

Inside Out

Issues
in Crime
and
Justice

What is Inside Out?

The Inside-Out Prisoner Exchange program has been building bridges between college students and incarcerated students for nearly 20 years. The core belief fueling this program's vision is that facilitating informed dialogues among incarcerated and non-incarcerated students allows for truly transformative learning experiences that transcend social differences. This program emboldens participants to become leaders, while collectively and creatively imagining different solutions to crime and related social problems. These classes are held within a correctional facility (i.e. jail, prison, detention facility) and provide a paradigm shift for participants, drastically changing the ways that students see themselves, others, and the world. This latter point is critical to changing the conditions that give rise to crime and that create an overreliance on prisons and policing to solve social problems.

The Inside-Out class meets once per week at a women's prison located 5 miles away from the University. The class combines CSU Pueblo campus-based students (outside students) with an equal number of incarcerated women (inside students) at La Vista Correctional Facility in Pueblo, Colorado. Both inside and outside

students follow the same syllabus and requirements, collaboratively learning about issues of crime and justice and creatively imagining different solutions to crime and related social problems.

Inside-Out was founded by Lori Pompa at Temple University with the first class taking place in the Philadelphia prison system in 1997. The program has since grown to include 565 trained instructors from 40 states and 6 countries reaching over 20,000 students. The Fall 2017 Inside-Out class was the first time a class like this was taught at CSU Pueblo or in southern Colorado.



Ashlee

Hi, my name is Ashlee. I am a junior at Colorado State University-Pueblo. I am majoring in Sociology/Criminology with a minor in Legal Studies. I took Inside-Out because it sounded like a great opportunity to get some hands on experiences on being in a prison environment.



Brandy

My name is Brandy. I am a sociology and criminology major at CSU-P and an aspiring writer. I took Inside-out because I am highly interested in mass incarceration and prison reform. This has been one of my favorites because it was educational and I formed bonds with everyone.



Claire

I was born in rural New York, excelled as a 3-sport athlete and ranked top of my class. I worked for years with the homeless, delinquent youth, and coached teen girls. I hold a BA in business and a Masters in Physical Therapy.



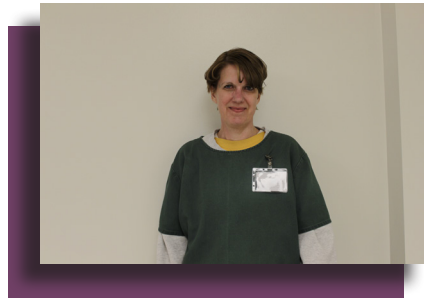
Dazzelle

My name is Dazzelle, I am 22-years-old and I am a junior at CSU-P. I am majoring in Sociology with a Criminology emphasis. I plan to graduate and go on to law school in hopes of helping people. I became passionate for Inside-Out because of my own experiences with the criminal justice system.



Who Are We?





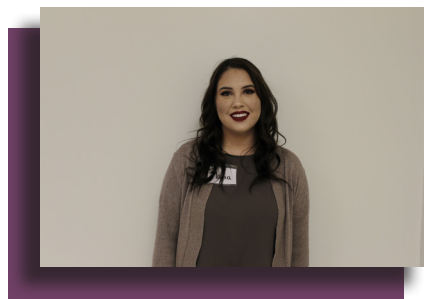
Joy

My name is Joy, I am 44-years-old and a Colorado native. I have accepted responsibility for my poor choices and I have dedicated myself to using my time for personal improvement and growth. I have chosen to take advantage of the opportunities available within CDOC and in rebuilding my support system. I plan to be active in education and criminal justice reform upon my release.



Linda

I've been down at La Vista for 7 years and coming up in December I have been at my job for 7 years at the greenhouse and I help with the grounds. I have 4 beautiful children. E., my oldest has her Associate's and Bachelor's and is now working on her Masters. My son P. is 32, my son A. is almost 23. My youngest B. would be 15, but she passed away at 5 months old. My family is my life.



Maria

My name is Maria. I am a sociology-criminology major. I took Inside-Out to gain a better understanding of where my future clientele has come from. I gained useful knowledge and memories from this class that will last a lifetime. Inside-Out has allowed for both inside and outside students to have gained the ability and trust to say "I am here for you, I believe you, and I am rooting for your success." Inside-Out has changed everything.

Morticia

My name is Morticia, I am 35-years-old and I have been incarcerated for 12 years so far on my 20 year sentence. Throughout my time, I've learned to own who I am and what I am about. I know that I can turn this negative into a positive by following the true me and taking all the classes provided to me and being committed to who I am. I am close to my release and will use what I've learned to push forward and help others.



Natalie

Hi, my name is Natalie. I have been doing time for the last 20 years. During my incarceration I've learned a lot of positive and negative things about myself. In the beginning of my incarceration I was able to attend and complete a lot of educational and mental health programs in order to turn those negative aspects into positive aspects. Now that I am at this point in my incarceration, there are so many things that I would like to do but I am not able to because of the length of my sentence. I would like to see things change in the prison system for women.





Shauntiel

I am Shauntiel and I have been in prison for almost 24 years. In this time I've been incarcerated, I have fought for my life in more ways than one. My biggest struggle has been being away from my parents. My father has recently died. My biggest fear is that my mother may pass while I am still in prison. I stand on faith that God has already worked things out on my behalf and soon it will work out and I will go on to do great things. Therefore, I have worked hard to change my life and do things to ensure success upon my release. I knew back then that I could not leave the same way I came in and I know what I did in here would one day benefit me on my getting out so that I can see about my mother and help others in my community. I also will pursue helping other incarcerated people coming out and at risk young people as well as abused women and so many more.



Shelby

My name is Shelby. I am currently a senior at CSU-P majoring in Psychology and Sociology/Criminology with a minor in Honors. After I graduate I plan on working on my Masters and possibly my PhD from Arizona State University. I also want to work as a law enforcement officer or do nonprofit work in the Phoenix area.



Taylor

I am a second semester junior at CSU-P studying Sociology/Criminology with a minor in psychology. I would love to work with juveniles after I graduate. I am looking to get my Masters of Science in Sociology after I graduate from CSU-P.

What

Did We

Learn?

Claire

The biggest lesson I learned from Inside-Out is, I am not who I was. I am more confident, self-aware and effective as a communicator at 50 than at age 20. I am encouraged to meet several young people with enthusiasm and creative ideas for criminal justice issues and compassion for offenders. It's easy to imagine that we are forgotten and deemed worthless. They reflect hope. This program is mutually beneficial to break down biases or ignorance about either group. We are truly one community and any problems should be a concern for everyone. I think it's important to empower women to achieve educational goals, personal growth, independence, better parenting skills, and strength over addiction tendencies. With no out-date, I feel committed to inspire this prison population in every interaction.

Dazzelle

The biggest lesson I have learned in Inside-Out is that we are all human beings. We all deal with loss, illness, happiness, and excitement. At the end of the day there is not much difference between all of us. Inside-Out has made me much more enlightened in my own personal experiences and made me realize that others go through the same things. I have never been a judgmental person because everyone goes through things, but Inside-Out definitely reaffirmed that for me. Programs like Inside-Out should be offered and taken because they put prison life into perspective. They make you realize that we as human beings are all capable of the same things, good or bad. Personally, Inside-Out has given me a place of normalcy, which is

odd because why would a 22-year-old feel normal taking a class at a prison with inmates, but all my life I never have been able to normally talk about my personal experiences with family member involvement in the criminal justice system. This class made something that has been an odd fact that I live with be normal. I think for other people like me, this class could be monumental.

Taylor

My biggest takeaway from Inside-Out is to always see people for who they are now and not see them for the mistakes they have made in the past. Seeing as everyone has done something at some point in time that they regret doing, we shouldn't judge those whose mistakes put them in prison. Before Inside-Out I was very uncomfortable with how people viewed prison. I had only visited YOS and a county jail and had preconceived notions of those who are incarcerated. After taking this class, I am much more comfortable in my opinions of incarcerated populations. Inside-Out completely changed how I view inmates, especially women. We have been given different opinions by staff and those opinion shaped my initial opinion walking into class. Programs like Inside-Out are amazing! They offer a great experience to interact with incarcerated populations and to learn their views on certain topics. It is important to get their opinion on the prison system. I have created strong bonds with my fellow outside students. I hope to use this experience to better any other program or facility that I work in once I graduate. Honestly, I have met some amazing women and have learned so much about them because of their stories. I think that by sharing those stories and experiences with DOC and others that people may finally wake up and do something to change this flawed system.

Brandy

The biggest lesson I learned from Inside-Out is that everyone is human and we all deserve to be treated as such. And, you know, I knew that before, but when it strikes you in the face the kinds of ways that we treat our incarcerated citizens, it feels a lot more real. After meeting them, bonding, looking them in the eyes, it just really hits home that we are all people and no one anywhere deserves to be treated like an animal. Inside-Out changed the way I see myself in that it has hit me harder than ever that I am more than a person just moving along. I am worth something, we all are and the second we all see that, we can start making some real changes. I have always seen others as having worth, as being able to do anything they wanted, but being in the Inside-Out program has really shown me more than ever that preconceived notions are trash. We've all done something and we don't all deserve to be thrown away for it. Inside-Out is one of the most helpful programs I've ever been in during my entire academic career. This program makes you think, it make you feel, it makes you actually acknowledge the problems and then actually work to fix them. I think it is highly beneficial to anyone who takes it, inside students because it is a great rehabilitative and learning program that allows them to use their experiences to make a difference. For outside students because they get to see reality, they get to see things as they are and maybe do something about it. In the end, I think the worst part of this program is how much I am going to miss these beautiful women.

Morticia

I learned that there are people who are willing to see the "good" in people and are willing to help others who are or were on a bad path make changes. I know entering this class I had no idea what was going to happen, but since I've started, we've had some real intelligent, mind opening discussions that are eye opening. I realized through this program I am worthy and worth it. I showed myself that I'm smart and intelligent as I know I can be and even though some of the papers were challenging, I received excellent grades. I am open minded and aware more now than

ever. I read "Just Mercy" and my mind was open to so much more than what I see on a daily basis. I know there are good people out there and that they are not judgemental, but mindful and helpful. I believe this class is an eye opener and extremely educational. I know this class opens up our minds and gets us to real situations and values that happen everyday and we, the insiders are capable of being surrounded by and learn with the outsiders. The knowledge and creativity I brought myself to is extreme for me. I want to help others by sharing who I was, who I am today, and what I endured. I want to help open up my options and help others after my release and this class gave me the strength to do that.

Linda

I've learned that there are other people who actually see and understand how we are viewed by the whole world. Also, that we can get actual help and learn to help ourselves here too. It changed by making me stronger. I am actually a good, smart woman and I am not alone. It helped me give people a chance because they are just as scared and nervous as I am meeting each other. I think that it's a great program especially having a think tank after, so that people in here know that there are people that could help you. It gives great information to you so you can stand up and help yourself change and become a smart hard working person and keep yourself to the way you've changed. I think women that actually want to be apart of the change and want to learn are important. My experience was good. The new women that I met were the best. They made me feel good about myself. I really opened up, normally I stay in my room and don't associate with anyone.



Maria

The biggest take-away from Inside-Out has been just how much it means to see advocacy coming from somewhere you least expect. Whether it's inside to outside students or vice versa. Telling someone "I'm here for you, I believe you, and I'm rooting for you" means so much more in an environment like this. Inside-Out has given me a view of myself that I've never had. It has boosted my confidence, self-worth, and it has changed my willingness to forgive myself and grow. Inside-Out has changed everything about how I see others. I've noticed I'm less likely to attach an "us vs them" scenario to everything in life and see people as people not their mistakes. I have noticed though that I'm more likely to speak up when I see someone abusing authority or purposely talking down to someone. Inside-Out has initiated dialogue among differences and has in fact made us all realize we are more similar than we ever imagined. Inside students are able to see that there are people outside of DOC that are rooting for them and it is important for outside students to put faces and emotions to the people we learn about everyday. I came into Inside-Out like a deer in headlights. I never expected to care about everyone this much. I've learned hard truths and ugly experiences inside students are forced to deal with every day that would otherwise be unknown. We instead of sitting in a room a few hours a week have stood for and supported each other through hard times and given each other tough love when necessary. Inside-Out was more than just a class, it was memories, laughs, tears and so much more.

Shauntiel

I've learned that you really shouldn't judge a book by its cover and that there really are people on the other side who care about us and what to see things change. Who are willing to help implement that change. It reaffirmed for me that I am worth redeeming. I've learned that there are still beautiful people in the world who truly care about others regardless of our place in life. People who don't judge us behind making a poor choice that landed us in prison. To find the message out about the poor quality of the justice system and for people

to see that incarcerated people can make a good contribution to life. I thank God to have been blessed to participate in such an awesome program with such awesome people who like me, want to right some of the wrongs done to incarcerated people. It's about time. I hope they bring it back.

Natalie

I've learned that there are a lot of people who don't look at people in prison as monsters. Yes they're nervous but once they get to know us as people the nervousness goes away. Before I got into Inside-Out I had a lot of stuff stuffed inside and this class has given me a positive outlet because the women listen. This program challenged me in more ways than I can count. I never really had a bad view of people. I'm not a person that judges people off top, there has to be a reason for me not to deal with a person. This program should be offered in every prison because a lot of people don't even know what's going on around them, it brings a lot of awareness to the forefront. When I was asked to do this program I really didn't know what to think. But now that we're at the end I really wish it wouldn't end. Everyone has been so supportive and understanding. I really appreciate this.



Ashlee

I learned that just because a person is incarcerated, it does not mean they are not a real person, with real stories. I learned that everyone is worth saving and no one should be locked up and forgotten because the people I met in Inside-Out are the best people I've met in my entire life. Inside-Out opened up a whole new side of myself. It made me more open minded and made me see the light of a negative place (prison). Inside-Out changed my view on how I views others by breaking down my own personal biases and viewing a person for who they truly are on the inside and not everything that they appear to be based off the outside. Inside-Out should be offered and taken by others because it truly is an experience like no other that will surprise you in all ways possible. Inside-Out will change you, your views and your perspectives and beliefs on what being in a prison is like and what interacting with an inmate is really like. Inside-Out is a program that not only benefits the inmates as a program they are able to take and learn from, but it truly benefits the outside students who take it, because it is so enlightening and eye opening. Not only did I meet an extraordinary group of women, but I made and built relationships that will never be forgotten. My experiences with Inside-Out have been nothing but positive. I learned about others and I learned about myself. Inside-Out has made me a better person, student, and future sociologist. I will cherish the memories I've made in Inside-Out for a lifetime.

Joy

I've learned that people are more alike than they are different and that more outside people care about prison reform than I anticipated. I found that the program helped my self-worth. I was accepted and valued despite my felony convictions and I built positive rapport in a professional setting with other people with different backgrounds. I found it empowering. I was surprised at how passionate the outside students were about the reforms needed in the criminal justice system and how vocal they were regarding the injustices they've observes. It made me feel not so isolated or alone. Some of us want to use this time to improve

ourselves and turn our lives onto a new path and cognitive or behavioral programs are an essential part of that growth and self-improvement. I am incredibly grateful to have been a part of this initial offering of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at LVCF. This has been validating on a personal level, and I have been listened to and my thoughts/opinions valued simply because I am a human being with no judgement because I am still worthy and my experiences are valued. It has been very rewarding to me.

Shelby

The biggest lesson I've learned during Inside-Out is: everyone is human, everyone has rights, and everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Throughout my life, I have always felt aware about prison life and the criminal justice system. With taking this class, I now feel like I can relate more to prison life due to my experience of taking a college level course in a prison setting. Growing up the way I did, I always heard stories about incarcerated individuals. The good and the bad about what they do and how they act. Actually hearing the stories for myself really gave me a different perspective. I got to experience a snippet of prison life once a week for a semester that helped give me a better understanding of what these individuals go through. This program should be offered in many different disciplines because it helps to educate both inside and outside students in an unconventional way. People both on the inside and the outside should take this course because it helps mend the space between society and the society we house behind bars. Overall this class has really helped me reaffirm my thoughts about prison and prison life. I got to experience first hand the way inmates are treated and looked at just because of the title they hold.

Let's Talk Gender Responsive Programming

Every Inside-Out class has a final project component to it. For the fall 2017 class, we decided to research gender-responsive programming in correctional facilities. Because we are addressing women's issues, we felt it necessary to look at prison programs and therapeutic models that take gender into account and center criminalized women's experiences.

Prison programs and services for women are more effective when they address the realities of women's lives and their particular pathways into the criminal justice system. For example, women offenders have different backgrounds when compared to their male counterparts, and therefore have specific rehabilitation needs regarding substance use, trauma, mental illness, parenting, employment, etc.

Incarcerated women are most likely to have:

"Been convicted of a drug or drug-related offense
Fragmented family histories, with other family members also involved with the criminal justice system
Survivors of physical and/or sexual abuse as children and adults

Significant substance abuse problems

Multiple physical and mental health problems

Unmarried mothers of minor children

High school degree/GED, but limited vocational training and sporadic work histories."

Covington and Bloom, "Gender Responsive Treatment and Services in Correctional Settings", 2006 (p. 3)

To address incarcerated women's issues therapeutically, it is important to practice trauma-informed services that require an understanding of violence against women and how trauma impacts women's lives.

Trauma-informed services must:

"Take the trauma into account;

Avoid triggering trauma reactions and/or retraumatizing the individual;

Adjust the behavior of counselors, other staff, and the organization to support the individual's coping capacity; Allow survivors to manage their trauma symptoms successfully so that they are able to access, retain,

and benefit from these services."

Covington and Bloom, "Gender Responsive Treatment and Services in Correctional Settings", 2006 (p. 7)
y correctional facilities have adopted gender-responsive programming and have subsequently seen great success in rehabilitation rates for women and a reduction in recidivism rates. Connecting therapeutic services to needs and histories and the ways that gender, violence, and trauma impact those histories is a very important next step in incarcerated women's rehabilitation services.



What did we do with it?

We divided our work into two groups: Group #1 worked on mental health and substance abuse and Group #2 worked on relationships, trauma, and self-esteem.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse:

Incarcerated women display higher rates of eating disorders, self harm, mental health during incarceration, and increased struggles with mental health post-incarceration. Criminalized women are often given unnecessary medications which can lead to or exacerbate substance abuse, which is particularly problematic when considering that 80% of female prisoners suffer from addiction, 50% used alcohol, drugs, or both at the time of arrest, and 1 in 3 committed offense to obtain money for addiction.

The following poems and writings were completed by Shauntiel, Taylor, Linda, Shelby, Claire, and Brandy:

I Matter

People are sick
People are falling out
Broken bodies
Breaking souls
Put in ice rooms
Pale, unyielding
Empty

They don't care here
It's nothing
Drink water
You just want attention
Are we human?
Or are we dogs?
Sit, Stay, Speak
Why would they care
If they've already thrown us away
This is our mind screaming out loud
I'm here, I'm real
I breathe in and out
I matter, goddamnit
I do
Stand up, speak out
But these people's eyes are cold
There is nothing there
I guess we deserve what we got
My body is all loose ends
Caught on door handles
And glass
They're pulling me apart
And nobody here
Thinks I'm worth
Stitching back together
I don't deserve this
I won't say I do
I deserve life
Compassion
I deserve humanity
And I deserve to
Be put back together
Because I matter
Goddamnit, I do
-Brandy

State of mind matters. I start each day with gratitude. Work. Play. Pray. Grow. Advocate for your own wellness. Physically move. Eat veggies and fresh fruit, drink water, exhale. Look in the mirror. Acknowledge your flaws. Speak the truth. "Stay in your own lane; do your own number." Change affiliations that bring you down. Set aside your pride and ego. Be accountable. Learn from the past. Make amends with family, friends, victim, the broader society. Of course, there are limits here. Focus on what is possible instead. Be proactive. Start with something simple. Lend a hand or hold a door. Savor a compliment. Forgive yourself. Kindness costs nothing yet it's priceless. Smile more. "Fake it til you make it." Empower yourself. Envision a different future. Show the world the best of humanity. It still exists, even here! Common courtesy and respect go a long way in building trust. We all deserve dignity and compassion... and second chances. There are no guarantees, but these things will help. A crowd can be transformed into a true community.

-Claire

Being in prison is already the punishment so now to begin your recovery.
You need to be with people that are good at being a stable positive and ready to learn from their mistakes. I will help you to give what it takes, also be able to laugh and help you along the way.
So you can adjust and leave a quiet, somewhat peaceful progressive healing life.

-Linda

I walked in broken, lost and scared.
I saw so many people, alone and in pairs.
I tried to duck, step fast and hide.
Past abuse caused me to isolate and stay inside,
Until the day I met "her".
She listened, laughed and concurred.
I needed patience, guidance and tough love.
I respond better when you hold my hand, not with a shove,
My mentor was practical and kept it real.
I learned to own my choices, to share how I feel.
I found safety and comfort to open like a flower
My petals expanded and i felt an inner power,
I made progress, being proactive each day,

Not wanting to waste my time or delay
I uncovered a strength I didn't know I had
And told "her" how much she mattered on my journey to be glad,
I'm glad for this new perspective on life,
I'm glad to practice new behaviors, personal boundaries
No worries of strife.

-Claire

Momma

All I want is help momma
But they don't do that here
I have sent kite after kite momma
But rejection is all I hear
I cannot control the pain momma
But I'm running out of options
All I want is help momma
But medical doesn't care
I have spent my months' pay momma
But rejection is all I hear
I can slowly feel myself dying momma
But medical doesn't care
Everyone around me is worried momma
But my mind is starting to flare
I think my time is coming momma
But my story will be hidden
It's time to say goodbye momma
But my words may never reach
I have to go now momma
All because medical didn't care

-Shelby



My suggestions for topics that women benefit women include financial planning, money management, shopping for an apartment or house, buying a car, loans, securing affordable child care. Women traditionally allow the man (or are denied by the man) to handle finances. Women have self-esteem, low self-worth issues, operating independently can be completely foreign to them. Women that is what they want to saw deep down. Women fear rejection, through, and are acclimated to follow along with their peer group. Acceptance from others means more than self-acceptance. This is more than likely subconscious. Consider how many women choose dysfunctional relationship over being alone. Women who are anchored within themselves are more resilient to endure the unexpected "speed bumps" of life, to stand up for themselves, to not give their power away, and fall victim to peer pressure.

Inside-Out may assist in these areas of concern by educating others. We can inform LVCF on ways to improve programs, to guide, staff to better interaction, to uplift inmates, and motivate them to participate in their own wellness. We can also educate people in the community about the challenges inmates face and the benefits of hiring a transitioning offender. Perhaps a support network can be formed for new releases where by caring citizens or former inmates who have been successful for a reasonable time frame can be a "safety net" or sounding board or provide advice. We don't want women to give upon themselves when they get discouraged. Many people do not have family or friends who often provide moral support or simple favors automatically.

LVCF could be different if it was designed on a female-centered philosophy. The staff would be trained to build a rapport with us since we value relationships beyond most anything else. If we connect to you, we will be more receptive to what you suggest or demand of us based on the rules. We respect certain officers at LVCF because they maintain a healthy balance of friendliness and professionalism. Other ways it would be different I believe is in food, recreation, and basic rules. I think women want more salads, fresh fruit and vegetables. They want less protein and complex carbohydrates, generally at CWCF, we had a salad bar option at lunch and dinner to the regular meal

that was very popular. For recreation, women like to socialize more than physical exercise. We can engage women with craft or hobby projects or peer teaching opportunities. People feel good about themselves and what they made when they learn to crochet, to draw, to quill, ect. The population may be more responsive to female administrative leadership, hoping there is more empathy for gender-specific needs. Women want to add a "homey" touch to their room with an afghan or photos with crafted frames or other artistic efforts displayed on their personal boards. Women are more comfortable and able to function better in a less sterile environment. Women also need to have physical touch. We respect the need for PREA policies and the potential for manipulation or domination but as humans, women want to hug, platonically. Maybe there is a safe option besides a pedicure.

- Claire

By fixing these issues, [and addressing the different needs that women offenders have], you would probably have less women coming back to prison. There are many unique issues that women deal with that need to be addressed like: abuse, sexual assault, drug abuse, underlying causes, bad marriage, trauma, children, inmate's family, and victims and their loved ones. Gender Responsive Programming is important because it will deal with the specific needs of women such as: housing, development skills, and parenting. Some treatments could be: providing a healing journey, improved family relationships, and physical and mental health. By getting the word out there so society can see for themselves that addressing these issues may help stop the return of women to prison, as well as assisting them in living productive lives upon their release.

- Shauntiel



Relationships, Trauma, and Self Esteem

Women's relational theory asserts that a women's sense of self-worth can be damaged or undermined when relationships important to her are abusive. Considering that nearly 80% of incarcerated women have experienced some type of abuse, either as children, adults, or both, this theory becomes essential to understanding how rehabilitation services might be improved by focusing on healthy relationship-building both during and after incarceration. A truly rehabilitative environment must focus on repairing the past trauma and offering a space to transform an incarcerated woman's ability to develop positive relationship building skills. This will offer a prosocial opportunity for incarcerated women to therefore develop a strong sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

The following poems and writings were completed by Natalie, Maria, Joy, Ashlee, Morticia, and Dazzelle:

From what I understand, the system is geared toward men. There are way more facilities for men, there are more support services for men, the men are paid more in state pay, they receive larger portions of food, they have access to more incentive jobs which earn a higher wage, and the uniforms and boots are all made for men. Being a woman in prison is very challenging. Typically women depend more on relationships and social support and that can be stripped away upon entry into prison. You may receive correspondence on visits in the beginning but they slack off as time crawls by; friendships change and it's much harder for the incarcerated women to reach out when she feels isolated. It's not like we can just pick up the phone or send an email whenever we want to.

We would have clothing/shoes designed for women instead of just smaller sizes of men's options; we would have vocational programming focused on women's jobs and training for felon friendly careers; we would get better food choices with more healthy options; we wouldn't be punished for problems that occur at the male facilities; there would be more emphasis on mental health treatment- not simply a cookie cutter substance abuse policy.

I feel like women typically have more of a history of abuse, trauma and victimization that has not been

previously addressed. Talk therapy is not offered in any capacity and the individuals who might be willing to engage are not comfortable being vulnerable with strangers who may use what they hear in group against them in the yard. Most inmates who come into prison are young and immature both in age and emotional capacity. Women often have been introduced to a criminal lifestyle by a man in her life and those poor choices are very often tied to low self esteem and confidence, neither of which are adequately recognized or treated.

- Joy

If Only

If only today, just for today there was not anger,
sadness or bitterness

If only today just for today I'd try for a better tomorrow

If only there were brighter lights, healthy, emotional,
relationships

If only today we start opening a better change for tomorrow.

If only my past did not scare me from opening up and sharing...

If only people understood trying wasn't as easy as it sounds

But just for today, only today

I'm willing to see what's in front of me.

I promise I'll try.

-Morticia

Life behind bars can be scary.

Life behind bars is isolation from family and friends.

Life behind bars means less communication and more intimidation.

Life behind bars is stressful.

Life behind bars could also be positive,

But all we get is negative doing

Life behind bars.

-Natalie

Who is to blame?
Who really cares?
There is no shame, in what others endure.
What's the point of sharing?
When no human is sparing.
Of compassion, love, or kindness.
We all act as if we suffer from blindness.
Choosing to ignore the obvious.
The hurt, violence, and mindlessness.
Ignorance is bliss, I guess it's there.
Because if others saw what I do they would be blue.
Be blue from shame, disgust, and failure.
But who is to blame?
Its me, its you, were one in the same
The same until we open our eyes
And choose to see the cries,
The cries for compassion, love and kindness
If we open our eyes, the world will lose its blindness...

-Dazzelle

There should be more trauma and mental health courses women can take. More women would be taken seriously and they would get the actual treatment they need in the beginning instead of when they're closer to leaving and they would be able to start healing and deal with their reality head on so they'll want to begin a course of change. I believe there are a lot of medical and mental health issues and if us women don't get the care we need and are neglected we go off of course. When there's mental or physical pain involved a lot of women medicate themselves and 9 times out of 10 search for pills to ease their pain changing one addiction for another.

-Morticia

Reaction, reflection,
Guilt, sorrow,
Weight, burdens,
It's all how I got here.
Compassion, positivity,
Light from the darkness-
It's all because they are here.
Raw emotion, brutal honesty.
Soft voices calming eyes,
We're in this together because we are here.
Trials, tribulations,

Up days, down days.
Forgiveness, love, genuine sisterhood.
Ability to see change,
Mended hearts,
Shattered ceilings,
Fresh starts.
It's all because we were there.

-Maria

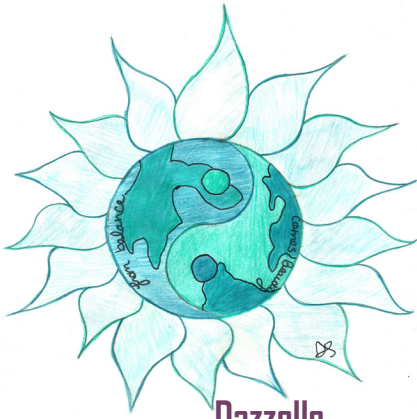
I need help, but I am silent.
I did not ask for it
But I am weak.
I feel crazy
But is that too dramatic?
They say it is safe
But I do not feel welcomed
They say it is judgement free
So where is the understanding?
Overcoming.
It isn't easy
But I am ready
Ready to be happy
I am wanted.
Therefore I am ready
Ready to be new.

-Ashlee

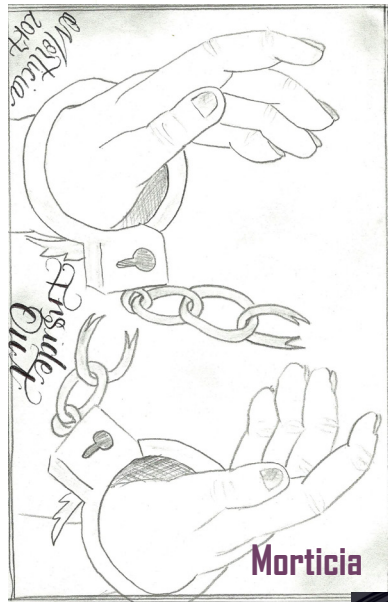
A special thank you to our
professor Dr. Hackett, who made
the whole program a reality



Expression Through Art



Dazzelle



Morticia



Taylor

On behalf of
the Inside and
Outside students,
we would like to
thank you for
reading our work.
This has meant a
lot to us and we
appreciate the
opportunity to
share it with you!

-Ashlee, Brandy,
Claire, Dazzelle,
Joy, Linda, Maria,
Morticia, Natalie,
Shauntiel, Shelby,
Taylor, and Dr.
Hackett

