way of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and doing associated with a particular vision of reality" (Harman, 1976). A paradigm tells most people, most of the time, what's real and what's not, what's important and what's not, and how things are related to one another. "A paradigm is more than a dry mental map – it is our experienced window onto the world that shapes how we see and understand the nature of reality, our sense of self, and our feelings of social connection and purpose" (Elgin, 1999, p.56).

We are making a shift from the science and the assumptions reflected in the "what works?" literature with its focus on prediction and control to a science based on holism, systemic thinking, and interconnection.

Over the years, social scientists have incorporated aspects of the physical sciences into their methodology in order to create greater legitimacy. However, science has changed. If we want to continue to draw from the sciences to create organizations and programs, to design research, and to formulate hypotheses about planning, human nature, and change processes, then we need to ground our work in the new science of the twentieth century, not the seventeenth century. This is the science we will need for the twenty-first century. The new science research referred to comes from the disciplines of physics, biology, and chemistry, and from chaos and complexity theory (Bohm, 1980; Capra, 1976; Sheldrake, 1981).

Scientists in these different disciplines are questioning whether the world can be explained by the mechanistic science created in the seventeenth century, most notably by Sir Isaac Newton. In the machine model, one understands parts. The assumption is that by understanding the parts, one can understand the whole. The Newtonian model of the world is characterized by materialism and reductionism.

Margaret Wheatley states, "In new science, the underlying currents are a movement toward holism, toward understanding the system as a system and giving primary value to the relationships that exist among seemingly discrete parts" (1992, p.9). Donella Meadows, a systems thinker, quotes an ancient Sufi teaching that captures this shift in focus: "You think because you understand *one* you must understand *two*, because one and one make two. But you must also understand *and*" (1982, p.23). As we begin to view systems from this perspective, we focus on connections, on phenomena that can't be reduced to cause and effect, and on the constant flux of dynamic processes. As stated

previously, thinkers are beginning to see that a science based on a physical science model is simply not adequate as a means for understanding the workings of complex human systems. " A living system is not a machine. Treating it as if it were causes harm to the system's long term performance and ultimately threatens its survival" (Johnson, 1998, p.1).

Sociorationalism

This recent development in science has created a movement away from mechanistic research designs based on the logical positivist idea of "certainty through science" and a shift toward the "sociorationalist" metatheory of science (Gergen, 1982). Table 1 summarizes and contrasts the commonly held assumptions of sociorationalism and logical empiricist views of science. It is sociorationalism that we are using as the scientific framework of thought for the development of programming and evaluation for women offenders.

Table 1. Comparison of Logical Empiricist and Socio-Rationalist Conceptions of Social Science

Dimension for Comparison	*Logical Empiricism*	*Socio-Rationalism*
1. Primary Function of Science	Enhance goals of understanding, prediction, and control by discerning general laws or principles governing the relationship among units of observable phenomena.	Enhance understanding in the sense of assigning meaning to something, thus creating its status through the use of concepts. Science is a means for expanding flexibility and choice in cultural evolution.
2. Theory of Knowledge and Mind	Exogenic - grants priority to the external world in the generation of human knowledge (i.e., the preeminence of objective fact). Mind is a mirror.	Endogenic – holds the processes of mind and symbolic interaction as preeminent source of human knowledge. Mind is both a mirror and a lamp.
3. Perspective on Time	Assumption of temporal irrelevance: searches for transhistorical principles.	Assumption of historically and contextually relevant meanings; existing regularities in social order are contingent on prevailing meaning systems.
4. Assuming Stability of Social Patterns	Social phenomena are sufficiently stable, enduring, reliable and replicable to allow for lawful principles.	Social order is fundamentally unstable. Social phenomena are guided by cognitive heuristics, limited only by the human imagination; the social

order is a subject matter
capable of infinite variation
through the linkage of ideas
and action.

5. Value Stance	Separation of fact and values. Possibility of objective knowledge through behavioral observation.	Social sciences are fundamentally nonobjective. Any behavioral event is open to virtually any interpretive explanation. All interpretation is filtered through prevailing values of a culture. "There is no description without prescription."

Dimension for Comparison	*Logical Empiricism*	*Socio-Rationalism*
6. Features of "Good" Theory	Discovery of transhistorically valid principles; a theory's correspondence with fact	Degree to which theory furnishes alternatives for social innovation and thereby opens vistas for action; expansion of "the realm of the possible."
7. Criteria for Confirmation or Verification (Life of a Theory)	Logical consistency and empirical prediction; subject to falsification.	Persuasive appeal, impact, and overall generative capacity; subject to community agreement; truth is a product of a community of truth makers.
8. Role of Scientist	Impartial bystander and dispassionate spectator of the inevitable; content to accept that which seems given.	Active agent and coparticipant who is primarily a source of linguistic activity (theoretical language) which serves as input into common meaning systems. Interested in "breaking the hammerlock" of what appears as given in human nature.
9. Chief Product of Research	Cumulation of objective knowledge through the production of empirically disconfirmable hypothesis.	Continued improvement in theory building capacity; improvement in the capacity to create generative-theoretical language.
10. Emphasis in the Education	Rigorous experimental	Hermeneutic interpretation

| of Future Social Science Professionals | methods and statistical analysis; a premium is placed on method (training in theory construction is a rarity). | and catalytic theorizing; a premium is placed on the theoretical imagination. Sociorationalism invites the student toward *intellectual expression* in the service of his or her vision of the good. |

(Cooperrider & Srivastra, 1987, p.140)

Relational Psychology

Another important shift has taken place at the end of the twentieth century, the shift in the theory of human psychology. There is a move from cognitive, behaviorist, humanistic, and psychoanalytic psychology, which postulate the individual as primary, to relational psychology (Stacey, 1999). Relational psychology focuses on connections, interdependence, changing patterns, and the understanding that individuals cannot develop outside a web of relationships (Miller, 1976, 1986; Stern, 1985; Surrey, 1985). Relationship is seen as primary. In relating to each other, people create and are created by their social reality.

Cognitive psychology, the current dominant theory for program development in correctional settings, is based on the "assumptions of the primacy of the individual and the position of the objective observer" (Stacey, 1999, p.14.1). The group is seen as a collection of individuals, so the attention is on the individual, particularly the single individual brain. The human brain is seen as an information processing mechanism, much like a computer. Relationships between people do not play any fundamental part in how humans know anything (Stacy, 1996). In addition, cognitive therapy is based on the assumption that feelings come from thoughts. This psychological model is congruent with the mechanistic model of human behavior reflected in logical positivism.

Relational theory with its emphasis on connection and patterning, decenters the individual and postulates that individual minds are formed by and from relationships at the same time. An individual's mind arises between that individual and the others with whom he or she is in relationship. Mental phenomena, including the sharing of meaning with others, all arise in social, or group relationships. Relational theory also suggests that feelings and thoughts are interwoven. Miller and Stiver (1997) suggest that:

> This separation of thought and feeling seems clearly linked to a long-standing gender division in Western culture. Thinking has been linked with men and is the valued capacity; feeling has been linked with women and is disparaged. In contrast, we believe that all thoughts are accompanied by emotions and all emotions have thought content. Attempting to focus on one to the neglect of the other diminishes people's ability to understand and act on their experiences (p.212).

The concepts of new science and sociorationalism are clearly reflected in relational theory.

A Model Program

The new models of science, sociorationalism, and relational theory are not only congruent with each other, they are congruent with what is needed in the criminal justice system. These new systems of thought shift the discussion from individual pathology (i.e. criminogenic) to looking holistically and systemically at women in the context of their life history, as well as acknowledging the connection between social policy and criminality. In viewing women's pathways to crime, the intersection of race, class, and gender, and relational theory, the need for a program model that is contextual and collaborative becomes apparent.

To move from theory to practice, how would programming for female offenders be developed based on the above science? *Helping Women Recover: A Program for Treating Substance Abuse* (Covington, 1999) can serve as an example. It integrates three theoretical formulations (women's psychological development, addiction, and trauma) to provide a foundation for the program. The realities of women's lives and their pathways to crime are used as the lens for developing the treatment interventions. Relational theory is the dominant construct throughout the model.

Theory of Women's Development – Traditional developmental psychology is based on a separation/individuation model. Self-in-Relation theory, developed by the Stone Center at Wellesley College, is based on the assumption that "connection" is a basic human need, and that this need is especially strong in women (Jordan et al., 1991). Women develop a sense of self and self-worth when their actions arise out of, and lead back to, connections with others. Such connections are so crucial for women that women's psychological problems can be traced to disconnection's or violations within relationships – whether in families, with personal acquaintances, or in society at large. Healthy connection with other persons is seen as both the means and goal of psychological development.

Theory of Addiction -Addiction can be viewed as a kind of relationship. The addicted woman is in a relationship with alcohol or other drugs, " a relationship characterized by obsession, compulsion, nonmutuality, and an imbalance of power. It is a kind of love relationship in which the object of addiction becomes the focus of a woman's life" (Covington and Surrey, 1997, p.338). Moreover, women frequently begin to use substances in ways that initially seem to make or maintain connections, in an attempt to feel connected, energized, loved or loving when that is not the whole truth of their experience (Surrey, 1991). Women often turn to drugs in the context of relationships with drug-abusing partners – to feel connected through the use of drugs. In addition, women often use substances to numb the pain of nonmutual, nonempathic, even violent relationships.

It is also important that addiction be treated from a holistic disease model that acknowledges the physical aspects as well as the emotional, psychological, spiritual, environmental, and political aspects of disease. This is a shift from the traditional medical model and the social learning model where the focus is on the individual.

Theory of Trauma- The vast majority of female offenders have been physically and /or sexually abused as children and adults. Thus, most female offenders are trauma survivors when they enter the system, and then they are at risk for retraumatization in the system. Incarceration can be traumatizing in itself, and the standard practices and policies that characterize the criminal justice system (restraint, body searches, isolation) can be further traumatizing. Many women use alcohol and/or other drugs in order to medicate the pain of trauma. Trauma can also skew a woman's relational experience and hinder her psychological development.

Psychiatrist Judith Herman (1992) writes that trauma is a disease of disconnection and that there are three stages in the process of healing from trauma: (1) safety, (2) remembrance and mourning, and (3) reconnection. Safety, the first stage in recovery from trauma, is essential in criminal justice settings. If we want to assist women in changing their lives, we must create a safe environment in which the healing process can begin to take place. We can help a woman feel safe in her external world by keeping facilities free of physical and sexual harassment and abuse.

In summary, women begin to heal from addiction and trauma in a relational context. Recovery happens in connection, not in isolation. Nonmutual, nonempathic, disempowering, and unsafe settings make change and healing extremely difficult. The more we understand and apply relational theory, the more able we will be to help women who suffer from trauma and addiction.

Evaluation

Using the above science to develop programming for female offenders creates a need for evaluation based on the same scientific assumptions. Currently there is a heightened sensitivity to and interdisciplinary recognition of the fact that, based on " the structure of knowledge" (Belenky et al, 1986; Kolb, 1984), there may be multiple ways of knowing, each of them valid in its own realm when judged according to its own set of essential assumptions and purposes. In this sense there are many different ways of studying and evaluating the same phenomenon. Morgan (1983) states:

> "The selection of method implies some view of the situation being studied, for any decision on how to study a phenomenon carries with it certain assumptions or explicit answers to the question, "What is being studied?" Just as we select a tennis racquet rather than a golf club to play tennis because we have a prior conception as to what the game of tennis involves, so too, in relation to the process of social research, we select or favor particular kinds of methodology because we have implicit or explicit conceptions as to what we are trying to do with our research" (p.19).

Thus, in adopting one mode over another the researcher directly influences what he or she will finally discover and accomplish. We are suggesting a paradigm shift in both programming for female offenders and its evaluation. As stated earlier, a change in paradigm represents much more than a change of ideas and how we think. This is a change in how we organize our experience of existence itself and represents far more than a simple change of ideas. "A paradigm shift is felt in the body, heart, head, and soul. We are now living in one of the rare shifts in our perceptual paradigm that has the potential to grab us all 'in the gut' with a dramatically transformed view of reality, identity, social relationships, and human purpose" (Elgin, 1999, p. 3).

The model we are proposing for evaluation design is called "Appreciative Inquiry". Appreciative Inquiry is a research perspective that is uniquely intended for discovering, understanding and innovating. "As a holistic form of inquiry, it asks a series of questions not found in either a logical-positivist conception of science or a strictly pragmatic, problem-solving mode of action-research. As shown in Figure 1, its aims are both scientific (in a sociorationalist sense) and pragmatic (in a social-innovation sense), as well as metaphysical and normative (in the sense of attempting ethically to affirm all that social existence really is and should become)" (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987, p.159).

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Is scientific/theoretical	Is metaphysical	Is normative	Is pragmatic
↓	↓	↓	↓
Seeks sociorational knowledge (interpretive)	Seeks appreciative knowledge of miracle of organizing	Seeks practical knowledge	Seeks knowledgeable action
↓	↓	↓	↓
Grounded Observation	Vision logic	Collaborative dialogue and choice	Collective experimentation
↓	↓	↓	↓
Best of "What Is"	Ideals of "What Might Be"	Consent of "What Should Be"	Experiencing of "What Can Be"

ACTION RESEARCH MODEL
FOR A HUMANLY SIGNIGFICANT
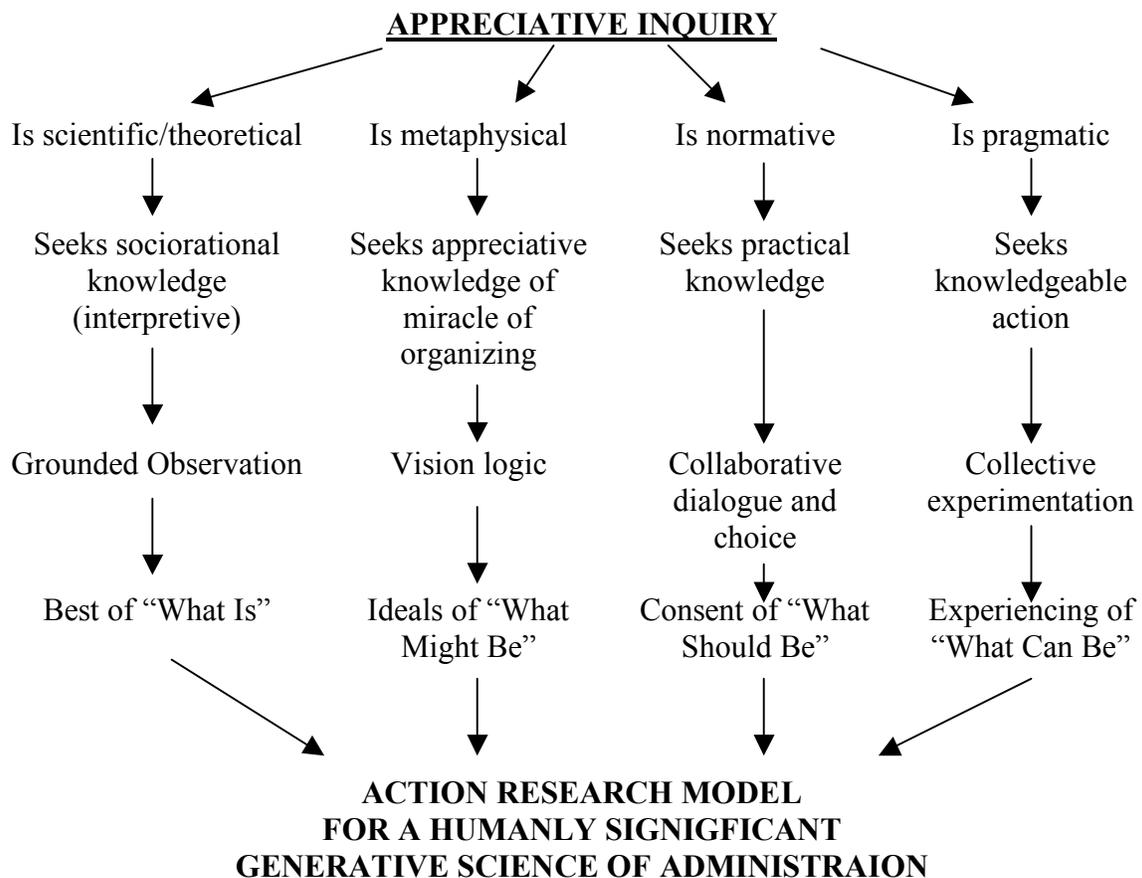## GENERATIVE SCIENCE OF ADMINISTRAION

Figure 1. Dimensions of Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastra, 1987, p.160)

Earlier in this paper we presented relational theory as the foundational theory for women's programming and offered an example from practice (*Helping Women Recover*). We are now presenting an example of a hypothetical evaluation of the *Helping Women Recover* program using Appreciative Inquiry as the theoretical framework. By choosing this approach and developing a set of questions, the system (the culture, environment, or context of the program) is evaluated. The guiding principles or assumptions inherent in this approach are articulated in the work of Dosher and Terry (1993):

- **Appreciative** – Understanding that in every human system lies strengths and resources that are key to its healthy development. To appreciate this is to acknowledge that every system and person is a resource.
- **Applicable** – Leads to generation of theoretical knowledge that can be used. Knowledge can be validated in action and presented in ways that make it accessible to those who need to use it.
- **Proactive** – Assists the community of participants to take an active role in guiding its own evolutionary transformation. Clear evaluation of what currently exists helps direct the course towards what can be. Thus, the role of the evaluator is both pragmatic and visionary.
- **Collaborative** – Enters the evaluator into a collaborative relationship with participants. The unilateral approach to evaluation is in direct negation of appreciative inquiry.

According to Cooperrider (1987):

"Appreciative inquiry seeks out the exceptional best of 'what is' to help ignite the collective imagination of 'what might be.' The aim is to generate new knowledge which expands 'the realm of the possible' and helps members of the organization envision a collectively desired future and to carry forth that vision in ways which successfully translate images into possibility, intentions into reality, and belief into practice… The underlying assumption of appreciative inquiry is not that organizing is a 'problem to be solved' but rather a 'solution to be embraced' " (p.165).

The following chart describes the difference in approach:

PROBLEM SOLVING	APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY
Basic Assumption: **Organizing is a Problem to be Solved**	**Basic Assumption:** **Organizing is a "Mystery to be Embraced"**
"Felt Need" Identification of Problem ↓ Analysis of Causes	Appreciating "Valuing the Best of What Is" ↓ Envisioning "What Might Be"

↓	↓
Analysis of Possible Solutions	Dialoguing "What Should Be"
↓	↓
Action Planning (Treatment)	Innovating "What Will Be"

(Shear & Smith, 1999, p.4)

This is a different approach than using quantifiable individual measures and creating an aggregate. When one creates an aggregate based on individual measures, the system (i.e. context) learns nothing about itself. For example, part of the evaluation of *Helping Women Recover* might consist of pre- and post-tests of various individual scales (self-esteem, depression, resiliency, post-traumatic stress disorder), as well as measuring change in addictive behavior and recidivism. While this data is important, it is not sufficient. It is individualistic and is based on the assumption that the whole is equal to the sum of the parts. There is no contextual evaluation.

When using the Appreciative Inquiry approach, the initial question might be:

> *What are the necessary conditions for helping women to heal?*
> (possible response)
> - safe environment
> - respect
> - supports empowerment

Which then leads to the following question:
> *What is required of staff?*
> - Attitudes
> - Skills
> - Knowledge
> - Behavior

When these are described the next questions would be:
> *How would you know it when you see it?*
> *What would best practices be?*

The concluding questions could be:
> *Are these the right measures?*
> *Are we getting there?*

Clearly this shift requires creativity and commitment on the part of leadership. The focus of the evaluation now includes both data from the individuals and from the environment/culture of the program. The system must reflect upon itself if it is going to self-actualize and create an environment that can create change. We are essentially asking the criminal justice system to reflect and question "How should the system be?"

and "By what criteria should it be evaluated?" This requires a different mindset and is a call to become a "learning organization" (Senge, 1990). To complete the evaluation, the process would extend beyond the criminal justice setting and include an evaluation of the community to which the woman returns.

Conclusion

In closing, let us return to our original question, *What is the work*? The work is to develop a systemic response to the needs of women in the criminal justice system. In order to do the work, the perspective must shift from the individual woman to include the context of her life. This means the development of programming and evaluation that reflects our understanding of the universe we live in – a world in which everything is connected. An example exists today that responds to many of the questions we are asking. In Saskatchewan, Canada, there is a Healing Lodge for aboriginal women in the Correctional Service of Canada. Its development reflects the model we are advocating as described by the following quote (Correctional Service of Canada, 1997):

> The operation of the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge is focused on **Healing**. The healing process of Federally Sentenced Women is premised on the following:
> a) Self-knowledge to acquire a thorough awareness of self and of the issues that have affected one's life in order to start the journey towards healing.
> b) Equality to acquire the knowledge and ability to empower oneself so that one can deal with the work from a position equally.
> c) Aboriginal Spirituality and Traditions to acquire and/or deepen knowledge and understanding on one's role as women, mothers, and community members through Aboriginal Teachings, Traditions and Spirituality (p. 4).

The real work is creating change in women's lives…deep, transformational change. There must be change in the system for this to occur. This requires a shift from transactional change (which builds upon the dominant reality and is incremental in nature) to transformational change (which alters values, assumptions, goals, structures, and relationships). This requires transformational leaders, not transactional leaders. Transactional leaders are primarily concerned with attaining efficiency, effectiveness, and even excellence within the status quo, the dominant reality. What the criminal justice system needs are leaders who listen to, sense, and communicate the deeper human needs and wants that are being expressed, and then develop a framework for action that *transforms* wants and needs into a new reality.

"Transformation is a path of the heart led by the human spirit and imagination" (Dosher, 1999). As we move into the 21st century, let us use the wisdom of the new sciences to create programs for women that re-awaken the imaginative spirit and have a reverence for life. This shift offers a possibility of hope and transformation that extends beyond the women themselves, to the criminal justice system and society at-large.

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